

**GLOBAL FEMINISMS  
COMPARATIVE CASE STUDIES OF  
WOMEN'S AND GENDER ACTIVISM  
AND SCHOLARSHIP**

**SITE: TANZANIA**

**Transcript of Penina Mlama  
Interviewer: Anneth E. Meena**

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**Penina O. Mhando Mlama** was born in Morogoro in 1948, and is a scholar, gender activist, analyst and practitioner of popular theatre in Tanzania, a playwright and one of the few female writers published in the Swahili language between 1970s to early 1990s. She was the first female Deputy Vice Chancellor – Academic (then was called chief academic officer) at the University of Dar es salaam for the period of 7 years (1991 – 1998). She pioneered several initiatives to increase admission and performance for female students at the University of Dar es salaam e.g. pre-entry programs and working with the university broadly to improve and promote gender responsive pedagogy. She was the co-founder with Lihamba, A. in 1996 the TUSEME<sup>1</sup> (speak Out) empowerment model for gender equality for both Primary and Secondary Schools. She joined Forum for African Educationalists (FAWE) as an Executive Director (1998 – 2007) founded and led a progressive program on supporting access, retention and performance for girls – Gender Responsive School (2005) and Gender Responsive Pedagogy (2005). She later joined Campaign for Female Education (CAMFED) as an Executive Director (2007 – 2010). She has served on various boards; in 2013 -16 she was appointed by the president to serve as a chairperson to the National Arts Council. She studied at University of Dar es salaam – BA (Hons) Education, MA Theatre in Education and PhD.

Mlama joined the department of theatre arts at the University of Dar es salaam upon graduating. Her initial plays illustrate enthusiasm for socialist ideology; such plays include *Hatia* (1972; “Guilt”), *Tambueni haki zetu* (1973; “Reveal Our Rights”), *Heshima yangu* (1974; “My Honour”), and *Pambo* (1975). Her works are renowned by the use of modern standard Swahili. Her plays started to change to tone in the late 1970s to 1980s with a focus on political corruption, jockeying for political power and the pursuit of personal profit over community development, Such plays include; as “*Nguzo Mama*” (Mother, the main pillar, 1982), “*Harakati za Ukombozi*” (Liberation Struggle, 1982 with Amandina Lihamba & Ndyanao Balisidya), “*Lina Ubani*” (There is an antidote for rot, 1984), and *Mitumba Ndui* (The Pox, 1989). She is among the pioneers together with other African playwrights on Theatre for Development<sup>2</sup>. She also wrote several scholarly works in English including *Culture and Development: The Popular Theatre Approach in Africa* (1991). She also appeared in the film “*Mama Tumaini*” (1986). She has published several papers: “Partnership in the Arts and Literature – Challenges and opportunities for building bridges between Africa and the world” in *Rethinking African Partnerships for Global Solutions*, Michigan State University, Lansing, 2017. “Women Teachers in Tanzania: barriers encountered and policy recommendations” in *Women Teachers in Africa*, Stromquist N et al Eds, Routledge, London 2017; *The Cultural Dimension of Gender in Education - Sustainable Development in a Globalized world*, *Studies in Development, Security and Culture*, Vol 1.( in memory of Karl Eri Knutsson), Editor Bjorn Hettne, Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire and New York, 2008; *Empowerment for Gender Equality through Theatre; The case of TUSEME –The Legacy of Efua*; Sutherland, Pan African Cultural Activism. Editors Anne V Adams and Esi Sutherland-Addy, Ayebia Clarke Publishing Limited, UK, 2007; “The gender Dimension of Open and Distance learning,” keynote speech at the Pan Commonwealth Forum, PFC 4, Ocho Rios, Jamaica, November 2006, *Educom Asia*, Vol 12 no2 Dec 2006; *Gender Issues in Higher Education in Higher Education in Africa, Achievements, challenges and Prospects*. UNESCO Regional office for Education in Africa, Dakar, 1998; some of the books: *Emergence: The indelible face of artistic creativity in the struggle for self - determination in Africa*. (CODESRIA Newsletter, 2017); *Gender Responsive Pedagogy: A teacher’s handbook* (et al) FAWE, Nairobi, 2005;

*Empowering Youth through TESEMA, Let us Speack Out: A Teacher's handbook* (et al), FAWE, Nairobi, 2005 and *The Gender Responsive School: A handbook for education practitioners* (et al) FAWE, Nairobi 2005.

