

7TH CEO FORUM

ON LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE
FOR WOMEN LEADERS OF WOMEN'S
RIGHTS ORGANISATIONS IN AFRICA

CONVENING REPORT

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ACCRA, GHANA



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INTRODUCTION

AWDF's CEO Forum
a Capacity Building
Programme

African women's organisations have long been at the forefront in advancing and protecting the rights of African women, particularly through the ratification of protocols on the rights of women in Africa as seen in Kenya, Ghana and Uganda.

The CEO Forum and coaching programme, designed by African feminists, develops the individual and collective leadership skills of women leaders who are at different points in their careers (senior, mid-level and emerging). As a Capacity Building Programme, this space also addresses critical gap areas while strengthening institutional and governance structures and providing an enabling framework for their sustainability.

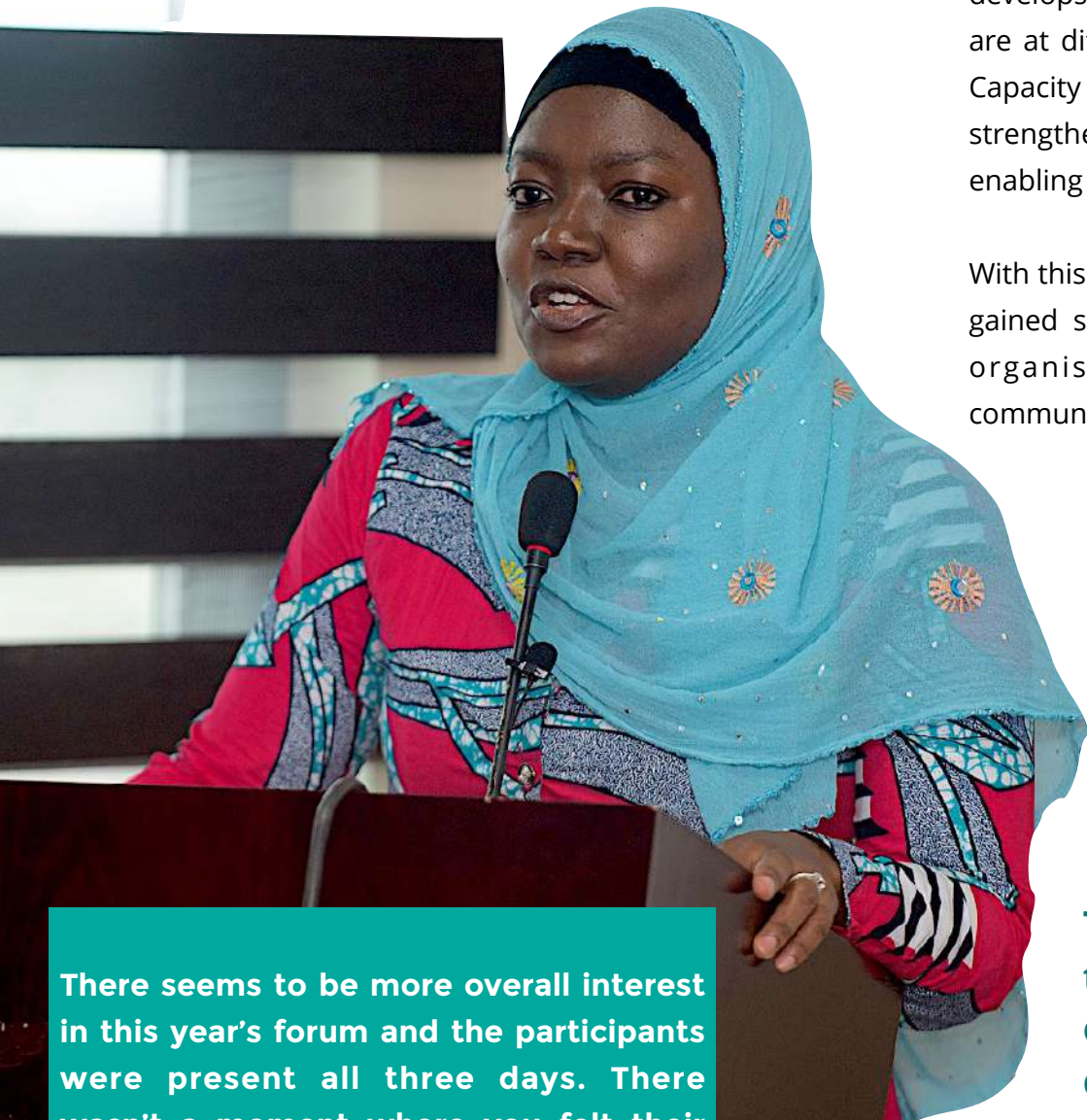
With this 7th CEO Forum and 4th coaching programme, we have over the years gained specialised knowledge of the persistent challenges African women's organisations contend with concerning resource mobilisation, communications, governance, leadership transition, safety and wellbeing.

At the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), we believe that well-grounded leaders in feminist values, ideology and clarity of purpose can accelerate the process of social justice and development effectively. Therefore, investment in both individual leaders and governance frameworks of African women's rights organisations is vital.

This CEO Forum and the coaching experience is truly a rare find. Normally such expertise would only be available to people working in a corporate structure.

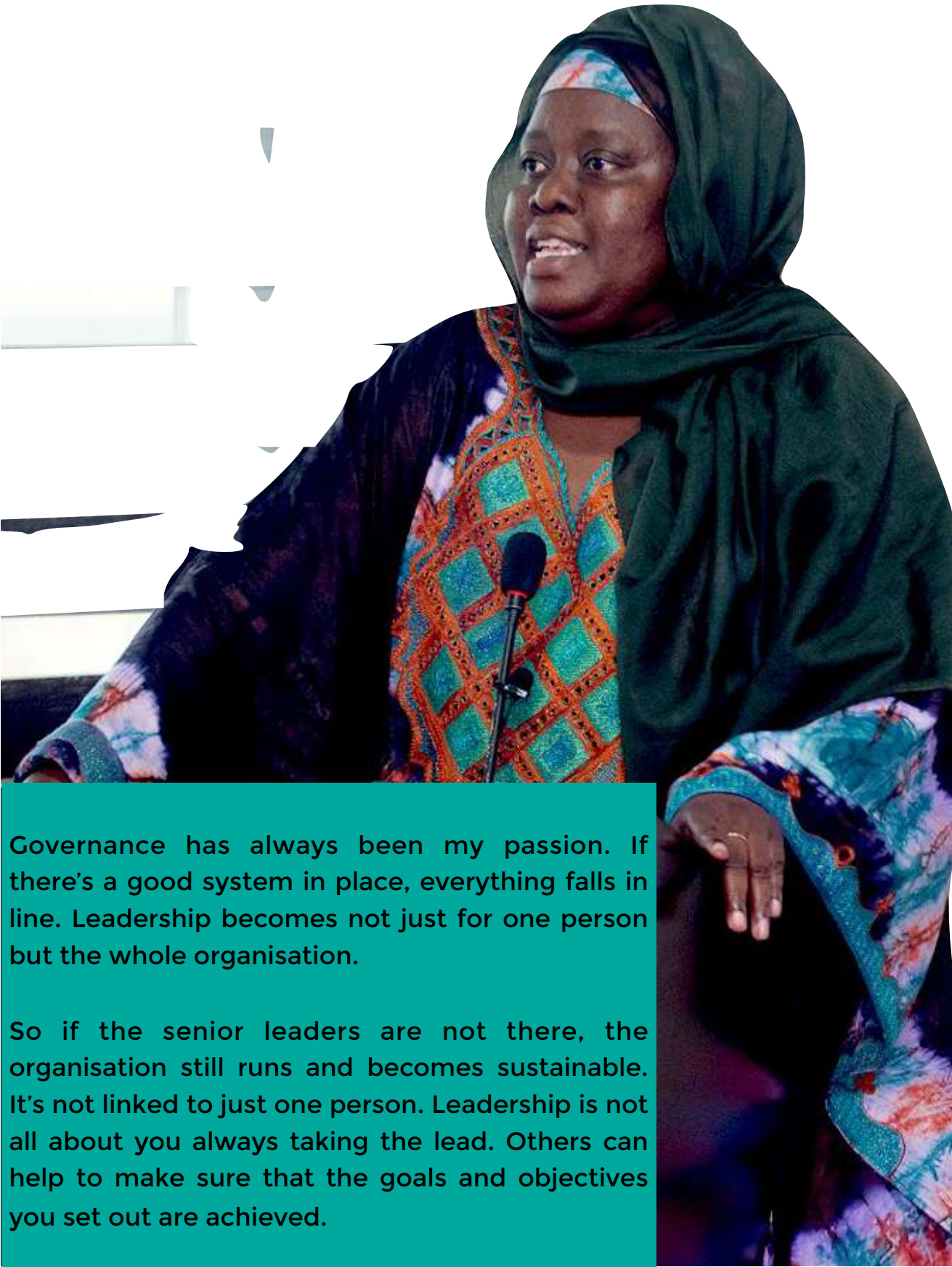
However, AWDF a pan-African feminist organisation that resources funds for women's organisations in **42 countries across Africa as well as multiple countries in the Middle East**, is invested in women's leadership because we centrally believe that women have the capacity and power to transform their own lives and communities.

