



REPORT

on the One-Year Evaluation of AWID's 2008 Forum

The POWER of Movements

November 14–17, 2008 | Cape Town, South Africa

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What a time
to be a
Feminist!!!
We WIN!!



DON'T
TOUCH!
MY BOY
IS MINE

JOVENES
FEMINISTAS



TO END
THE
WARD
AND THE
RAPE



15
April 1951

The struggle continues

AFRICA BELONGS
TO US AS
WOMEN
VIVA WOMEN
OF AFRICA
WOMANLAND

Together we can make it



3

♀
LEADING
CHANGE
WORLD
YWCA

10-2000-10




With Love
From Minority Women
in Action -
LBTI

Don't make
straight,
can be
but always
triachy
4 LIFE
TAX

I think I'm
going to far!
But where else
should I go?
Chris

Bizau
la vie
le soleil

 amupei
BOLIVIA ESTÁ
PRESENTE...
ADELANTE COMPAÑEROS



viva
solidarity!

ARE YOU A
FEMINIST?
&
DO YOU WATCH
PORN?

DISABILITY
WOMEN'S
ACTION.
SWAZI

ODAS
NAS
VIA

Not just a face
and a vagina
I... woman, gods





About this Report

This report summarizes and analyses results of the one-year evaluation conducted among a focus group of participants at AWID's 11th International Forum "The Power of Movements" held in Cape Town, South Africa in November, 2008.

The usefulness and longer-term impact of events like the AWID Forum are challenging to assess and evaluate. It is often felt that such events are either talk shops that lead to no concrete action, or that the excitement and stimulation rapidly dissipates, with no longer-term results. AWID decided to test these impressions, to explore whether the enormous effort we put into organizing and holding our Forums creates more lasting effects, and if so, analyze what these may be. Towards this, AWID conducted a one-year follow-up evaluation exercise of the 2008 Forum between November and December 2009.

Methodology

A full evaluation survey by Forum 2008 participants was conducted immediately after the event, and results were compiled and shared with Forum participants and donors. We felt that exploring the more nuanced long-term effects of the Forum did not lend itself to the survey mode. So we decided to conduct interviews with a small, but diverse sample of Forum participants.

The **interview guide** was designed around the key objectives of the Forum:

1. To advance thinking and action around the power of movements, and bring back a focus on movement building among women's groups and donors worldwide;
2. To take steps to overcome the fragmentation within movements and to contribute to building strategic alliances with other social movements;
3. To contribute to significant visibility and engagement of young women in key debates and strategies of women's movements, highlighting the importance of effective multigenerational movement building;
4. To contribute to the revitalization of women's organizations and movements (having participants leave with a renewed sense of commitment and energy, inspiration, as well as new allies, strategies, and ways of thinking and acting).

The interview guide had ten questions that explored the status of these objectives one year after the Forum, since evidence for several of them would be more evident after this interval than immediately after the Forum. The questions were designed to probe the following key dimensions:

1. What insights, ideas, strategies, or new thinking on the power of movements had remained with the interviewees one year after the Forum?
2. Had these influenced or changed their own or others' action / practice in any way, and examples of this?
3. Had any new initiatives – networks, joint projects, discussion groups, meetings, etc. – emerged as a result of connections made at the Forum?
4. Had they seen or heard any evidence of increased funding of movement-oriented strategies by donors?
5. How could AWID better make the case to donors for supporting an event like the Forum?

The criteria for the selection of interviewees were based on choosing respondents from diverse locations, sectors, levels of work (from grassroots to global), age, ability, donor representation, and both Forum “veterans” as well as first-time attendees. Time and staff resources allowed for 30 interviews. But of the 30 participants selected, only 25 were able and willing to be interviewed within our time frame. Of these, one person declined to respond to the questions in our interview guide, since she felt they did not adequately capture the feedback she wanted to give us.