**Anneth E. Meena** was born in Coast Region in 1971, and is an activist, researcher and feminist. She is an independent consultant in Environment, Health and gender issues. She is passionate about women rights. She has worked in several organizations holding various positions e.g. Monitoring and Evaluation coordinator for World Vision, Arusha (2000); and Project Coordinator for Forum for African Women Educationalist on Centre of Excellence school in Tanzania as a model for gender responsive curriculum and pedagogy (2001 -2002). She pioneered the establishment of a family social enterprise and became the first school manager and later first principal (2007- 2017). She has worked as an independent consultant with various Women Rights Organizations including TGNP Mtandao; Women Fund Tanzania Trust (WFT-T); Readership for Learning and Development (Soma). Meena has been involved in documenting women's stories through TGNP Mtandao, WFT-T, Soma and currently with University of Michigan. She is a member of various coalitions including sextortion, women leadership and constitution.

Meena has had various academic awards such as 'The Hammad Prize Award' in recognition of exceptional written work on an international topic, 2005 with Wagner School of Public Services, New York University, New York, USA. She was one of the two recipients of an Oprah Winfrey Scholarship as a graduate at the New York University (2004 to 2005). She was a Ford Foundation Fellow (2003) with International Centre for Research on Women Washington, DC, USA. In 1999 she received small grant Research Award from Council for the Development of Social Science Research.

She holds an undergraduate degree on Environmental and Geographical Sciences from University of Cape Town, South Africa (1996); Masters of Demography from University of Dar es salaam, Tanzania (2000) and a Masters of Science in Management for Public Services from the University of New York, USA (2005).

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Penina Mlama: Wow! Thank you. First of all, I'm very happy to be associated with this program. I think it's a very important program and I'm happy to be a part of it. Now in terms of my, you know, at my age, I have come a very very long way so it's a bit difficult to, to summarize, summarize my work and my life. Let me just try to pick some of the, maybe the highlights. Okay, maybe starting from my family, I was born into a family of seven children, yeah I have gone too far back. Then I went through the normal processes of going through education up to the university. And for many years I was a professor at the University of Dar es Salaam,<sup>1</sup> specifically I was a professor at the Department of Creative Arts but even at the university I have a long career in different areas. For example, I played some parts in terms of the administration of the University. I have served as head of department and Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. I also served as the chief academic officer, which is the equivalent to a Deputy Vice Chancellor for academics in the university. I also served as the professor for the professorial chair for Mwalimu Nyerere, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Professorial Chair on Pan-Africanism<sup>2</sup>. So, that is from the academic and the administrative background. But, in that process I was also involved throughout my career in issues related to gender equality and I can say that this started very early on and this was during my early years as an academician, because as soon as I was employed by the university, myself and our, my fellow colleagues, especially the women colleagues, we realized that there were many hurdles that were gender related in terms of our advancement, as academicians. And we were like the initial crop, the initial generation of female academicians, and the academic field was very male dominated at that time. So, there are quite a lot of hitches and hindrances which we felt, if we didn't address, our academic career progression would be affected.

So we started the movement to fight for gender equality very early on like in, this was in the 1970s and 1980s and we had for example, to fight to change the policies that were gender discriminatory. We had to fight for space, so that the female academician could have equal space in terms of academic advancement as the men. For example, if I give you an example, with our male colleagues, it was very easy for them to work for further studies, but with us we were in time where we were producing children, right. So it wasn't easy for someone to just up and go and leave a four month baby, or a four year old baby and just go abroad for a masters or PhD studies, so we had to fight for how the University could consider enabling the female academicians when they go out for studies--whether they could go with their young children--so we had to fight for the local scholarship, so that we can do our studies as well as look after our families. So this initial hindrances to

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<sup>1</sup> University of Dar es Salaam is a public university in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The university was established in 1961 and became an affiliate of the University of East Africa in 1963. ("University of Dar es Salaam." <https://socialprotection.org/connect/stakeholders/university-dar-es-salaam>. Accessed 17 February 2022.)

