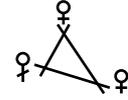


CSBR E-NEWS

Sexuality in Muslim Societies



WWHR- New Ways

Congratulations to the people of Tunisia and Egypt, we would like to express our deep admiration especially for **ATFD** (Association Tunisienne des Femmes Démocrates), **AFTURD** (Association Des Femmes Tunisiennes Pour La Recherche Et Le Développement), **EIPR** (Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights) and **NWF** (New Woman Foundation); four CSBR member organizations in Tunisia and Egypt who are among the leading groups of the amazing change in both countries. All CSBR members are wishing you that your incredible efforts bring freedom(s) and equality to your countries.

THE INTERNATIONAL CSBR CAMPAIGN “ONE DAY ONE STRUGGLE”

Around 50 organizations from 12 countries campaigned together for the second time uniting efforts under one common slogan: “Sexual Rights are Human Rights!”



by Ahsan Mahsood

On November 9, 2010, the 2nd international and simultaneous “One Day One Struggle” campaign organized by the CSBR to promote sexual, reproductive and bodily health and rights in Muslim societies took place in 12 countries across the Middle East, North Africa, South and Southeast Asia. With diverse and groundbreaking actions and events, around 50 human rights organizations, universities and municipalities **simultaneously** called for public attention to issues like *right to information, sexuality education, sexual health, bodily autonomy and sexual rights of individuals, LGBTQ rights, sexual diversity and Islam, sexuality and Shariah* as well as the struggle to bring an end to sexual rights violations ranging from *polygamy to killings of women and LGBTQ*.

On this day, hundreds gathered at panels, workshops, film screenings, theater performances and press conferences to assert that sexual, reproductive and bodily rights are universal human rights based on the inherent freedom, dignity and equality of all human beings.

Inside this issue you can find details on the struggles and issues raised by the advocates in all 12 countries via 27 simultaneous events realized as part of this Campaign that was coordinated by Women for Women’s Human Rights (WWHR) – New Ways.

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3RD CSBR SEXUALITY INSTITUTE, SEPTEMBER 2010, INDONESIA



Following two successful CSBR Sexuality Institutes (Malaysia, 2008 and Turkey, 2009), the **3rd CSBR Sexuality Institute** took place through September 18-25 in Jakarta, Indonesia. Co-organized by the CSBR and WWHR – New Ways, the training brought together 21 leading sexual health and rights activists and practitioners from Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ghana, Indonesia, Iran, Lebanon, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sudan and Tanzania. The participants’ incredibly enthusiastic feedback confirmed the increasing need for this kind of sexuality training that is equipped with the perspective of the global South.

The program of this year’s Institute was composed of an overview of theory and research on sexual diversities and non-conforming sexualities, sexual health, HIV/AIDS, gender and politics, youth sexuality, sexuality education, SRHR and the international law, current debates on SRHR, Shariah and sexuality, and advocacy for SRHR at the local, national and international levels. The Institute curriculum included workshops, lectures, discussions, group work and exercises, roundtables, and a panel session with SRHR activists from Indonesia. Diversity of the sessions and participants’ backgrounds enabled a space for networking, south-to-south knowledge transfer and also presenting both the variety and commonality of sexual rights issues in different contexts.

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ONE DAY ONE STRUGGLE CAMPAIGN IN 12 COUNTRIES

Continued from page 1

As a unique effort to underscore the joint struggle against the violation of sexual and bodily rights in Muslim societies, this simultaneous international campaign was conceptualized in response to the social and political context in which religion is misused as a powerful instrument of control and sexual oppression with the goal of legitimizing human rights violations in the domain of sexuality. The campaign once again asserted that sexuality is not a private issue but rather a site of political, social, and economic struggle for equality, human rights, democracy and peace at the national and international levels. With double the number of participating organizations from 12 countries, this year we raised our voice even more strongly to claim our sexual and bodily rights and continue our struggle against violations of our rights and freedoms.

BANGLADESH

UNCOVERING THE MYTHS AROUND SEXUALITY

Bandhu Social Welfare Society and **Manusher Jonno Foundation** organized a day long program of a variety of events including a thematic discussion on sexuality, film screenings of *Jihad for Love* and *Love for Share*, a quiz game and debate contest on sexuality, sexual diversity and LGBTQ issues, with the participation of university students, lawyers, journalists and representatives of sexual minority groups. More than 50 people attended the



Campaign event where participants from different backgrounds and age groups shared their thoughts regarding sexuality and spoke up to uncover the myths around sexuality.

Participants emphasized the need for this kind of public discussions on sexuality, sexual diversity and LGBTQ issues, and underlined that

the existing laws violate the freedom and right to bodily autonomy and expression of individuals, especially violating the rights of LGBTQ and women whose bodies are recognized to be sources of crime as evidenced in the current practice of the laws. Possible ways to eliminate and reduce stigmatization and discrimination were also discussed, among the suggestions were; the revision and reinforcement of legal systems, adoption and implementation of comprehensive rights-based education and health programs and policies, and the development of policies and programs that aim to reduce and eliminate discrimination.

www.bandhu-bd.org * www.manusher.org

DISCUSSING SRHR IN BANGLADESH: A MOTHER'S LAMENT

Centre for Gender, Sexuality and HIV/AIDS at the James P. Grant School of Public Health of BRAC University hosted a film screening and discussion on SRHR issues. The Centre also sponsored a Hijra-rights based event organized by **Shomporko Naya Shetu**.

The Centre screened a documentary entitled *A Mother's Lament* by the acclaimed international filmmaker Yasmine Kabir. The documentary explores issues of sexual violence, gender discrimination, custodial abuse, and other pivotal issues in Bangladesh such as the Bangladeshi women's struggle against institutional oppression and abuse of power. The film explores the sense of disempowerment and hopelessness a family undergoes as it struggles to cope with their girl's incarceration leading to her death under custody.