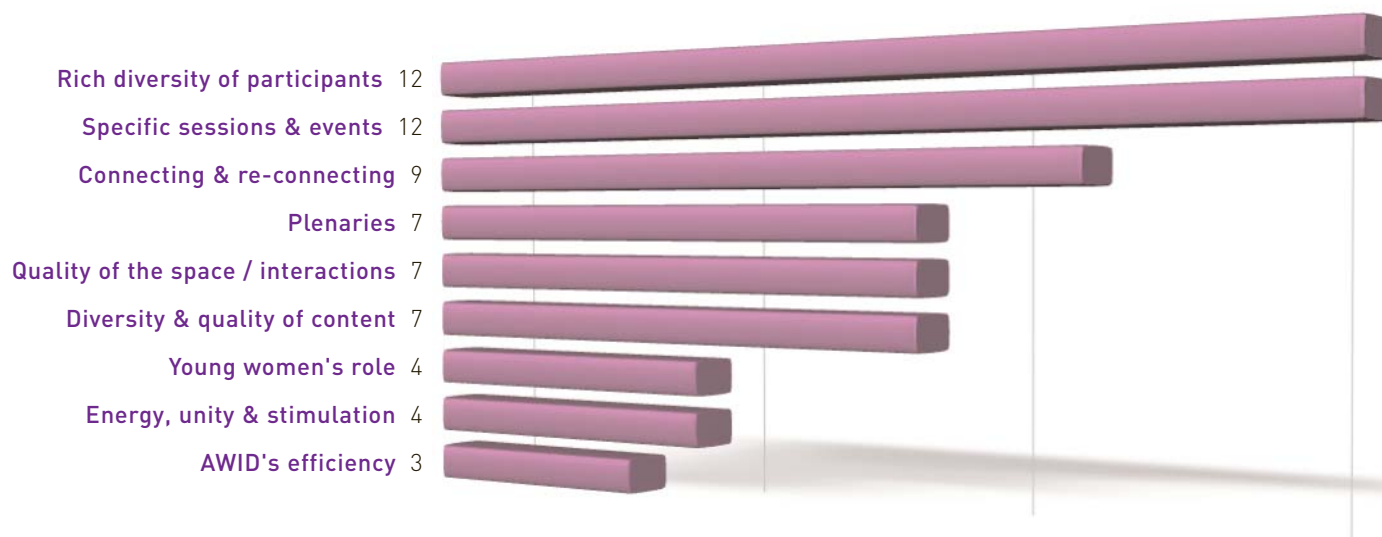


Analysis of Responses

1. Remembering the Forum

Our first interview question was designed to elicit what impressions and memories of the Forum remained with participants one year after the event. We believe the responses to this question – **“One year after the AWID Forum in Cape Town, share with us your top three memories about it - what are the three things about the Cape Town process that have stayed with you?”** – are indicative of one aspect of the longer-term value and impact of the event. For the majority of our respondents, three critical aspects have remained with them long after the Forum: the rich diversity of participants, specific sessions and events that have left a lasting impression, and the opportunity to create new relationships and re-kindle old ones. So it would appear that the diversity of participation, the nature of various events, and connecting and re-connecting with people are unique and treasured facets of the AWID Forum.

FIG. 1: WHAT I REMEMBER ABOUT FORUM 08



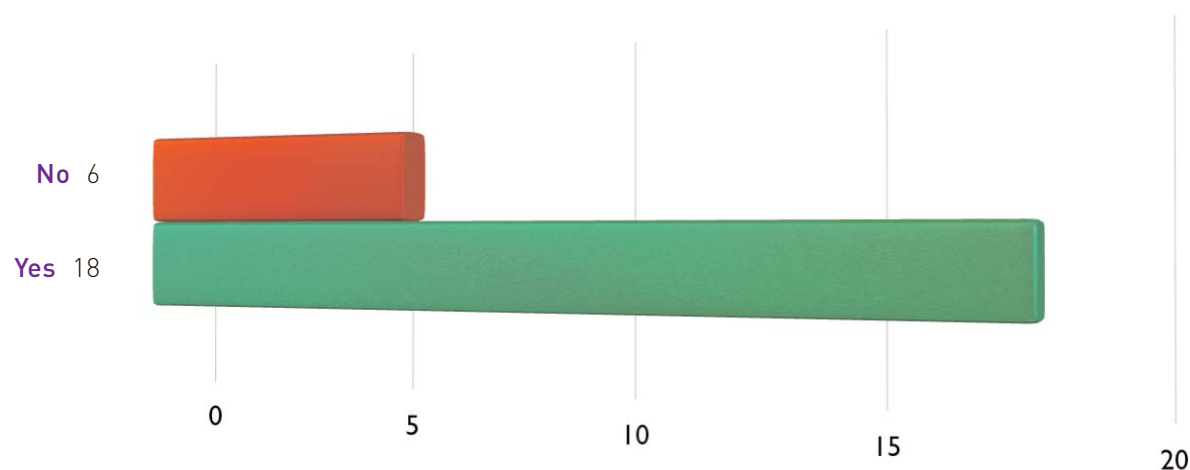
The quality and design of the plenaries left a lasting impact as nine out of 25 of our interviewees mentioned them either generally or with reference to specific speakers, themes, or the diverse formats used. The enabling and inclusive quality of the Forum as a space, and the diversity and quality of its content also remained in the minds of many women we interviewed.

A sense of unity, new energy and stimulation, and the huge presence and role of young women were other strong memories that have remained with participants. Finally, AWID is pleased to note that several interviewees recalled with praise our handling of the Forum logistics.