<sup>2</sup> Mwalimu Julius Nyerere Professorial Chair on Pan-Africanism is in honor of the first President of the United Republic of Tanzania, promote Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. It was founded in April 2008 and is determined to promote Mwalimu Julius Nyerere's thoughts relating to human development such as increasing interdisciplinary research, encouraging youth to be researchers, and reinvent the idea of university. ("About Us." University of Dar es Salaam. <https://www.udsm.ac.tz/web/index.php/offices/nyererechair/about-us>. Accessed 8 February 2022.)

our academic progression really opened up my eyes to the need for a wider gender struggle. And that is how now, I got involved into many aspects of gender activism from that time, until now, and I've been active in the gender activism area, alongside my academic progression because I realized early on that the academics could move on, but the gender issue was a constant reminder or a constant hitch to whatever one did in whatever type of career that one undertook. So, and then, in short, I am, I got married; unfortunately, my husband died, but I have two children, a boy and a girl, so in brief maybe that's my background.

**AM: Thank you Professor Penina. I think, if you could like highlight a bit of the like some of the things you did at the university. I know the free entry program that was able to, like, allow more girls in school, especially for the sciences, and other kind of like program that you were able to do as part of your career background, the TUSEME project and things of that nature.**

PM: Now, in the area of gender, I really participated quite actively to, in the effort to try to bring about change here and there. So I'll give a number of examples of things I was involved in. For example, when I was the Deputy Vice Chancellor, the situation of girls in gender equality at the University was very very disheartening and especially in terms of admission, the admission of girls was only about 19%. At that time, this is like in the late 1980s, early 1990s, about 17, 19% and in the sciences it was as low as 3%. So then I had to push very hard. So that in the strategic plan that the University was coming up with after I joined the management team, which was starting in 1994, the strategic plan starting in 1994, I had to fight very hard, so that we could have strategic objectives to bring about gender equality in the admission of university students. So we had to put targets and at that time we had a target whereby we said in the next 10 years, we should reach 50/50 admission for boys and girls at the university, and of course it was going to go progressively so we started with 10% increase, 20%, the idea was that after 10 years we should have equal admission. and on that point I must say there has been a lot of progress in that area. And then, quite a lot of faculties at the moment, the admission really is some of them have reached 50%. Many of them are at 40%, of course.

The only problem is that when you come to the hard sciences and engineering there is still a problem. So if you take the average, the University admission for girls is still around 35%, but if you look at individual faculties, especially the humanities and the business school and all that. For low. Some of them have gotten as far as 50 or 40%. Now, while we put that in the strategic plan, and then it became of course mandatory because it was then the strategic plan it became mandatory for all faculties to make sure they reach the target which we have put in the strategic plan, but now the challenge was with the sciences, because the science faculties and engineering, they had no objection to increasing the admission for girls. But the problem was they were not getting enough girls who were qualified to enter the university and the main issue here was girls were having a lot of challenges at the level of secondary school.

Primary, secondary school access of girls to science subjects, performance of girls in

science subjects was still very problematic, and there weren't enough programs to address the challenges of science, performance in science subjects for girls. So a lot of girls were not performing at the level of being able to be admitted to the university. But when we looked through the data we found out that actually quite a number of girls were on the margins, like they missed admission to the university by one point or by half point, it was like, something would be done for them to enter the university.

So we decided, we would, whereas we would negotiate with the government and other people to improve the performance of girls at secondary school level, but at that particular moment, we still wanted to take action to increase admission of girls into the sciences. So we decided to start a program, which we called the pre-entry program for girls, whereby would take girls who missed admission to the university, by one point. The admission to the university one point or half a point or whatever. So, the program would admit those girls into a program of study eight weeks before the start of the academic year. So they would undergo a science program for eight weeks, whereby they would be taught whatever they're being taught on the level of A level, secondary school advanced level and then they'll take an examination after eight weeks. So, those who pass that exam, we use that criteria to admit them to the university, so they got a special entrance into the university after going through that pre entry exam and I must say it's really worked very well. After a number, maybe after about five or so years, over 500 girls got into the university using that program and after that, even other universities adopted that program for science subjects and for engineering, and it did help to push up the number, the number of girls that went into the university. So that's one thing, which I can say, I had the privilege to contribute to at the level of the university.

