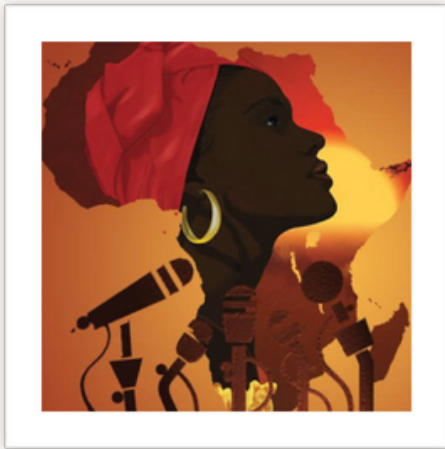


# African Feminism(s) and its Relevance Today in Northern Ghana

Sponsored by: LAPS, The Harriet Tubman Institute -York University, Canada and the University of Business and Integrated Development Studies (SDD UBIDS), Ghana.



## INTRODUCTION

The African feminism(s) and its relevance today in Northern Ghana Workshop is a sponsored event funded by the York University LAPS and awarded to Prof. Sylvia Bawa, Director of the Resource Centre for Public Sociology at York University. The event was held on the 14th of July 2022 with many partners from Harriet Tubman Institute, York University and SDD university of Business and Integrated Development studies (SDDUBIDS) including Dr. Constance A. Akurugu a senior lecturer at the SDDUBIDS department of public policy, who collaborated with Prof. Bawa on the project.

## SUMMARY OF EVENTS

The main objectives of the gathering were to engage in discussions focused on the problems with feminism in Northern Ghana towards developing relevant solutions that will enhance gender equality. The event was open to public attendance through a hybrid format that featured up to 80 participants from academic institutions and civil society organizations.

As a guest speaker, Prof Bawa, in her keynote speech, addressed the audience on the need to build an understanding of feminism and its connection to sociocultural settings. Drawing more depth from her work as a decolonial feminist, Prof. Bawa emphasized that most of the challenges experienced by feminists are not peculiar to African Women alone but affect all women globally.



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She reiterated that relevant stakeholders and participants need to be mindful of the socio-cultural context in addressing the issue of feminism and gender. Other identity indices that lead to marginalization or discrimination within the pre/post-colonial settings must be considered. She further expressed the desire to use Waali (the language of the Waala ethnic group in the Upper West Region)

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In this sense, she sees being a decolonial feminist as including the “capacity to decolonize to the point that societies are able to hold conversations about things like feminism in their native languages”.

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as a medium to communicate a lecture in the future as language translation will help people to appreciate social concepts better. In this sense, she sees being a decolonial feminist as including the “capacity to decolonize to the point that societies are able to hold conversations about things like feminism in their native languages”.

The event had in attendance some other notable aficionados in the persons of, Dr. Jane-Frances Lobnibe, Dr. Isaac Dery, Dr. Grace Alenoma, Hajia Leilatu Issah and Madam Catherine Amissah, who were all speakers. Also, the Pro Vice-Chancellor of SDDUBIDS and



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and Director of the West African Center for Sustainable Rural Transformation, Prof. Emmanuel Derbile, was in attendance and delivered a speech focused on the goals of achieving feminism towards creating a peaceful and just society.



Prof. Derbile's speech called on relevant stakeholders to ensure total commitment to promoting gender inequality and creating awareness of the issues surrounding feminism.

In her remarks, Dr. Constance Awinpoka emphasized that the challenge of feminism is not peculiar to Africa alone but a global phenomenon. In her view, dealing with issues of feminism through a postcolonial and cultural perspective provides a roadmap towards the eradication of westernization of feminism, as well as the demonization of feminists and gender activists. Furthermore, Dr. Awinpoka used the intersectionality lens to draw the participant's attention to women's identity and experience when the discussion around the different forms of feminism arises.



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## RECURRENT THEMES

The recurrent theme that inspired more discussions focused on the following five categories: Challenges of female academics in Northern Ghana, Gender advocacy from the NGO Perspective, Men's Involvement in Gender Advocacy in Northern Ghana, Conducting Gender-Based Research in the Upper West Region, Gender Advocacy from the Local Government Perspective: Experiences, Prospects and Challenges. From the brainstorming group activities, many emerging topics arose from the discussions, which include:

1. Collaborating with traditional institutions to redefine the concept of gender and feminism.
2. Educating our societies on gender- and feminist-related issues.
3. Implementing measures to close the gender gap, such as affirmative



actions and quotas.

4. Embracing the labels associated with doing gender and feminist works.
5. Remodifying institutions to prioritize the needs of working mothers and include childcare facilities at workstations.
6. Redefining the concept of gender in terms of practice to cover broader socio-cultural perspectives.
7. Enhanced and effective lobbying with the patriarchy.
8. Re-socializing gender roles and norms.
9. The use of inclusive language.