We are honoured to have expert coaches Hope Chigudu, Paula Fray and Yene Assegid on this journey. A special thank you also to **Comic Relief and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF)** for support of the CEO Forum and Coaching Programme.



There seems to be more overall interest in this year's forum and the participants were present all three days. There wasn't a moment where you felt their energy levels were completely gone. They understood what was going on and where they did not, they asked questions. Overall, this group has been very interesting and we hope that they show as much commitment to the coaching programme as they have with the forum.

AYESHA ABUKARI
Capacity Building Assistant
AWDF



Governance has always been my passion. If there's a good system in place, everything falls in line. Leadership becomes not just for one person but the whole organisation.

So if the senior leaders are not there, the organisation still runs and becomes sustainable. It's not linked to just one person. Leadership is not all about you always taking the lead. Others can help to make sure that the goals and objectives you set out are achieved.

**AMINA ALHASSAN
BIN SALIH**
Capacity Building Specialist
AWDF



AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO BUILDING AFRICAN FEMINIST LEADERSHIP

On the first day of the forum, the meeting room bubbled with excitement. Women leaders from organisations across Africa - Zimbabwe, Malawi, Kenya, Uganda, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Ghana - were all gathered here. Brightly patterned fabrics, determined spirits, curious minds and passionate enthusiasm adorned the participants. For 3 full days we focused on building connections and capacities of African women leaders working diligently to secure rights for women and girls and sustain social change in their communities. The African Women's Development Fund's 7th CEO Forum is a programme customised each year to strengthen and sustain the personal and organisational development of African women leaders working at executive, mid-career and emerging stages. Designed as an African feminist capacity building methodology, the forum and 9-month coaching programme is a purposeful investment in developing individual and collective leadership structures in governance and communications for African women's organisations. Through this experience of meeting other women activists, we learn that we are not alone. We are all working together - each in our corners of the continent - to dismantle structures of inequality that limit and control the lives and choices of women and girls.

By claiming feminist activist practices, we own our right and responsibility as leaders. What does it mean to be a leader? During the forum, we identified leadership as a persistent process of transformation - to possess honesty, integrity, humility, bravery, good communication, dedication to something bigger than yourself, a willingness to think outside the box, a relentless commitment to service and, most importantly, a collective approach to power. This is a journey that is always expanding.

As a feminist principle, self-care is a necessary ritual for effective leadership. Although we already implement a variety of methods that ground personal joy and happiness in our lives such as cooking, spending time with loved ones, acting, singing, dancing, exercising, having an active spiritual life, and "adventuring" (as one participant shared), there are ways we can increase the frequency of self-care time, and plan for it as a priority in our lives. Indeed, the personal is political and change begins from within. We are learning to nurture and invest in our needs and desires so that we can be more available to our families, communities and organisations.

Feminism is a shared political, personal and collective practice of being transformed. Feminism is a practice of plurality - "Feminisms" - because there are many ways to express sisterhood and solidarity. As one participant expressed, feminism is a state of being. The manifold ways that women push for the world we want. We resist together "that which does not make us feel good" (Jessica Horn). That which strips us of our rights to be free as we choose, that which denies our humanity, dignity, respect, safety and limits our right to equal resources and opportunities on the base of our gender. Patriarchy runs our world and is a persistent system of control and power that values men over women. We are well aware of how pervasive and harmful patriarchy is - how it creeps or slams into our lives and that of our daughters, mothers, sisters, nieces, aunties, cousins, friends and neighbors. Due to how patriarchy constricts the lives of women in different yet intersecting ways, we practice **intersectionality**, intentional methods of solidarity and sisterhood across difference. We fight together and past our personal perspectives to confront sites of oppression affecting other women such as sex workers, women with disabilities, queer women and women-identified persons, women in resource-strapped conditions, and women living with HIV, among many others. **We are inclusive here.**

The coaching programme develops the activist leadership of African women's organisations and expands the feminist movement. Therefore, we are consistent and conscious about the leadership development process for ourselves and co-leaders within our organisations. Just as feminism is a question of gender and gender relations so is the coaching process a question about our current state of being and what new we are willing to embrace in our lives. If we commit to the process, we witness the rewards. This means we are persistent, aware and present about our vision, purpose and goals. This requires truth-telling, transparency and accountability. Coaches are guides for this development process, turning the mirror so we see our reflection and providing a safe space for the answers to emerge and growth to take shape.

**Over the three-day forum,
4 key questions kept ringing out like a bell:**

**Can we commit to the process of our own
development?**

**Can we prioritise ourselves and become fully
invested in the programme?**

**Can we permit ourselves to be honest,
vulnerable, open and able to dig deep?**

Can we allow ourselves to be transformed?

Feminism is primarily concerned with the question of gender and the questioning and resisting of unequal power structures. The things that feminism cares about are not static but living and the priorities change over time and place. A common misconception is that feminism began in western academia but this is not the case. It began within women's lives due to collective experiences that don't make us feel good but afraid and terrible. By being born a girl in this world, we are told we are a waste of money and no value unless as the property of boys and men. From birth, your body is determined as boy or girl and you are assigned what you can or cannot do. Gender inequality is based on sex and how our biological characteristics are classified as either female or male. This severely excludes those who are neither or more than female or male and it doesn't capture the full spectrum of sexuality (such as trans or intersexed persons). Feminism is viewed as a threat to our world because we are not behaving properly as women. We are taught to believe that everything about this prevailing power is right and good and we are resistant and oppositional to this because it doesn't reflect our realities.

Feminism and Women's Rights: To be able to make change we must believe and know that we have a right to. This is the first step in feminist consciousness. We also need genuine support and solidarity that is invested in women's wellbeing. There's no time for fake solidarity. This must be a clear and consistent practice. It is not for our own interests but for our sisters who are being exploited.

In the places where we come from, there are stories of women who flourish and have space to be. Women's power and leadership in Africa is often linked to a spiritual power deeply connected to protecting the people and allowing the land to flourish. Women's activism around our economies goes back so far. However, colonisation brought more power to men as well. Anti-colonial feminisms such as the Aba Women's Riots of 1929 in Nigeria are testament to that. Women have always been in the trenches fighting for independence and freedom against white imperialism and supremacy but also systems of sexism, rape, abuse and neglect experienced by African women.

