WHY DO WE NEED A MEDITERRANEAN WOMEN’S FUND?

know that they must not only fight to obtain norther shores of the Mediterranean, women Whether they come from the southern or the apparently very different situations, share many from the Mediterranean region are subjected to a influence of three monotheistic religions, women Belonging to the same cultural area, under the revolution, sent a video message for this occasion during the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effective- sion (see www.medwomensfund.org).

A FEW KEY STATISTICS CONCERNING THE FEMALE POPULATION OF SEVERAL COUNTRIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Fertility Rate</th>
<th>Average Age at Marriage</th>
<th>Literacy Rate</th>
<th>Literacy Rate of those between 15 and 24 years</th>
<th>Employment Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>1.7 children/woman</td>
<td>29.5 years</td>
<td>96.9% (98.5%)</td>
<td>99.6% (99.6%)</td>
<td>49.1% (68.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Croatia</td>
<td>1.5 children/woman</td>
<td>26.2 years</td>
<td>98.1% (99.5%)</td>
<td>99.7% (99.6%)</td>
<td>46.3% (60.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>1.5 children/woman</td>
<td>23.3 years</td>
<td>94.7% (97.1%)</td>
<td>99% (98.5%)</td>
<td>49.3% (70.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>2.2 children/woman</td>
<td>25.4 years</td>
<td>85.3% (96.4%)</td>
<td>99% (98.4%)</td>
<td>24% (92.6 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>2 children/woman</td>
<td>27.4 years</td>
<td>46% (55.4%)</td>
<td>99.1% (98.6%)</td>
<td>22.3% (71.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Representation in national parliament 34.7% 23.5% 16.4% 9.1% 3.1%

Fertility rate 1.5 children/woman 1.5 children/woman 1.5 children/woman 1.5 children/woman

Average age at marriage 29.5 years 26.2 years 23.3 years 25.4 years 27.4 years

Literacy rate* 96.9% (98.5%) 98.1% (99.5%) 94.7% (97.1%) 85.3% (96.4%) 46% (55.4%)

Literacy rate of those between 15 and 24 years* 99.6% (99.6%) 99.7% (99.6%) 99% (98.5%) 99% (99%) 99.1% (98.6%)

Employment rate 49.1% (68.5%) 46.3% (60.3%) 49.3% (70.4%) 24% (92.6%) 22.3% (71.5%)

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Note: figures for men are given between parentheses.  * According to the estimation of the Statistical Institute of UNESCO

WHY DO WE NEED A MEDITERRANEAN WOMEN’S FUND?

They act in a climate of general repression which is the effect of radical conservative movements in societies undergoing changes and they are experiencing many difficulties in finding the necessary funding for their activities at a local or regional level. This is why two women from North Africa and Southern Africa have taken the initiative to create a Mediterranean Women’s Fund which is aimed at helping with improving women’s condition and to promote gender equality throughout all those countries in the Mediterranean region.

WHY DO WE NEED A MEDITERRANEAN WOMEN’S FUND?

The Indian Ocean is approximately 105 boys for every 100 girls, it has risen to 115.5 boys for every 100 girls in Alba- nia, and to 109.7 boys for every 100 girls in Monte- negro. In the south, advertisements for clinical ser- vices enabling one to choose a baby’s sex during in vitro fertilization recently have appeared in the Pales- tinian territories.

HOW CAN GROUPS OF YOUNG GIRLS WHO ORGANIZE THEMSELVES TO DEFEND THEIR RIGHTS BE REINFORCED? How can young people’s perspectives be promoted with- in women’s funds? These were the main questions addressed during the meeting organized to pave the way for a community of practice by the Central American Fund for Women and Marfa Cash held in Amsterdam September 21 to 22. 20 participants, of which 10 were members of the International Wom- en’s Fund Network and four organizations of young girls, benefited from the first space for discussion on young girls to form a learning community.

A special feature of this revolution is the strong presence of wom- en in coordination committees and cultural and artistic actions. Women also are paying a heavy price. The undeniable repression carried out by the ruling regime, which is hitting all citizens targets them also: torture, exec- utions, rape. The Mediterranean Wom- en’s Fund, in collaboration with Souha Houria and with the support of Falta Halaem (Deputy to the Mayor of Paris), organized a debate on November 29 at the Town Hall of the 3rd district of Par- is. Over 150 people met to listen to the presentation of Samar Yazbek and to the various reports gathered by the or- ganizing associations. The actress Nad- wa Soleiman, who is deeply involved in the revolution, sent a video message for this occasion (see www.medwomenfund.org).

AND THE 3 WINNERS OF OUR 2011 PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION ARE...

