

SEPTEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER

THE AFRICAN WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNICATION NETWORK (FEMNET)



Photo Courtesy: The 4th African Feminist Climate Justice Academy in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Building Feminist Power for Climate Change The September Dispatch!

September has been a deeply inspiring month of connection, learning, and cross-border solidarity! The heart of our work this month brought us together in Addis Ababa for the fourth African Feminist Climate Justice Academy. Surrounded by the rich history and political energy of Ethiopia's capital, movement leaders, grassroots organizers, and advocates came together to share transformative strategies for frontline climate action. In this issue, we take you inside the Academy—celebrating the power of collective care, intergenerational knowledge, and the unwavering resilience of African women leading the fight for ecological justice across our continent.

WHAT'S COOKING AT THE SECRETARIAT?

African Feminist Academy for Climate Justice Cohort 4: Shaping the Future with Girls and Young Women



The 4th African Feminist Climate Justice Academy Participants at the African Union (AU) headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia



Participants during the launch of the Africa Resilience Collaborative (ARC) on the sidelines of the 14th Conference on Climate Change and Development in Africa, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

What happens when girls and young women are given the knowledge, space and networks to shape the climate future they want to see? In September, FEMNET's African Feminist Academy for Climate Justice Cohort 4 brought this question to life, convening girls and young women in Addis Ababa from 7–10 September 2026 for four days of learning, dialogue, reflection and collective action. The Academy created a vibrant space for participants to explore the intersections of climate justice, gender equality and feminist leadership, while examining the systems and inequalities that shape the climate crisis.

Through shared experiences and practical learning, participants strengthened their understanding of climate justice and built the tools, confidence and connections to influence change in their communities and beyond.

The fourth cohort adds to a growing community of young African feminists committed to advancing climate justice. The Academy reaffirmed that girls and young women are not simply inheriting the climate crisis — they are already leading, organising and shaping the solutions for a more just future.

Read Mariam Nafula's [Experience in the Academy Here](#)

Difference She Makes: Celebrating Women Transforming Legal Institutions

After three months of spotlighting the everyday leadership of women across East and West Africa, the Difference She Makes campaign culminated in September with a powerful call to rethink how we understand women's leadership and gender equity within legal institutions.

The campaign has been more than a celebration of individual women. It has been a cultural shift — challenging the myths that continue to shape perceptions of women's leadership and asking a deeper question: What would institutions look like if women's leadership was not the exception, but part of how systems are designed and transformed?

Throughout the campaign, we highlighted women who are challenging norms, opening doors, shaping legal systems and creating pathways for others to lead. Their stories demonstrate that meaningful change cannot rest on individual women having to navigate, survive or transform systems on their own. Difference She Makes called for a shift from tokenism to transformation, from placing the burden of institutional change on individual

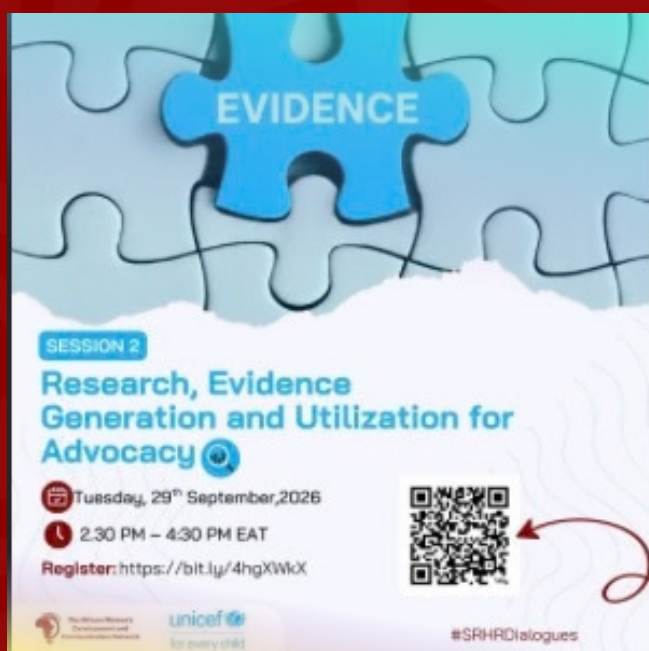


women to demanding institutional accountability, and from exclusive power networks to transparent and inclusive systems.

As the campaign ends, its message remains clear: the difference women make is not only in the positions they hold, but in the systems, they help reshape. Sustainable gender equity requires institutions that recognize, support and institutionalize women's leadership — creating spaces where women can influence decisions, shape policy and transform systems without having to constantly prove that they belong.