Women's rights including contesting violence against women, building bodily choice and autonomy, access to sexual, reproductive health and wellness information and services, and providing safe space for queer women to exist and be. We continue to resist violence even within mixed-gender work environments on human rights, where sexism can also pervade. Therefore, we resource funds and opportunities for women-only spaces to exist especially for safety, support and non-harassment. We recognise that solidarity with men is most effective when men are open, honest and willing to deconstruct their power.



Patriarchy is the collective interest of men and power over women. With 1 in 4 women experiencing violence at some point in their lives, patriarchy is a historical system that creates certain stories about women in order to maintain power. These narratives detail who can or cannot be fully capable based on gender and sex. Women are also brought up in this world to be complicit with this patriarchy and to defend it to the detriment of their bodies, minds and

Intersectionality refers to women who are united in their fight against inequality through a common condition of oppression that is expressed through multiple, simultaneous and linked identities.

For instance, African women can be grappling with multiple sites of oppression such as women living with HIV or living in a resource-strapped rural or urban community where women are denied land rights. Intersectionality is understanding that human beings have created a system of power that makes us unequal in many ways. Through the matrix, feminist activists create a purposeful community of inclusivity for African women to implement and share solutions.



WOMEN WARRIORS OF GOVERNANCE

THEO SOWA
CEO of AWDF

shares critical expertise on constructing effective boards and governance structures

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE BOARD?

Strategic oversight

Practical monitoring of work completed by management and staff and

Guardian protecting the vision, mission and mandate of the organisation

The primary responsibilities of the board are to provide an efficient and effective system of checks and balances for the organisation to ensure that it is sustainable and on track.

The board operates as the guardian protecting the vision, mission and the mandate of the organisation and ensuring that the work of the organisation is reflected in the ethos of the vision. The board provides strategic oversight of organisational development to ensure that work plans and other activities match the strategic plan and mission. Practical monitoring of the work is also needed from the board and an ability to problem solve effectively. The board cannot work well without having good relationships with others in the organisation.

Ineffective boards operate in two ways - boards that do everything and interfere in the day to day operations of the organisation or boards that give too little and are not truly valuable because staff are doing everything.

Governance can make or break an organisation. It is often a feared topic and is often the last thing that is considered. Many don't consider governance's importance until they have to deal with it, and by then, it may be too late. This is a big danger - we need to think strategically and plan ahead for our organisations. That's why this space is imperative to share ideas between our organisations on different strategies we can use.

We handle governance every day and work with it on different scales (national, international, organisational, family and community). We have power in governance that is often underutilised. The beginning of governance starts with each member of the organisation, especially the staff who serve as the public face of your organisation. Governance is also about our financial transparency and how all staff members contribute to the integrity and accountability with our systems.

Let's take control of the power we do have. If you don't recognise your power, you'll have weak systems and structures in place. If there is too much power or ego by leaders within our organisations, things will also fall apart. We can take charge of our governance systems by completing periodic assessments of where we are now, how we plan to start and keep on track and deciding the direction we want to go. To do this means that we are building what Hope Chigudu terms "organisations with a soul" but we are also building soulful individuals and movements which is what is needed for social transformation to take place. **Let's be warriors when it comes to governance.**



"I was asked to sit on my first board in my early 20s. In the first meeting, everyone there was twice my age. I was the only Black person and there was only one other woman on the board.

The first couple of meetings was a nightmare. There's nothing worse than feeling like you've been put somewhere because you are a token. It really felt like that to me.

I was lucky because I had some very good friends and colleagues and we strategised about what I needed to learn outside of that board, how I needed to learn it and how to make allies to ensure I was making an impact. It was a really lonely and frightening experience. I wish the organisation I was working with at the time had done more to prepare me for that board experience."

How do you maneuver and work within these types of spaces? Sitting on a board can be an important learning experience that provides a different working perspective for you.

Never underestimate how much African women's expertise is needed because we are really underrepresented on boards. For every civil society activist, it is important to sit on a board (private, public sector, the type doesn't matter). This can help with understanding different types of leadership outside the scope of your everyday job. How do you encourage other leaders in your organisation and support them to serve as leaders in other contexts)? Do you give staff space to deal with their board commitments? Do you have supervisors to help staff understand where they can serve on boards and how to do so? How do you build solidarity on a board?

Sitting on boards now, I've learned how to negotiate and challenge. Seek support from peers to be prepared to change and implement agendas. If you are the only Black woman on the board, you can plan to bring in other Black women and change the way that board is constructed. This should be part of the agreement you make beforehand - to negotiate for the doors you want to open before the deal is done. When joining a board or dealing with your organisation's board, think about what you bring to the table and what you need to learn (for example, technical expertise, ways of thinking, passion, and belief systems).

Be prepared to learn in new areas and think through how this builds our collective experience as African women leaders. If we are stuck on individualism, we undermine our capacities for transforming the lives of women. We are not nurturing futures for millions. We need to be more collective in our work (governance and implementation) and together we can change systems. Our agenda is to challenge social inequality with feminist integrity, ethics, sisterhood and collective action.

The African Women's Development Fund doesn't stand not alone. We are part of a movement of African women's organisations determined to break down the gender barriers haunting our continent. **The more we work together, the more powerful we can be.**

MANAGING BOARD ISSUES

Board manual with clear guidelines on responsibilities and expectations

Provide clarity on roles for board members, management and staff

How do you differentiate between board and management level decisions?

The board helps to see where the challenges are but management and staff work out solutions to the issues. It is important for staff to provide pertinent information to the board to guide the vision, mission and strategic plan of the organisation.

The board manual is a key document to guide this process because it provides clarity. It will tell you the requirements for board members – what expertise is needed, how often to meet and what they are expected to do. Include what an effective board member is very clearly and the terms of office. Board term reminders can be updated at each board meeting or once a year so that all members are accountable. Having transparent board terms helps to get rid of ineffective board members and gets in new blood with different ideas. Overstaying board members can affect your integrity and ability to secure expanded resources for your organisation. The sooner you identify something isn't working, the earlier you can work on a solution. If members don't adhere to the guidelines, the manual will outline the procedures for removal from the board. It takes strength and determination to stick to what you've outlined in your board manual. Also detail the specific responsibilities of board, management and staff for optimum working relations. This helps you work out the gaps, indicators and learnings.

Having a good chair on the board helps to monitor the values of the board and what they offer and to keep the other board members in touch. The chair can act as a mediator especially between the board and staff. The main function of the board as a checks and balance system for the organisation means that the CEO cannot also serve as board chair because this is a conflict of interest and severely limits the value and effectiveness of your organisation. network sharing, promotion, volunteering, etc.

Note that network boards are harder to manage because there are different parameters at work. For instance, is the person participating as an individual or a representative of the organisation? Network boards can be tricky because, at times, you don't get the commitment that you need to make the network effective and sustainable. **All in all, it's necessary to provide clear terms and conditions about the type of board and their particular constitution within the manual.**

Engage board members on a regular basis so that they feel like they are learning, connected to what's happening in the organisation and feel appreciated for their efforts. Plan board engagements purposefully with staff (organisational visits, staff presentations at board meetings, skills sharing sessions, etc). The Executive Director or CEO must work with the board chair and members to make sure communication is strong and things are going on well. Appraisal systems are needed for the board to identify what works, what doesn't, and what must be learned to grow? Review the board through self-assessments or a mediated process with a facilitator. If there are certain types of knowledge needed to improve the board, put that requirement in the manual.

The topic of payment to board members can be a really divisive one. Payment terms really depend on the rules and laws of each country but payment is not a typical practice for African civil society boards which are usually voluntary positions. Payment questions by board members shows a lack of commitment on the part of the person. However, payment for travel, food and lodging for board meetings is a standard practice.

Boards can be excellent in raising resources for organisations but that expectation must be made clear from the beginning. "Give or Get" is a practice instituted for AWDF's Board of Directors where they provide 250 USD payment each year to the fund either in payment, network sharing opportunities, volunteering, promotion, or in-kind donations that amount to this value. Therefore, you don't want to exclude qualified candidates from your board because they don't have money to give because they may have other valuable resources to offer instead.



