



The Middle East & North Africa  
"Gender and Development E-Brief"  
Issue #120  
May 2012

## NEWS & ARTICLES

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### GENDER ACTIVISM

Women Continue to Show Power in Protests in Egypt  
Stop Lowering Minimum Age of Girls for Marriage in Egypt Campaign  
'Women's NGO takes pro-FGM Parliamentarian to court' also in Egypt  
Muslim Woman Defends Burqa at European Court

### GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

Women Harassed for Not Wearing Full Face Veil in Yemen  
Kurdish Female Migrants Find Isolation in Istanbul  
Media's treatment of women damages self-esteem

### GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS

Women See Worrisome Shift in Turkey  
Saudi Feminism: Between Mama Amreeka and Baba Abdullah  
In Yemen, eating is a luxury millions struggle to afford

## RESOURCES & CALLS

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS

CRTD.A launches its improved website  
G8 - Women's Human Rights Agenda

### BOOKS and REPORTS

Rural Women & Migration  
ILO World of Work Report 2012 - Crisis Impacts on Women

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The MENA Gender and Development eBrief receives material from various sources for its publication. Should you wish to refer to these sources/ sites directly, the list includes publications from: AVIVA, [www.aviva.org](http://www.aviva.org), AWID: [www.awid.org](http://www.awid.org), Democracy Digest: [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org), Development Gateway: [www.developmentgateway.org](http://www.developmentgateway.org), Dignity: [www.dignity.org](http://www.dignity.org), e-Civicus: [www.civicus.org](http://www.civicus.org), Eldis: [www.eldis.org](http://www.eldis.org), ESCWA: [www.escwa.org.lb](http://www.escwa.org.lb), GDB: [www.developmentex.com](http://www.developmentex.com), Global Knowledge Partnership: [www.globalknowledge.org](http://www.globalknowledge.org), IGTN: [www.IGTN.org](http://www.IGTN.org), ILO: [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org) One World: [www.oneworld.net](http://www.oneworld.net), Siyanda: [www.siyanda.org](http://www.siyanda.org), The Daily Star: [www.dailystar.com.lb](http://www.dailystar.com.lb), The Drum Beat: [www.comminit.com](http://www.comminit.com), The Soul Beat: [www.comminit.com](http://www.comminit.com), The World Bank: [www.worldbank.org](http://www.worldbank.org), UNDP: [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org), Wicejilist: [www.wicej.addr.com](http://www.wicej.addr.com), WLP: [www.learningpartnership.org](http://www.learningpartnership.org); WIDE: [www.wide-network.org](http://www.wide-network.org); IRIN News: [www.irinnews.org](http://www.irinnews.org), Women's UN Report Network: [www.wunrn.com](http://www.wunrn.com), Women Living Under Muslim Laws: [www.wluml.org](http://www.wluml.org)

### GENDER ACTIVISM

#### Women Continue to Show Power in Protests in Egypt

Egypt's revolution is now often described as hijacked and women's legal rights are seen as vulnerable to an Islamic-style promotion of marriage and family. But in a show of their own force, women keep braving the deadly dangers of street protests.



*Credit: oxfamnovib on Flickr, under Creative Commons (CC BY-ND 2.0).*

Female protesters continue to participate in pro-democracy demonstrations that remain deadly more than a year after President Hosni Mubarak was overthrown. Primary school teacher Reham El Hakim, for instance, was on the front lines on May 5 when the 12th person was killed during demonstrations against the military government in Abbasaiya in front of the Ministry of Defense. Hundreds

were detained and although many have been released, Associated Press reports paint a grim picture of the harassment, molestation and threats of increased sexual violence these men and women faced in custody.

El Hakim wasn't among the detained, but still felt fear in her heart when she saw tear gas and water cannons and heard gunfire rip into the crowds. She said it was her duty, though, as an Egyptian and a woman to be part of the movement against the military.

"When I saw the gas and smoke, of course I was afraid. I heard the sound of gunfire. I wanted to see what was happening," she said.

This kind of bravery, said Mariam Kirolos, an activist who was among the millions protesting in Tahrir Square last year, shows the revolution, for all the disappointment of recent months, is still being fought and holds promise for stronger women's rights.