But besides that program, of course they were many other things that we were battling, in terms of gender equality because there was a lot of sexual harassment, there were a lot of issues in terms of gender equality, even among the faculty. There are even cases of sexual harassment among, I mean between academic staff and students; and we had to come up with stiff rules and regulation that if any member of staff was caught, having a sexual, doing sexual harassment, they would actually be sacked and that was the cause, quite a lot of sensation but we did actually sack quite a number of academic staff members on the basis of their sexual harassment of students, and that sent a message that girls had a right to be at the university and the staff should not think sexual harassment is just something that they can do at will. Of course, I believe, it did help to curb the sexual harassment, to a certain extent, it didn't finish it as you know, up until now there's still cases, some cases, but at least it did send the message that sexual harassment is not tolerated by the university. Later on we even came up with the sexual harassment policy at the university. So now people are aware that this issue of sexual harassment is not for fun. I mean, you can get into trouble if you engage in sexual harassment and, so that was at the level of the university.

Then, during my work in the department I was very active in the area of culture and development, and I was very active in my academic career in that sector. So that took me to a lot of work on the ground, a lot of work, working with villages, working with the

programs on the ground and working hand in hand with the communities.

Now, as I conducted that work with my colleagues I really came face to face with the issues of gender inequalities in our society. They're so stuck. I mean, we're trying to talk of for example, development. So for example, we were, we had a big project on using the arts for social mobilization for development. So we would go into a community, work with the community for several weeks to try to analyze what their developmental problems were, how they can use their own cultural processes to address those development issues, how they can engage with the government to make sure that they solve the problems. But as we did that, every problem that emerged, it was very clear that there were serious gender issues, gender inequalities.

For example, if you talk about the problem of water, it was the women who really suffered if there was no water in the community. I mean, whatever you pick, the issue was women inequalities, women oppression. I mean, it's really hit me very hard, that there are a lot of cases of gender inequalities in our society at large, then this pushed me to think that there must be something that can be done to address this issue, we can't just leave it go like that. I think it's such a mammoth issue, what do we do.

Now because we were dealing with a cultural process, we used, we called the project theatre for development so we're using artistic expression to analyze and dialogue on development. So, myself and my colleague, Professor Mandina Rihamba. We had a lot of discussion around these challenges that we face, and then we came up with the idea that we can use the same process of engagement through cultural processes to address this issue of gender inequality.

But then we thought the best place maybe to start and reach more people would be if we started with the education system. So we thought we should try to engage with the secondary school girls and boys, because then we will be catching them early before all these cultural attitudes against women become deeply entrenched. They should start to analyze and understand these gender dynamics, so that they can live a different type of life than their mothers and fathers and their grandparents. So that's when we came up with this project which later became quite big, which is called TUSEME, TUSEME is a Kiswahili<sup>3</sup> word which means: "let us speak out." So we developed a model whereby through using the arts, schoolchildren at the secondary level could actually analyze this whole issue of gender inequality in all aspects. So the process is such that the boys and girls would research or would review their community, would bring up issues that they thought were problematic in terms of gender dynamics, they would come up with suggestions, with an analysis of why there is such a situation, for example, why are the girls, getting a rough end of the stick. Why is it girls that are being mistreated in the school environment but in the community as a whole? So they would do an analysis and then come up with a conclusion whether it was fair or not fair. If it was not fair, then come up with suggestions on what should be done to change or to transform the situation. This was really sensation, because I remember our workshop TUSEME in the

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<sup>3</sup> Kiswahili is the official language of Tanzania and Kenya (often referred to as Swahili in English). It is also commonly used in multiple other African countries such as Uganda, Rwanda and Malawi. ("Kiswahili." University of Kansas. <https://kiswahili.ku.edu>. Accessed 17 February 2022.)

schools, once the girls and boys did that kind of analysis, you could actually see them getting this realization or actually getting quite engaged in the situation and starting to realize that actually there's a lot of things that are being done which are not fair and are not correct for the girls. Like I remember the way boys used to, I mean, they started like those are tah tah tah but then after the analysis and [tatata] when then they were confronted with the question: why are you treating women like this, is it right or is it wrong and why, why, why exactly are women being treated like this? Then they reach a realization that actually it is not fair. They're just being treated like that because somebody somewhere decided that's how women should be treated but actually shouldn't be done in that way. So by doing that we raised the awareness of both boys and girls, and the school community including the teachers as a whole on the issues of gender inequality and we had some very very fascinating results by going through such processes.

