



WoMin
AFRICAN WOMEN UNITE AGAINST
DESTRUCTIVE RESOURCE EXTRACTION

NEWS

ISSUE 1 APRIL 2016

WOMIN.ORG.ZA

BUILDING WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN AFRICA FOR DEMOCRATISED RENEWABLE ENERGY AND CLIMATE JUSTICE!

**Women Stand their Ground
Against Big Coal, January 2015.**



In our very **first WoMin newsletter** we update you on our work to build an **African women-led women's rights grassroots driven campaign addressing fossil fuels, energy and climate justice**. This is NOT a WoMin campaign but is rather being driven, at this time, by dozens of organisations, grassroots groups and networks across four countries: the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Uganda and South Africa.

We are on the move! National consultations, involving at least 60% of grassroots women leaders, in each of the four countries are in an advanced stage of planning and will be implemented by mid-July 2016. The discussions had there will come together in a regional campaigns strategy and training meeting scheduled for end-July 2016, most likely in Kinshasa, DRC. We are reserving 60% of the seats there for women in community leadership positions in these four countries. In the rest of 2016 and the first half of 2017, the campaign carefully builds from below in specific local sites of organising and action to the national level. As we work we are carefully cultivating an eco-feminist approach to campaigning.

Our next newsletter will focus on the WoMin-Just Associates (JASS) African Women's Movement Building School just held in March 2016.

Thanks for reading!

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE...

Ecofeminist political economy of energy in Africa, the first in a research series to be written in 2016 and 2017

COP 21 organising, including our critical reflections on COP 21 and WoMin's efforts in Paris (in French and English)

Women and Coal Fact Sheets which we are implementing in partnership with the international network, End Coal

Building Energy Resilience Resource which will support women's organising in communities and their struggle for localised renewable energy alternatives

Solidarity research work with **women fighting coal in Somkhele and Fuleni in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**.

Dear friends, sisters and comrades

WoMin, alongside dozens of allied organisations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, South Africa and Uganda, is imagining and building a powerful women-led, grassroots driven, women's rights African campaign addressing fossil fuels energy and climate justice. The campaign was proposed by more than seventy mainly women activists from Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zimbabwe who gathered in Port Harcourt, Nigeria in October 2015 under the banner 'African Women Uniting for Energy, Food and Climate Justice'.

Why is the campaign needed? African women carry the major social and environmental costs of fossil fuel extraction, processing and combustion, and the associated climate change, but women's struggles are generally invisible and poorly supported. African women are, however, living the REAL alternatives to this deeply destructive patriarchal, extractivist model of development in the ways they produce food, conserve and steward natural resources, and take care of their families and communities. African women, hold the solutions to the many crises of ecology, climate, food, water, energy, transport and development that the planet and its people confront. The campaign will advance a powerful vision of development built from the needs and perspectives of the majority of African women.

Our concept for the campaign The intention is to build a campaign rooted in grassroots struggles which are led by women, which supports women's organising and movement-building as defined in specific localities and at the national level, and which also unifies women's struggles across localities and countries through a common set of political demands to be pursued at different levels of the campaign. Over the next 18 months to two years, WoMin and its allies will define a political agenda (the changes we want to achieve) for the entire campaign which is grounded in the demands of women at the local and national levels. We will not impose a political agenda from above but will build this from below. This common political agenda is critical to provide a unified frame for our organising at the regional, national and local levels. The campaign is NOT working to build the identity and profile of a single organisation. Hence, WoMin will play a leading role in building and sustaining the campaign, but the campaign is not a WoMin campaign. If the campaign is to build organisation and movement, including by creating new intersections between organisations and struggles, the campaign needs to be a political platform of partnership between many organisations.

Where will we build the campaign from and what might be the role of different actors?

The regional campaign will be rooted in four priority countries in 2016 and part of 2017 – the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Uganda and South Africa. In the second half of 2017, we will 'phase' in two to three more countries following a similar approach to the process that will have been tested in 2016. In each country, the campaign will be built in specific localities/geographies where there are community organisations and movements or local NGOs which are willing to deepen or support women's organising and campaigning. At the regional level, we will have a draft regional campaigns framework to 'frame' the scoping out and development of campaigns at the local and national level in each country. At each level of the campaign we will seek to build a political platform which brings together a range of organisations and movements bridging the environment and climate, women's rights, land and natural resources, extractives etc.

Supporting local struggles through the campaign There is a deep commitment on the part of WoMin to build a genuinely grassroots driven women-led campaign which is defined from the bottom up. The campaign therefore is a strategy, a process and a platform to support women's organizing and movement-building. This requires an intensive highly participatory process which is rooted in specific localities or communities in every country. As mentioned WoMin and its allies in each of the three countries will prioritise 2-3 specific sites or communities for 2016/early 2017 where intensive local organizing and planning work will happen under the umbrella of the campaign. In each community, we will support women there undertake participatory research, visioning exercises, and develop local action plans to be supported through the campaign. Women leaders from these local sites will participate in national campaigns planning meetings and trainings (local and national) and will be represented on national campaign platforms.

