

An African society where gender equality is achieved and women and girls enjoy all their rights and live in dignity

"Don't let go yet! We have more work to do"

FEMNET has recently appointed Memory Kachambwa as the organization's Executive Director effective from June 2018. In this debut public address to the FEMNET's membership, partners and critical stakeholders, Memory answers question on her vision in this new and important role.



You have just taken over the mantle of leadership of the African Women's Development & Communication Network (FEMNET), what is your immediate message to all FEMNET members and partners regionally and globally?

To my mothers, my sisters, my daughters, my colleagues and partners who work with us at FEMNET; to all of Africa's women & girls, my very first plea is **"Don't let go of the struggle yet! We still have so much work to do!"**.

I am motivated by the fact that FEMNET in all its diversity and audacity to challenge patriarchal norms and practices across Africa still remains faithful to this goal 30 years after its formation. This is the resilience and loyalty to the struggle for gender equality & women's empowerment that motivates me even in this new role to keep the ball rolling. We have not yet achieved full women's empowerment yet. We still have so many challenges that we need to overcome so that Africa's women & girls are truly liberated from social, cultural and economic dis-enfranchisement. It is in fact time, to fight harder and press forward as we push for women's rights.





At this point in time, what must the continent focus on to deliver gender equality & women's empowerment in Africa?

What we acknowledge at the continental level at this time is the fact that we do have quiet some significant basis for the agitation of gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE) because of the numerous legal and policy frameworks in place. Africa stands at an opportune time to lead the way of full implementation and show its commitment to implementing all these critical frameworks meaningfully crafted for the sake of women and girls. Even though our flagship driving factor right now is the global focus on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, also known as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within which gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment is clearly pegged, we urge that Africa does not lose sight of the other critical frameworks such as the Maputo Protocol, the Beijing Platform for Action, the ICPD and the CEDAW. All these frameworks, alongside localized and domesticated processes on GEWE must always be our priority.



What is still the greatest impediment to achieving GEWE and what must women's rights organizations do to counter these challenges?

At FEMNET, we love to look at the challenges as indeed opportunities to explore as we push forward with our work. This is the approach we urge all our members to take because unless we are pro-active in addressing our challenges, we may never see the opportunities within them.

For the longest time, we have lamented the lack of political will to follow-up and follow-through on the implementation of the many instruments and frameworks that will guarantee meaningful and full realization of GEWE. We must see the opportunity in the recent revitalization of the African Union resolve to galvanize the continent towards transformation as an indicator for our governments to act more on their commitments. We must forever push for the substantive action based on the political will to change things for the better. Where we see that the participation of women & girls is not present, where we sense a push-back against women taking up leadership roles, where we see persistent with social and cultural patriarchal norms that are determined to push down women & girls, then we must SPEAK OUT! These are the challenges that have curtailed our work on GEWE in the past – they still are. We must be vigilant to this reality then mobilize, strategize and organize on how to confront and overcome them.



What message do you have for African governments, policy makers and diverse stakeholders on upholding instruments and frameworks on GEWE?

As an organization working at the policy formulation levels, the biggest draw-back to our efforts is that governments refrain from fully implementing the instruments and frameworks that they have signed on.

African governments have been fairly responsive in for instance signing on to CEDAW, the Maputo Protocol and embracing the ideals of the 17 goals within the SDGs. HOWEVER, the devil is in the detail of implementation. It is one thing to sign a document that makes you look good and in solidarity with the rest of the progressive but it is entirely a different level of commitment to actualize your endorsement to a policy or framework. We at FEMNET are categorical to our African leaders and we say; "**if you sign it, then implement it!**" It is time that our governments stopped playing games with the lives of African women and deliver on their promises. They must budget for what they have signed on for; they must allocate the necessary resources to achieving GEWE and yes, they must sustain this commitment until ALL women and girls in Africa are fully liberated.



