

POST The melting of the iceberg

If it were a mountain... the status of women would be an iceberg

Consider, for example, women's access to public space. On the surface, such access is a fact of life in the countries around the Mediterranean: women are seen in (nearly) all public spaces. And, by constantly denouncing the sexual harassment which women often experience in public spaces, their governments have begun to react over the past few years, enacting laws to punish harassment as in Egypt last June, and as is being discussed increasingly in Algeria and Morocco. If you believe what you see – the visible part of the iceberg – the problem of women's access to public space is in the process of being resolved and soon will no longer need much attention.

However, if you consider that the distinguishing feature of an iceberg is that what is visible above the surface is considerably smaller than what lies beneath, the time has come to understand the invisible part of the problem and invest real resources into resolving it. The task at present is to lift the implicit and pervasive prohibition on women to freely circulate and act outside the four walls of their homes.

A recent survey shows how women in France carry a mental map of where they need to go and the spots along the way that they should avoid, and they feel that the street is not a place in which they can linger. This is particularly striking because over 75% of public funds spent on leisure activities serve to finance male activities, thereby reinforcing the presence and domination of men in public spaces.

This implicit prohibition has many consequences: a lack of self-confidence, information, knowledge, networks, and landmarks create barriers to women's participation in multiple fields (economic, social, political, cultural). One fatal consequence is that in the case of

natural disasters, 4 out of 5 victims are women because their lack of knowledge of the outside world renders them particularly vulnerable.

[eprints.lse.ac.uk/3040/1/Gendered_nature_of_natural_disasters_\(LSERO\).pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/3040/1/Gendered_nature_of_natural_disasters_(LSERO).pdf)

Women's iceberg status thus needs to be melted for women to be able to adapt to melting glaciers...

Caroline Sakina Brac de la Perrière

12 000 EUROS COLLECTED FOR WOMEN IN SYRIA

Paris Gala 2014



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The MWF gala was held on 15 May 2014 under the Cabaret Sauvage marquee, which was graciously offered to us by Meziane Azaïche. In order to attract as large an audience as possible, our sponsor, **Souad Massi** (singer-songwriter) was at our side along with other artists who all donated their talents to this evening dedicated to the women of Syria: **Lori el Armenia**, **Clionne**, **HK**, **Nôma Omran**, and **Nawel**. The journalist **Audrey Pulvar** and the writer and humorist **Souad Belhaddad** honoured us by presenting the event and interviewing **Basma Kodmani**, co-founder of the Syrian Women's Network on the situation of women in Syria.

During the gala, Hervé Pauchon made a set of programs for his show, "Un temps de Pauchon" broadcast on the French radio station, France Inter. http://medwomensfund.org/fr/Gala_2014.html

The funds raised were donated to two Syrian women's associations.

The first runs several shelters for female victims of domestic violence. Three of these shelters are now located in the middle of a war zone due to the advances of Da'esh troops (also known as ISIS) and must be urgently relocated. The funds donated will enable the association to move these shelters to more secure areas.

The second association, Saida Souria, works at several different levels, producing a feminist magazine publishing articles on women's rights, the conflict in Syria and its consequences, not only for Syrian women, but women around the world. It supports and accompanies women activists involved in the media to organize themselves and gather in "Media-Centers" in Syria to learn how to write articles and produce reports.

SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE YEAR, WE HAVE SUPPORTED SOME FIFTEEN INITIATIVES OF GROUPS WORKING TO...

DEFEND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS



Kaos Gay and Lesbian Cultural Research and Solidarity Association, was founded in 2005 in Ankara to help and support gay, bisexual and trans individuals encountering problems in spheres such as family, education, employment, housing, law, human rights, media, health, sexual health, psychology-psychiatry, and access to goods and services. It carries out its work through three main programs: Human Rights Program, Media Studies and Anti-Homophobia Activities. On March 14-16, it organized the **3rd International Feminist Forum** held with the presence of women from Turkey as well as Mediterranean, North African, Balkan and Middle Eastern countries in cooperation with Ankara University Gender and Women's Studies. The overall aim of this Forum is to strengthen the already established relations between the LGBT and feminist movements.