2. Impact of the theme: “The Power of Movements”

The theme of the Forum has had an ongoing influence on the thinking and work of the majority of participants interviewed – 17 out of 24 - said that insights gained on the power of movements have changed or influenced their approach since the Forum. Their comments indicated that insights from the Forum were mainly resulting in them viewing themselves through a new, more critical lens, re-shaping some existing strategies, and personally providing a renewed sense of belonging to a global women’s movement. What is more, even those six interviewees who did not feel the Forum radically transformed their view of movements and movement building acknowledged that it helped reinforce or remind them of the power and importance of movements.

FIG. 2: IMPACT OF THE FORUM THEME: THE POWER OF MOVEMENTS



Feedback Highlights:

“In my organization, we have reassessed some perspectives (and tools) that are not the usual or more commonly used. Now, I see the significance of looking for spaces to connect with other groups and advance agendas together. This is not necessarily new to my work, but I have a fortified sense of urgency when it comes to creating or strengthening alliances.”

“Working with ICT and technology, we really have to establish allies in both the women's movement as well as in the communication rights movement, and to solidify the link between looking at ICTs as important and useful in building movements, as well as understanding communication rights as a critical part of the women's rights agenda.”

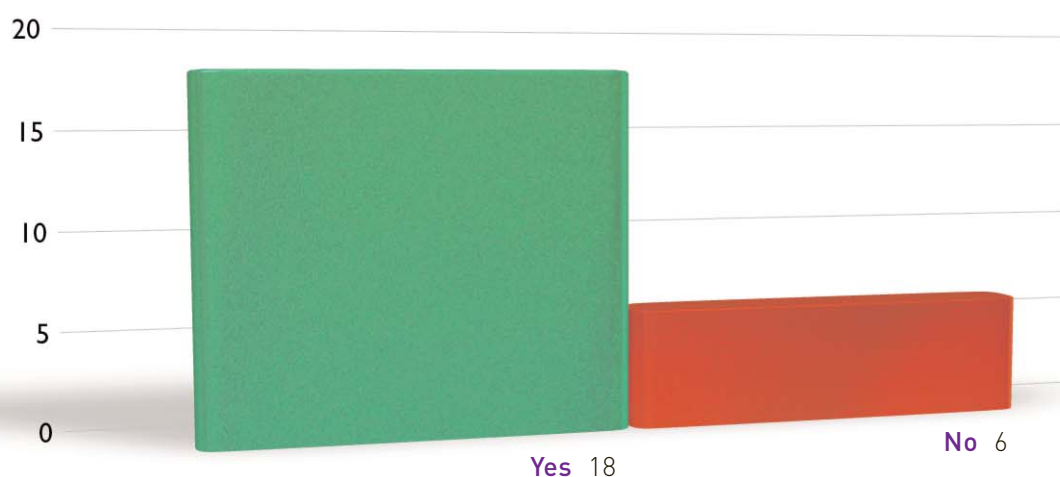
“The theme of the power of movements – the power of collective thinking and collective action - helped in placing our efforts within the broader perspectives of movements. In my work now, I try to push my initiative to think more broadly and to focus more strategically on what it is that we are trying to achieve rather than what activities we can run in our program.”

The comments of those who did not feel particularly impacted by the Forum theme are also interesting to share. For some, the discourse on movements was far too “centrist”, and reflected the natural positions of women who were affluent enough to afford the high cost of participating in the Forum. If AWID had been able to facilitate the participation of more women involved directly in local struggles, the perspectives would have been far more radical. For others, they went away unimpressed because of the poor quality of the sessions they attended, or because there were other more profound catalysts that had provided insights into the power of movements.

3. Evidence of the impact of the Forum on others

At AWID we had anticipated that there would be small pieces of evidence of the Forum's impacts on individuals and organizations who had attended it, from perhaps a handful of interview respondents. We were therefore quite overwhelmed to find that 18 of our interview respondents had evidence to report on how individuals and organizations had been influenced in their post-Forum work.

FIG. 3: IMPACT OF THE FORUM ON OTHERS



Feedback Highlights:

Enthusiastic efforts of some 200 South African participants to create the South African Feminist Forum (along the lines of the African Feminist Forum that they heard about at one of the Plenaries), and their struggle to keep it going given their packed schedules and lack of dedicated resources or staff.

Sex workers from different Latin American countries were invited, for the first time, to participate in the Encuentro Feminista in Mexico; they felt welcome, and found especially young women activists very receptive to including them in their debates and strategizing for joint actions. They also witnessed how groups that had attended the Forum were calling for others to address issues of the fragmentation of the women's movement in the region; the sex workers groups have become part of a couple of feminist networks.

Marked increase in interest in disability issues after (and as a result of) the Forum. For disabled women participants, it was an empowering experience, and they have carried forward a stronger sense of finally belonging to something larger than the disability movement itself.

