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Breastfeeding and work – Let’s make it work!

World Breastfeeding Week (WBW), which runs from 1-7 August, 2015, focuses this year on the importance of supporting women to combine breastfeeding and work. This includes women working in paid employment, self-employment, seasonal and contract work to unpaid home and care work.

This year’s theme revisits the 1993 WBW campaign on the Mother-Friendly Workplace Initiative. There have been some key achievements and milestones since then to support working women, such as the adoption of the revised ILO Convention 183 on Maternity Protection with much stronger maternity entitlements, and more country actions on improving national laws and practices. More actions have also been taken at the workplace level to set up breastfeeding or mother-friendly workplaces, with initiatives with awards for breastfeeding-friendly employers, as well as greater mass awareness on working women’s rights to breastfeed.

The Innocenti Declaration (1990) recognized that breastfeeding provides ideal nutrition for infants and contributes to their healthy growth and development. Global monitoring on infant and young child feeding progress shows that there is still much to be done to meet the fourth Innocenti Declaration target that calls on governments to “...enact imaginative legislation protecting the breastfeeding rights of working women and establish means for its enforcement”.

Read more:

<http://www.eldis.org/go/latest-news/news/breastfeeding-and-work--let-s-make-it-work#.VcXsGnGqqko>

WLP Morocco/ADFM Condemns Recent Government Violations of Individual Rights and Demands Penal Code Reforms to Protect Women

In response to the recent arrest of two Moroccan women for violating “public modesty” laws by wearing short skirts, WLP Morocco/Association Démocratique des Femmes du Maroc (ADFM) along with other women's rights organizations convened a protest on Sunday, June 28, 2015, in Rabat.

ADFM also issued the below statement to demand that the Moroccan government take necessary measures to protect women’s personal choice of clothing.

Statement by the Association Democratique des Femmes du Maroc regarding “Sanaa and Siham”:
Where is state protection for women?

Dangerous regressions in women’s basic rights took place at a market in Inezgane, Morocco last week, where two young women were arrested and detained for 24 hours at a police station. After the two women were harassed, cornered, and assaulted by a crowd for their “inappropriate” clothing, they now face charges in the Inezgane Court of the First Instance for “breaching public modesty” under article 483 of the criminal code. Meanwhile, the attackers face no formal charges for the sexual harassment and violence they committed against these two young women.

Read more:

<http://www.learningpartnership.org/lib/wlpmoroccoadfm-condemns-recent-government-violations-individual-rights>

The struggle of Kurdish women human rights defenders continues in Iraq, Turkey

On 20 July 2015, the International community was shaken by the news of the murder of 31 civil society activists, many of whom were human rights defenders in the predominantly Kurdish city of Suruc in Turkey. The activists were on their way to rebuild the war torn Kurdish city of Kobane in Northern Syria, carrying toys and books for orphaned children.

Although the attacks were attributed to the self-proclaimed “Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant” (ISIL), many point to the government of Turkey’s complicity in the bombing of activists to curb peaceful advocacy in solidarity with Kurdish minorities of the region.[1]

The assassination of the WHRDs at Suruç took place almost one year after the poignant intervention by Iraqi Ezidi MP Vian Dakhil on abuses committed against Ezidi women and girls by ISIL. It is worrying to observe violence targeting women in the region has escalated since Dakhil’s call. Despite ongoing challenges and organised violence, Kurdish WHRDs continue to develop new strategies to tackle oppression by governments and violent non-state actors.

AWID spoke with five Kurdish women activists to learn more about their experiences of defending Kurdish women’s rights, and to analyze the challenges and opportunities for the struggle in Iraq, Turkey and Syria.

Read more:

<http://www.awid.org/news-and-analysis/struggle-kurdish-women-human-rights-defenders-continues-iraq-turkey-syria>

Financing for Gender Equality



FINANCING FOR DEVELOPMENT
13-16 JULY 2015 - ADDIS ABABA - ETHIOPIA
TIME FOR GLOBAL ACTION

With the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD3) taking place in Ethiopia from 13-16 July, what is the relevance and importance of gender equality to global development finance debates?