"I believe that everyday, the protests show the power of women," said the 22-year-old political science graduate, who also participated in the Abbasaiya protests. To read the article, follow the link <http://womensenews.org/story/equalitywomen%e2%80%99s-rights/120510/egypts-women-keep-showing-power-in-protest>

#### Stop Lowering Minimum Age of Girls for Marriage in Egypt Campaign

Egypt's People's Assembly Council is currently discussing legislation that would reduce the minimum age of marriage for girls from 18 to possibly as low as 9 years old and could vote on the final draft bill at any moment. If adopted, girls could be married off by their families without their consent putting them at risk of physical and psychological harm, as well as cutting short other life opportunities, such as pursuing their education. Such measures make Egyptian women, including the umbrella organization Alliance for Egyptian Women, fearful that their rights are being rapidly eroded post-revolution.

In an emerging pattern of challenges to women's equality during the past year, Egyptian women are extremely concerned that the new government is prioritizing legislation that undermines and restricts women's and girls' rights. For example, draft legislation has also been introduced limiting a mother's custody of her children upon divorce. In addition, a

prominent MP of a conservative party has reportedly denounced the 2008 ban on female genital mutilation (FGM), stating that women should have the right to choose to undergo FGM. FGM is a harmful practice and a human rights abuse. According to UNICEF, FGM in Egypt is usually carried out on girls between the ages of 9 and 12.

Therefore, the MP's comment also ignores the fact that girls typically are unable to exercise their right to choose. Activists in Egypt, both women and men, have sent a statement to the Parliament highlighting the inconsistency of these proposed legislative changes with the principles of the revolution, which include dignity, justice and freedom.

The current Egyptian Constitution states that, "All citizens are equal before the law. They have equal public rights and duties without discrimination due to sex...." Egypt is also a party to a number of international human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which considers minors to be those under 18 years of age and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Both the UN's

The screenshot shows the Equality Now website. The main article title is "Egypt: Stop the lowering of the minimum age of marriage for girls in Egypt". The date is 8 May 2012. There is a "view as pdf" link. The article text discusses the Egyptian People's Assembly Council's current discussion of legislation that would reduce the minimum age of marriage for girls from 18 to possibly as low as 9 years old. It mentions that if adopted, girls could be married off by their families without their consent, putting them at risk of physical and psychological harm. The article also mentions that such measures make Egyptian women, including the umbrella organization Alliance for Egyptian Women, fearful that their rights are being rapidly eroded post-revolution. There are "TAKE ACTION NOW!" and "JOIN US" buttons on the right side of the article.

Committee on the Rights of the Child and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women, which oversee the implementation of these conventions, have strongly recommended that States increase the age of marriage to 18 years for both girls and boys. Article 16(2) of CEDAW clearly states that, "The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect..." To continue to comply with and implement its obligations under the CRC, CEDAW and other human rights standards, Egypt must not promote discriminatory legislation, such as the reduction of the minimum age of marriage for girls. To read more about this campaign follow the link

[http://www.equalitynow.org/take\\_action/child\\_marriage\\_action](http://www.equalitynow.org/take_action/child_marriage_action)

### 'Women's NGO takes pro-FGM Parliamentarian to court' also in Egypt

Egypt's New Women Foundation said they are suing Islamist Parliament member Azza al-Garf over her pro-female genitals mutilation (FGM) statements. The women's rights foundation sent a letter to the speaker of parliament Saad al-Katatny, informing him of legally going after Garf and asking for his permission to be allowed to take the MP to court.

The parliament needs to lift immunity for an MP in order for them to be held accountable in a court of law.

The screenshot shows a Twitter thread. The first tweet is from @lgarf14, the wife of Azza al-Garf, stating that she is suing her husband for FGM statements. The second tweet is from @menafakhry, who is replying to the first tweet. The third tweet is from @KareemNegad, who is replying to the second tweet. The tweets are in Arabic and discuss the legal action being taken against the MP.

Garf was reported saying that FGM is an Islamic practice and that the anti-FGM laws should be amended. Garf is a Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) member, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

“We are on our way to sue Garf to preserve our rights and the gains of Egyptian women,” said the open letter to the speaker.

