



WORLD MARCH OF WOMEN NEWSLETTER

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Editorial

Our 8th International Meeting is fast approaching. It will take place from the 20th - 25th November in the Philippines and we have so far received delegates' registration forms from 32 countries (10 from Africa, 6 from the Americas, 9 from Asia-Oceania and 7 from Europe). In Europe, Central America and the Southern Cone of the Americas, regional meetings are being held so that International Meeting delegates will be able to express the ideas and proposals of those countries that aren't able to participate. The participation of all WMW sisters is particularly important in the debate around how to continue to construct our movement and face the challenges of the current context. To this aim, this edition of the newsletter includes another debate contribution: a strategic look at communication.

We regularly receive news from National Coordinating Bodies who are organising public actions and meetings in preparation for the IM. In France our sisters denounced the impunity enjoyed by Dominique Strauss-Kahn, while women from the Basque Country denounced the murder of Sophie Loudette in Bayonne. We demand an end to impunity in cases of sexist violence.

The 12th October is the Day of Struggle against Capitalism, as decided on by the Social Movements Assembly in Dakar, Senegal, last February. Meanwhile, the 17th October marks the 1-year anniversary of the Closing Event of our 3rd International Action, in a context of renewed militarization. These are important moments in which to organise or join in public actions, and to combine debate and action as part of the preparation for our International Meeting in the Philippines.

INTERNATIONAL

Communication: a strategic debate for women

The role of the mass media (radio, television and high-circulation newspapers) in forming public opinion and disseminating ideas and values continues to expand and is becoming ever more decisive. In many cases, these media have their own interests and disseminate a particular ideology every day, which goes against their supposed neutrality and "objectivity." At the same time, these media are controlled by either large corporations or a handful of families: major powers that do not represent the diversity of society. In this context, anyone who attempts to negate ideas (via community radio stations or blogs) is repressed, and economic obstacles are erected (to obtaining national broadcasting). Based on this analysis, the International Committee of the World March of Women engaged in a strategic discussion on the subject of communication during the meeting held on March 25-29 this year, with the participation of Bia Barbosa, an activist with the WMW and with Intervozes, a collective movement that fights for the democratization of communication media.

Bia provided facts about the communication media scene that is currently also characterized by the co

modification of information, as a standardized good disseminating what is tantamount to a single message, despite the apparent plurality of media. Thus, the communication media, which should be a democratic venue for society's free expression, are turning into an authoritarian space that disseminates and legitimates prejudices, stereotypes and social inequalities. In relation to women, when the media are not actually reinforcing a fixed place and role for women in the world, they are at least legitimizing this type of attitude.

This single message is bolstered by another characteristic shared with capitalism: global concentration. A decade ago, there were 10 major communications companies; today there are only five global conglomerates. This ensures that the single message is global and more homogenous, transmitted either through news agencies, which feed the national media, or through news channels like CNN.

This concentration also implies changes in the news production process, in which the same subject is reproduced on different media (print, television, radio and Internet). This has led to a shrinking workforce in

the sector, with aggravated exploitation of remaining staff and increased control over what is being published. At the same time, we have also seen the emergence of alternative voices, like the Arab network Al Jazeera, which attempt to provide a counterpoint to mainstream networks.

Presence of women in the news

In this context of media concentration and the modification of information, the news reporters still present a world in which men constitute the majority in all areas of human activity – even though this does not correspond to the reality. The study, *Who Makes the News?*^[1], published in 2010, found that, given the current rate of change, it will still take another 40 years before we achieve a balanced presence of women and men. This study, which monitors the representation of women and men in newspapers in 108 countries, is repeated every five years.

The latest edition showed that, in the printed press, only 24% of those who appear in the news are women. Between 2005 and 2010, the presence of women grew, but only in certain types of journalistic content like, for example, science and health (up from 22% to 32%), which represent a very small proportion of total news items. In general, one-third of news stories cover politics and government; in these domains, women's presence is just 14%. Even in female-dominated disciplines, men are heard more often, such as in education, where 70% of interviewees are male professors, in health, with 69% male interviewees, and even higher figures in law and scientific research (83% and 90%, respectively). Women are only the majority in two cases: talking about home-making (72% of interviewees) and student interviews (54% women).