The conference brought together high level political representatives, non-governmental organisations and business sector stakeholders to produce an inter-governmentally negotiated and agreed outcome document, with the potential for great impact on the implementation of the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Gender equality advocates had welcomed the draft outcome document's recognition of the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in order to achieve sustainable and equitable growth and development. But they argued that the draft does not go far enough, and that FfD3 represents a key opportunity to examine the broader macroeconomic climate and the ways that it exacerbates gender inequalities.

Read more:

<http://www.eldis.org/go/latest-news/news/financing-for-gender-equality#.VcXsMHGqqko>

TV show for arab women to launch in October “Nida’a” (The Calling) – Zainab Salbi Host



Discovery Communications-owned pay network TLC is launching a chat show for Arab women, its first local program for the Middle East, which marks a breakthrough of sorts.

Hosted by Iraqi-American humanitarian, activist and reporter Zainab Salbi, “Nida’a,” which means “the calling” in Arabic, will launch in October across the Middle East and North Africa on TLC, on Dubai-based paybox OSN, the region’s leading pay-TV player.

Salbi, who is the founder and former CEO of Washington-based Women for Women International, has lined up interviews with several notable international and Middle Eastern personalities, including Bill Clinton, fashion designer Donna Karan and Egyptian actress Yusra.

“Nida’a” is being presented as giving Arab women “a voice and platform, and diverse topics such as women’s issues, current events, pop culture, entertainment, food and fashion are all covered in front of a studio audience,” TLC said in a statement.

Read more:

<http://variety.com/2015/tv/global/tlc-launches-chat-show-for-arab-women-across-middle-east-and-north-africa-1201536779/>

Feminist economists discuss crises, austerity and gender equality

In the week that the EU Troika were asking Greece to accept austerity measures and the Third Global Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa (FfD3) got closed with an outcome document, which was expected to provide instruments for financing the post-2015 development agenda, feminist economists from across the globe gathered in Berlin, Germany, and discussed the gender equality in challenging times.

As the panelists at the Opening Plenary of the 24th Annual Conference (16-18 July) of the International Association for Feminist Economics discussed the ongoing European crisis, those from Asia, Africa and Latin America wondered how the European situation described is familiar to them. Indeed, one of the speakers mentioned that austerity measures proposed to Greece have been known as ‘structural adjustments’ and that Europe can learn from experiences of the developing South.

Professor Joan Tronto of University of Minnesota, in her keynote speech entitled *Migrant Care Work & the Global Political Economy*, pointed out that drudgery work and unpaid care work, performed mainly by women, working class and migrants, are not new.

“They have been a part of modernity since its colonial beginning.” The poor/South providing care to the rich/North resembles a master and servant relationship; inequalities created in the neoliberal society are a colonial legacy, she explained, answering that decolonization is needed.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2015/08_15/08_03_15/08_0315_feminist.htm

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

With Her Father On Death Row, Afghan Mother Attempts To Put Decade Of Incest, Abuse Behind Her

You might forgive Khatera, a grown mother of two, her belief in monsters.

After all, she says, one haunted her childhood. She recalls how, on good days, he lashed out at her or her long-suffering mother, beating them or simply reminding them that no one cared whether they lived or died. On bad days, she says, he inflicted indescribable pain while beating her to silence her muffled cries. On worse days, family members branded her a liar and insisted she keep her talk of any "monster" among them to herself.

"This is how every father shows his affection for his daughters," Khatera remembers her paternal grandmother saying when, as an 11-year-old, she told her of her rape at the hands of her father.

And for a long time she believed it, and suffered in silence and shame growing up surrounded by her father's extended family in a three-room brick home in the Afghan capital, Kabul.