“We are suing her for going against Egyptian laws that criminalize sexual harassment and FGM, practices that goes against women rights and human rights.

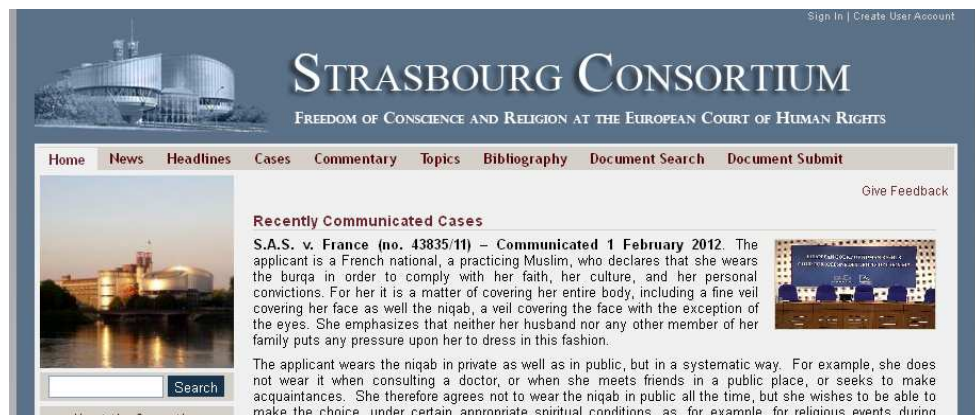
“We completely refuse Garf’s statements and announce that she does not represent us.”

Garf gave similar statements on her Twitter account last month, calling for lifting the laws that criminalize FGM. The statements stirred criticism, which led to the FJP to announce that Garf has no account on Twitter and no comments were made by Garf herself. To read the full version of the article, follow the link <http://www.wluml.org/news/egypt-womens-ngo-takes-pro-fgm-parliamentarian-court>

### Muslim Woman Defends Burqa at European Court

The applicant is a French national, a practicing Muslim, who declares that she wears the burqa in order to comply with her faith, her culture, and her personal convictions. For her it

is a matter of covering her entire body, including a fine veil covering her face as well the niqab, a veil covering the face with the exception of the eyes. She emphasizes that neither her



The screenshot shows the website for the Strasbourg Consortium, titled "FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE AND RELIGION AT THE EUROPEAN COURT OF HUMAN RIGHTS". The navigation menu includes Home, News, Headlines, Cases, Commentary, Topics, Bibliography, Document Search, and Document Submit. A "Give Feedback" link is also present. The main content area features a section titled "Recently Communicated Cases" with a sub-heading "S.A.S. v. France (no. 43835/11) – Communicated 1 February 2012". The text of the case summary is partially visible, starting with "The applicant is a French national, a practicing Muslim, who declares that she wears the burqa in order to comply with her faith, her culture, and her personal convictions. For her it is a matter of covering her entire body, including a fine veil covering her face as well the niqab, a veil covering the face with the exception of the eyes. She emphasizes that neither her husband nor any other member of her family puts any pressure upon her to dress in this fashion." There is also a search bar and a "Meet the Consortium" link at the bottom of the page.

husband nor any other member of her family puts any pressure upon her to dress in this fashion. The applicant wears the niqab in private as well as in public, but in a systematic way. For example, she does not wear it when consulting a doctor, or when she meets friends in a public place, or seeks to make acquaintances. She therefore agrees not to wear the niqab in public all the time, but she wishes to be able to make the choice, under certain appropriate spiritual conditions, as, for example, for religious events during Ramadan. Her goal is not to create a nuisance for others, but to be able to be in accord with her own religious feelings and beliefs. The applicant agrees that she should remove the face covering for security checks, at a bank, or when taking a plane. However, under French law she is forbidden to cover her face in public at all. The applicant therefore complains that when she wears the veil in public she could be subject, under law, to penalties as well as to harassment and discrimination, constituting degrading treatment in violation of ECHR Article 3. She furthermore invokes Article 8 of the Convention, violation of her right to respect for her private life. Invoking Articles 9, 10, and 11 she complains of violation of freedom of religion, freedom of expression, and freedom of association or assembly. Finally, invoking Article 14, she complains that the legal prohibition of wearing a face covering in public generates discrimination on the basis of sex, religion, and ethnic origin, to the detriment of women, such as herself, who wear the total veil. To read more about this story please follow the link,

