




Feminist Economic Realities

Exploring stories
from across the
Count Me In!
Consortium

count
me **IN!**

CMI! is a Strategic Partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and consists of member organisations Mama Cash (MC), the Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID), CREA, Just Associates (JASS), and

the Sister Funds Urgent Action Fund for Feminist Activism (UAF-FA) and Urgent Action Fund - Africa (UAF-Africa). The sex worker-led Red Umbrella Fund (RUF) and the Dutch gender platform WO=MEN are strategic partners of the consortium.



The Count Me In! (CMI!) consortium envisions a gender equal and just world, where all women and girls, and non-binary, gender non-conforming, trans, and intersex people enjoy their rights fully and live to their full potential.

Acknowledgements

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Summary

Feminist Economic Realities

Exploring stories from across the Count Me In! Consortium:

A Brief

“It’s a journey,” Alma said. She went on to explain something like this...

“When I think about what Feminist Economic Realities is, how to explain it to someone, the first thing that comes to mind is asking, “have you ever thought about what the world would look like if, for example, there was free housing for everyone or if there was free access to water?” Stay there for a while, as long as it feels good because this part usually feels good.

“The next step in the journey is asking, why?” she explained. “Why is that not the reality? What is constraining us?” This part doesn’t feel so good. This is where you see dark, ugly, unkind, too true things.

From the if, to the why, we end up with, the but... “But there are communities doing and living this. There are those working to make the dream a reality,” she said. “Feminist Economic Realities land after coming through the journey.”

Alma Magaña works with Just Associates (JASS) which is a part of the Count Me In Consortium (CMI!) consisting of member organisations, Mama Cash (MC), the Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID), CREA, and the Sister Funds Urgent Action Fund (UAF) and Urgent Action Fund- Africa (UAF-Africa). The sex worker-led Red Umbrella



Fund (RUF) and the Dutch gender platform WO=MEN are strategic partners of the consortium. One of the consortium's priority areas is Feminist Economic Realities.

The Count Me In! consortium understands Feminist Economic Realities (FERs) as a term that encompasses models, approaches, imaginings, and actions that critique and directly challenge unjust economic orthodoxies that have reigned supreme over the last four decades, most notably global neoliberal capitalism (and its underlying racial, patriarchal, imperial roots), and provide solutions to dismantle the unequal power relations that are rooted in systems of economic oppression. They are an attempt at showing more just and harmonious ways of living together with nature and organising our societies by centring care, sustainability of life, and meaning for individual communities and all forms of life on earth and the planet. Feminist Economic Realities manifest as established and ongoing economic systems that are constant and inherent through their continued existence, as communities have been organising socio-economically for decades or centuries in what are today considered 'alternative' ways, before being disrupted by neoliberal capitalist economic systems and colonisation.

This report is an effort to provide glimpses of the other side, the economic systems and ways of being that have always been present despite and in resistance to the dominant orthodoxies. It includes perspectives from consortium partners including FemLibrary in Armenia, The Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras (COPINH) in Honduras, Equality for Growth in Tanzania, Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment in the Philippines, LeyDem Platform in Guatemala, the Rural Women's Assembly (RWA) in Southern Africa, and Young Africa Intellectuals in Zimbabwe.

The stories told and experiences shared revolve around a series of collective values. These values center communal and collective processes of work. The women used words like redistribution, reciprocity, solidarity, communal living, saving and sharing, when describing the work that they do and the world building in which they are involved. Their imagination and creation aligns deeply with how the natural environment survives and thrives, in complete contrast to and resistance of the tenants of capitalism- extract, consume and accumulate. When the Rural Women's Assembly shares seeds, when Kalikasan fights extraction, when COPINH distributes organic fertiliser, fruits, vegetables and medicinal

herbs, when LeyDem platform members offer their office space, or breakfast or transportation, they are mimicking nature, which is by default, a rejection of capitalist processes. The work, for these women, is to redistribute resources to serve the people and to restructure everything in their desire for a better, kinder, nature way. They work to move resources, to circulate it and to disrupt its value.

The report paints a picture of a world in the eyes of the partners, a world of danger and creativity, cruelty and solidarity, greed and community. The stories they share demonstrate feminist economic realities in practice and the strategies used by their communities, networks and movements to resist neoliberal economic systems and create their own ways of being and systems of doing.



Part 1

Understanding Feminist Economic Realities





What are Feminist Economic Realities?

The Count Me In! consortium understands Feminist Economic Realities (FERs) as a term that encompasses models, approaches, imaginings, and actions that critique and directly challenge unjust economic orthodoxies, most notably global neoliberal capitalism (and its underlying racial, patriarchal, imperial roots), and provide solutions to dismantle the unequal power relations that are rooted in systems of economic oppression. They are an attempt at showing more just and harmonious ways of living together with nature and organising our societies by centring care, sustainability of life, and meaning for individual communities and all forms of life on earth and the planet.

Feminist Economic Realities are people and planet-centred, holistic, rights and justice-based, and understand the dimensions of care and pleasure, and are not driven by values placed only on economic growth. Feminist Economic Realities recognise and challenge both the myopia and injustices inherent within economic growthism that has caused significant destruction to planetary resources as well as human wellbeing, driven primarily by values of unfair and unequal capitalist accumulation. This model has led to the wellbeing of people and the environment being either ignored, compromised, or exploited under complex systems of oppression.

Examples of Feminist Economic Realities in action are myriad: they are often organised around common themes, including *valuing women's work, centring care work, and protecting*



the commons (both physical and digital) and traditional knowledge systems in defence of people and planet, all of which aim to challenge the exploitations inherent within the dominant economic neoliberal capitalist system. Within these areas of common purpose Feminist Economic Realities manifest in different forms. Examples of these include movements for land and resource justice, ecological feminist practices such as agroecological movements and their alignments with food, energy and seed sovereignty, feminist debt, tax and trade justice, labour rights that challenge workers oppressions towards dignified and decent work, and cooperativism in its varied manifestations. These examples are not exhaustive.

Feminist Economic Realities are positioned within as well as outside the dominant economic model. They can exist within the current orthodoxy as examples of ongoing and new resistance to the status quo, such as through labour rights movements and in collective economic action. They also exist outside of the system in various ways. These can manifest as imaginings of alternative economic propositions that directly challenge the very construct of the status quo e.g. demands for reparative and redistributive economics that upend endless and unequal capitalist accumulation. Feminist Economic Realities are more than just imaginings of alternatives, they also manifest as established and

ongoing economic systems that are constant and inherent through their continued existence, and we recognise that communities have also been organising socio-economically for decades or centuries in what are today considered ‘alternative’ ways, before being disrupted by neoliberal capitalist economic systems and colonisation.

Feminist Economic Realities are also often organised around a series of collective *values*. In the first instance they are *gender justice and feminist leadership* driven and led, and informed by the needs of women, their communities, and the natural environment. They are also often *Redistributive, reparative, generative, in solidarity and caring*, embedding within the wellbeing of people and planet. They are also often *disruptive to the dominant patriarchal economic order*, challenging and dismantling unequal power relations rooted in systems of oppression that perpetuate the exploitation and violence against people and planet. In almost all instances they are *collectivist and solidarity focused*, centering living interconnectedness within and between communities, movements, partnerships. They also work to reclaim and shift power towards *systemic and structural* change. Finally, they are *pluralist*, capturing a broad spectrum of approaches, movements, and lived realities that address/seek to address patriarchal power relations and structural exploitation.



Understanding Feminist Economic Realities in our current times

Over the last four decades, neoliberal capitalism has become an established economic orthodoxy¹ at a global level, facilitated by major institutions including the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and also the World Trade Organisation. Free market ideology has become dominant, and is often viewed as inevitable. Critically, other economic positions and visions are often not only marginalised, but often cast as “unworkable”, “utopian”, or “irrational”. This belies the reality that communities, societies, and nations - including many within countries categorised as developed- have successfully used different economic models to flourish throughout history.

Although many Feminist Economic Realities exist as already living examples of economic systems, methods, and approaches, they are increasingly in contention with the dominant neoliberal capitalist economic orthodoxy. For example, the recent COVID-19 pandemic and its fallout increased the indebtedness of global Southern countries, with a further expectation and normalisation of austerity policies and financialization. The normalisation of these policies have heightened inequality and delivered actions

¹ Economic orthodoxy refers to commonly accepted theories and policies regarding the organization and management of a country's economy. It encompasses a range of ideas, including the role of markets, government intervention, and economic growth strategies.

that negatively impact women and the most marginalised in society: cuts to public spending, regressive taxation, a curtailment of labour rights in favour of private sector needs, corporate capture and exploitation of Indigenous and commonly held resources, and ecological and climate breakdown as a result of increased and more ruthless extraction from and pollution of the earth. Feminist Economic Realities- as both living alternatives and as realities already in motion- are therefore needed more than ever these injustices further entrench themselves within the economic status quo.