The culmination of the campaign is therefore not an endpoint, but an invitation to continue the conversation and carry these principles into the institutions, movements and communities we are building across Africa.

Research, Evidence Generation and Utilization for Advocacy



In September, FEMNET, in partnership with UNICEF, held the second session of the #SRHRDialogues capacity-strengthening series, focusing on Research, Evidence Generation and Utilization for Advocacy. The session strengthened participants' understanding of research, data collection, evidence generation and analysis, while exploring practical approaches to using evidence to inform advocacy strategies and influence policy processes. It also highlighted accessible tools for data management and disaggregation, supporting women's rights and girl-led organisations to translate evidence into stronger, more informed advocacy.

Looking Ahead: Africa CSO Sub-Regional Consultations for CSW71

As preparations for the 71st Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW71) gather momentum, FEMNET, together with NGO CSW/Africa and partners, will convene a series of African Civil Society Organization Sub-Regional Consultations throughout October 2026. The consultations will create spaces for African women and girls and civil society organisations to reflect on progress and persistent barriers to gender equality, identify priorities, and develop recommendations to inform Africa's collective advocacy ahead of CSW71. Draft CSW71 Concept note (1)



The consultations will bring together Anglophone, Francophone, Lusophone and Arabic-speaking constituencies, alongside a dedicated Girls and Young Women consultation, culminating in an Africa Regional Consultation. These engagements will contribute to strengthening African feminist movement-building, solidarity and collective advocacy ahead of CSW71, taking place in New York from 8–19 March 2027. Draft CSW71 Concept note (1) Follow the consultations: #CSW71 #AfricaDisruptCSW71.

Membership Engagement This Month





The 6th African Girls and Young Women Festival

The 6th Girls and Young Women (GYW) Festival which will be held in Maputo, Mozambique in November 2026, will bring together girls and young women to explore reparations as a pathway towards justice, healing, dignity and transformation. This year's festival, under the theme... African girls and young women in solidarity for bodily autonomy and feminist futures will create space for young feminist voices to reflect on the historical and ongoing injustices that shape their lives, communities and futures and to imagine what meaningful repair can look like. For FEMNET, the Girls and Young Women Festival is an important space for intergenerational feminist solidarity and movement-building, affirming that girls and young women are not simply beneficiaries of change—they are leaders, knowledge holders and powerful agents of transformation. The 6th Festival invites us to listen, learn and act alongside young women as they reimagine a future rooted in justice, equity, healing and collective power.

Inaugural High-Level Annual Conference on Gender and Elections in Africa (COGE 2026)

Organized by the Women's Academy for Leadership and Political Excellence (WALPE Africa), FEMNET, and key regional partners, the inaugural High-Level Annual Conference on Gender and Elections in Africa (COGE) will take place from 28–31 October 2026 in Johannesburg, South Africa under the theme #TryWomen: Amplifying Women's Leadership in African Elections. Bringing together 100 leaders, activists, election administrators, and policymakers from across the continent, the conference directly addresses Africa's persistent gender gap in political leadership—where women hold just 26% of parliamentary seats and 3.7% of presidential roles. Key deliberations will center on dismantling barriers such as electoral violence, campaign finance inequity, and technological/AI challenges, while scaling lessons from countries with progressive electoral frameworks. Ultimately, the convening aims to launch the landmark Johannesburg Declaration, formalize a pan-African network of women leaders, and establish robust, gender-responsive policy tools and election observation frameworks ahead of the 2026–2028 regional election cycles.

Building with AFMA Webinar Series Continues

The Building with AFMA Webinar Series continues to create space for critical conversations on feminist economics, bringing together diverse perspectives to examine how economic systems, policies and resources can be reshaped to advance gender equality and economic justice.

For Webinar Series #4, we turn our attention to Feminist Domestic Resource Mobilization (DRM) and ask a fundamental question: Where will the resources to fund our development come from — and whose priorities shape how those resources are mobilized?

Join us as we explore how countries can mobilize domestic resources in ways that advance gender equality, economic justice and inclusive development, while examining why a feminist lens matters when we talk about taxation, public resources and development financing.

 **Speaker:** Naomi Majale

 **Date:** Thursday, 8 October 2026

 **Time:** 2:30 PM – 4:00 PM EAT

 **Don't just save the date — register to participate:**

[Register for AFMA Webinar Series #4](#)

Trauma-Informed Care in Harmful Practices and EAWG Programming

On 14 October 2026, FEMNET, in partnership with UNICEF, will convene a webinar on “Trauma-Informed Care in Harmful Practices and EAWG Programming.” The session responds to identified capacity gaps among Women’s Rights Organizations working to address harmful practices and gender-based violence, particularly around mental health, psychosocial support, and survivor-centered care.

