


RECOMMENDATION PAPER FOR DEVELOPMENT
PRACTITIONERS AND POLICY AND DECISION
MAKERS:

FEMINIST
DEVELOPMENT POLICY:
A PATHWAY TOWARDS
FEMINIST GLOBAL
COLLABORATION

#3
**Intersectionality,
gender & the
economy**





WHY INTER SECTION ALITY?

This recommendation paper offers development practitioners and organisations some reflections in order to shift international development policy towards intersectional Feminist Global Collaboration. It accompanies our podcast episode on [Intersectionality, Gender & the Economy](#) and allows us to further explore how intersectionality as a tool can inform decision-making processes - happening on a personal, organisational and cultural level. Reflecting on the interconnectedness of gender justice and economic justice provides a concrete example of how we can apply an intersectional lens.

WHY INTERSECTIONALITY?

The concept of intersectionality as a term was coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw. Though Crenshaw's paper came out in 1989, the concept is actually rooted in Black feminist thought and experiences which can be traced back as far as abolitionist Sojourner Truth's speech "[Ain't I a woman](#)" in 1851.

As it is commonly understood and put into practice, intersectionality allows us to identify the multiple oppressions and/or privileges an individual may face in a world shaped by sexuality, gender, class and other social categorisations. These categories are interconnected and often overlap to form interdependent systems of discrimination and disadvantage.

INTERCONNECTEDNESS

INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF GENDER JUSTICE AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

It is vital to understand that the current economic system is not neutral, but relies on societal imbalances to function and grow; it is deeply rooted in the exploitation of systemically excluded people and nature. Not only does the system perpetuate gender injustice, but also, as intersectional analysis allows us to comprehend, other modes of oppression such as racial, sexual and class injustice.

“One of the most important offerings that the intersectionality framing gives us is that there is no hierarchy of issues [...] intersectionality allows us to sharpen our analysis and bring to fore realities that tend to be deliberately silenced.” (Sanyu Awori)

Too often the mainstream approach of international development maintains the idea that people can be “empowered” by merely entering the existing economic system and receiving formal employment. While it is vital for people to be able to have financial security, there is an absence of scrutiny around the conditions of said employment. Even in the current discourse around feminist development policy, the root causes of inequality sadly still go unquestioned.



“We need to be thinking about the economy in terms of how does the economy centre and pour care into societies, and especially to those on the margins. We need water, we need education, we need housing, we need health to remain public so that it can reach the most vulnerable, those most living on the margins.

What actually has happened is the approaches and decisions of international finance institutions pushing structural adjustment programs have instead put us in conditions of austerity and left our governments with very limited fiscal space to even make decisions for our collective welfare.”

Sanyu Awori

OF GENDER JUSTICE AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendation paper stresses a long standing feminist demand “to expand what we mean by the economy and move it from a very reductivist, Western neoliberal idea of just GDP” (Sanyu Awori), based on the extraction of people and nature to an economical system using wealth to fund systems of care for people and for the nature. Hence, this paper calls for an economy which is based on real people’s needs and that these needs be met without the extraction of the nature. The following conditions need to be met on a path towards such a feminist economy:

- Analysing the interconnectedness of gender justice and economic justice
- Addressing the roots of inequality: capitalist, colonial and extractive systems of power
- Promoting a people-, environment- and care-centred economical approach
- Creating social-economic systems which work for all people in all their diversity
- Recognising, redistributing, reducing and remunerating care work

The recommendations are based on conversations with [Sanyu Awori](#), the Building Feminist Economies Manager at AWID; [Veena Singh](#), a feminist development practitioner and consultant; and [Natalia Carrau](#), a labour rights and environmental justice advocate.

