The Mediterranean Women’s Fund celebrated its 10th anniversary in Paris, organizing a Gala gathering over 500 people around our team and 10 magnificent performers… a spectacular party that generated joy, energy, friendship and… money, with 20,000 raised for four associations: Women Now for Development - Syria, le Feminist Collective Against Cyber-bullying - France, Women Journalists of Mesopotamia -Turkey and Victory for Rural Women -Tunisia.

**Focus: the Victory for Rural Women association** was established in 2012 in Sidi Bouzid in Tunisia to improve the situation of women working in rural areas in the fields of agriculture, livestock farming, fisheries, forestry and crafts.

**Why do we support it?**
For its commitment and determination despite threats and intimidation in a region marked by conservatism and fundamentalism. And for its eco-feminist outlook.

A memorable encounter

The story began in 2015 when Karima Amami participated in our Feminist Training in Collective Intelligence in Tunisia. We discovered a woman determined to change conservative mentalities and improve living conditions of women through her association, Victory for Rural Women. The training gave her the confidence and inspired her to become a leader.

The first project, funded in 2016, was called “Aswat el nissa” (Women’s voices). It aimed to make people familiar with CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, adopted by the United Nations’ General Assembly in 1979 and signed by Tunisia). This convention explicitly mentions equality between men and women, and Article 14 of the text specifically discusses rural women’s rights.

Islamist organizations have spread considerable misinformation about it, presenting CEDAW as a tool of the devil, but no government authority has taken measures to counteract this misinformation. The association therefore organized “Citizens’ cafes” in the homes of volunteers to inform women about the existence of this international convention which recognizes their status and defends them.

A visit to the field

In March 2018, we went to visit Victory for Rural Women in its building in the middle of Sidi Bouzid. It was the day that Hedia Nssiri, the delegate to the Secretariat of the Rights of Women and the Family, was visiting to meet with some twenty rural women. One of the association’s activities is indeed to put members of the Tunisian government in contact with women to inform the latter of the existence of public measures to which they are entitled in their farming and artisanal work, and to bring institutions closer to marginalized women.

Notwithstanding the pressures faced, the association is known and recognized. Women know that they can find a sympathetic ear and a helping hand at Victory for Rural Women. Women who have been the victims of violence and young girls who have experienced sexual abuse seek refuge at the association. As there is no centre dedicated to welcoming or listening to women victims of violence in Sidi Bouzid, the association decided to launch itself into a new, ambitious project, that of creating such a facility.

The visit to the field having confirmed the value of the work conducted by Victory for Rural Women, we decided to support them again this year with funds raised at the Gala for this project dedicated to women victims of violence in the region.

Ten years of storms and clear skies… or how to navigate a ship through perilous seas?

The clouds over the sea became ever darker and menacing. Because, just as migration -- and deaths -- hit record numbers in the Mediterranean, 2015 was also a record-breaking year in terms of climate change. Reaffirming our eco-feminist vision, we tried to build bridges between people concerned with climate change and those defending human rights.

But these people, ourselves included, had to struggle to break a centuries old code of silence by denouncing sexual violence. In 2017, they formed the incredible MeToo wave, sweeping away their shame and raising their heads high.

Today, new threats are on the horizon, to both the north and south, as our Mediterranean Sea drowns in plastic, and an aggressive movement screams its hatred for women and diversity in life. It is once again upon us to stand tall and stay resolutely on course towards justice, love, and beauty in the world.

LETTER FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN SHORES
The Mediterranean Women’s Fund newsletter
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Please subscribe to our newsletter!
Translations: Grace Delbôl
Graphic design: https://mpbgraph.myportfolio.com/

The Mediterranean Women’s Fund aims to help improve the status of women and promote gender equality in countries around the Mediterranean by contributing to the strengthening of women’s rights associations at the local and regional level.

POST

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END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

TURKEY

Established in 2002 in Kadıköy, the Association to Fight Sexual Violence aims to raise awareness concerning all forms of sexual violence and support survivors. Despite the repressive environment, the association organizes “Discussions about sexual violence” in a secure space so that participants can share their experiences and discuss non-violent ways to fight sexual violence.