<http://www.strasbourgconsortium.org/index.php?pagelD=9&contentId=24&blurbId=1040>

## **GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

### **Women Harassed for Not Wearing Full Face Veil in Yemen**

Al-Qaeda militants in southern Yemen have begun to harass women who do not wear the

veil with Bikya Masr reporting on one instance of physical abuse as militants forced a woman to don the full face veil in Aden. The group, known as Ansar al-Sharia, believes a woman should follow the example of the Prophet's wives and be fully covered, including her face. Women in Aden, however, have expressed outrage at



the recent form of harassment against them, according to a report on Sunday. "How can they dare attack girls and women who do not wear the veil? It is a personal choice, which should not be imposed on anyone," school teacher Anessa Abdelaalem was quoted by Bikya Masr as saying. Ansar al-Sharia has also been accused by local authorities of throwing acid on several girls "for refusing to bow to their demands." Harassment is not limited to Aden or to intimidation or attacks by militant groups. Yemen is considered one of the poorest countries in the world with a terrible record on gender equality. However, during the protests against former President Ali Abdullah Saleh, more women stepped out of their homes to join the demonstrations.

The Arab world's first woman to receive a Nobel Prize, Tawwakul Karman, is Yemeni. But women remain marginalized and have little recourse to justice when it comes to harassment. A 20-year-old woman from Ibb, who only gave her name as Zainab, complained of being harassed by a police officer in Taz, according to a report Monday in Yemen Times. When she shouted at him in the hope that he would be intimidated or she would attract attention of people around her, she was arrested by the police man for indecent behavior. The issue is not effectively dealt with by law enforcers as a result of which women do not report incidents. An official from the interior ministry, Lieutenant Haifa Hussein told the Yemeni paper that although a phone line for complaints has been set up, few people call in due to fears of being stigmatized. Yemenis will go to the polls in 2014 to vote in the first independent elections. Women activists are pushing for a law that will guarantee them 30 percent representation in parliament - a move they hope will help them challenge traditional norms from a legal perspective. To read the entire article, follow the link [http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/05\\_12/04\\_30/043012\\_yemen.htm](http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/05_12/04_30/043012_yemen.htm)

### **Kurdish Female Migrants Find Isolation in Istanbul**

Sosin and her family moved from rural Turkey to Istanbul, the country's largest city, and for four years she did not leave the house, not even to buy food for her children.

"I was afraid to be lost. I never saw any place outside the house. We would be starving with the children until evening when my husband would come home," she told researchers with the Istanbul-based Basak Culture and Art Foundation. Its findings were published last year in the book, "What Has Changed? Kurdish Women's Experiences with Forced Migration."

"Women are generally more active in their villages, where they work in fields, walk around and have a social life," Nese Erdilek, administrative director of the Center for Migration Research at Istanbul's Bilgi University, told Women's eNews. "In the city, the whole family is under pressure and fearful of the outside world. Social pressure [on women] is a kind of defense for the family."

Erdilek said women are often not part of the decision to move and have less experience in surroundings other than their rural or small-town homes.

Agricultural upheavals, lack of economic opportunity and, more recently, violence and political pressure in Turkey's largely Kurdish eastern and southeastern regions -- where Sosin comes from -- have driven repeated waves of internal migration since the late 1940s. Many families find their way to Istanbul, home to a fifth of the country's population and accounting for nearly half of its wealth. In the process, Turkey has been completely transformed, from 25 percent urban in 1950 to 75 percent urban today. For women caught up in this migration, the uprooting can be particularly harsh. To continue reading the article, follow the link

[http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/05\\_12/05\\_07/050712\\_turkey.htm](http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/05_12/05_07/050712_turkey.htm)