After the screening, the filmmaker and the present audience of academics, human rights activists, researchers, and representatives from the LGBT community held a discussion on the current state of sexual, bodily and reproductive rights of women in Bangladesh, highlighting the social, legal, political, gender, and patriarchal issues. <http://sph.bracu.ac.bd>

EGYPT

RIGHT TO SEXUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL

New Women Foundation (NWF) in cooperation with the **Center for Egyptian Women's Legal Assistance (CEWLA)** and the **Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR)** conducted a round table discussion on the right to sexuality education in formal school curriculum. The discussion attended by 40 participants revolved around the importance and the need to include sexual rights education in school curriculum and the expected role of the civil society to advocate for sexuality education for youth. In addition to distinguished experts, representatives from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and the National Councils for Women, Motherhood and Childhood also participated in the meeting.



Following up on the ideas shared at the roundtable discussion, NWF is now planning to formulate an action plan and coordinate a task force composed of NGOs and young people to integrate sexuality education into the formal education system of Egypt.

Also within the framework of the *One Day One Struggle* campaign in Egypt, a number of bloggers released a blog titled "sexuality 4 all" which includes posts on sexual health and rights, comics and also video shots with famous actors to support sexual rights.

www.sexuality4all.wordpress.com * www.nwrcegypt.org * www.cewla.org * www.eipr.org

GHANA

ISLAM'S ROLE IN PROMOTING SEXUAL AND BODILY RIGHTS

RUWACDA and **Partners In Development** in collaboration with the **Ashaiman Network of NGOs** organized a seminar on sexuality and the role of Islam in promoting responsible sexual behaviors and bodily rights of individuals. The seminar, which led to questions and answers that opened the door for detailed discussions on matters of sexuality in Islam, was attended by over 30 participants including young people, policy experts, Islamic scholars, Assembly members, activists, and NGOs including Muslim chiefs.

At the end of the seminar, participants and particularly the Muslim chiefs expressed their demand to organize such seminars more frequently in order to expand the spread of information regarding sexuality in Muslim communities. www.ruwacda.blogspot.com

INDONESIA

(HOMO) SEXUALITY IN ISLAM

GAYA NUSANTARA together with the **Network of Anti-Violence Society (JAMAK)**

held a public seminar entitled "Islam and (Homo) sexuality". Keynote speakers of the seminar were the progressive Muslim scholar (*ustad*) **Imam Nakhoi**, leader of an Islamic boarding school in Situbondo, East Java and the moderator **Dede Oetomo**, founder of **GAYA NUSANTARA**.



Organized at the Nadlatul Ulama Museum (Museum NU) in Jalan Menanggal V, Surabaya, the seminar was attended by around 40 representatives of local NGOs, and witnessed lively discussions with the active participation of the audience.

www.gayanusantara.or.id

AN INSPIRING WEBSITE TO BUILD A SAFE SPACE FOR QUEER WOMEN IN INDONESIA

Institut Pelangi Perempuan (IPP - Indonesian Youth LBT Women Center) celebrated the launch of its long awaited website which will provide a very important resource for young queer women in Indonesia and constitute a safe space to share their own experiences and build links of solidarity. As it is very difficult for young LBT women in Indonesia to be visible in public spaces, IPP is using the internet as an effective way for organizing young queer women and providing them with a space where they can interact with each other and express their sexuality freely.

www.pelangiperempuan.or.id

IRAN

WOMEN ACTIVISTS IN IRAN DISCUSS SEXUALITY

Women activists in Iran organized a one-day workshop on "Sexuality and Education in Iran" attended by 25 participants, who first defined the term sexuality and its related concepts incorporating their own knowledge. Lack of an equivalent for the words related to sexuality in the Persian language was an important aspect of the discussion. A brief overview on the history of sexuality was followed by a discussion on sexual rights and the importance of studying sexuality.



A feminist activist lawyer's presentation on "Sex and Sexual Rights in Iranian Law" led to a discussion where participants expressed that all basic sexual rights including the freedom of choice and the right to sexuality free from compulsion, discrimination and violence have been denied in the Iranian laws.

Facilitator asked the participants to write scenarios on topics like dignity, freedom, respect, pleasure and equality in sexuality; which were then staged as plays. Following a review of concepts like "sex", "gender" and their relations to sexuality, the facilitator explained sexual orientations, and drew an axis with good and bad sex at opposite ends, asking the participants to put different sexual orientations on this axis, which showed the dominant clichés and stereotypes in Iran. Based on the very positive assessment of this workshop, organizers decided to hold more workshops on sexuality and bodily rights. If you want to contact the organizers of the campaign in Iran please write to newways@wwhr.org

MALAYSIA

SEXUALITY DIALOGUE IN MALAYSIA

Sisters in Islam (SIS) in collaboration with **Pink Triangle Foundation (PTF)**, **Women's Aid Organization (WAO)** and **All Women's Action Society (AWAM)**



organized a Sexuality Dialogue at the PTF Office in Jalan Raja Laut, Kuala Lumpur. The half day workshop on sexuality and Shariah was attended by 55 participants, most of whom were PTF clients.

Objective of the workshop was to start a progressive discourse on the issue of sexuality from the Shariah perspective and to contextualize the issue in Malaysia. It was envisioned that gaining knowledge on the progressive outlooks can empower the community to stand up, claim its rights, and advocate for its sexual and bodily rights to end discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Some participants stated that the workshop really opened their eyes, showing how one can look at Islam and Islamic Laws with a more non-discriminatory view. Most participants were happy to know that there are progressive interpretations of Shariah and sexuality issues that they could follow regardless of their sexual orientation. It has also been proposed to hold the workshop on a regular basis. www.sistersinislam.org.my * www.wao.org.my * www.awam.org.my * www.ptfmalaysia.org

LEBANON

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO SAY ABOUT YOUR BODY?

