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 known that they must not only 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 changes and they are experiencing many difficulties in finding the necessary funding for their actions at a local or regional level.

This is why in 2008, 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.

- to mobilize women in the process of political transition in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia at its 57th session in which it urges all State parties to strongly condemn all forms of violence against women and girls and to ensure that custom, tradition, and cultural or religious considerations are not invoked to justify non-compliance with their legal obligations under the Convention.

- The African chapter of the International Network for Women’s Funds (INWF) met in Cape Town in early August to draw up a collective plan of action for all feminist African funds including, of course, the MedWF, which supports women’s associations in five North African countries.

- The United Nations Post-2015 Development Programme was studied attentively by civil society organizations.

In March, the MedWF and the Urgent Action Fund (UAF) decided to take advantage of the meeting of the World Social Forum in Tunisia to organize a meeting of women activists from the region. This action also allowed participants to attend various workshops of the World Social Forum and to participate in the International Women’s Assembly held on March 26. During the day of reflection (March 27), the 14 guests, coming from Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey, Israel/Palestine, Algeria and Tunisia, were able to discuss the situation of women and the status of the women’s movements in their countries, and to draft a list of priorities for the defence of women’s rights in the region. Three crucial questions were raised: the question of fundamentalism and the role of women in revolutionary processes, the question of sexual and bodily rights as a new challenge in the region, and the question of the rise of young feminists to renew the movement. These discussions enabled the MedWF to better understand the situation experienced by the associations with which it works, to meet and to get to know the coordinators of the different projects supported by the MedWF such as Muntada – Arab Forum for Sexuality Education and Health, Kayan, Kais, Engagement Ciyones and CSBR, in the southern region of the MedWF http://www.medwomensfund.org/en/Workshop_Tunisia_March_2013.html

The competition runs from June 20, 2013 at 00:00 to October 30, 2013 at midnight.

The competition is only open to amateur photographers living in a Mediterranean country.

This competition is open only to amateur photographers living in a Mediterranean country.
**Fighting to End Violence Against Women**

Beit El Hanane is a non-denominational association created in 2008 to provide psycho-social, emotional, and physical support to women victims of violence no matter what their origin, appearance, or beliefs. It furthermore promotes awareness raising and the education of society to break the taboos regarding violence and abuse of women. By offering a welcoming and secure refuge to women fleeing violence, the first step in their rehabilitation in society, Beit El Hanane, the “House of Tenderness”, helps them to integrate themselves and become active members of society through education and efforts to become autonomous.

**Awakening and Raising Awareness, Egypt**

Adam Foundation for Human Rights, created in 2012, works as an umbrella organization for some community-based organizations in Giza governorate. It promotes campaigns against female genital mutilation, advocates for better healthcare for women, and conducts youth leadership workshops.

The project “Combating female genital mutilation by Theatrical Drama”, proposes using theatrical drama to raise awareness about female genital mutilation (FGM) hazards and harmful effects and to combat this kind of violence, which touches 91% of Egyptian women.

**Association Feme et Progres**, clowned in Kef in 2011, aims to raise the awareness of women, particularly in rural areas, about their rights in a context of post-revolutionary political instability. The members of this association are convinced that a woman who is more aware of her rights is better equipped to fight against violence and discrimination, particularly in closed environments. As part of its project, “Karamati fi Majallati” (“My dignity in the Personal Status Code”) aims to raise the awareness of women, most of whom are illiterate, regarding their rights and fundamental liberties so that they can become defenders of change on the political scene in society.

**Anima Center for Women’s Peace Education** was founded in 1998. Its mission is to create a non-patriarchal society of free individuals (both male and female) by spreading culture of peace and non-violence, as well as promoting gender equality. The project “Transitional Justice & the Feminist Ethic of Care: a Feminist Approach to Dealing with the Past in Post-conflict ex-Yugoslavia” aims to increase the active role of women in transitional justice and peace building processes, bolster women’s visibility in social and political decision making, and amplify women’s impact on post-conflict policies and civil society systems throughout the region. Through this project Anima aims to:

- Increase awareness of the State’s responsibility for crimes in 1990
- Increase awareness of civil society of transitional justice mechanisms
- Connect alternative art and activism through the Performance of “GAM Theatre”.

**Cairo Centre for Development, Egypt**

It aims to promote women’s rights, gender equality and struggles against all forms of violence against women.

These objectives are pursued through the implementation of a number of awareness raising activities, capacity building and advocacy campaigns.

The project “Media for Combating Violence against Women” targets media professionals and aims to provide them with information and knowledge on violence against women. In so doing, the organization seeks to raise public awareness about violence against women through media campaigns and to raise legal awareness as a strong tool for combating violence.