The webinar will explore how Women’s Rights Organizations, feminist movements and advocates, youth-led groups, and service providers can better integrate trauma-informed and survivor-centered approaches into programs, advocacy, and service delivery. Participants will also engage with practical approaches for recognising the lasting impacts of trauma while centring the safety, dignity and experiences of survivors. CN Webinar on Trauma Care (2)

 14 October 2026

 2:30 PM – 4:30 PM EAT

 Online

 Register: <https://bit.ly/4hmcaBm>

Funding Opportunities

Commonwealth Foundation Annual Grants

- Eligible Organizations: Non-profit Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) registered in eligible Commonwealth member countries across Africa.
- Focus Areas: Projects addressing gender equality, climate and environmental justice, economic inclusion, and creative advocacy/freedom of expression.
- Funding Amount: Up to £30,000 per year (for up to 2 years).
- Deadline: October 26, at 1:00 PM GMT.
- Application Link: [Commonwealth Foundation Open Grants Call](#)

Global EbA Fund (8th Call for Proposals)

- Eligible Organizations: Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and civil society groups operating in ODA-eligible countries across Africa.
- Focus Areas: Small-scale grants supporting Ecosystem-based Adaptation (EbA) and climate justice initiatives, with an emphasis on gender-transformative approaches and local leadership.
- Funding Amount: Up to \$250,000 USD.
- Deadline: October 26.
- Application Link: [Global EbA Fund Application Portal](#)

Rapid Response & Protection Grants – Urgent Action Fund Africa (UAF-Africa)

- Eligible Organizations: Pan-African women-led NGOs, girls' rights groups, and African Women Human Rights Defenders (AWHRDs).
- Focus Areas: Urgent safety/security needs, crisis intervention, unexpected advocacy opportunities, and protection mechanisms for feminist activists facing political, social, or security threats.
- Funding Amount: Flexible rapid response grants.
- Deadline: Rolling / Open Continuously throughout October (Applications reviewed on an ongoing basis).
- Application Link: [UAF-Africa Grant Application Portal](#)

Human Rights Defenders Protection Grants – Front Line Defenders

- Eligible Organizations: Women-led NGOs, feminist grassroots groups, and individual human rights defenders at risk in Africa.
- Focus Areas: Direct physical and digital security, legal support, medical assistance, and emergency relocation support for human rights defenders and organizations under immediate threat.
- Funding Amount: Up to €7,500.
- Deadline: Rolling / Open Continuously throughout October.
- Application Link: [Front Line Defenders Protection Grants](#)

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Women For A Change (WCAF) - CAMEROON



In communities across Cameroon, menstruation has long been a silenced subject surrounded by shame, leaving many young girls uninformed, vulnerable, and afraid. Since January 2026, Women for a Change Cameroon (WFAC) has addressed this through a community outreach program that has directly and indirectly reached over 100,000 young girls. By bringing education on menstrual dignity, hygiene, and reproductive health directly to schools, neighborhoods, and faith spaces, WFAC has created safe environments where girls can openly discuss their bodies and ask questions without fear of judgment.

This initiative has sparked a movement of empowered young advocates who are breaking long-standing taboos. Girls who previously struggled to mention menstruation are now leading conversations in their neighborhoods and churches—spaces where discussions on female sexuality and reproductive health have traditionally been restricted. Furthermore, the program has transformed household dynamics, with parents noting that their daughters are now more confident, informed, and comfortable seeking guidance on menstrual health from trusted adults.

The grass-roots impact has extended to the national policy level. Drawing on WFAC's gShe program and their own lived experiences, adolescent girls championed a National Menstrual Dignity Policy brief submitted to the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and the Family. The policy reframes menstrual health as a matter of fundamental rights, equality, and dignity, advocating for key structural changes including the removal of taxes on sanitary products, free products in schools, and alignment with frameworks like Cameroon's Vision 2035, CEDAW, and the Maputo Protocol.

Founded in 2009, Women for a Change (WFAC) is a sub-regional feminist advocacy and research organization dedicated to advancing the sexual and reproductive health rights, leadership, and development of women and girls across Central Africa. By fostering intergenerational movements and supporting youth participation in major global policy spaces—such as CSW, CPD, and UNFCCC—WFAC continues to turn single, difficult conversations into nationwide structural progress.



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When you disrupt the existing conditions and refuse to accept anything less than what you know you are worth, you start making those who oppress you so uncomfortable that they will try anything to discredit you.

Malebo Sephodi (South African feminist writer and researcher, from her book 'Miss Behave')

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***Are you a FEMNET Member?
Become a FEMNET Member Now***

Questions or comments? Email us at m.anzaya@femnet.or.ke