Nasawiya with the collaboration of **Helem** and **Meem**, launched the website www.jismi.net featuring “The Awareness Clips” on sexual and bodily autonomy, and opened the floor for the following questions: “How are our bodies our own, our freedom of expression, and our freedom to be? How do racism and sexism limit us? How does the system restrain us and our sexualities?” They shared their videos on the webpage designed for the campaign and on Youtube. Within 24 hours, the campaign picked up and spread all over Facebook and Twitter. To date, the videos have been viewed more than 6,000 times. Jismi.net was shared more than 300 times on Facebook within 24 hours and retweeted just as many times. The videos have also been used in many classes to educate the students on sexuality and diversity. Nasawiya, Helem and Meem initiated this viral campaign with the belief that discussing sexuality and bodily rights in a more open, liberated way will not only benefit women. Liberating women, they argue, will also help liberate men, who are often cornered by their friends’ and families’ patriarchal view of the female, even if they do not agree with them. www.jismi.net * www.helem.net * www.nasawiya.org * www.meemgroup.org



Also as part of the *One Day One Struggle* campaign, an **independent women’s shelter** in Lebanon held a workshop on trauma and violence against women in the form of rape, war, and abuse of all kinds.

PAKISTAN

LOVE HAS NO BOUNDARIES

Aahung in collaboration with **Dugdugi** and **T2f-Peaceniche** organized an interactive dialogue on “Sexual Minorities in Muslim Societies”. The event titled “Love has NO boundaries” featured excerpts from *Jihad for Love* and a play narrating the story of a same-sex couple through a reading of letters. Panelists of the following discussion were Dr. Uzma Ambreen, a practicing psychiatrist and therapist; Dr. Sikandar Sohani, a practicing physician and sexual and reproductive health expert associated with Aahung; and Mr. Hadi Hussain, contributing editor of the first Pakistani magazine (Chay) to cover sexuality issues in a South Asian perspective. After the panelists’ presentations of their views, the floor was opened for discussion. Aahung had intentionally invited only those with some level of sensitivity towards the issue of homosexuality, yet it was seen that there is resistance also among those considered to be ‘converted’.



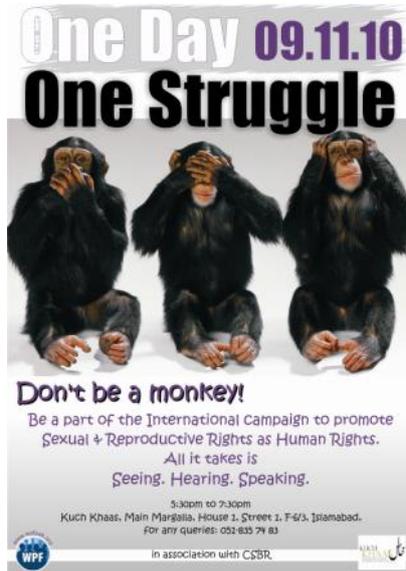
Aahung also received a strong reaction from representatives of sexual minorities who asked “Why bring Islam or any religion into the debate about homosexuality?”

Objectives of the interactive session were: to dispel the notion that homosexuality is a disease to be cured; increase

awareness on the fluidity of sexuality; promote tolerance for diverse sexualities; reconcile the issue of homosexuality and faith. The event was successful in opening up the debate and moving forward by linking with other organizations and individuals struggling for sexual and bodily rights in Pakistan. www.aahung.org * www.t2f.biz

BREAKING THE SILENCE: ALL IT TAKES IS TO SEE, TO HEAR, TO SPEAK

World Population Foundation in Islamabad organized a unique theatrical performance to break the silence around issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights. A group of talented, motivated and socially conscious students staged a performance entitled “Seeing. Hearing. Speaking.” which depicted issues in our daily lives, such as the denial regarding the existence or relevance of the sexual abuse of children, gender based violence and sexual harassment.



Over 40 people participated in the event, including human and women’s rights activists, parents and adolescents. Students performed in full candor and the audience took active part in the ensuing discussion on the sexual abuse and violence that takes place in everyday life. Noting that only a few people talk about these issues while others live in a state of denial, it was concluded that unless we start speaking up, the violence will continue. The most striking feature of the event was the youth’s enthusiasm to become a

positive force of change and the support with which the audience responded. Everyone had insightful ideas on how we can improve our surroundings and society and what we can do as individuals to secure the future of upcoming generations. www.wfpak.org

TURKEY

“I WAS BORN FREE! BUT WILL I LIVE FREELY?”

Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR) - New Ways organized an event entitled “I was born free! But will I live freely?” featuring the award winning documentary *Pure Evil*, on the true story of a 16 years old girl buried alive and killed by her father and grandfather. The following panel on “Our Bodies, Sexualities and Struggle



against Violence” addressed the control mechanisms over people's bodies, and aimed to reveal the link between non-recognition of bodily rights and the violence against women and LGBT. Panelist from Women's Platform Against the Killing of Women, Funda Ekin underscored the role of the State and State

officials who do not take any precautions. Seval Kilit from Women's Gate, a trans women's organization, addressed the importance of a counter-ideology against hate crimes/culture to safeguard the right to life; also emphasizing the need for employment alternatives for trans women. Independent feminist journalist Emine Ozcan, gave an account of sexual rights violations that result in murders. Also analyzing the news coverage, she criticized the mainstream media language that legitimizes these killings. Yasemin Oz from Amargi and KaosGL presented her research on how sexual and bodily crimes are defined in the Turkish Penal Code, and problematized the concept of “public morality” frequently used against women and LGBT.

Around 80 activists, academics and students attended the panel that paved the way to develop new collective strategies. Discussions on police violence against trans people and discriminatory practices, led to the conclusion that public campaigns should be organized to fight this culture of hate, and ensure the proper implementation of laws. www.wwhr.org



10 DIFFERENT EVENTS IN 9 CITIES ACROSS TURKEY

Partner organizations and participants of WWHR's **Human Rights Education Program for Women (HREP)** organized 10 different events across Turkey. HREP participants in **Ankara-Mamak** organized a panel on violence against women, while the panel in **Istanbul-Umraniye** focused on sexual function disorders and its link to violence.



