

[00:00:27.210] - Alys Mumford (Voice Over)

Hello and welcome to On The Engender, Scotland's feminist policy podcast. I'm Alys Mumford from Engender, and we're continuing to delve through our archives of events from the past year to bring you some of the discussions, talks and general chit-chat we've been hosting about feminism in Scotland and around the world. This week, we're excited to be sharing the recording of an event we held in collaboration with Christian Aid, looking at intersectionality around the world. It was a real honour to host this discussion with guests Talat Yaqoob, Memory Kachambwa, and Dr. Marianna Leite.

[00:01:05.280] - Alys Mumford

I'm really delighted to have this chance to delve into the issues around intersectionality with our fantastic panel. We'll be having a little bit of chat and then we'll be opening it up for comments, questions. We'll be asking you to speak into the mic for that, just so everyone can hear. If you're not comfortable with appearing on the podcast and being recorded, that's totally fine. Just let me know afterwards. And if you would like to be on the podcast and I've got just some little forms to sign, but feel free to speak without fear that it's going to be broadcast to the nation. And the whole nation listens to our podcasts.

[00:01:38.630] - Audience

[Laughs]

[00:01:38.630] - Alys Mumford

So I'm going to introduce our fantastic panel. First, we have Memory Kachambwa. Hi, Memory.

[00:01:45.090] - Memory Kachambwa

Hi.

[00:01:45.090] - Alys Mumford

Memory is a pan African feminist and social justice activist. A recognised dynamic leader and movement building, feminist organising and policy advocacy and networking, with over 18 years experience developing, managing and implementing programmes promoting women and girls rights regionally, and globally. She's the executive director of FEMNET, and super delighted to have her here.

[00:02:04.840] - Alys Mumford

We also have Dr. Marianna Leite. Hi Marianna.

[00:02:10.570] - Marianna Leite

Hello everyone.

[00:02:10.750] - Alys Mumford

Marianna is the global lead on gender inequality at Christian Aid. And she works on the development of holistic approaches to gender and intersecting inequalities that ensure equality of outcomes and rights for all.

[00:02:21.430] - Alys Mumford

And finally, we have Talat Yaqoob. Hi Talat.

[00:02:22.590] - Talat Yaqoob

Hello.

[00:02:24.730] - Alys Mumford

Talat is the director of Equate Scotland, working on women in STEM and the co-founder and chair of the Women 50:50 Campaign for Equal Representation. She sits on the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls and runs workshops for organisations on working intersectionally.

[00:02:37.420] - Alys Mumford

So, we've got a real treat in store tonight. I'm very impressed that we all managed to say hello without giggling. When we record this in our office, that's normally the first point in which everyone realises they've got a mic in front of their face. So panel: intersectionality, it's a word we hear a lot in feminist contexts, but often without context surrounding it. So what does intersectionality mean in practice for you and the work that you do? Memory, let's start with you.

[00:03:01.870] - Memory Kachambwa

Thank you so much, Alys. And I'm so delighted to be here and to just share my thoughts and also experiences. So intersectionality, I think we all know that this was really coined in terms of looking at how in terms of development, different aspects, be it race, be it class, affect. We can't just look at one aspect of development. And I come from the feminist movement and feminist intersectionality is actually a branch of feminism which actually looks, and sort of like tries to distinguish between, how if you're a feminist or you, you are of a particular ideology, how class intersects, how issues of race, and that also intersects.

[00:03:52.360] - Memory Kachambwa

And my experience is also coming from southern Africa. Born in Zimbabwe, we also use this framing in terms of the work that we do, where we look at how the the historical context of colonialism, and also neoliberalism, also affects how we identify and how we work. So most of our work is, I might be a feminist, I might be a women's rights activist, but I have certain privileges which are accorded because of my class in society, what I've been able to be exposed from and how it differs in terms of even the geographical location.

[00:04:38.530] - Memory Kachambwa

So I might be coming from an urban area. My experiences in the world view may be different from a feminist or an activist who's coming from a grass roots area and how it can't all be looked at as being unique. So for me, that's how I identify the intersectionalities that women are experiencing. A woman who is disabled, for example, how they interact with us in terms of the work that we do. And we have also, as FEMNET the organisation that I lead, started also looking at these intersectionalities.

[00:05:17.500] - Memory Kachambwa

It can be across gender, it can be across class. It's can be across the rural divide. Even within the urban setting, it can also be we work a lot with women who, and girls, who are in formal settings, and that also provides all the different layers. So really, intersectionality is about putting all those layers together, but also trying to map and seeing where do we intersect in understanding that we are all different, have different experiences, but what we bring to the table is very unique. And it should be something that we should be able to take at the same level and equally respect. I'll stop there.

[00:06:02.260] - Alys Mumford

Amazing, thank you Memory. Marianna?

[00:06:04.980] - Marianna Leite

Thank you, Alys, and thank you for the invitation. I echo what Memory was saying it is about understanding the different levels of vulnerability people were exposed to. But also understanding that how those different levels of vulnerability affect people's experience and how that might lead to further oppressions and different levels of oppression. So let's say for talking about a rural woman, an indigenous women in rural Bolivia will have a very different experience from a lesbian woman in urban Glasgow.

[00:06:38.850] - Marianna Leite

So that affects how we're going to deliver our programmes. That affects how are we going to address the policies we are going to be pushing for. And that also affects the language that we will be using. At Christian Aid we pay tribute to the person who coined the term, Kimberlé Crenshaw. She departed from a very particular example of how racism and sexism affected a particular experience in the United States. That being said, that particular tool that she, lets say systematised, I mean, that it's not particularly new in terms of the experience that we have in terms of our work, but it was very well

systematised by Kimberlé.

