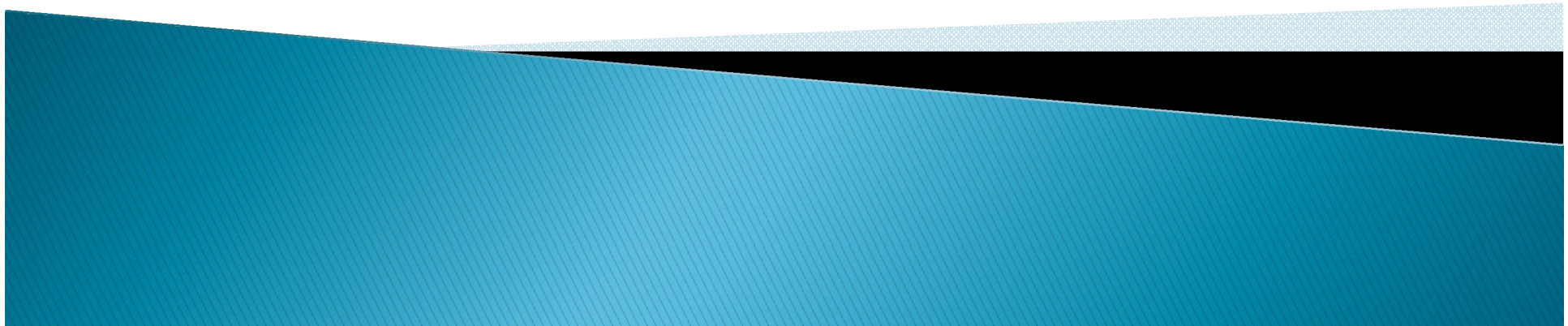
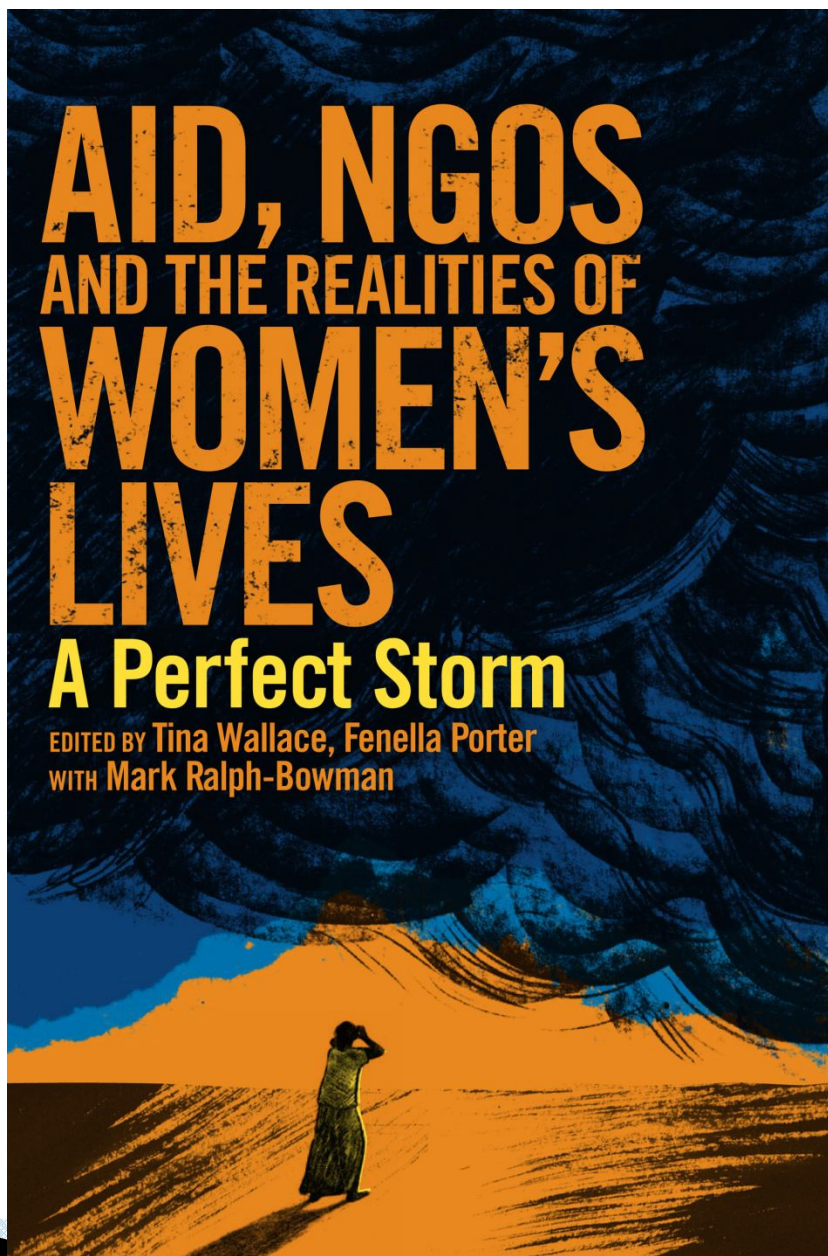