From the workshop in Canakkale

Marmaris Women's Support Association and the HREP participants in Akdeniz University - **Antalya**, and in **Istanbul- Gazi** organized panels on sexuality. In **Canakkale**, HREP participants, Women's Support Center (ELDER) and the Municipality Social Affairs Department organized three simultaneous workshops on sexual and bodily rights in three community centers.



From the panel in Ankara

Diyarbakir Metropolitan Municipality Center for Research and Application on Women's Issues (DIKASUM), Epidem Women's Education and Consultation Association, Selis Women's Consultation Association, Kardelen Women's Cooperative, Ceren Women's Cooperative, and Bağlar Women's Cooperative issued a press release on the killings of women and the State control over women's reproductive rights; and screened a compilation of sexual violence incidents of the past year as a slideshow in a crowded street.

HREP participants and the Women's Assembly of Metropolitan Municipality City Council in **Izmir** and the Van Women's Association (VAKAD) in **Van** held screenings of *Pure Evil* followed by discussions. Press releases on sexual and bodily rights were issued in Izmir and in **Hatay** where HREP participants also organized a demonstration. www.wwhr.org



From the workshop in Marmaris

**CALL FOR ACTION:
“WE ARE CONCERNED
ABOUT TURKEY’S FAILURE
TO ATTEND THE VOTING
AT THE UN GENERAL
ASSEMBLY!”**

On Tuesday December 21st, 2010 the United Nations General Assembly voted an extremely critical resolution aiming to ensure the protection of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender individuals (LGBT) against extrajudicial or arbitrary executions and killings. However, as was the case in the previous sessions held to ensure LGBT rights, Turkey’s UN representative failed to take part in the voting. In order to protest government’s indifferent attitude about such a burning issue, 28 organizations brought together by **Kaos GL Association** and **Women for Women’s Human Rights (WWHR) – New Ways** wrote a common protest letter and have called upon the Turkish government to break its silence about the hate crimes committed against LGBT individuals and to immediately make necessary amendments in law and practice. For further details please see; www.wwhr.org/news.php?detay=66

**AWARE GIRLS LAUNCHED SAFE
ABORTION HOTLINE IN
PAKISTAN**

by Gulalai Ismail, Aware Girls - Pakistan

Aware Girls, a young women-led organization working for women’s empowerment, gender equality and peace in Pakistan has launched the hotline “Sahailee” (Female Friend) with the support of a Dutch organization Women on Waves and the Asia Safe Abortion Partnership (ASAP). The hotline provides information about sexual and reproductive health, safe abortion and the means to prevent postpartum hemorrhage. Aware Girls is promoting safe abortion by training midwives and community women on the use of misoprostol, which induces safe abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. To date they have provided information to hundreds of women. Pakistan has one of the highest rates of maternal deaths in Asia; each year 30,000 women die due to pregnancy related reasons. Whilst 80% of maternal deaths happen during home births, nearly 90% of women continue to deliver at home in the absence of skilled birth attendants. Despite the fierce opposition of different religious and political leaders, and though there was minimum publicity on it, within one month of its launch the hotline received a huge number of calls. Aware Girls is very determined to run the hotline, as it saves the lives of thousands of women who die of unsafe abortions and postpartum hemorrhage. You can help Aware Girls sustain the Hotline by spreading the information or donating to them. To reach the hotline call +92 315 917 0408. For more information visit www.awaregirls.org or e-mail aware_girls@yahoo.com

**NASAWIYA; A FEMINIST COLLECTIVE
IN LEBANON JOINS THE CSBR**

by Farah Salka, Nasawiya - Lebanon

CSBR gets stronger with the energy and exciting work of its newest member Nasawiya. Here is a brief introduction from Nasawiya:



Nasawiya is a collective of feminist activists based in Beirut. By feminists, we refer to individuals committed to gender justice and equality. We apply feminist analysis to our social justice work; that is we always keep an eye on gender dynamics and oppression within the social and political struggles,

address the systematic structural problems rather than the symptoms, and regard women’s experiences and voices as central to all solutions and activist work. Feminism is a learning process for all of us and we are continuously figuring things out by listening to each other, challenging our opinions, and reflecting critically on our work and our theories for social change.

By activists, we refer to individuals actively involved in gender justice work. Some Nasawiyas work fulltime in the field of women’s rights; others volunteer for a few hours every month. Some are students and some are professionals in different fields. All of us are activists with different capacities, whether leading our own feminist projects or discussing gender issues with our friends and communities. In our jobs, classes, homes, and daily lives, we advocate for equality and social change.

Nasawiya is a member-driven collective where everyone is equal and in support of each other’s activism. We do not have a traditional NGO structure of boards, staff, and volunteers. We believe that we are stronger together. At Nasawiya, we work together to recreate a world free from sexism, and all other forms of exploitation and discrimination that reinforce it, such as classism, heterosexism, racism, capitalism. We recognize all these problems to be interrelated and equally oppressive, and we insist on addressing them from a progressive grassroots feminist perspective.

We are aware that our mission may sound too idealistic, and the issues we are addressing may seem controversial, some may even be considered taboo. Yet we believe it is time we go to the root causes of our problems; it is time we embrace the people that have long been silenced both by our society and many human rights groups in it. We strive to be not only a movement of educated and privileged women, but a movement by and for the single mothers, the refugees, the disabled, the sex workers, the migrant workers, and the people of non-conforming gender identities and sexualities. We understand that we have been taught to believe that we do not have much in common; but having been united in marginalization, we can make an effort to unite in seeking a change in ourselves and in our society.

The three pillars of Nasawiya are; creating innovative feminist initiatives that tackle the diverse manifestations of sexism and patriarchy in communities and institution; connecting activists and marginalized groups working on various gender issues to foster friendships and build a powerful solidarity movement; and finally, mobilizing and developing collective resources and capacities to support the activists working for social change with tools, information, experience and love.

www.nasawiya.org

LGBT PRIDE WEEK IN ISTANBUL FOCUSED ON “THE FAMILY”

by Cihan Huroglu, Lambdaistanbul LGBT Solidarity Association - Turkey

The Istanbul LGBT Pride Week 2010, which took place through June 18-27, generated a great dynamic in terms of its organizational capacity, and opened the floor to new discussions around its specific theme of “the family”. The week was concluded with its traditional pride march realized with an ever-growing number of participants.

