

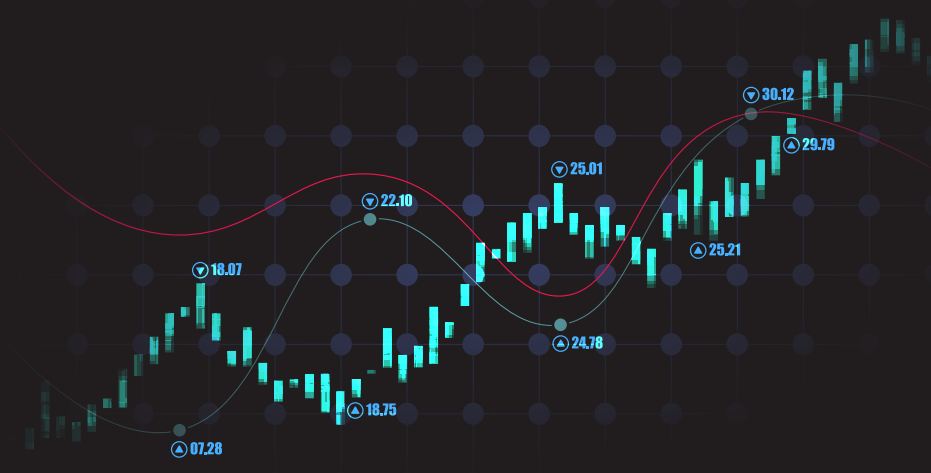


AFRICAN FEMINIST MACROECONOMIC ACADEMY
The Audacity to Disrupt

**PROMOTING A FEMINIST APPROACH
TO DELIVERY AND FINANCING OF
PUBLIC SERVICES IN AFRICA**

**FEMNET
AFMA 2021 REPORT**

NOVEMBER 15-19, DAKAR, SENEGAL





AFRICAN FEMINIST MACROECONOMIC ACADEMY

The Audacity to Disrupt



The African Women's Development and Communication Network

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Co-funded by
The European Union



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INTRODUCTION

From November 15-19, Dakar hosted AFMA 2021, the first African Feminist Macroeconomic Academy (AFMA) to be held in a francophone country, as well as the first physical academy to be held since the onset of COVID, following a virtual convening in 2020. AFMA 2021 marks the fifth academy since inception in 2017. Memory Kachambwa and Ebrima Sall, on behalf of FEMNET and Trust Africa, set the context for the Academy.



Considering that a deep understanding of issues is required to counter dominant discourses and challenge what is often presented as a 'no-alternative' default, AFMA facilitates a space for women to gather and reflect, challenge orthodoxy in economics, deepen their thinking and explore alternatives.

COVID has exposed the extent to which these orthodoxies must be challenged, considering they have not and will not serve us. We've witnessed a reduction in resources, a reprioritization based on interests and power and an exacerbation of existing inequalities – particularly for the most marginalized members of our societies.

AFMA allows us to use a pan-African, feminist lens, using feminist tools to break down macroeconomics, the political economy, examining power and how it affects us in all our diversities. This edition of the Academy focuses on public service delivery and financing. The importance of public service has become even more apparent with the pandemic, the disproportionate burden of which has been borne by women and girls, and among them, the poorest, most marginalized members. While our governments should have been responsible, the lack of a care economy has meant that women and girls have been subsidizing governments and picking up the slack.



"I'm just coming from COP26 – I am exhausted – nothing is moving – we have a global climate crisis on our hands, we're coming from COVID, those who've crafted a neoliberal economy are holding on to it – and making sure status quo prevails. We can disrupt this by using our collective power. We hope this will be a brave space – that it spurs you to take action. AFMA is not another workshop – we are building a feminist African army that will shake things to the core."

– Memory Kachambwa



Participants were introduced to each other by sharing the animal they would be if they had a choice. In the room were eagles, elephants, teddy bears, rabbits, horses, dogs, warthogs, caterpillars, rabbits, cats, ants, mosquitoes, leopard, dove, dinosaurs, squirrels, cows, zebras, elands, lions, hummingbirds, penguins and other birds.

Participants chose these animals for various attributes including looking out for others, getting a bird's eye view of the situation at hand, the transformation from an insect crawling in the earth to a beautiful butterfly, the uniqueness of the animal, an ability to plan ahead, their industrious nature, ability to adapt to their circumstances, their faithful, caring and loyal nature, their curiosity, self-awareness, intelligence and their exploration of new horizons, amongst other reasons. These animals hailed from twenty-two countries across the five regions of the continent, from Tunisia to Sierra Leone to Cameroon to Angola to South Sudan and Zimbabwe and assembled in Senegal.

DAY 1

Analyzing Major Issues for Macroeconomic Policy

Facilitated by Aurea Mouzinho & Dr Anta Ngom



Dr Anta Ngom took participants through classic definitions and dimensions of the economy, including microeconomics, macroeconomics and mesoeconomics. She also went through the main components of macroeconomic policy. While microeconomics looks at the parts that make up an economy, such as the individual, firms and industries, macroeconomics looks at the functioning of the economy as a whole. Mesoeconomics is not reflected in orthodox economics and puts emphasis on social aspects – including interactions, relationships, and engagements.

She spoke of classical economics as looking at people's behavior and choices depending on available resources, the use of those resources, quantities and prices of products that a producer puts on the market, and the consumer's choices depending on their means and their possibilities to buy a product. Various classical perspectives exist, including that of Smith who views economics as the science of wealth, Raymond who sees economics as the science of administering scarce resources as well as the behavior of individuals when resources are scarce, Samuelson who focuses on the purchasing power of individuals, and their behavior depending on that purchasing power as well as the process of value from production to distribution, amongst others.



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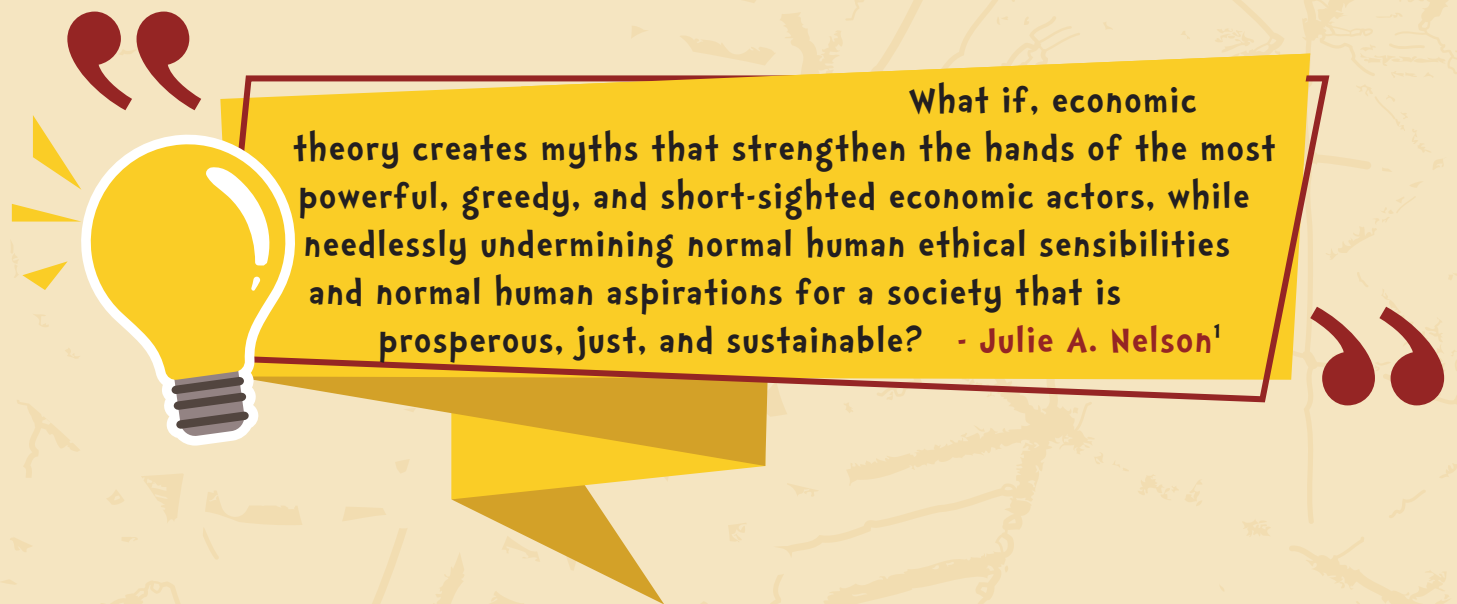


While economics is a science of production, prices and consumption, economic policy refers to attempts by the State to solve problems that emerge and create the means and mechanisms to allow low-income families to survive.

Aurea stood up as she facilitated the session, sharing "I have a problem sitting down because knowledge is embodied – it concerns not only our intellect, but also our bodies – where we go, where we sit with our children".

She began her session by asking participants to write something nice to someone in the room and give them the written notes. Participants shared love and care with their fellow participants in the room. The energy of the room lifted as notes with kind words were read.

Participants were then asked to write down three words that came to mind when thinking of economics.



Economics is characterized by a framework of thought, with neoclassical economists such as Adam Smith and Ricardo defining what they think the discipline should focus on, i.e., issues of scarcity and choice. White men had very specific ideas of gender and class, i.e., women belong to the household, that work is unproductive, and if women do work, they are not deserving of the same pay as men. It was in the 1950s and 1960s, following the war in the West, that women began to leave their homes, as there was a shift from production in the house to production in the factory, and thus a shift to paid work. It was at this time that the question of inequality was raised. Mainstream economists explained this by saying the "incentive for women to go to work was greater than the incentive to stay at home". Feminist activist Betty Friedan refuted this, stating that there were strong constraints in the home – and that women are sometimes in a position of subservience – and therefore, going to work is a temporary relief. Other economists would further explain this shift to preference and ability rather than engage in questions of power and inequality.

¹ Julie A. Nelson. *Poisoning the Well, or How Economic Theory Damages Moral Imagination*. *12-07Nelson_PoisoningWell.pdf (tufts.edu). 2012

Mainstream economics makes a number of flawed assumptions on human behavior and agency that are very consequential. These include that humans:


- ✿ Are driven by reason and not emotion
- ✿ Compete, they don't cooperate
- ✿ Prioritize their self-interest rather than care for others
- ✿ Are autonomous rather than dependent

Under this model, care labor, including rearing children, caring for the elderly, the sick, cooking, making life happen everyday is also seen as irrelevant.