Muntada – The Arab Forum for Sexuality, Education and Health was created in 2006 in Haifa. Its mission is based on its belief that sexual and reproductive rights are basic human rights and that their realization contributes in a vital way to sustained human development. Muntada strives to promote these rights within Palestinian society by addressing the specific needs of diverse age groups. The project entitled **"Film-making: a powerful tool for promoting gender equality and sexual rights for young women in marginalized localities in Israel"** includes a training workshop addressing the issues of sexual rights and violence and film-making sessions to produce 5 short films that will reflect the current social situation of the Central District. Finally, films screening events will be organized for youth participants, followed by a discussion on the issue of violence against women, particularly the so called "Honor Killing" phenomenon.



The Fundacion Calala-Fondo de Mujeres, is a feminist fund that was established in Barcelona in 2009 to support women and feminist movements in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Spain. It raises awareness and funds, and awards grants to women's rights groups, networks and organizations working on issues for which it is

difficult to find funding: reproductive rights, sexual health, and violence against women, among others. The project, **"Supporting Spanish women's organizations working for sexual and reproductive rights in Spain"** is a collaborative effort of the Calala Fund and MedWF. It aims to facilitate support for the urgent mobilization need to fight against draft legislation calling into question women's sexual and reproductive rights and threatening public health.

COMBAT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN



Women's Room Center for Sexual Rights, founded in Zagreb in 2002 aims to empower women and raise awareness of institutions and the public about sexual violence and sexual rights through education, research and public work. Women's Room provides direct and indirect assistance and support to victims of sexual violence: women survivors of different forms of violence, especially sexual violence, people close to women survivors, youth, relevant institutions, and the general public with the emphasis on women as a vulnerable group; LGBTIQ population. Institutional support enables the organization to be sustainable by funding salaries, office costs and the honoraria for external experts working at the Center.



Beit el hanane/Home of tenderness, was established in 2008 in Beirut to offer shelter to female victims of domestic violence regardless of their social status, religion, or ethnicity. The support for operations enables the maintenance of this secure site where physically and mentally abused women can recover and find renewed strength, peace and harmony, and be helped to find training and work and become financially and psychologically independent.



B.A. B.E. be active be emancipated was created in 1994 with the aim to promote and protect women's human rights. Today it is focused on promotion of gender equality and equal opportunities for all genders in all spheres of social life. Its Counseling Centre for Prevention and Eradication of Gender Based Violence has been active for over nineteen years

Institutional support enables the Counseling Centre

team to continue to provide women in need with free legal advice or legal representation, free psychological support, and any kind of personal assistance to find a way out of violence and/or social exclusion. B.A.B.E. try to bridge gaps in the existing (imperfect) social service structure, especially in areas of special state concern which are economically lagging far behind the rest of the country, to work simultaneously on prevention, protection and punishment of gender based violence.

STRENGTHEN WOMEN AND ORGANIZATIONS CAPACITIES



Mujeres Pa'lante Association, founded in Barcelona, seeks to improve the empowerment of migrant women and to promote equal rights in society to achieve a better cohesion in Spanish society through the integration of migrant women. Its project, "Empowerment of Latin American women for their active participation in the Catalan context" has three lines of intervention: psychological support, social work assistance and training in immigration law for migrant women. Institutional support is needed to cover two areas in particular: the compensation of the two project coordinators and the rent of the site where activities are conducted.



Cairo Centre for Development, founded in 2009 in Giza, is mainly concerned with women's rights and gender equality. This goal is implemented through awareness raising activities, capacity building and advocacy campaigns.

Its project, **"Building Capacity of Women's NGOs"** aims to increase NGOs' interest in supporting women's rights and combating violence against women. An advanced training workshop will provide capacity building for NGO representatives to lead them to adopt advocacy activities for women's rights and gender equality and improve their organization's content and related knowledge and skills (e.g. women's rights, intervention strategy, advocacy).

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* To view all of the projects, visit the information page on our site

MEET AND CREATE NETWORKS



MEDITERRANEAN

The Feminist Coalition for Equality and Democracy,

coordinated by Fondation Ytto and gathering associations from Morocco, Algeria, Mali, Sudan, and Tunisia and partner European associations, was created in 2013 in Ouarzazat, Morocco. It aims to unify the strategies and actions of the feminist movement in

Middle Eastern and African countries in order to constitute a pressure group and develop local, regional and international actions targeting institutions and decision makers in response to threats to women's rights.