Many women involved themselves in these movements for change, often among the first to do so: in Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Spain, Italy, and Greece... But when some succeeded in fending the idols, and daily life resumed, the good old system of domination man over women, rich over poor, instantly fell back into place, and disguised under a veneer of change it relaunched its machine. However, the veneer is thin — it does not take much to scratch the surface and reveal the raw material our societies are made of: a patriarchate in reinforced concrete. This is why, despite the 2006-2011 action framework of Istanbul and Marrakech, which urged all govern- ments in the region to promote equality in their countries, there are even less women than last year in the new governments of Spain, France, Tunisia, Egypt, and Morocco. The situa- tion is such that (a first in the region!) Moroccan deputies demonstrated in the Assembly and described their new government, which does not include a single woman, as male chauvinist.

We warmly congratulate all of the candidates for the quality of their work and we are pleased to present in this letter the three winning photographs.

Photo competition

January 2012

N° 5

NEWSLETTER FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN SHORES

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IN ITS PROGRAM FOR THE 2ND SEMESTER 2011, THE MEDITERRANEAN WOMEN’S FUND SUPPORTED A DOZEN PROJECTS. THEY INVOLVED...

AWARENESS RAISING AND INFORMATION ON WOMEN’S RIGHTS

AGAINT FORCED MARRIAGES

Voice of Women was created in 1998 by a young French woman. A victim of forced marriage as a minor, her demand for protection in a home was refused by a juvenile judge on the grounds of “respect for her culture.” The association aims to fight against forced marriages, so-called honour crimes, and all other sexual violence related to the control of women’s sexuality. Voice of Women is carrying out a documentary project entitled, “If hate attacks you from behind,” produced from the feminist workshops of slum and karagar. This educational documentary will accompany the screenings and debates that Voice of Women organizes in inner-city neighbourhoods under its campaign, “My heart belongs to me.” This campaign aims to prevent forced marriages and so-called crimes of honour, with a perspective of non-violent free choice in amorous relationships.

AND EARLY MARRIAGES

The SYTO foundation for housing and rehabilitation to women victims of gender violence, created in 2008, has organized a “National campaign for the enforcement of the family code, against early and forced marriages.” As part of this campaign, a caravan covering the villages of Kalla and Addo was organized over the course of ten days in July. The caravan went from door-to-door and organized medical visits and training workshops on reproductive, administrative management, awareness raising, and organizing for forced marriages and so-called crimes of honour, with a perspective of non-violent free choice in amorous relationships.

COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Brod group for women’s human rights founded in 1998. Its program is called “Social Inclusion and Integration of Women Victims of Domestic Violence in the Labour Market in Brodsko posavska Country.” Brod is the only non-government organization in Brodsko posavska county dealing with the issue of promotion and protection of the rights of women and children. Approximately 6000 women from whole Croatia asked for help from Brod and the problems are: domestic violence, social insecurity, not paying alimony, divorce, etc. Women exposed to domestic violence are a specific group that are usually psychologically instable, dependent on their partners, with lack of self-confidence and belief in their own power; they are usually persons with inadequate educational level that does not allow independence; they carry a feeling of disgrace and shame to admit that they are exposed to domestic violence fearing condemnation of their surroundings. They are in particular need of specific and carefully designed approach adjusted to their particular needs that will provide them with more comprehensive support in order to help them regain self-confidence, and motivation for additional education and participation in the labour market. They are in need of various kinds of support ranging from consumption, psychological support, and legal advice, to finding a shelter in a safe house and economic empowerment in order to become independent, and thus be able to step out from the vicious circle of violence.

THE LIBERTY TO MOVE ABOUT FREELY WITHOUT FEAR

HarrassMap is a volunteer initiative founded by 4 young women who were tired of being harassed and tired of complaining and wanted to take positive action. They linked up with volunteer tech partner, Nabil (www.namad.org), and launched the HarrassMap system in December 2010. HarrassMap believes that the key to stopping sexual harassment is in the hands of each citizen. During the first days of the revolution, all Egyptians were proud of the fact that sexual harassment almost disappeared. And responsible for this amazing change was not the police, it was not a new law; it was a citizen refusing to tolerate harassment in their own streets. HarrassMap aims to encourage the return of this sense of pride in the streets and pride in traditions and values that reject harassments and their behavior as unacceptable. To achieve this, HarrassMap set up HarrassMap helps organize teams of volunteers who reach out to people in their own neighborhoods to be watchful against sexual harassment.