[00:07:25.320] - Marianna Leite

And it's really useful in terms of our work because it helps us have an in-depth analysis of a particular context. So what we do in our programmes before we start a project, we have an in-depth analysis, and a power analysis of what are the issues at play. So what are the gatekeepers, or what are the people that are benefiting from the status quo, and what are the ones that are suffering? And then we just develop the tools that need to be put in place to change that particular situation. And we have one thing that we call the adaptive programming, which means that we have to always revise that in a recurring basis. So we understand that those identities and those vulnerabilities are not fixed. They are very fluid and they change in the lifetime. They change over time. So that really impacts how we deliver work. But on the flip side of that, when we're talking about policies that we are going to be pushing for, will we always look at the not only the gender elements of those policies, but what are the differentiated aspect in terms of the populations that might be affected by particular policy?

[00:08:34.560] - Marianna Leite

So you're talking about health legislation, let's say. If it has an effect on HIV AIDS population, then you might want to consider the LGBT+ population and then that really affects our work. So it is a really good tool for analysis and a pretty good understanding and a reality check for us, because people don't really separate that on their lives.

[00:08:55.600] - Alys Mumford

Amazing, thank you. And Talat?

[00:08:57.660] - Talat Yaqoob

It's been explained and described beautifully and brilliantly. So I don't want to cover that. What I would say, and I agree with how it's been described and particularly the understanding of layers and the layers that an individual can have and bring that together. And importantly, talking about intersectionality in terms of power and privilege, as Marianna said, is hugely important. Intersectionality has come into the lexicon of Scottish policymaking over the last few years. It's existed for a lot longer than that. So it's important that we know that where its origins are and the fact that there are women of colour particularly, that need to be credited with the origins of it as well.

[00:09:35.430] - Talat Yaqoob

But for me, when reading about intersectionality in section analysis, it's the first time I saw myself reflected in policymaking. So it's the first time I was reading something, and something was talking about me as a woman, me as a Muslim, me as a person of colour. And bringing that all together. And it's hugely powerful because it's the first time that women like me are seeing themselves in policymaking. And if we don't see ourselves, we don't participate. Policies do not work for us. And that's the most important. That is what intersectionality is about. And it was a hugely powerful tool for me to be able to talk about how we make policy in Scotland because of the power it enabled me to have, because it gave a word for the thing that I am experiencing on a daily basis. And that's what makes it so important in terms of the work that that I do and put it into context of delivery.

[00:10:27.210] - Talat Yaqoob

So Women 50:50 is the campaign for fair representation in parliament. And we want to see our parliamentarians reflecting Scotland's population right now. They are vast majority male, whether it's in councils and in parliament. But if I did not take an intersectional approach to the work of women 50 50, I would be talking about women and I would be creating a culture that allowed those who are and forgive. I don't really have a better turn of phrase for this, but the lowest hanging fruit who were always really going to have access to power and opportunity, I was going to open the door fully rather than it being ajar.

[00:11:01.830]

My work is to look at who is the door pretty much closed. For the best way for me to explain that is that 20 years of evolution, there's never been a woman of colour elected to the Scottish Parliament. If I don't take her intersectional analysis, my campaign will miss her out. So the point of my work and

my life experience, everything I do is taking an intersectional approach so that I'm not just helping the women who the door is already ajar for. I'm looking at the women who the door is closed for, who have got a bolt on the door and can get in if they were banging on it. That's intersectionality.

[00:11:35.350] - Alys Mumford

Talat was speaking at an event in the Scottish Parliament the other day and talked about that again, the Scottish lexicon talking about "hard to reach communities" and actually are they just 'easier to ignore communities'. So definitely want to come back to to loads of those themes, particularly power and vulnerability, I should say, as well, we all very nicely took it in turns there. But do you feel free to, you know, interrupt to get your points in - no need to be nice on this table. Or, to agree and say "excellent point, thank you."

[00:12:05.250] - Alys Mumford

So you talked about the sort of Scottish policymaking context and of the Engender is Scotland's feminist policy and advocacy organisation. And one of the things that makes feminist policy advocacy difficult is that different strands of equality are often, sit on different strategies, although we like to say that things work intersectionality, and we have equality strategies that cover all the protected characteristics. Actually, those strategies are often very, very bad, at recognising the specifics of people's lives. So we have race equality strategies that barely mentioned women. We have women's equality strategies which barely mentioned women of colour. You can say the same with disabled women, the same with trans women across the whole spectrum. And it's incredibly frustrating as something we do often in the Engender office is "CTRL F" women when a new strategy comes out,

[00:12:53.050] - Audience

[laughs]

[00:12:53.100] - Alys Mumford

Don't do it, it's a depressing exercise. But is that, I mean is that something you find in the work you do - how we can bring those those different areas of policy together? Because they're not actually different areas of policy.

[00:13:04.260] - Marianna Leite

No, they're not. I mean, as I was just saying, it's not like people separate that in their daily experiences. It's not like, oh, this is the day I'm going to be living climate change. Tomorrow. I might be living gender inequality. And then the day after, maybe I'll experience violence. It's not like that. It's all intersecting and overlapping and they might happen at the same moment or they might just affect how you experience a particular different of oppression, in another situation, because you're just so, I don't know, exhausted and tired and just so frustrated with those things. And I think making what I think is the message and we need to drive forward is that inclusion or equality, it's everyone's responsibility. It cannot be the women's ministry. It cannot be the committee [of] gender equality or the Human Rights Committee. It needs to be everyone's responsibility integrating that. It's, it's part of everyone's job and us as the electorate, let's say, we have to hold those politicians to account and making sure that everyone is taking into account not just a particular population that might be a bit more dominant in a particular setting.