Further critiques of mainstream economics include the following:

- ✿ **Scarcity** is not pre-determined but rather man-made and comes about with profit maximizing behavior and well as concentration and unequal distribution of finite resources
- ✿ There is a restrictive scope for **what constitutes economic analysis**, with a focus on causality, rather than consequences for people, and avoiding issues pertaining to race, gender, sexuality
- ✿ **Efficiency** as a primary goal and indicator of success, rather than equity, equality, fairness. Mainstream definitions of 'efficiency' can result from offloading costs onto households/marginalized members of society or relying on resources that are not paid for (unpaid labor) – i.e., when cut public services, women pick up the slack
- ✿ When speak of individuals, choices, scarce resources, ignore or dismiss how we as a community/society organize beyond the market, beyond production, consumption, buying and selling. It fails to recognize that we lead and live lives that are not commodified
- ✿ Neglect ways other than quantitative to explain what economics is – separates economics from politics, culture, ecosystem – obscures interests served by mainstream rhetoric and practice

Reframing Economics



Mainstream economics has a gender problem, and a million others!
- Aurea

On the other hand, feminist economists seek to –

1. Explain, don't just calculate, the causes, nature and consequences of gender inequalities
2. Change – strive for a society that is more gender equitable, where women's subordinate position is eliminated, producing knowledge for change, to lead us closer to transformation
3. Scrutinize – produce adequate explanations of economic life – centered on lived experiences of people, less western, less male-oriented

Feminist economics, while not a single idea but rather a lens through which we approach gender issues within the study of the economy



emerges from a pluralistic tradition that is irreconcilable and incompatible with mainstream economics. We can't achieve social provision for all while maximizing efficiency for some. Aurea reminded us of Audre Lourde's words "You can't destroy the master's house with the master's tools". Feminist economics is purposely marginalized to discourage the development and articulation of these alternative approaches.

Aurea shared some of the approaches that influence feminist economics, which include the following:

Marxian Approach: appreciates that Marx, while limited by his time, drew us to the right questions about the nature of capitalism, the framing of gender relations within the workings of the capitalist system, how we relate to each other as we produce (as opposed to market exchanges) and how that shapes people's daily lives, interrelationships between paid/unpaid work, difference between women and men in terms of social class

Institutional Economics: understands that it's not that women are marginalized in the market, but rather that the way the market works accentuates, if not creates, the marginalization – and it perpetuates – embedded in social norms, in how society works

World systems, third-world, underdevelopment theories: argues that capitalism is developed on a circular scale, with other regions being systematically underdeveloped and looted. The exploitation of 'peripheries', results in an increase in dependencies on the metropolis

Ecofeminism: make a distinct connection and correlation between capitalist exploitation of the earth and of women. How women are treated, the undervaluing of care labor is essentially the same as how nature is treated. Both are considered irrelevant, disposable and are thus marginalized, exploited and destroyed. The prosperity for all/permanent growth mantra will lead to ecological destruction and life will no longer be possible



Social Provision Approach believes that:

1. Care labor is valuable – it enables societies to continue, to thrive, fuels the worker/producer and is the basis of any society (completely neglected by measures of economic success)
2. Human well-being should be a yardstick for economic success – if people are poorer, unhappier, exploited what good is it?
3. Importance of social agency – ability for people to determine for themselves, what a good life is
4. Importance of ethical judgements – is this correct? Is this good? Is it ethical? Are we cutting corners? (i.e., In Angola, fuel subsidies are being cut, putting aside the environmental consequences aside for a moment, the subsidies enable people with low incomes to get on public transport and make a living. Without the subsidies, fuel prices go up, transportation costs go up, but incomes remain low, making life harder for the poor)
5. Understand the differentiated impact on men and women and between different socio-economic classes

These alternative schools of thought see the gendered nature of an economic agent, appreciating that that agent is an embodied person, with preferences, needs, values, aspirations, beliefs and agency. The agent is an individual who is shaped by and shapes society – he/she/they are interdependent and has social relations in and outside of the household. The agent is not simply a worker.



In these alternative schools of thought, gender is understood and analyzed as a social construct, which is constantly shaped and reconstituted in the places of work, worship, study and in homes.

The theories and traditions upon which feminist economics is based shift focus away from exchange and optimizing choice to social provisioning for human life, paying greater attention to the connection between paid and unpaid activities; markets, households, communities and government; social provisioning – how life is reproduced; not how we maximize resources, or act as individuals, but rather how we make a living collectively as a community/society.



Participants were asked to discuss in groups what should constitute African Feminist Approaches to Economics. Responses included being conscious of the historical context of the economy, power analysis, a decolonization of cultural traditions and customs, centering women's stories and experiences, reimagining measures of economic growth beyond GDP, valuing care work, tackling unequal pay, priming fairness, justice and equity, centering humanity and sustainability and dismantling social, tradition and religious gender norms.

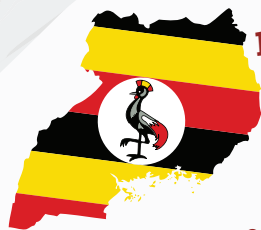
Power Dynamics Politics of Language

Aurea reminded participants to be conscious of the politics of language and the power dynamics existent in our speech. How certain words can reiterate domination and othering words such as "lower-level women" "bottom-up". Who determines who is at the bottom and who is at the top? What makes certain women "lower-level" women as opposed to "upper-level" women?

Neoliberalism, Macroeconomic Policy and African Development

Anta Ngom

Anta shared ideals of economic liberalism, as one based on an economy without the intervention of the State, as well as neoliberalism which aims to establish and maintain competition between individuals, without taking into account the predatory behavior of some, including corporations to eliminate their competitors. Anta shared the impact on women of neoliberal policies, which included increasing access to loans, although not taking into account the social dynamics, which include the constraints of requiring their spouse's authorization, as well as the high rates for the loans.



In Uganda, 80% of the economy is supported by agriculture, the majority of which is done by women. Policies don't favor women and girls who are driving agriculture we're just there to be used, to drive the economy that milks us.

We must think about ways to influence policies to make sure they work for us. This has been an eye-opener for me, I now understand all the ways in which the economy impacts the work we do.

- Labila Sumaaya Musoke

Feminist Critique of Neoliberal Macroeconomic Policies

Aurea

Neoliberalism is not only a set of values, but a specific approach to how economic policies should function and the role of the state within the economy. Liberal and neoliberal logic are not contradictory to the idea of equality – although equality is framed as 'equality of opportunity', looking not at collective outcomes, but at how an individual with his/her/their capacity and drive, can achieve. The reality, however, is that we don't all start at the same time. There are structural factors that determine whether or not the individual will be able to achieve that. When the goal of empowerment is reduced to an individual level, issues of equity, fairness, justice and rights are neglected. We have rights, we are bearer of rights, the state exists to uneven inequalities. A neoliberal understanding doesn't make room to go beyond capability and effort and doesn't cater for those who have been held back by structural and systemic factors.

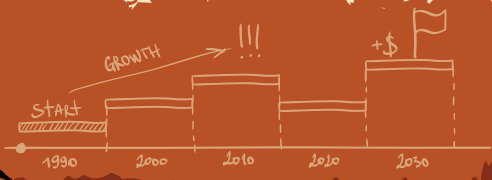
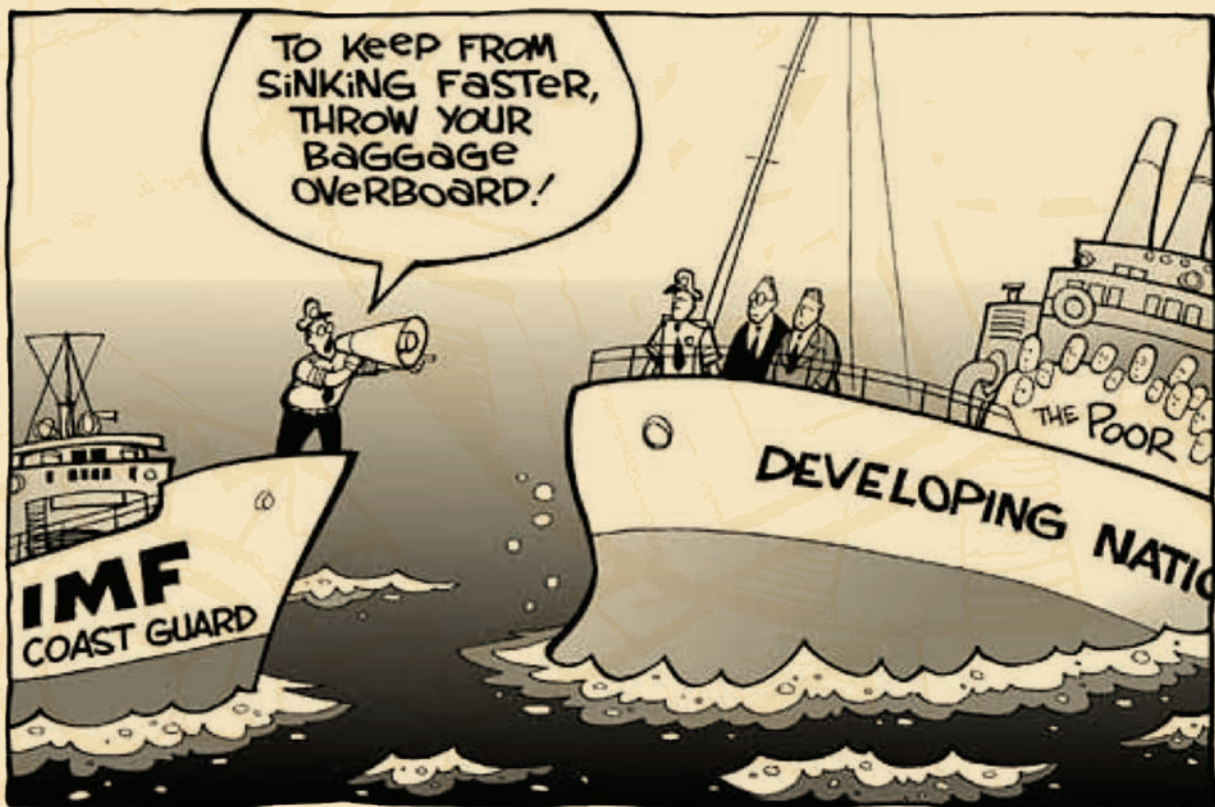
Macroeconomic policies care about how the economy functions as a whole. Fiscal and monetary policies determine outcomes like inflation, employment, interest rates – which greatly impact other factors. Historically, macroeconomic policies have been seen as 'gender-neutral', as though it has no separate or greater effect on women. This has been the case with trade policies as well.