The study further shows that it is twice as likely that age will be mentioned, and four times as likely that family ties will be discussed, when the interviewee is a woman. Women's images are also displayed more often than those of men: among all those interviewed, one-third of women's photographs are published, compared with 15% for men. In general, in 16% of news stories, women are presented as victims, compared to 5% of men.

Gender inequality was covered by just 6% of global news stories; in Latin America, the news speaks more of gender inequalities than in any other part of the world (this figure tripled between 2005 and 2010). As a whole, 46% of articles reinforce, rather than challenge, stereotypes of women. This only changes in the case of female reporters, where there are more chances that women's perspectives will be heard, and that stereotypes will be questioned.

^[1] Spanish, English, French and Arabic versions available for download at: www.whomakesthenews.org.

In the debate that followed Bia's presentation, it was added that the presence of women is, indeed, increasing, but as images, not as active protagonists. For example, in Mexico, women can be seen as entertainment critics, but always paired with a man and always in items that justify violent attitudes toward women, perceived as collateral damage. There are also serious shortcomings in terms of the use of inclusive language. These facts lead to the conclusion that the mass media reinforce a patriarchal view of women, to the extent that they show no appreciation for women's work, which is rendered invisible, and that they reinforce the gender divide in the workplace, which is essential to the propagation of capitalism.

Democratizing communications

The increase in distrust and questioning of the mass media, and the development of a critical view of them, is only a recent phenomenon, in every country. Amongst social movements, there is an increase – albeit a slow one – in awareness of their negative role in the struggles of women and peoples, and of the need to fight to democratize them in order to see greater diversity in the form of the voices and opinions of all segments of society (black, indigenous, different sexual orientations, people with disabilities, the left-wing sectors, etc.). The rise in “alternative” media, like community radio stations and the advent of the Internet have contributed greatly to debates on ideas and to helping our message reach all of society.

Faced with the culture “industry” and the concentration of mass media outlets, the struggle to democratize of these media is gaining ground, in conjunction with the fight for freedom of expression. It is not enough to be able to bring women's demands and perspectives into the public eye, if the freedom to express these in the media is not also fully guaranteed.

The right to communication includes three other rights: the right to knowledge, to discussions and to the transmission of content (fiction and publicity, not just journalistic news). Historically, movements organize to produce information and other content about their struggles, but this production remains limited to a specific movement or to the circle of organized civil society. In most countries, this right to transmit and broadcast specific content via the mass media – those with the most impact on forming public opinion and people's values and culture – has not yet been won. For example, in Mali, in addition to paying for the media (whether private or State-owned) to come to cover a given activity, the media professionals also need to be fed and their transportation provided. For this reason, it is crucial to fight for the right to communication, which in some countries involves fighting for a State that will guarantee this right by means of policies on access, production and distribution and, among other issues, also entails

working on this while simultaneously fighting State censorship.

For example, there is a major struggle now in Latin America to change the laws that direct and regulate the communications sector. The most recent progress was made in Argentina (*photo*), where the Audiovisual Law guarantees that one-third of the communication media spectrum will be dedicated to community-based communications, which will allow social movements to promote their agendas and their struggles. In other situations, such as seen frequently in Europe and North America where the right to broadcast content already exists, this means fighting to prevent backslides and to take past successes to the next level. In nations like France, England, Quebec and Switzerland, the State is providing less and less funding for public communications, leaving the function of informing and, above all, ensuring freedom of expression, to the market.



The fact was also discussed that, while movements are investing a great deal of time and energy in raising journalists' awareness (via press releases, well-publicized press conferences, press kits, publication of studies, etc.), struggles that fight for the public interest are facing resistance from media owners, who hinder the dissemination of such agendas, either to preserve private business or to avoid conflict with other powerful groups, like religious groups that may co-own the media outlet. This happened in Pakistan, for example, where a series of efforts targeting the media and various aspects of violence against women (sexual harassment, wage gaps, etc.) led to a sensationalist program that brought rapist and rape victim face to face. In the same country, human rights organizations called a press conference on 7,000 missing persons (children and adults), with 200 women presenting their stories. The conference hosted more than one hundred journalists from various communication media, but the following day, not a single line was published: the subject had been censored by media management.