As the new FEMNET leader, Africa's women & girls look up to you and the FEMNET membership to steer the ship of GEWE in the continent, what is your clarion call on this mandate?

I say, "**Stay on! Don't let go of the struggle! Let's hold tighter together, lets stand closer together, the work is not yet done**". I stand on the authentic reality of the strength of Africa's women & girls informed by their diversity and different realities but united by the fact that as African women, they are much stronger when they hold a collective voice to breaking barriers that stand on the way of full realization of GEWE. It is my motivation as the Executive Director of FEMNET to see to it that we maintain this status quo of solidarity and movement-building that we have held in the last 30 years. We shall forge ahead and push for our solidarity at the basis of our struggles – **We welcome you to stand with us; because we stand with you!**

Memory can be reached on email m.kachambwa@femnet.or.ke and Twitter @Mokachambwa

Meet FEMNET'S new Executive Director, Memory Kachambwa

Memory is an intersectional feminist, a women's rights activist with over 18 years of experience working on issues of gender and development, women's empowerment and human rights at national, regional (Africa) and international levels.



As a dynamic pan-African feminist, thought-leader and strategist, Memory is passionate about making a difference in the lives of women and girls using diverse approaches grounded in social justice, feminism and gender equality analysis and practice. She holds a Masters of Philosophy in Management, Integrated Water Resources with a focus on women in leadership and is currently pursuing a second Masters degree in Peace, Human Rights, Gender and Development.

Memory joined FEMNET in May 2016 as Head of Programmes, leading and strategically coordinating the programmatic conceptualization, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of FEMNET's advocacy, communication and capacity building approaches. Prior to joining FEMNET, Memory worked as a Gender and Economic Empowerment specialist at International Youth Foundation. She also served as the Executive Director of The Women's Trust in Zimbabwe, following an accomplished 8 years in the UN in various capacities at UN Women, UNIFEM and UNFPA at both regional and national level. Memory values deep relations that are empowering and timeless.

We DEMAND for Holistic #JusticeForNoura

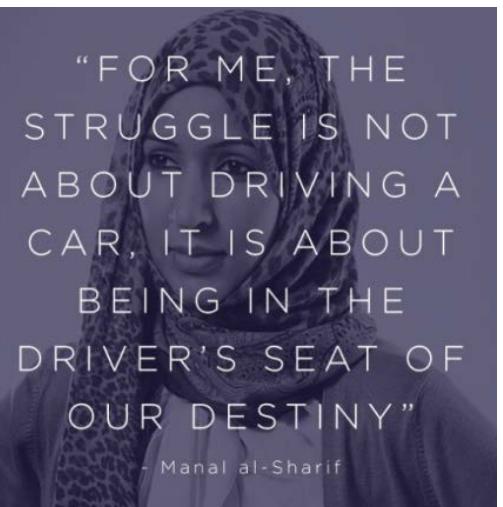
Following weeks of sparked global outrage and several petitions calling for [#JusticeForNoura](#), a Court in Sudan overturned the death sentence for 19-year-old Noura Hussein, who killed her husband after he raped her. However, the courts' sentencing of Noura to five years in prison and order to pay a fine of 337,500 Sudanese pounds (around \$18,700) in "blood money" to the man's family is unacceptable!



[Sign on this Petition](#) to continue calling for holistic [#JusticeForNoura](#) and the start of legal reviews and reforms of Sudanese laws around child marriage, forced marriage, marital rape and women's rights. In the dispensation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the AU Agenda 2063, let's hold our leaders accountable to ensuring Noura Hussein is the last person to go through such inhumane horrific. [Click here for regular updates from Equality Now.](#)

Saudi Arabian Women's Struggle for Equality

24th June 2018 was a [historic moment for hundreds of Saudi Arabian women](#) who celebrated taking on the wheel for the first time in decades as the government finally overturned the world's only ban on female motorists. Years of spirited advocacy campaigns by Saudi human rights activists led to several women being arrested and jailed for defying the prohibition and taking the wheel. So perhaps this is the beginning of a new era that will see more and more women not only exercise their right to social mobility but also collectively move towards dismantling the male guardianship system and the full realization and enjoyment of their rights as equals. "[#IAmMyOwnGuardian](#)"



#FundHerAfrica: East Africa Strategy Meeting

From 22nd – 23rd May 2018, FEMNET convened 30 women's rights advocates, activists, feminists, thought-leaders and development partners from across the continent to deliberate on the funding landscape for women's rights work and how to match development partner priorities to women's rights' concrete needs.