SAPs

SAPs, or Structural Adjustment Policies were designed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) and other international financial institutions (IFIs) and presented to countries who unable to meet their debt payments in the 80s and 90s during the debt crisis. Some of the policy prescriptions included:

- ✿ **Cutting government budgets** which in and of itself is not necessarily problematic except that the sectors it targeted and considered superfluous were the social sectors, including education, health, social provision
- ✿ **Privatize public assets** to raise revenue based on the logic that anything public is inefficient – this reflecting a conflation of government mismanagement of funds and public resources due to corruption with an innate inability of government to effectively manage public enterprises. There is however a strong social case for certain services to be made available irrespective of the cost, in order to maintain accessibility to the public and to the majority.
- ✿ **Deregulation of industries** based on the logic that regulation creates inefficiencies and reduces profitability
- ✿ **Liberalization of trade and investment**, including the elimination of trade barriers such as tariffs, instituting subsidies, liberalizing the exchange rate to be determined by supply and demand, cede control over capital



The effect of SAPs is widespread. Burkina Faso, for example used to have a thriving cloth industry which was run down after implementation of SAPs.

Due to increased criticism of SAPs in the 1990s, the IMF and WB softened conditionalities and ushered in debt relief for highly indebted poor countries (HIPC). SAPs were replaced by poverty reduction strategy papers (PRSPs) – as condition for the loans. PRSPs were essentially SAPs but with an element of “consent”, giving countries the illusion of having ownership of programs to reduce poverty and promote growth, the same policies that had been advanced by SAPs.

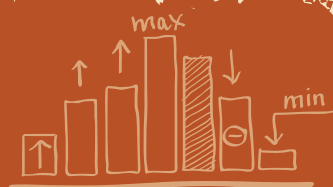
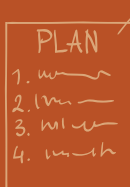
SAPs and PRSPs were gender blind – something that persists to date in IMF programs, such as with the Extended Credit Facility (ECF). SAPs, PRSPs, and other neoliberal, austerity policies which echoed the call to regulate, privatize and liberalize in order to achieve economic stabilization and growth were fronted as the only “sound” macroeconomic policies and the only legitimate route to get out of poverty.

Feminist economists' critique this and assert that the burden of adjustment is borne on certain groups, especially low-income groups, women, and other marginalized groups, resulting in the perpetuation of poverty and inequality.

Neoliberal Macroeconomic Policy Biases

Aurea took participants through the three biases that prop up neoliberal macroeconomic policy thinking and formulation.

1. **Deflationary Bias** – inflation is kept low, so that the return on assets can be high – unable to deal with the recession, job losses result
 - a. Women in the formal sector tend to lose jobs faster than men, as they are often in positions that are easier to dismiss, and have less access to social safety nets. These women crowd into the informal sector, driving down earnings there
 - b. Women assume greater responsibilities to cushion their families from the negative effects
2. **Commodification Bias** – subjecting everything to the logic of the market – everything is privatized, including pensions, health care schemes, old care homes, homes, schools, based on the flawed logic that anything public is inefficient and of low quality, resulting in:
 - a. Drastic reduction of state-based entitlements, a drastic decline in access as well as quality (due to discriminatory factors, people go when it's too late or when absolutely necessary)
 - b. Women disproportionately provide unpaid care upon which social reproduction rests
 - c. In periods of crisis, women are likely to act as 'provisioners of last resort'
 - d. Even in times of economic prosperity, inequalities persist, with women kept in insecure and low-paying jobs



3. Male Breadwinner Bias - women of color and black women in particular have always worked outside the home, they worked the land. This bias assumes women's income as secondary, and not as one that sustains the home. How social benefits are accessed depends on traditional notions of units, those outside of these notions are often disenfranchised and excluded

The biases reinforce each other. When budgets are cut, privatization is encouraged to meet state obligations, and thus the vicious circle perpetuates itself. Social policies become subjected to financial policies, often as a consideration of whatever is left over. In Angola, for example, over 50% of the budget goes to paying foreign debt. Of the remainder 6% goes to education and 7% to health.

Furthermore, the hidden costs of deflation and commodification is not visible in macroeconomic measures, and in particular GDP that is the basis of policymaking. The efficiency gains that were assumed to have resulted from SAPs disregard unpaid economic activities.

Participants got into groups following this session to discuss the impact of SAPs in their respective countries. The stories consisted of more of the same – privatization of public goods and services, decreased public spending, liberalization of markets and trade, deregulation, increased exploitation, overworked and underpaid laborers, collapse of thriving industries, decreased access to social services.

“

**It's the same too much. It's the same too many times.
Our countries have had similar problems, similar impact even though countries
have very specific conditions.
If issues are common, the solutions must also be common.**

- Aurea

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DAY 2

Introduction to the Political Economy of Africa's Development

Facilitated by Briggs Bomba

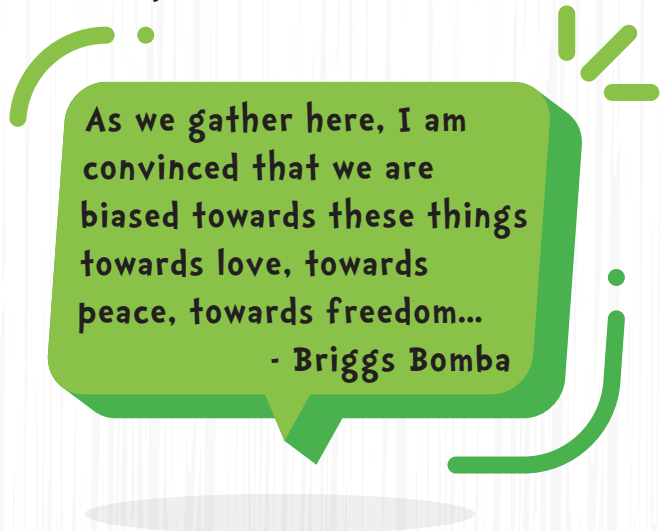


Day 2 began with a moment of silence following news of bomb blasts in Kampala, as well as recognizing the unrest in Ethiopia and elsewhere on the continent. Participants were challenged to introduce each other, testing their memories before the session began.

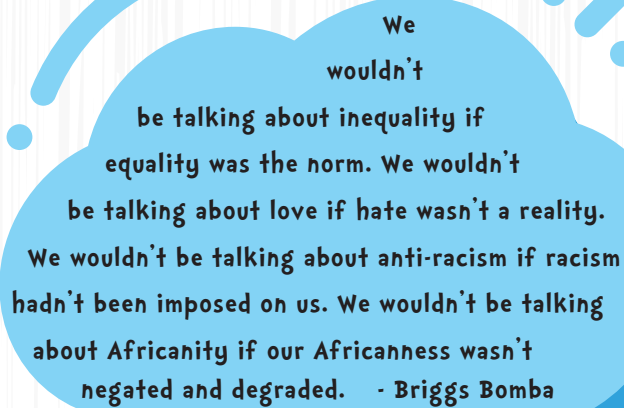


Briggs began the day with that question-and-answer refrain. He reminded us of Issa's words - our task is not to present an intellectual balance sheet where we neutrally present things - if we want the things that we say we want - freedom, equality, peace, justice, love - we must be necessarily biased towards those specific things.

The reproduction of ideas that aim to advance the status quo happens in the subtlest ways - through socialization, through the very first cartoon that you watch, the first comic book that you read, through elementary and tertiary education. Education is not an innocent process.



For us to evolve lasting meaning with the issues we're engaging with - public service, love, equity, freedom - we must be rooted. Briggs reminded us of Marx's words, 'Men and women make history, but on the canvas history has made for them.' This is important considering we're dealing with a continent with very particular histories. We must be locally rooted before we go international.



We wouldn't be talking about inequality if equality was the norm. We wouldn't be talking about love if hate wasn't a reality. We wouldn't be talking about anti-racism if racism hadn't been imposed on us. We wouldn't be talking about Africanness if our Africanness wasn't negated and degraded. - Briggs Bomba

Participants were asked to discuss the following concepts in their groups: political economy, politics, governance, power. Some responses included – the interaction of politics and the economy, questioning the idea of scarcity and rather focus on managing greed, exercise of power to organize society, contestation between various interests. Participants also discussed the importance of understanding structural factors that determine the political economy, that shape the politics and governance of a geographic space, as well as how power plays out. Other factors include both formal and informal rules that govern behavior, rewards and punishments, varied interests, as well as how things unfold in the process of change.

Historical Trajectory

Acknowledging the importance of understanding Africa's historical trajectory, AFMA spent time discussing major global events that have shaped policy and practice today. These events included slavery, colonization and apartheid, independence and liberation movements, post-independence, Cold War, the global recession, neoliberalism/the Washington Consensus and SAPs.

The period of underdevelopment – including slavery, colonialism and apartheid were characterized by the extraction of resources and wealth – including human bodies, minerals, land, materials and artifacts. Existing institutions and economies were disrupted, as people were separated with artificial boundaries.

Development that took place in the 60s and 70s was in a context of uprisings and liberation struggles, independence movements and post-independence transitions. This period saw a rise of ethnic/tribal conflict, while at the same time a rise of Pan-Africanism and a greater struggle for social, cultural, economic and political freedom. This period also witnessed the ascendance of the state, nationalization processes as well as national development planning.

The prevailing orthodoxy of neoliberalism in the 80s and 90s were characterized by the imposition of SAPs, which included privatization, the conversion of community land to private land, land grabs, corporate capture, limited access to public services. SAPs moved the state away from pro-poor policies and away from universal access to water, health and education, promoting the trickle-down theory. SAPs also resulted in a shift from the state to the market. At the same time, feminist movements began to emerge, and debt cancellation movements gained traction.

The policies set at this time have present day impacts. Fiscal space is crowded out by debt servicing, for example, over 50% of Zambia's budget is spent paying debts; reduced funding to public services means a greater burden of unpaid care falls on women and girls and the most marginalized members of society. The high dependence on the private sector for public services has resulted in shrinking access and increased prices for these services.

Some thoughts from the floor:

In the global north, public services haven't been led by the private sector, there hasn't even been a public-private partnership (PPP).

Rather it has been driven by the state. There is a massive contradiction why are we expected to have a weak state, believe in the invisible hand of the market to solve our problems? The Global North has a strong state that drives these things.

In Mali, our rice and cotton are sold elsewhere. Their production doesn't serve the population, we rather resource the development of other countries.

Public services are poorly budgeted. The wealthy go abroad for healthcare, or go to private facilities what happens to those who can't afford to go abroad?

- Mariam Modibo Tandina

The squeezing of public spending, including in universities was coupled with the WB spending millions setting up think tanks in academic institutions pushing thinking aligned with their policies. It has been an impactful strategy, the effect of which we see today.