Two women in Istanbul's Kuzguncuk neighborhood

Credit: Jennifer Hattam

### Media's treatment of women damages self-esteem

Lining the edge of every highway in Lebanon is billboard after billboard advertising a huge array of products from clothing to food, cars and jewelry. But what often unites these myriad ads is the image of a woman, in various states of undress. Sex sells. But experts are warning that this constant bombardment of homogeneous and sexualized images, found throughout every form of mass media - not just advertising - poses a huge danger to Lebanese women and young girls. At a screening last week at the



American University of Beirut of the 2011 U.S. film "Miss Representation," a documentary

which explores this topic, experts discussed the issue in Lebanon-specific terms, often arguing that the situation is even worse here, and the consequences more acute. The film argues that as media firms, such as TV channels and Hollywood production studios, have sought to increase revenue, they have used increasingly sexual imagery of women. At the same time, advertising companies chasing profits have used similar images of women of one, virtually unobtainable, body type. And with a reciprocal relationship, the industries have simultaneously supported this same standard. “You have to sell your products ... And the only way to sell products is by making people feel inferior,” said Sarah Mallat, of the department of sociology, anthropology and media studies at AUB, and who runs a Digital Media Literacy course. The effects of this objectification of women are numerous, experts agreed. Nadine Moawad, of feminist collective Nasawiya, said that issues surrounding body image and self-esteem were among the first that the group had to tackle when it was founded. “There is a crisis when it comes to the self-esteem of our women,” she said. “Girls of 12 or 13 are going to salons and getting their hair done, getting waxed. Everyone wants to be blonder, or have lighter skin.” Lebanese girls are taught to think, “I’m too fat, my hair is too curly, my eyes are too small.” Big industries, she said, are preying on these fears to increase profit margins - whether directly, by selling beauty products which promise to firm thighs or lighten skin, or indirectly, through advertising or photo shoots which reinforce the “ideal” body type. In Lebanon specifically these fears of imperfection are also played upon by the plastic surgery industry, she added. “We have become a culture which sells the image of women,” she said, in reference to the popularity of plastic surgery and its use to lure tourists in MEA in-flight entertainment. Such objectification of women is directly linked to rampant sexual harassment, she said. Read more:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Culture/Lifestyle/2012/May-21/174090-medias-treatment-of-women-damages-self-esteem.ashx#ixzz1vVwRemj2>

## **GENDER & HUMAN RIGHTS**

### **Women See Worrisome Shift in Turkey**

Gokce, a soft-spoken 37-year-old mother of two, has lived on the run for 15 years, ever since her abusive husband tracked her down, broke down her door and shot her in the leg six times after she refused to return to him.

Stoic and prematurely graying, she said her husband had since kidnapped her mother and stabbed her brother, trying to force them to reveal her whereabouts. She repeatedly turned to the police. But, she said, they chided her to return to her husband. Once, after her husband came to pick



her up at the police station, she said she heard an officer advise him to break her legs so she could not escape.

“Our state is the No. 1 enemy of women,” Gokce said recently at a women’s shelter here in Istanbul, declining to use her last name for fear of her husband. “I was 14 when my husband started to abuse me, and now I’m 37, and I am still living in fear for my life despite all my cries for help.”

While reliable statistics are hard to come by, given what Turkish experts say is the serious underreporting of domestic violence here, rights groups point to a recent spate of high-

profile attacks against women to raise the alarm that Turkey is backsliding on women's rights. They say women's progress is being undermined by Turkey's flagging prospects for European Union membership and a Muslim-inspired government that is increasingly embracing the conservative values of the Arab world it seeks to lead. To read the full article, follow the link <http://www.wluml.org/news/turkey-women-see-worrisome-shift-turkey>

### **Saudi Feminism: Between Mama Amreeka and Baba Abdullah**

On 9 May 2012, Manal al-Sharif was awarded the Havel Prize for Creative Dissent at the Oslo Freedom Forum in Norway. This came shortly after al-Sharif was honored as one of TIME's *100 Most Influential People in the World* at a Gala in New York City. Such events have given rise to a pattern: just as numerous pictures and videos of activists attending various conferences and receiving numerous awards surface, waves of criticism pour in. Their motives are viewed with suspicion, worthiness is questioned, and a movement's progress is reassessed.