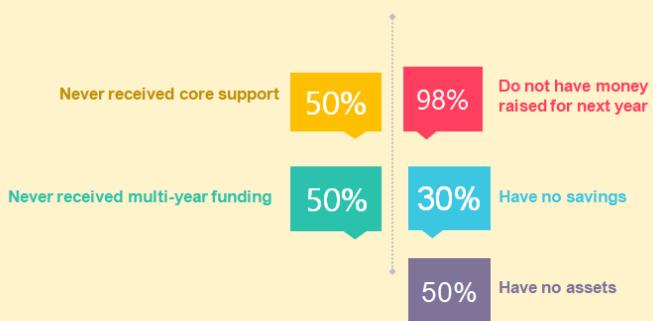
Check out the [Commuqué](#) and a

[Press Release](#) released immediately after the meeting outlining critical areas of concern and proposed strategies that can address the underlying issues dwindling resourcing for women's rights organizations.

For more information reach out to Crystal Simeoni, Head of Advocacy, FEMNET (advocacy@femnet.or.ke).

Sustainability of feminist and women's rights organizations

Source: AWID/CMI



The REAL game changer? Canada's new Equality Funding Initiative

On 25th May, we were so excited to read and follow conversations by [The MATCH International Women's Fund](#) on the new Canada-led innovative, multi-million-dollar and multi-sector funding mechanism to directly support women's rights organizations globally. That's right! An equality funding initiative that will strategically invest in the deeply under-resourced global women's movements and organizations driving the cultural, economic and political changes required to make gender equality a reality. Canada has become a global champion of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. In launching the Feminist International Assistance Policy in 2017, Canada committed to expand innovative partnerships that have the greatest potential to close

"Canada's Feminist International Assistance Policy recognizes the importance and impact of **supporting women's rights and movements**. I am excited to think of the collective impact we can have together with partners, investors, philanthropists and the private sector to help address the funding gap faced by women's rights defenders and gender-equality advocates in developing countries."

We can achieve so much more together as we strive to achieve the eradication of poverty through the empowerment of women and girls."

"Let's work together to ensure a lasting LEGACY for women and girls." - Marie-Claude Bibeau, Minister of International

gender gaps and eliminate barriers to gender equality in order to effectively reduce poverty and support women's rights movements and organizations in developing countries. The initiative will draw on the strengths of the Government of Canada, the philanthropic community, the private sector and civil society to mobilize unprecedented levels of resources in support of this goal. Canada is willing to contribute up to \$300 million to such a partnership. [Read More](#)

FEMNET @ the 31st AU Summit

Ahead of the 31st AU Summit in Nouakchott, Mauritania in June 2018, FEMNET participated at the Pre-Summit Consultative Meeting on Gender Mainstreaming in the AU, hosted under the auspices of the 32nd Gender Is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC). Represented by 15 members from 8 countries across the 5 African sub-regions, FEMNET hosted a panel on gender, conflict, illicit financial flows and the extractive industry. Anchored on experiences from Madagascar, DRC and central African region, the panel highlighted the important linkages of conflict and fragility with violence against women, access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, financing for health including SRHR and how this affects implementation of policies on gender equality and women's empowerment. [Click here for more information](#)



For more information reach out to Catherine Nyambura, Advocacy Officer, FEMNET (prog-associate@femnet.or.ke)