One example I remember, for example, there was a lot of abusive language that is being used against girls in the schools by the teachers, and by the female, the male students. So we went through a process of unearthing, what kind of language is being used in the classroom, outside the classroom, by whom, what kind of language do the teachers use when they are addressing girls, and a lot of information came out that showed that the language was very sexual, sexually abused, especially for the girls. In fact, in all the schools we did this exercise, the teachers were shocked that they were actually using such language, they were using that language without even realizing that it was wrong. So they're saying, you know, I've been using this kind of language without realizing what kind of damage it can cause but actually is terrible. Oh my god, I feel terrible. I remember one teacher saying professor, why are you coming now? Why didn't you come, 10 or 15 years ago? Now I think back and all the girls that I mistreated.. I really feel like crying. This was a male teacher, but even the female teachers were using the same language. So the whole idea of TUSEME was actually to empower the girls for gender equality, but also to empower the boys for gender equality, because we know, we thought if we don't leave the boys out, because boys are part of the dynamic of everything that is happening in terms of gender inequality so at the end of it, really, our intention was to empower both boys and girls and men and women in relation to the teachers, so that they can practice gender equality in the community. So that was one of my major - am I taking too much time? Because I have other things I can talk about; maybe I can come to them later.

**AM: Okay. Thank you so much for that highlight. Come back to your work. What drew you to your work you do, or what you have done, how did you first come to be involved in work in this area, and how has this involvement changed over time? Has your work changed in a way that has shaped the experience from your own life? Or have you experienced any personal changes as a result of your engagement in feminist academic work. Yeah. Part of it is related to what you have said but you might have more to add into this, Karibu.**

PM: I will focus on the work that I've done which is gender related.



**AM: Okay.**

PM: As I said I came to get involved in gender work because of the realization of the gender inequalities that were in existence in my workplace, at the university but also in the community, as I went out to work in the communities. So the gender inequality was so stuck but I was just touched to do something about it. But I must also say that my generation, my generation, we were like the vanguard generation after independence, right! Yeah, there were a lot of changes that were happening in our countries, many African countries, effort for self independence, for self determination, for self identity. So my generation was engaged in a lot of processes to bring about change, and we were engaged in the processes of change in terms of the, for example from the academic point of view in terms of even the content of what was being taught in our schools, in terms of the content of what we are teaching at the university in terms of asserting our African identity, in terms of asserting that we are an independent nation. So I think we were fortunate that we were embroiled in this movement of change, change, change, change. So we were thinking of change all the time. And then, as academicians at that time, the most highly educated segment of the population, it was like our obligation to engage in this change so that we can assist our nation to reach whatever goals that the nation had set itself for after becoming independent. So I think this was a situation that was a very good catalyst for us to venture into things to try to bring about change.

So even the issue of gender movement, gender activism, I always look at it also from that point of view. Because when we got independence it was clear that there was need for women development for each, I mean we had some political movement about gender equality represented at that time, which sounds funny if you say it today, represented at that time by UWT you know the Umoja wa Wanawake (the National Women Organization).<sup>4</sup> Okay. UWT at that time was actually very active in trying to bring about change for the development of women. You know the activists of today we normally forget that, that part of our history, that it was actually the gender, the gender activism was started by UWT which was a political wing. Because they were the ones who were going out in the rural areas, bringing out the issues about gender inequality, pushing for women to go to school, pushing for women to be given programs so that they can develop themselves in the, starting even income generating activities for women just to change the situation of women. So, in their own way they were also part of that change, part of that change, because we got independence, we want to start our nation. What about the women, what the position of women, but I think it was in that form, dynamic of change, that's my generation... [connection issue]

Our generation were pushed into activism for gender equality because we were also in that time of change, that time of dynamics of change, I think that is one aspect that I think that drove us to work very, very seriously, for bringing about change, also for issue of

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<sup>4</sup> Umoja wa Wanawake is a women's organization in Tanzania that is focused on empowering women to make national rhetoric a reality. ("Umoja wa Wanawake." Project Topics. <https://www.projecttopics.org/journals/200193-umoja-wa-wanawake-wa-tanzania-and-the-needs-of-the-rural-poor.html>. Accessed 17 February 2022.)

gender. So, me personally, those are the kind of factors that pushed me into the work on, the work on gender equality, and of course, seeing it on a day to day basis wherever you go different types of inequalities you could see them. And also as an educated woman at that time, one of the few educated women, we were constantly confronted with these gender discriminatory kind of practices from our colleagues, from the community, and all that so we couldn't lose face, we couldn't lose focus on that there was a problem that we needed to address.