The most prevalent criticism of Manal al-Sharif was that she was accepting an award for *political* dissent when she was only, at most, *asocial* activist. This criticism was not meant to undermine her efforts but rather to allocate them a bit further down the activist totem pole, so to speak, in order to remove them from the high pedestal they had been placed on. One ought to note, however, that al-Sharif herself stated at the Forum that, "I don't consider myself a dissident, I had to actually ask what it was." So, it seems, she may agree with her critics. To read the entire article follow the link



<http://www.wluml.org/news/saudi-arabia-saudi-feminism-between-mama-amreeka-and-baba-abdullah>

### **In Yemen, eating is a luxury millions struggle to afford**

For almost half of Yemen's 22 million people, eating has become a luxury they can't always afford. On a bad day, Umm Ahmad and her family of five, who live in Sanaa's shanty-town district of Al-Sunaina, go without any food at all. On a better day, Umm Ahmad's husband, who works as a vendor, selling baby clothes in the market, comes home with "500 Yemeni riyals (about \$2.30) and we eat."

"Have pity on us," she says, breaking into tears as she holds her sick and hungry daughter Amira and describes her family's daily struggle to survive. She fears for Amira's life. Lifting the 5-year-old's dress and pulling up her sleeves,





she reveals skinny and slightly bruised limbs, a consequence she says, of a blood disorder for which they cannot afford treatment. In the past year alone, according to the latest U.N. report, the cost of basic foodstuffs has surged by between 40 and 60 percent and the price of always scarce drinking water has risen by 200 percent, adding to growing inflation. Unemployment rates have also soared, and 10 million Yemenis, out of a total population of about 22 million, struggle to put food on the table, the U.N. says. The popular uprising that ousted veteran leader Ali Abdullah Saleh and the months of political unrest that followed have crippled the government's already weak and corrupt institutions. The result, says the chief U.N. representative in Yemen, Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed, is "a much more profound and much more deep humanitarian crisis than what we have been describing." Evidence of the crisis is clear, not just in the country's distant provinces where government services are weakest and international aid is hindered by ongoing conflicts, but also in the capital Sanaa. Read more:

<http://www.dailystar.com.lb/Business/International/2012/May-17/173646-in-yemen-eating-is-a-luxury-millions-struggle-to-afford.ashx#ixzz1vVvsFyYI>

## RESOURCES & CALLS

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### CRTD.A launches its improved website

"In commemoration of our first decade of working on social justice and gender equality in Lebanon and the Arab countries, Collective for Research and Training on Development-Action, is happy to re-launch its new and improved website and portal: <http://crtda.org.lb/>

This new website is intended to act as a user-friendly and interactive knowledge sharing tool for practitioners, activists, organisations, academics as well as individuals interested in and committed to gender equality and social justice in Lebanon and across the Arab region. We will attempt to focus on the key themes of our work and which revolve around gender and inclusive citizenship, economic



rights and empowerment as well as women's public and political participation. Whilst our focus will be primarily Lebanon, we will nevertheless endeavour to have a broader regional as well as international outreach.

The new website offers information about our own events and publications as well as those of sister organisations and networks. Our various resources sections will revolve essentially but not exclusively around these thematic areas and will offer updates, articles, analysis, publications and documentation in three languages (Arabic, English and French) to the website users who will also have the opportunity to subscribe to our various e-newsletters, e-updates and e-news and announcements. We also hope that users and visitors will be able to follow our various campaigning, lobbying, knowledge sharing and training activities in Lebanon and in the region and participate in our activities.

Your comments and suggestions would be welcome and we invite you to communicate with us through: [info@crt-da.org.lb](mailto:info@crt-da.org.lb)

We hope you enjoy navigating our new website which is now coming as an addition to our current social media tools. :

- Facebook Page Lebanese women's rights to nationality and full citizenship <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Lebanese-Womens-Right-to-Nationality-and-Full-Citizenship/144824882142>

- Twitter: Jinsiyati Account [www.twitter.com/jinsiyati](http://www.twitter.com/jinsiyati)

- Blogs: <http://nationalitycampaign.wordpress.com/> and women's economic rights [www.womeneconomicrights.wordpress.com](http://www.womeneconomicrights.wordpress.com)

- Storify: [www.storify.com/jinsiyati](http://www.storify.com/jinsiyati)

- YouTube Account <http://www.youtube.com/user/CRTDASocialMedia>

You can also access our Lebanon Knowledge Development Gateway on: <http://lkdg.org> for more specific information on active citizenship, gender and social entitlements particularly in the education and health sectors as well as other related subjects.”