[00:14:21.950] - Marianna Leite

So, for example, Christian works a lot with economic justice, as does FEMNET. And one of the things that we found is that a lot of the fiscal justice policies don't take into account the gender element. And then when you talk about the people in the global south, then that adds into your geographical location, then you are even further marginalized by those policies that are supposed to be gender blind or but actually they aren't because the system is not blind to those inequalities, they are built for a particular population, which usually white northern privileged men who are heterosexual and that have access to those positions of power. So I think we need to understand that those policies fit into a wider system that needs to be challenged as well.

[00:15:10.290] - Memory Kachambwa

Yeah, I want to agree, but you said we should not agree.

[00:15:13.070] - Audience
[laughs]

[00:15:16.670] - Memory Kachambwa
I think yeah, I think it's so it's so easy for us to always look at the category. For example, we work primarily with women and I think for a long time we've been just looking at women as being homogeneous or say 'African women', 'Asian women', 'women from Europe'. But women are different. And I think more and more in policy development, it's important for actually understanding how different we are and how we are not homogeneous. And once that understanding is there, because I think there's also been quite a huge shift when we see all these proclamations of feminist men and, some of them are but...

[00:15:59.890] - Audience
[laughs]

[00:16:01.190] - Memory Kachambwa
I think it's so difficult also for. I mean, personally, I always wonder you, you, don't experience menstruation or maybe some of the experiences that I just experience as a woman and it's OK for you to advocate. But some of the things that women do experience and how they experience it differently sometimes is so unique. And it's something that we should always think about in policy making, and to say it can't be a one size fits all for all women. But how do we become conscious enough to be able to have that lens all the time? Because when policies are being driven and the way policies are usually structured, they're not structured in a way that allows intersectionality. So it has to be a deliberate move and is something that we should be able to consciously always say and ask and make sure actually forced through, because it's not something that is always taken up. And because most of the people who are in this policy spaces, like we've talked about, are privileged.

[00:17:14.120] - Memory Kachambwa
So if I'm a privileged woman, I mean these spaces, I'm even privileged. I'll give a quick example. We do a lot of work working at the United Nations around this Commission on the Status of Women. And one of the things we've always found continuously is that negotiations are done in English. And yet on the African continent, we have more. So many, I mean, the official: we have Portuguese, we have French, we have a bit of Spanish, we have Swahili. So we have so many languages. And when documents are being shared, for example, a draft document is shared in English and translating it a draft document that has to be tracked, in terms of the issues, it becomes quite difficult. And so that's one thing we've learned is that the space, even globally, most of it, the language just becomes a barrier. So we haven't even started to go. And looking at the gender issues, we just looking at the space in how it's not even an intersectional space itself.

[00:18:22.910] - Memory Kachambwa
And then we look at other deeper issues in terms of accessing some of the documents, the research. So some of our colleagues and our partners in in the Portuguese speaking countries were like but, you know, there's a lot that's happening even in these discussions that we are doing. We're not talking about intersectionality. Sometimes they're left behind because the the information there, it's not even in their language that they can access, let alone some of the geographical aspects in itself being much of a barrier. And then another issue is also around when we look at how people then interpret and think that, OK, this is a policy that maybe is providing water and there's certain groups, which ordinarily would not be in that space or will not be able to to be included in that space. And assuming that is only a binary way of thinking about the genders or some or that if it's just women that all the women are the same and there's just one gender: 'woman' and not thinking also that within women there are different identities within that. So I think the conscious lens is something that as well in these policy spaces really now need to really consciously and to start pushing it in all aspects regardless. Yeah, and it's a journey.

[00:19:55.230] - Alys Mumford

Yeah. And I think on the flipside of that as well, it's assuming certain groups of women will be interested in certain areas of policy and only going to certain communities or certain groups on one particular issue and never talking to them again. So yeah, both ways.

[00:20:09.560] - Talat Yaqoob

Yeah, and I said that's actually exactly the point I was about to make in that I absolutely agree that who is making the policy, who is in the position of power, whether we're talking about how UN uses language and how they participate in intersectional analysis or or the international development movement as a whole, there's also a responsibility on those who occupy the equalities space. So this is about feminist organisations, women's organizations. This is about anti-racism organisations and race equality organisations and others. And it is, actually, how much are they genuinely bought in to intersectionality as a concept? How are they participating in it and what are they doing internally and in the work that they do to champion it? Because absolutely. Absolutely at the end of the day, the power lies with the people who are making the policies. But if women's organisations are the only ones talking about intersectionality, then we're going to be talking about women of colour, but I need race equality organisations to be talking about women of colour.

[00:21:14.080] - Talat Yaqoob

And when we do that as inequality's sector, we will be influenced and change faster. So I guess it's to my colleagues in the third sector really about what what are we doing? How can we do it better? Is intersectionality as important to you as it is to me? If not, why not? And even, you know, as somebody who cares deeply about it, at Equate Scotland right now - another pitch for my work. I'm sorry about that - but at Equate Scotland right now, which is the national expert organisation of women's participation in STEM, we have a piece of research out that is specifically about 'if you are women who is studying in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, or you're working in it and you experience multiple discriminations, you want to hear specifically from you.' And one of the questions in it is, 'is outreach work on women in STEM actually accessible to you?' As somebody who is black ethnic, whose first language isn't English, you might be a carer, you know. So that is the important work of the organisation that I have the privilege of leading - self reflection on whether we are doing intersectionality in the way that we delivered our work.

[00:22:19.060] - Alys Mumford

Well and because the organisations can't be delivering their work fully if they're not thinking about these things.

[00:22:25.030] - Talat Yaqoob

Exactly.