Part 2

Hope in motion:
Feminist Economic
Realities as interwoven
stories of resisters,
dreamers, and doers



Prologue



**“It’s a journey,”
Alma said.**

She went on to explain something like this...

“When I think about what Feminist Economic Realities is, how to explain it to someone, the first thing that comes to mind is asking, ‘have you ever thought about what the world would look like if, for example, there was free housing for everyone or if there was free access to water?’” Stay there for a while, as long as it feels good because this part usually feels good.

“The next step in the journey is asking, why?” she explained. “Why is that not the reality? What is constraining us?” This part doesn’t feel so good. This is where you see dark, ugly, unkind, too true things.

From the if, to the why, we end up with, the but... “But there are communities doing and living this. There are those working to make the dream a reality,” she said. “Feminist Economic Realities land after coming through the journey.”

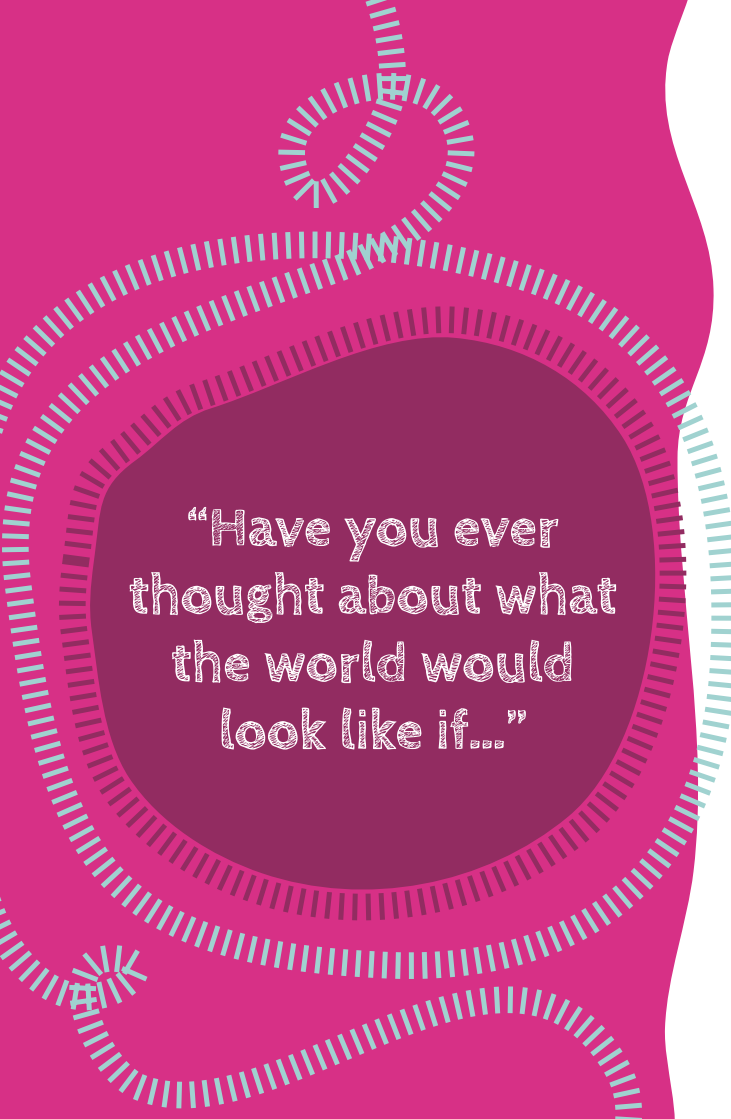
Alma Magaña works with Just Associates (JASS) which is a part of the Count Me In Consortium (CMI!) consisting of member organisations,

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- The sex worker-led Red Umbrella Fund (RUF) and
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are strategic partners of the consortium. One of the consortium’s priority areas is Feminist Economic Realities which is a term with deliberately expansive and flexible meanings.

For the purposes of this report, we will follow the journey Alma has laid out for us. In an effort to share experiences of creating different ways of living that align with nature, that are just and kind, communal and reciprocal, creative and caring, here it is, some words on a page, trying to make it plain.






“Have you ever
thought about what
the world would
look like if...”

It is about creativity and curiosity. That’s what the sisters of the CMI! Consortium told us. “I’m always so excited by Feminist Economic Realities because it’s an invitation to follow your curiosity,” Sanyu Awori of AWID said. Alma Magaña, as she explained the journey said, “It allows people to dream a little bit... what if we were able to access these rights...?”

So, imagine this...

You go to the hospital when you’re sick and you see a doctor or nurse first, not the cashier. You have a pleasant conversation with the doctor or nurse, who you know, who knows you and your family, “are the kids still driving you crazy? Has the little one stopped breastfeeding yet?” the doctor or nurse asks you before getting into what ails you. You leave with a follow-up appointment and some dietary recommendations. There is no cashier. Imagine that women and men who care for the sick are rewarded and not penalised. They are given value in society, in all that value means in society. Imagine that land is revered and not owned. Imagine that sex workers are protected under the law, that their work is considered work, that they also provide safe care and are safe providing care. Imagine that when you turn on the water faucet, you are worried only about wasting water and not about your water bill. There is no water bill. Imagine that when you go to the market,



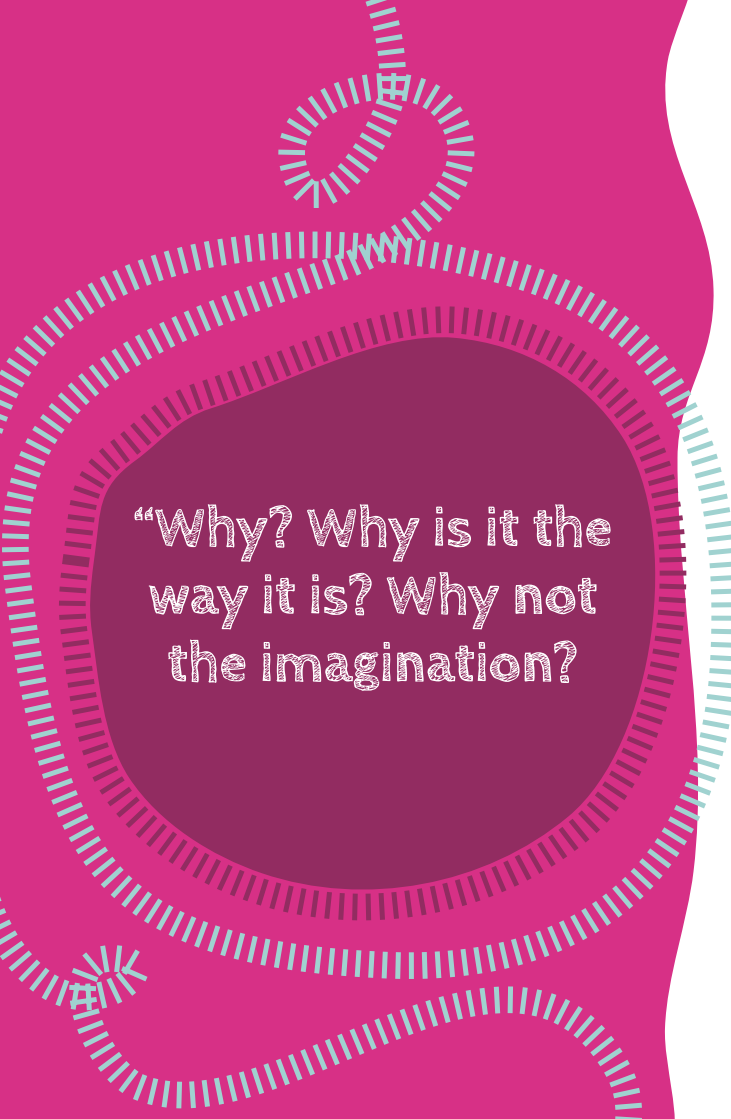
you purchase one kilo of collards and it is the same price as it was last month, as it was last year. Imagine that there is no inflation, no arbitrary rising of basic goods. Imagine that you have seeds that come from your grandmothers' seeds that you share with your neighbours who share with their neighbours, who share and share. Imagine that you do this not in secret, but out in the open. Imagine that there is no law against seed saving.



Imagine...



LAND FOR ALL



“Why? Why is it the way it is? Why not the imagination?”

It’s the whole thing. It’s the whole damn thing.