Due to highlighting of digital stories created by participants of the Feminist Tech Exchange (FTX) training prior to the Forum, at a plenary, and the FTX Hub in the Forum venue, the power of communications in movement building and advocacy has been truly understood. Consequently, there has been a lot of demand for FTX training from different regions and groups.

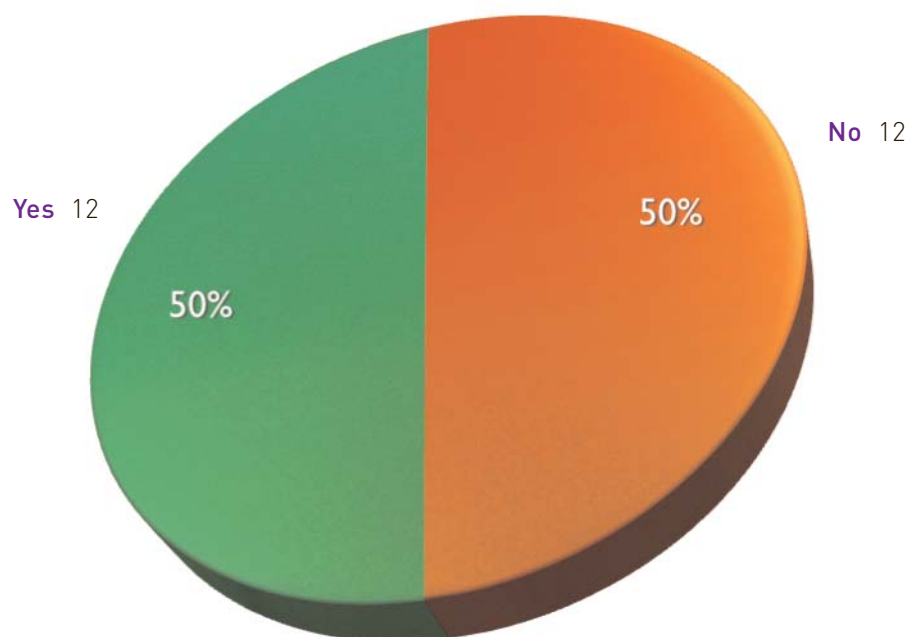
The Pacific Women's Network has increased their work on gender equality, become involved very strongly in climate justice work, and taking on a different role in other movements in the region as well, all connected to the Forum's impacts.

GROOTS Kenya has decided to recognize and celebrate grassroots women who have been champions of their movement, and improve documentation of their work.

4. Participation in initiatives / processes that emerged at the Forum

Given this considerable evidence of the impact of the Forum theme, it is not surprising that even our small group of twenty-three interview respondents gave us plenty of examples of new initiatives launched at or just after the Forum. Several of these are already described in the earlier section. It is encouraging to note that half (12) of our respondents reported being part of new initiatives, networks, campaigns, e-groups, learning exchange visits, and other ventures that have grown out of the linkages made at the Forum.

FIG. 4: PARTICIPATION IN INITIATIVES THAT EMERGED AT OR AFTER THE FORUM



Post-Forum Collaborations:

Some of the more interesting collaborations reported, and attributed by our respondents to the Forum, were:

The South African Feminist Forum.

A new campaign launched by the FEIM (Fundación para Estudio e Investigación de la Mujer) and CTA (Central de Trabajadoras de Argentina) to advocate for passing a law to prevent, penalize and eradicate VAW particularly in the household and the private sphere.

Active discussions among Caribbean activists who attended the Forum about how to strengthen their organizations' capacity and the Caribbean women's movement, including active discussion for launching a Caribbean Women's Fund.

After the Forum, WSRN (a community radio station in the Pacific) launched Forum Tok Talk. It really allowed them to connect with people who they had been doing work with online.

GROOTS International has had a focused meeting with AWID to talk about moving forward the women's rights and women's empowerment agenda.

A new coalition of young women activists in Senegal.

Nouveaux Droits de l'Homme, Cameroon, has become part of several Francophone African movements after the Forum: the Genre en Action network, Bridge, Women Won't Wait, as well as ROFAF which is a network of feminist organizations in French Africa.

