

EUROMED PROGRAMME “ROLE OF WOMEN IN ECONOMIC LIFE” QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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• FOCUS ON GENDER AND TRADE

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We are happy to present the third newsletter of the EUROMED Programme “Role of Women in Economic Life” in its new html format. We hope that you will find this new edition easier to navigate with useful information and resources for civil society actors, development practitioners, students and others interested in gender equality in the region, and women’s economic empowerment in particular.

This issue focuses on the thematic area of Gender and Trade, with an article by Lina Abou Habib of CRTDA - Lebanon on the impact of trade liberalisation in the MEDA region, best practice experience by the EOWEL project partners, as well as links to useful publications and websites for further information in relation to gender and trade.

We would also like to draw your attention to the Role of Women

in Economic Life (RWEL) project website www.euromedwomensrights.net where one can find information and updates on the RWEL project activities. One may also access the Gender Equality Database that brings together in one easily accessible format gender equality literature and critical analyses of related themes on women’s situation and empowerment in the region.

Finally, we encourage and look forward to receiving contributions from our readers on issues relating to women’s economic empowerment in the Euromed region for forthcoming issues of the the EUROMED Programme “Role of Women in Economic Life” Newsletter.

Enjoy reading! *RWEL Project Team*



• GENDER, TRADE AND ACCESS TO MARKETS IN THE MENA REGION - LINA ABOU HABIB, CRTDA, LEBANON



One of the many debates surrounding globalization and trade liberalization concerns these forces’ impact on gender. Groups such as WIDE and IGTN argue that trade, like other economic and political issues, is not gender neutral and that current liberalization policies negatively impact women in gender-specific ways. The preponderance of unskilled female workers in low-wage manufacturing jobs-the “feminization” of export industries-is but one example of how globalization policies simultaneously offer

low-income women new opportunities while putting them at risk of exploitation. This is particularly critical in the case of the MENA region where women workers tend to concentrate in low-skilled poorly protected jobs essentially in the informal sector.

While much has been written about the effect of trade and economic liberalization policies on poor and low-income women in most of the Global South, there is a dearth of similar work on the MENA. The effect of globalization on household economies and gender relations remains largely unexplored. It is unknown whether and to what extent women’s increased earning power translates into increased decision making at home and in the community. In addition, there is no systematic research investigating what strategies women are using to negotiate economic power or to retain control over their earnings. Information regarding roles and power relations is scant as well; it is uncertain whether and how men’s and women’s attitudes towards traditional gender roles are changing, and what kind of redistribution of roles within the family and community may allow women to work. Finally, there is little data on the impact of new job opportunities, and whether they empower women, or rather reproduce traditional power relationships in new ways.

In this paper, Lina Abou Habib, Director of Collective Training and Development Action (CRDTA), seeks to provide a preliminary discussion of gender and trade in the MENA region and to identify some of the issues which are critical for partner organisations’



work on the subject. The article explores the debates surrounding globalization and trade liberalization and its impact on gender; the 'feminization' of export industries; the structural problems and challenges women face such as limited mobility and largely male dominated market institutions; and why women's access to markets and ability to develop marketing strategies is a key gender issue in the region.

For access to the full report please visit our website at www.euromedwomen-srights.net

For more information please contact: Lina Abou-Habib, Director, CRTD.A labouhabib@crtd.org

• **PROGRAMME PROJECTS:**
ENABLING WOMEN'S ACCESS TO MARKETS



As discussed extensively in the previous Article on gender and trade in the MEDA region, women face a number of critical gender based obstacles hindering their access to markets. These range from isolation from mainstream, largely male and patriarchal trade sector and from policy making circles, poor knowledge and familiarity with market forces and the ways in which these operate, multiple roles and responsibilities associated with the household and extended family structures, and limited physical mobility among others. One of the main objectives of the programme projects is the implementation of innovative strategies to facilitate women's access to markets and to overcome the numerous structural and societal obstacles they face. These strategies range from

awareness raising, training in product development and sales techniques, trade fairs and exhibitions and more.

To read more about strategies used by the project partners please visit www.euromed-womensrights.net

• **EURO-MED WOMEN'S RIGHTS RESOURCES ON GENDER AND TRADE**

ONLINE REPORTS

- **Global Monitoring Report 2007: confronting the challenges of gender equality and fragile states, World Bank**

The 2007 Global Monitoring Report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) assesses the contributions of developing countries, developed countries, and international financial institutions toward meeting universally agreed development commitments. The report highlights two key thematic areas -gender equality and empowerment of women (the third MDG) and the special problems of fragile states, where extreme poverty is increasingly concentrated. The report also looks at growth, poverty reduction and financial sustainability; aid, debt relief and trade; and monitoring the performances of the International Financial Institutions.

Available at:
<http://go.worldbank.org/77CS8CLUN>

- **Gender and Trade: Overview Report**

Zo Randriamaro - Bridge Cutting Edge Pack

This report points to the crucial need to ensure that trade liberalisation does not undermine women's rights and poor people's livelihoods, and supports the gender equality agenda and calls for a rights-based and political economy approach to gender and trade issues.