Where have we reached at this time? After intensive consultations and bilateral conversations, national lead organisations have been confirmed as the Femmes et Justice Economique (FEJE) network in the DRC, Kebetkache Women Development and Resource Centre in Nigeria, the National Association for Women's Action and Development (in partnership with the National Association for Professional Environmentalists (NAPE)) in Uganda, with two community allies under careful consideration for South Africa. National consultations, in which grassroots women leaders will constitute 60% of participants, are being conceptualised and budgeted for in each country and will be held between end-April and early July 2016. A one-week regional exchange, strategy and training meeting will be held in either the DRC or South Africa at end-July 2016. WoMin has successfully recruited a regional campaigns coordinator who will be in place by 1 June 2016, and national coordinators, to be placed in each national lead organisation, will be recruited and inducted in advance of or immediately following the national consultation meetings.

[FOR MORE ON THE CAMPAIGN VISIT OUR WEBPAGE](#)

[DOWNLOAD OUR CAMPAIGN CONCEPT NOTE \(ENGLISH\)](#)

[DOWNLOAD OUR CAMPAIGN CONCEPT NOTE \(FRENCH\)](#)

Other activities linked to the campaign:

Ecofeminist analysis of energy in Africa: an exploratory paper In September 2015, WoMin commissioned an exploratory ecofeminist analysis of energy in Africa to inform the development of the fossil fuels energy and climate justice campaign. This exploratory paper will be the first in a series and will suggest the themes and issues to be explored more deeply through subsequent papers. It will also start to frame a research agenda in each country leading the campaign. The paper will be published as one of a series on women and energy in Africa. The paper will be launched at the July 2016 regional campaigns strategy meeting.

Organising, campaigning, knowledge-building at COP 21 WoMin sent a delegation of twelve women activists to Paris in December 2015 to lead and participate in civil society organising and campaigning for climate justice. WoMin's intention was not to participate in the internal process but to rather use this as a key opportunity to learn, build awareness, be challenged, and create new connections all oriented to supporting the development of the fossil fuels, energy and climate justice campaign. The main countries supported to participate in COP 21 organising were the same that will lead the WoMin regional campaign: Uganda, South Africa, the DRC and Nigeria. WoMin joined hands with many partners – the Rural Women's Assembly, People's Dialogue, Franciscans International, Ibon International, the World March of Women, CIDSE, CCFD and many others to convene five platforms at the COP and we were invited to join the spaces of many others to input and contribute: CCFD, EDGE foundations, the Land and Water Convergence, the Campaign against Corporate Impunity convergence space, CIDSE, the Gaia Foundation, Friends of the Earth International and others.

[VISIT our ecofeminist analysis in advance of COP 21](#)

[DOWNLOAD our COP 21 reflections in French](#)

[DOWNLOAD our COP 21 reflections in English](#)



WoMin delegation at COP 21, Paris, December 2015.



12 December 2015 People's March, Paris.

Photo: Coalition Climat 21

Women and Coal Fact Sheets WoMin is partnering with the International Coal Network (ICN) to produce two fact sheets on women and coal. The key themes covered are: the political economy of coal in Africa; the crisis of energy in Africa; corporate externalisation of the costs of coal; impacts of coal on health, environment and livelihoods; renewable energy and alternatives to coal; and women's leadership in battles against big coal. Further empirical research is currently being carried out to address gaps identified in the drafting process, specifically examples of African women's resistance, and the alternatives we are striving for/ building in practice. The fact sheets will be launched in mid-2016.



WoMin solidarity visit to Mpumalanga, South Africa, January 2015. *Photo: Heidi Augestad*



Women Unified in the Fight Against Coal, Mpumalanga, South Africa. *Photo: Lebohang Tlhako*

WoMin 'Building Energy Resilience' Resource In the second half of 2015, WoMin commissioned the development of a WoMin 'Building Energy Resilience' Resource – a collection of six simple, easy to read and powerfully illustrated brief pamphlets targeting peasant and working class women and their support organisations which can be used to (a) inform users about energy, its sources, some of the risks and alternatives; and (b) illustrate some of the simple practical solutions, drawing on renewable resources, to address energy poverty at the micro-level as part of a long-term mobilisation towards wider structural transformation in the energy system.

The six pamphlets are as follows:

- 1. Energy basics:** What energy is, the different forms of energy (potentials and risks), the problems of the current energy system and what we are striving for as part of a wider transition
- 2. Energy is a women's rights question:** What we as women are collectively struggling for
- 3. Four simple solar energy solutions** which can be implemented at the local level as we struggle for the bigger structural solutions: (a) water heating (b) cooking (c) cooling and (d) water distillation.

The collection will be designed for open-access download from online sources, for easy translation into other languages and for printing in either black and white or colour. WoMin will launch the collection during 2016 linked to campaign development activities at the national and regional levels.

Participatory research, with consent focus, with women affected by Coal in Fuleni/Somkhele, KwaZulu-Natal

In this highly strategic collaboration building on solidarity work we started with women in Fuleni/Somkhele in October 2014 we supported women in Fuleni to come together for the first time to discuss their political position in respect of a proposed coal mine, and exchange with the women of Somkhele, who have been deeply impacted by a coal mine established more than a decade back.

Women from Somkhele and Fuleni joined the WoMin sub-regional coal exchange in January 2015. The research, which women in both communities have helped shape designed that:

- Offers women a platform to tell their stories of struggle against the coal mine/s
- 'Outs' the failures of the state and local traditional authorities which are compromised by their relationship to the corporates
- Explores and advances their ideas for a local development alternative.

The second phase of research starts in April 2016 and will conclude in June/July 2016. Women's organising and actions will continue to be supported through the research and in the longer-term through the fossil fuels, energy and climate justice campaign.