Istanbul Pride has been organized every year since 1993; the pride march, however, has become visible on the streets only since 2003. Number of people who participated in the march this year was estimated to be around 3000-4000. Undoubtedly the most celebrated activity of the LGBT Pride, the march was also the culmination of Istanbul Pride following 10 days of events including a series of workshops, panels, exhibitions, film screenings and parties.

This year, the main theme of the Pride Week was inspired by the encouraging achievements of LISTAG; the family support group of Lambdaistanbul, and thus was declared as the concept and construct of “the family”. After the unfortunate statement of the Minister of State Responsible for Women and Family Selma Aliye Kavaf who declared “homosexuality is a disease”, the Pride organization team further mobilized its efforts around the LGBT protests against the minister.

The main motivation behind this year’s conceptualization was primarily to go beyond the first step of the movement, namely the individual LGBT emancipation (meaning coming-out discussions, the declaration of identities and following discussions around identities, the queer alternative etc.) and to focus more on the social relations of non-heterosexual individuals, where one faces the family in the first instance. The question of alternative family models and the economic and social role of the family were discussed from a queer perspective. There, the focus has been placed not only on the families of LGBT individuals, but also on LGBT as family members to deconstruct the traditional perception of “queers as a threat to the family”. This motive was reflected during the week in the form of a workshop on “being a father”; informative speeches on partnership regulations around the world; and critical discussions on hetero-normative family models and transgender fertility.

In addition, the week also addressed the issues of the current LGBT movement campaigns and agenda as well, such as hate crimes, conceptualization of gender, sexuality and morality, police pressure and the politicians’ ignorance and disregard of LGBT issues, as portrayed in the statement by Minister Kavaf. One of the most inspiring achievements of the Pride Week was the broad participation in the organization of events. A lot of LGBT individuals contributed to the week in a variety of ways; for many, this experience was their first contact with the movement and an LGBT community. The participatory method not only broadened the activities’ sphere of influence, but also improved the quality of the critical perspective in the discussions during the conceptualization of the entire project. A separate women’s initiative with a separate agenda was established under the organizational committee as well.

Guests such as Stefan Liebich, an MP from the Leftist Party of Germany, and various representatives from LGBT organizations in Germany, Lebanon, Portugal, Greece, England, Spain and USA all enriched the program. Discussions on the rising Homo-nationalism specifically in Germany, as well as the conditions of migrant LGBTs in Turkey indicated the great diversity of issues on the LGBT agenda and interconnectedness of the social problems. A special session was also held on Queer solidarity against the apartheid in Israel.

Art exhibitions and discussions on queer art, workshops on sexuality and body led by Female to Male transgenders, inspired new initiatives. The Genetically Modified Tomato Awards Ceremony that “awards” the most homophobic persons and institutions of the year also caught much attention and became one of the most visited events of the week. Needless to say, the Genetically Modified Tomato Award for the “life long homophobic performance” has gone to the Minister of State, Selma Aliye Kavaf.

The week also included many social events such as parties, cocktails, and film screenings followed by discussion sessions. In the panel of family support groups, activists exchanged their experiences and encouraged the LISTAG initiative to extend its work beyond Istanbul to other Anatolian cities, where the LGBT movement has recently been developing and gaining strength.

Istanbul Pride this year, as in previous years, served as a major driving force for LGBT activists from various cities to connect with activists in Istanbul and elsewhere, and create the spirit of LGBT solidarity which materialized in the pride march around the rainbow flag on Sunday June the 27th bringing thousands of activists and supporters together. The international participation was visible during the demonstration with banners that read 'queers against Israeli apartheid' and slogans in various languages including turkish, english, kurdish and armenian.

www.lambdaistanbul.org

www.prideistanbul.org/



By Ekin Yasa



By Ekin Yasa

3RD CSBR SEXUALITY INSTITUTE

Continued from page 1

It was most encouraging to see the interaction of so many activists, researchers and practitioners from a wide spectrum of areas such as sexual and reproductive health and rights advocacy, women's rights, LGBT, and youth sexuality undertaking groundbreaking work in their respective countries. Many of the participants emphasized that the Institute was a very enriching experience in all its aspects and equipped them with crucial tools in tackling the issues of sexuality in their respective countries. Here are some reflections from the participants of the Institute:

REFLECTIONS ON THE CSBR INSTITUTE



Mohuya Leya Falia - Manusher Jonno Foundation, Bangladesh

Before the Institute, I used to think that sexuality was totally unrelated to human rights issues, I could not link them together. Now I am quite confident, I can think of sexuality within the framework of basic human rights. The Institute also helped me deconstruct my understanding in many respects. I discovered that woman's sexuality is one of the major mechanisms of controlling women, and that normative sexuality framework marginalizes a group of people and limits the scope of respect for diversity; thus some are denied their basic human rights and faced with violence. My organization works a lot on violence against women and rights of the marginalized, so we will work towards linking the issue of sexuality with violence against women and marginalization.

Fatima Haider - AAHUNG, Pakistan

This was an overwhelmingly amazing experience for me, I'm so glad that I got the chance to be part of it. The trainers, facilities, logistics, everything was just brilliant and handled amazingly. I thought I knew everything about sexuality but realized that I really knew very little. And I'm so glad that I got to meet all these people who are very experienced in their own fields.



Farah Salka - Nasawiya, Lebanon

I am gratified to have joined the Institute and met great activists and feminists. I gained a lot both on personal and professional levels. My perception has changed as I've seen very different aspects of the issues around sexuality. I feel stronger, much more empowered now to speak up and defend angles that I did not have in sight before. I will try as much as possible to share all the knowledge, experience and stories with the other members of Nasawiya. I have been truly inspired and will try to transfer this inspiration into action.