- Wangari Kinoti

Briggs added that prevalent economic policies (i.e., export-oriented agricultural policies) date back to the colonial era, where we were made to grow things that were not meant to feed ourselves, but rather feed the desires of the metropolis. Trade in mineral resources was and continues to be defined by relationship of exploitation – big countries continue to determine the prices of our minerals on international markets, as well as the price of transporting our minerals. This is the fate of a continent which consumes what it does not produce, and produces what it does not consume.

The privatization of the mining sector has meant that foreign investors get concessions at very low prices while the public entities go bankrupt.

Briggs reminded AFMA 2021 that there is also a history of actual progress – where resistance has borne fruit – and we must remind ourselves of the power that we have, and leverage it for the things that we desire – peace, freedom, justice and love.

Building Forward Better - Challenging Orthodoxies in Economic Thinking

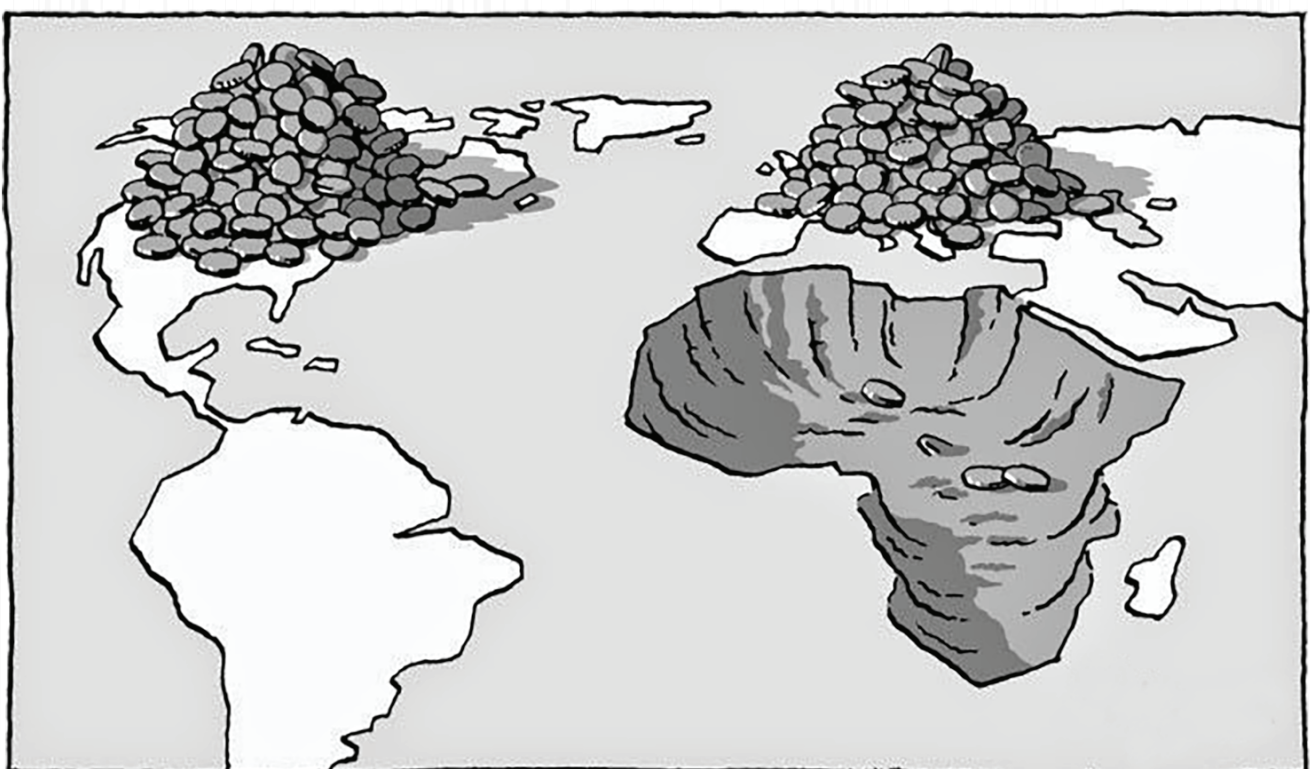
Ebrima Sall

Ebrima began by reminding us of Amilcar Cabral's words 'we must think with our own heads, within our own realities', that we must look at the world from where we are. With that in mind, how do we challenge orthodoxies that are ever-present? Global thinking is heavily influenced by European thought, and highly Eurocentric. This is evident in our everyday realities such as how we measure time (GMT), and how we delineate time periods (colonial, post-colonial), despite our existence long before colonialism.

Similarly, development and under-development shaped heavily based on the European experience. Pre-colonial Africa was not worried about underdevelopment. Think of Mansa Musa, ruler of Mali, who on his pilgrimage to Mecca took and distributed so much gold that on his arrival to Cairo, the price of gold collapsed for the next twelve years! This wasn't an isolated phenomenon, the libraries of Timbuktu were evidence of a vibrant intellectual life, coupled with prosperity. The oldest higher educational institution in the world, al Qarawiyyin, was founded in 895 in Morocco by Fatima al Fahri, long before the University of Bologna in 1088.

Recommended Read: *Walter Rodney, How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*

The dominant development model has been unsustainable. It led to the climate crisis, poverty in many parts of the world, resource depletion, inequality across gender, class, ethnicity, race and heavy concentration of wealth in a few hands (the 1%), and skewed relations between Global North and South amongst others. There have been attempts to reform this, with calls for a new world order growing louder.



We have the largest youth population in the world, twice the size of Europe's population. How to get jobs for all of them? Although the informal sector is huge, it often doesn't offer decent working conditions, decent pay, stability, is exploitative and uncertain.

Africa has been integrated into the global economy – that's not the problem. Our mode of integration into the global economy is problematic, with our low value commodities coming back as manufactured goods. The exchange is unequal, and the power is grossly imbalanced.

COVID has resulted in a series of negative disruptions, bringing the world to a standstill. Endangering lives and livelihoods, the pandemic has had devastating effects on the poorest and most marginalized. The impact has been undeniably gendered. It has been a crisis that revealed and continues to reveal the fault lines in society, and reproduced, exacerbated and produced new inequalities. It has affected supply and demand, disrupted supply chains, caused the collapse of certain industries. The full effects are still unfolding, and uncertainty remains high.

What would Africa build back to, if Africa had to build back? If systems were problematic, in shambles why would we want to build back to pre-Covid conditions?
- Ebrima Sall

Arundhati Roy asserts that the pandemic is a portal, a moment when humanity must decide whether to move forward and make decisions about what to take along, and what to leave behind. In terms of our development models, how our -economies are organized, how societies are organized – what do we want to do away with? Historically, pandemics have resulted in major shifts in society.

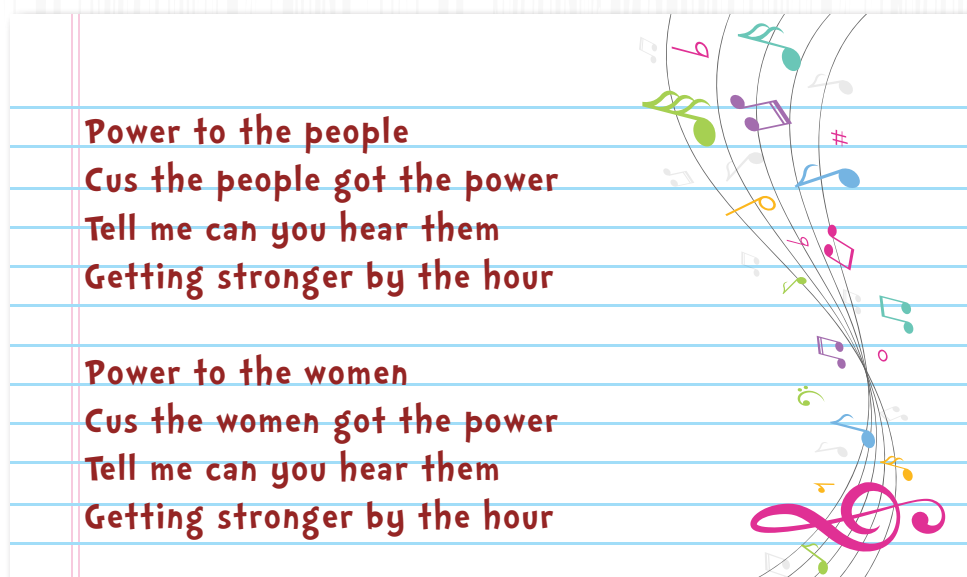
Fifty years before the Magna Carta, Sunyata Keita, who had led the fight to end slavery and became emperor of Mali, adopted the Manden Charter in the 1200s. The Charter affirmed the sanctity of human life, women's rights, the right to an education, food security and self-expression. The Charter was highly respectful of nature and animals and understood that the two were mutually dependent. We must, as Cheikh Ante Diop reminds us, reconnect with our heritage.

Challenging Orthodoxies in Economic Thinking

In order to tackle the challenges with which we are confronted, we need to understand and challenge prevailing economic orthodoxies, develop new forms of economic thinking and build power behind those.

- Ebrima Sall

AFMA 2021, led by Memory Kachambwa broke out into song, getting louder and more assertive with every line.



Stop the Bleeding Campaign

Day 2 ended with a short conversation around the Stop the Bleeding Campaign.

“Africa is rich, but her people are poor”

Lyrics from the Stop the Bleeding Campaign video

The dependence of African economies on natural resources extraction makes African countries particularly vulnerable to IFFs. By undermining domestic resource mobilization, illicit outflows create dependence on outside resources thereby undermining national sovereignty and creating vulnerability to unfair conditionalities tied to development assistance, foreign loans, and aid. Illicit outflows from the continent have been as much as \$1.4 trillion over 3 decades. Corporate commercial activity particularly stands out as the biggest culprit – accounting for as much as 65% of all illicit outflows. Illicit financial flows are a mere symptom of a much bigger structural problem of unjust economic and power relations between Africa and the developed world that has historically impoverished Africa and enriched the West. This is how our campaign has evolved from targeting IFFs to addressing the broader bottlenecks around development financing for Africa².

A number of African organizations, including Trust Africa, FEMNET, PALU, Tax Justice Network - Africa, and Nawi came together for the Stop the Bleeding Campaign. The campaign aims to bring greater attention to IFFs and call for greater accountability. Beyond capacity building of our tax collectors and parliamentarians, this work requires political will, putting new policies and new systems in place. It is not by accident that someone is benefitting, and someone is losing. The campaign seeks to build on the resurgence of pan-African collaboration and mobilize African citizenry to engage in the conversations and movements around curbing illicit financial flows as well as calling for just systems. The Stop the Bleeding Campaign will be focusing on debt in 2022.