**AM: Okay, thank you. Reflection on your work now. How do you understand the term feminism? What has it meant to your work? We are relating to your work now. Can you tell us something about the relationship with other members within your own maybe institutions? What are some of your expectation of your institutions?**

PM: Well, I must say that at the beginning of my engagement with gender equality activism it was more of a push to answer an immediate need. Yeah,

**AM: Yeah.**

PM: So it was like, pushed by a practical situation on the ground. That this is happening, we have to do this, this policy, we have to fight it so that it treats both men and women fairly. There is this issue which if we don't address, the women will get a raw deal. So it was like trying to respond to a practical problem. But later on the movement, this feminism movement really helped me to articulate issues related to gender equality in a much better way ideologically, philosophically, and academically. It was sort of now giving you an analysis on a broader perspective. So it isn't just gender inequality as you see it in your home or in your classroom or in your workplace, but, analyzing gender equality as a bigger issue, a global, a bigger issues related to systems, related to patriarchy, related to bigger forces that in order for whatever work that needed to be done, it was important to understand these broader, these broader facets. So that was a very important aspect of my own development in terms of my engagement in the gender activist.

**AM: Yeah. We're on it together. Yes. So like, how do you perceive the relationship between scholarship and activism in general and in your own work?**

PM: In my own work. I think the number of, maybe a few things there. In my own work, for example, I talked about TUSEME. Yeah, right! You know, on the one hand TUSEME is active activism on the ground right. Yeah. But on the other hand, you need to apply scholarship to understand the dynamics of gender inequalities within the context of the school, the context of the community, and the context of the country. So in terms of the scholarship, the feminism scholarship and the activism that I was engaging practically, I think there was a very good link because otherwise the interpretation of what was happening on the ground could have been quite superficial. So for example, even though we were dealing with young, young girls and boys we couldn't go and expound gender

equality from a scholarly point of view but we needed to guide them that gender inequality, for example, has a lot to do with patriarchy for example. So they had not only to see the inequality in terms of how the boys were treating them but in terms of how their community behaves in relation to, in the relationship between men and women. So that's scholarship, which is feeding into the practical, practical application at that time. And there is another, another aspect to my work where I found this relationship, even better, because I was, I've also been involved in another big thing, which is properly known as gender responsive pedagogy. I was engaged actually when I was working with FAWE, I have forgotten to mention that I worked for the forum For African Women Education for nine years as the executive director of that forum.<sup>5</sup> And the short form is FAWE, and FAWE is an organization which is operating in over thirty-five countries in Africa and basically FAWE is engaged in the promotion of girls' education at all levels. Now while I was at FAWE, myself and my colleagues we developed this gender responsive pedagogy model. The whole idea was to change the teaching and learning processes in the schools and whatever, to make them gender responsive. This was after working with the schools in our effort to bring about, to improve girls' participation in education and when we realized that there were a lot of gender constraints in the dynamics of the school itself, the way things were taught, the way students were learning, the school environment, relationships between boys and girls, between teachers and students. There were so many issues that needed to be addressed. So we came up with this model, which looks at gender responsive pedagogy, which means that the teacher must apply gender equality in whatever process of teaching and learning that happens in the school. Because the gender inequality is actually embedded in those processes, and if they're not addressed, then gender inequality is perpetuated.

For example, if the teacher prepares a lesson plan, doesn't take into account the need for equal participation of boys and girls, he or she will perpetuate the less participation of girls. If the teacher in interacting with the students uses abusive language against girls, he or she will perpetuate in the gender inequalities. If the teacher picks teaching and learning materials that have a lot of gender stereotypes and using them in teaching, it means he or she is perpetuating gender inequalities. So we had to actually come up with a model that addresses every aspect of teaching and learning and make it gender responsive. Now in doing so, we couldn't do that if we didn't apply a scholarship on pedagogy because we had to understand the whole process of teaching and learning. The pedagogical philosophies, or the pedagogical approaches in education, we had to apply that scholarship to our activism in changing the teaching and learning processes. So that is a very big link between the two [cuts] because scholarship feeds on the practical application, although practical application also feeds into the scholarship, but in all my work, I really found the two work together very well and it is important that the two are linked.