The Association Femmes pour le Dire, Femmes pour Agir (FDF) established in 2003 in Paris, works to promote the status of handicapped women in French society and to fight all forms of discrimination, in particular the double discrimination faced by handicapped women. Our support allows them to fund a hotline number for handicapped women victims of violence: 01 40 47 06 06.

FRANCE

The BuSy Project was launched in 2016 in Cairo by the Egyptian NGO, MADEV. The Caravane BuSy is a mobile workshop which enables women and men from various towns in Egypt to be introduced to story-telling to highlight issues related to sexual violence, domestic violence, and racial discrimination in their towns. In addition, the BuSy TOT program is a 7-month training program for the facilitators of these mobile workshops.

Established in 2016, Feminists against cyber bullying combats violence against women, girls and the LGBTQIA+ community through digital tools. The collective is behind the

#TwitterAgainstWomen campaign and aims to raise awareness in the public and on social networks with an interactive guide to awareness raising and information about cyber violence.

DEFEND SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

EILTHYAR for Gender Studies and Research was launched in 2014 in Cairo by young Egyptians. Each month, law and sexual and reproductive health practitioners and activists meet around the Karama Platform to share their knowledge and identify research on sexual and reproductive rights in order to access this knowledge through documentation and translation into Arabic.

PROVIDE SAFE SPACES

The Center for Legal Research, Advice and Protection of Women provides psychological, financial and legal aid to women victims of violence. The association currently is assisting approximately 100 women. MRI’s support enables them to better help the women and expand their awareness raising campaigns for the general public.

MAKE WOMEN’S VOICES HEARD

Established in 2009 in Gaza, the Centre for Legal Research, Advice and Protection of Women provides psychological, financial and legal aid to women victims of violence. The association currently is assisting approximately 100 women. MRI’s support enables them to better help the women and expand their awareness raising campaigns for the general public.

El Marsa for Culture and Creativity is a cultural centre established in 2013 that tries its best to animate the Gaza strip. The project supported is a play about violence against women that is followed by a discussion led by professional psychologists and social educators.

PALESTINE

The first Mediterranean meeting of women specialized in media and communications which took place at the Maison des Savoirs Féministes Altradomira, in the heart of Pescara in Italy, from 6 to 8 July 2018. It gathered 18 women from 10 countries in the region (Algeria, Croatia, Egypt, Spain, France, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia), some linked to organizations, others freelance, all committed to defending women’s rights in their work and daily lives.

ALBANIA

Close to Adolescents has worked since 2005 to strengthen vulnerable groups in Albanian society. Its project this year is to strengthen women whose requests for asylum have been denied, or who have returned to Albania after living in exile, by helping them reduce their stress through legal aid and discussion groups, and to fight against the violence to which they are subjected. This project will be set up in three locations: Tirana, Kore and Barrel.

Awareness raising through Art and Culture

Feminist Foundation, was established in 2005 in Sarajevo to offer a secure environment to a new generation of feminists. The project funded involves the participation of activists and women artists in Festival Pitchwise 2017 in Sarajevo. The festival aims to promote and celebrate the success of artists, theorists, activists, politicians and athletes who remain invisible to their society and region.

Throughout the Year, we have supported some fifty initiatives working to establish feminist networks, to strengthen feminist organizations, to promote women’s rights and to establish women’s spaces in the region.

The trained young women are changing their societies in Tunisia

The trained young women are changing their societies in Morocco

In 2015, we trained 28 young women, 3 of whom were the founders of the Taymatnine association, in Aït Qalla, a village in the middle of the Atlas mountains. The participants also included the head of the Tafoukte association, based 3 hours away in the village of Aït Ourir. During the training program, they came up with an idea that has become a reality thanks to the determination and support of the Caravane BuSy.

The trained young women are changing their societies in Tunisia

In 2016, we trained 23 young women from 17 associations. In March 2018, nine of these young women, coming from Tunis and the suburbs of Sousse, Gafsa, Thala, and Sidi Bouzid, gathered to consolidate their network and identify together their priorities. They decided to engage in a collective action: a campaign for sexual and reproductive rights which currently exist but which are under grave threat from conservative groups and religious fundamentalism.