[00:22:25.050] - Alys Mumford

I mean we, you know Engender is by no means, you know, 'best practice' on this and there's so many things we can learn, but a project we did last year, which was really valuable, was working with disabled women and working with disabled people's organisations on disabled women's reproductive rights, which was truly a very participatory project and truly shocking in the stories that were coming out around forced sterilization, still, of learning disabled women, forced terminations, inability to have smear tests because doctors surgeries don't have hoists, you know all these sorts of things. And it came about because when we were doing work with disabled women, the first priority that always came up from our disabled women participants was the fear of having children taken away from them. And that was not a fear that was coming up from non-disabled women. And so we felt, well, that's that's something that needs exploring. And it was such a valuable project and of course, once you know these things, it's it's nothing. No one would ever look at the findings and say, well, we don't care about that. No one would ever say, well, we don't really care about disabled women's reproductive rights once you see it there. But it's asking those questions and writing it down and getting the data. So, yeah, absolutely, I think.

[00:23:26.590] - Talat Yaqoob

And bringing breaking into the day to day, the day to day activity of what you do, the normalisation of the practice. It's not, it doesn't, it stops being academic. Then it becomes something that is your job.

Yeah.

[00:23:36.740] - Alys Mumford

And it's, and I think you said it, Memory, it's a way of working rather than...you can't be an intersectional organisation. It's not, it's not a thing you are, it's what you do. Exactly. Marianna you talked a lot about, you know, oppression and a sort of global injustices. And one thing I'm particularly keen to explore a bit more is how feminism fits in with those justice campaigns. We often say, as Talat said, it's feminists and feminist groups that talk about intersectionality rather than other groups. But we we know that climate change, corporate power, migrant rights, these are all feminist issues, but they're not they're not seen as "women's issues" in the way that violence against women, period, poverty, these sorts of things often are. Do you think that's changing? It is their recognition, actually, that these campaigns need to be doing more than just sort of listing the problems? I don't know.

[00:24:26.950] - Marianna Leite

I think it is I do think it is. And I'm a very glass half full person, and I'm optimistic in terms of seeing how the movements are progressing. One of the things I've been seeing, that the shrinking space of civil society has forced organisations to talk to each other because at some point we just became really fragmented and specialist. And now we're just saying - because we don't have a lot of space, we don't have a lot of resources, we just have been forced to talk to each other and and think how we need to strategize. And that has helped to break some of the silos that, for example, there was something we're discussing today, how feminist weren't necessarily working with faith-based organisations. But, you know, here we are today, Christian Aid and Engender and so and we are seeing the added value of each other. I mean, one thing that we do at Christian Aid (and also doing a bit of publicising, side by side, and the coordinator just back in the room), which is working with faith based organisations and leaders to promote a movement for gender justice. So we are trying to sort of see how we can break out of the silos and integrate a bit more.

[00:25:36.370] - Marianna Leite

And I think that is the nature of feminism, isn't it? It is a movement for social justice that looks for equal outcomes that necessarily isn't just about women. I mean, I don't think is just about women, but I also recognise there are many feminisms. I mean, there is, you know, Black feminism. There's the first, second, third wave. I mean, we can go and on and on. And I think that's beautiful, because it is recognising the diversity, the plurality and I think we need to be at a point where we feel comfortable embracing that, and I think that's what intersectionality is all about.

[00:26:11.470] - Memory Kachambwa

And I think that as women's movements and as feminists, we've always used the framework of intersectionality, because I think the way we've looked at how women are affected has actually created a framework for us to even analyze. And we also have the tools where I think we've always been, I always think that women's rights, women's organisations, we have we've always been intersectional in our work, but of course, we need to do more. And one of the things that keeps coming, I think, is the issues around inequalities and the inequality narrative also I think is also starting to break, in terms of whatever beats climate justice we think that there are inequalities and I think it also is a great opportunity for using the intersectionality framework. And I think across across the struggles that we do, we should actually be using this, we should be looking more at intersectionality because it doesn't help when we all fighting for social justice and we're just not recognizing that within that fight there are other people who experience things differently.

[00:27:29.580]

And I really liked, Alys, when you started talking about working with women with disabilities, one of the things that we realized at FEMNET was that we don't know how it is because we, even within our team, we didn't even have anyone living with disabilities. But when we started working with groups of women with disabilities, it was just amazing. And them questioning us that "before you do this meeting, have you considered accessibility issues? Are you translating into Braille?" I mean, for I mean, all types of disabilities, it's just not physical disability, also putting in issues around mental health, how we're very exclusionary in terms of not even considering women who have mental health issues, and not even mentioning it. I mean, in some contexts, even working with people with albinism

in some communities in Africa, they still hide them. So some of the groups and some of the people we should be working with cannot even access, in terms of us even seeing them.

[00:28:39.310] - Memory Kachambwa

So is going that little bit deeper, but actually having the people themselves teach us. So we had to kind of like be humble and say we actually don't know what it is like within our work to have a disability-friendly environment, but to also start understanding the issues and not to speak about them, but actually have them be the ones speaking and defining for themselves. So it was a learning, still a learning, but I think it's also having within some of the groups creating a space and an avenue for them to really question us and to say it as it is and being open to say, "ok, yes, we are fighting feminism, yes, we are fighting inequality, social justice battles, but are we open enough to be able to allow people to really question us and say, but your practice, you are leaving this and that?"

[00:29:44.290] - Talat Yaqoob

I'm trying to find things to disagree with

[00:29:46.510] - Audience

[laughs]

[00:29:49.220] - Alys Mumford

That's the trouble with women, all too nice.

[00:29:51.910] - Talat Yaqoob

Yeah, not something that's been said to me recently, but thank you. The only thing I can disagree with is: I'm glass half empty. That's the only bit that I can figure out a way to disagree with, but that's just the state of UK politics.