² Text taken from Stop the Bleeding – Campaign to end illicit Financial Flows (stopthebleedingafrica.org)

DAY 3

Public Service Delivery & Financing



Overview of Alternative Macroeconomic Policy Frameworks

Aurea

We can collectively imagine and work towards a feminist future, one that centers social provision, care and well-being, including ecological well-being. The state is critical, as a regulatory body, as a provider, guarantor, and equalizer. Centering the state is also an affirmation that it is possible to have efficient, quality public services. It is possible to guarantee decent life for all as a public good, enabling dignity as a basic right, rather than as a privilege.

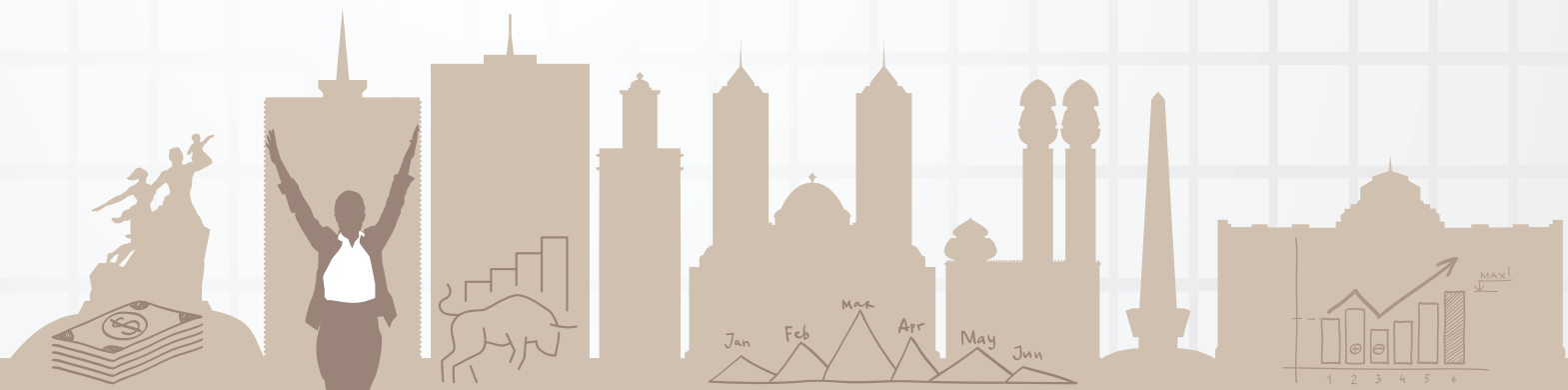
Aurea introduced participants to AWID's Feminist Propositions for a Just Economy, which include: reclaiming the commons; working to establish our relationship with land as one of respect and reciprocity, and asserting our sovereignty to decide what we eat; building community knowledge to build just futures that are rooted in lived experiences; challenging growth orthodoxies and proposing an alternative framework for economic governance.

There is no one alternative that addresses all of our problems, rather alternatives must emerge from people's lived realities.

Fiscal Policy Alternatives include increasing public investment and ensuring income transfer policies and provision of quality public services that guarantee social rights, rather than efficiency. Tax Justice must be pursued, with implementation of progressive taxation in the system, closing loopholes that enable avoidance and evasion. This is ever more important considering that the 2021 State of Tax Justice Report confirmed that over \$483 billion is lost to tax avoidance every year.

With regards to monetary and trade policy, Aurea raised a number of questions:

When IFIs insist on the accountability and independence of state institutions such as the Central Bank, who



are they accountable to? Who are they independent from? Does this prevent the people from being able to influence a key body? When trade is liberalized, whose interests are upheld? Economic governance must be reclaimed. Trade policy shouldn't be based on arbitrary notions of efficiency but rather on solidarity and justice.

African feminist macroeconomic thinking and analysis has contributed to pushing this agenda forward. Collectives such as Nawi are coalescing this knowledge into a portal that puts together research on alternatives. We must continue to seek knowledge and insights to keep honing our ideas of alternatives.

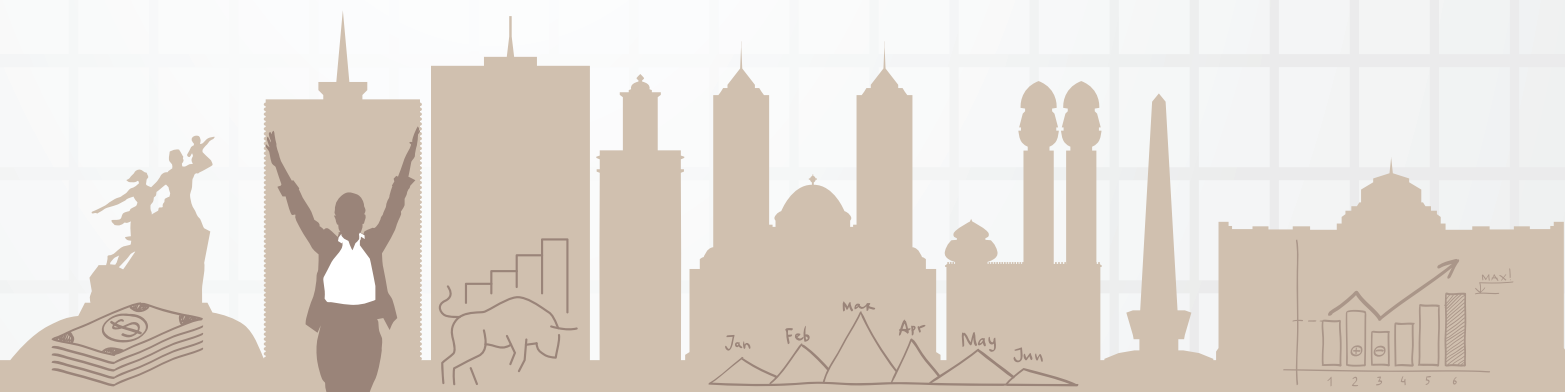
Reclaiming our Collective Power, Rights and Dignity - Decommodifying Survival

Wangari Kinoti

What's the point of the revolution if you can't dance? Wangari began her session with Chronixx's 'Here Comes Trouble'. Participants jammed to the song, so much so that a man passing by the open windows keeps eyes glued to a room full of African women jamming to reggae, until he was out of view.



Wangari asked participants to reflect on key terms; care, social contract, public goods and social guarantee. The words that came to mind for care included compassion, showing love, kindness, and ubuntu. Care sustains households, communities, economies and the planet. Without care, we would be in complete



dysfunction. Social contract was viewed as an agreement, written, implied or otherwise, between the ruled and rulers, which defines the duties and rights of each. Public goods are produced by governments or other public sector agents and created through collective choice, are paid for collectively and include products, services, benefits, standards and rights. Social guarantee asserts the rights of all to life's basics – including air, water, health, shelter, food, education and health, as well as a living wage. It is a trust that the social contract will be upheld.

In order to build a care economy, we must recognize the following:

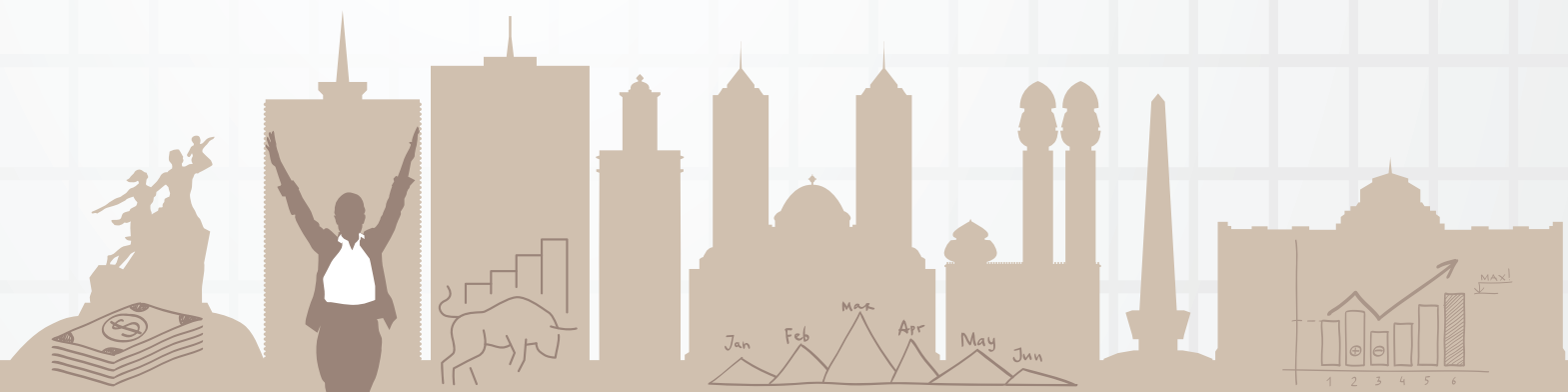
- ❁ Care and well-being are critical to sustain economies, and must be valued and redistributed
- ❁ Social division of care is gendered, unequal, racialized, classed
- ❁ Paid care is often underpaid and devalued, and therefore inadequately compensated
- ❁ Care is often carried out by impoverished, marginalized, excluded, black women (or women of color)
- ❁ A care economy includes caring for people (children, elderly, sick) but also caring for the environment and ecosystems (this is often done by women and indigenous people who are reliant on and guardians of it, this is rarely recognized and valued)
- ❁ The social contract must be reinstated, and huge investments must be made in public care infrastructure and jobs
- ❁ There must be a shift from measuring human economic activity by efficiency, and productivity to social and ecological well-being

The haves will not do care work, they will look for the have nots to do it. - Wilson

African socialisms assert the need for collaboration, dialogue, solidarity. They reject notions of neoliberal, patriarchal, capitalist values of competition, domination and hierarchy. They challenge the artificial divide between the personal and political and assert notions of ubuntu and ujamaa, the idea of our interconnectedness.

“Honesty, generosity, justice, temperance, courage these are the five ethics of the Kikuyu what would happen if we modeled our economies around them?”