FEMNET's Global Advocacy

In April, the **51st United Nations Commission on Population and Development** held under the *theme "Sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration"* emphasized the need to uphold the human rights of marginalized and vulnerable groups, including poor people, slum dwellers, youth and older persons, as well as refugees and other migrants within the discourse of urbanization and migration trends. [Click here for more information](#)

Also in April 2018, the **Stockholm Forum on Gender Equality** gathered over 700 participants representing civil society, governments, private sector and academia from over 100 countries, who together reflected on women's and girls' diverse realities, efforts and journeys towards achieving a gender equal world in all sectors. The Forum concluded with a reminder by Margot Wallstrom, Sweden's Foreign Minister that history will belong to those who work to make the world more equal *"I am confident that gender equality is one of these defining issues – the unfinished business of our times – one of those fateful questions upon which future generations will judge our performance as leaders, activist and citizens."* The [next Forum will be held in April 2019](#) in Tunisia [Click here for more information](#)

In June, the 2nd *Girls Not Brides Global Meeting on ending child marriage*, was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and resulted in calls by civil society for renewed action to end child marriage by 2030. [Click here for more information](#)



FEMNET's former Executive Director, Dinah Musindarwezo was nominated as among the **100 Most Influential People in Gender Policy in 2018** [Click here to check out and send back your feedback to Apolitical](#)

Community Dialogues in Kericho & Bomet to end sexual harassment and gender-based violence

In May 2018, FEMNET in partnership with UN Women in Kenya convened 30 male smallholder farmers, entrepreneurs, teachers, village elders, youth and other community leaders in Kericho and Bomet counties in Kenya to dialogue and name persistent social norms, attitudes and values that normalize and justify sexual harassment and gender-based violence towards women and children – both in private and public spaces. The Dialogues analyzed the roles men of all ages should play in prevention and response initiatives towards speaking out against and eliminating sexual harassment and gender-based violence within these prime tea zone of Kericho and Bomet counties. Through the *Men to Men* Regional Programme, FEMNET continues to engage men and boys in the advancement of gender and social justice.



For more information reach out to Kennedy Otina, Programme Associate, FEMNET (mentomen@femnet.or.ke)

FEMNET's Resource Centre moved

FEMNET's Resource Centre has over the years housed a rich repository of gender and women's rights related resources on international laws, policies and practice that have been useful reference for university students, lecturers and researchers. In May/June, as part of FEMNET's strategy of enhancing optimal usage of these diverse resources and bringing information closest to its users, FEMNET donated its collection to academic libraries and community resource centres. The select collection will be housed at the University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Egerton University – which offer gender related courses - and community resource centres including Rural Community Development Agency (RCDA) in Meru and in Kisumu.



For more information reach out to Rachel Kagoiya, FEMNET's Information Manager (library@femnet.or.ke).

Young FEMNET Corner!

Boudicca, Winnie Mandela and Queen Nzinga: The erasure and under mentioning of women from history

On the 2nd of April this year, the world and more so the people of South Africa were saddened by the news of Winnie Madikizela Mandela's death. As the messages of condolence came in and news outlets shared the breaking story, it became apparent that the world only knew Winnie as Nelson Mandela's Wife ... and while this is a fact about her it most definitely is not her whole story. Winnie Mandela dedicated her life to the struggle for freedom and in so doing she charted a way not only for her country people but for African women and women all over the world.

Winnie Mandela (Born *Nomzamo Winifred Zanyiwe Madikizela*) was a strategist, a leader, a visionary, a fierce feminist whose work and tenacity is something we can all admire. By not sharing her story as widely as we did the men of the struggle, the world not only does a disservice to Winnie Mandela but to history and the girls of the world who desperately need to see one of their own written into the stories of our people. Long before meeting Nelson Mandela, Winnie was an activist and a young woman who truly had her community at heart. She later went on to organize protests, was imprisoned while pregnant, in the name of the struggle and underwent both emotional and physical brutalization for decades under apartheid rule. Yet her spirit remained unbroken.