There are exceptions, though, like in the Philippines, where there is now a venue for journalists with a critical view to publish public interest articles in the mainstream media. In Brazil, there is a different, more

positive approach that focuses on mass media that have a more localized reach – often with greater proximity to the women with whom we would like to engage as a priority – as opposed to targeting more national media.

Media and the criminalization of movements

The IC also commented on the role exercised by the mass media in spreading prejudice and in criminalizing the fights driven by social movements. In Quebec, for example, “trash radio” is becoming ever more common. These programs are capable of mobilizing demonstrations of 50,000 people to demand the construction of a sports stadium but, at the same time, also engage advocate and organize actions in favor of the privatization of public services, in addition to criticizing movements that demand better wages and better access to healthcare and education. They may also promote “masculinism,” such as news items about men who are the victims of violence perpetrated by their women. In addition, limits are imposed on the actions of the most critical professionals, who are censored or removed from their programs when they go against powerful interests, and are often dismissed when forced to cover higher-demand topics.

Public radio is not free from this type of influence, depending on the priorities and orientations of the political parties in power. Thus, conservative governments tend to cut resources for programs that focus on analysis and discussion, instead maintaining those that are more entertainment-oriented. Another common point among the media is the negative presentation of movements' priorities. For example, in Quebec, they highlighted the Minister of the Status of Women (a member of the conservative party) saying that the WMW is not representative of women because, in her words, we work on violence and poverty among women, but we do not look after professional women.

Challenges for feminists

Thinking about how feminist women want to be seen in the media is a challenge. We can broadcast a message, but we have no control over how this message will be received or twisted. In general, the mainstream media seek out public figures, experts, people who stand out from the crowd - which goes against the principles of feminism and of many movements, that stress horizontality, equality and the community, in which problems are societal, rather than individual. In the end, this leads to the voluntary exclusion of feminists from these venues.

Gender inequalities are also present in the alternative and public media, which all too often reproduce non-democratic operating structures, in which neither the content nor the participation of women is any better than in the mainstream media. This goes hand in hand with a shortage of resources: typically, most of the

work done in these media is voluntary, with little in the way of material and human resources, so it is difficult to maintain permanent programming and the regular production of information on formats that are accessible to the audience and capable of rivaling the mass media.

Another challenge is to pressure the media to use an inclusive language, with a gender perspective that can provide a different interpretation of the world around us. This is linked to monitoring initiatives that look at how the media treat women and analyze coverage to determine whether our vision of the world and our approaches are, in fact, represented.

But we cannot ignore the fact that, in Latin America - primarily in the 1980s - it was by working on the media and communications in general that a number of feminists switched over to institutions (with much support from North American foundations), supposedly in the interest of a more “efficient” tool than working with grassroots women, which in turn refocused agency interests on “efficiency.” And this is what the WMW changed, by placing a priority on investing in the mobilization of real women (despite the fact that the communication media, for the previously-mentioned reasons, do not give visibility to these actions).

“Take it to the streets, not to Facebook”

Increasing the use of the digital media available online (especially email, lists, blogs and Skype) is another challenge facing movements today. There is a digital division that is not merely a reality in Africa, but also in European and North American countries. Some feminists refuse to learn to use available online tools other than email.

The criticism also relates to a growing feeling that tools like social networks (mainly Twitter and Facebook) are immobilizing and tend to take the place of concrete action in the streets. Almost nothing is mentioned when a call to action via social networks fails. The revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt have shown that such media cannot organize struggles on their own; they can merely serve to amplify and organize pre-existing work. The occupation of public spaces with demonstrations, graffiti, banners and noise, without authorization, gives us visibility that the electronic media never could. Thus the challenge is to make critical use of social networks, with a full understanding of their limitations and risks.

How do we move forward?

When thinking about communication, the key aspects to consider are how to expand and organize our movement, increase our forces, and continue to take action, all of which will generate our content and a multitude of new information. In this sense, communication is a fundamental part of our

mobilization and our organization: it allows us to debate ideas amongst ourselves and directly with society, without the filter of the mass media.