Working sessions of the Coalition organized in Algiers, then in Midelte in Morocco, made it possible to finalize the charter and adopt a strategy and

action program which takes into account the political and social context of each country. At the end of the Midelte meeting in August, a news release was issued http://www.medwomensfund.org/en/Feminist_Coalition_Mena_Africa_2014.html

■ **And do not forget! If you wish to provide support, safe on line donations are possible on our site!**
www.medwomensfund.org

... AND ORGANIZED

...THE LAST TWO SESSIONS OF THE FEMINIST TRAINING IN COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE: in February in Moulès-et-Baucel, the session entitled, "Assert and defend oneself in public", and in July in Martin de Londres, the last session on the theme, "Create and build together".

Our training in France gathered a total of 33 participants, of which 10 followed all three sessions, 11 two, and 12 one. The participants were young women aged between 18 and 35 from 16 different towns (of which 10 are located outside Paris and Montpellier). Most were members of associations (13 different associations, including 8 feminist associations).



What they said about the training:

"I was deeply moved, not simply as an activist. The training allowed me to take radical decisions in my life. The impact was extremely strong. I thought I was just coming for a training in activism, but in the end, it allowed me to find things in my life that I never would have found otherwise."

"The most beautiful thing about the training is how we grew individually while creating magnificent ties between all of the participants. We are real in these trainings. We are not in the mode, "I represent this or that organization". We humanely revealed ourselves. This was what created such strong and solid ties."

"I had lost confidence in goodwill and I no longer was sure that it was possible to trust in it, but in fact, one can."

"What was shared in this training, what we learned, was a great surprise. It was, in fact, a huge event in my life."

"I did not expect this material. It was both a source of ecstasy and terror. From both a personal and professional point of view. It brought about tremendous self-questioning. This training is a great asset."

AND A MEETING IN PARIS GATHERING OUR EUROPEAN GRUNDTVIG PROJECT PARTNERS

on the theme, "Using traditional and new forms of media to campaign against prejudice, discrimination, and xenophobia". (Complete details on the project and a list of partners is available on the blog: <http://mediacampaigns.blogspot.fr>).

In March, we also closed the final chapter of the Grundtvig Project by hosting our European partners at a meeting entitled, When Mediterranean women seize new media tools to defend their rights!, which focused on people campaigning against sexist discrimination.

How are Mediterranean women using the me-

dia and social networks (blogs, videos, Facebook, songs) to defend their rights? Which campaigns are the most innovative? What impact are they having on society?

Over the course of the two days, MWF, in association with the organization, "G.a.r.c.e.s" organized a meeting at Sciences Po where actors in these innovative campaigns could speak. Among them were:

Eba'a El Tammami, for the Egyptian association HarassMap, which fights against sexual harassment in the street and which has received our support on numerous occasions.

Farah Barqawi from the Women's Uprising in the Arab world, a Facebook page created after

the Arab revolutions which today has over one hundred thousand visitors.

Natacha Henry, co-director of 10 short animated films for the French association Libres Terres des Femmes (Women's Free Land), aiming to inform women about their rights in response to domestic violence, with the support of the MWF.



Education and Culture
Lifelong learning programme
GRUNDTVIG

■ **THE AFRICAN CHAPTER OF THE INWF NETWORK**, gathering 7 feminist funds working in Africa: Women Fund Tanzania (WFT), African Women Development Fund (AWDF), Mediterranean Women's Fund (for North Africa), Wheat Trust, Global Women's Fund (GWF-sub-Saharan Africa), Congolese Women's Fund (FFC) and Urgent Action Fund-Afrique (UAF-Africa) met in Zanzibar in July and produced a pamphlet reiterating the urgency of increasing funding of women's organizations.