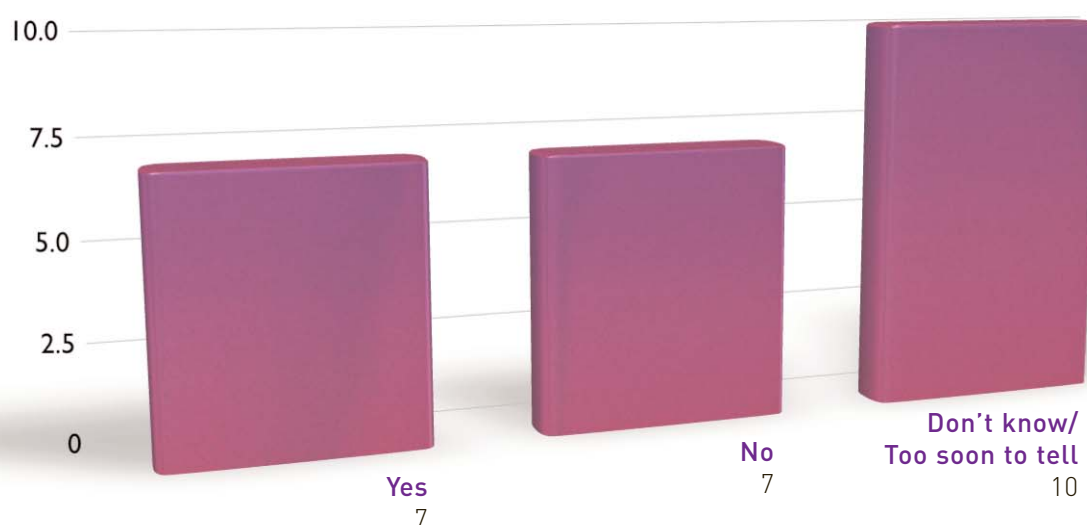
5. Evidence of increased donor support for movement building

A key goal of the Forum was to advocate greater support from donors for movement-building approaches, especially since AWID's "Where Is the Money?" research had demonstrated a serious decline in such funding over the past years. Forum events like the Funders' Forum and other sessions on movement building and resource mobilization issues were well attended by donor representatives. However, one interviewee noted that overall donor participation in the Forum was less than she had expected. In her words,

"...I don't know why, but there were relatively few donors there – and the ones who were there were the feminists, the [long-standing allies] who've supported AWID and believe in the cause. This bothered me. Two, what bothered me even more, was that very few friends from the UN system were there – hardly anyone from UNIFEM, UNDP, etc. One reason could be because so many other important meetings were happening at around the same time – Accra, FFD Doha, – so the timing was not good."

The feedback of all the other interview respondents (see Fig.5), seems to at least partially bear out this impression – most said they had not heard or seen any evidence that donor support for movement building had increased as a result of the Forum, or that it was too soon to tell. On the other hand, some respondents reported encouraging signs of new investments by donors, which they attributed to contacts made at the Forum. However, as many of respondents observed, one year is probably too short a time to find evidence of renewed support for more transformative strategies among the donor community.

FIG. 5: EVIDENCE OF GREATER DONOR SUPPORT FOR MOVEMENT BUILDING



6. Promoting multigenerational movement building

Since modeling and promoting more multigenerational ways of working within women's organizations and movements was one of the goals of the Forum, our one-year evaluation attempted to track evidence of the impact of this process on participants. This was complex terrain to explore, since many of our respondents were from organizations with multiple generations working together, and many challenges keep intentions from becoming realities. It was also hard to determine the Forum's role in sensitizing people to these issues. Nevertheless, we were pleased to find that a small but significant proportion of our respondents (see Fig. 6) had actually themselves implemented, or heard of others implementing, efforts to make their initiatives and ways of working more consciously multigenerational, and specifically, more supportive of young women.

At the personal level, however, the issue has had greater impact since the Forum— 10 of our respondents (see Fig.7) felt that they had become more conscious of multigenerational questions in their own work and setting.