SELECTING COMMITTED AND PASSIONATE BOARD MEMBERS

Construct a diverse set of committed board members with different strengths

To choose your board effectively, you have to plan and look ahead. Have a list of the criteria you want and that you want to avoid. It's important to note that friends and family board members can be a pathway to disaster if they are ineffective. if they are incapable of bringing something unique and valuable to the table, this can be a potential conflict of interest and undermine our work in serious ways. Therefore, appoint members with clarity, transparency and integrity.

You want a board that is united in working together but who don't agree on every single thing. You need a board that knows how to work together in their diverse expertise and perspectives. There are a number of resources on the Internet with guidelines on how to choose a board so explore options and research on this. Have a diverse set of members that stretch and push you to grow. It is important to make sure everyone has the same underlying, core values and principles and commitment to the organisation even as they think and contribute differently on organisational effectiveness.

What types of strategic and organisational expertise do you need on your board (for example, finance, programmatic, MEL, principles and values)? What do you need to climb? Be sure to include experts in relevant fields but also include the stakeholders that your organisation works with who can provide a different grounding. Involve people who will keep the organisation grounded and honest.

Create a list of people featuring the best possible candidates for board positions. Ask members of sister organisations for advice or network sharing information. Make individual asks to candidates or organisations that headhunt for possible board members. Consult other recommendations so you have the technical and soulful expertise from board candidates who exemplify the principles and values of your organisation. You want as wide a pool as possible so that you have choices. Don't discriminate by only having those who look and sound like you. Create a truly constituent board not targeting potential candidates who can offer different perspectives on class, geography, rural and urban conditions, disability, health and wellness, LGBTQI issues, young women rights, and more.

WOMEN WARRIORS OF GOVERNANCE

Participants detail their visions of effective governance, experiences in best practices and organisational challenges to tackle.

EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

Each person’s point of view is included and everyone contributes to the solution-making process.

Coworkers are committed and motivate one another by sharing ideas.

Staff work together to set principles and a shared vision.

Human resources are skilled and professional.

Timeliness, good communication and a supportive board

Clear delegation of responsibilities

The board understands the vision and mission of the organisation.

CHALLENGES

Limited Time

Need to build staff and board

No systems or structures in place to handle communications or MEL budget needs.

Mechanisms needed to assess how effectively we are responding to our stakeholders.

Resources needed to scale up work (strengthen existing programmes and create new programmes).

Transportation and Internet access and other issues of working in rural communities.

Complacency

Meeting needs and expectations of stakeholders within work plans (including communications, capacity building, monitoring, evaluation and learning).

Not effectively tapping into expertise available.

No terms of board office stated clearly.

BEST PRACTICES

High level of involvement by the Board of Directors

Feminist board and executive leadership that is experienced in different sectors and engage in participatory management.

Board manual with clear guidelines

Women speaking out on issues affecting them like SGBV with men joining in to push these messages.

Increase clubs in schools for information dissemination.

Good working relationships with strong team spirit and unity.

Information sharing and awareness

Independence



This exciting live talk show moderated by Paula Fray showcases how the AWDF CEO Forum and Coaching programme made the difference for two Ghanaian women executive leaders and their organisations.

KEY COACHING EXPERIENCES

DEBORAH: I created 2 organisations, the first is Golden Baobab, an NGO that supports African writers and illustrators of children's literature (Golden Baobab). The second is a publishing company that produces high quality contemporary children's stories by African writers and illustrators. I started Golden Baobab at the age of 19 as a college student.

I grew up in Ghana and received a scholarship to study in the U.S. After graduation, I moved back home and one of my mentors in the states suggested that I apply for a highly competitive social enterprise grant. There were thousands of applicants across the world but they selected 20 people and I was one of the recipients. This was a very high level opportunity that exposed me to so many things. From there, I received other fellowships and opportunities that were beyond my years.

Very few people in Ghana understood where I was at this time as many of my peers were at a different stage in life – completing national service and entering the workforce. My challenges and ambition looked mad to them. There was also a disconnect with the coaching I was receiving from the U.S., often from white men sharing methods on fundraising practices that didn't work in this context precisely because they couldn't fully grasp my experiences as an African woman.

The CEO Forum and coaching programme was an incredible and transformative experience. Meeting my coach, Hope Chigudu, was like meeting a soulmate or a kindred spirit. Over the past 2 years, there are things that she told me that I keep repeating to myself. I received key lessons like "Don't let the challenges or people you meet steal your confidence." I went through a number of challenges with hiring and staff turnover which made me feel I was the problem. Maybe I'm trying to do too much. I should limit my ambition.

My coach said, 'All your dreams are valid and you can do them. You started when you had nothing and if you were able to do all those things then, now that you have more maturity, knowledge, skills and networks, you can do even more.' Never get to a point where you think you can't do more than you have done. You are capable of more than you can imagine. You can do more because the person you are now is greater than you've ever been. These words have seen me through every challenge and to the next level. The impact of my coaching relationship is something I cannot quantify. **The value of building a community of people who are in the same space as you are is very high so you should take advantage of it.**

HOW THE PROGRAMME WORKS PRACTICALLY

WEDADU: This is structured to be a very convenient and flexible programme adjusted to the schedules that you and your coach have. We spoke online, mostly through email exchanges but also Skype calls and WhatsApp chats. It's not all about assignments. My coach shared lots of information, resources and opportunities to increase my knowledge and access. My coach always had time for me. She never got discouraged even when I disappointed her.

It is not a straightjacket kind of programme so try and make time for these exchanges and give it the needed attention. Every information and email communication is important so engage well so you get the most out of it. Work on the recommendations from your coach. Make time to comment, contribute to the discussion and share feedback so that others can also benefit from your experiences.

WEDADU: I am from Tamale in the Northern region of Ghana. I met my coach while working for Women Support Activist Group (WOSAG). My expertise is in supporting women and girls to address the gender gap inequalities in education and health within rural communities. I work to improve access to sexual and reproductive health services and economic and livelihood opportunities for rural women and girls. It is this passion that drives me because hidden leaders exist in Africa's rural communities.

The coaching programme has been a life changing experience for me. I was a board member in WOSAG when I first met my coach. She saw great potential in me but I was hiding in my corner. She wouldn't let me go. That was what caught me. Her persistent determination in me. She encouraged me to consider the ED position. And it just so happened that our ED resigned and the position fell to me to take up.

I took a lot of things for granted when I began the programme but I was exposed to certain daily routines needed to build my leadership. She helped me understand the need for a personal strategic plan and gave me direction as to how to develop this. She helped me to separate between the need for strategic plans for my personal development and that of the organisation. There is a need for both.

How many of us remember our childhood dreams where when you wake up it doesn't go?

Where are you and what have you done to contribute to your daily personal development? This should be something you consider in the morning and night, something you review every day to measure the rate of changes that are being made and to evaluate your progress towards achieving your goals. This will guide your direction as a leader and will affect the development of your organisation. Treat the process with the same respect you approach your Bible or Koran. We need to document these processes and be ritualistic with our daily practice like our religion or anything else.

FEMINIST COACHING BUILT TO LAST

In Conversation with
Deborah Ahenkorah
and Wedadu Sayibu

FEMINIST COACHING

BUILT TO LAST

ADVICE TO FIRST-TIME COACHEES



DEBORAH: This is happening also as your life is in progress which can be busy and chaotic. Don't let one failed expectation hold you back from keeping consistent. The programme is designed to factor these things in. Don't drop off. If you fall, get back up and continue. The programme is designed to meet you where you are. What I learned from this process is that we are our organisation's biggest assets as leaders. We as women are also the biggest assets to our families and our dreams. Think about your organisation's biggest assets. Imagine how you care and protect for those assets. It has to be the same with yourself. This opportunity has come to enhance you and your organisation. Growing yourself at this level of transformation is unlike anything else happening in your life. What you get from this will transcend all the challenges, so be really clear on your priorities. As I get older, I am now thinking about how my organisations can grow with me instead of the focus being me growing with the organisations. As my life changes, I want to see how my organisations grow with me. How do we protect and serve ourselves to do more? There's nothing else within the next 9 months, that will give you this ripple effect of benefits. What you get from this, you can't put a value on it.