To browse the new website please follow the link <http://crt-da.org.lb/>

## G8 - Women's Human Rights Agenda

The Group of Eight (G8) is a forum for the leaders of eight of the world's most industrialized nations, aimed at finding common ground on key topics and solutions to global issues. The G8 includes Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. On May 18, leaders of the world's eight largest economies (the G8) gathered at Camp David, a walled-off retreat reserved for the US President and his guests. There, they will make decisions that will affect all of us, no matter where we live.

This unjust distribution of political power means that sustainable alternatives to harmful policies are ignored, and voices of the global 99% are silenced.

But women's human rights advocates refuse to be ignored. We know that women worldwide are creating solutions to the crises we all face, including poverty, economic injustice and militarism. We are putting forward our own G8 agenda. We need your input to craft it.

Poverty and Economic Injustice



This Is the Reality:

**Income Inequality:** G8 policies protect the richest at the expense of the rest. When governments value private profits above the public good, poverty and instability result.

**Labor Rights Violations:** The rights to unionize and to be free from gender discrimination are essential. But workers worldwide are routinely denied protection for internationally recognized labor rights.

**A Broken Aid System:** Aid today is insufficient and ineffective. It often does not reach where it is needed most. It does not address the root causes of poverty and inequality. What's more, aid delivery perpetuates dependency and is conditioned on policies that enrich the G8.

This Is Our Vision. Women Demand G8 Policies That:

- Recognize the many ways women fuel economies, from performing unpaid work as caregivers to sustaining informal economies.
- Safeguard access to basic services, like health, housing, education, water and sanitation.
- Support proven strategies to end poverty—like investment in social safety nets and girls’ education.
- Ensure that aid delivery is effective, transparent and boosts local efforts.

Visit [www.madre.org/g8agenda](http://www.madre.org/g8agenda) to share your ideas and to join our effort. Together, we can demand policies that protect women’s human rights worldwide.

## BOOKS and REPORTS

### Rural Women & Migration

Due to structural, cultural, social and economic barriers, rural women, who make up one fourth of the world’s population, fare worse than rural men, urban men and urban women in virtually all of the Millennium Development Goals (Inter-Agency Task Force on Rural Women, 2012). It is increasingly acknowledged and understood that migration is a highly gendered phenomenon. Women, in general, face different challenges and opportunities in many areas than similarly situated men do. In addition, because rural women still often lack access to infrastructure and productive resources, represent the majority of the world’s illiterate adults, are often excluded from waged employment and struggle to access health care, their experience of migration can significantly differ from urban women’s experience. Women in rural areas, whether they decide to migrate or stay behind as family members of male migrants, are confronted with very specific hardships that both migration and development policy debates need to address in order to make migration work for rural women. To read the entire publication kindly follow the link

[http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/05\\_12/05\\_07/050712\\_rural.htm](http://www.wunrn.com/news/2012/05_12/05_07/050712_rural.htm)



**D**ue to structural, cultural, social and economic barriers, rural women, who make up one fourth of the world’s population, fare worse than rural men, urban men and urban women in virtually all of the Millennium Development Goals (Inter-Agency Task Force on Rural Women, 2012). It is increasingly acknowledged and understood that migration is a highly gendered phenomenon. Women, in general, face different challenges and opportunities in many areas than similarly situated men do. In addition, because rural women still often lack access to infrastructure and productive resources, represent the majority of the world’s illiterate adults, are often excluded from waged employment and struggle to access health care, their experience of migration can significantly differ from urban women’s experience. Women in rural areas, whether they decide to migrate or stay behind as family members of male migrants, are confronted with very specific hardships that both migration and development policy debates need to address in order to make migration work for rural women.