Available at:
<http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/reports/CEP-Trade-OR.pdf>

Gender Equality and Trade-Related Capacity Building: A Resource Tool for Practitioners.

Zo Randriamaro - Bridge Cutting Edge Pack

Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), 2003

<http://www.acdicida.gc.ca/INET/IMAGE>



• **WOMEN ARTISANS NETWORK**

Planet Finance Morocco and the Contemporary Women and Youth Foundation - Turkey have established the Women Artisans Network which has launched its website at www.womenartisansnetwork.org.

The aim of the network is to promote the work of female crafts workers by widely disseminating information and providing them with visibility. The network website actively supports the work of women working in crafts in one region by encouraging them to collaborate with women from other regions, building a network at the regional, national and finally international level. It also integrates these women into the international circuit, breaking their isolation while respecting their way of life, without any destruction of the traditional landscape or dismissal of ethical constraints.

For more information please contact: Fatim-Zahra Benharbet
Secretarie Generale / PlaNet Finance Macro
fbenharbet@planetfinance.org

[S.NSF/vLUIimages/GenderEquality2/\\$file/WEB-COVER-E.pdf](http://www.snsf.vluimages.com/GenderEquality2/$file/WEB-COVER-E.pdf)

- **Trade and Gender: Opportunities and Challenges for Developing Countries**

Tran-Nguyen, A. and Beviglia Zampetti, A., 2004, UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Available at:
http://www.siyanda.org/docs/UNCTAD_EDM_2004_2.pdf

- **WIDE Briefing Paper: 'Gender Indicators for monitoring Trade Agreements'**

Irene van Staveren, February 2007

In this briefing paper, Irene van Staveren develops a tool for policy makers to main-

stream gender equality goals in trade agreements consisting of a set of gender and trade indicators. The briefing paper discusses the methodology chosen for the development of the indicator; it presents eleven indicators, and illustrates their use in relation to the bilateral trade agreement between the European Union (EU) and the four Southern American countries, Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and Paraguay, associated in Mercosur.

Available at <http://www.wide-network.org/index.jsp?id=231>

USEFUL LINKS

- Network Women in Development Europe (WIDE)

www.wide-network.org

WIDE is a European network of development NGOs, gender specialists and human rights activists. WIDE monitors and influences international economic and development policy and practice from a feminist perspective. WIDE's Economic Literacy project enables members and partners to participate in debates on the global economy by enhancing their understanding of economic and trade issues as well as the conceptual links between gender and trade.

- International Gender and Trade Network (IGTN)

www.igttn.org

The IGTN website provides an extensive collection of documents on all aspects of gender and trade. Resources cover information and updates on trade agreements, including background on the WTO, reports and articles on the key issues, advocacy materials, and economic literacy materials produced by its regional chapters. The IGTN electronic bulletin also provides analysis on gender and trade issues and updates on the WTO negotiations from Geneva.

- Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)

www.awid.org

AWID is an international membership organization connecting, informing and mobilizing people and organizations committed to achieving gender equality, sustainable development and women's human rights. Through the Women's Rights and Economic Change theme, AWID works towards developing more effective strategies to deal with gender equality and poverty eradication in an era of globalization.

- Eldis

www.eldis.org

Eldis is a database and email service of information sources on international development. It aims to share the best knowledge on development, policy, practice and research. It provides an extensive collection of documents on gender and trade and trade policy.

- Siyanda

www.siyanda.org

Siyanda is an on-line database of gender and development materials from around the world. It is also an interactive space where gender practitioners can share ideas, experiences and resources.

• PROGRAMME EVENTS: 2ND PARTNERS' MEETING: SHARING GOOD PRACTICE - CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



The second partners' meeting came at a stage where the programme has been in action for almost a year and half and can be considered the first technical meeting based on the outcomes of the first meeting that took place in Cairo in June 2006, where a common understanding of the aim and objectives of the programme was established. All seven project consortia were represented at the meeting which took place from 5-8 March 2007 in Casablanca, Morocco, often with more than one representative per organisation.

The meeting aimed to provide a regional forum for sharing, learning and linking the work of the seven EOWEL projects and for building on strengthening cross-cutting themes, communication and visibility, review and analysis, documentation and dissemination of lessons learned.

The programme addressed seven main topics: Women's Economic Empowerment

- Building a Common Understanding, Sharing Good Practice - Challenges and Opportunities, Monitoring impact, Presenting Study Findings on National Women's Machineries and Women's Economic Situation in the MEDA countries, and finally, Communication, Dissemination and Visibility.

The meeting also provided an opportunity to present the main findings and recommendations of the two thematic studies commissioned by the RWEL programme on National Women Machineries and on Women Economic Situational Analysis in the MEDA countries. More information on the RWEL studies can be found on the programme website at <http://www.roleof-womenineconomiclife.net/RWEL.html>

In addition to the technical sessions, field visits were organised by the Moroccan partners, enabling participants to engage with the women project beneficiaries, discuss their products, compare quality and pricing, and make valuable contacts through networking. Project partners also used the opportunity of the meeting to network, discuss issues related to their respective projects and establish common ground for future initiatives on areas mutual interest and concern.