This coaching programme is an opportunity you may never get again as an African woman leader because these women understand the whole of who you are.

WEDADU: The strategic plan provides a direction for the organisation especially through structural changes that happen over time. It helps to deal with shifts and transitions as they happen (internal and external, expected and unexpected). We were able to review our board and to get organised with a structure. We now have a strategic plan and a board manual.

Reflection is very key on a daily basis. My coach asked me, how spiritually grounded am I? She showed me how a practice of personal development will help me spiritually. It takes dedication and commitment to stick with it like exercise.

How often do you reflect in a day? Does this process provoke something in you? It should because your personal strategic plan is a living document that you will review and return to again and again. As your vision or mission shifts, make the changes also in your personal and organisational strategic plans.

BALANCING MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPING COLLECTIVE LEADERSHIP

DEBORAH: Everyone has strengths and weaknesses. The program will help you be the best version of yourself. As an ideas person, my coach reassured me that my ideas are valid even if crazy and unconventional. This validated me and gave me the space to be myself and to self-correct along the way.

WEDADU: It boils down to negotiation. We don't live in isolation so you take in the feelings of others who are impacted by those decisions. I may have to sacrifice part of my vision to include others and their desires and needs. Other times, you have to be assertive and not lose sight of what is at stake. It's all about sacrifice and compromise.

WEDADU: Trust with my coach was very easy and natural because informally, we had already built a relationship when I was a board member. She's someone you can easily bond with. She finds space in you to create that relationship even though I had an issue with procrastination. Initially, I remember we wanted to paint a good image of our organisation by focusing only on our achievements. But you can't hide the issues and challenges you have. This process is about strengthening your organisation so you have to be honest and straightforward to get better. By doing so, you can increase the number of resources and funding available to your organisation because you have done the work. **If you hide your challenges, the coach can't really help you and be effective with a diagnosis.**

DEBORAH: I let go of internalising mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes and it's not personal – my coach helped me understand this. Coaches are like doctors with the ability to heal so you should approach it like that. Go to it with that mindset and come out whole.

ORGANISATIONAL MENTORSHIP AND THE LIFE-WORK BALANCE

DEBORAH: We haven't formalised mentorship as a programme within my organisations but it is coordinated informally through work meetings and on-the-job training. It happens naturally.

As far as a life-work balance, approaches in self-care and love are important and radical ideas we kept hearing in the 2014 forum. I learned that is okay to prioritise yourself. The coach can help with strategies and ideas with balance especially in the face of chaos.

CREATING A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR COACH

WEDADU: The programme is structured in phases to focus on the personal and organisational aspects. Coaching also makes room to grow the leadership of other persons in your organisation outside of the program such as staff, volunteers and interns. This addresses sustainability issue in some ways. Mentorship is not formalised in my organisation but we interface mentorship opportunities between our board and staff.

Project participants also benefit from this kind of cross-scale mentorship. **Planning is key to better see the indicators and to minimise the impact of challenges.**



On Day 2 of the CEO Forum, Media and Communications Coach, Paula Fray, led participants through a training and mock media interviews to practice, reflect and learn how to be an effective storyteller. In a basic understanding of how communication works, the Sender encodes messages for the reviewer who decodes the message. But you have to get feedback from the receiver that they understand the message. Effective communication is not that I speak but that people understand and buy into the message.

How do you communicate? Face to face, email, social media, pamphlets? When engaging in public speaking, first you have to fight through the noise in the room, possibly because you are a woman speaking to men. Get rid of the noise before you communicate. This can get in the way of your message if people have turned off. We begin to speak for ourselves when there are issues we are passionate about. The training is a grounding of our activist purpose in working to embolden marginalised voices.

The Internet is affecting how we communicate in the world. We are visual and we watch to consume information. In fact, YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world with 1.3 billion users, 300 hours of video uploaded each minute and 5 billion videos watched every day. People are not reading or looking at TV like they used to. How do you get news today? Is it through your phone, radio, TV or social media? As smartphones become cheaper, Internet expands to more global users. In Africa, more people access Internet on phones than a laptop or PC. The format that people choose to receive their communications is important for understanding reception.

This is the era of the mobile. Apps are important. 79% of all smartphone users check their devices 15 minutes after waking up. Apps work because they assess the habits and patterns of users. Understand where your platform is and how to reach them. What platforms are your stakeholders using and how do you connect with them better through digital and social media? Perhaps there are ways to work with media to investigate issues and be more effective. There are numerous opportunities to strengthen and deepen your message and storytelling practices through social media. This extends your message to a wider audience and reinforces what you are saying. You can create a Livestream event on Facebook Live and promote an event or activity by your organisation. Target social media posts to specific audiences geographically (3-4 updates a day) and learn more about your stakeholders.



DEVELOPING KEY MESSAGES

Right at the beginning, find a focus. This is your headline. What is the vision of your organisation? This is your key message which must be linked to what you do.

Don't have more than 3 key points so you don't lose your audience. A well-evidenced argument backs up your headline.

Ask yourself,

Who am I trying to talk to?

What am I trying to say?

What platforms does my audience use?

How do they use the information and interact with it?

Identify how they find information. Use media as a channel to that audience.

Media interviews are a viable way to get your message across. You are the expert and you can steer the interview your way since you know the contexts. An editorial or opinion piece in a newspaper is 13x more valuable than an ad. At the end of the interview, the journalist should have a story and you have shared your key messages.

Communication is central to getting people to understand the vision and achievements of your organisation. How does your organisation and activities stand out and make a difference? Sustainable messaging is how to get journalists interested outside of main events and activities. How do you extend the message after the event is over? You will need to have a very clear message.

LEGACY MEDIAS and NEW MEDIAS

Radio has the biggest reach.

TV is preferred because of visual impact.

Print still is regarded as an influencer. Newspapers give you context and tell you what to think about. What happens in print ends up on radio and TV and influences how the story is being told. Print is the place where research begins often.

Online media is a tool for building relationships especially those who are afar. Social media is good for relationship building with project participants, donors, and partner organisations.

Media is used to inform and engage, share ideas and bolster advocacy. If you are strategic in your communications, you can reach your target audience.



GOING FOR MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Avoid “noisy” clothing and jewelry that is distracting. Avoid black and white and go for pastel colors that won’t pixelate on camera during interviews.

Women can cross their leg at the ankle if wearing a skirt or dress.



PRESENTATION SKILLS

Your tone of voice and body language are more important than what you are saying.

You should appear professional, informal, relaxed and well-groomed. You want to be comfortable with what you are wearing so you can focus on what you want to say.

Use open body language and your hands to reinforce the points you are making. Don't distract viewers by using too much hand movement or covering your face when talking.

Is the person interviewing you bored, engaged or confused? Read the signs.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS

BRIDGING

Use this technique when you want to bring the interviewer back to your key message again and again.

Incorporate the question into your insert linking back to your key message.



FLAGGING

Use this technique to empahsise your point. Your critical points are also the journalist's critical points.

“The most important thing to remember is...”

“The key thing is...”

If you are asked an open question, you get to decide how to approach the situation and how best to answer the question.

“As coaches, we build a love train and ride with you to answer some fundamental questions.

Why is it so difficult to respect ourselves like we respect others?

Why do we honor contracts at work or with others but not ourselves?

We start with you. Where are you?

What is your current way of being and how far are you willing to go?