# Reinvigorating a Gender Agenda and Restoring a Feminist Approach: Navigating the ‘Perfect Storm’

Fenella Porter  
Ruskin College, Oxford and  
Birkbeck College, University of London





# AID, NGOS AND THE REALITIES OF WOMEN'S LIVES

## A Perfect Storm

EDITED BY Tina Wallace, Fenella Porter  
WITH Mark Ralph-Bowman

# The Perfect Storm

- ▶ A need to change the conversation;
- ▶ To open out a critical space in which to challenge dominant approaches
- ▶ ... and the way development is practised
- ▶ and 'known'.



# The gender agenda ...



- ▶ Gender is popular - The Girl Effect/Girl Hub, The London Summits (Family Planning, FGM), Girl Summit

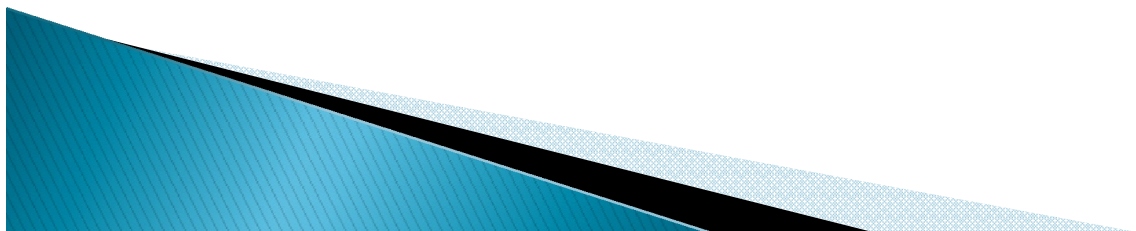


- ▶ ... more support and money.




## 3 bullet points or less ...

- ▶ The agendas are huge (a future free from FGM, to eliminate gender inequality etc)
- ▶ But the communications have to be simple (3 bullet points) ... look good and feel good.
- ▶ This reduces the issues



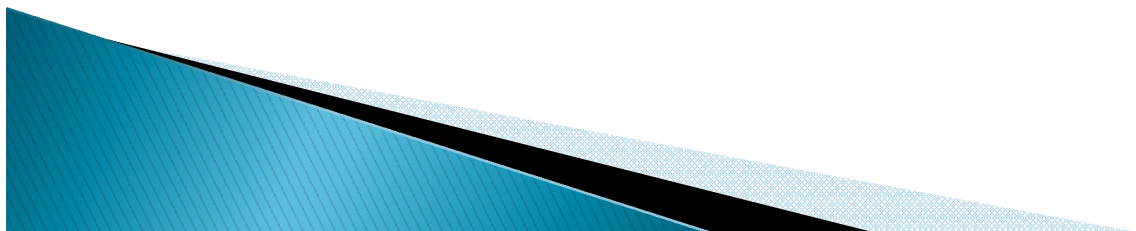


# Who knows what?

- ▶ 'Traditional' and 'new' actors
  - ▶ 'Efficiency' and 'value for money'
  - ▶ Partners in the South – key to legitimacy
  - ▶ But are excluded
- 

# Justifying gender ...

- ▶ It *makes (economic) sense* to address gender ... no challenge to existing structures, just making them better
- ▶ Political sense too: no threat ... it looks good, and it feels good
- ▶ It is empowerment that now needs defending



# The Playdoh model of development

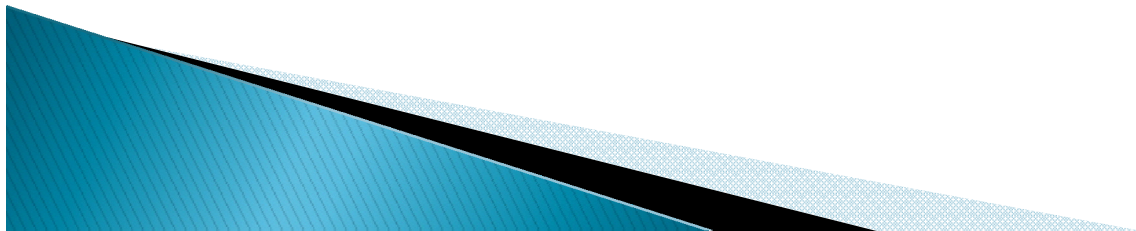
- ▶ It looks good, and it feels good .





## But we *know* ...

- ▶ ... it's much more complicated
- ▶ Knowledge about gender has been established for decades;
- ▶ But it is still not understood within development.



# Restoring a feminist approach

- ▶ Not a lack of knowledge ... more a lack of space
- ▶ Space exists ... but often *outside* the development discourse.
- ▶ But ... lack of resources (AWID, Womankind)
- ▶ Restoring a feminist approach means challenging norms of the development industry

