

WOMEN.

**OLDN-AFGHANISTAN
WOMEN REORIENTATION &
CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE**

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Team Leader Commentary (Maureen Omeibe)



Sustainable Development Goal 5 is about Gender Equality & Women Empowerment (SDG 5: Achieve Gender Equality and empower all women and girls). The foundational values of the Organization Development (OD) field include: democratic, social and humanitarian values. Historically, the OD field emerged in the late 1930s to facilitate social justice through extolling humanitarianism. In leading sustainable strategic change, continuous improvement, and improving the human condition, OLDN recognizes the role of women and commits to upholding the OLDN defining value of diversity and inclusion. The OLDN-Afghanistan Women Empowerment Initiative targets facilitating real Impact-Influence among OLDN Women and those in their circle of influence.

Based on the resolutions passed during the OLDN Virtual Consultative meeting (led by Mrs. Maureen Omeibe) of 13 September 2020, the current document seeks to initiate conversations focused at working on modalities to reach out to women in Afghanistan. The OLDN Women Initiative is targeted at driving consciousness among women and other members, thereby drive gender equality demands in Afghanistan and all other countries. Through active inquiry and engagement, OLDN seeks to design well-prepared mechanisms targeted at ensuring transformative outreach to women in Afghanistan.

The Request

The OLDN Consultative Meeting of 13 September 2020 identified five (5) cardinal points towards reaching out to women in Afghanistan. In developing the roadmap for driving Women Reorientation & Capacity Development in Afghanistan and other countries, please complete the following table with at least two recommendations or suggestions.

Name (optional) :
Profession:
Educational Background:

	Proposed Interventions (What needs to be done?)	Recommendations (clearly state any two) (How can this be done?)
1.	Conversations to understand the issues facing women in Afghanistan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ By establishment of Afghan women network in the grass root level in 34 provinces of Afghanistan, although there is somehow networks which is been already existing which has been formed by national and international SCO's, but for better formulation of current network, it's very important to work out and connect them for meaningful achievement. ✓ Lack of security, Lack of access to education basic health services, gender inequality, social and gender discrimination, lack of access to an unbiased justice system and legal representation, various forms of physical, economic, psychological and sexual violence/abuse, lack of inclusion/lack of political will to accept women as one half of the society. ✓ Interaction with Women Oriented organisations in Afghanistan (e.g Musha Mukadzi in Zimbabwe), to have a closer look at issues facing Afghanistan women.
2.	Propose modalities to reach out to women both in cities and provinces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Focus discussions, round table dialogues, seminars and exposure visits inside and outside of the country, ✓ Education, through enlightenment and awareness programmes. Studies have shown that when you provide women and girls with education and opportunity, they rise up to become a powerful force for change in their families, communities and nations. ✓ Utilise the easiest as well as most widely used form of communication to the ordinary Afghanistan woman in a bid to reach out to as many as possible and at their various levels.
3.	Psychological Empowerment of women – Women Capacity Development & Reorientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The most important barrier Afghan rural women is economic problems for women to reach out their dreams and goals, for enhance capacity development of women in Afghanistan its recommended to design further capacity building project in grass root level. ✓ Education through a value/belief system re-orientation, Education empowers women to attain skills and knowledge that they need to contribute to economic development and I believe that helping women achieve their full potential is a path to breaking the cycle of poverty. This will in turn create a ripple effect.
4.	Marketing the potential of Afghanistan women (Drive consciousness among women and other members and let the public know women's achievements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A strategic vision and mission in national level would recommend for better marketing of afghan women capacities, off course education is must but to enhance their education in national level is important. ✓ Leveraging on technology. By optimizing and taking full advantage of the use of social media and publicising/ marketing the achievements of these women.
5	Highlighting examples of what women can do thereby challenging women merely holding symbolic positions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A common goal and vast network of afghan women will be the key of success to get out of the symbolic positions of women ✓ A systematic network and continues follow up ✓ Having other women who have attained success in career and business reach out to these Afghanistan women and inspire/motivate/challenge them by sharing their success stories with them (including their struggles, failures and challenges they faced in their career and business as they strive to attain success) so that these women we seek to empower can see that it is actually possible for them to overcome every hurdle the society has placed in their way. ✓ Maybe prepare documentaries or biographies of the world's well known and successful women, highlighting their strengths, weaknesses and what led them to be achievers. These documentaries/biographies can be shared at preferred intervals on platforms that the Afghanistan women have easy access to.
Any other Comments In order to active the above objectives and enhance the capacity of afghan women within the country, its highly recommended to take time to have a research of Afghan women, stablsh the diverse committee to champion the initiative and have a plan for sustainability of the initiative. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear vision and mission • A systematic and step by step objectives to meet the problems and have a clear step by step implementation plan for sustainability • Establishment of women vice ambassadors along the country to communicate and enhance the issue of women • Ms. Bontle Marumoloa pointed out that "more awareness is needed to move women to use their talents", 		


