



Training Session to Build a Coalition/Platform for Formerly Prisoned Women in the Country (November 12, 2024)

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Introduction:

To support the ex-women prisoners in building a functional platform or coalition, this training session will cover the foundational concepts of coalition-building, clarify shared goals, and provide guidance on structure and sustainability.

Mainstreaming wellness, collective care, and healing into the coalition's agenda will be emphasized to support long-term resilience. Here's an outline with suggested content, exercises, and an action plan framework.

Session Goals:

1. Build knowledge on coalition formation, objectives, and types.
2. Understand the importance of articulating a collective agenda for rights advocacy.
3. Learn strategies for lobbying policymakers and connecting with other women's rights groups.
4. Incorporate wellness, collective care, and healing into coalition work.
5. Develop a collaborative action plan for launching and sustaining the coalition.

Outline with Content

1. Introduction and Setting the Context

- **Overview of the Session:** Purpose, goals, and structure.
- **Participants' Introductions and Sharing Circle:** Each participant shares their motivation and vision for the platform, fostering a sense of unity and mutual understanding.

- **Establishing Ground Rules:** Respect, confidentiality, and mutual support.

2. Understanding Coalitions: Definition, Types, and Examples

- **What is a Coalition?:** Define coalition vs. network vs. platform, highlighting differences and purposes.
- **Types of Coalitions:**
 - **Issue-based:** Formed around specific goals like advocating for prison reform.
 - **Identity-based:** Formed based on shared identities or experiences.
 - **Goal-based:** Formed to influence specific policies or social change objectives.
- **Examples and Success Stories:** Share examples of effective women's rights coalitions in the country or globally.

3. Defining Objectives, Vision, and Mission of the Platform

- **Vision and Mission Workshop:** Identify what the coalition stands for and the long-term impact it aims to achieve.
- **Key Objectives:** Generate goals that reflect participants' interests, such as:
 - Advocacy for policy reforms.
 - A support network for sharing experiences and resources.
 - A structure for learning, sharing, and solidarity.
- **Expected Outcomes:** Establish clear, realistic outcomes, like influencing laws on prisoner rights and preventing discrimination.

4. Articulating a Collective Agenda and Developing Advocacy Strategies

- **Identifying Core Issues:** Discuss the specific challenges ex-women prisoners face (e.g., discrimination, lack of social services, reintegration issues).
- **Framing a Collective Agenda:** Formulate a list of key issues to address through the coalition.
- **Strategy Development:** Explore advocacy strategies, such as:
 - **Direct Advocacy:** Reaching policymakers, submitting petitions, or engaging in public campaigns.
 - **Alliances:** Building partnerships with existing women's rights organizations.

- **Public Awareness:** Raising community awareness through storytelling, media engagement, etc.
- **Approaches:** Discuss methods like policy briefs, community meetings, storytelling, and data collection.

5. Exploring Coalition Structures

- **Leadership and Governance:** Discuss co-leadership, shared responsibilities, and democratic decision-making.
- **Membership and Roles:** Define who can join, roles, and responsibilities.
- **Decision-Making Processes:** Explore inclusive and consensus-based decision-making models to ensure transparency.
- **Sustainability and Accountability:** Define methods for tracking progress and accountability to the group.

6. Integrating Wellness, Collective Care, and Healing

- **Feminist Wellness Principles:** Discuss why wellness, self-care, and healing are critical for personal and collective resilience.
- **Collective Care Practices:** Explore strategies to promote mental health, prevent burnout, and support each other in times of distress.
- **Wellness in Advocacy:** How wellness practices can sustain members through challenging advocacy work.
- **Healing Exercises:** Introduce brief grounding exercises and group support methods to address any stress or trauma from past experiences.

7. Action Planning: Moving Forward as a Cohesive Platform

- **Identifying Immediate Actions:** Define steps like selecting a leadership team, scheduling regular meetings, and setting short-term advocacy goals.
- **Assigning Roles:** Establish responsibilities for each member to encourage ownership and accountability.
- **Building Partnerships:** Plan outreach to other women's rights coalitions and community organizations.
- **Developing a Support Plan:** Create a wellness and care plan for the group to maintain collective health and unity.

Suggested Exercises

1. Visioning Exercise:

- **Purpose:** Align participants around a shared vision for the coalition.
- **Instructions:** Ask participants to close their eyes and visualize what they want this coalition to achieve in five years. Each person shares one aspect of their vision, and these ideas are synthesized into a draft vision for the coalition.

2. Brainstorming Core Issues and Objectives:

- **Purpose:** Identify the key issues and goals for the coalition.
- **Instructions:** Divide participants into small groups to discuss specific challenges they face and their ideal changes. Each group presents, and common themes are used to formulate objectives.

3. Collective Agenda Mapping:

- **Purpose:** Prioritize issues and develop a unified agenda.
- **Instructions:** Write core issues on large sheets, then discuss and rank them based on urgency and feasibility. This will guide coalition focus.

4. Wellness and Care Practice:

- **Purpose:** Build awareness of personal and collective wellness.
- **Instructions:** Lead a brief mindfulness or breathing exercise to help participants relax and refocus. Discuss how these can be incorporated into coalition activities.

5. Action Plan Development Exercise:

- **Purpose:** Create a concrete plan for initial coalition activities.
- **Instructions:** Participants work together to identify three immediate actions (e.g., assigning a leadership team, holding the first official meeting, setting up communication channels) and designate roles for each task.

6. Role-Playing Advocacy Scenarios:

- **Purpose:** Practice advocacy skills and build confidence.
- **Instructions:** Create role-play scenarios where participants practice advocating for policy change to government officials. This can help them feel more comfortable with public speaking and lobbying.

Wrap-Up and Next Steps

1. **Reflect and Share:** End the session with a reflection circle where participants share what they learned and their next personal commitment to the coalition's goals.
2. **Final Wellness Exercise:** Conclude with a simple grounding or gratitude practice to foster a sense of closure and optimism.
3. **Feedback and Closing Remarks:** Gather participants' feedback and encourage ongoing involvement and commitment.