Dr. Muhammed Aslam Bajwa - Organization for Participatory Development, Pakistan

The Institute provided us with a very holistic picture about the issues around sexuality. The sessions were interconnected and helped me integrate feminist perspective into the sexual health perspective. The Institute gave me very important tools to deal with the issues in my own country, and empowered me to talk about the real issues of the society from the perspective of sexuality, sexual health and rights.

MY EXPERIENCE OF THE CSBR SEXUALITY INSTITUTE AS A TRAINER

by tan beng hui - Fiesta Feminista, Malaysia

Many years ago, I was quite perplexed when I heard a friend refer to lesbians as 'lesbian women'. I remember thinking, "Strange... if lesbians aren't women, what else could they be?" I was convinced that the use of the word 'woman' was redundant since by definition, lesbians had to be 'women-loving-women'. I since discovered that I had little ability then to think beyond what the dominant discourse on gender told me. After all, the struggle at the time had been about asserting the distinction between biological sex and socially constructed gender. Those challenges aside, some of us now understand how this struggle also inadvertently contributed towards a binary view of gender, one which reduced the meaning of the term to men and women, and in the process, exclude those who may have fitted into both or neither.

Like 'gender', the term 'sexuality' has also had a history of being narrowly grasped by activists of all persuasions. For those dealing with rape, their framework of sexuality was largely confined to keeping women's bodies free from violence. On the other hand, those addressing maternal health, abortion, or contraception would rarely adopt a position beyond sexual and reproductive health and rights. At some point – perhaps in the hope of reversing years of silence and discrimination – sexuality was automatically assumed to mean sexual orientation or preference.

The recently concluded 3rd CSBR Sexuality Institute provided 21 activists working in different Muslim contexts with an opportunity to revisit and re-contemplate the concepts of gender and sexuality. Sessions comprising a combination of lectures, small group discussions, role-play, film, and even song and theatre were used to present and explore theory and practice.

One objective was to widen how gender and sexuality were understood. Specifically, thinking outside the box when using labels like 'man', 'woman', 'gay', 'lesbian', 'bisexual', 'transsexual', 'transgendered', 'intersex', etc. As well, having greater clarity in what meanings these terms may hold for different people. Participants were also encouraged to view gender and sexuality holistically – as opposed to treating them discretely with little or no connections.

Being part of this Institute, I found it amazing how much progress has been made in this regard. Just twenty years ago (or less depending on one's social, economic or geographic location), the opportunity to learn about such matters – what more being able to sit together in a room of like-minded activists in discussion and debate – would have been unimaginable for the majority. Had it presented itself, I might not have been so quick in concluding like I did, that all lesbians had to be women!

For many reasons ranging from efforts of sexuality advocates locally and globally to the politics of funding, there has been a proliferation of courses within the last decade, leaving those pursuing knowledge relating to gender and sexuality spoilt for choice. The CSBR Sexuality Institute may have been one of many initiatives that emerged out of these developments, but over the last three years, it has also distinguished itself from the others in the following ways.

For one, the Institute has a unique focus on those living in Muslim societies. This is driven by a belief that apart from the difficulties in addressing issues of gender and sexuality, efforts have to be negotiated through an additional layer of challenges that arise out of the politicization of religion: 'fundamentalism' and increasingly, Islamophobia.

At the same time, it isn't presumed that these experiences are homogenous. Neither is a blanket solution prescribed for all. The selection of a diverse group of participants – from Asia, the Middle East and Africa, with an assortment of identities and working backgrounds – serves as a reminder that those living in or among Muslim communities may share similar problems but not necessarily the same analytical lens or strategies for confronting these.

Recognizing that non-Muslims too are affected by these same challenges, albeit in differing degrees, the Institute welcomes the possibility of their inclusion, hence consciously extends the frontiers of solidarity building.

Indeed, another distinguishing feature is how the Institute's emphasis on promoting scholarship is matched by a desire to strengthen networking. A key consideration is to bring together activists for the purpose of engaging, challenging and learning from each other. This is also why a significant portion of time is dedicated to the sharing of experiences, in particular those relating to strategies for advocacy.

That the Institute has had a positive impact on many who have been through its doors is amply clear from the feedback received. I have been privileged to be a part of its journey so far, and hope to be able to support it for many more years to come. However, its continued success (and existence) lies very much in the hands of the network it serves.

beng hui was a trainer at the CSBR Sexuality Institute in 2009 and 2010. She wishes to thank both the participants who gave so generously of themselves, and her fellow trainers for the many insights she gained.

ADVOCATING FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS, NON-DISCRIMINATION AND SEXUAL RIGHTS: TURKEY'S 6th PERIODIC CEDAW REVIEW

by Liz Ercevik Amado and Sehnaz Kiyamaz, WWHR-New Ways - Turkey

In July 2010, the 6th Periodic Country Review of Turkey by the UN CEDAW (Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women) Committee was concluded with the review session at the UN Headquarters in New York. **Women for Women's Human Rights (WWHR) – New Ways** co-coordinated the CEDAW Turkey shadow reporting and advocacy process (2008-2010), which had significant impact on the review and the subsequent CEDAW Committee Concluding Comments, including on several important issues pertaining to sexual, reproductive and bodily rights. Having coordinated the women's movement's CEDAW advocacy efforts in previous reviews of Turkey in 1997 and 2005, WWHR-New Ways launched the preparations for this review process in 2008. After a meeting bringing together two women's coalitions, namely the Women's Platform on the Turkish Penal Code and the CEDAW NGO Forum Executive Committee, a joint coalition consisting of 20 national NGOs was established for collective work around Turkey's 6th Periodic Review. Envisioned as a collaborative and participatory process, the report was drafted under seven headings by different working groups, with an introduction to provide an overview and underline crosscutting emerging concerns.⁽¹⁾