[00:30:05.130] - Audience

[laughs]

[00:30:05.210] - Talat Yaqoob

So, and in terms of what you said about the kind of global fights and the intersections within them, climate change is a brilliant example of where an intersectional analysis is, if you don't have it, the responses will be wrong. Because you have to look at who's emitting the most CO2, who is suffering the consequences of that industrialization. And so and within that, the very gendered analysis of who is doing the majority of the world's farming, who is, you know, so you look at that and you think a non-intersectional approach, a very, kind of, binary approach to climate change will not be a solution to the problem. It's as simple as that. But, at the same time, I don't think that is something that is front and centre of climate change conversations, it's secondary because we've got to deal with what we're dealing with right now. And actually right now is the inequality and the intersectionality and the causes of climate change and damage to our planet.

[00:31:08.330]

So there's, that's one example of not taking intersectional approach actually further embeds the harm that you're trying to get rid of, but in the same way that has been said by others an intersectional approach means that you're doing your job right. And if you're fighting for a social justice campaign, there is no aspect whether we're talking about poverty, whether talking about literacy rates, whether we're talking about violence, whether we're talking about single parents, for example, whether it's carers and caring responsibilities. All of these have gendered consequences. And the consequences are that women are harmed more and the women are harmed most. So not taking intersectional approach, and the fact that within that disabled women, working class women, women of colour are harmed most. So it's just about doing your job well and actually getting to the end goal of progress faster because you started the conversation with an intersectional approach rather than coming at it later and realizing that you need to then reconsider everything you've done through an intersectional lens.

[00:32:08.540] - Alys Mumford

It's almost like you're saying decision makers don't care about women.

[00:32:12.260] - Talat Yaqoob
My glass is half empty.

[00:32:13.340] - Audience
[laughs]

[00:32:15.590] - Alys Mumford
I would like to pass over to to folks in the room. I think someone's going to do a roving mic for me.

[00:32:21.050] - Alys Mumford (Voice Over)
We had a really fascinating and wide ranging discussion with the audience, including a contribution from a former Councillor talking about power and how we can challenge the idea of the best man for the job, which is still so pervasive in Scotland, even though lots of people think we've achieved equality. We had questions on how we can embed intersectionality into policy work, which tends to be normative. For example, child care policy based around traditional breadwinner models, especially in the context of funding constraints. And the final question for this section: were the panel's mothers feminists?

[00:32:51.980] - Talat Yaqoob
Is my mum a feminist? I don't think my mum would call herself that. I think she's an accidental one. She's the mother of eight girls. She didn't have much of a choice, I'm going to be honest. And she's my mum, she didn't have much of a choice. And I don't think she would necessarily use those words. That's also got a lot to do with her first language isn't English. She's born and bred in Pakistan, originally India. So feminism isn't a word that is is is used. So it's not, she wouldn't call herself a feminist, but she would say that she is for girls and that she's for women. But it's not a word that is used readily, so it comes back to intersectional way of looking at feminism. It's not it's not a word that's used. It's not a word that existed for her. But I think she is...I'm going to say yes. I'm gonna ask her tonight.

[00:33:41.750] - Talat Yaqoob
And so the question about power. Yes, women 50:50 has a lot of work to do on this, I'm readily aware of this. I think our councils are the furthest behind. I think we still have wards that are all male. We have one council that continues to be all male, and across the board it's only twenty nine percent women. A very, very, very, very small fraction who are women of color, a small fraction that are disabled women. So there's a significant amount of work to do there. But there is the need for significant culture change in how our councils work. There are late night meetings, there's decision time at 9pm, there's - a majority of councils and I mean the vast, vast majority of councils have no working maternity policy or parental leave. We're talking very, very basic things because they're not considered employees of the council they're considered elected representatives. So we're talking about basic stuff that prevents women from participating in it. So there needs to be a dramatic culture change and system change in our councils. And certainly some of the language and rhetoric that is used in our councils needs to needs to change. And I mentioned this in the speech that was referenced there. I need women not to be paper candidates. I need women in winnable seats. And for that to happen, the male gatekeepers and the favoured sons need to move aside because it wasn't theirs. It wasn't, it's not their entitlement. They've got to deserve it and work for it in the same way that women have. So I want to see women in winnable seats. And when we start seeing that culture change and the moving aside and lack of entitlement, then we'll see change in our councils.

[00:35:14.960] - Talat Yaqoob
In terms of policy making. I fundamentally believe that if we had had a fair representation of women from the start to childcare would be considered an economic priority. It is not, because of who has made the decisions for generations and that it is considered secondary. Childcare should be an economic priority. It's not. I think the way in which to take an intersectional approach is actually to change how we make policy. So I believe that, we can call it limited resources, I would call it choices on where resources are put, choices around austerity, these are these are choices that are made. I'm

not sure how much the resources have shrunk, I think it's the decisions that are being made about the resources. But I think policy making in itself needs to change. It's a very small group of people who are privileged, who participate in the influencing and developing of policy. And that includes me. I'm in a privileged position because I have access to policymakers. But is it talking to the woman who has three part time jobs and needs childcare around that? Is it talking to women with caring responsibilities who need a different type of social care system to support them? Is it talking to real women who have multiple discriminations, their access to influencers, their access to policymakers? I actually think we need a shift in how policy is made full stop because I don't think it's working in a way that listens to the women who need good policy the most.

[00:36:35.110] - Alys Mumford

Amazing, thanks. Marianna, Memory, come in on all or none of those questions?

[00:36:39.270] - Marianna Leite

Yeah I don't think my mom would self identify as a feminist, to be quite honest. I am Brazilian. I sort of grew up in a very patriarchal, very macho society and very macho family. That being said, my mom does, is very much about sort of women's independence, education and liberation. But she is very conflicted by the environment where she grew up, quite understandably, so I don't think she would say that about herself. And I think that, in a sense, was what inspired me to become a feminist. It's just a real feeling of just believing that equality should be the reality in my family. And that wasn't the case, and experiencing several different types of discrimination throughout my life because of the mere fact there was a woman.