What is your story and what do you want to do with it?”

- HOPE CHIGUDU



1. Coaches are guides assisting women leaders to move from Point A to Point B.

It takes years to complete coaching training and there are many different approaches global practitioners use. The coach is not a therapist, consultant, teacher or guru and she can an expert working outside your fields of work. The coach stands by as you work through the process of change. This helps you to reflect and take a bit of distance from your life so that you can bring out your potential and abilities.

2. Coaching moves you from your current reality to your desired reality.

We have to know where we want to go so that we can make a plan to get there. Where do you want to go and in what timeframe? What are practical and realistic targets? Your coach helps you assess your progress as you go so you can achieve your goals faster and in the most efficient time. The coach is not there to give you answers. The answers are within you and you must own the knowledge. The coach helps to pull out your deeper meanings so that you can process all that you are able to do.

3. Coaching will oblige you to get out of your comfort zone.

If your ambition doesn't scare you, you are not thinking big enough. This awakening of consciousness directly connects the choices we make today to the future we envision for ourselves. Of course, you will experience vulnerability because you are at risk of failing. Failure and taking risks allows you to learn more and grow. Don't shut down - try and share information as much as possible with your coach about how you are feeling. The coach helps with reflection to assess and reach your potential. She encourages and supports you through this vulnerability so that you can stretch yourself and do more. It can be a scary learning process but you will grow and that's why we do it.

4. The coach reminds you of your promise to yourself to stay on track.

When you begin to feel lost, the coach helps you remember with questions like “What is the big plan?” This can help shape your thinking process to commit to a blueprint of your own making and get the best results. Coaching helps to make the link between where you are, where you want to be and how to best get there. With your coach, you will create an individualised formula for life success.

5. Own your decisions.

Coaching is not about validation or getting approval. What is the result you want? Where are you today and what do you value? Is there coherence between your values, beliefs and behaviors? The coach is the check and balance. In order to have that, you have to plan and complete a number of steps. This begins with reordering our values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviors to achieve effective results. Be as comprehensive and clear as possible about what you want to achieve. We can co-create our futures proactively by learning from the past and engaging differently with the future. Ask yourself, at the end of your life what do you want to achieve? How do you want to be remembered? What choices must be made to get there?

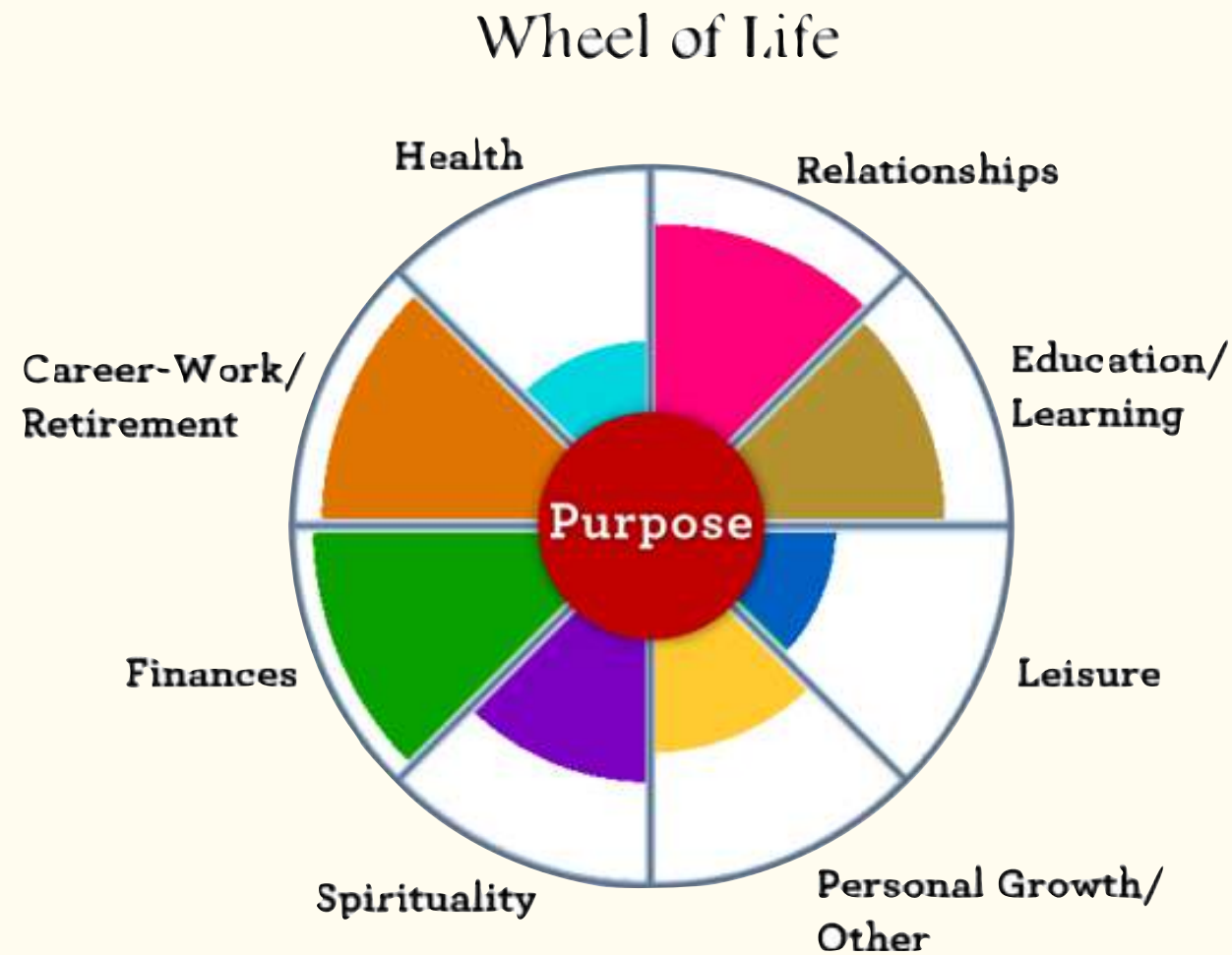
THE AWDF COACHING PROGRAMME

Coaches Hope Chigudu and Yene Assegid share with participants how African feminist coaching can transform the lives and work of women leaders on the continent .

6. The coach keeps you accountable with love.

With your coach, you define a strategy to ensure accountability. The feedback that comes is for your own good and welfare. It may be hard to take but it is for you. There is no judgement or attempts to “fix you”. It is important to maintain timely appointments with your coach. Show up when you're supposed to. The coach blocks out 3 hours and this time is precious. Therefore, the coach will not chase you for responses. Fully own the process, opportunities and consequences of your own personal and professional development.

6 STEPS ON EMBRACING THE COACHING EXPERIENCE



The Wheel of Life exercise is used to assess our current reality as a means of reflecting on our desired reality and how best to attain it.

Participants will meet with 1-2 chosen partners from other women's organisations on a periodic basis (physically or online) to check in on progress achieved. The exercise helps us to be more self-aware and also to help other sisters to be aware and push towards their goals. AWDF Coach Yene Assegid shared that we can also do self-assessments on a daily or weekly basis to push ourselves forward with small steps toward change.

This exercise is part of a tool-seeking process to plan better in each area of our lives. Everything is in balanced and interconnected. This is also a great way to repel toxicity and stress and to walk away when needed. Yene detailed how we can give ourselves time - at least 15 minutes in the morning and/or evening - to quiet down. This time is just for us to unwind, de-stress, repel toxicity and take care of ourselves. Tasks like email can be time crunchers so we were encouraged to find ways to effectively answer emails so it doesn't take a lot of time (such as scheduling specific check times during the day to complete).

1

With a **Feminist Consciousness** we claim the rights to our bodies and souls through the building of an inclusive and strong sisterhood. It is what we are entitled to as human beings. What you decide to do with your body is political. What we are wearing expresses our personality. Are you wearing what you wear to express yourself or what society expects of you?