The stories of women's contribution to humanity is often under mentioned or not at all. The stories of great female warriors like **Boudicca** who led the British tribes in battle against Roman rule and under her command they engaged in the largest battle on British soil. **Boudicca** did not submit even after physical torture and the violation of her daughters by the Romans. She was a ferocious, powerful and charismatic war general whose story, like that of many women gets footnoted while lesser triumphs hoard the headlines of history.



WRITE

HER



IN



Trailblazers like **Margaret Chase Smith**, the first woman to ever announce a serious bid for the presidency of the United States and a vicious supporter of integrating women on permanent status into the US military also receive only mention as an afterthought. Margaret Chase Smith faced great opposition for her commitment to follow her conscience and not party (Republican) politics and rings as a fine example of what integrity in leadership should look like.

Women heading the military and engaging in diplomacy is not a western ideal or an erasure of cultural roles as we have so often been made to believe. **Queen Nzinga** of the Ndongo and Matamba kingdoms (Present day Angola) showed women could take up weapons and go into war in the 17th Century and remains one of the major figures of resistance against Portuguese rule. Known for her political, diplomatic acumen and brilliant military tactics, **Queen Nzinga Mbande** was one of the fiercest feminists that ever lived.

To a great extent society and the writers of history do not know how to tell the story of women who refuses to be demure and quiet. The warrior women, the defiant ones are often labeled mad in addition to being ridiculed and having their personal lives put out for public consumption and judgment. It is only after the death of Kenya's own **Wangari Maathai** that she received but a fraction of the respect owed to her. This woman whose passion for social justice and the environment saw her brutalized and facing the hard fist of government was often labeled as mad and an enemy of the state. In the face of injustice women like **Wangari** refuse to stay calm and it is their storm, it is our storm that liberates the masses.

But this is not an exhaustive list of the great women of history. Women in science have been greatly under mentioned and it was common practice in decades past that, in seeking recognition for their work and not themselves, women would submit papers and plays in the name of close male colleagues or under a male pseudonym. With this in mind it is more than plausible that the very foundational works and documents of literature, art and science originated from brilliant female minds. The onus now is on us as a society to accurately state the massive contributions of women to the cause of humanity. It is for us to write about these women, to document their successes and celebrate them while they are still alive. Sadly, so many stories have gone untold and so many female role models have gone unnamed in centuries passed... but in the worlds of Maya Angelou, "**when you know better, you do better.**"

The feminist movement celebrates her **sheroes**. We refuse to be quiet, we refuse to be erased and we commit to **#WriteHerIn** history for all our great sisters. Amandla!

Written by Kalevera Imungu is a feminist and passionate advocate for women's rights, currently a consultant with FEMNET in the Advocacy Programme.

Call for Action

Voice's Call for Policy Action: Uganda Influencing Grant

Deadline: 10th August 2018

Are you a locally registered Ugandan organization that wants to advocate for effective implementation of laws, formulation of new policies? Are you passionate about building a network of like-minded organizations to amplify the voices of marginalized and discriminated groups? [Click here to Read More and Apply](#)

Sign-On Petition: End sexual harassment and assault at the United Nations

This petition launched by the U.N. Feminist Network calls for new policies and procedures that engage victims and witnesses, specialized expertise and an adequate time frame and resource for the UN Task Force on Sexual Harassment to conduct its work of tackling the problem of sexual harassment, sexual assault and abuse of power in multilateral organizations. [Click here to Sign-On to the Petition](#)

AWDF: Calls for Proposals

The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) invests in women's rights organizations as leaders in advancing women's rights, and as a core force for demanding accountability and respect, protection and fulfilment of rights for all women from duty bearers at all levels.

- **16 Days Against Gender Based Violence 2018** [>> click here](#)
- **Leading from the South** [>> click here](#)
- **World Aids Day 2018** [>> click here](#)

E-Resources



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