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**A few key statistics concerning the female population of several countries:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Fertility Rate</th>
<th>Literacy Rate (Women 15+)</th>
<th>Employment Rate</th>
<th>Representation in National Parliament</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>2.7 children</td>
<td>59.4%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>1.8% (9 for 214)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>(59 for 214)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>18.9% (19 for 109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bosnia</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>66.1%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>16.7% (7 for 42)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Why do we need a Mediterranean Women’s Fund?**

Belonging to the same cultural area, under the influence of three monotheistic religions, women from the Mediterranean region are subjected to a common form of patriarchy and despite living in apparently very different situations, share many similar aspects of their condition.

Whether they come from the southern or the northern shores of the Mediterranean, women know that their fight to obtain equality but also to strengthen their existing rights which have been obtained thanks to their tenacity and their struggles.

They act in a climate of general regression which is the effect of radical conservative movements in societies undergoing change and they are experiencing many difficulties in finding the necessary funding for their actions at a local or regional level.

This is why two years ago women from North Africa and Southern Europe have taken the initiative to create a Mediterranean Women’s Fund whose aim is to help with improving women’s condition and to promote gender equality throughout all those countries in the Mediterranean region.

---

**Information letter from the Mediterranean Women’s Fund (MedWomenFund)**

**Address:** oct 47, 47, place du Milhaire

**Email:** letter info@medwomensfund.org

**Website:** www.medwomensfund.org

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**Quarterly newsletter**

**Editor:** Caroline Brac de la Perrière

**Graphic conception:** MIPgraph

**Translation:** Kate Le Mestre

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In its Program for the 2nd Semester of 2010, the Mediterranean Women’s Fund supported seven projects. These included:

**TRAINING OF GIRLS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>P A L E S T I N E</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| The Women’s Development Center works in Bethlehem and the refugee camps in Deir al-Balah to raise women’s awareness of their rights. In response to the needs voiced by girls 12 to 16 years old that are forced, “for their own protection”, to stay at home, the association decided to organize vacation camps for young girls. The girls in question live in refugee camps and come from poor families that either have no income or live in areas with high unemployment. The idea of the summer camp was to give these girls a chance to learn how to decide, plan, organize, and assume leadership roles by reinforcing their confidence in themselves and in their own capacities. In response to the enormous demand, members of the Women’s Development Center first organized a summer camp for young girls between the ages of 8 to 12 years, and will organize a spring camp for the older girls.

**THE CREATION OF BRIDGES BETWEEN WOMEN:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M E D I T E R R A N E A N</th>
<th>M E D I T E R R A N E A N</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| The European Feminist Initiative network, the Macedonian Antico Association, the Arab Women’s Solidarity Association (AWSA), the Organization for the Freedom of Women in Iraq, the International League of Women for Peace and Liberty, the associations ACT and HEVA, and Foundation for Women in Egypt together organized an international conference “Women in the 21st century – Feminist Alternatives.” This conference took place in Cairo in December 2010 to coincide with the 8th conference of AWSA. AWSA was founded by the Egyptian feminist Nawal el Saadawi, who has inspired, like Simone de Beauvoir, a large number of Arab feminists. The conference provided theorists and women’s rights defenders from the Mediterranean region and elsewhere a place to exchange experiences and discuss peace, justice, and gender equality as a prerequisite for democracy and development.

**REINFORCING CAPACITIES**

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<tr>
<th>A L G E R I A</th>
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| Res’Art, a network of women’s initiatives launched by the association Femmes en Communication (Women in Communication) organized on December 14, a day entitled “Women Artists: Between Tradition and Modernity”, at the Centre des Arts in Algiers. The project included a conference on arts in Algeria, a film and a show of the latest creative works. The Mediterranean Women’s Fund supports Res’Art by finding Algerian businesses and individual donors to finance their activities.

**AT A REGIONAL LEVEL AND BEYOND TO DEVELOP STRATEGIES FOR EQUITY**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>T U N I S I A</th>
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</table>
| The Tunisian Association of Democratic Women (Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates), created in 1989, is an independent feminist association working for women’s human rights and democracy. It runs a help center for women who are victims of violence and is part of a network of associations fighting violence against women. One member, a lawyer at the Help center in Tunis, was delegated to participate in the day of reflection, “Stop the Violence! Women’s Rights Now”. The day was organized in Algeria on November 25 by the Family Planning Association of Algeria and the Collective Stop the Violence to correspond with the international day to fight violence against women. The government did not allow the meeting to take place at the convened location but areas were organized at the last minute, allowing an exchange of experiences and the consolidation of the existing network.

**INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION ON WOMEN’S RIGHTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F R A N C E</th>
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</table>
| Informelles set up its website with general information on women and gender: www.equality.com. With a sponsorship committee made up of Brimée Croul, Geneviève Frasie, Patrice, Jean, Michelle Perlot, and Françoise Hintier, and nourished with contributions from journalists, researchers and association leaders, Egalité’s approach to the news is to re-establish a balance between women and men in the sphere of information. Its main objectives are to promote equality between women and men, raise awareness of women and men in the general public with regard to the important contributions of women in all fields of activity and to the discrimination faced by women around the world. The site aims to publicize the struggles and social, political, economic, and intellectual role of Mediterranean women and the men who support them by giving them the floor to speak.