FIG. 6: IMPACT OF
MULTIGENERATIONAL ISSUES

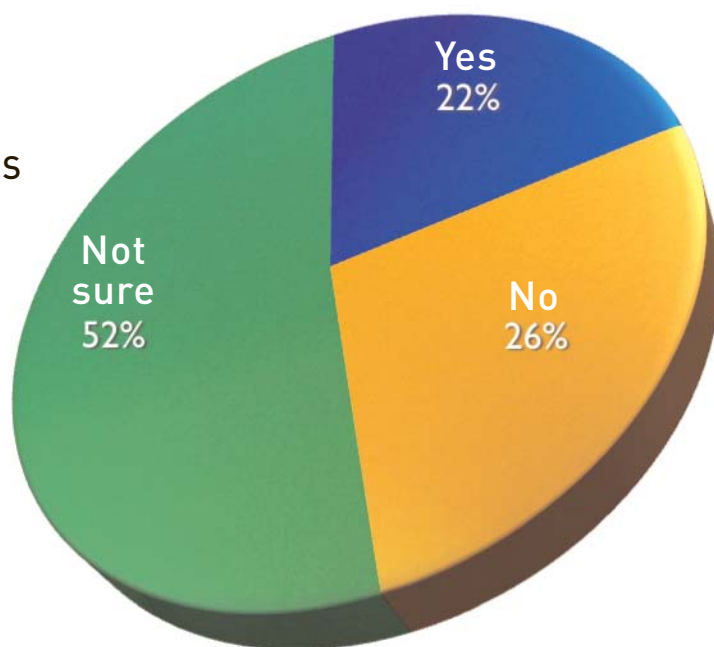
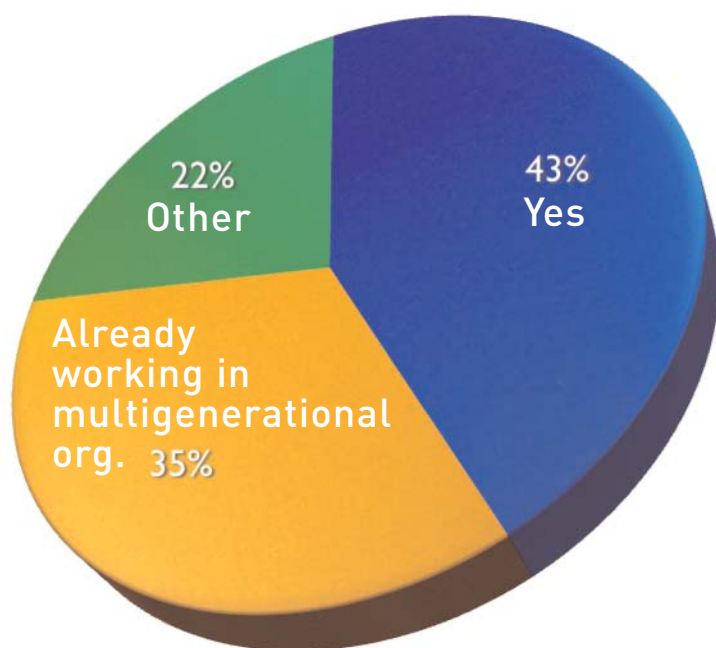


FIG. 7: PERSONAL IMPACT OF THE
MULTIGENERATIONAL MODEL



7. Keeping, Changing, Adding to strengthen the Forum in the future

As AWID begins preparations for the 2012 Forum, we also wanted feedback on what aspects of Forum 08 need to be modified or retained, and what new features need to be included in the next Forum to make it a stronger and more effective experience for participants. Several useful suggestions came our way through the interviews, which are presented below in the respondent's own words and voice:

Keep the Same: there were several aspects of the Forum that received enthusiastic affirmation for AWID to retain – in fact, some respondents, when asked what we should keep in future forums, merely said: “*Everything!*” Specific facets and characteristics of the Forum that were strongly endorsed were:

- **Size, Diversity and Inclusiveness:** respondents urged us to continue to protect and enlarge the space for participation of grassroots and disabled women, and to ensure we mobilize the resources to facilitate this (full sponsorships for grassroots women, personal assistants for disabled women, etc.); they also urged us to retain the size – neither less nor more than 2000 – with wide diversity within that number.
- **The Plenaries and Diversity of Formats / Sessions:** the quality of speakers, the “great big issues”, inspirational nature, global perspective and varying formats of the Cape Town plenaries were highly appreciated – respondents observed that the way each plenary framed the focus of the discussions for the day was really valuable. At another level, it was felt that being in the plenary – with all the other participants – was “very empowering and inspirational”. The variety of sessions, while overwhelming in some ways, also were felt to provide “something for every taste”, and hence worth keeping. Thematic caucuses and the YFA activities were also much appreciated, as were the digital stories and cultural activities which were felt to provide spaces for more relaxed togetherness.
- **Spaces for self-care, organizing and informal linking:** the physical venue of the Cape Town conference, the FTX hub, the various booths and relaxation spaces were felt to be vital in enabling people to self-organize, meet and brainstorm informally, leading to potential longer-term linkages and incubating new initiatives. The focus on self-care was also much appreciated, and the sessions and evening celebrations that enabled people to feel connected at a less-cerebral and more gut level. “Keep the dancing...” said one interviewee, “never get rid of the dancing!”
- **Logistics and Support systems:** the flawless logistics and management of the entire process came in for high praise from our respondents. The quality of support provided – in terms of translation, booths, transport, etc. – were considered to have hugely facilitated the quality of the experience and engagement of Forum participants. As one respondent said, “Small meetings, large meetings, and in between – no one does it better than AWID!”
- **Keep the young women coming:** there was great appreciation for the significant presence of young women and the various YFA activities, and a strong message to keep and expand this aspect of the Forum's diversity.
- **The intangible spirit of the Forum:** many respondents alluded to the importance of retaining this, the indefinable but vital quality that makes the Forum experience so memorable for all who come there. In the simple words of one respondent, “Keep the magic of the Forum.”

Change for the better: AWID also received a wide range of useful ideas and feedback on what we need to change and improve at the next Forum.