Individual level

As in previous recommendation papers we want to support your individual reflection with some questions:

- Our guest Natalia Carrau states in the podcast episode *“As many of us now know, colonialism never ended, it was just transformed. And we are definitely not on an even playing field.”* > What thoughts does this statement bring up in you? If it is a feeling of resistance or [disbelief](#), why do you believe that is so?
- Sanyu Awori: *“What we don’t want is a neoliberal feminism that doesn’t recognise or acknowledge that the market is an unequal place, designed to favour those with power and resources. And so, I think that’s one of the first things we need to be unpacking.”* Do you recognise this neoliberal feminist narrative from conversations or media you consume? Have you ever been exposed to more critical perspectives of the current economic model?
- How is **care work** (cooking, cleaning, health, child or elderly care) valued in your own life? Is care work divided evenly amongst you and others in your household? If you identify as a woman, does most of the care work fall on you? If you have help in your household, is the person coming from a different class, race and gender background than you?

Organisational level

- Does your organisation ensure that those excluded by multiple systems are able to get work, receive a decent living wage, access services (e.g. health care) and have access to social protection?
- Advocate for dignified work: a job with rights, with social security and protection, with freedom of association and collective bargaining (Natalia Carrau)
- In what ways could you push to lessen the focus on business- or growth-oriented policies towards systematically focusing on policies which support:
 - The demands of feminist movements with regard to care work and according to the 4-R-rule: to recognise, redistribute, reduce and remunerate this work
 - Access to quality public services and fight against the privatisation and commodification of public services which negatively affect especially the poorest
 - Advocating the abolition of systems of exclusion and oppression and for creating social-economic systems which work for all people and nature
 - Tax justice
 - Wealth distribution to fund systems of care
 - The commoning as a mode of collective economic production and social cooperation to steward resources
 - Question the international division of labour, asking e.g. who is producing goods and where are those products being consumed?
- Debt makes up much of the budgets of systemically exploited countries, meaning those countries cannot use much of their revenues to invest into health care systems etc. but rather have to spend it on repaying loans. We can push wealthy countries to support the cancellation of debt for countries of the so-called Global South. Find more information on the interconnectedness of inequality, climate crisis and debt [here](#) and [here](#).



“So, if we are talking about Intersectionality, we need to bear in mind that class is a very important aspect that we should consider. It’s not that it’s most important, it’s that it should be addressed in an intersectional way, as well as race or gender identity. The worst paid jobs, the most informal and precarious ones are carried out by women, poor women, Black poor women, they suffer worst working conditions but also moral, labour and sexual harassment. The LGBTIQ+ population is also discriminated in their access to decent work.”

Natalia Carrau



“We need to connect the dots and ensure that we have an enabling environment, that we have the right, policies in place that will ensure women, trans women, sex workers, migrant women... just marginalised people... are able to get work and get a decent living just wage, you know, that they’re able to access services, that they have social protection.”

Veena Singh

If you have any questions or would like to get in touch with us. You can reach out to Lisa Tatu Hey, Project Manager at FAIR SHARE of Women Leaders e.V. at lisa@fairsharewl.org or to Jana Prosinger, Office Director Global Unit for Feminism and Gender Democracy at Heinrich Boell Foundation at prosinger@boell.de.

Cultural level

- Does your organisation use an intersectional analysis to understand the communities you work with/in and their needs? Without such an approach discrimination cannot be fully addressed and systemic barriers cannot be overcome.
- Whose idea of development do you share? Do you share the idea of development being focused on GDP and the extractivist approach? Discuss the foundations of the neoliberal system and reflect on understanding the economy just as GDP.
- Promote the idea of an economy of kindness (Veena Singh), based on accountability to each other, transparency in terms of how we work and who we work with, and on hard discussions around the root causes of poverty and inequality.
- Try to learn to define poverty not only through a financial perspective but also by the lack of other resources like time, education etc.
- Stand for dignified work as a concept and as a reality.
- How does your organisation define and understand gender? Is it a binary perspective? Are you equating gender with women? Did you know that the gender binary has a colonial origin? If we maintain a binary gender perspective, we can create harm for people who are gender diverse by not including them in policy and action.
- Are you attempting to embed an intersectional perspective in your organisation’s culture? Are you willing to disrupt oppressive systems of power both within your organisation and in partnerships with other organisations? After having read this briefing paper, what added value do you think a intersectional perspective brings?

The ideas and practices introduced here are based on the episode of “A pathway towards FEMINIST GLOBAL COLLABORATION: Intersectionality, Gender & the Economy” featured in the podcast series “Our Voices, Our choices” from the Heinrich Boell Foundation in collaboration with FAIR SHARE of Women Leaders and the members of a new emerging feminist network on feminist development policy based in Berlin.