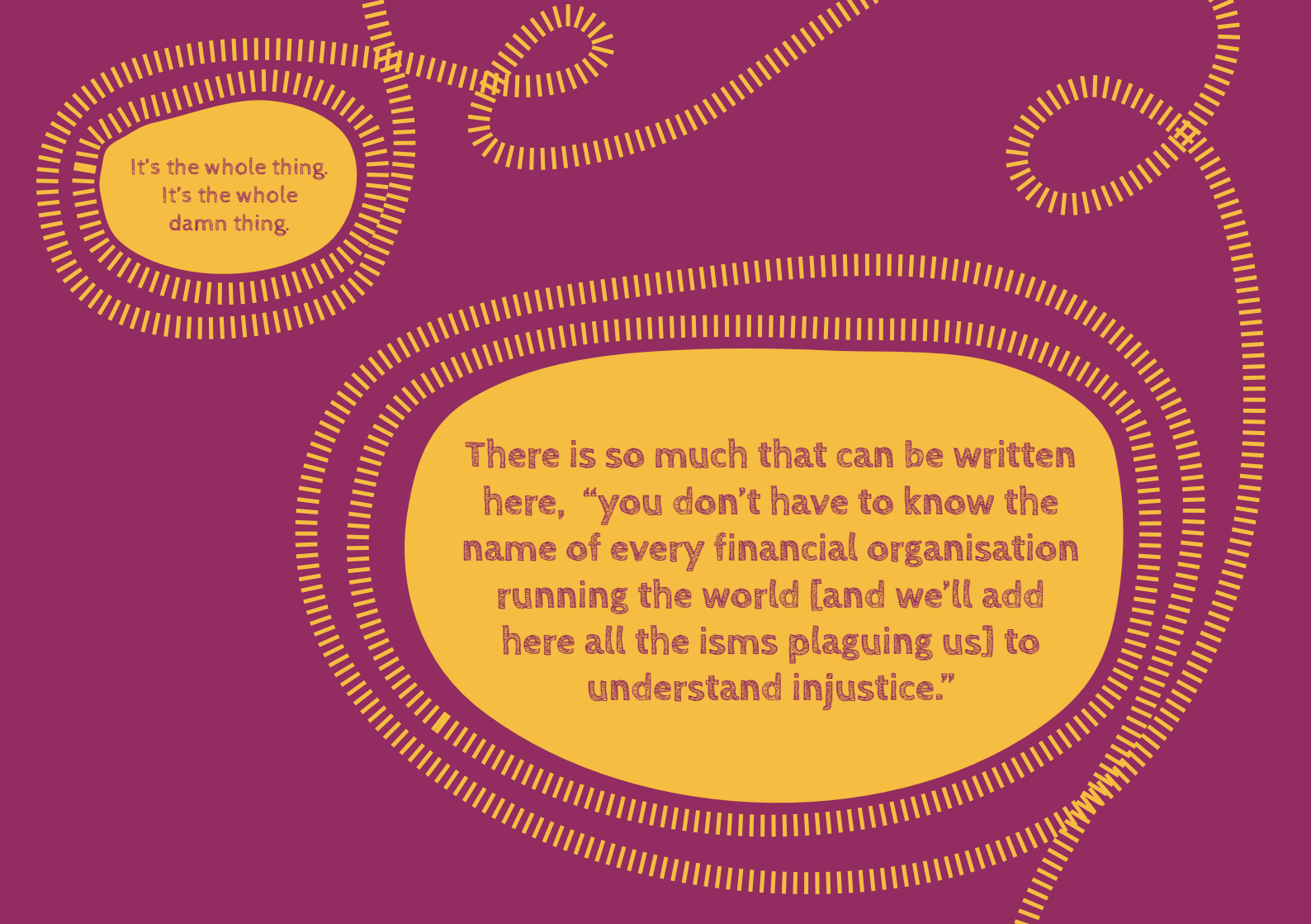
Why? “Poverty is made amongst abundance,” our sisters at Nawi wrote in their Macroeconomics 101 pocketbook. They asked, “Why are we hungry when our soil is fertile? Why are our schools dilapidated when we have building materials? Why are we denied entry into hospitals? Why are the sick dying when the healers are inside the building? Why?”

It’s the whole thing. It’s the whole damn thing.

It’s government run like business, it’s private business takeover, profit generated motivation. It’s the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organisation. It’s neocolonialism, neoliberal capitalism, imperialism, and patriarchy; that is its greed without limits, thievery, exploitation, the misalignment of values, the disconnect from nature, the desire for control, the desire for more and more and more, the allure of prosperity. It’s systemic cruelty.

It’s the whole thing. It’s the whole damn thing. It’s money. It’s money. It’s money. It’s money.

It’s that kid at school, always talking about what he has, always bragging, always empty, always mean like, always uncool. It’s that kid growing up to become the leader of a nation.



It's the whole thing.
It's the whole
damn thing.

There is so much that can be written here, “you don’t have to know the name of every financial organisation running the world [and we’ll add here all the isms plaguing us] to understand injustice.”



**“But, there are
communities doing
this thing.”**

“With Feminist Economic Realities, when you encounter it, you know it,” Sanyu said. She explained that you will know it because you will see different values existing that guide FERs including, care, freedom, empathy, and reciprocity. We spoke to the consortium and some of their partners and this is what we encountered.

On behalf of the collective

Almost all of the women we spoke to told us at some point in the conversation, something to the effect of, “we’re speaking on behalf of the collective, it’s not about us.” So, not only do we want to make note of that – that while we are quoting those who we spoke to, they are speaking to the work of very many women – we also want to begin the storytelling of their work with a description of the structure and process which is collective and communal in nature.

These conversations took place over Zoom or Google Meet or WhatsApp, so we were not in the space that the women work in. We couldn’t see in person what it looks like or how it works, but from what we heard, they work



the way collectives and networks work. **The Rural Women's Assembly (RWA)**, for example, is a self-organized network of rural women movements in Southern Africa where members pay a small membership fee at the local level. They have a fiscal agent for donations, do not have a fixed office and in order to plan the work, stay up to date, deal with issues that come up and allocate resources, they hold monthly meetings with country leaders over Zoom. "We want to remain a movement and we don't want to institutionalise," Mercia Andrews noted, explaining the Rural Women's Assembly's structure of 2 staff members only. She explained that the more staff members, the more resources go to salaries and not to the movements. "The issue is not about money, because we will never sustain this movement if it's about money." Mercia pointed to trade unions as a model for building a sustainable movement. The Rural Women's Assembly, which was created after a gathering of 250 Southern African rural women in Limpopo, South Africa in 2009, has 160,000 members and country chapters in Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Eswatini, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. As a network, they promote feminist agroecology; offer feminist schools, trainings and exchanges; organise events and fairs to showcase food sovereignty and

indigenous ways of food production; provide seed banks and seed sharing, promote waste management and compost efforts; advocate for policy change, and they deliver emergency response for their members and neighbours in times of need. For their activities, they cover costs (transportation, visa, etc) and they pay in kind with skills transfer.

The LeyDem Platform in Guatemala similarly is a volunteer-based alliance of more than 150 women's organisations that include thousands of women across movements (homemakers, labourers, rural and indigenous women, those living with HIV/AIDS, those with disabilities, etc) who came together in 2018 to advocate for the passing, enforcement and implementation of Initiative 5452, the Women's Economic Development Law, which calls for the government to allocate resources for women, recognise their contributions and ensure women have access to productive resources to sustain their economic well-being. LeyDem has a secretariat of six people and alternates each year with three of them giving more of their time to maintain energy and momentum. It works, Dalila Vásquez says, because it is an alliance, it relies on the time and resources available to its secretariat and its members, which varies at different times.



Liseth Pérez Arrecis adds that “everyone doing everything doesn’t work in practice”, so rotating leadership and responsibility, delegating specific people for specific tasks is how they sustain the work and advance their agenda. In practice, their work looks a little like the Rural Women’s Assembly, in that the little resources that they have, they use to support the mobilisation of women as much of the policy advocacy must happen in the capital, that means transportation to and from the capital.

These organisations rely on their people and on the community to get things done. Of **Kalikasan People’s Network for the Environment** in the Philippines, Jonila Castro explained that their action is collective and that their strength is based on the people involved in their campaigning. In combating environmentally destructive projects, reclamation and development projects, mega dams and mining projects, they engage in a dialectical process with the community. They do research in the community to understand how the projects are affecting the community and they systematise the data to create a campaign. They also build alliances with scientists, students, and environmental organisations.

Young Africa Intellectuals founded in 2022 in Zimbabwe also employs a similar strategy, working with both communities and academic institutions to better understand the health and unpaid care issues facing youth and women and produce various think pieces and knowledge products to contribute to the body of knowledge and provide evidence-based approaches and analysis to inform the work. Tapiwanashe Hadzizi of Young Africa Intellectuals summed it up well when he said, “It’s too dangerous to work alone, we need each other to be more effective and impactful.”