But she knows better now and is determined to put a decade of incest and rage behind her.

She expects one final act in this tragedy, however, when Afghan authorities execute the man who is at once both her own father and the father of her two young children.

The condemned man, Haleem Khan, is sitting in a Kabul prison awaiting word on an appeal against his death sentence, handed down in May.

Read more:

<http://www.wluml.org/news/her-father-death-row-afghan-mother-attempts-put-decade-incest-abuse-behind-her>

Hamas concludes first-ever military training camp for girls



Palestinian girls exercise during a summer camp organized by the Hamas movement in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip

On Aug. 1, Hamas' women's wing opened the all-female "First al-Quds Army camp" to prepare academically exceptional girls aged 12-18 for the liberation battle of Palestine.

This camp, which ended Aug. 10, is the first of its kind in the Gaza Strip, as Hamas has never organized a female training camp before. Around 1,000 girls attend the camp, which offered a special curriculum to resist the occupation taught by women affiliated with the Hamas movement. These women enjoy extensive military experience and know how to intellectually mobilize people against the occupation.

Camp director Rajaa al-Halabi told Al-Monitor, "The goal of the First al-Quds Army camp is to prepare girls for self-defense and for future battles against the occupation."

Halabi explained that the camp focuses on the psychological education of girls, who participate voluntarily.

Read more:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/08/gaza-hamas-women-camp-liberation-battle-palestine.html>

Assyrian Christian woman shares story of captivity by Islamic State



Displaced Assyrians who fled from the villages around Tel Tamrit sit outside the Assyrian Church in Hasakah as they wait for news about the Assyrian abductees remaining in the Islamic State's hands

They were kidnapped by the Islamic State on Feb. 23 in the governorate of Hasakah, Syria. A total of 253 Assyrian Christians, from 35 different villages along the Khabur River. A small group of 23 elderly individuals were released March 1, allegedly due to their age. Among the sources who spoke to Al-Monitor on condition of anonymity, the exact number of those initially abducted varies slightly. Since then, little more has been learned about the fate of those who are still held hostage. Statements that could not be confirmed claim that local Sunni leaders are negotiating for the release of the hostages. Ransom requests by IS reaching \$35 million have not been met and a veil of deafening silence has covered the issue.

A Christian Assyrian woman released recently agreed to meet with Al-Monitor at her daughter's home in the outskirts of Beirut and tell her story of those months living as an IS hostage and what she could learn about her captors and their identities.

Read more:

<http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2015/07/lebanon-syria-assyrian-christian-woman-isis-captured-release.html>

Missed Opportunities in Using Tech to Fight Violence Against Women



Technology is a key piece in preventing and ending violence against women. As the number of women with access to the Internet and Internet-enabled devices increases, so does the potential for social impact of “tech for good” projects. Access to Internet-enabled devices has been found to be key for ensuring gender-equality in the long run (No Ceilings). Of the women with access to Internet and phones, 30 percent report earning additional income, 45 percent report searching for jobs, and 80 percent report improving their education.

As tech for good becomes mainstream, not only are key opportunities to utilize existing technology being missed, but so are opportunities for utilizing the niche emerging tech that could be saving lives. There are seven key areas those in the tech for good sector should invest in to maximize their impact:

1. Responsible Design & Optimization: More and more, organizations are using human-centered design to create and implement products and services. But from useless apps to slow websites not designed for mobile use, there is a plethora of underutilized opportunities and solutions putting survivors of violence at risk.

Read more:

<http://www.ictworks.org/2015/08/05/missed-opportunities-in-using-tech-to-fight-violence-against-women/>

GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

Iran's Working Mums Face Sack after Maternity Leave



Tens of thousands of working mothers have been sacked in Iran since the start of 2014 because employers found cheaper staff, an official said Friday, warning that a new maternity pay policy remains unfunded.

The comments highlight the financial pressures on families and on the Iranian government, despite this month's nuclear deal with world powers that could pave the way for an economic rebound.

