

## Women's Assembly draft proposal

Put forward by Anita Wright and Dona Feltham, National Assembly of Women, Lindsey German Stop the War, and Rachel Newton, Peoples Charter, all original signatories of the People's Assembly

We propose to organise a Women's Assembly event in January 2014, as part of the People's Assembly initiative. The event will be organised by women for women.

The purpose of the Women's Assembly event is to

- Give voice to the impact that policies of austerity and privatisation are having on women
- Develop thinking about the alternatives to austerity from women's perspective
- Encourage women in resisting through linking up and learning from each other, including between womens organisations and women in the labour and trade union movement
- Ensure that women are at the front and centre of a movement against austerity and in developing the alternative

The event is called by the National Assembly of Women along with any bona fide women's organisation/women-led organisation, women representing trade union bodies, leading women from historic trade union struggles, plus influential women individuals in public life. The only criteria is that they must be anti austerity and support the founding statement of the Peoples Assembly.

We are aiming for a conference of 300 women, using a format, similar to the Peoples Assembly on 22 June - short plenary start and end with workshops on themes with panels of speakers and discussion.

Speakers must reflect diversity – across the UK, ethnicity, age, disability, sector (note: the attendance on June 22 was not diverse in terms of ethnicity, we should aim to improve this)

We want to achieve the same atmosphere as we had on 22 June –a balance of speakers from nationally known speakers and local activists, participatory, positive, creative – e.g. through having comedy/poetry/visuals. It will be much smaller, making it easier to be participative in the workshops.

We want to get the support of known women, including celebs, who between them have a broad appeal.

We agreed that the event is on women and austerity in the UK, and if we have an international speaker it would be to demonstrate shared experiences and/or what we have to come if we don't stop it – e.g. a speaker from one of the PIGS countries.

The venue will be in central London, with a view to encouraging attendance from across the UK. Possible ideas for venues to be explored: NUT head office, Unison head office, Conway Hall.

Funding – we anticipate needing to charge £5 entry to help cover costs and ask different unions to sponsor different aspects e.g. venue, refreshments, publicity and (possibly) travel costs of speakers, and ask smaller unions/other organisations to donate 1 or 2 hundred. Also

to check whether any help can be gained from PA centrally e.g. help with the deposit up front to be paid back when money comes in.

The event will be announced in the press with a letter from leading organisations/figures about women and austerity (in a similar manner to the PA launch letter in the Guardian).

### **Next steps**

- Put together a steering group to organise the event – first meeting end of August. Send notice of this out to the PA signatories and other interested women. Want it as broad and inclusive as possible.
- Draw up a list of women's organisations and individuals to approach –to call the event (and sign letter) and/or speak at it (note standing invitation to all those who call the event to send a rep to the steering group)
- Scope out potential venues – NUT, Unison, Conway Hall – availability, price, size/large hall and smaller rooms for workshops, refreshments possibilities. Aim to do provisional booking before organising meeting at the end of Aug.
- Start talking to potential union sponsors/any other sponsors to bring to meeting at end of Aug
- Check what other events are happening in January