[00:37:30.270] - Marianna Leite

So I think that covers my mother and I absolutely agree with what has been said about the policies, the economic policies and budgeting issues being very much subjective, even though they say it is objective, it is a part of the neoliberal system that tends to argue that we should monetize everything when in fact that for me is a fallacy. And I think that's a part of our job is changing that narrative. And again, goes back to that point about positive discrimination. I don't think I would call it positive discrimination, I think it's reparation for historical injustices suffered by women that have been constantly marginalized again and again and again. And perhaps if we could call it that, you know, that might receive a different response.

[00:38:25.450] - Memory Kachambwa

Yeah, OK, I'll start. My mom, I think she, I see her as a feminist, but I don't know what she would see herself, but largely because I'm sure with...ok she got married at 18, also had eight children. But there's something in our culture where they give something like 'totems'. And so my father, so we take on our fathers totem and in our fathers totem the women, there's no description for women, so the women are considered as men and is considered as very aggressive. So we are considered as men in that sense of 'we can do everything that a man does.' And if you get married to someone like me, if you have the man, your role is like a woman. I hope I'm making sense here right? I'm speaking in patriarchal terms. So she had six girls who were literally considered to be men, so just handling it. But I think what that did to us and what that meant is there was, it kind of like allowed us to be able to access and to be treated like a boy would be treated. So my mum had no choice. She was bringing up amazing women who are feminists so I think she would never call herself feminist but to me, she is.

[00:40:02.670] - Memory Kachambwa

OK. So I think going to some of the questions and comments, I really think fighting, one of the things about fighting this system, it's it's some of the entrenched systems. So even if you go to parliament, it will still follow you, the discrimination, the oppression, they'll still follow you, because I think it's it's a system which allows that. So dismantling that system and dismantling and even understanding how it operates, I think that's one fight that we need - to make sure that more women can actually get into these positions of power, for example, or people can start allowing and seeing the different races and the different classes that are excluded in some of this policymaking. And most of the tensions within, I think policymaking, is also because most of our policies are driven by capitalist agenda. It's an agenda which is so much about accumulating wealth at the expense of everyone else, because I see

no reason why there shouldn't be fair distribution of wealth in a country like Scotland or UK where taxes are collected very efficiently. We do a lot of work around tax justice and you'll find that the taxes are not even used for what they are supposed to be used.

[00:41:29.370] - Memory Kachambwa

So this is something also that we talk about intersectionality. So if I'm speaking to feminists from the north, they're talking about child care. And there's this syndrome, which you always call the "at least child care". So I would be like "Oh at least you have a bit of child care", but it shouldn't be about 'at least you have a bit of child care'. It's about - if it's not delivering the way it should be, because the people who are making it are not the ones who are having the reproductive responsibility of taking care of children. It's so difficult to see it I think we are having a conversation about how men will be like, "oh, today I have to do something, I have to, I'm taking care of the child, so I have to go early". Like they are now taking excuses for some of the gender roles which women have ordinarily done without complaining, we just do it and we're expected to do it and not get paid for it. So I think is the tensions would definitely exist in terms of policy making. And I think this is why even the push for 50:50 and quota system is saying, "look, we don't care who gets in, but if we get a majority of women and we start having a space and we start talking about some of these issues that are not working for us, it's a good start".

[00:42:50.520] - Memory Kachambwa

In South Africa, I'll give a quick example, when women started after apartheid in 1994, when women went into parliament, one of the things they found out was that there were urinals - the toilets, id not even, they didn't have toilets for women as a start. So obviously, they had to construct and make sure this provision for women to have simple things like toilets. And then they also discovered that the timing for parliament was different. I mean, they would just decide when to have the parliament, for example. The times were difficult because most of the women were single women and because of the term system, they had no time with their children, so when their children were on holiday, they were in parliament in session and things like that. So they had to push and say, "we need the parliament times to align with the school holidays for time". And one of the things, because I did my work there, interviewing them and they said "for you to be a woman parliamentarian, you need to have a wife". And I'm like, "What do you mean? You need to have a wife?" "Yes, because when I get home, I need to put my feet up, read the newspaper. I need someone to make food for me. I need someone to, you know, because I need to be up to date with what's happening in terms of current affairs. So if I don't have someone who acts like a wife, I'm not going to perform in Parliament."

[00:44:14.360] - Memory Kachambwa

But I think these are the experiences where you'd be like, OK, so in policymaking, we really need women and the people who represent the population, like you say, because it would be difficult to transform some of these structural issues because they are so embedded and they may look like they are really not important, because when you bring this to men within their clubs, they think, you know, "we should be talking of bigger things. We should be talking about trade policies. We should be pushing for this. There's no room and space for us to to to spend a lot of time discussing things like child care." So it's also that thing of bringing back to intersectionality that the actual people who experience should be the one in those positions to influence and talk about policy.

[00:45:04.290] - Alys Mumford (Voice Over)

The second round of questions included a contribution from an audience member who had been at a conference in Iceland recently discussing the women who'd been excluded from the #MeToo movement and had heard the great quote: "If you're not doing gender, you're not doing race well. If you're not doing race, you're not doing gender well", and we also had questions on how we can reframe leadership as being about empowering people, as currently it can seem the opposite of intersectional practice, how to get oppressors to listen and to learn, and a highlight of the challenge of engaging with men who still hold the power in many places or whether feminism is simply 'women's work'.

[00:45:40.170] - Marianna Leite

You asked about my mom and I can tell you about my husband. I am, he is very proudly a feminist

man, and he says that very clearly. And I think I kind of was responsible for that, pushing for a bit for a few years. I think you're absolutely right about engaging men and sort of trying to slowly instill that culture of inclusion, feminist values into the men that are in power, the men that are part of our lives. That being said, I also think that men have prevailed for so many years. And that goes back to the point about leadership that we also need to really understand that we are still and, unfortunately, at a point that we still need to focus on bringing the voices of women to the forefront. I would have loved to tell you that we were in a different position, but I don't think we are just yet. And the voices of women from different places and different experiences and the different bases, because we don't want to homogenise the voices that are going to be at the forefront, it is about diversity.