**AM: Thank you. That's very... Coming to our 5th section, the intersection of your**

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<sup>5</sup> FAWE, For African Women Education, a Pan-African organization in Sub-Saharan Africa that promotes equality in women's education across 34 national chapters. ("About FAWE." FAWE. <http://fawe.org/about-fawe/>. Accessed 9 February 2022.)

**work with the women movement in the country, and globally. What is your analysis, or evaluation or expectation of the development of feminism, in this country? And what is the relationship with other women's organizations in this country with other activists, and how do you think about your work in relation to women's movements? So basically how do you interrelate?**

PM: Let me start with the first one, the development of feminism, in this country, did I get it right?

**AM: What is the analysis, yes, for the development of feminism in this country?**

PM: Let me start with that one and you will remind me of the other part. I'm very happy to see that actually feminism has grown quite a lot in this country and I'm particularly happy that the younger generation is really getting quite engaged in this whole issue of feminism and fighting for equal rights between women and men. And I sit in many-- when I sit in different meetings and watch these young people articulate in feminism and their belief that we have to advocate for it, to fight for the equal opportunity and equal rights of men and women in all spheres all spheres of life, I get quite encouraged that the movement has really moved on to a point that quite a number of people now understand it.

And I am saying this because, again, in my generation, the word feminism came in a manner that it was like it was a bad word. Because when feminism, the word Feminism was introduced in this country, like in the 1970s people had a very bad view of it/ 1970s, late 60s, this was the time that feminism was very active in the western world, right! But it came to us like feminism is equal to women [laughs] women refusing to be women. Yeah. and it was equated to because... there was one time like a demonstration, I think it was in the US or somewhere where women decided that they will not put on bras, or that they will wear what they will wear, they should not be told what wear. And it was part of the movement of the 60s, the 60s, but the interpretation that came to us. Oh that these are, like mad women eh they do things which are really like it was like frivolous, and they have nothing to do with our, our situation here, with our culture, and this movement where women just want to reject men. There were a lot of misinterpretation around the word feminism, so it was so much so that for a time, people didn't even want to associate themselves with the word feminism because it had a bad meaning.

But I'm glad to see that now it has been sort of--the meaning has become clear, and people understand now feminism as it ought to be understood, but this has meant a lot of work has been done to reach that point. But I'm glad that it happened. My only worry or my only concern, and this is a really big concern, is to what extent our feminism movement is really reaching the majority of the Tanzanians.

It is, in my opinion, it really is a movement of the few basically in the urban areas, basically in the elite class, basically in those who have been exposed to high level, kind of

reading, and exposure to dialogue on feminism. But if you take the ordinary Tanzanian, even the ones who are in urban areas, the majority of them wouldn't even understand the term. You see what I mean. If you go to the rural areas that's even worse. Because in the rural areas even, I mean the word wouldn't make any sense. Although the challenge here is whether we should link the term feminism to the struggles for gender equality generally, because if you look at Tanzania generally both in the urban areas and in the rural areas. Now people understand what gender equality is all about. Even if you go to the village now they know you will hear them say ah ah, women should also talk. Why are you men only talking all the time? Or you would hear women saying no no, that is not correct. We need equality bwana, equality we have to be treated. So they know, they know that it's important to address gender equality although the situation is still not very good in terms of actual practice because there are still a lot of inequalities that are being practiced. But my argument is that, it's, what is happening in terms of improvements or developments in gender equality is not necessarily tied to the term feminism. I don't know if you get what I'm trying to say. It is not necessarily tied to the term feminism, right! There's quite a lot of work happening in terms of trying to achieve gender equality at different levels. I don't know if that's a problem or an issue, or it should just stand or maybe feminism is more at the scholarship level or feminism is more at the advocacy level or at the movement level. But I think we should be aware of that, I don't know how to, what to call it but that labelling. I don't know because if you just say feminism, the majority of people won't understand, but they understand the concept of gender equality. Maybe there's something we should continue debating and discussing. Okay, the next part of the question was?