- Crystal

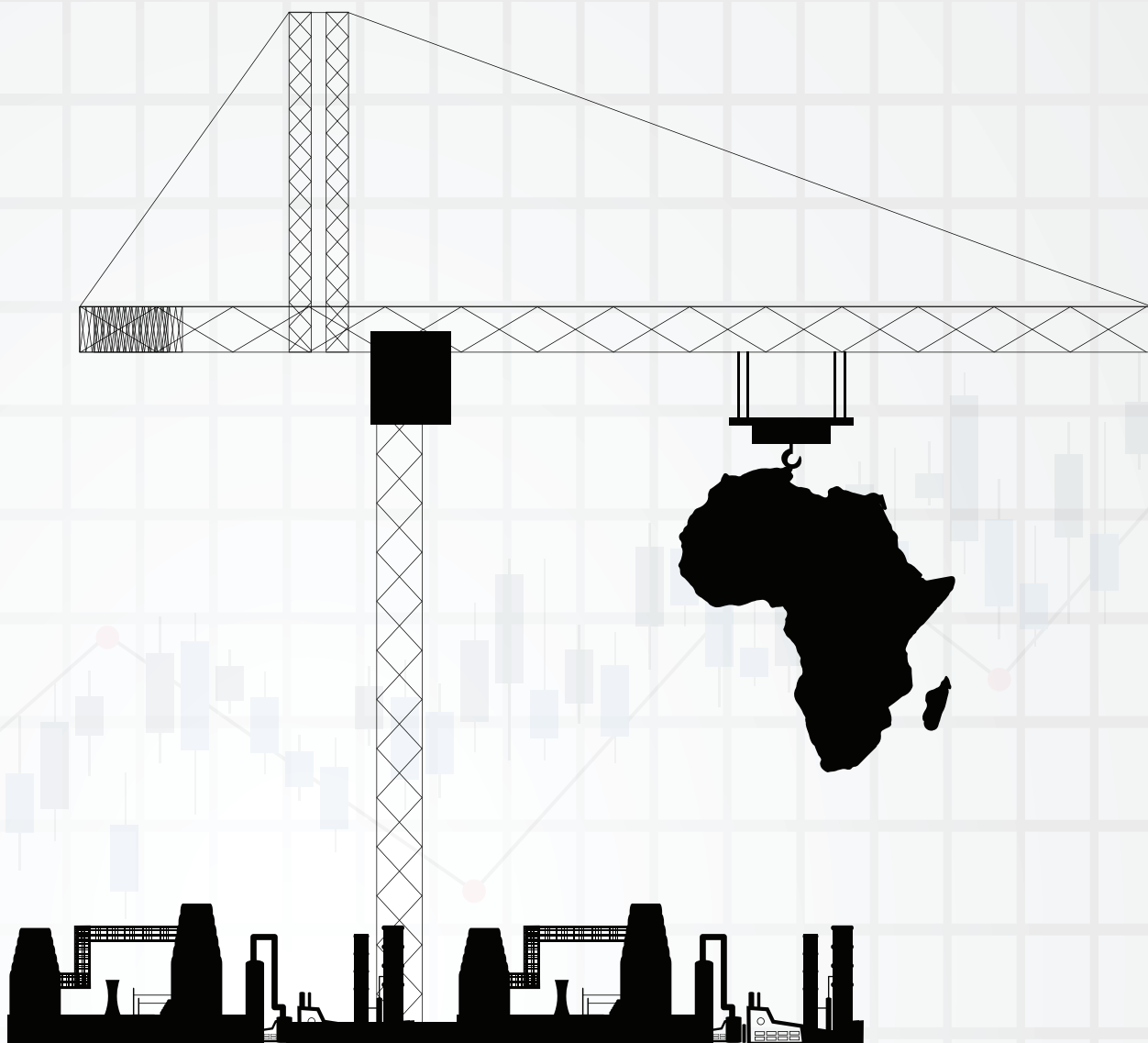


Breaking Free from Our Chains

Wangari Kinoti

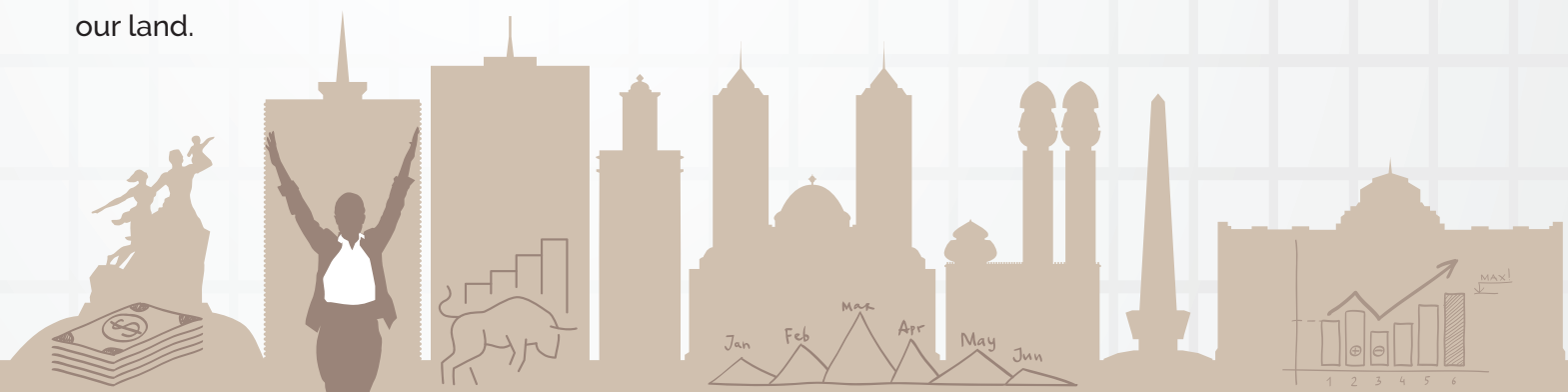
Wangari took participants through the African Failure Complex, the Austerity Cult and the Privatization Lie.

African Failure Complex: seeing and treating Africa as a 'hopeless continent', full of incompetence, corruption and hapless people. TIA as an expression of all the things that go wrong, as though failure and poverty are endemic to Africa.



We must recognize our problems, understand our history and learn from our mistakes, avoid scapegoating but also have a healthy understanding of the interplay between internal and external factors, the global systems of oppression and inequity, and South to North transfers of wealth, natural resources and labor.

We must speak about ourselves with love and hope, and change how we view ourselves, our people and our land.



Austerity Cult: calls for austerity result in cuts in public funding, a shrinking public sector, widespread privatization, deregulation and corporate capture. Austerity reduces the state by forcing it to do the least when it needs to do the most. Austerity transfers labor and costs to women, particularly the poorest. Women's unpaid and underpaid labor provides subsidies to the state, women are the "biggest reserve army of labor (and cost)".

Big Privatization Lie: PPPs are most often complex and non-transparent, are driven by profit interests and blind to the needs and priorities of the citizens. All risk and loss fall on the public purse, while profit is privatized. PPPs are more expensive than traditional government investments and designed in that way. They have a direct impact on women's livelihoods, for example mega infrastructure projects result in displacement, loss of access to land and natural resources, greatly impacting food production and health.

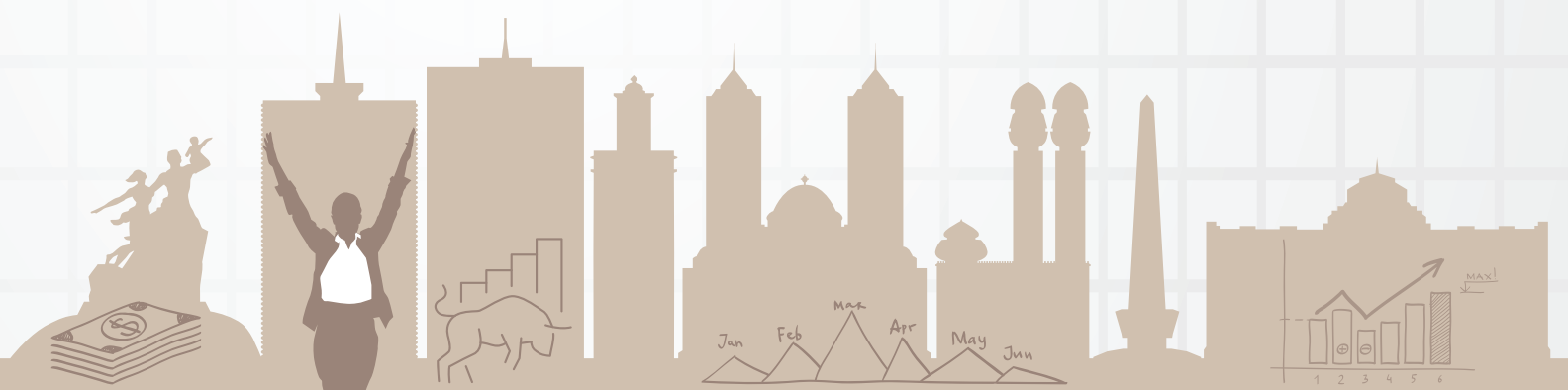


We remember and pay tribute to Berta Caseras, an environmental activist and indigenous leader who was killed in her home in Honduras, for her work resisting the damming of a river. She was murdered because she was fighting huge corporate interests. As a result of the efforts of Berta and fellow activists and community members, the construction of the Agua Zarca dam has been halted. The work against these powers is often a matter of life and death.

Privatization results in economic strain on the most marginalized due to out-of-pocket payments, an overall decline in the quality of services as users are segmented based on their ability to pay, normalizing poor service delivery. In Sierra Leone, free health care is dubbed "free health die", with those who can, avoiding free health care because they don't want to die.

PPPs are driven by corporate profits and thus antithetical to the notion of public goods. Privatization in all its forms amounts to commodification of human rights and lives, which is a gross violation of human rights. We cannot speak of delivering on rights if they are commodified.

PPPs are driven by corporate profits and thus antithetical





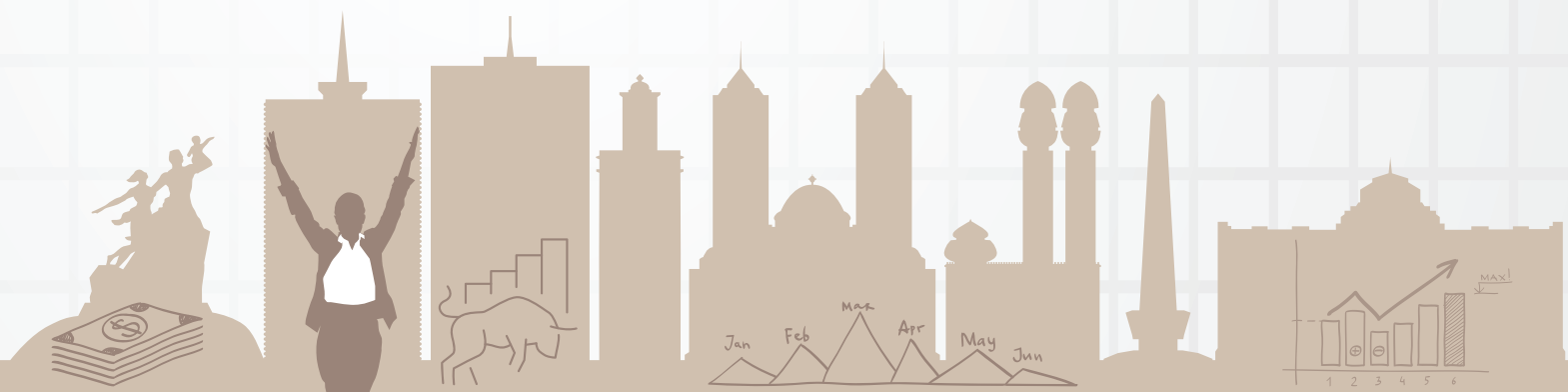
An Aside: On China

An emotionally charged conversation on the impact of the Chinese in Africa ensued amongst participants. Most could hardly articulate their frustrations, noting that if we default on the payments, they will take our resources.