Sometimes the wider collective includes people who you may not expect. Sometimes you have to work with different people outside of the collective to get things done and that is just another type of relationship building. The LeyDem Platform similarly worked with Congress people and line ministries to help advocate for the passage of the Women’s Economic Development Law in Guatemala. These alliances resulted in the process passing the first and second readings, reaching the third reading in Congress. They used similar strategies to WO=MEN with the recognition that the people they were speaking to had very different visions and ideologies to theirs, but they used language and processes that were non-threatening to get to their goal.



Neighbours must go

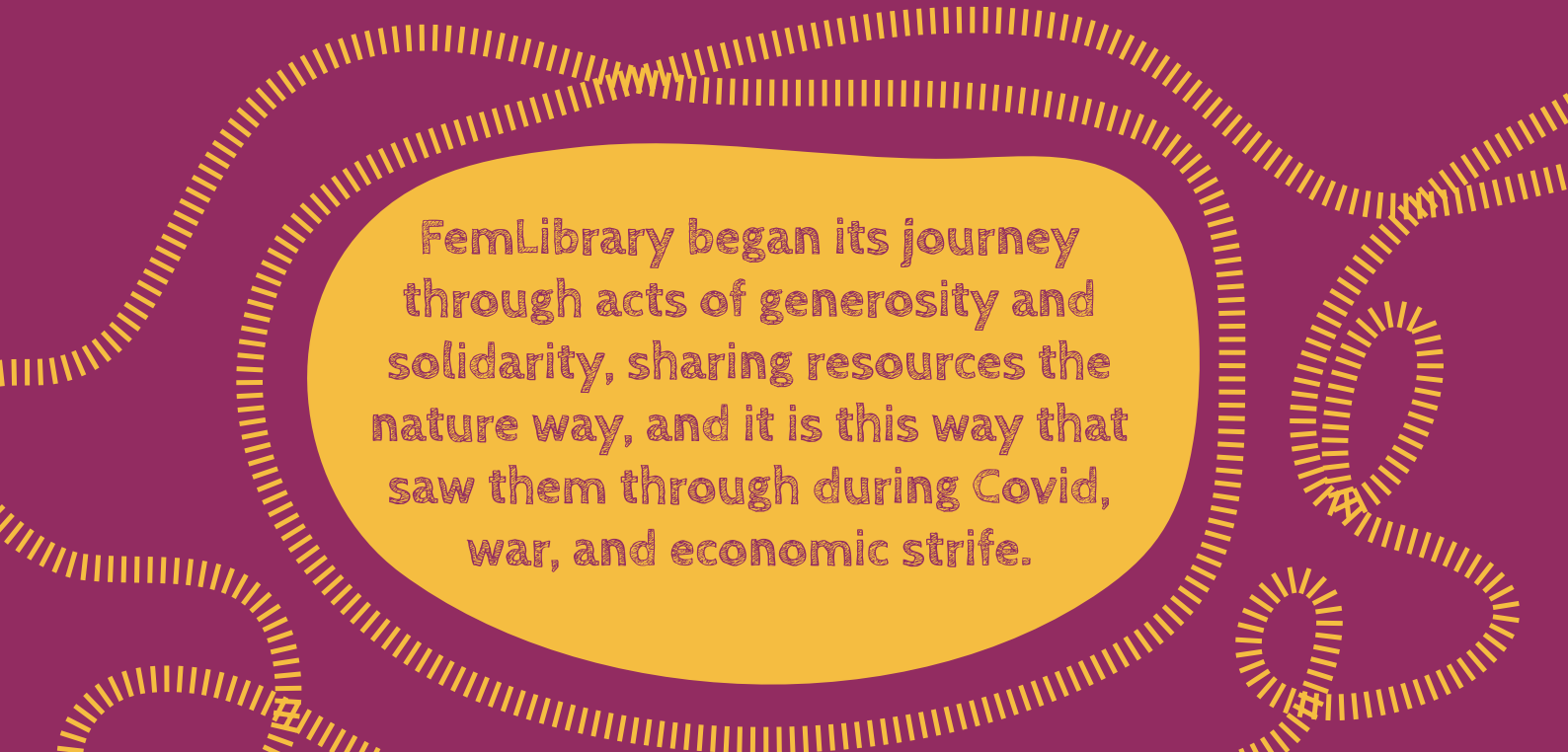
“We send sisters to do an assessment, and they give us an update and feedback on the situation, what’s needed, who’s affected. Then we have our own meeting to discuss what can be done, how we can give,” Mercia said explaining the process for urgent response. An action that they call, “Neighbours Must Go.” In March 2023, Cyclone Freddy hit Malawi and the Rural Women’s Assembly was on the scene. The question is, she said, “How do we give solidarity to our members in Malawi that are dealing with the climate crisis and cyclones, how can we recover their fields?” After getting information from their members in Malawi, they organised what they had, tapped into donor money and rented a trailer so that members from Zambia could go to their sisters and give them what they said they needed – pots, spoons, buckets, sanitary napkins, seeds.

This is an action that the Rural Women’s Assembly has done over and over again. The nature of their network is such that when something happens to one of them, their sisters are at their call; they hear what is needed, organise what they can, and they show up.

**“These are the small
things that we can do,”
Mercia said.**

When FemLibrary began in 2018, the idea was to open a space that houses queer feminist books, organizes exhibitions, workshops, book clubs and trainings and also translates books into Armenian, French, German, and Russian. When they began, they had an idea, but very little resources. They received donations of books

from friends, activists and people they know and through drop offs and by mail from strangers who heard of the initiative and wanted to contribute. The tables were made by friends with minimal resources.



FemLibrary began its journey through acts of generosity and solidarity, sharing resources the nature way, and it is this way that saw them through during Covid, war, and economic strife.




We are nature

So, you create the community, you build a network, you gather your sisters and then you look for a way to do this thing. Maybe you look for a model. “We are nature,” is what Mercia of the Rural Women’s Assembly said as she explained the process and the goals of the work. How about if nature is the model?

The Rural Women’s Assembly’s work for food sovereignty, seed sovereignty, land rights and climate justice, guided by the principles of feminist agroecology, is an active attempt at promoting a particular relationship to nature and to each other. Their slogan is “We are the guardians of land, life, seeds and love,” an attempt, Mercia said, “to articulate our relationships with nature.” These guardians promote indigenous foods and organic food production and seed saving and they challenge the social division of land and land holding patterns to ensure women’s access to land. “The environment is where we get our food... Being an environmental defender is more than being a nature lover, for us it means life.” In light of the climate crisis, life is on the

line. The organisations working on the environment stressed the urgency of the protection of nature, “protecting the environment is protecting our future,” Jonila of Kalikasan People’s Network for the Environment said.

The Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras (COPINH) is a broad-based social and political organisation working with Indigenous, rural and urban populations in Honduras. Under the umbrella of COPINH, is a community collective of nine women who have come together to produce organic fertilisers and grow their own fruits, vegetables and medicinal herbs in their community gardens, in an effort to build self-sufficient communities. COPINH supports them with seed banks, including heritage and ancestral seeds. They use the fruits and vegetables they grow for their families and sell the surplus locally, distributing what is not sold to community members. Their work has meant that community members no longer need to walk two hours to go to the markets to get their fruits and vegetables, and no longer need to walk two hours to get to the nearest health centre, as they use the medicinal herbs and natural remedies they grow to address illnesses. These women also work with children and have begun to make and feed the children nutritious meals in schools from



fresh ingredients grown in their community gardens, with the help of the organic fertilisers they themselves make. Some members are also beginning to learn about how to run community radios so they can use those platforms to mobilise and inform community members of extractive and exploitative land grabs and conscientise them on how to secure their ancestral and communal lands.

But it's not just that they work with and for nature, it's that they seem to be learning from nature, using it as a model. They use words like reciprocity, solidarity, communal living, saving and sharing, which all seem to be aligned with how the natural environment survives and thrives. Extract, consume and accumulate is what capitalism tells us is the natural human instinct. Trees who link together in a network of roots, interconnected, surviving only if their neighbour also survives, tell a different story. When the Rural Women's Assembly shares seeds, when Kalikasan fights extraction, when COPINH distributes organic fertiliser, fruits, vegetables and medicinal herbs, when LeyDem platform members offer their office space, or breakfast or transportation, they are mimicking nature, which is by default, a rejection of capitalist processes. It seems like a good strategy for any movement – asking the question, what would nature do?

Redistribution of resources, restructuring of everything

You have your people and your way of being and you do the work. And the work, for these women, is to redistribute resources to serve the people and to restructure everything in their desire for a better, kinder, nature way. They work to move resources, to circulate it and to disrupt its value. The way they move resources depends on how they focus their work.