**THROUGH A CAMPAIGN**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>E G Y P T</th>
<th>I S R A E L</th>
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| The Egyptian Women’s Resource Center (EWRC) has been fighting sexual harassment in Egypt for many years. In a 2005 study, the association determined that 83% of Egyptian women and 98% of foreign women have experienced sexual harassment, with about 45% of both Egyptian and foreign women noting that the harassment takes place on a daily basis. According to this study, sexual harassment affects all women: Egyptian and foreigners, veiled and bare headed, young and old. And these consequences are not limited to the negative impact on women’s psychological and physical well-being. There is evidence that sexual harassment is blocking Egyptian women’s progress in participating in public life and thus in development processes.

**REINFORCING CAPACITIES**

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| Assiwar focuses on gender violence and sexual abuse experience by Palestinian Arab women in Israel. A feminist education and awareness program in Palestinian-Arab schools in Israel aims to change general attitudes, promote gender equality, and free women from the oppression that hinders them from taking the necessary measures to recover from violence.

In parallel, the organization runs a direct support program for victims of sexual abuse, particularly a free telephone hotline open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or 168 hours per week. This around-the-clock program is crucial for victims who may need to call at any hour of the day or night. The women who call the hotline come from particularly marginalized communities in Israel and, due to mistrust in and control by authorities, often do not have access to any other form of assistance. In 2009, the number of new calls rose to 747, out of which 658 were related to sexual abuse and 89 to violence in general. 530 calls were followed up several times, with 66 women coming to the office for direct support sessions, some of whom were accompanied by family members. 510 women were brought to medical centers, 6 to the police, and 3 are taking their cases to court and were followed up in 25 high risk cases, the women were brought to specialized refuge homes.

To carry out this huge amount of work, Assiwar must overcome many obstacles. The obstacles rooted in the general context in which the association works are: above all, an absence of funding, aggravated by the international financial crisis. It is difficult to find funding for this field of activity and the Israeli Interior Ministry reduces its support each year. The alarming political situation caused by the criminalization of a minority of Israeli Palestinians by part of the government is pushing civil society and individuals to work against the negative impact on women’s psychological and physical well-being. There is evidence that the existing network.

Lastly, the image given women by the media, with the excessive use of stereotypes and the representation of women as objects, has a very negative impact. The growing use of the Internet has aggravated this clear media trend of encouraging violence against women and children.

Organizational obstacles include:

- Members of the Assiwar team face difficult working conditions, with an overload of work, low salaries, and unpaid overtime. Despite this, they remain extremely qualified, professional and committed.

- Unfortunately, opportunities to improve the level of organization, the activities, and the work of the association are under incessant threat from funding shortages.

This is the reason Assiwar decided to rely on volunteers in their work. It plans to hire a coordinator to recruit and motivate volunteers, and to allocate funding to support volunteers, including training and personal development activities.
IN ITS PROGRAM FOR THE 2ND SEMESTER OF 2010, THE MEDITERRANEAN WOMEN’S FUND SUPPORTED SEVEN PROJECTS. THESE INCLUDED:

THE CREATION OF BRIDGES BETWEEN WOMEN:

Training of Girls

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IN GREATERT DETAIL…

COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

In 2010, five years after the start of their campaign against sexual harassment, EWRC launched a campaign, “Safe Streets for Everyone”. This campaign consists of three components: research, interventions in schools, and an advocacy and media campaign. To put pressure on the government to recognize the need for a law criminalizing sexual harassment, EWRC has begun a study titled, “De jure versus de facto”, which addresses features of sexual harassment from a legal perspective by covering the role of judges in the implementation of the existing penal code. EWRC will organize a seminar to debate articles of the penal code that apply to sexual harassment.

Work carried out during the research stage of the project will furnish the knowledge needed to debate with diverse social groups.

In parallel, the organization runs a direct support program for victims of sexual abuse, particularly a free telephone hotline open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (or 168 hours per week). This around-the-clock program is crucial for victims who may need to call at any hour of the day or night. The women who call the hotline come from particularly marginalized communities in Israel and, due to language and cultural barriers, often do not have access to any other form of assistance. In 2009, the number of new calls rose to 747, out of which 658 were related to sexual abuse and 89 to violence in general. 530 calls were followed up several times, with 66 women coming to the office for direct support sessions, some of whom were accompanied by family members. 58 women were brought to their shelters, 6 to the police, and 3 were taken to court and followed up. In 25 high risk cases, the women were brought to specialized refuge homes.

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Lastly, the image given women by the media, with the excessive use of stereotypes and the representation of women as objects, has a very negative impact on the society. The growing use of the Internet has aggravated this clear media trend of encouraging violence against women and children.

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**NEWSPAPER FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN SHORES**

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**ON THE OCCASION OF THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF WOMEN’S RIGHTS DEFENDERS** on November 29 and the 10th anniversary of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, the Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition critically reflects on Structures of Violence: Defining the Intersections of Militarism and Violence Against Women, the theme of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence for 2010. Mentioning the discrimination, intimidation, and aggression experienced by activists working for women’s rights and sexual rights, the Coalition demands governments to ensure their security and to support their organizations by changing the situation which is endangering them.

Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition (WRDH IC) http://www.wrdhic.org

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**Women from the Mediterranean shores need your support!**

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**I WISH TO DONATE TO THE MEDITERRANEAN WOMEN’S FUND**

Apt 74 - 47 place du Millénaire - 34000 Montpellier France

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>FIRST NAME</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZIP CODE</td>
<td>COUNTRY</td>
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<tr>
<td>EMAIL</td>
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- **☑️ BY CHEQUE**
  - made out to Fonds pour les Femmes en Méditerranée

- **☑️ BY BANK TRANSFER**
  - Crédit Coopératif, Montpellier, France
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