**Fighting for the Human Rights of Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LBTI) People**

The Coalition for Sexual and Bodily Rights in Muslim Societies (CSBR) founded in 2002 is the only international solidarity network in Muslim societies working to promote sexual and bodily rights as human rights. CSBR has a multi-disciplinary character and is composed of a wide array of organizations and academic institutions from the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia and Southeast Asia, engaged in advocacy work including women’s human rights, human rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights and LGBT rights at the national, regional, and international levels.

The project CSBR at the Commission on the Status of Women allowed the presence of a delegation of CSBR members at the CSW Commission on Women (CSW). This year’s theme being the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls. While the current situation is alarming, the CSB is an opportunity for CSBR to mobilize its constituencies and attempt to counter the Organization of Islamic Countries’ positions on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR).

**Montenegro**

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**Turning the page on violence against women**

The project, “To Support This Work, online donations are possible on our site”, during which laughter and understanding the mechanisms of the socio-political sphere which one belongs as well as those of movements for change such as the feminist movement.

The second part, “Affirm and defend oneself in public”, focuses on the relationship with the other, both within intimate relations and within the public sphere, learning and internal communication in a group, including conflict management.

The third session, “Build and create together”, which is planned for this fall, will be the moment to implement the collective intelligence gradually formed over the preceding session.

This training is given in partnership with the association Géode (France).
FIGHTING TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, Beirut El Hanane is a non- denominational association created in 2008 to provide psychological, emotional, and physical support to women victims of violence no matter what their origins, appearance, or beliefs. It further promotes awareness raising and the education of society to break the taboos regarding violence and abuse of women. By offering a welcoming and secure refuge to women fleeing violence, the first step in their rehabilitation in society, Beirut El Hanane, the ‘House of Ten- derness’, helps them to integrate themselves and become active members of society through education and efforts to become autonomous.

**AWAKENING AND RAISING AWARENESS, EGYPT**

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- Increase awareness of the State’s responsibility for crimes in 1990
- Increase awareness of civil society of transitional justice mechanisms
- Connect alternative art and activism through the Performance of ‘I AM Theatre’.

LAUNCH OUR FIRST COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE TRAINING, A Feminist Training in Collective Intelligence: What is This? Lastly, the Mediterranean Women’s Fund launched its first feminist training in collective intelligence: two training sessions were held March 14-19 and June 27-July 2 near Algiers. They gathered some twenty young women from different towns in the country. Concluding the training, Oyna, Mostaghoubi, Bejaia and Alger, all convinced of the need for change in the situation of women and all-already active in associations. They were thrown into a formation that was “unlike anything they had ever seen”, one that taught laughter and reflection, transmission and learning, poetry and irony, and experience mixed harmoniously in a warm and welcoming space.

This three-part training mixes feminist approaches both on the theoretical level (what is domination? what is equality? feminism? gender? the women’s movement?) and concrete level (the space created is a hierarchical space of liberty, poetry and rigour, theory and experience mixed harmoniously in a warm and welcoming space). The project’s objectives are pursued through the implementation of awareness raising activities, capacity building and advocacy campaigns.

**Meeting Together and Organizing Themselves, Slovenia**

**Feminist Ambassadors** project in 2011 seeks to promote the rights of women, non-violence, and a socially just economic system for all.

Project Revolt Social Workers (RSW) started in December 2002 with beginning of All Slovenian Revolt in Slovenia. Feminist Ambassadors seized this opportunity to form the women’s/feminist group Revolt Social Workers, since none of the revolt groups represented women’s rights and position of women in Slovenian society. Revolt Social Workers are women-mostly young(er) women, professional social workers and students of social work, but also university professors and women who consider themselves to be social workers (since to be a woman in our society, means to be a social worker, since women’s work within the family and elsewhere is based on care for others, emotional support, understanding of others problems etc.). RSW organizes discussions, round tables, art performances, political actions, protests concerning position of women, women’s rights, unemployment and poverty of women (demand for social protection and new social rights). Women’s presence in the public (and political) space is essential for broader public sensitization of issues affecting women the most (low pay, exclusion from the political space, precarious employment) which have increased with austerity measures and changes happening within the global and European context.

**Launched in the World Social Forum in Tunis 26-30 March 2013** aimed to support some of its members in the running costs of their participation as Feminists Indigènes (travel, accommodation, etc.) in order to have a collective presence at the forum, and the workshops they were invited to.

**Feminists Indigènes** is a feminist group founded in 2011 and made up of diverse feminisms and feminisms. Its main goal is to achieve a worldwide change in human, social, political and economic relationships, so that diversity is fostered and valued, from a feminist perspective. Its strategic goals therefore are to create and support the ongoing networking and solidarity among feminist and feminist groups, at the local territorial level as well as a much broader level (national and international) and to promote debate and exchange among feminists. The project “Participating in the World Social Forum in Tunis 26-30 March 2013” aimed to support some of its members in the running costs of their participation as Feminists Indigènes (travel, accommodation, etc.) in order to have a collective presence at the forum, and the workshops they were invited to.