Nathalie Margi with the Urgent Action Fund spoke clearly about the model of work, as a funder, being centred on the redistribution of resources. The question is, she said, “Who has money and why... Money is in the wrong hands, accumulated and hoarded.” She spoke to the complexities around being a US-based workplace whose staff livelihoods depend on a salary. “We are not a union,” she said. Still, she spoke to the changes being made in philanthropy and the funding of movements, including what so many organisations and collectives and movements have pushed for, unsolicited, unrestricted funding (including rapid response grants for emergencies), and the possibilities



created when a grant becomes a gift. “What are the ways that we want to be in a relationship with one another? What becomes possible when we say that you have nothing to prove... you do not need to report to us, if anything, we have something to prove to you?,” she asked.

While some in the funding space have come to the understanding that funding like gift giving has a different kind of impact than funding for report writing, these women seem to know intimately how to redistribute and how to give. The Rural Women’s Assembly shares seeds, provides free trainings and workshops, shows up for sisters in need with what they need; the community collective under COPINH are creating self-sufficient families and communities who create, use and share resources; and Leydem works to pass a law to push the government to allocate public resources for women’s economic wellbeing. These are just a few examples of how collectives are pushing for the redistribution of resources, and how they themselves are moving resources in response to their needs.

Another, albeit different, example of redistribution and restructuring is the work of the Usha Cooperative in India, which was founded when mainstream banks refused

services to sex workers in Sonagachi. As was explained to us by Sithulisile Moyo of the Red Umbrella Fund, sex workers self-organised to prioritise their economic concerns and set up their own financial institution. The Usha Cooperative is a cooperative bank of over 20,000 sex workers and has provided over USD 4.7M in loans to 7,231 sex workers in a span of one year. With a membership made up entirely of sex workers, the bank provides real ownership and influence over the cooperative’s governance and management, pioneering ways for individuals and communities on the margins to build economic power on their own terms.

One of the tools that these women have used to make change and restructure their societies is through policy advocacy. While recognising that policies alone may not create material change to people’s lives, policies are tools that can be used to protect and advance rights. Policy change, along with its implementation and enforcement is a preoccupation for the LeyDem Platform, which was created out of a desire to put in place legislation that would ensure the allocation of and access to resources for women in Guatemala. Delila asserts, “we’re all paying taxes- this money should come back to us and reinvest in our communities”. Members of the LeyDem Platform have



been working on the passage of the Women's Economic Development Law for the past six years and counting, working with champions within government including Congress and relevant line Ministries. Progress made on this draft law is due to a number of factors, one being the level of focus from the beginning. While members wanted to work on issues of violence and the environment, they decided to keep the focus on economic issues as a central entry point, which could then be used to tackle other related issues. The level of political clarity over the years, as well as their strategy to share the burden and responsibilities among various team members allowed them to sustain their energy and momentum.

As part of their work, the Rural Women's Assembly uses an already put-in-place resolution, the United Nations Declaration on The Rights of Peasants (UNDROP), as an advocacy tool. UNDROP was promoted by La Via Campesina - an international movement bringing together millions of peasants, landless workers, indigenous people, pastoralists, fishers, migrant farmworkers, small and medium- size farmers, rural women, and peasant youth from around the world to defend peasant agriculture for food sovereignty- and includes articles that speak to the rights of rural women

in relation to food sovereignty, the right to land, and the right to seeds. The Rural Women's Assembly published a booklet on UNDROP for local distribution and they host teach-ins and study circles and promote and popularise UNDROP in local and international settings. They work with local leaders from different provinces to introduce the declaration and to see if it is being adhered to. The hope is that if members, if rural women know their rights under this declaration (which has been ratified by South Africa), those rights will be fought for and respected. The Rural Women's Assembly also goes to international spaces, including the Universal Periodic Review of UNDROP in Geneva, to provide recommendations for its implementation.

Beyond formal law and policies, norms, attitudes, prejudices and practices can act as barriers to change. Equality for Growth is working to bring to the fore conversations around the necessity for childcare provision in marketplaces, along with an appreciation of who bears the burden of care, gender roles and expectations and their impact. Due to this, the burden of care has become a greater conversation in the public discourse in Tanzania – where it previously wasn't being discussed at all in public spaces or at the community

level, only at the policy level with a few organisations who have programs on childcare. Young Africa Intellectuals also works to create an enabling social environment that gives value to unpaid care, seeks to reduce and redistribute it, allowing the women and girls who bear the burden to

have more time for leisure and/or other activities of their choosing. It does this through open dialogues, listening to community experiences, employing participatory approaches to build conscientisation among family and community members and leaders.





Shifting language to meet your needs

One very important aspect of strategy is language and what we heard from the organisations and collectives who we spoke with is to use the language that works to get done what you need to get done. One way to do that is to understand what issues different parliamentarians for example care about, what words they want to hear. So, for people who are pro- business, private sector and small government, you can explain how a certain policy or project leads to efficiency and benefits for society. For those type of people, you would downplay the rights-based talk. You would not speak about equal rights for women.

Equality for Growth in Tanzania equally employs this tactic, as Jane explains “we use the language they understand (KPIs, or key performance indicators) to advance our agenda”.

Some of the women said that in much of their work, aside from the international meetings or donor proposals and reports, they are not using certain language because that could deter their work and, in some cases, could be dangerous or lead to a shutdown of their work. FemLibrary for example, while they consider themselves a queer feminist collective, do not introduce themselves as such to their neighbours. To their neighbours, they are a collective

of women academics and researchers creating a space for their work. They do this because if their neighbours hear queer and feminist, they would most likely be driven out. LeyDem also plays around with language in order to stay safe and keep the work going.



“Speaking about land is like cursing in public,” Dalila explained, “...we camouflage it by calling it ‘development’”.



Dangers

In a very early conversation with Sanyu, she said, “Risks are more pronounced the more local you get... because of the proximity to power.” That is certainly what we found when speaking with these women. There is the danger posed by corporations and government, who profit from the control of food systems, agricultural and extractive industries, to seed savers and environmental defenders; there is the danger from society when introducing ways of being outside of the mainstream; there is the danger that sex workers face from everybody; not to mention the potential violence women face from their husbands for engaging in work outside of the home, for organising and bringing attention to themselves. “Where were you?, Who were you with?” are common questions that women get from their husbands who are engaged in this work. These are common questions for women period.

For the women we spoke with, we heard of risks ranging from what FemLibrary experienced having to relocate four times in their six-year existence because of neighborhood pushback to Jonila who herself was abducted and imprisoned by the military while doing investigative work in Manila Bay where communities had been affected by reclamation projects. When we asked Sithulisile of the Red Umbrella Fund who we could contact for interviews, she responded, “[Sex workers in] China are punishable by death, in South Sudan, they are hunted by the military, in

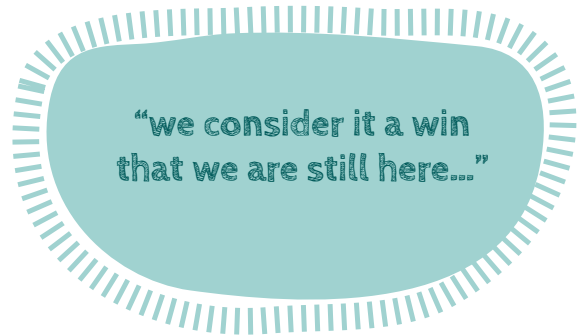


Latin America, there are many murder cases...”. As she said, “Sex work on its own is a rebellion against misogyny, non-feminist economics and a shift towards financial and bodily autonomy,” which makes sex workers a target for society at large.

All of these dangers have always been true. This time in particular though is one that is seeing the narrowing of spaces (both through explicit threats of violence and more subtle obstruction strategies) for people to gather, to engage, to organise, and to be there for one another. Making change is harder and harder in a time of aggression, war and threats of war, where billionaires and wannabe’s have the reins. And, of course there are very many ways of thwarting and killing change. Funding is decreasing for movements at the service of life and increasing for those profiting from the destruction of life, of the environment and of people’s ability to survive. The people we spoke to are working in this very unstable, unwelcoming and scary time.

The difficulties of the work outside of even the danger are the same difficulties as keeping anything going. It’s hard to keep things going, hard certainly to keep movements, collectives and networks energised and engaged.