Create “Safe Areas” in shops and public transportation
• Provide a safe, easy way to report sexual harassment by SMS (6067), on a website (www.harrasmap.org), by email (report@harrasmap.org), Facebook or twitter (@harrasmap)
• Send a report to each report telling victims how to access services from NGOs like legal or psychological aid, how to make a police report, self-defense and others
• Provide a space for victims to share ideas on dealing with harassment, get referrals, learn self-defense and find responses to common excuses justifying harassment
• Supporting the work of advocacy NGOs by providing them with instantly understandable data on harassment
• Supporting the work of police by pointing them to “hot spots” where they can increase their protection

THE CREATION OF BRIDGES BETWEEN WOMEN

Mada al-Carmel was established in 2001 by Palestinian academics and community leaders as the first Palestinian center for applied social research in Israel. Using theoretical and applied social research and policy analysis, Mada al-Carmel aims to enhance the human development and become a hub of knowledge and critical thinking about Palestinian in Israel, equality, citizenship, and democracy. Women’s issues are served by the Gender Studies Program (GSP), a dedicated program within Mada al-Carmel and the first research group devoted to Palestinian women in Israel. The GSP aims to uncover and analyze the various manifestations of oppression of Palestinian women in Israel in order to give voice to Palestinian as women, researchers, activists, and policymakers. The project aims to build a network between female Palestinian students, victims of the fragmentation of their country.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

“Amaria horra, etkalémi” (Free Egypt... express yourself) was established in 2011 by a women’s collective engaged in the Grassroots Movement of Arab Women in Egypt. This NGO has launched for example during the pre-elections period, a mass media campaign with 3 TV spots and 4 radio spots, all in local dialectic language that call women to go and vote, reminding them of their acquired rights.

SUPPORT WAS RENEWED FOR

Women and their bodies for workshops to introduce Arab women across Israel to the health guide “our bodies ourselves” translated into Arabic.

Kayan for its project “Developing and Institutionalizing the Grassroots Movement of Arab Women in Israel”.

European feminist initiative for its project of cooperation between the feminist movements in Europe and MENA.

Res’art with the support of Gif Leben for the network of women artisans.

women’s struggle to obtain political, social and economic rights. With this perspective in mind, they organize training sessions on political, legal, media, and economic issues. They implement a strategy based on modern means of communication to enroll in networks for exchanging experiences and lobbying in Egypt as well as on regional and international levels.

“Engagement Citoyen” was created in the wake of the January 16th Tunisian revolution by a group of young women. Right after this historic moment, they witnessed many signs of possible regression of women’s rights: conservative public debates about how women should dress, calls to apply religion as far as marriages are concerned etc... Therefore, their main goals consist in raising women’s awareness about their rights, and call them to participate massively in the elections to minimize impact of any anti-women movements. Knowing that at this critical moment in Tunisia conservative forces are calling for a pause on women rights and potential regression, this NGO has launched for example during the pre-elections period, a mass media campaign with 3 TV spots and 4 radio spots, all in local dialectic language that call women to go and vote, reminding them of their acquired rights.
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POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

“Masria horra, etkal-im” (Free Egypt…express your- self) was established in 2011 by a women’s collective engaged in the fields of politics and human rights. They mobilized themselves during the 2010 legislative elections to protest against electoral fraud and the instrumentalization of women’s quota by those in power at the time. Their main mission consists of keeping watch over the actual participation of women in politics and supporting women’s struggle to obtain political, social and economicic rights. With the perspective in mind, they organize training sessions on political, legal, media, and economic issues. They implement a strategy based on modern means of communication to enroll in networks for exchanging experiences and lobbying in Egypt as well as on regional and international levels.

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The Women’s World Forum took place during the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (HLF-4) in Busan, Korea, on November 26 to 28, 2011. At the close of the Forum, a policy declaration calls on governments and all other development actors committed to the MDGs to consider the following requirements: Any new development cooperation framework should be based on human rights, including women’s rights.

1. A new equitable development cooperation framework for gender equality and women’s rights should be established by the United Nations.
2. Development effectiveness requires democratic ownership by women and meaningful and systematic participation by civil society, especially women’s and feminist organizations.
3. Promote multiple accountability systems for women’s rights and gender equality, improving existing monitoring systems.
5. Development cooperation to the countries in situations of fragility and conflict must acknowledge the differential and disproportional impact of armed conflict on the lives and rights of women and girls.

The prenatal elimination of girls is spreading in the Mediterranean region. In the north, while the ratio at birth normally is approximately 105 boys for every 100 girls, it has risen to 111.5 boys for every 100 girls in Algeria, and to 109.7 boys for every 100 girls in Montenegro. In the south, the advertisements for clinical services enabling one to choose a baby’s sex during in vitro fertilization recently have appeared in the Palestinian territories.

How can groups of young girls who organize themselves to defend their rights be reinforced? How can young people’s perspectives be promoted within women’s funds? These were the main questions addressed during the meeting organized to pave the way for a community of practice by the Central American Fund for Women and Marina Cash held in Amsterdam September 21 to 22. 20 participants, of which 10 were members of the International Women’s Fund Network and four organizations of young girls, benefited from the first space for discussion on young girls to form a learning community.

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