An austerity budget passed in March after a precipitous drop in global oil prices has left key Tehran ministries, including education and oil, struggling to pay wages.

A new law enshrining nine months of paid leave for mothers has been passed yet there are no funds to pay its estimated 3.2 trillion rial (\$985 million) bill, according to welfare bosses.

"So far, not one rial has been allocated," Mohammad Hassan Zeda, a deputy at Iran's Social Security Organization, told the ISNA news agency in an interview.

Read more:

<http://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/186186-iran-s-working-mums-face-sack-after-maternity-leave>

Should India review Muslim divorce law?

Women's groups condemn "all at once" declaration by Muslim men known as "triple talaq" to divorce their wives.

Women's groups in India are calling for a review of the way Muslim men are allowed to divorce their wives.

A process known as talaq, based on the Arabic word for divorce, allows Muslim men to end their marriages by pronouncing their intention three times.

According to Islam, that should happen over a period of three months, to give both parties time to think through the consequences.

Women's groups have long argued that the declaration is being uttered in one go, effectively resulting in instant divorce.

The so-called "triple talaq" is banned in many Islamic countries, including Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Now rights activists say the opportunity for "digital divorce" is leaving women even more vulnerable, with men exercising the option of "triple talaq" through social media sites such as Facebook, Skype and WhatsApp.

It's adding to pressure for reforms, but is there an appetite for change in a patriarchal society that has historically favoured men?

Read more:

<http://www.wluml.org/news/should-india-review-muslim-divorce-law>

Withdrawal of the Maternity Leave Directive is a blow for women's rights in Europe

While it may have been on the cards for some time, the actual official announcement today by Commission Vice-President Timmermans to withdraw the Maternity Leave Directive is one more sign that the European Union (EU) and the Member States are failing women across Europe.

The withdrawal of the Maternity Leave Directive is yet another example of a failure by the leadership of the EU to take positive action for women's rights and gender equality in Europe. "It sends a very bad message to women and men in Europe about how much the EU can do to support working women and families in their everyday struggle for a decent work-life balance", states Joanna Maycock, European Women's Lobby (EWL) Secretary General.

The announcement comes a week after the launch of the second Gender Equality Index of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE). This index shows that in the past 10 years, progress in achieving equality between women and men has stagnated across Europe and in some countries even regressed. Overall, women are still only halfway to equality and continue to earn 16% on average less than men. It is often at the moment of childbirth that the gender pay gap begins, with life-long often irreversible consequences, including a 39% pension gap and higher levels of poverty as women age. Despite existing laws that protect pregnant workers, the EWL sees that more and more women today are experiencing discrimination in the work place as a direct result of pregnancy and parenthood

Read more:

<http://www.womenlobby.org/spip.php?article7250>

Minister of Justice confirms necessity to reconsider the legal and judicial system of women's inheritance right.

Minister of Justice, chancellor, Saleem AlSaqqa confirmed necessity to reconsider the legal and judicial system of women's inheritance right to facilitate women's access to their shares in inheritance as it considered as a fixed right in law.

Today during Women's Affairs center celebration, Mr. Chancellor Alsaqqa said that "Women's inheritance right is a sacred right guaranteed by the legitimate laws and ordinances while unfortunately reality says otherwise so everyone should stick to their rights and the community should work on enabling rights and ensure their validity through the dissemination of community culture, so that women can have access to their inheritance's rights."

And he added: "Lots of women were forced to relinquish their inheritance right before getting married and few of them get it while few other didn't get it full due to their weak awareness in such issues as he mentioned that long-term judicial procedures push women to relinquish their rights."

As he declared: "We are in dire need of a legislative revolution to change these judicial procedures to support women's inheritance right so for all stakeholders, you have to streamline the judicial process because when women get their rights that would enable them economically and socially so there should be a political and community will to change these procedures."