Hard to maintain a politics, hard to compromise, hard to make room for varied points of views while keeping the goals and values clear. There are internal and external quarrels that could threaten to end a thing. As of now, these women are here. They seem clear about the dangers, clear about the fatigue related to this work and some have spoken also to the corrupting and conflicting role of money and funding in the work. They do what works for them for collective protection and to continue their work- to keep themselves accountable, safe and motivated. After speaking about the effects of Covid, the Second Nagorno-Karabakh War, and internal and external struggles, Arpi Balyan of FemLibrary said towards the end of our conversation,



**“we consider it a win
that we are still here...”**

Because there is too much heaviness in this world and because we already know the dangers and because we are actively trying to keep this light, here's a story of risk that we want to tell:

Mercia explained that while multinationals can send seeds anywhere in the world, it is illegal for the people to carry it across the border. But her sisters needed seeds across the border so,

**“Women are very conscious,
and we become very creative.
When I went to see our sisters
in Swaziland, I put seeds in
beads in a basket.”**

**She did not
get caught.**

A summary of the diversity of strategies employed include:

4

Keeping the staffing small and the networks expansive–



2 women core team
(Rural Women's Assembly)



9 women collective
(within COPINH)



6 women Secretariat despite a very large network (LeyDem Platform)



youth-led team of 8
(Young Africa Intellectuals)

1



The first reminds us of an African proverb, "Alone, you go fast, together you go far" – **working in collectives and building alliances** (with various communities of people and institutions – Indigenous, labourers, market women, farmers, men, young people, elderly, children, those with disabilities, unions, civil society and community-based organisations, various levels and arms of government)

2



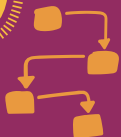
Conscious that these are all efforts that take time to bear fruits, team work, **rotating leadership and responsibilities** to maintain energy and momentum

3



Not institutionalising, loose structures – collectives, networks, movements with loose structures allowing for fluidity and flexibility to respond to emerging issues/causes, not bogged down by bureaucracies

5



While appreciating the interrelated and intersectional nature of issues, working on one issue at a time to stay focused and **go deep, rather than wide**

6



Dealing with limited resources creatively – through virtual assemblies, employing volunteers, piggybacking on resources of partner organisations such as for transport, office space, supplies, technical know-how and support

9



Working for **collective safety and sustainability creatively** on a case by case and flexible basis and by keeping informed, keeping communication lines open, shifting staffing and responsibilities, sometimes relocating and concealing, and maintaining relationships.

8



Working to enable a **conductive social environment** by going beyond policy to focus on shifting and transforming norms, attitudes, behaviours and practices

7



Working on policy change for a **favourable political environment**

10



Being flexible about the language used in order to make progress

11



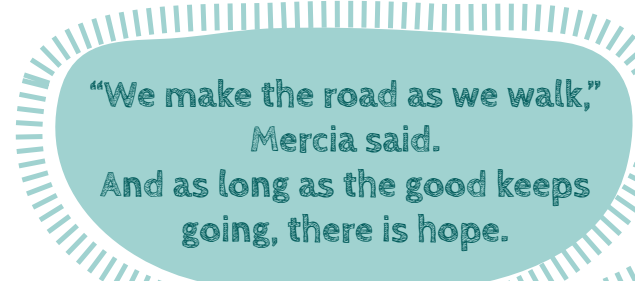
Building and **contributing to a body of knowledge** for greater documentation and better understanding of the issues and sharing of evidence-based practices



Back to the beginning

Initially when we asked the consortium members how this work made them feel, many responded with words like, “hopeful,” “excited,” and “inspired.” It was really nice to hear, but it was also strange. There is so much left to be desired of the world in its current state, capitalism seems to be winning and becoming more emboldened, hungrier, more brazen. But the sisters said hopeful, excited and inspired and we came to listen.

Hearing these stories, we see that it is everything at once. Hopelessness and excitement, frustration and jubilation; a world of danger and creativity, cruelty and solidarity, greed and community. It is the negative and positive, it is a wide net of strategy, small gestures that say, “We are with you, you are not alone,” small acts that say, “We will change the way we do this thing today,” and larger struggles that say, “We’re in this for the long haul.” Various approaches, diverse alliances, sometimes strange bedfellows.



**“We make the road as we walk,”
Mercia said.
And as long as the good keeps
going, there is hope.**

Part 3

Compendium







Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras (COPINH), Honduras

COPINH, or the Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras, was founded in March 1993 by human rights defender Berta Cáceres in defense of the indigenous Lenca people of Honduras, advocating for self-government, environmental protections and an end to violence inflicted on them. Members faced threats, harassment, abuse, and injuries and were even killed, including the founder Berta who was murdered in her home in 2016. COPINH has, over the past few decades, organised against water privatisation, hydroelectric dams, appropriation of land and other neoliberal economic policies and US foreign policy.

COPINH is a broad-based social and political organisation working with indigenous, peasant and urban populations in Honduras. Under the umbrella of COPINH, is a community collective of nine women who have come together to produce organic fertilisers and grow their own fruits, vegetables and medicinal herbs in their community gardens, in an effort to build self-sufficient communities. COPINH supports them with seed banks, including heritage and ancestral seeds. They use the fruits and vegetables they grow for their families and sell the surplus locally, distributing what is not sold to community members. Their work has meant that community members no longer need to walk two hours to go to the markets to get their fruits and vegetables, and no longer need to walk two hours to

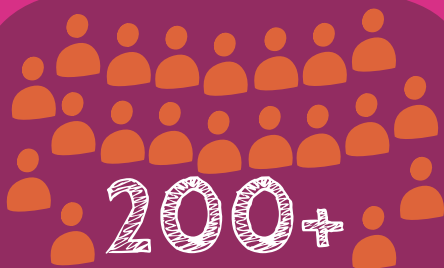
get to the nearest health centre, as they use the medicinal herbs and natural remedies they grow to address illnesses. These women have also begun to make and feed children nutritious meals in schools from fresh ingredients grown in their community gardens, with the help of their organic fertilisers. Some members are beginning to learn about how to run community radios so they can use those platforms to mobilise and inform community members of extractive and exploitative land grabs and provide them with information on how to secure their ancestral and communal lands.

The community collective of nine women is small and effective. Their main goal is self sufficiency which of course ensures a level of freedom and distance from the state. And, while issues of land are tied to the state (and their work also includes fighting for land rights), this small community of women is working in a way where the state is not involved in their daily lives. They grow their food and sell the surplus, they produce their own organic fertiliser, they create their medicine, they protect their seeds. They do face challenges from the state and many times, also challenges that come from their own homes. There have been times when husbands have forbidden their wives to

continue the work. The women from the collective try to be there for each other and try to create understanding so that husbands can see the benefit of their work for the community. They envision and are creating a community where they, their children and their land is taken care of.



Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras



200+

Lenca communities



Train their members



Run Community Radios for mobilization and education on land rights.



9 community collective of nine women



Opposing neoliberal economic policies and US foreign policy



Defends the indigenous Lenca people



Provide nutritious school meal programs for children



Grow Community Gardens with fruits, vegetables and medicinal herbs



provide seed banks including heritage and ancestral seeds

Activities



Produce Organic Fertilisers.



Equality for Growth, Tanzania

Equality for Growth is a rights-based organisation that was founded in 2008 in Tanzania to support women in the informal sector. Market women have been of particular focus for Equality for Growth, advocating for them to gain access to productive resources and to be able to organise amongst themselves for greater participation and leadership in market governance. Equality for Growth has put together guidelines to help combat and bring an end to gender-based violence, as well as pushed for the provision of care in the marketplace. Equality for Growth's work has resulted in the creation of 10,000 women champions influencing decisions at the market level.

One of the issues that Equality for Growth is working on is bringing to the fore conversations around the necessity for childcare provisions in marketplaces, along with an appreciation of who bears the burden of care, gender roles and expectations and their impact. Prior to their work, the conversation was designated to the policy level amongst the few organisations who have programs around childcare. Now, the burden of care has become a greater conversation in public discourse in Tanzania where larger communities, organisations, and local governments are discussing and debating childcare provisions.

The organisation is contending with the mismatched nature between guidelines and realities, especially with regards to the marketplace. The state has provided guidelines that outlaw children in the marketplace on account of security and safety issues, but they have not provided alternatives for the mothers around where to place their children when they are at work. The market women are then faced with penalties imposed on them because they cannot afford private childcare. The burden is then always with the working woman. Equality for Growth is working towards national provision of childcare services and that is not just confined to creating leaders to spread the word and lobby local governments, it also means working with architects and technocrats to design infrastructure that takes into account space for childcare facilities.

Equality for Growth is creating a large community of people who were not previously connected around informal sector work. While policy change is a major goal of the work, Equality for Growth sees awareness and a shift in attitude towards women in the informal sector, their needs and the responsibility of the state, as a vital step in making change. They have connected not only communities but the issues that women face in the informal sector, including lack of childcare, gender based violence and harassment, transportation issues, the lack of public services, and imbalanced financial burdens.

Equality for Growth envisions a world where the informal sector is given its rightful due in society. As the informal sector makes up much of the economy, Equality for Growth is suggesting that it is given its due in policy and budget considerations.. They envision a country where women in the informal sector are free to work, are given provisions for childcare, are safe and protected under the law and its enforcement. They envision a country of informal sector women leaders creating more leaders, creating more leaders. A country of champions.