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FEMINIST TRAINING IN COLLECTIVE INTELLIGENCE: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

And we organized...
END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

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The BuSSy Project was launched in 2016 in Cairo by the Egyptian NGO, MADEV. The Caravane BuSSy is a mobile workshop which enables young men and women from various towns in Egypt to be introduced to storytelling. The association is assisting young women and men in their fight against the multiple forms of discrimination they face in their communities. In addition, the BuSSy TOT program is a 7-month training program for the facilitators of these mobile workshops.

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The trained young women are changing their societies in Tunisia and in Morocco.

In 2015, we trained 28 young women, 3 of whom were the founders of the Taytmatine association, in Aït Qalla, a village in the middle of the Atlas mountains. The participants also included the head of the Tafoukte association, based 3 hours away in the village of Aït Ourir. During the training program, they came up with an idea that has become a reality thanks to their determination and our support. They have reassessed the feminist tradition of Amazigh poetry, an ancient oral tradition handed down from generation to generation which is rich in texts evoking equality between men and women. They did so by organizing an Amazigh (Berber) poetry contest on the topic of women and girls’ rights co-organized by the inhabitants of their two villages. We had the opportunity to see the final phase of this competition, which was open to male and female artists. It took place in Aït Qalla on 22 September 2018 with approximately 1,500 spectators in attendance. The 4 finalists (3 men and 1 woman) took the stage to use the language of poetry to denounce child marriage, promote girls’ education, and praise equality within the couple, before an enthralled audience of all ages. It was an unforgettable experience for us, and a historic event that girls and women will no doubt recount from generation to generation in a poem.

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A memorable encounter
The story began in 2015 when Karima Amani participated in our Feminist Training in Collective Intelligence in Tunisia. We discovered a woman determined to change conservative mentalities and improve living conditions of women through her association, Victory for Rural Women. The training gave her the confidence that she could in turn train other women and give them the chance to speak and the ability to act.

The first project, funded in 2016, was called “Aswat el nissa” (Women’s voices). It funded in 2016, was the day that

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Along with hope, the women’s movement was everywhere back into the limelight: a new 2.0 generation, creative, turning the female figure into a political message, demanding change in feminist colors.

Support for the organization of associations became critical. We immediately offered them space for meetings to analyze changes in their societies and to work together. For this new generation, we also designed a program that sought to consolidate the participants’ self-esteem, the Achill’s heel of many women, with training in collective intelligence.

Today, new threats are on the horizon, to both the north and south, as our Mediterranean Sea drowns in plastic, and an aggressive movement screams its hatred for women and diversity in life. It is once again up to us to stand tall and stay resolutely on course towards justice, love, and beauty in the world.

They open the cages! The Mediterranean Women’s Fund aims to help improve the status of women and promote gender equality in countries around the Mediterranean by contributing to the strengthening of women’s rights associations at the local and regional level.

LETTER FROM THE MEDITERRANEAN SHORES
The Mediterranean Women’s Fund newsletter
L’EAU MAREE - 34010 MONTPELLIER - FRANCE Tel. : 33 61 67 67 06 Fax : 33 61 67 67 06 73

Free biannual newsletter
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The clouds over the sea became ever darker and menacing. Because, just as migration – and deaths – hit record numbers in the Mediterranean, 2015 was also a record-breaking year in terms of climate change. Reaffirming our eco-feminist vision, we tried to build bridges between people concerned with climate change and those defending human rights.

But these people, ourselves included, had to struggle to break a centuries old code of silence by denouncing sexual violence. In 2017, they formed the incredible McToo wave, sweeping away their shame and raising their heads high.

The Theme of the photography competition, closed in March 2018, was: “They open the cages to welcoming or listening to women victims of violence and young girls who have experienced sexual abuse seek refuge at the Victory for Rural Women association. As there is no centre dedicated to self-knowledge, towards the direction of self-knowledge, towards other people, towards the world, leaving the doors wide open behind them so that others can follow! Among the over one hundred photographs submitted from ten Mediterranean countries (Albania, Algeria, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Spain, France, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia and Turkey), those of Antonin Weber (France/Turkey) and Mariem Naciri (Morocco) were respectively awarded the second and third prizes. The first prize went to Esther Perez Berenguer (Spain) for her photograph entitled “During the strikes and the March 8 women’s march” To view the other photographs submitted to the competition, see: www.medwomensfund.org

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