The comprehensive shadow report was endorsed by six nationwide women's coalitions representing over 100 organizations. Women's NGOs framed their demands with the overarching perspective that "The Government should approach eliminating all forms of gender-based discrimination as a matter of urgency and major priority with due political commitment. Rather than reinforcing traditional gender roles through embedding solutions in the traditional family structures, the Government should adopt policies to empower women in all private and public spheres."⁽²⁾ Issues around sexual, bodily and reproductive health and rights were addressed in numerous sections of the shadow report as crucial demands. These included incorporating the "Equality Before the Law" principle into the Constitution and laws; annulling discriminatory statutes in the Turkish Penal Code on honor crimes, virginity testing, sexual orientation, and consensual sexual relations between minors; abolishing the discriminatory provision requiring women to wait 300 days to remarry after divorce and allowing women to use their birth last names after marriage. The report also included demands for the provision of sexual and reproductive health services, measures to address HIV/AIDS among women and girls, the establishment of sexual assault crisis centers, definition of hate crimes and measures to prevent killing of transsexual women.

During the review session, the report was highly commended by Committee members. In the official session with the Turkish government delegation, during which Committee members questioned the government on the periodic report and progress achieved, almost all the questions directed to the Turkey delegation reflected the points raised in the shadow report. The CEDAW Committee challenged the lack of actual progress, the conservative discourse and implementation problems rather directly and strongly. For instance, in the first question following the opening remarks by the Minister of Women and Family, a Committee Member directly asked why the government was reluctant to enact an anti-discrimination law including discrimination based on sexual orientation. This was very significant considering the Minister's unfortunate comment in March 2010 declaring "homosexuality is a disease". Moreover given the fact that sexual orientation is not addressed directly in the CEDAW Convention itself, it is a progressive interpretation on the side of the Committee, reflecting willingness to address sexual rights in the framework of CEDAW.

The Committee also noted that the government must take measures to prevent the arbitrary application of Article 29 of the Turkish Penal Code that regulates "unjust provocation," for honor killings. The Committee also raised issues of ongoing discrimination against women in marriage and divorce; HIV/AIDS among women and girls; sexual violence and lack of comprehensive legislation against domestic violence. In terms of sexual and reproductive health and rights, the Comments include a number of important and specific recommendations such as adopting "comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation and clear prohibition of multiple forms of discrimination against women"; amendments to the Penal Code to make "women's consent a prerequisite for genital examination under all circumstances" and the "explicit inclusion" of honor killings as aggravated homicide; taking "comprehensive measures to combat the spread of HIV/AIDS, including preventive measures" and "designing and implementing long term strategies" to eliminate gender stereotypes, discriminatory attitudes and harmful traditional practices such as forced and early marriages.⁽³⁾

The women's NGOs' initial analysis is that the comments reflect our demands to a great extent and will serve as a useful tool to pressure the government to take effective measures against discrimination. Given the volatile political atmosphere and continuing threat of backlash in face of rising conservatism, it is of further importance for women's rights advocates in Turkey to make effective use of international instruments such as CEDAW to safeguard and advance women's human rights, including sexual, bodily and reproductive rights.

⁽¹⁾ The full text of the Shadow Report can be accessed at http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/ngos/WPTPC_Turkey46.pdf

⁽²⁾ Addendum to Turkey Shadow NGO Report: Brief for Concluding Comments

⁽³⁾ Draft Concluding Comments for Turkey are available at <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/cedaw/docs/co/CEDAW-C-TUR-CO-6.pdf>

LGBT REPORT TURKEY

Marking a landmark in the history of CEDAW processes in Turkey, for the first time a thematic shadow report was submitted to the CEDAW Committee on discrimination and violence against women on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity. LGBT Rights Platform, consisting of six LGBTTI initiatives and associations, prepared this shadow report and submitted it to the Committee for consideration during Turkey's 6th review. The effect of the report was quite visible both during the constructive dialogue with the CEDAW Committee and in the questions directed to the delegation of Turkey. Even though the CEDAW Convention does not directly address the human rights of LBT women, this thematic report, like many reports from other countries, helped open a new area of struggle for LBT women's rights.

SIS RESEARCH ON THE IMPACT OF POLYGAMY

by Jessica de Cruz, intern at SIS - Malaysia

The status of women's rights in Islam is a highly contentious issue with profound impact on Malaysia's Muslim majority population. CSBR member organization, Malaysian-based women's rights NGO **Sisters in Islam (SIS)** argues that Malaysia's 1984 Islamic Family Law Act (IFL), to which all Malaysian Muslims are subject, is restrictive of women's rights and has become more so in recent years. One key area of debate is polygamy, the impact of which has been comprehensively studied by SIS over the last three years. Researchers from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, Universiti Malaya and Universiti Sains Malaysia led by SIS, interviewed and surveyed numerous husbands, first and second wives in polygamous marriages across Malaysia. Their experiences in a broad range of issues, from financial security to emotional impact, from social relationships to sexual needs were examined. This article is based upon SIS' research findings from the East and Central Zones, as presented at the 7th Malaysian Studies Conference in March 2010.

In Malaysia, Muslim men can legally take up to four wives. In 1994, to the consternation of women's rights groups, the IFL was amended allowing men to contract polygamous marriages without prior permission from a *Syariah* court, provided that they subsequently obtain legal endorsement. To avoid lengthy annulment proceedings courts tend to endorse such marriages, failing to thoroughly examine the impact on existing wives. Whilst in most states, Muslim family law stipulates that existing wives must be informed of their husbands' application for polygamous marriage, many men circumvent this requirement by taking an additional wife in a different state. Without a centralised registration database that records all Muslim marriages, women struggle to ascertain that their husband has taken an additional wife. Women who are aware of their husband's intention to marry another are occasionally permitted to voice their opinion in court, but the court is not obligated to consider their consent or opposition. Thus, many polygamous marriages are contracted without the existing wives' approval or knowledge.