FemLibrary, Armenia

FemLibrary started as an idea ten years ago and came to fruition in 2018. The idea was inspired by a love for books, culture, art, learning and sisterhood. It was also inspired by the desire to create a safe space for queer communities and bring together feminist and queer activism, art and academia.

FemLibrary is a non-institutionalised queer feminist imagination and collective that does what it set out to do, provides a space for books, culture, art and organizes exhibitions, workshops, and book clubs. In an effort to expand access and storytelling, FemLibrary also translates books into Armenian and carries books written in French, German and Russian.

When FemLibrary began, it had passion, but little resources. It relied on the kindness and generosity of friends and strangers who provided book donations. The furniture in the space was made by friends and the work to create and sustain the collective was done on a voluntary basis. Along with what they originally planned to create, they began organizing feminist camps, or what they call, FemCamp, for young girls, women and non binary people. At the camps, they share knowledge with participants around intersectional feminism, the history of grassroots feminism in Armenia and the region, and radical thought and practice.

The vision of FemLibrary is a new world reimagined and rebuilt by women and queer people who have been emancipated from heteronormative oppressions and prejudices and who have dismantled patriarchal structures. FemLibrary aims at uniting Armenian feminists across movements, initiatives, groups and organisations. It strives to fight against patriarchy, heteronormativity, neuronormativity, militarism, colonialism and other intersecting layers of oppression by producing intersectional feminist knowledge and fostering creative a(r)tivism.

In its young life, FemLibrary has had to contend with a devastating pandemic and a war which caused uncertainty, increased inflation and poverty and constraints around gathering in community.

Additionally, although FemLibrary is a collective that desires community inspired by love, creativity and acceptance, the world they are creating is one that some in the community find dangerous, unacceptable, and threatening to their ways and understandings of life. The economic and safety concerns because of the pandemic, the war and negative community responses, have created challenges to the collective, including the need to move locations four times in their six years of existence. Many initiatives like theirs fell under the pressure of the times. They consider it a win that they exist still and continue to work to survive and thrive.

The FemLibrary Collective in their interrogation and imagination of a freed up world, centre critiques of capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy and all other systems and ideologies that keep people down. In trying to understand the wars, the pandemic and the current state of their community, country, region and the world, they work to connect capitalism, poverty, colonialism and militarisation. It is a constant learning process and even within their own internal organisation systems they ask questions. As one of the members stated, “we are rethinking things every month. We know money is exploitative, but we are trying to balance the need for money and the critique of capitalism.”

The FemLibrary is an alive collective that continues to learn, ask questions and make changes as necessary. They centre community and the interrelatedness of systems, ideologies, and relationships. In their work, they are creating space to try to understand the whole ecosystem, how it works and how it could work if only the point was to create and not to destroy.



Kalikasan People's Network for the Environment, Philippines

Kalikasan, which is the Filipino term for “nature,” is a network of over forty NGOs, grassroots organisations and environmental advocates that organizes nationwide environmental campaigns against environmental destruction, corporate control, mining, mega dams and reclamation projects. Kalikasan was founded in 1997 and has worked under the belief that the struggle for the environment is the struggle for the people’s welfare and the struggle for life. The struggle for the environment is part of the bigger social struggle against exploitation and oppression and for democracy and liberation.

The objectives of Kalikasan include to investigate and inform; engage and work with; organize and mobilize; and foster and encourage. Their strategy revolves around educating the community in order to create collective effort and collective action. The alliance within the network includes scientists, students, environmental organisations, and engaged community members. Kalikasan describes their work as a dialectical process in which they do research in the communities, systematize the data and then conduct advocacy campaigns that include protests, lobbying and international solidarity work. The campaigns are carried and led by the community and are meant to put corporations and the government to task, as well as to keep foreign governments and investors in line by studying policy and investments and campaigning against anything that doesn’t serve the people.

The work that those in the Kalikasan network engage in is dangerous. There is a lot of money involved in the projects that they campaign against, the stakes for the state and the corporations are high. Because of this, they face intimidation and the threat of arrest, abduction, disappearance and forced and false confessions by the military. Environmental defenders are labeled and sometimes tried as terrorists. In 2023, two Kalikasan environmental activists were abducted by the military and interrogated for a week before being released in part because of public uproar and demands for their release. Because environmental justice work is dangerous work, Kalikasan also works on aiding environmental defenders under attack.

Living in an area where the effects of climate change are present, where threats to and changes with the Manila Bay are clear, Kalikasan is fighting for a different future. The current order is one that will inevitably lead to environmental destruction induced climate change. The promise is of an unlivable future, a future without life, no future at all. The network knows that the environment is where we get our food, our air, our water. As one of the members said, “being an environmental defender is more than being a nature lover, it is defending biodiversity and fighting for life.” The threats to the environment are coming at the hands of capitalist informed, globally funded, profit driven interests. Kalikasan envisions and fights for a world

where life is worth more than the profit of the few, where power lies in the community, where nature is reciprocated and where life is worth more than paper. They do this with the knowledge that although the world that they envision may take time, maybe longer than their own lifetime, that it is worth fighting for.





LeyDem Platform, Guatemala

The LeyDem platform, or the Platform for Economic Development Law, was started in 2018. It is a volunteer-based alliance of more than 150 women's organisations that include thousands of women across movements (homemakers, labourers, rural and indigenous women, those living with HIV/AIDS, those with disabilities, etc) with the singular purpose of advocating for the passing, enforcement and implementation of Initiative 5452, the Women's Economic Development Law. The proposed law is being discussed in Congress and has passed its second reading. The Platform is now working to ensure that the bill is passed in its third reading. The proposed law calls for the government to allocate resources for women, recognise their contributions and ensure they have access to productive resources to sustain their economic well-being.

LeyDem has a secretariat of six people and alternates each year with three of them giving more of their time to maintain energy and momentum. The alliance works with the time and resources of the secretariat and its members so that people are not always expected to be available at any given time. The idea is that life is busy and can be unpredictable, so the structure of the alliance and the tasks of the work are spread out accordingly. Different people are delegated specific tasks which align to their schedules and availability. Many of the women in the alliance are not experienced in advocacy or working in political spaces,

but they are doing so here because they have a common, definitive, tangible goal that they all believe in. The LeyDem platform is limited in its resources. They use the resources that they have for transportation (lobbying is done mainly in the capital city, while organizing is in the territories) and hosting press conferences and other meetings. They rely on the pooling together of resources from other organisations, some providing them office space, others transportation and carpooling. Sometimes the members themselves are paying for their own transportation in order to keep the work going. When they have done door to door campaigning, the women have been offered meals and a place to rest.

LeyDem is not only contending with a reluctant and bureaucratic state, they are facing deeply ingrained patriarchal notions and systems, or as their members call it, machismo. They understand that a passage of law won't automatically change culture, but they believe that it will contribute to a shift. Like many people in movements around the world, they understand that the road is long and the strategies are many. This is one goal that they are all working towards as a stepping stone, not as a miracle fix for the issues facing women in Guatemala.

The women of the LeyDem platform envision another world, another Guatemala where women are safe, protected and supported. Where women have access to land, resources and the means of production. Women are already, and have always, cared for and worked the land. They are already, and have always been, entrepreneurs. They already, and have always, paid taxes. The women of the LeyDem platform are working together, as a large and diverse community, to make sure what women have put in, they will get back. To ensure fair reciprocity between women and the state and that the rights of women, their access to the means of production, are written in the national budget and enforced in law.



The LeyDem Platform

Alliance of more than
150
women's organisations



those with disabilities



labourers



6 Secretariat of 6 people, alternates yearly (rotating leadership and responsibility)



3 of them giving more of their time



Includes thousands of women across movements



homemakers



rural and indigenous women



those living with HIV/AIDS





Rural Women's Assembly, Southern Africa

We are the
Guardians of
Land, Life, Seeds
and Love.

The Rural Women's Assembly (RWA) is a self-organised network of rural women movements, assemblies, and organisations in different countries in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region. The Rural Women's Assembly came out of a gathering in Limpopo, South Africa in 2009 organized by the Land Access Movement of South Africa (LAMOSA), Women on Farms Project (WfP) and the Trust for Community Outreach and Education (TCOE). During the gathering, over 250 women from various Southern African nations convened representing peasant producers, small-scale farmers, and activists working on land rights, food sovereignty, and reproductive rights. Women shared their struggles and experiences and desires for unity amongst the various movements and organisations represented. The gathering was a catalyst for a unified feminist grassroots movement of rural women and was the beginning of a collective that would create the RWA, the RWA charter and platform for action. Since its inception, chapters have grown in countries around Southern Africa, including, in Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe,

The initial slogan of the Rural Women's Assembly was "We are the Guardians of Land, Life, and Love," and was later revised to "We are the Guardians of Land, Life, Seeds and Love." The slogan encompasses the work and desire of

the Rural Women's Assembly to level up consciousness, to create solidarity and practice reciprocity. The network is in part trying to articulate the relationship between people and nature, to promote love of the land, to understand seeds as life and women as seeds, and to encourage love in order to challenge violence at all levels including gender based violence and the violence of land grab, corporate control of food systems, hunger, disenfranchisement and capitalist greed. The system guiding the work is feminist agroecology, which means for the network taking into account not only how to care for the land, but also understanding and challenging the social division of labour as well as land holding patterns that disenfranchise women.