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2015/08_15/08_03_15/08_0315_gaza.htm

Greece - Women's Challenges in Times of Greek Austerity, Political & Social Crises

In Greece, similar to other EU Member States, men were initially hit the hardest by the crisis as it affected the private sector and the construction business, where men are overrepresented. By the time the austerity measures were implemented, concerning the public sector the most, women were affected to a larger extent. Austerity measures absolutely impact on women's life. The austerity policies that have taken place in most European countries have also had huge effects on public spending in Greece, causing drops in employment and wage cuts in the public sector, in the health and care sectors. This has affected women twofold.

Firstly, the public sector has traditionally employed a lot of women, and secondly, because of the increase in unpaid care work – which women are socially obliged to do - because of the cuts to public services. Austerity measures have also made the labour market more flexible for the employer (making it easier to sack workers), brought cutbacks in unemployment insurance, labour market reforms (in particular the abandonment of collective agreements), successive cuts to pensions, increases in retirement age, and tax reforms, raising personal income and sales taxes, while lowering corporate taxes.

Read more:

http://www.wunrn.com/news/2015/08_15/08_10_15/08_1015_greece.htm

RESOURCES & CALLS

BOOKS & REPORTS

Women, gender and the informal economy: An assessment of ILO research and suggested ways forward

This discussion paper provides an overview of the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) research on women, gender and the informal economy which was undertaken during the last two decades. It examines methodological and analytical frameworks used in various studies, identifies research gaps and proposes directions for future work. It ultimately aims to enhance ILO's work in developing consistent, coherent and coordinated policy advice to constituents across the four pillars of the ILO Decent Work Agenda: standards and fundamental principles and rights at work, employment, social protection and social dialogue.

This discussion paper is an outcome of two converging initiatives.

Read more:

<http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/gender&id=73143&type=Document#.VcXtH3Gqqk0>

For a direct link to report

http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1689&context=globaldocs&sei-redirect=1&referer=https%3A%2F%2Fscholar.google.com.my%2Fscholar%3Fq%3Dworking%2Bwomen%2Bin%2Binformal%2Bsector%2Band%2Bbreastfeeding%26hl%3Den%26as_sdt%3D0%26as_vis%3D1%26oi%3Dscholar%26sa%3DX%26ei%3DxzD4VP2yG46xuQTUI4HYBQ%26ved%3D0CBkQgQMwAA#search=%22working%20women%20informal%20sector%20breastfeeding%22

The motherhood pay gap: A review of the issues, theory and international evidence

Evidence that mothers suffer a wage penalty over and above the penalty for being a woman raises concerns not only for gender equality but also for the capacity of societies to manage a sustainable balance between their economic aims of active female participation in paid work and the social aims of providing a fair distribution of income to support the reproduction and rearing of children. These concerns underpin ILO Conventions designed to combat inequality in women's position in paid employment, especially associated with motherhood status.

Part I discusses the measurement issues, especially associated with statistical modelling of the motherhood pay gap, and presents headline results for a range of low-, middle- and high-income countries. It also addresses evidence of a wage premium for fathers.

Part II presents a critical analysis of six core methodological issues drawing on studies from multiple disciplinary approaches.

Read more:

<http://www.eldis.org/go/topics/resource-guides/gender&id=73136&type=Document#.Vczat3Gqqkp>

For a direct link to report:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_348041.pdf

Social protection for older persons: Key policy trends and statistics

This policy paper: provides a global overview of the organization of pension systems, their coverage and benefits, as well as public expenditures on social security, in 178 countries; analyses trends and recent policies, e.g. extension of coverage in a large number of low- and middle-income countries; presents the negative impacts of fiscal consolidation and adjustment measures in a number of higher-income economies; and calls for the expansion of social protection in pursuit of crisis recovery, inclusive development and social justice.

Read more:

http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/WCMS_310211/lang-en/index.htm

For a direct link to report:

http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_310211.pdf

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