A query was raised for discussion on the Women Reorientation & Capacity Development platform to discuss why most women are reluctant, too busy or uninterested in actively deploying their talents wherever they find themselves. Adding to that query, Mrs. Maureen Omeibe raised the question “Why is our talents rusting inside of us or being poorly tapped?”

Responding in the context of Afghanistan, Frozan Irfan Mashal reiterated that “Always been kept away from needed information and education in the country we live, therefore women do not know of their talent, value of their talents and better use of their talents”.

Agbafor P. Chijioke indicated that:

“From my perspective, the tables have turned drastically. Women are busy being breadwinners, hustling to ensure daily food on the table. Talents?!!! Question is what do I eat today while developing my talent? Fear of the unknown. Secondly, ignorance of your talent, not even been able to know/discover true self leaves the talent rusting. If you do discover self, lack of know-how or finance to develop it. Sometimes, giving up on oneself where one has been dominated over time. One takes things the way one sees it, just manage to survive syndrome sets in. It grows from there...”

This was corroborated by Victoria who stated that women are saddled with the burden of building homes. While majorly focusing on things to support their husbands in making ends meet. They also need more awareness to know there's so much untapped potential in them. An expanded mind to reaching out to a wider scope of influence and also given that privilege when discovered to lead without prejudice and envy from fellow women. Another thing I feel is a big challenge is women see what they do at home as the only thing their capacity can carry, meanwhile the singles are rushing to marry to hide under the spotlight of managing homes as their central focus. This mindset has to be reframed to move women forward and get more from them. When purpose is not defined, values are misappropriated. In the beginning, God said "let us make man in our own image after our likeness, and let them have dominion" (Gen. 1:26). Practically speaking, God wasn't referring to a specific gender "mens folk" here. When God made man in Gen. 1:26, women also came in existence. Same capacity and dominance privilege is given to women to change things and continue where God stopped. Awareness needs to be created to help women see beyond their shoulder and press forward to gaining expression of their giftings.



Gloria pointed out that as women we have allowed so many factors to define us as well as dictate what we can become and where we can go. We have allowed cultural backgrounds and norms of which most cultures value the female as a second class. In these environments, it is other women that are used to **PULL** other courageous women down who are trying to fight for a space using their talents. Because of the norms, the environment is in such a way that it fights for the elevation of women either by legislation or societal glass ceiling. Women emancipation efforts mostly are well presented on paper and talk but as one now want to see to it where is the talk being applied that is when it will become apparent that the steps to the goal are a non-starter.


Furthermore, from a young age, young girls are schooled about the importance of homes. Whilst this is good, but homes are built by both sexes. So, in the end we have households which are operating at the basis of one sex giving 90% effort and the other 10% effort (mostly being contributed by offering financial assistance). However, the contributed financial arm will be used also as a way to punish, belittle and make the women at the mercy of the other sex. Along the way, there is gender manipulation resulting from many factors again like child bearing, making the female also lose focus and concentrate on minors rather than majors. Hence, most women will spend most of their time focusing on looks just to please the men rather than doing it for their own satisfaction.

In supporting the above sentiments, Bontle Marumoloa pointed out that his is the reality in our patriarchal societies where we even see girls at home playing mommy in the kitchen and daddy driving to work. The subjects in schools also used to encourage gender manipulation with boys doing agriculture, design and technology and woodwork and girls doing home economics. Now there is a shift to inclusiveness in the curriculum.

Clementina Teena Ogbugoh indicated that there are various solutions that can be adopted and employed to help us change the narratives.

- We must raise our awareness to become valuable. It is not enough to have a vision of what we want or desire but what is the current level of awareness?
- There is a great need for value-based leadership and positive-minded beliefs to be ingrained in the girl-child.
- Cultural dynamics enabling pursuit of careers by women etc.

She further pointed out that Leadership is influence says my mentor, Dr. John C. Maxwell. Women are natural leaders. They influence every sphere of humanity starting from the home. They influence their husbands, children and by extension, the world! I love Sheryl Sandberg's book LEAN IN: Women, Work and the will to lead.