We must continue to invest in the production of our messages and our communications, strengthening our own media (newsletters, website, distribution lists and audiovisual materials), which are part of the “alternative” media. In doing so, it is also important to promote capacity-building among women so that they can produce their own content, in different formats and in their relationships and alliances with organizations already engaged in this type of work. At the same time, we need to consider how to organize our messages, which content to produce and which format to use, with the aim of expanding our discussions with society. This means that we cannot simply forgo relations with the mass media, but we need to think about when and how to engage with them, in order to avoid wasting our time, energy and resources.

In our communication efforts, we need to think about who the priority audience is for our actions, who we want to reach, which will define differentiated action strategies for each situation, as well as the type of channel to use (Internet, radio, printed press, television, etc.). In the case of social networks, because these are networks built on individual logic, we need to collectively develop strategies in order to have an impact on them.

Moving at the pace of the slowest member is a principle that guides the internal communications at the WMW. Thus, it is not possible to enclose ourselves in a highly complex virtual structure that necessitates 24-hour Internet access, when many at the WMW do not have continuous access. The closing event of the Third International Action in the Democratic Republic of the Congo was very educational in this sense, when we had the opportunity to experience the real difficulties of women in Africa who wish to communicate with one another and the rest of the world. This has concrete implications, like the fact that, for us, for example, we do not simply send a meeting proposal by email and sit back and wait for responses; we also make telephone calls to let our members know that it is very important that they read the message, etc.

It would also be strategic for all social movements to join in the fight to democratize the communication media, which cannot succeed if limited to communications professionals and specialists. This struggle means the de-privatization of media spaces, so that they can become a public forum in which the rights of all men and women are visible and, thus, are more likely to be respected. During the Assembly on the Right to Communication during the World Social Forum in Dakar, movements from around the world

reasserted a plan of action and shared commitments in this fight. Click here to read the declaration issued by the Assembly: <http://www.ciranda.net/fsm-dacar-2011/article/the-right-to-inform-and-be>.

Lastly, it is also important to expand our critical vision of the communication media and their democratization internally within the WMW, preparing and inspiring the National Coordinating

October: a month of international mobilisation

Global days of action mark the month of October, when social movements around the world take to the streets to protest against a system based on the oppression of peoples, and particularly of women and the environment. Key international mobilisation dates are as follows:

- **7th October:** World Day for Decent Work
- **8th – 15th October:** Week of Action against Debt and International Financial Institutions (IFIs)
- **12th October:** Day of action against capitalism / Global day in defense of Mother Earth / Cry of the Excluded (Latin America)
- **15th October:** International Day of Rural Women / Anniversary of Thomas Sankara's murder, symbol of the African anticolonial struggle / International actions for real democracy now!

Bodies to discuss this subject, based on the facts and information that have been presented and on their own real-life experiences. Many of the WMW's activists do not share this mistrust of the mainstream media, including those who accepted as fact the BBC coverage that portrayed the Congolese action as the initiative of Olive Kabenge Kabila, the wife of the DRC president, rather than that of the WMW.

- **16th October:** World Food Sovereignty Day
- **17th October:** International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

The 12th October, Day of Struggle against Capitalism, was agreed upon at the Social Assembly Movements during the 2011 World Social Forum held in Dakar, Senegal. Click on the following link to read the Assembly declaration:

http://www.marchemondiale.org/alliances_mondialis_ation/asamblea-movimientos-sociales/declarations/dakar2011/en

Please send us news of national actions and other activities in which the WMW will take part in October by email: info@marchemondiale.org

AMÉRICAS

Cuba: “The better world we are heading toward must be an ever more feminist one”

Interview with Tamara Columbié, a representative of the Cuban Women's Federation and World March of Women National Coordinator

The emancipation of women, the struggle for their rights and for gender equality are issues that the Cuban Women's Federation (FMC) has been working on since its creation. From 23rd August 1960 onwards, this organization has been driving the changes in favor of women that have since occurred on the Cuban stage.

Its 51st anniversary will be celebrated in a new context. Since the 6th Congress of the Communist Party, held in April, the country has made an important turn toward "upgrading economic policy and raising the population's standards of living." With this new orientation, various structural and organizational changes are being implemented. Alternative employment options are beginning to appear in the productive sphere, in the form of cooperatives, associations of small farmers, activities where land use rights have been granted, and self-employment, among others.