Together for equality and do not let yourself oppress. The training evolves over time. The first part, “Meet and know oneself” covers the relationship of women to the world at the individual and collective level; know oneself and understand the mechanisms of the social system to which one belongs as well as those of movements for change such as the feminist movement.

The second part, “Affirm and defend oneself in public” focuses on the relationship with the other, both within intimate relations and within the public sphere, learning and internal communication in a group, including conflict management.

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During the day of reflection (March 27), the 14 guests, coming from Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Turkey, Israel/Palestine, Algeria and Tunisia, were able to discuss the situation of women and the status of the women’s movements in their countries, and to draft a list of priorities for the defence of women’s rights in the region. Three crucial questions were raised: the question of fundamentalism and the role of women in revolutionary processes; the question of sexual and bodily rights as a new challenge in the region; and the question of the rise of young feminists to renew the movement. These discussions enabled the MedWF to better understand the situation experienced by the associations with which it works, and to meet and get to know the coordinators of the different projects supported by the MedWF such as Muntada – Arab Forum for Sexuality Education and Health, Kayan, Kooi, Engagement Citoyen and CSBR, in the southern region of the Mediterranean (http://www.medwomensfund.org/en/Workshop_Tunisia_March_2013.html).

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The UNITED NATIONS POST-2015 DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME was studied at-

tively by civil society organisations. In a letter — signed by MedWF through the auspices of the INWF network — that was sent on July 13 to the Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon, some sixty orga-

nizations from around the world urged the pro-

gramme to focus on individuals and ensure that no one is left behind.

THE USE OF MEDIA CAMPAIGNS against prejudice, xenophobia and discrimination is part of the Grundtvig programme in which the MedWF is engaged alongside organisations from 4 European countries. It is drafting the strategy of its next campaign entitled, “Father and proud of my daughter”

United Nations Women’s Rights Bodies Have Taken a Stand Condemning Agressions Evidencing Culture, Custom and Tradition to Justify Il-

limes on women’s rights. In March, the Commission on the Status of Women, in the conclusions of its 55th session, thus urged States to strongly condemn all forms of violence against women and girls and to refrain from investing in customary tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimina-

tion as set out in the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women. And in July, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women adopted a statement on the

role of women in the process of political transi-

tion in Egypt, Libya and Tunisia at its 55th ses-

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THE UNITED NATIONS WOMEN’S FUND (UNWF) STAND CONDEMNING ARGU-

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One might go back to the suffragist movement begun in Europe at the end of the 19th century, or to the begin-

nings of the Egyptian movement with the

Egyptian Feminist Union created in 1923 by Hoda Shaarawi, but it is undoubtedly start-

ting from the second half of the 20th cen-

tury that the movement for the emancipa-

tion of women, emboldened by the wind

freely hitherto oppressed groups of people,

flowered in the Mediterranean. And for

more than thirty years, even increasing numbers of women have organized themselves, even

in the most isolated spots in the world, and

have succeeded in throwing sand into the

well oiled machine of a patriarchal norm,

and, by disrupting it, are beginning to suc-

ceed in having the world be seen through

women’s eyes.

It is because they mobilized them-

selves, fighting their own reflexes as peo-

ple raised to obey, adding the engagement to their already full days as women, often

clashing with those they considered to be

allies (and luckily sometimes finding unex-

pected allies), that they were able to estab-

lish and develop a tea, a language unconver-

sible for a woman to live with whoever she

wishes, decide if and when she is ready to

have a child, and to be whoever she wishes:

to be a free human being.

But it is also, and above all, because

they have mobilized themselves together, uniting

the strengths of autonomous groups, based

on their own needs, in a more open society, are evolving in-

a way which is quietly charming, and gradually

is rendering the basic work of women’s associations impossible. They are desperately fighting against fundamental-

ism, militarization, torture, and to help the

wounded and refugees, and, even if they

continue to advocate for egalitarian con-

stitutions and gender equality, violence against

women: they no longer have the resources to

continue their awareness-raising activities.

They need the women’s movement to

be strong, not in its own country, then in

neighbouring ones, so that others can ex-

press their voices, their demands, and win

ground no matter where they are.

Because if somewhere in the world just

one woman is free, respected, and in pos-

session of all her rights, that means that

day one all the women in the world may be so too...

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**Fonds pour les Femmes en Méditerranée**  
47, Place du Millénaire - Apt. 74  
34000 Montpellier - France  

Tél. + Fax : 00 - 33 - (0)4 67 67 08 73  
info@medwomensfund.org  
www.medwomensfund.org