**Feminist Futures Without Fundamentalisms**

In 2016 the Association for Women’s Rights in Developent (AWID) worked with Brazilian illustrator Carol Rosetti on a project to celebrate activists resisting religious fundamentalisms from feminist perspectives and to raise awarness of the diverse strategies they use. The exhibit, consisting of 12 portraits, each with information about a different strategy, was displayed at the 13th AWID Forum in Bahia, Brazil in September 2016.

The aim of the project was to disrupt the mainstream media narrative that focuses disproportionately on certain forms of fundamentalisms, and which tends to depict women and LGBTQI people solely as victims rather than people with strategies to challenge them.

Through highlighting the inventive and radical ways that people are confronting fundamentalisms, it was hoped to show that many responses to the problem exist outside of mainstream solutions that often only feed the cycle of violence.

It was hoped that the small sample shown in the exhibit would serve as an entry point to highlight the countless feminists around the world who are at the forefront of resisting religious fundamentalisms, and creating positive alternatives.

## 1. Zainah Anwar

Zainah Anwar, Director of [Musawah](http://www.musawah.org/), believes that to break the hold of conservative forces over the field of religion and public policy feminists living in Muslim contexts must be able to offer an alternative vision that reconciles Islam with women’s rights. Musawah’s [Framework for Action](http://www.musawah.org/about-musawah/framework-action) is used by advocates around the world to demand reform towards gender equality.

## 2. Ana Francis Mor

Ana Francis Mor is a Mexican performer and writer whose work with cabaret group Las Reinas Chulas takes discussion of gender and religion out of the academy and direct to people on the [streets](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1LiU_qNGsu0), in theatres and workshops, and through radio and [television](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aElY5tL4qp4)—all with a generous dose of tongue-in-cheek humour.

## 3. Isatou Touray

Isatou Touray has dedicated her life to ending female genital mutilation (FGM) Gambia. Her organization [GAMCOTRAP](http://www.gamcotrap.gm/index.php/homepage) works within communities to reach a consensus to “drop the knife” using a combination of awareness-raising workshops, engagement of local leaders, and programs to provide alternative employment to ex-circumcisers.

## 4. Sandra Mazo

“We must understand our power and energy, we must realize that we are are strong.”

Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir - Colombia (Catholics for the Right to Decide - Colombia), the organization Sandra Mazo works with, are leading a [campaign for a secular state](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OHnLcQf1x6o) in Colombia and across Latin America.  CDD-Colombia’s campaign articulates the voice of Catholic women who do not feel represented by orthodox Catholic views and do not accept the Church’s imposition of its vision upon state policies.

## 5. Dawn Cavanagh

Dawn Cavanagh and her organization, the [Coalition of African Lesbians](http://www.cal.org.za/) (CAL), believe in the power of conversation and of ideas, since the domain of ideas is a mechanism through which fundamentalisms exert control. CAL employ a strategy which they call the “think for yourself” approach. Discussion are facilitated about commonly-held ideas, helping people build the critical analysis skills to resist becoming "compliant consumers of the ideas of others".

## 6. Nilza Iraci Silva

“We black women dare to reframe the concept of Living Well, betting on the utopia of a full life with dignity, justice and pleasure. It's that simple.”

Nilza Iraci Silva is the President and Communications Coordinator of [Geledés - Black Women's Institute](http://www.geledes.org.br/the-geledes-black-woman-institute/), in Brazil. Geledés works at the intersections of race and gender, tackling the increasing encroachment of conservative Catholic and Evangelical actors into public life and the disastrous effects this is having on Black women’s lives.

## 7. Cynthia Rothschild

Cynthia Rothschild has been an activist, author, and trainer for over 25 years.  She believes in strategically using international human rights systems to promote rights agendas.  Cynthia feels that activists must be inside the human rights system to push its boundaries for what they care about, and that as long as the opposition remains there [feminists must also be there](http://www.oursplatform.org/the-project/" \t "_blank).

## 8. Sussan Tahmasebi

Sussan Tahmasebi’s organization [ICAN](http://www.icanpeacework.org/) supports civil society activism to promote women’s rights, peace, and human security. ICAN’s latest initiative [WASL](http://www.icanpeacework.org/programs/womensallianceforsecurityleadership/) (Women’s Alliance for Security Leadership), an independent alliance working to prevent and counter all forms of extremism, facilitates South-South dialogue, creating opportunities for knowledge exchange between activists from various Global South countries.

## 9. María Consuelo Mejía

“Recognizing one's own freedom of conscience is essential to self determination, a safe path in the pursuit of happiness.”

María Consuelo Mejía is the Director of Católicas por el Derecho a Decidir Mexico (CDD-Mexico). One of CDD-Mexico’s most effective strategies has been a cartoon series called [Catolicadas](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrJMqvmYoO0O3EVCjiIZi3Q). Catolicadas features Sister Juana as its protagonist, a nun who sensitizes the clergy and her congregation about LGBT rights and the rights of women, including their sexual and reproductive rights.

## 10. Arvind Narrain

Arvind Narrain is a founding member of the [Alternative Law Forum](http://altlawforum.org/) in Bangalore, India. In 2008 and 2009 there was a wave of vigilante attacks by Hindu nationalist groups upon young men and women of different religions who were seen in public together. The Alternative Law Forum, working with other groups, mounted a legal challenge to bring justice to the perpetrators, using the language of the Indian consitution to support their case.

**11. Janette Akhilgova**

Janette Akhilgova works with Peacebuilding UK in the North Caucasus region of Russia as well as being the Chief of the Board of RC-DEV a local non-profit in Ingushetia. Janette is working for stronger platforms for awareness-raising about fundamentalisms and their impact on women, and for greater international solidarity with those opposing fundamentalism in Russia.

## 12.  Khouloud Mahdhaoui

Khouloud Mahdhaoui is President of [Chouf](http://chouf-minorities.org/), a feminist organization in Tunisia who in 2014 began a project call [Choufthouhonna](http://chouf-minorities.org/chouftouhonna-2nd-edition-may-13th-14th-15th-2016/), an International Feminist Art Festival in Tunis. Choufthouhonna was a response to a lack of public space available for women’s expression. Khouloud describes the art festival as challenging fundamentalist rule by “opening the streets to women’s voices and bodies”.

*More information about the project can be found here.*