The Rural Women's Assembly organises for food sovereignty, seed sovereignty, land rights and climate justice (and against corporate control of land and food systems) through teach-ins, workshops, research and documentation, and policy advocacy. They promote seed saving, seed sharing and seed banks, small scale farming, natural compost and the reintroduction of indigenous and nutritious foods. They advocate for securing the rights of rural women and girls, ensuring their access to and ownership of land. They engage in national, regional and global advocacy campaigns and have adopted the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants (UNDROP) as an advocacy and legal framework that can put authorities

to task and create assessment criteria. The Rural Women's Assembly also engages in urgent action providing resources and comfort for sisters in need through a program that they call, "Neighbors Must Go." They have open lines of communication between their members so that when a cyclone hits Malawi, for instance, women in the network convene, assess after hearing what is needed to help their sisters and raise money. Those closest in distance and able to move, go to the region hit, many times by road, and provide resources to their sisters in need.

The Rural Women's Assembly envisions and is creating a world very different from the designs of multinational food and pharmaceutical companies, far from the constrained, deficit focused, competition driven ideals of the global capitalist model. The network envisions a world aligned to feminist agroecology, biodiversity, food and seed sovereignty; a world where small-scale farming is the way, where women have access and ownership of land, where the food is good and the soil is healthy; a world free from violence against the land, the seed, and women. They work with abundance in mind and abide by the law of reciprocity. They learn from nature and mimic its ways. They envision this world and in their work, they make it anew.

Rural Women's Assembly



160,000

members



offer feminist schools trainings and exchanges



promote waste management and compost efforts;

2
staff members



Monthly Zoom meetings



Fiscal agent for donations



organise events and fairs to showcase food sovereignty and indigenous ways of food production;



advocate for policy change, and deliver emergency response for their members and neighbours in times of need



provide seed banks and seed sharing

Activities



feminist agroecology



Young Africa Intellectuals, Zimbabwe

Young Africa Intellectuals (YAL) is a youth-led group founded in 2022 consisting of a small staff of eight, a board, volunteers and interns, all under the age of 30. Young Africa Intellectuals works in particularly marginalised or neglected communities, including in rural areas, informal and squatter settlements and refugee camps. The group carries out awareness raising initiatives, education and training, research, innovation and advocacy campaigns. They work on a variety of issues including gender based violence, teen pregnancy, cyberbullying, HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, child abuse, women's rights, youth underemployment and unpaid care work. They believe in youth-led, evidence based solutions to society's challenges.

Young Africa Intellectual's works with both communities and academic institutions to better understand the issues facing youth and women and produce various think pieces and knowledge products to contribute to the body of knowledge and provide evidence-based approaches and analysis to inform the work. It does this through open dialogues, listening to community experiences, and employing participatory approaches to building knowledge bases amongst its community members and leaders. They use the evidence and experiences

gathered to compliment movement building, inform campaigns, and capacity training. A particular focus of the group's work in the recent years has been around unpaid care work, where they work to create an enabling social environment that gives value to unpaid care and seeks to reduce and redistribute it. Their work is aimed at reducing the burden on women so that they can have more time for leisure and other activities of their choosing.

Young Africa Intellectual believes deeply in evidence based, experience guided advocacy. Their strategy is based on the power of the people. They are particularly motivated by the power of the youth. The youth will inherit the future, and they have incentive to create it. The challenges they face include limited resources and community resistance (particularly a resistance to young people taking control). They are a young, energized and open organisation. They are facing their challenges with the hope of youth and a practicality that comes when working against the issues of the day. They envision a world where people are respected and protected, where the ills of society are tackled with evidence-based sensibility and where hope and practice meet. They envision a future that exists for young people like them.



A stylized illustration of a woman with dark hair, wearing a teal long-sleeved shirt and a dark skirt, with her arms raised in a gesture of protest or celebration. She is surrounded by abstract shapes in shades of pink, purple, and orange. A thick, dotted orange line winds through the composition, framing a central dark purple circle and a smaller orange circle in the top left. The background is white.

In Brief

COPINH, Honduras

COPINH, or the Council of Popular and Indigenous Organisations of Honduras, was founded in March 1993 by human rights defender Berta Cáceres in defence of the indigenous Lenca people of Honduras, advocating for self-government, environmental protections and an end to violence inflicted on them. Members, who were fighting for power, faced threats, harassment, abuse, and injuries and were even killed, including the founder Berta who was murdered in her home in 2016. COPINH has over the past few decades organised against water privatisation, hydroelectric dams, appropriation of land and other neoliberal economic policies and US foreign policy.



Equality for Growth, Tanzania

Equality for Growth is a rights-based organisation that was founded in 2008 in Tanzania to support women in the informal sector. Market women have been of particular focus for Equality for Growth, advocating for them to gain access to productive resources, access justice and be able to organise amongst themselves for greater participation and leadership in market governance. Equality for Growth has put together guidelines to help combat and bring an end to gender-based violence, as well as pushed for the provision of care in the marketplace. Equality for Growth's work has resulted in the creation of 10,000 women champions influencing decisions at the market level.

An illustration of a person with dark hair, wearing a light blue shirt and dark pants, sitting and reading a pink book. To their right is a stack of three books with pink, yellow, and pink covers. Above the person's head is a yellow megaphone with sound waves. The background features a large, abstract shape in shades of orange and red, with a purple circle containing the text 'FemLibrary, Armenia'. A decorative yellow dashed line with small square patterns winds around the scene.


FemLibrary, Armenia

FemLibrary started as an idea 10 years ago and came to fruition in 2018. FemLibrary is a queer feminist collective that provides a safe space of books, culture, art, learning and sisterhood. The aim is to unite Armenian feminists across movements, initiatives, groups and organisations. It strives to fight against patriarchy, heteronormativity, neuronormativity, militarism, colonialism and other intersecting layers of oppression by producing intersectional feminist knowledge and fostering creative a(r)tivism.



Kalikasan People's
Network for the
Environment,
Philippines

Kalikasan is a network of NGOs, grassroots organisations and environmental advocates that organizes nationwide environmental campaigns against environmental destruction, corporate control, mining and reclamation projects. Kalikasan is a Filipino term for “nature.” Kalikasan believes that the struggle for the environment is the struggle for the people’s welfare and the struggle for life.

An illustration featuring a woman with dark hair, wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt and dark pants. She is holding a yellow document with red horizontal lines and a blue gavel. To her left is a large, dark teal speech bubble with a white border, containing the text 'LeyDem Platform, Guatemala'. The background is white with a pink dotted line forming a circular path around the woman and the speech bubble.

LeyDem Platform, Guatemala

The LeyDem platform, or the Platform for Economic Development Law, was started in 2018. It brings together over 150 organisations at the national level to advocate for the passing, enforcement and implementation of Initiative 5452, the Women's Economic Development Law, a proposal that is being discussed in Congress and has already passed its second reading. The Platform is now working to ensure that the bill is passed in its third reading. The proposed law calls for the government to allocate resources for women, recognise their contributions and ensure women have access to productive resources to sustain their economic well-being.

An illustration of a woman with dark hair in a bun, wearing a pink top and a pink skirt, holding a green plant with blue leaves. The background is a large, abstract yellow shape. A decorative orange border with a dashed pattern surrounds the central text area. The text is in a white, sans-serif font.

Rural Women's Assembly, Southern Africa

Rural Women's Assembly is a network and movement that began in 2009 guided by the slogan, "We are the Guardians of Land, Life Seeds and Love." They organise for food sovereignty, seed sovereignty, land rights and climate justice (and against corporate control of land and food systems) through teach-ins, workshops, research and documentation, policy advocacy and urgent action providing resources and comfort for sisters in need – a program called, "Neighbors Must Go."



Young Africa Intellectuals, Zimbabwe

Young Africa Intellectuals (YAL) is a youth-led group founded in 2022 consisting of a small youthful staff of 8, a board of young people along with some volunteers and interns, all under the age of 30. They work in particularly marginalised or neglected communities, including rural areas, informal/squatter settlements and refugee camps in Zimbabwe. Young Africa Intellectuals carries out awareness-raising initiatives, education and training, research, innovation and advocacy.