One participant said, “maybe one day, we will cede ourselves because we can’t pay back our debts.” Cate Duru added to this, sharing banter from the Nigerian streets, “One day you’ll be walking on the streets and a car will come up to you and stop and ask you to get in. You’ll ask them what you did and they’ll tell you, “Ah, your people have sold you since”.

Crystal urged participants not to get caught up in the ideological battle between East and West, as it’s the same model, just different politics. We see the same oppression with themes of extraction we must recognize this whether it is from the WB with their conditionalities or from the East with their own conditionalities. We must push back against anything that doesn’t serve us.

Read about a PPP case in Kenya, a seven-year scheme to provide specialized health equipment to 98 hospitals across the country which involved five global companies and cost \$432 million, money that could have been invested in community health care and had the greatest potential for impact and for improving health outcomes and ensuring access to health for all.



Women's Labor (paid, under and unpaid), Decent Work, Bodily Autonomy, and Gender Transformative Public Services

Wangari Kinoti

The estimated cost of unpaid work is \$10.8 trillion, three times the size of the tech industry. Unpaid work is invisibilized and taken for granted. Women spent 3.5 times more time on domestic work than men pre-pandemic, with overwhelming evidence of increased unpaid workloads (cooking, cleaning, sanitizing, caring for sick, childcare, education) globally due to COVID (2-4 hours more daily). Ninety percent of young women surveyed by Action Aid said access to basic services had been disrupted.

Current economic models neither value care nor recognize the human right to care, yet they benefit through free or cheap labor with little to no regulation.

The care chain is a whole continuum, that extends from the household to society/public provisioning. Feminists assert that we must:

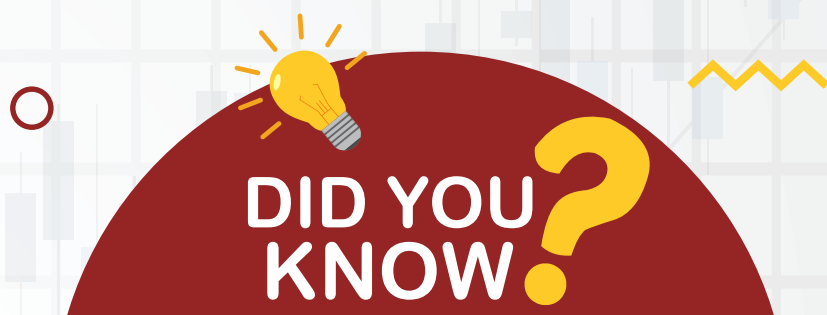
Recognize care as a human right, and its social and economic value

Reward and/or remunerate care work through equal pay for work of equal value, decent pensions, dignified working conditions and comprehensive social protection

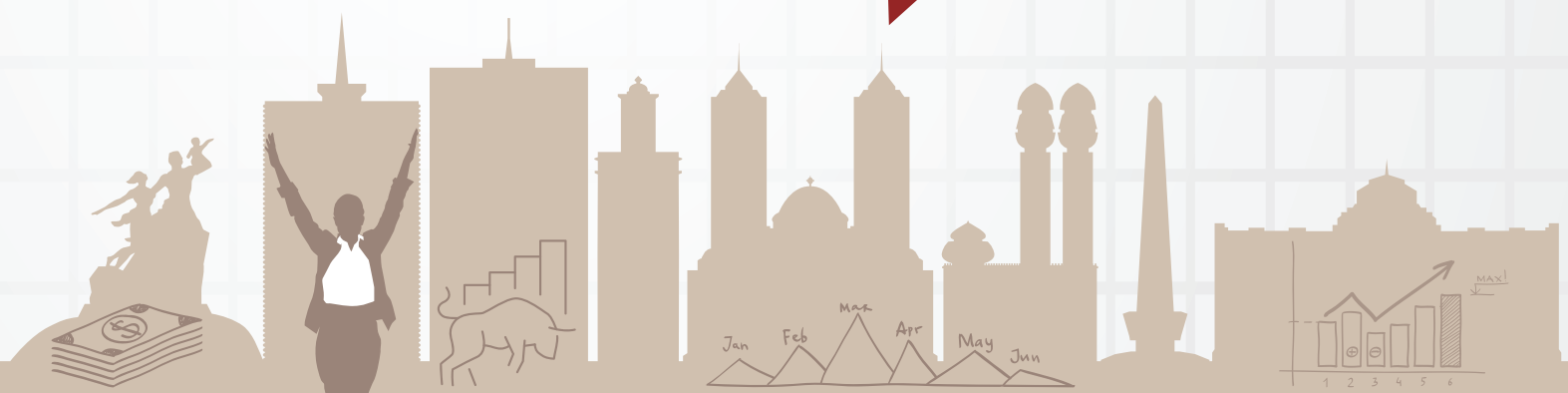
Reduce the burden of unpaid care on women

Redistribute care work within households and between households and the State

Reclaim public nature of care services by restoring duty to state for public care services and mobilizing financing through fair and progressive taxation



Domestic workers in South Africa are protected by the Domestic Workers Act, which also sets a minimum wage. Employers are required to register their domestic workers and contribute to their unemployment insurance fund. Domestic workers are also entitled to four months of unpaid maternity leave, and six weeks of sick leave over a three-year period.





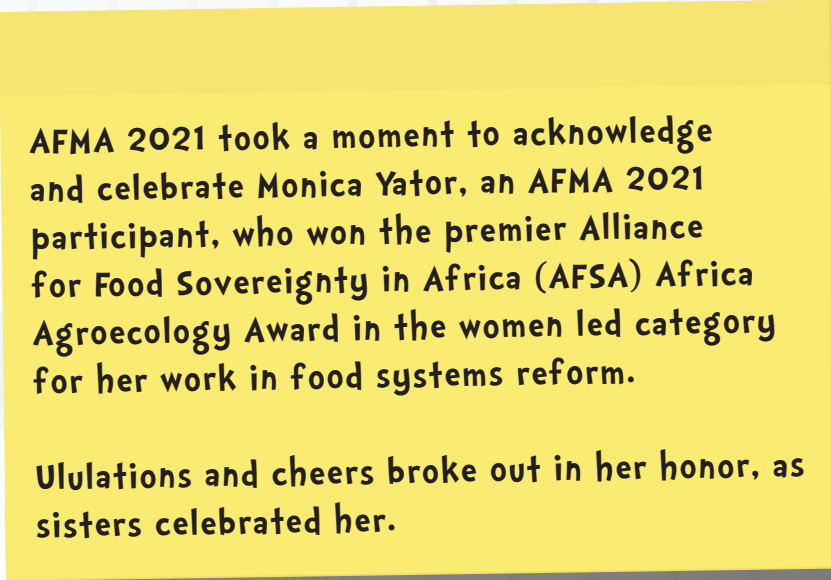
Do we aspire for day care for rural women, or those in low-income jobs?

How do we recognize emotional/psychological care, so that we begin to reduce and redistribute it?

The questions above were posed for reflection.

Care is at the core of the decisions that women make about their lives. Care is a social responsibility, more than a productive, it is emotional. We must recognize it as a facilitator of collective well-being. Care should be recognized outside of its monetary value, as something that sustains life and tradition from one generation to another.

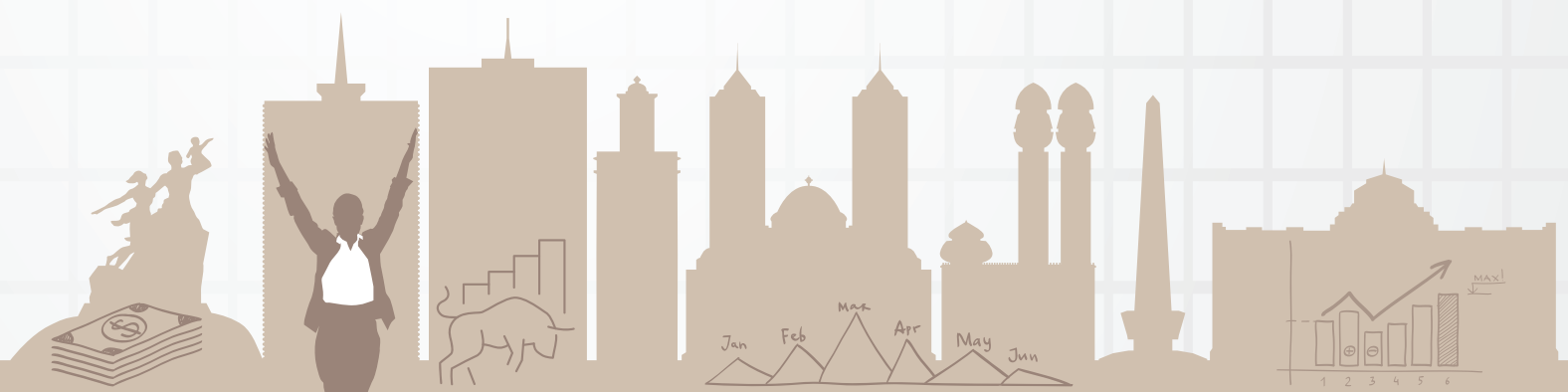
Participants worked in groups to identify practical examples of the five R's. Suggestions included expanding provisions for care work in existing labor laws and legislation, strengthening social protection mechanisms, subsidizing health care for poor women, reviewing labor conditions for care workers, enhancing entitlements to paternity leave, increasing investments in public services, infrastructure and labor-saving technologies, and shifting gender norms.



AFMA 2021 took a moment to acknowledge and celebrate Monica Yator, an AFMA 2021 participant, who won the premier Alliance for Food Sovereignty in Africa (AFSA) Africa Agroecology Award in the women led category for her work in food systems reform.

Ululations and cheers broke out in her honor, as sisters celebrated her.

Day 3 of AFMA 2021 ended with a movie night, with a screening of *Softie*, the story of a Kenyan activist, Boniface Mwangi and his family in his journey to run for office in the 2018 Kenyan elections, in a context of corruption and threats as he challenges status quo. A discussion followed the film, recalling a question that had been asked earlier in the day about the emotional care and labor that his wife Njeri had to bear – and how that factored (or didn't) into the story.