The FMC and other institutions are now focusing their actions on seeing that this path does not turn into a “tightrope” that women will have to tread carefully,



WMW activity in Cuba, in 2011

but rather an opportunity for them to continue contributing to the reinvention of socialism.

Tamara Columbié talked to us about the inclusion of Cuban women in this process for change and about the need to escape from stagnation/immobility. She also stressed the importance of looking at the international feminist movement and strengthening solidarity among those who are building the better world toward which we are heading.

What impact will the new changes in the country's economic policy have on the Cuban women?

TC: The first thing to point out is that the changes that are happening today aim to improve our system. This process comes at a time when Cuban women have already made great progress in the legal, economic, social and family spheres. Women in Cuba have a low unemployment rate, with 1.5 million women employed in the country. They account for 46.7% of the civil servants and 66% of professionals and technicians. The female labor pool boasts at least a ninth-grade level of education (meaning they have completed high school) and many of them have technical skills or work in management. In other words, they have been trained for employment.

The humanistic, inclusive and non-discriminatory principles which were adopted by the government in updating the economic model in Cuba – a process which is now being implemented – are the expression of its willingness to continue to promote the development and enjoyment of equal human rights among women and men, as endorsed by the constitution.

There is a process of change under way (in normative, structural and functional terms) and the FMC is actively involved in the decision-making process, along with other organizations that also address issues specific to women's rights such as the ANAP farmers' organization, the Workers' Central Union of Cuba, the National Union of Jurists, the Journalists' Union, the Writers' Union and youth organizations, among others, many of which are part of the World March of Women's National Coordinating Body.

Periodic evaluations of the promotion of women are conducted at all levels of the Federation's Committees and by the Boards of Directors of Central State Agencies, in order to identify successes and any persisting difficulties blocking women from holding more decision-making positions, especially those who are not elected, but rather appointed.

In this area, what are the new challenges facing the FMC and other organizations working for women's rights in Cuba?

TC: For us, we first need to raise women's awareness so that they can access the different employment options. We must also monitor those cases requiring special treatment within labor policy, either for being single mothers, or some other case covered by social work.

In other words, the FMC is very active at times when changes are occurring in employment law and whenever a job-cutting policy is put in place. We have to ensure that the criteria for determining who will keep their jobs are not permeated by subjective views

that discriminate against women. The FMC must have continuous contact with the grassroots level. Most recently, the FMC's various national, provincial and municipal bodies have already visited a large percentage of the 76,000 grassroots organizations with which some 4.2 million women are affiliated, in order to understand their views and channel their interests.

In view of the new measures and employment alternatives being proposed - some of which have traditionally been occupied by men - what initiatives have been launched to reduce the gender gap?

TC: The National Action Plan for Follow-up of the Beijing Conference and the 1997 Agreement of the Council of State of the Republic of Cuba, with its 90 pro-women measures covering all fields, both of which documents are to be applied by all Central State Agencies, are fundamental tools.

But the process of changing men's and women's cultural behavioral patterns with regard to prejudices and discriminatory practices against women are rooted in the education of children – girls and boys – from an early age, both in school and at home. Because of this, the National Education System has developed objectives and content aiming to contribute to the establishment of non-gender-discriminatory behavioral patterns. Because the transmission of sexist patterns can also take place in the home, the awareness-raising performed in each territory by Orientation Houses for Women and Families is of particular importance.

On the other hand, although Cuban women have increased their presence in traditionally "male" sectors, they remain the majority in certain specific sectors in which women have always been more visible. There have, however, been notable changes, such as in economics, which has historically been a field dominated by men worldwide; in our country, more and more women have gradually entered the domain, such that 68% of economics students are now women.

Our organization is currently increasing the support we provide to women looking for work, particularly young drop-outs. We also work in order that women are taken into account in job postings that have not traditionally included women. We also work with the Ministry of Education to promote better inclusion of girls in vocational paths such as medical technicians and other skilled workers, with the same equal conditions and opportunities as boys.