For a full report of the 2nd Partners' Meeting please visit www.euromedwomen-srights.net

• ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Seminar on National Women's Machineries - 13-14 June 2007, Cairo

The the EUROMED Programme "Role of Women in Economic Life" will convene a 2-day seminar on National Women Machineries in the MEDA region on 13-14 June in Cairo. The researchers who have undertaken studies on different National Women's Machineries in the MEDA region, representatives of National Women's Machineries, leading NGOs, and some donor agencies and gender experts have been invited to discuss study findings and arrive at recommendations. For more details, check out our website for latest news on the seminar www.euromedwomen-srights.net

- WIDE's Annual Conference 2007 'New aid, old trade: What do women have to say?' - 14-17 June 2007

WIDE's Annual Conference 2007 will be hosted by the Gender and Development

Working Group of the Spanish Platform of Development NGOs (CONGDE), in Madrid on 14-17 June 2007.

The aim of this year's conference is to create a forum for constructive analysis of women's rights today and perspectives for gender equality in the new global development and trade architecture.

Further information will follow at WIDE's website in the coming weeks:

www.wide-network.org

- International Conference on "Mediterranean Women and the Challenges of Human Development" - University of Fes, Morocco 28-30 June 2007

"Mediterranean Women and the Challenges of Human Development", organised by Isis Centre for Women and Development and Fes-Saiss Association is the third of a series of international conferences on Mediterranean women organised in Fes.

The conference aims to contribute to the advancement of reflection, research, and action in the overall domain of women's development in the Mediterranean Basin. By bridging the gap between researchers, decision-makers, and civil society. The conference also aims at reinforcing democratic thinking and inter-cultural dialogue in the region.

For information contact:

Professor Fatima Sadiqi

President of ISIS Center and Executive Board Member of Fes-Saiss Association

sadiqi_fatima@yahoo.fr

- Round-Table on Women & Public Life: Empowerment & Participation in Social Studies & Research - July 2007

The Middle East Research Competition (MERC) program in Tunis and the Organization of Arab Women in Cairo will organize jointly a round-table on "Women and the Public Life : Empowerment and Participation in Social Studies and Research". The seminar scheduled for July 2007 in Syria falls within a topic of interest to the two organizations, focusing on research in the area of empowerment of Arab women and developing ideas on the public sphere.

Given the situation of women in the Arab world and varying developments across countries, this seminar invites participants to discuss the relationship between women

and the public sphere through an exploration of regional state of the art. It is an invitation to undertake a critical reading of what is being written on women and the public sphere and an attempt to explore some of the current features to identify gaps and are understudied areas.

Deadline for sending abstracts by email is 30 April 2007

Please write to:

Organization of Arab Women - Cairo

Info@arabwomenorg.net

MERC - Tunis

contact@mercprogram.org

- Seminar: Muslim Women in the Media: Between myth and reality

The European Forum of Muslim Women and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe are organising a seminar aimed discussing negative stereotypes of Muslim women in the media, particularly since September 11, 2001. The objective of this seminar is to initiate a space of open dialogue and exchange of views between all concerned actors, Muslim Women, journalists and politicians. For further information please contact sajjad.karim@europarl.europa.eu

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership's Education and Training for Employment (MEDA-ETE) project

The project is a regional initiative, implemented as part of the Barcelona process. Education and training have been identified as key tools for promoting economic and social development in the MEDA region and for developing competitive economies in open markets, both of which are key items in the political agendas of the Euro-Mediterranean region countries.

The MEDA-ETE website has recently been newly designed and updated and includes a number of new functions and enhances the website's focus on the project's thematic areas of adult learning, employment, entrepreneurship, gender equality, ICT in learning, key competences, lifelong learning and VET, qualification frameworks, skills for poverty reduction, and teaching and learning. The new site also provides country information on the MEDA partner countries and links to useful websites in those countries. Please visit: www.meda-ete.net!

• CONTACTS AND SUBSCRIPTION

To subscribe to our newsletter or to receive more information on the programme please contact:

Alaa GHONEIM

Administrative Officer

EC Project Role of Women in Economic Life

192 El Nil Street,

Agouza, Cairo

Egypt

T: +20 (0) 3001 609

F: +20 (0) 344 3076

Alaa.ghoneim@britishcouncil.org.eg

If you would like to contribute to our next issue please contact:

Susana Pavlou - Editor

Programme Coordinator

Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS)

46 Makedonitissas Ave.,

1700 Nicosia, Cyprus

T: + 357 22 351 276

F: + 357 22 353 682

susana@medinstgenderstudies.org

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• STAFF BOX

- Editor in Chief: Marguerite Appel
- Editor: Susana Pavlou
- Writers and Contributors:
 - Lina Abou Habib
 - Fatim-Zahra Benharbet
 - Noha Yehia
 - Michael Cracknell
- Layout & Design: Mohamed Ahmed