

Fridah Atoko Muyale-Manenji



African Feminist Thinkers: Our Voices [1]

I was born in Kenya 45 years ago and am currently resident in Harare, Zimbabwe. Having successfully completed the Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education (A? Levels) at Matuga High School, Kwale District, Coast Province, Kenya, I was recruited at the Africa Press Service, first as a subscription officer and then trained in reporting and journalism skills. I furthermore contributed to the feature and news articles both at the APS and to National newspapers in Nairobi.

In my later years after getting married and moving to Zimbabwe, I successfully completed and attained a BSc Hons in Sociology and Gender Development from the Women?s University in Africa (Zimbabwe) and a Masters in Philosophy in Women and Gender Studies from the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. The title of my Honours level research was ?Coping Mechanisms of single parents in a selected community in Chitungwiza, Zimbabwe? (2002) and the research for the Masters degree was based on ?An exploration of the extent of gender mainstreaming in UNESCO Harare?s HIV/AIDS programmes?.

I have close to 2 decades experience working in administrative, senior secretarial positions, communication and gender issues. Apart from this, my journalistic and excellent writing skills have taken me through Communications and Public Relations positions as was the case with World Vision International, African Development Education Network and APS. Because of my added interest in gender, I have experience in facilitating leadership sessions in this area and on other developmental issues such as project proposals, donor/funder relationships etc. Here is some of my more recent experience:

- Participated in the Southern African Conference on Violence Against Girls in Schools ? Towards Sustainable Strategies workshop; 8 ? 10 May, 2006, Holiday Inn Hotel, Harare
- Served as the Gender focal point of the UNESCO Harare office between October 2004 ? October 2006.
- Assisted in the Formulation and prepared a concept paper for a workshop on Gender mainstreaming in Education Curricula in learning Material workshop; Lusaka, Zambia, 14 ? 16 November 2006.
- Active member of the UNESCO Harare HIV/AIDS Working Group established in February 2006 to strengthen and consolidate efforts of the existing HIV and AIDS unit in

the office. The objectives of the group were to improve visibility and impact of the HIV and AIDS Programme in the Harare Cluster countries of Botswana, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

- To facilitate discussions on HIV and AIDS issues as and when they arise, and to ensure that HIV and AIDS were mainstreamed in all of UNESCO's fields of competence such as education, culture communication, information and the sciences through reviewing the past and future activities and work plans, developing appropriate tools for disseminating information on HIV and AIDS, disseminating information on HIV and AIDS activities through the EDUCAIDS newsletter and other targeted media groups and developing feedback mechanisms and effective mechanisms for monitoring.
- Served as Rapporteur at a Gender Mainstreaming Training for Oxfam Australia partners; 2 -4 December, 2006, Bronte Hotel, Harare
- Participated in 'Mainstreaming Gender into National Educational Curricular and Learning Materials', Experts Training; September 25 - 26, 2006, Cresta Oasis Hotel, Harare sponsored by UNESCO Harare.
- Participated in the Zimbabwe Girls Education Strategic Plan formulation and finalisation; Harare, February 2005 co-ordinated by UNICEF
- Presented a paper during the UNESCO Harare/Maputo Exchange Mission; Maputo, Mozambique, 21 - 27 February, 2005 on gender mainstreaming initiatives and activities in place at the Harare office.
- Participated in the Empowering Women in the Great Lakes Region: Violence, Peace and Women's Leadership Consultation, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; 30 May - 1 June, 2005.
- Participated in the Zimbabwe United Nations Development Assistance Framework (ZUNDAF) Orientation Workshop; 30 October - 2 November, 2006, Kadoma Ranch Motel, Kadoma.
- Participated in the Regional staff training workshop 'Early Childhood, Inclusive Education and Gender Workshop Participant, World Council Consultation on Environment, Culture and Education Toluca, Mexico, June, 1996.
- Participant, World Council of Churches, Women Workshop on Education, Manila, Phillipines, September, 1997
- Facilitator of Leadership Skills Session on Gender; Chitungwiza Integrated Youth Survival Alternative Project; June 1994 - September 1996.

I am thinking of pursuing a PhD in 'An assessment of the socio-cultural factors affecting the management of HIV & AIDS in three selected teacher colleges in Zimbabwe'. So far, my most important piece of writing was an article produced in the ECHOES Magazine in Switzerland titled 'The Effects of Globalisation on Culture - in the eyes of an African woman'. This article has been referenced and used in several circles.

In the future I would like to be fully engaged in an organisation that works on gender related issues, culture and social problems, as my connection with the Gender and Women's studies will motivate my specific interest in gender issues. This is also an opportunity for me to share ideas with other activists on topics of common interest and to share my work and writing.

Publications

- 'Echoes' Bulletin. 1998. 'The Effects of Globalization on Culture in the eyes of an African Woman'; World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland: <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/what/jpc/effglob.html> [2]

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