2

Curiosity keeps us asking questions. If you are not excited about the next phase, something is wrong. Pessimism kills everything. There has to be joy in the process. Use optimism as a resource to achieve the objectives.

3

Consistency is all about working the program consistently so that you reap the benefits. What you put in, is what you get out of it.

4

Shed off some of your work responsibilities to engage the program fully. Who in your organisation and in your life can you share tasks? This is also an opportunity to trust others and develop their leadership.

5

Be dependable. Coaches are not evaluators so don't try to cover up things. Be open and honest with the coaches who are trained to respect and protect the confidentiality of your engagements. Trust the system, process and the journey for the shift to take place. Trust the coach and yourself.

6

Meet with your coach when you are supposed to and set aside 3 hours (an hour for the session and an hour before and after the session for reflection). Allot adequate time for the process. Stay in touch with your coach

“I’ve been thinking so long for other people. Now it is time to start thinking for and about myself.”

Nangobi Joyce Rosemary
Slum Women's Initiative for Development
Uganda



**YENE
ASSEGID**

SELF-CARE

for Leaders is a necessary, feminist and loving practice.

Creating Synnergy in your Life and Work with Time Management, Reflection and Relaxation

Punctuality and time management are measures of a good leader. Do you have a written daily agenda? There's value to a written paper agenda. This becomes a track record of what you have done that year. Your time management is record evidence of your life and the best way to know what you have done. If you don't have a diary, you can make mistakes and commit to things you won't be able to do. When planning your time, know that if you take up something new, you have to remove something. Sometimes, it is necessary to say no. Respect your time and others will as well.

Reflection and journaling is an important part of the coaching programme. Use a journal to write your thoughts out. Using this method can help you to feel lighter so you don't carry a lot of weight. A regular meditation process can help your brain to forget time and focus on space and presence, so that you can let go and start again fresh. Let the thoughts run and don't chase them or build on it. Nature can be a powerful restart button. Self-care and relaxation is also imperative for this process of reflection. Give yourself permission to take time off especially when it is time for sleep. This means no TV, phone, tablet or other electronic device in your bedroom because this can disturb you when you want to rest and sleep. Do not stimulate your brain in the evening when you want to calm down and relax.

Ultimately, the change is more sustainable when the answer comes from within. The coach helps you uncover the answers that are clearly within you. Coaches help you peel off the gray layers but only you can make the decision and commitment to change. The coach can help encourage you but cannot make you institute the changes.

Two participants were inspired by the events of the forum and created songs for the space. We erupted in musical joy singing these songs on the second and third days of the forum.

We will listen carefully
to each other's dreams;
We will hold space for you to explore
your hearts, ambition, and goals
We will be the light that shines when
you need it most.

And when times are tough
in your life or organisation,
Reach out and
Remind us of this day,
of the sound of atmosphere
of sisterhood and of the light that shines when we get
together.

Now, everybody close your eyes,
Reach both hands high into the sky,
Feel this vibration, this love that can
be seen from space.

Perlagia Tafadzwa Kapuya
Zimbabwe

African women
Are we together?

We are one!
Oh we are together

Oh we are one!
(Call and Response)
*Repeat with different African countries
(i.e. Kenyan women, Liberian women, etc.)*

Nangobi Joyce Rosemary
Uganda

As leaders, we have to rise up. Get the power to stand strong against patriarchal power. Stand firm and talk about what affects us as women. We also have power in relation to our governments. Communication is important as a leader to articulate the principles and values, vision and mission of your organisation.

From yoga, I've learned the importance of leading with joy. If you lead with fear, no one will follow you. If you are not confident, you won't be able to express yourself well.

We don't stop to see that rest and reflection is also a key part of work.

I want to work very hard to be a great feminist leader and focus on myself so I dream loud. There's confidence and skill in me to reach out and change the world.

You can't give what you don't have - you become a desert this way.

Sisterhood and solidarity make feminism

If you don't have power within, you can't deal with external structures of power. Collective power is the answer. Work on yourself and cultivate the gardens of your power through exercises guided by your coach.

REFLECTIONS

Participants express their key takeaways from the CEO Forum.

We are working on our own corners in our countries doing work and thinking we are the only ones. But meeting sisters here, I realise it is not only I who has a passion to change women's lives. There is a collaborative effort at work without us even knowing which is amazing.

Stop, reflect, assess what is working and what is not working.

TESTIMONIES

Participants reveal their excitement, commitment and expectations for the Coaching Programme.

PERES ABEKA

Executive Director

Young Women Campaign Against AIDS
Kenya

The experience has been an inspiring one. I have really learnt a lot from the presenters as well as from my fellow women leaders. What I really liked most was being the day with exercise – yoga. It gave us energy to go throughout the day which I think was really a passionate point I would make that any training for leaders begin with an exercise because it gives us energy. For me, it was time for a break because it has been very hectic, doing so many things at the same time, having sleepless nights. As much as it was a learning opportunity, it also gave me that break that I needed. I'm really grateful to AWDF for organising this and I hope that the coaching over the next 9 months will help me to be a better person.

I'm excited about the coaching because I know it will make a long lasting impact on myself as a person and a leader in charge of an organisation and governance. As leaders, we have a responsibility with governance because it is the engine. I'd like to appreciate the fact that I was able to bring someone else. I realised the need for mentoring and coaching for my organisation because I'd like to exit at some point. But exiting without someone to there to carry forward the mantle is almost like doing nothing. Key people within the organisation died. There was a point where the organisation was on its knees. We were bringing in new people into the organisation with less experience – people who were not highly educated. So we really needed a capacity building opportunity like this. It was an opportunity to see Eunice (coworker) really unleash the strength that she has. I hope to participate in other opportunities – and even more so – for my team.

BETTEA ESSAY MONGER

Executive Director

Women's Solidarity & Development Inc.
Liberia

My experience was all about good governance and bold preparation. Governance is about staff and board working together with one understanding because one cannot work without the other – it is the two to make a better organisation and a better nation. I met different women from different countries – we know we are all from Africa and we are all one. I'm so proud to be with them because I gained other experiences sharing with them ideas and I'm very grateful for that.

One of the most important things I want to share with my staff is about the setting up of the board because our board never properly set up. I'm really happy to learn about it because we were never had any problems. We knew some things but we didn't know much. So when I get back to the office I want to share this information and focus on our board. Now we are going to change those things that are not working and stay with those who have the mind for the organisation – to see the upliftment of our dream – we will go with them.

KULIMBAMTIMA CHIOTCHA

Senior Project Officer

Drugs Fight Malawi
Malawi

I have been involved in a capacity building forum before but in a different structure. I was involved for a day or 2, you learn the basics but this one will be a long one that you can attach to your cause. The coach helps you assess how much you're moving forward. This is my first time with a coach. This is an eye-opener and I'm hoping to learn a lot at the end of the period.

One thing I will take back home is strong communication between management and the board. We undermine that important aspect of governance. The other thing would be to stand firm as a feminist, to know that I am not alone, and I don't have to be alone and we should speak as a collective voice. The issue of trying to fight patriarchy as a group and communication with the board are the key things I will have to work on.

Yesterday when we were discussing effective governance, I laughed with my colleague because a lot of things we thought we were doing well, we realised we were not. That's where we've shared quite a lot of our experience here, we have realized that many of things are not being done effectively. I have an idea on how to change this and that would be to constantly communicate with the board and it should be 2-way so if there are issues that board members would let us know. This starts with effective channels of communication with your board.

VALNORA EDWIN

Executive Director

Campaign for Good Governance
Sierra Leone

This has been a mind-opening experience. I think of a quote that says, It's not about you but it's all about you. It's not anything personal about you but there's a lot you have to do about yourself to be a better person. As the CEO, you take the lead in making the organisation a better place. There have been quite a lot of conversations both in the sessions and informally that shows that you are not alone. You feel you are alone in the bad experiences – you have a feeling of, is something wrong with me? What am I not doing right? Am I not communicating well? But in conversation we realise that it is something common but we need to work on ourselves to make things better.