The emotional distress caused by such polygamous marriages is exacerbated by the financial repercussions. Whilst the *Qur'an* and IFL stipulate that a man may enter a polygamous marriage only if he can provide equally in material as well as intangible needs, the rule is poorly enforced. In Perak, for instance, a man is not required to prove his financial means, but must merely state his intention to treat his wives fairly. Financial problems are felt acutely by first wives, with 40% stating that their husband's financial contribution to the first family diminished significantly after these men's second marriages. Second wives generally reported feeling more financially secure than first wives, it is posited that this may be due to their lower expectations of their husbands' obligations towards them.

Amendments to the IFL have been regressive in ensuring that first wives' attain financial security: husbands are no longer required to maintain their first wives' standard of living, and first wives are often forced to surrender their right to maintenance if they seek to obtain 'harta sepencarian.'⁽¹⁾ Consequently many first wives are compelled to increase their working hours to support their children. Children are profoundly affected as many resent their absent fathers, particularly when denied their right to proper education owing to their fathers' financial neglect. Within the existing IFL there is little a woman can do to escape the deleterious effects of a polygamous marriage, she even loses her entitlement to maintenance if she leaves the marital home without her husband's approval and is declared *nusyuz* ⁽²⁾ by the *Syariah* court. It is unsurprising that 82.8% of first wives stayed in a polygamous marriage merely for the sake of their children.



It is apparent that many polygamous marriages in Malaysia fail to live up to the *Qur'anic* image of a humane institution designed to protect women

and children in the exceptional circumstance of a post-war period. The 2005 amendment to the IFL no longer requires that a polygamous marriage be proven 'both just and necessary'; only 'just or necessary' thus allowing the notion of justice, the *raison d'etre* of polygamy in the *Qur'an*, to be almost completely undermined or disregarded in court deliberations. **SIS intends to use the research findings to lobby the Malaysian government to amend the IFL to ensure that polygamous marriages uphold justice and equality for all concerned. In 2011, SIS will publish its research findings in academic and other publications, to increase public awareness on the negative impact of polygamy. SIS also hopes to garner popular support for more effective legal protection for all the members of polygamous marriages.** Progressive amendments to the IFL will be most effective when supported by a civil society movement that challenges the discourses of superiority and patriarchy upon which many polygamous marriages are based. Hence, SIS' research is an important contribution towards advocating for women's rights in Malaysia and striving for advancements in this particular area.

⁽¹⁾ Division of matrimonial property.

⁽²⁾ Disobedient

FEATURE PUBLICATIONS & UPCOMING EVENTS

FEMINISTS ON THE FRONTLINE: CASE STUDIES OF RESISTING AND CHALLENGING FUNDAMENTALISMS

published by AWID, 2010

Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) has produced a unique bilingual anthology of 18 case studies that document the experiences and strategies of women's rights activists who confront religious fundamentalisms around the globe. "Feminists on the Frontline" is based on first-hand accounts of activists working in various fields around the globe; from sexuality, citizenship and queer rights to communalism, ethno-nationalism and scientific research.

The anthology can either be read as a whole, giving readers a sense of the landscape of fundamentalisms across a variety of regions and religions, or readers can focus on selected case studies. A two-page summary of each case study allows the readers to get a quick snapshot of the full story. The publication will soon be supplemented with an introductory chapter that synthesizes some of the key learnings and trends that are highlighted across case studies. "Feminists on the Frontline" covers a broad range of strategies women use to confront and challenge religious and other fundamentalist ideologies, with the hope of inspiring others in their activism.

The anthology is available online at www.awid.org/eng/About-AWID/AWID-Initiatives/Resisting-and-Challenging-Religious-Fundamentalisms/CF-Case_Studies

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES & TRAININGS ON SEXUALITY

UN CSW 55th session: The 55th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) will take place in New York, USA through February 22–March 4, 2011. As part of CSW Parallel Events, the CSBR will hold a panel entitled "Sexual and bodily rights in Muslim societies: Building a progressive discourse" on Monday February 28, at 6 pm, in the Church Center for the United Nations, the Boss Room. www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/csw/55sess.htm

CREA's 5th Global Sexuality, Gender and Rights Institute: Exploring Theory & Practice will be held in June 18–26, 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey. Deadline for applications is February 15. www.creaworld.org

International Association for the Study of Sexuality, Culture and Society (IASSCS) Conference, entitled "Naming and Framing: The Making of Sexual (In)Equality" will take place in Madrid, Spain through July 6-9, 2011. www.iasscs.org/2011conference/

WAS Award for Excellence and Innovation in Sexuality Education 2011: World Association for Sexual Health (WAS) invites submissions from educators and organizations to be considered for the WAS Award for Excellence and Innovation in Sexuality Education 2011 to be presented at the 20th World Congress of Sexual Health, Glasgow, U.K., June 12-16, 2011. Deadline for submissions is March 31, 2011. www.worldsexology.org/content/was-awards

YOGYAKARTA PRINCIPLES COMIC BOOK

Prepared by
WWHR - New Ways

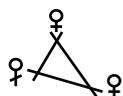
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WWHR - New Ways



CSBR member **Institut Pelangi Perempuan** (IPP - Indonesian Youth LBT Women Center) published "Yogyakarta Principles Comic Book" with an effort to "translate" the principles into a more youth friendly language and to disseminate information on Yogyakarta Principles amongst the young queer community in Indonesia. The story in the comic book is inspired by the real life story of a number of young queer women in Indonesia.

Yogyakarta Principles is a set of international principles relating to sexual orientation and gender identity, intended to address documented evidence of abuse of rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people, and further of intersexuality requested by Louise Arbour according to the International Human Rights Law. The outline of the Principles was drawn at a meeting of International Commission of Jurists and human rights experts from around the world at Gadjah Mada University in Java from 6 to 9 November in 2006. It contains 29 Principles adopted unanimously by the experts, along with recommendations to governments, regional intergovernmental institutions, civil society, and the UN itself. Bahasa Indonesia version of the book is available in hard copy.

For the English version visit IPP website at the link below:

www.pelangiperempuan.or.id/program/penerbitan-buku/yogyakarta-principles-comic/