**Rural women on the move**

Rural women are not a homogeneous group. Their circumstances, and in turn their capacity to migrate, plan and control their journey as well as its outcomes, vary according to their income, social networks, education, and local gender dynamics.

Migration out of reach for many rural women

Migration requires resources and, as such, it is not available to everyone. Women who represent the poorest of the poor in rural areas often lack the resources to migrate (e.g. information, land ownership, assets and social networks). Even in households where these resources exist, the larger family may control them, constraining women’s migration opportunities (Bridge, 2005). Women can be more physically vulnerable and can be restricted in their movement by their caring and reproductive responsibilities. Cultural norms, which can be particularly stringent in rural areas, can also dictate that it is not acceptable for women to travel on their own. That type of restriction may mean that women have to travel shorter distances or stay put altogether (Bridge, 2005).

For those living in remote and isolated areas, other obstacles include the lack of proper identity documents and difficulties in accessing transport or information. Indeed, besides the fact that information sources on migration may be scarce in rural areas, rural women who constitute the bulk of the world’s illiterate people, face increased difficulties in accessing reliable information on legal and safe migration channels.

Rural women who do migrate can move to another rural area (rural-to-rural migration), relocate in cities (rural-to-urban migration) or cross international borders (rural-to-international migration). The latter pattern is more likely to occur when connections and support networks are readily available in rural areas through migrant workers or recruitment agencies (ILO, 2009). When these support structures are absent, rural women often first migrate to urban areas, to gain training and connections before migrating abroad (Bridge, 2005).

IOM is committed to the principle that humane and orderly migration benefits migrants and society. As an inter-governmental body, IOM acts with its partners in the international community to assist in meeting the operational challenges of migration, advance understanding of migration issues, encourage social and economic development through migration, and work towards effective respect of the human dignity and well-being of migrants.

IOM International Organization for Migration

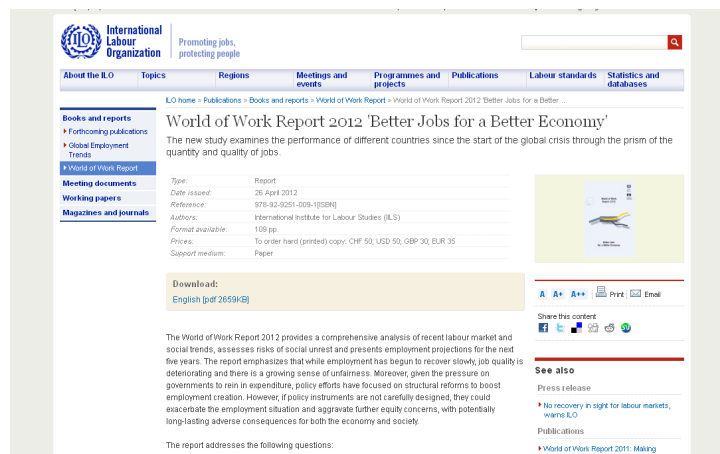
### ILO World of Work Report 2012 - Crisis Impacts on Women

The ILO launches its annual report “World of Work Report 2012: Better Jobs for a Better Economy”. The new study examines the performance of different countries since the start of the global crisis through the prism of the quantity and quality of jobs. Women and youth are disproportionately affected by unemployment and job precariousness.

Non-income dimensions of inequality are on the rise. Additionally, there are non-income dimensions of inequality that are not reflected in the data coefficients. These dimensions of global inequality include inequalities in health, access to education, employment, gender, etc., which, apart from exacerbating poverty, also lead to greater marginalization within society.

The share of informal employment remains high, standing at more than 40 per cent in two-thirds of emerging and developing countries for which data are available.

This Report calls for countries to put in place the necessary conditions for a dramatic shift in the current policy approach. It highlights the need for an approach that recognizes the importance of placing jobs at the top of the policy agenda and the need for coherence among macroeconomic, employment and social policies. This requires a significant change in domestic and global governance, which is a complex task. Though the task is demanding, even progressive steps in this direction will be rewarded with better job prospects and a more efficient economy. To access the Direct Link to Full 128-Page ILO report:[http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dropouts/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_179453.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dropouts/---dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_179453.pdf)



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