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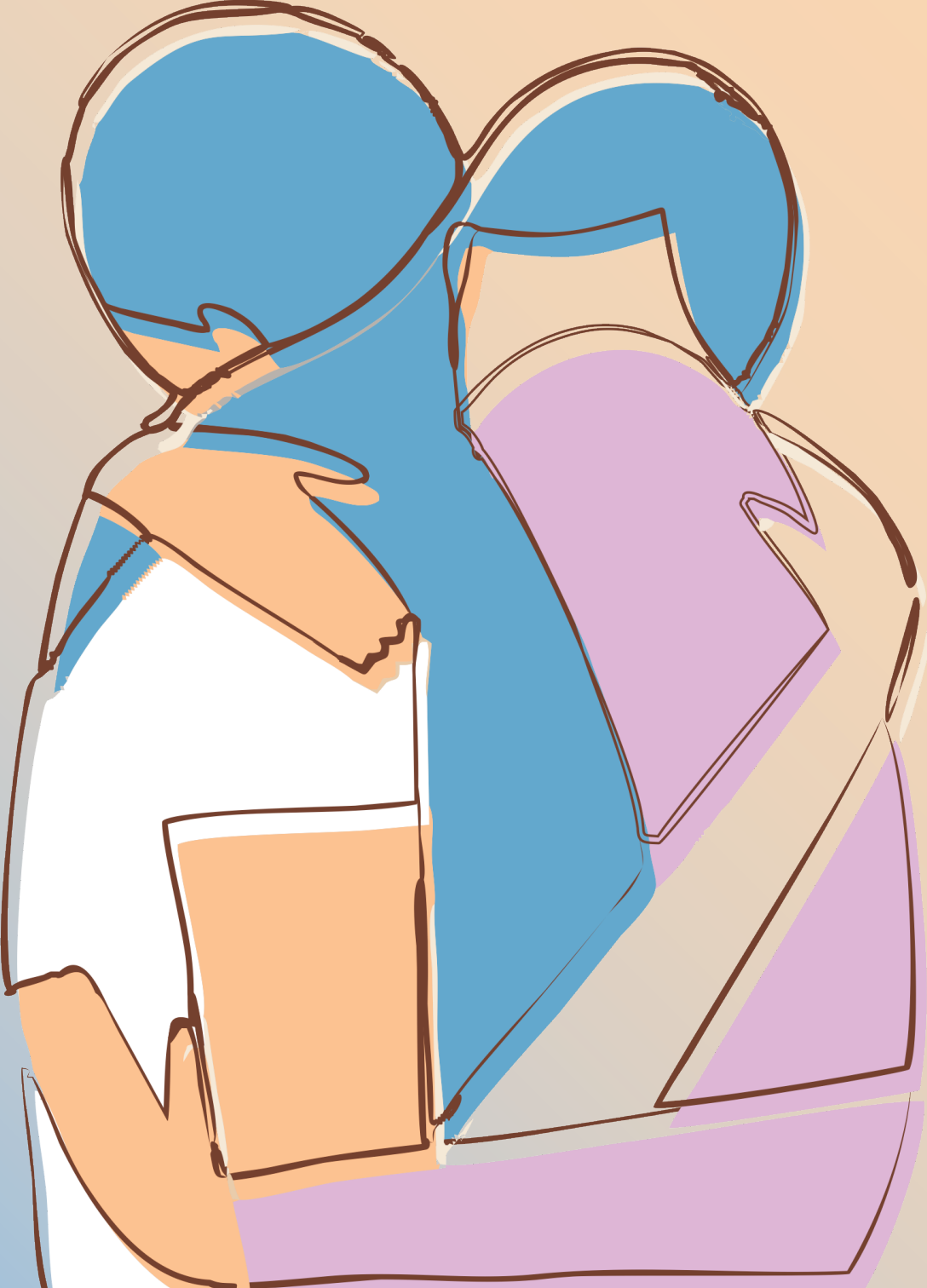
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