DAY 4

Public Services

Wangari Kinoti



A public service agenda includes protecting public service workers, the aim being to build an empowered and accountable public sector. If we are to value care and public service, we must value public sector and its workers. Public sector jobs are essential to increase employment and decent work. Between 2009 and 2015, they constituted 1/3rd of jobs in Africa.



Gender division of labor continues into the care sector – with women making up about 70% of frontline and health care and social service workers. While overrepresented, they tend to be underpaid and operating within precarious conditions. International Labor Organization (ILO) Convention 190 addresses violence and harassment in the world of work, which is important for the public service conversation, particularly in terms of public transport – how workers get to and from work. Violence and harassment are linked to deregulation and austerity, which results in restructuring, insufficient staff, excessive workload, non-standard contracts, lack of adequate safety, and wage bill cuts.

Public Financing: Progressive Taxation

The most sustainable way to raise public funding for public services is through progressive taxation. Attention must be paid equally to how money is raised and how it is spent.

Recommended Reads:

- Framing Feminist Taxation: Making Taxes Work for Women
- Realizing Women's Rights: Role of Public Debt in Africa



Tax can be used to redistribute power and resources and help to eliminate gender and other inequalities.



Progressive taxation means that those with higher incomes pay more taxes and that the tax burden shifts from consumption to wealth and property taxes. Women in low-income households spend large portions of their income on consumption taxes when they purchase food and basic goods.

Debt distress levels in Africa are high. Not all debt is bad, it depends on what governments borrow for and what the loans look like. Debt crises have a direct bearing on the ability of government to deliver public services. When states reduce social spending, impose austerity policies and deprive people of common goods, the burden is carried by women. Women provide huge subsidies to the state, they are both borrowers (as citizens and taxpayers) and lenders (through their labor and costs).

Women and girls spend an incredible amount of time sourcing water. Access to **water and sanitation** is inextricably linked to the right to an adequate standard of living, the right to health and the right to life. It is fundamental to human survival and affects a range of rights and freedoms both in and beyond households. Water is health, happiness and wellbeing. It improves school attendance, performance, maintains sexual and reproductive health, and reduces risks of pregnancy and complications during childbirth.



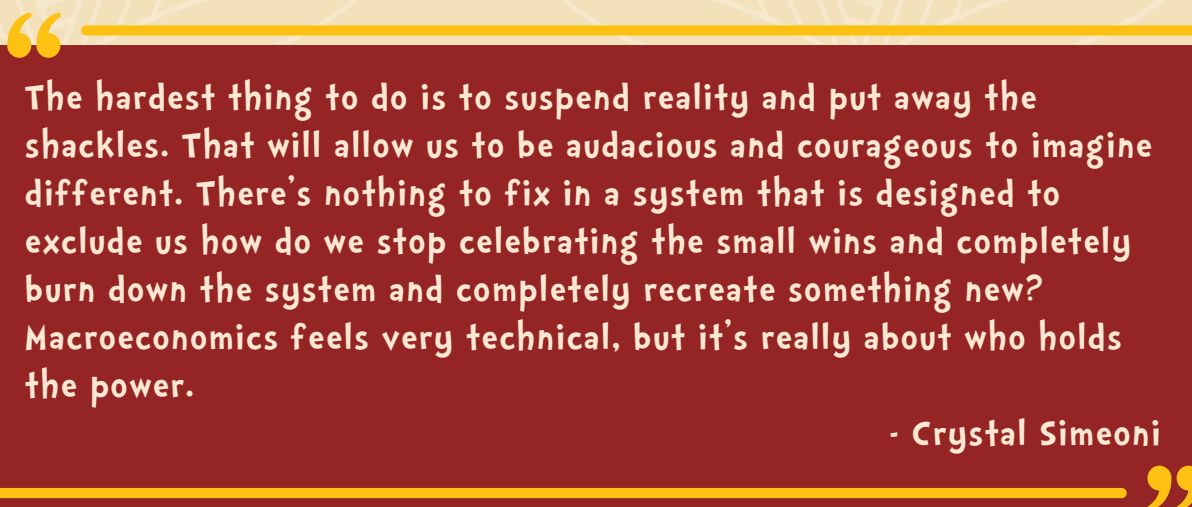
Transport impacts the ability to access decent work and other rights. It facilitates freedom of movement, with the lack of mobility impacting access to other rights including access to school, work, social and public life, and other essential services.



High fares and inefficient routing, including multiple stops and vehicle changes mean that women bear the cost, financially as well as in increased time pressure and overall stress for those who combine unpaid care and paid work.

Participants were asked to envision a gender transformative future in public service, within the realms of water and sanitation, healthcare, education, childcare, public green spaces and security. Participants were asked to think of an economy and a society that values care for people and the planet above all else, addressing multiple, intersecting forms of discrimination, ending gendered division of labor, promoting decent work, promoting bodily autonomy and freedom from violence.

Some of the imaginings were constrained by our realities, and the dysfunctional systems we operate in. Crystal and Aurea summed it up well, when they said:



The group on healthcare put on a play with two realities, one that reflected the dire state of health care (or lack thereof) in our countries, while the second was inspiring and set in Ubuntu Land. In the first, a mother comes to a health care facility with her newborn. She is ignored by the woman at the front desk and belittled. The care is costly, and neither the nurses nor the doctors pay too much attention to her, prescribing her medicine without examining her and listening to her concerns and symptoms. She is treated without decorum and respect.

In the second skit, the mother is received warmly by the receptionist who offers her free water, offers to have her baby taken to a day care while she gets checked. The nurses and doctors are attentive and kind, there are no fees for the care she receives, including free breakfast and daycare, the data systems are integrated, and she gets the care she needs. Most of all, she is received with respect and kindness and love.

One participant noted, "We need that care and love when we're sick. Our health care systems must love and care for us."

Another participant remarked to the group, "You showed us that it's possible – the journey to creating new possibilities is not only about what we can imagine in the future, but what we can change now for that future." – Wilson

Participants also shared positive stories in their countries of health care.

In Burkina Faso and Senegal, there is free healthcare up to the age of five, this includes for a C-section and vaccines, which are free and mandatory. In Mali, free family planning was just announced, although it hasn't yet been implemented fully. Insurance covers 70% for the individual and the family.





The last day of AFMA began with participants writing messages to their governments, inspired by 'Ubuntu land'.

Yassine Fall



While **Yassine Fall**, one of the pioneers of feminist-macroeconomics in Africa, an expert in economics and former presidential candidate, couldn't be with us in person, she spoke to AFMA 2021 via zoom. Despite a few technical glitches, Yassine shared some of her insights and experiences having been in the field for the past few decades. Much of what she spoke about was brought up in the first few days of AFMA 2021. She suggested that the emphasis of our conversations should be about 'Where we are and what to be done better 46 years since Beijing 1975'.

Yassine shared her frustrations over the fact that GDP, with all its shortcomings, is still used as a measure for development, completely excluding environmental concerns, care work, and emphasizing trade, open markets and foreign direct investment (FDI) which flows out of the country without the citizens benefiting. She suggested alternative measures such as Gross National Income (GNI) which helps to see what and who is both inside and outside the economy.

When governments cut spending on health, it results in cuts on women's reproductive health, shifting the responsibility of the State to women, who leave their activities to care for the sick. The use of their time, their health, access to health care – all of this must be brought into the economic dimension. Yassine challenged neoliberal ideals that open markets to foreign direct investments and push for the privatization of social services, maximizing their profits and minimizing their costs. She urged for us to organize against the constant mortgaging of women's lives, where women's lives were handed over to the market.

Yassine spoke of the importance of infrastructure, which not only referred to roads and highways, but to structures that enable people to live decent lives and access essential services. She gave the example of a train in Senegal that cost 1 billion CFA to build, while the second largest village doesn't even have one



kilometer of paved roads, and while it is host to the largest lake in the country, doesn't have any drinking water. She stressed the 'need to analyze policy analysis and practice...and link it to the reality of Africans, African women, to the life of the people, while being cognizant of the power dynamics at play.' Senegal was following the World Bank recommendations on "taxing faster, easier and larger", which meant taxing the poor and impacting women and marginalized populations.

Participants raised issues around the CFA and the politics of currency and lack of sovereignty that resulted in relying on money made elsewhere. It was suggested that the topic of social protection for domestic workers, which was brought up become a theme in a future AFMA. Yassine reiterated her call for participants to engage more deeply with issues of CFA as not only a francophone issue, but an African issue; privatization, land grabs and their impact on our ability to grow food that is good for us.

Coumba Toure



Coumba Toure, a feminist, a storyteller, coordinator of Africans Rising and the Board Chair of Trust Africa, urged participants to reflect on what next.

Speaking on a myriad of issues ranging from the debt crisis which kept Africans enslaved, to efforts to build solidarity, the normalization of violence and rape in particular with the recent high-profile cases in Senegal, she asked a number of pertinent questions. Who benefits when people fall sick? Where are the necessary investments to keep women healthy? How do we democratize water?

As a storyteller, she uses art as a means to heal, to express herself and produce stories to train new generations to think differently. She concluded with a poignant piece, *Time for Divorce*, speaking about divorce from capitalism and from the economy as it is now, and drawing a parallel between the fate of Africa in the global economy and how women are treated in society.





Time of Divorce

I am Africa

A woman in a forced marriage

Asking for divorce

I am tired of being raped and exploited.

I am standing angry through my vibrant youth,

Stone in hand, hunger in the belly fire in my mouth

My heart defying death on the land and in the sea

**Carrying in my mind the mad desire of being the best
and being happy**

I just turn against centuries of theft and rape...

Coumba Toure expressed her appreciation of Yassine Fall's work and reminded participants that they were what was needed, that what they were doing was what was needed. She encouraged them to take care of themselves and of each other in the process of the struggle.

Excerpts from an imagining of a society centered on care, love, kindness and solidarity written by Agazit Abate and produced by Nawi titled, 'In a Time not so Far Away' was read by a number of women, creating a beautiful atmosphere in the room.

AFMA 2021 concluded with certificates being handed out to each participant, accompanied by cheers and clapping and ululations and gratitude to FEMNET's Nicole and Trust Africa's Rouguiétou for the organization and planning of AFMA 2021.

Participants spent the afternoon, contributing to the local economy at the markets and appreciating history at the Museum of African civilizations.



PHOTO GALLERY



PHOTO GALLERY









AFRICAN FEMINIST MACROECONOMIC ACADEMY
The Audacity to Disrupt

**PROMOTING A FEMINIST APPROACH
TO DELIVERY AND FINANCING OF
PUBLIC SERVICES IN AFRICA**

FEMNET AFMA 2021 REPORT



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