Please, click to continue reading the interview:

<http://www.marchemonde.org/structure/cn-groupes/ameriques/cuba/2011/entr092011/en>

In South America, women on the move in training sessions and in the streets!



In **Argentina**, the World March of Women has been driving a series of exchange activities, debates and preparations for actions since July. They have defined four main subjects for their next meetings: the first one covered women and work and took place on the 11th of August. It addressed topics such as legislation, gender-based divisions of work, economic autonomy, discrimination against younger and older women in the labor market and the false illusion of equality. The decriminalization of abortion was the theme of the second meeting, on 1st September. The upcoming encounters will discuss militarization, common goods and violence against women.

All of these preparations were shared between the women of the different groups that participate in the WMW in Argentina. During the meetings, they also discussed preparations for the 8th International WMW Meeting to be held in the Philippines and court cases against transnational companies, among others issues.

To learn more about these meetings, please visit: <http://www.marchemondiale.org/structure/cn-groupes/ameriques/argentine/2011> (in Spanish only).

In **Brazil** (at right), some 1,200 WMW activists from all the country joined another 70,000 women for the fourth edition of the March of Margaridas, held on the 16th and 17th of August in Brasilia. The action was organized by the trade union movement of rural workers in Brazil. The name is a tribute to Margarida Maria Alves, who fought against exploitation and illiteracy and for the rights of rural workers and agrarian reform, and who was assassinated by landowners in the province of Paraíba on the 12th of August, 1983.

The closing action of the march included the participation of the Brazilian President, Dilma Rousseff, who announced a number of measures to respond to the platform of demands issued by rural women, linked to health, the development of and women's inclusion in production, access to land and the fight against rural violence. These measures included the construction of river-based healthcare units and a health prevention plan for people exposed to agro-toxics. Other important initiatives were presented in support of

rural incomes, such as the increase to 200,000 reais worth of agricultural products sold per family to the National Food Program and an increase in lines of credit for women. Additional measures were announced, including programs for joint property ownership, either via agrarian reform or purchased through property loan programs, and the creation of documentation centers for rural women in Amazonia.

Important aspects of the platform of demands still need to be addressed, such as the updating of land productivity indices, rural credits for women with the endorsement of the federal government, and regulation of the use of agro-toxics. The President also announced the creation of an inter-ministerial group to continue this dialogue.

For further information, please visit (in Portuguese only):

<http://www.contag.org.br/hotsites/margaridas/>



In **Chile**, the WMW joined thousands of people in the streets to call for changes in a country characterized by huge inequalities. The driving forces behind these actions were high school and college students, who, for three months, have been maintaining a strong social movement, which has brought together and politicized a large segment of Chilean society.

The first national strike of the year took place on the 24th and 25th of August, at the call of the Workers' United Center of Chile (CUT). The student movement supported the strike, participating in demonstrations that mobilized some 400,000 people throughout the country.



The demonstrations in Chile began as a struggle against education for profit and soon turn into a fight against the structural inequalities engendered in the country in recent decades, due to the fierce

neoliberalism established during the dictatorship. The main idea is clear: to constitutionally guarantee free education and to democratize the higher education system. So far, the government has presented three suggestions, but none of them meets the students' demands, because they do not take into consideration the structural changes that are needed.

This struggle for a more democratic and egalitarian country has received cross-cutting support from all of society: workers, ecologists, feminists, native peoples, farmers, copper workers, and more, all of whom stand behind the students.

Click here to read the full article about the demonstrations, by Rocío Alorda, a WMW activist in Chile:

http://www.movimientos.org/show_text.php3?key=19722.

ASIA

Pakistan: civil society united against terrorism

The political situation in Pakistan is getting worse due to Talibanization and terrorists who, since April 2011, have increased their actions. In the city of Karachi, the industrial hub of Pakistan, all economic activity has been frozen. After five months, 1,400 innocent people have been killed based on targeted ethnic and political grounds. In August, 220 people were killed and 1,400 vehicles were torched. Karachi produces 80% of Pakistan's total annual revenue. People from every province come to settle there for jobs and business. Most of them live in or around the city's slums. Now this city is in the grips of terrorists, who are killing innocent people, destroying economic activities, and creating restlessness and fear in low income areas.