On factors limiting women today, Chigaemezu Regina Richards indicated that there are enormous factors limiting the women of today. To evolve beyond these factors and show forth light, the message of CONFIDENCE must be reiterated as much as MINDSET REORIENTATION. While a few are becoming vocal and active to rewrite narratives, it is worthy to mention, that the cause these few are chanting, are future forwarded. What do I mean by Future Forward...The change we desire to see in the minds and attitude of women in nation building, leadership, science, technology, will manifest more in the generation following ours. However, it is expected of the women of today, to teach the women in future, the path to driving the change desired. I believe in catching girls upstream. Let more effort be put in awakening the minds of the Girl Child. They are the end goal of all advocacy. Let's teach them that their place is everywhere! Teach them inclusiveness in governance, Politics, classroom, STEM...





CHALLENGING GENDER STEREOTYPES- PROMOTING INCLUSIVENESS AND REDUCING COST OF EXCLUSION

OLDN-WRCD IWD 2021

Transcribed by: Abigail Daniece Tabili

Organized on March 16, 2021, a profound and insightful dialogue was conducted on a centered focus about gender stereotypes, the roles of women in leadership, and being solution partners in reducing cost of exclusion of women. Speaking through their experiences in Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, and across the globe – our main speakers featured: Maureen Omeibe, Ghazal Shaheen, Prof. Chris Funke Ifeta, and Chigaemezu Regina.

Key Objectives of This Session:

1. Get into conversations to understand the issue facing women primarily in Afghanistan.
2. Propose modalities to reach out to women both in cities and provinces.
3. Psychological empowerment of women to get women to understand their real identity.
4. Marketing the potential of women across the boards of Nigeria, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, India, and other parts of the World.
5. Highlighting examples of what women can do in our different communities and societies.

As part of the youth, I'm privileged to learn an abundance from this discourse. Not everyone is able enough to be educated, especially on the basis of basic human rights. Here are important key extracts from this session:

Gender stereotypes are making it easy for society to celebrate mediocrity. "Women represent 51% of the World's population as of today. If the World decides in the setup that women are not give the opportunity of any sort, it means the World has decided that they will work with only 50% of the population." The growth and development in society will stay immobile if generations continue to have this narrative. Organization Leadership and Development Network Women Reorientation and Capacity Development aims to understand the negative side that infringes the rights of women that debilitates the flow process of the development life of women.

Women in crafts and leadership are difficult to obtain in Nigeria. Major challenges of women leadership being surfaced are the fellow teenage girls starting from secondary and university levels. Prof. Chris Funke Ifeta is still the first woman to graduate sculpture to this day. She proposes an objective to focus on guiding and teaching young girls better decision-making when opportunity arises in Nigeria. "All it takes for a woman is perseverance, patience, and ambition."

Misinterpretation of social construction in gender is the main enemy. If the World wants absolute development, it's mandatory to start right from our families. Men who are successful and enter social conferences to advocate and write about women empowerment but completely exclude their wives, their daughters in their advocacy – are they actually vocalizing woman empowerment when their own wives and daughters are omitted? In order to fix this narrative, a man's role needs to start demonstrating that they practice what they preach with their wives and daughters.

Women constantly face discrimination in varieties of places in the society of Afghanistan. Systematic laws of prohibiting music, girls singing and receiving education are eliminating and silencing basic human rights for the female gender. "The moment our identity, personality, who we should be are characterized, it starts from a pregnancy ultrasound." Working at home and taking care of your child is not seeking gender equality, it is a basic life skill that everyone needs. When equal opportunity is given, cerebral opportunity is also supported – where a woman can be a CEO while having three children. Women have made remarkable advancements but require to have more open doors in Leadership to be capable in bringing fellow women as one.

Video link:

https://fb.watch/59t7xxc_QP/



Looking Ahead

OLDN-WRCD will continue to deepen and consolidate notes on Women championing global action/response for their emancipation, equality rights and empowerment. The engagements will also continue to deepen connection for the work of mobilization ahead. A call was made for OLDN-WRCD members to foster collaboration and to begin a process of constructive mobilization of more global Women to the OLDN-WRCD community. The work in this Team is predominantly driven by passion and pain that we experience seeing Women bruised, bound and broken by socio-cultural and systemic barricades. Creating a community of Women that genuinely love their fellow Women and can stand, speak and support at the needed times is what may spiral our efforts here to yield beyond expectations. It was reinforced that the problems and experiences of women are global. OLDN-WRCD platform will indeed go a long way in addressing the challenges faced by women across the globe if we can all agree to stand together and speak with one voice.