The Wheel of Life – the nature and pace of the organisation – we're all paying attention to that rather than ourselves. We need to work on ourselves, reflect and set targets and goals and that will help us to strengthen the team. I want my colleagues to do some reflection. Our governance structure is not too bad but it could be better than what we have now. While we were doing the baseline evaluation, in practice we are doing a couple of things but in terms of formalizing and developing tools, written policies and structures, these are things we will work on when we return to the office.

I'm very excited to the coaching and I'm really looking forward to it. I'm in another leadership training program in Sierra Leone which is also a 9-month program and it's almost similar. This is preparing me for the next level – I don't know what – and so I am excited for being equipped to do this.

APPOLINE COMPAORE

Executive Director

Association Songui Manegre/ Aide au
Développement Endogène
Burkina Faso

During this 3-day workshop, I acquired a lot of new knowledge. I now know I can have my personal strategic plan just as organisations have theirs. To achieve that one needs to know the goals and objectives and how to start working towards them, as well as at what time to start at Point A and at what time to reach Point B. This helps in planning activities and managing time very well to achieve those objectives.

This training is different from other trainings I had. It is special to me because a coach will work with us for some months to develop our skills. It shows that AWDF is really concerned about our personal growth and that of our organisations. Therefore, we need to be serious, committed and give out our best during the coaching period. We have to follow instructions given by our coaches so that we can achieve our objectives.

What I will bring back to my organisation is that the board advises, controls and coordinates the ruling of an organisation. It is also important that organisations train their staff. Any organisation that needs to grow must train staff regularly. It must allow staff to go for training programmes organised by other institutions as well. The organisation should allow staff to strengthen their skills by taking courses outside the working environment. I believe the new skills that my staff will acquire during this training will be useful for the growth of the organisation.

OUEDRAOGO NA INES

Programmes Coordinator
Association pour la Paix et la Solidarité
Burkina Faso

During this 3-day workshop, I was happy to meet sisters from different parts of Africa. The coaches made us feel comfortable and confident about ourselves. We were allowed to ask many questions related to our training. Explanations and answers were given to our questions. The working environment helped us to be ready to acquire more knowledge.

What I will bring to my organisation is that Executive Board is something very important for every organisation because it helps shape and readjust the organisation's activities when it is not working towards the stated vision and mission. It is also very important to look out for competent people when recruiting in any organisation. It is very risky for the organisation to recruit people on the basis of only friendship or family relations. I am also very happy about the coaching offered to us because it will give us a lot of advantages.

RITA ATUKWASA

Executive Director
Institute for Social Transformation
Uganda

Being here is a great opportunity for me. I see it, I feel it, I am in the right place and I am very excited because I can take my leadership, career, personal goals and the organisation to another level. I feel very confident that I am going to do it. The skills I don't have but I am yearning to get, I am sure I will get from this program. I feel I am ready to roll and to take on leadership as a feminist and create impact in women's lives but also to the world. To be able to have a voice.

One thing that has really come out clear for me is solidarity. Sometimes I am hesitant to add my voice because I think, will it create a difference? I tend to become complacent but I know now I must add my voice to it because there are things we are trying to change as feminists are not simple things. They are related to power, add a voice to shake them and for people to begin to listen. Having a clarity on the skills that I already have – this has been very powerful. Having the opportunity to do a TV talk show, I have done so many TV talk shows but yesterday I learned. How do my hands add on to make it compelling and convincing for the audience that is watching me? I've been learning on the job and not knowing exactly what works and what doesn't. For sure, it is now clear what works and what I need to emphasise to build on. Self-care, we must feel good on the inside so that you are able to give and lead with happiness and joy. You provide a service to yourself, your family, your organisation. It comes out very different this way – focusing on ourselves as a way to bring out a better product.

DEBORAH TAVONGA TAKAWIRA

Project Officer, Markets and Training
African Women's Initiative in Developing Economies
Zimbabwe

It has been awesome, inspiring and eye-opening. I learned that being a leader involves a whole lot of things not just having the academic qualifications or being able to tell people what needs to be done but you have to ensure that things are running efficiently, that there are proper structures that need to be in place in terms of governance and who you are going to be working with so it's important that you have the proper leadership qualities if you are going to be effective.

In Zimbabwe, you think you are the only ones doing a lot of work but there are other women in the whole of Africa who are also doing awesome work that is also similar to yours. I was talking to one lady from Malawi and they have a program that is very similar to ours. It has been very exciting to share our different experiences and to also learn from them. We have a board that is very brilliant and has the proper skills but there is need to ensure that we properly tap into those skills because at the moment I feel it's a bit dormant. We have a board where we come and present our reports and they agree with us. They don't do much. We will talk with the board to see if they want to work with us to help our organisation to grow and to be on par with all the other successful women's organisations across Africa.

BERNADETTE FRENCH

Program Manager
Campaign for Good Governance
Sierra Leone

I'm happy that I was given an opportunity to be here because before I came here I was in that place where you have all these ideas about where you want to go but the big gap was you are afraid to dare and do it because I am one person who doesn't like to fail. This space has helped me to realise and be confident that failure is a part of life. The success, the strength in failure, is how you are able to rise above those failures and move on in a positive way. Learning how organisations are structured and governed and how I can impact other people's lives as a feminist activist. Many times, when we do this work we are always challenged to protect others and to make a change in other women's lives but we forget our own lives. This has been an eye-opener and helped me understand that beyond the work I do, I have an identity. I am my own person and it's okay to want to be who I want to be without any ill feelings.

It has helped strengthen the relationship with my CEO on a personal and official level because we are here together and we've been able to hear and understand how we can move from where we are to a better place that we can be proud of. We've been having quite a lot of conversations on how we can structure our governing bodies in the entire organisation. Going forward, the things we've learned here today will really help not just us in terms of supporting our organisations but also the succession process.

This training also helped us to reflect deeper on who we are, what we want to be, asking those critical questions about ourselves. I see a better future and I'm looking forward to the coaching sessions. I am resolved that this is something I'll really be committed to, give time and attention to, so that I'm able to find myself. Sometimes we are scattered even in the way we do things because the work we do compels us to do things that we're not even passionate about. Within the feminist or gendered space, there has to be that one thing you want to push within the many things, combatting sexual violence, the women's political agenda, so this has given me a lot of food for thought and help me process my future in a very cohesive manner and find that one path that I want to follow.

MOUREEN WAGUBI

Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
Institute for Social Transformation
Uganda

It has been quite a good experience for me because this is my first time to be in such a leadership forum. I will benefit before the end of the nine months. I would like to enhance my leadership skills, build my capacity in public speaking. I am shy – I'm not used to speaking publicly comfortably but with this coaching, I think I'll be the best public speaker for the benefit of myself and also for my organisation.

I've learned a lot from women from other countries like Uganda and Malawi. I've interacted with the women and I'm learning their way of cultures, how leadership is from their places, what they do in their organisation, so I've learned a lot. We've exchanged and we'll keep on talking.

Yesterday Theo talked about governance and brought up the need to have a board manual. Our manual is not in a good place because we haven't updated it since the organisation started so we need capacity building to have a good manual and to use this as a basis to evaluate how to update HR and other policies and manuals for the organisation. Effective governance is needed to meet the vision and mission of the organisation. You need to be prepared when speaking to the media and have that background on your organisation. What is the key message?



“We are here because we are part of a broader feminist and women’s rights mobilisation on this continent. As African women, we have always been maverick, we’ve always done things that were unusual. We’ve always set the pace and been ahead of the game, and we’ve always shown leadership in different domains.”

JESSICA HORN
Director of Programmes
AWDF

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