[00:46:50.120] - Marianna Leite

In terms of the #metoo movement I think that was Angela Davis said, you know, you know, if feminism is not, you know, pro racial equality, it's not, if it doesn't take racial injustice into account, it's not going to be successful at all. And I think that goes to every other aspect of intersectionality. And I think, I think we have to be self-critical as well as feminists. We have failed to a certain extent. And it's a really good time for us to reassess how to make people listen, and that's a tall order. One thing that we do a lot of Christian Aid, we we we use single stories, put the faces to the phenomenon we are trying to address, because then people can connect with that. You know, that idea of solidarity, the idea that we are all part of the system that discriminates, disempowers. Yeah. And in terms of the leadership model of being very male-oriented, and it's not only about men is also about women. Some women are just as disempowering as men because we are we're created in a culture that behaving like a man is the way to go and to be successful. And I think we need to appreciate and celebrate the champions more. So to the ones that do it right, the ones that are more open, the ones that don't speak over other people, the ones that do let those voices come to the forefront, the ones that don't want to be the gatekeepers.

[00:48:23.770] - Memory Kachambwa

Yeah, I think also from the point of where you departed about how the world is also framed in terms of being a leader. And I'm always talking to my team and saying we've grown up seeing the leaders, the successful CEOs, or even the way some of these MBAs, they're structured in a way to you know, you're doing a course thing around managing just an organisation. And you're thinking, yeah, but isn't there an alternative way of of managing and having shared power? I mean, should everyone be so - it's all structured in a very masculine power, you have to show your power, so you have to tell your team they need to fear you, you know? I had in that - we do a 360 appraisal and one of it was, "oh, you know, sometimes we're not so sure that she's in power like, you know". So if my team is not sure that I'm in power...

[00:49:30.050] - Audience

[laughs]

[00:49:30.160] - Memory Kachambwa

Actually, it's really frightening. But I think it's also like how people view power. And if you are a woman, you're soft spoken, you know, you listen, you want to listen, you have a very participatory type of leadership. It's not considered 'the' leadership. You know, you have to be out there, you have to be loud, you know, you have to show your power, dominate and you know, enforce. But it's so, so if people grew up with such a point and seeing the world like that, I think it's it's how we start measuring leadership. And we read all these leadership books and I'm like, yeah, but we need to think of feminist leadership, which is really different and, it can look different. So maybe that's what I'll comment around leadership. And it's also interesting that even within the leadership aspect, there's always the issue around the boys clubs and these boys clubs are there. I have a friend of mine who works in private sector, you are talking about talking to other groups and working with other people, women in the private sector. And she was a high level bank manager. And she said, "you know, all the meetings started at seven and eight o'clock". So five o'clock the boys would be like, "we're going to the gym after gym, will come back and have a meeting". She was married, she had young children, she had to supervise homework, but she had to leave a job. And this was a high, she was a bank manager in the private sector. And I was saying to her that, "oh, so this is the kind of work we do" and she's like, no, your kind of work, because it's like we are a civil society, we are NGO. So trying to get that connection

that, even if you are within the private sector, it doesn't mean that the work that we are doing within civil society is not important, so it goes to connecting the battles. I think there is, you know, we always talking about we are fighting one war, but the battles are different.

[00:51:35.610] - Memory Kachambwa

So the battle on climate change, the battle for LGBTQI rights, the battle for abortion, controversial issues, especially from the African context. And we're actually doing some work on looking at the impact of the gag rule on women's rights organisations. And we discover that, you know, it's just not about the gag rule. Just last week or this week, actually at the UNGA meeting, there was a whole fight to scrap everything that talked about sexual reproductive health and rights. And so it's a battle where people think, "oh, no, the gag rule, you cannot speak about that, it's about, it's for abortion activists", but it's not. It's about women's rights because because of the impact of that gag rule, we have people who cannot access HIV/AIDS treatment because the budgets are cut. We've got hospitals which are closing and women cannot access hospitals, so it's affecting maternal health, you know, things like that. So it means that it's just not a battle which is for pro-abortionists, or some of those controversial issues but we need to then realize and say even when you're talking about intersectionality, it's about the rights, it's about human rights. So it's a battle that everyone should fight because we need to start looking at it as a big war. But we need to be taking the battles and fighting in solidarity.

[00:53:06.990] - Memory Kachambwa

And lastly, working with men.

[00:53:09.870] - Audience

[laughs]

[00:53:09.930] - Memory Kachambwa

So we are always being asked, "do you work with men? You are a feminist network". So we do work with men and we have a program which is called Men to Men. And we really believe that men should not take our space. So, you shouldn't speak about my issues as a woman. You've got your space. Men should not take resources for women and women's rights organising. But men should speak to other men. So feminist men, men who have now have the understanding, they should speak to their other colleagues who are men and convince them, within their spaces, for them to start looking at things differently. So one of the things that we find out, so we work a lot with religious leaders, traditional leaders, men in corporates. And so within their own spaces, we have our men who are like envoys who really start making them to think things differently. And one of the things that we keep hearing and we even, when we interact with them, is that men will also be asking, you know, I've always thought about this, but I've never had a space to cry, to express myself. So we are getting more and more of these stories. And for us, that's the method that we think really works in working with men.

[00:54:28.230] - Talat Yaqoob

So the issue about working with men and listening is actually the same bit of the same, it's the two sides of the same coin. Because, yes, we need to work with men provided the privilege and power is left at the door. Right, if you have that self-awareness and that capacity, I will gladly work with you. So if you enter the space as somebody who wants to let me know how feminist you are,

[00:54:55.650] - Audience

[laughs]

[00:54:55.770] - Talat Yaqoob

then you go ahead and leave.

