

OUR FEMINIST MANIFESTO

FOR INDIVIDUALS AND

COLLECTIVE HAPPINESS,

WELL-BEING AND GROWTH

Created by the UNGEI Secretariat

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INTRODUCTION

**“It is in collectivities
that we find
reservoirs of hope
and optimism.”**

- Angela Davis



As members of the UNGEI Secretariat, we care deeply about UNGEI's mission of progressing gender equality in and through education. We are committed to working collaboratively with each other and our partners to progress this mission.

We live in a patriarchal world and are witnessing gender inequalities and rollbacks on girls, young women and LGBTIQ+ children and young people. As we do this work, it is important that we are not recreating the patriarchal structures that we are fighting against and that we acknowledge patriarchy can often live within organisations. We understand that to deliver our work the best we can, we must be unapologetically feminist. We must respect and care for one another and for ourselves, and be conscious of how we are holding the power and the spaces we occupy.

This Feminist Manifesto, inspired by FRIDA the Young Feminist Fund, Oxfam and Action Aid, depicts the kind of feminist organisation we want to be and the way we want to interact with each other, our partners and the communities we serve. We continuously go back to this manifesto and revise these commitments to reflect our current realities. We are on a collective learning journey. We will continue to reflect on our own actions and the ways we navigate these spaces. We are committed to unlearning, and relearning.

-Team UNGEI

OUR OVERALL COMMITMENT

We are proud to be part of UNGEI and we are committed to its mandate.

We commit to developing and improving our organisational culture through and with feminist principles.

We commit to UNICEF CRITA principles (Care, Respect, Integrity, Trust, Accountability), especially in respectful communications and supporting each other to achieve our goals.

As an organisation, we will be mindful about what we commit to, recognising that the balance between work and rest needs constant attention.

We will celebrate our wins and dance, dance, dance!





CHAPTER 1

How do we communicate with each other (manifesting care, accountability, professionalism and trust)?

Goal: Strengthen empathy and trust through more communication (including feelings)

- We will try our best always to communicate openly, honestly, with kindness and respect, aiming to find constructive solutions together. If we make a mistake, we will apologise. We will be mindful of the fact that not everyone's first or second language is English. We will acknowledge each team member's lived experiences.
- We will commit to speaking bilaterally when things feel wrong and check in with colleagues on bandwidth and new requests.



- As collective leaders, we will try to take responsibility to understand and articulate our own feelings, which requires sitting with our feelings and being honest with ourselves. We will tap into the following in our Toolbox (and will continue to build our toolbox):
 - Journaling;
 - Breathwork / meditation;
 - Identify 5 objects in the room;
 - Take a physical break – go for a walk, stretch, put on a song you like and dance!
 - Taking a pause (take 5 minutes! Overnight!) before reacting via email, phone call, chat, etc.;
 - Draft an email response then go back to it after a break.
- We commit to the following milestones:
 - Weekly team meetings starting with personal sharing and finding creative ways to also share difficult emotions (colours, rates, etc.);
 - We will reflect on our true, brave feelings during quarterly Feminist Manifesto check-ins;
 - Bi-annual (twice a year) coaching sessions with an external specialist on expressing emotions with respect for oneself and the listener and practising active listening;
 - An annual in-person team retreat with a dedicated session on sharing feelings and time to socialise. We will also discuss professional development and careers.



CHAPTER 2

How do we organise our work so that our job is part of our lives but not our lives?

Goal: Support every team member to find their right balance between work and personal life.

- We will set and respect each other's boundaries and work-life balance. For example, we will not send emails / messages on the weekend and we will be more conscious of different time zones. This means being sensitive to colleagues' time zones, planning meetings at times that can work for colleagues in different time zones, expressing gratitude to colleagues who accommodate meetings outside their regular work hours and being as flexible as we can with our own availability for meetings. It is okay to send emails and Teams messages during our regular hours so long as we do not expect responses outside of the colleague's time zone.
- We commit to picking our leave / vacation dates thoughtfully and in line with UNICEF policies and then doing our best to respect everyone's right to disconnect when on leave.
- We will support each other through urgent / time-sensitive personal emergencies while ensuring that we handover highly time-sensitive tasks that cannot wait one's return.
- We will use Teams Meeting chat as our main chat and WhatsApp only if our colleague is okay with it. We agree that for large events, we will use group WhatsApp for more effective coordination.
- We will find opportunities to spend time together when in person and to not discussing work when we meet!



CHAPTER 3

How do we collaborate (including decision-making, team meetings, strategising and work planning) to maximise results and joy, with priorities set for each year?

Goal: Equal contributions, not leaving heavier weights of work to fall on one or a few, and leveraging each team member's comparative expertise.

- We will develop a clear strategy and work plan that gives importance to work-life balance while aiming to deliver on our mandate.
- We will establish our deadlines together.
- We will have clarity on each team member's roles.
- We will decide together what advocacy projects / events to take on, and how much spontaneous / ad-hoc work we can deliver, taking into account our work plans and our commitments to partners and donors.
- We will commit to intentional, empathetic and honest reflection after every significant work event, milestone and difficult situation.
- We will create structures of collaboration across different work areas.
- To the extent possible, we commit to making decisions together, especially when committing to events.
- We are actively seeking to create a democratic environment where everyone's knowledge and expertise is valued e.g. lived experience or geographic expertise.



CHAPTER 4

What is our place in this world?

Goal: Understanding our privilege, power and platform to impact regional and global change for girls' education and gender equality in and through education both as individuals and as part of the UNGEI family. But also understanding that this privileged position, if not well utilised, can have harmful effects on those around us.

- We will be conscious of how we hold, use, share and shift our power. This includes:
 - Joint decision-making with our partners (to the extent possible);
 - Meaningful consultations with experts (not limited to technical or academic) and partners for perspectives.
- We will be transparent about why we are doing what we are doing. When we don't know the answer immediately, we will say so as that is an important way to start doing things differently.
- We will contribute to decolonising development, by intentionally partnering and consulting with grassroots organisations and experts from diverse backgrounds to be as inclusive as possible, taking into account many people's lived experiences.
- We will meaningfully partner with younger and older feminists of all identities, in all processes of our work.
- We will acknowledge and be conscious of our own backgrounds, privileges and vulnerabilities and how that affects others. For example:
 - Being white and affluent from an English-speaking background;
 - Being of a majority community in one's country and affluent background even when we are persons of colour.



- We will make space for reflections on racism in the workplace and how it shows up consciously and unconsciously for individuals and in relationships with partners. We will hold dialogue sessions, make space for coaching, DO THE WORK! For example:
 - We will make sure committees and advisory groups aren't majority white representatives;
 - We will work proactively to find training opportunities for our team.
- We will be as inclusive as possible in all aspects of our work. This includes (not limited to):
 - Support all events/external meetings / webinars with translations / captions / sign language interpretation to the extent that resources allow;
 - Where possible in the team accommodate other people's languages and find opportunities for translations within the team. This includes making it comfortable for colleagues to speak in their language in team meetings.
- We will be intentional about diversity when recruiting individuals, companies and partners, making sure that we are fair in the way we value different people's skills, education and work experiences, while following UNICEF procedures. This includes:
 - Prioritising BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, Peoples of Colour) and women-led organisations and businesses to work with;
 - Including our intentions re: diversity for recruitment in our Terms of References;
 - Providing on-the-job learning opportunities like joining calls, contributing to concept notes, joining missions (when feasible.)
- In all our social media we will ensure that we are not participating in white saviourism in the images we use. Ensure that we are captioning all our images with descriptions for screen readers.






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