- **Ensuring space, flexibility and mechanisms that allow the Forum to include and address issues that arise in the months immediately preceding the event** – for example, the global economic recession that hit the world just before the Cape Town Forum.
- **Strengthening the links between the Forum theme and individual sessions / thematic caucuses / workshops** – a couple of respondents felt strongly that this was a weak or missing element in the design of the Cape Town Forum. Many sessions simply didn't address movement building at all, so that the sessions as a whole did not amplify or explore the central theme adequately. One respondent advised: "ensure that the theme is the central point of discussion and debate, not sharing organizational agendas or showcasing."
- **Better quality control** in terms of the methodology and content of the sessions offered – some were felt to have been below par, and this affects the experience and learning of participants who attend them. Along the same lines, other respondents felt that AWID must reduce the number of panels / "talking heads" sessions, and increase the number of workshops and interactive / experiential learning methods used. This is probably a reaction to the fact that not even sessions billed as "interactive panels" were interactive in practice!
- **Increasing the duration of the Forum to 5 days**, to allow for major events like the march protesting Violence against Women organized by the South African women to be held at a time that does not require participants to choose between other sessions and these events; this could also be a way for participants to visit local women's organizations. Similarly, a longer duration would allow AWID to have a dedicated "campaigns" space where people can listen to the various campaign issues and sign petitions outside a plenary format – in fact, one respondent felt the various petitions that were projected at the closing plenary in Cape Town damaged the quality of what should have been a solemn and inspiring closing.
- **Explore more ways to expand participation** – especially of those women who cannot be physically present due to distance, space, or cost constraints; there were particular concerns expressed about the need to expand participation of host-country women, lower registration costs, and enhance online participation mechanisms. Strengthening facilities and technologies for greater remote participation also received a strong vote. There was also a suggestion that other radical social movements need to be more strategically reached and encouraged to participate.
- **Targeting increased participation of women from specific language groups and regions** – the example given was that despite the Forum being held in Africa, the participation of women from Francophone African countries was very low.
- **Level the playing field in terms of getting the most out of the Forum** – this referred to the fact that "old hands" and AWID Forum veterans knew how to effectively negotiate this bewildering and complex space, while newcomers did not, leading to some confusion or sub-optimal experiences. One respondent encouraged us to interrogate our own "exclusionary practices", even if unintentional. The YFA was felt to have done a good job of orienting young women in this respect, but some sort of orientation process, guidelines, might be useful for others.
- **Avoiding too many concurrent events during lunch and in the evenings** – lunchtime sessions at Cape Town were felt to be too difficult due to the high noise levels and crowding, which was felt to be unfair to the organizers of these sessions.
- **Use media and publicity more strategically** – this was felt to be an important way of extending the reach of the Forum, and also of influencing donors and acknowledging the donors who support the event.
- **More strategic outreach to the donor community** – the need to ensure that people who don't "think like us" are also persuaded to attend, listen and learn.
- **Keep a focus on macroeconomic issues and visioning** – as one respondent said, "the Forum has to keep asking the big question: what kind of world do we want? It needs to [help us] explore new paradigms..."

- **Work on the heart, not just the head** – this is a powerful argument for moving beyond the intellectual level of discourse to deeper layers of women’s power for change, a more holistic approach. In the eloquent words of one respondent: “Most plenaries were pure mental exercises... all in the head! If we want to become the whole being that feminism argues for, we need to stop being the spaces we run. Consider why the session “What’s the point of

the revolution if we can’t dance?” was so full... Our aim for the 2011 Forum should not just be about getting more participant involvement, but working to engage more of who we are...” Along the same lines, another respondent strongly advocated increasing the number of plays / theater events, since these penetrate to deeper levels of consciousness that no amount of intellectual analysis can reach.

Add to strengthen: given the wide range of suggestions for changes and improvements in various aspects of the Forum, there were relatively few inputs from our interviewees on what they’d like to see added to strengthen it. A few of the interesting suggestions we received include:

- **More opportunities for informal interaction / analysis** – the experience of one of the regional Social Forums (in Belem), was cited to illustrate the point: thematic spaces for interaction were created (education, feminism, etc.), and people could gather in these tents to discuss their insights and conclusions, which turned out to be a transformative experience because it allowed for less structured and spontaneous engagement with core issues.
- **Enabling the participation of new groups of disabled women** by providing facilities for women with sensory disabilities (visually and hearing disabled).
- **More pre-Forum preparatory processes** – this suggestion concerns working with key actors and coalitions prior to the Forum to strengthen local, national and international debate on its thematic issues. It is felt that this will lessen the problem of participants arriving at the forum with very little information about the theme or the state of current debate. This could be achieved through background papers, regional meetings in the lead up to the Forum, and other means. One respondent hopes that this will overcome the current situation where “we are not fully taking advantage of having such a diverse and large group of influential women’s rights advocates in one space.”
- **More remote participation before and during the Forum** – and using a range of new ICTs to do this: Twitter, Web-casts, maybe a Second Life pre-conference.
- **Proactive pedagogy** – it is felt that the Forum needs to play a more active teaching role for those who want to learn about topics and issues they know nothing about. A series of “101” sessions / mini-plenaries that offer basic introductions to the core issues of the Forum, so that participants can gain more from the plenaries and sessions. Along the same lines, it is suggested that AWID prepare materials and conduct more “how to” / skill-building sessions that enhance capacity – e.g., writing proposals, positioning one’s work and talking to donors, etc