**AM: Was, what is your relationship with other women's organizations or institutions in this country, or with other activists, and your work and relationship with the women's movement?**

PM: First of all, I must say, really a lot of my work has been in the area of education. Right. So if you talk of TUSEME, if you talk of JRP, if you talk of my work at the university, it has really been in the area of education. So my engagement has really been with educationalists although educationalists as such do not have a movement. I mean, like, I don't think there is a movement of feminism for women in education or something like that. But it doesn't mean that the women in the education sector are not engaged in the processes for the education. So for example, TUSEME, we created quite a big network of teachers, and the students themselves that have gone through TUSEME and until now they're pushing for girls empowerment, wherever they are, even though they're not organized as members of a particular network that has a name, or that has a label, but I take them as being a network because they are active in actually implementing this work process of enabling girls and boys to be empowered on gender equality.

I would say the same with JRP. Foreexample, right now I'm engaged with the tutors of teacher training colleges because we are training all tutors into the gender responsive pedagogy. And the ones we have already trained they are already engaged in the what, in

the teacher training college across the country. They are not formed into a network with a name or with a label, but they're a network in terms of actually practicing gender responsive pedagogy because they have been trained, they have accepted the philosophy behind gender responsive pedagogy and they're bringing about change in their colleges by practicing whatever they're practicing. And in that context, I go back to FAWE, the Forum for African Women Educationalists, for which I worked for nine years. In order to do our work of promoting girls' education in the 35 countries, we really had to work with a large network of people, and we work through what we called national chapters. So, national chapters had a membership of FAWE, and they took up the challenge of making sure that they promote girls' education and girls in their country admitted, they go to school, they stay in school they perform well. So they, they're activists, at that level by bringing about change, fighting for gender responsive policies and doing whatever they could to change the situation of girls' participation in education. Now if you take the 35 chapters, and then members in every chapter, that was a very big network. It is still there, it is still there. A big network and I worked very closely with that network during my nine years working with FAWE. But here in Tanzania, I also worked with Tanzania gender networking program which as you know is a very very active organization and pushing the gender, agenda and feminism, and they're really like the top organization in the country and, yeah, that's my answer to your question.<sup>6</sup>

**AM: Thank you. Coming to the last one, connection to international forms of activism and scholarship. Do you have any connection with other activists, scholars, organizations in other countries and how did this connections come about? and what have they meant to your own work? And how do they make sense of differences and similarities in kinds of issues raised, approaches taken by these activists scholars organizations.**

PM: My connection at the international level really has basically on the individual level. People I've met, for example in conferences, people, we have worked together on gender related projects, people, we have attended conferences together and took up some action to push the gender agenda. So is like people that I know, on the individual, on the individual basis. Although, when I was with FAWE, I worked very closely with the United Nations Girls Education Initiative.<sup>7</sup> That is an initiative which we used to push the girls' agenda at the United Nations. And it really helped because the UN you know has access to all the countries, who are member, the member states. So through UNGEI we did quite a lot of work trying to reach the different countries that are member states in the whole

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<sup>6</sup> Tanzania Gender Networking Program was established in 1993 and works towards gender equality through policy advocacy to all of Tanzanian society. ("Tanzania Gender Networking Program (TGNP)." TDM. <https://www.transnational-dispute-management.com/about-author-a-z-profile.asp?key=1349>. Accessed 17 February 2022.)

<sup>7</sup> The United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) is a global organization hosted by UNICEF that strives for gender equality in education. The organization promotes gender-responsive education systems and policies around the world. ("Who We Are – Overview." UNGEI. <https://www.ungei.org/who-we-are/overview>. Accessed 17 February 2022.)

agenda of gender in relation to education.

**AM: Okay. Thank you so much, Professor, for your time; and it's always an honor to have the opportunity to talk with you, asante sana.<sup>8</sup>**

PM: Thank you, it's my pleasure. I'm glad you made me think about my life and come up with issues.

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<sup>8</sup> 'Asante sana' means 'thank you very much' in Swahili. ("What does asante sana mean in Swahili?" Work Hippo. <https://www.wordhippo.com/what-is/the-meaning-of/swahili-word-3aec2dc7322e151cd38e729ba401573182a2cd7a.html>. Accessed 19 June 2022.)