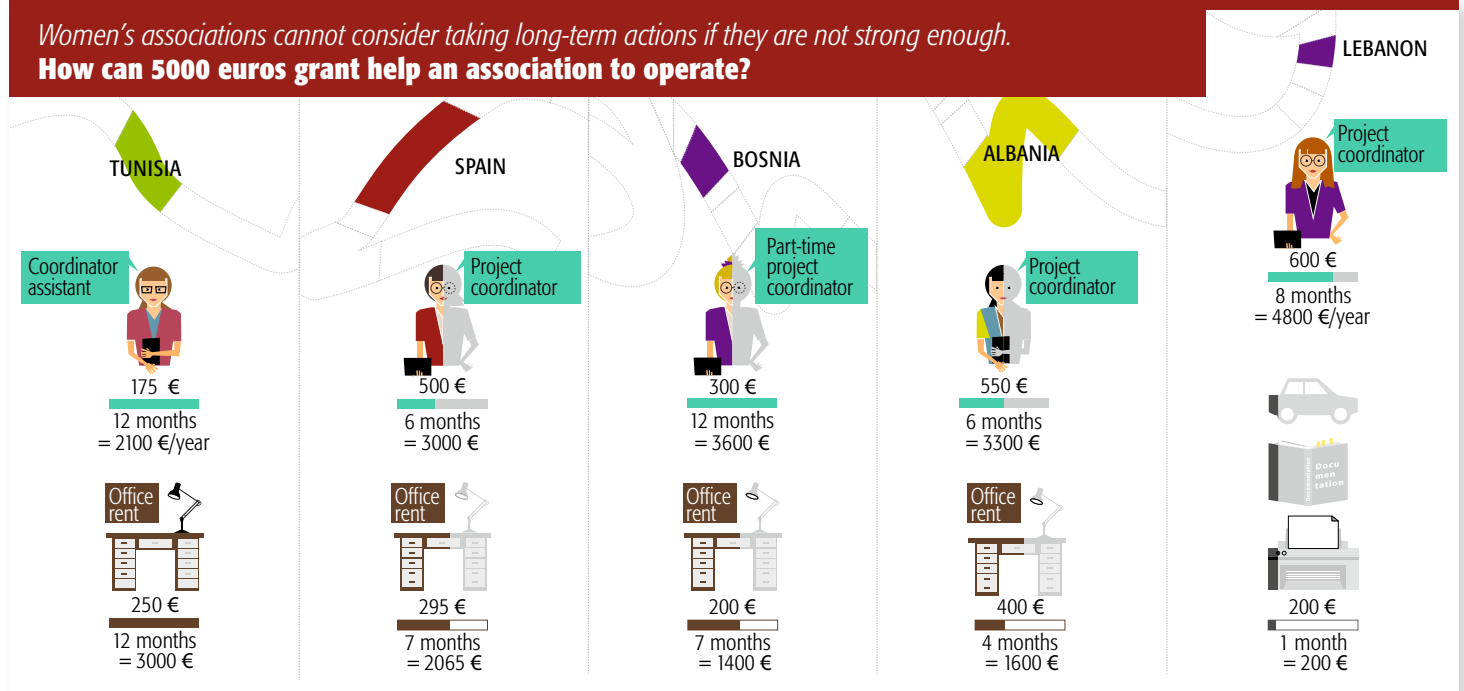
■ **BRING A FEMINIST VISION TO HANDLING ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**. This is the idea of the world summit, "Women and Climate Change", organized by Global Greengrants, INWF and the Greengrants Alliance of Funds, in Bali last August. The summit gathered environmental funds and women's funds, including MedWF, and local groups from Indonesia and from the Amazon, New Guinea, and Vietnam who focused on the role of women as key actors on climate adaptation <http://www.greengrants.org/2014/06/24/why-a-womens-network-is-taking-on-climate-change/> ■



The Mediterranean Women's Fund established a partnership with France Culture, a French radio station, for Charlotte Bienaimé's show **Nasawiyat**, which features news on Egyptian, Tunisian, Moroccan, and Algerian young feminists.

One may listen to recorded programs in French at <http://www.franceculture.fr/emission-nasawiyat> http://www.medwomensfund.org/en/News_Region.html

Women's associations cannot consider taking long-term actions if they are not strong enough. How can 5000 euros grant help an association to operate?



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 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.

NEWSLETTER FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN SHORES
Information letter from the Mediterranean Women's Fund

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