These terrorist activities have increased since the establishment of large capitalist corporations from the textile, oil and sugar sectors, as well as Australian and Chinese mining companies, who aim to grab all business, destroy the country's economy and weaken small traders. In order to achieve this, they have allied with political and religious parties and Mafia groups that are disseminating violence around the city. These parties have divided the city on ethnic bases and formed "no-go areas". When any person from another group enters these areas, terrorists kill them. They openly display and use their weapons, without restriction. The Pakistani government has not been able to control it and has failed to provide security to the people. The administrative authorities have not arrested the culprits.

Mostly of the people targeted in the affected areas are illiterate and only have unstable employment. Each family has 5 to 8 children, and women work only in the home. Many male family members are now being killed, with their women remaining alone to cope with

all the responsibilities regarding their children. Some of them work in various garment or plastics factories, but they are not able to get to their places of work, due to violence and transport strikes. The number of widows and orphans is increasing and the majority live below poverty line.

In the face of this situation, the WMW and other civil society NGOs and movements came forward in Karachi on 18th July to speak about the situation in the city and the fight against terrorism. Four women's organizations were also in attendance; they presented the situation of women within this context. In the end, they decided to visit these areas to console the victims' family members and to assure them that any help they may need will be provided to them. After this conference, a coalition called the "Concerned citizens of Karachi" was created, bringing together humanitarians, intellectuals, doctors, women activists, and lawyers demanding the restoration of peace in the city and the preservation of innocent people threatened by targeted killings. Saleha Athar, from the WMW in Pakistan, informs: "We also demanded that the government disarm the city, we organized rallies and demonstrations with the victims, held a press conference and visited those areas where targeted killings are taking place. Women in those areas are very frightened for their children and only ask for minimum protection: 'we are living very peacefully with our neighbors; we have no hatred between ethnic groups'". This coalition now continues to meet every week.

Click to read the full report submitted by Saleha: <http://www.marchemondiale.org/structure/cn-groupes/asie-oceanie/pakistan/082011/en>

EUROPE

Young feminists' Camp: a success!

The World March of Women's Young Feminists' European Camp ended with a big party on Saturday, 16th July 2011, in Terreblanque, close to the city of Toulouse, France. During the previous 8 days, some sixty young feminists from 10 European countries had been discussing their situation and their struggles. Women from Portugal, Galicia, the Basque Country, France, Belgium, Switzerland, Macedonia, Romania, Poland and Armenia were present, along with a young woman from Quebec and migrant women from several Latin American countries. Together, they exchanged their ideas, discussed the future and worked on strategies for collective struggle.

On the first day, life at this self-managed camp was organized, setting up solar showers, dry toilets and a common kitchen. Afterward, during the following three days, they organized thematic working groups and exchanged ideas on different issues such as feminist self-defense, solutions for surviving in a male-dominated environment, how to live in situations of instability, and the position of lesbians in our movement, as well as more hands-on participation during a theater workshop and another on personal management of menstruation (including home-made tampons). During those three working days, the young



women interacted a lot and really got to know each other. Thanks to all of this dialogue, they were

then able to write a common Young European Feminists text.

On Friday, 15th July, the group went to Toulouse to participate in a dynamic demonstration where the energy and strength generated by their exchanges were given a public expression. Slogans, dances and songs set the rhythm of the march, which drew surprised looks from local inhabitants and vacationing on-

lookers.

On the last day, locals from the surrounding area were invited to discuss the development of the feminist movement and how to make it more inclusive and more popular. A concert and a party were held afterwards, and our young feminists danced till dawn.

This first WMW young feminists' initiative has been a real success! The participants reinforced their motivation to struggle for a better world and to change women's lives in their own countries, together with women from all over the world. An online network is being developed, including the creation of a website, and the women also expressed their desire to hold another camp next year in another country. Links were created in France too between young feminists from different cities, brought together under the analyses and proposals of the World March of Women. The WMW young feminists' group in Paris, which organized the camp, will be returning to its activities in September, and all young feminists are invited to join these initiatives! We will continue on the march until we are all free!

Video of the demonstration on 15th July:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyNUPNrpjDA>

To contact the WMW Young Feminists group in Paris: mmfjeunes@gmail.com

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