[00:54:57.380] - Alys Mumford

Take you cookie and go.

[00:54:58.200] - Talat Yaqoob

Right? There's no gold stars for you here. If you can have the self-awareness and the competency to see where your privilege and your power is and be in that space to learn and listen, then yes, you are an ally. And that's something that I think is a very difficult place for a lot of people to get to. And the other part is exactly what Memory said, which is: come in to that place to talk to me about masculinity and your role in creating a space where men get to be empathetic and caring - because that's good for you and it's good for me. Right? That's, that's it. If there's a conversation to be had, it's about masculinity and the backfiring of patriarchy on that. So that that's that's what I think the men's conversation, Memory is absolutely right there. On the listening thing. There's one slight thing I'll disagree with, which is I think we need to be very careful with case studies because the emotional labour of being the case study is not intersectionality. The emotional labour of going: "I am poor" or "I experience racism, hear my story". There's a huge responsibility with being the person who is, who is providing the space for that case study to be heard, because otherwise there's an emotional exploitation (and obviously this isn't what you were talking about), but if it's not done well, it's exploitative. So, yes, listen, but ensure that the person who is sharing the case study is also there as somebody who has power in the space to make change, is advocating for someone to say, "here's my case study and therefore this is what I need you to do and this is what I need you to listen to" rather than the "we've heard you, we feel bad for you, we've moved on". So the listening has to come with the person who you are listening to being given power and advocacy space.

[00:56:37.660] - Talat Yaqoob

And the last bit about about leadership, the leadership model is a masculine leadership model. And, you know, there are different ways to lead and we should be welcoming that because that's how we create a culture change and how, and how we do leadership. And the who makes policy, and the how they make policy is intertwined with one another. And I think that there needs to be a significant effort made in who gets to make the policy, as in passing the mic and passing the space. I was just chatting about this beforehand, passing the space for leadership on to somebody else. So I am very aware of how often I get told to speak. I get asked to speak at things. I'm bored of me. I'm assuming most of Scotland is bored of me too. But I get asked to speak a lot at things. But I have like a spreadsheet of women of colour who are experts. And I, as a person of privilege who has a mic literally in front of her right now, has a duty to pass the mic to the women who have different experiences but are equally important to mine. So the leadership, a leadership model that I want to see is one that passes the mic, shares the platform, understands that their voice doesn't need to be heard all the time. And I take that on for myself, too, as the person who is currently speaking a lot right now.

[00:57:52.210] - Audience

[laughs]

[00:57:55.660] - Alys Mumford

So I would like to end by asking our panellists to give us just a little bit of hope, maybe a practical tip, something you use in your own work and author you love, a great project you've been involved in, brag about something...who's going to go first?

[00:58:13.930] - Memory Kachambwa

OK, so in my family, I think it's - I have boys only - and one of the things that I have done consciously is for them to see their father do the gender roles. So it's a huge task, I mean, getting my husband...very religious, and African man, to be able to do and to share the roles and their responsibilities. And I think change really always starts with us. And demonstrating with them and bringing our boys we will say "OK, today, who's cooking? Mom is watching TV. She's got her feet up." And, you know, it's becomes sort of like a norm. So really trying, trying, trying to practice what, what we are out there for me is, is one of the few things that I think is also a privilege. But I think we can only be they change if we start doing things consciously. And I will definitely take having a spreadsheet. [laughs] So, yes. And I think I always making sure that I go to my spreadsheet and look and see who should be speaking and who should be in this space. The work that we do, it's a network, very diverse in an African context, the diversities are there and just understanding. But my hope, I'm very optimistic, that we have started this conversation and everything that women have started has been their revolution. So I'm positive. And if it's led by feminists, it will not die.

[00:59:56.380] - Marianna Leite

So intersectionality may seem very difficult and complex term, but it is about what we experience on an everyday basis and connecting with that. And also when we're talking about the systems of oppression, it also might sound quite elusive. But the reality is that we are all the system. I am the system, you are the system. And we can change, if our individual activities, um, it could be something as small as changing the language and the labels that we use so we don't stigmatize and we don't discriminate. Or having great examples like the ones that Memory was just giving. And if you want to learn more about this sort of work and how can you implement that or like with the the cases that are coming from organisations such as ours, I would recommend two reports that Christian Aid produced. One is called 'Leave No Woman Behind'. You can find it online, and the other one is called 'Christian Aid and the Leave No-one Behind Approach'. I'll leave you with that.

[01:00:57.490] - Talat Yaqoob

My glass is half empty looking at patriarchy and capitalism, however, my glass is always, filled to the brim after I have conversations like this.

[01:01:06.420] - Audience

[awwwwww]

[01:01:06.490] - Talat Yaqoob

Yes thank you, I practiced that in my head before I said it. Having these conversations and being in a space like this and having nuanced conversations from a place with positive intent is like food for the soul. And I need it, I need it regularly. And I guess what might tip would be to continue having these conversations and find spaces to to do this. And whatever your space is, find that space in your area and your area of expertise and your organisation, in your group of friends to have a conversation about what role you are playing in thinking about the women who are at the sharpest end of policymaking and who are the furthest away from platforms. So what are you doing? What can you do better? Who can you talk to? I guess my plea would just be the food for the soul, and the enthusiasm to keep going. The feminist revolution happens through sisterhood and continued conversations. So I'd say just keep, keep doing this.

[01:02:11.410] - Amanda Stanley (Voice over)

This episode on the Engender was hosted by Alys Mumford and produced on behalf of Engender by Amanda Stanley. The music featured through it was written and performed by Bossy Love. You can find out more about Engender by heading to their website, Engender.scot and following us on Twitter @Engenderscot. And be sure to click subscribe to this podcast so you don't miss the next episode.