Conclusions

The evidence gathered through our one-year evaluation exercise seems to indicate that there are small but significant longer-term effects of the Forum on those who attend. These seem to fall into four main categories:

- A sense of renewed energy, purpose, and clarity;
- Interrogating and revising the frameworks and strategies that participants use in their organizations and movements;
- A greater awareness and some action on building multigenerational ways of working and strengthening young women's voices; and
- New initiatives, connections and collaborations born out of the linkages made at the Forum.

AWID is satisfied that the Forum does serve as a catalyst and a vital space in recharging women's rights movements and actors, advancing strategic thinking and action, and shifting dominant discourse in ways that will continue to manifest for some time to come.

We feel it is fitting to conclude our one-year evaluation report by allowing the message from them to be conveyed in their own voice and words:

“ The days are gone when we can sit in our village and think about how to change it. Now we are a global village; so we need a global space where we can share experiences and challenges, and think together about solutions. The Forum ignited a consciousness... ”

“ The Forum is a space where we can think globally and act locally, and there is no other space like it where grassroots women are present in such a large number. ”

“ I want to make resourcing the AWID conference and participation in it something very routine – not something that needs a lot of thought. ”

“ The Forum is ... a historical review of the course of feminist movements. ”

“ There are very few political spaces for women that are open and asking political questions- almost none... [the Forum as a] space is not attached to the UN, there isn't any lobbying, it is not about a single issue, we don't have to dumb down our politics. ”

“ Activists like me really need a space like the forum where we can see each other face-to-face... and feel reenergized and reinvigorated! Virtual communication doesn't allow to share emotions, energy, vitality and passion as the forum does. ”

“ [The Forum] serves as a boost for activists that have very tiring and dangerous lives back home. ”



“ It is one of the few environments that I know of in which women from across the globe – who are working in really hard contexts – are able to get together and feel that they can have trust in the other women that are there. It is one of the few environments where the idea of intersectionality is more than just brave words. ”

“ The AWID Forum is not just an event or the result of a juncture that has a beginning and an end. It is a process and has an immense multiplier effect not only for local and national initiatives but also for strategies at the global level. ”

“ It is... a distinctly political space that is set, defined, shaped and strengthened through the people who are working to advance women's rights everyday from all parts of the world. What gets discussed, highlighted and prioritized at the AWID Forum does have an impact on the work of women's rights movements locally, as can be seen through the multigenerational dialogues, the movement building [framework] and the interrogation of funding for women's right work. There is really no other space like it. ”

“ For young people in particular it is an important space to ask questions and get a sense of how global the movement really is. ”

“ The forum is a space for women who work on the margins to come together and feel empowered. It creates a true sense of solidarity and it makes one see their day to day work as it relates to the overall picture. Without the forum, many women would feel isolated and detached. ”

“ It's a space to build relationships- it does help with when you are doing regional work to have a group of women who have met each other ... because in the Pacific these women are so far apart. [The focus on] sustaining our movements and self-care was vital - the Pacific has activists who have been in it for 30 years and new activists - so spaces like AWID help to keep you working through all those issues... ”

“ It is important to [support] women to reinforce the dream of a better world, to inspire women's organizations, to be a testimony to the diversity, the richness of the actions and perspectives of women, to establish spaces of sorority, to exchange and to give, to see the proof that another world or equality is a reality, that it is possible! ”

“ Every three years, the AWID Forum convenes and shows us the richness but also the complexity of the women's movement. It helps us learn ... that there are as many diverse realities as there are peoples. AWID allows us to nurture ourselves with these diverse experiences and it also opens up our minds, our insights and our hearts. Diversity, multiculturalism and intergenerationality are the challenges of the egalitarian, equitable and supportive society we women dream of. ”

“ I would tell donors that by supporting and funding women's fight for equality they're contributing to a more just world... if they'd stop funding the Forum, they would suspend our energy and discharge our batteries. ”

“ Oh my! The spirit of the AWID forum - there is nothing like it in the world, it's like a huge celebration. On one hand, it is a chance for us to celebrate our victories, to meet old friends, and to feel energized and recharged. On the other hand, it also brings together thousands of fragmented feminist efforts into one space - I think the forums... will go down in global feminist history as an instigator of so many amazing connections for women's rights. ”

