



EDITORIAL

On May 26th Make Every Woman Count launched the first set of a series of **workshops** between May - September 2012 designed to empower Diaspora African women to play a stronger role as decision-makers in community development and to participate in all areas of social, political and economic development.

The workshop opened by the Founder and executive director of Make Every Woman Count Ms. Rainatou Sow. Ms. Marie Claire and Ms. Sow critically discussed how violence against women is perpetuated at all levels of society from the individual level to the state level, through traditional, cultural, economic, social and institutional mechanisms. It provided the participants with an opportunity to share their personal experiences, the tools to identify violence against women and the legal framework to combat violence against women.



The one-day course was designed to enable participants to identify and raise awareness about Gender Based Violence (particularly Violence Against Women) and understand the various existing legal Frameworks on human rights. It also addressed the role of the State to protect women as its citizen from abuses, discrimination, persecution and other human insecurities. The workshop which included women from a variety of professional sectors (prison workers, teachers, social service workers, politicians, women and human rights activists) encouraged the participants to talk about violence against women, discuss it within their homes and communities to generate awareness.

The workshop examined the content and the use of UNSCR 1325, the Maputo Protocol and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. Ms. Marie Claire stressed that it is important for communities and governments to understand the specific needs of women such as menstruation. When a community acknowledges a women's basic needs they demonstrate their ability to recognise the human rights of women. "Denying women her sexual reproductive rights is a form of sexual violence." The most common form of discrimination against women is through state budgets. National governments must prioritize health care and education spending, rather than focus on increasing their security and military spending. "Anything that prevents you as a woman from reaching your potential is a denial of your human rights."



Tackling change must start at the individual level. You must first educate and empower yourself with the knowledge, tools and resources to be able to advocate against violence against women. "Women must empower each other and address and become leaders in their own communities first if they want to combat violence against women it must start at an individual level-you must lead by example" (Marie-Claire).

The workshop concluded with a collective reading of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa. Make Every Woman Count would like to thank all the participants for attending and Ms. Marie Claire for an interesting, insightful and in depth and interactive presentation.

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH

[AFRICA: OUR INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH WITH TABITHA NJOROGE](#)

Profiled as one of the youngest directors in the Kenyan civil society, **Tabitha Njoroge** is the Chief Executive Officer of Women in Law and Development in Africa (WiLDAF) Kenya. Tabitha's passion for women rights and emancipation began during her days of undergraduate studies while serving as a student leader in the students' council (SONU) and in the Women Students Welfare Association (WOSWA) where she served as the Chairperson.

The women's movement on gender equality and empowerment has been on the upward trend in Africa in recent times, what is WILDAF's contribution to the trend?

WiLDAF has an Africa wide network in 36 countries and each of these have been very instrumental at both national and international levels with regard to women emancipation. WiLDAF has been successful in influencing the legal framework in several nations including Kenya, meaningful engagement of women in leadership and decision making and in addressing Sexual and Gender Based Violence. All of these have impacted very positively on the upward trend of the Africa women movement.

As a young woman what do you consider as the constraints young women face and strategies that can be employed to enhance their voice in Africa on development and gender equality?

Some of the obvious reasons include:

- a) Lack of mentorship
- b) Forced marriages
- c) Female Genital Mutilation/Cut
- d) Illiteracy particularly in the rural areas
- e) Discriminative Socialization
- f) Unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions

Most of these can only be comprehensively addressed through formulation of laws and policies that will consciously protect the young women and girls. These must also be fully implemented and this comes with goodwill for the same by the Government of the day. On the other hand the older women must make a conscious decision to tell the stories of where they are coming from so that in passing on the baton the younger women will receive it from a point of understanding what the struggle for women emancipation means and why it is important to sustain the momentum. Otherwise, young women will continue to feel misplaced in the whole agenda and discourse around development and gender equality.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights issues are largely a taboo subject in many African settings, yet it holds the key to advancement of the gender agenda, do you think enough is being done to realize this right?

Efforts have been made by various stakeholders and governments to address this but a lot more needs to be done. There seems to be resistance to SRHR programming particularly because of the religious and cultural views held by majority of the people particularly those in decision making. On a minimum, every African country should embrace sexuality education in schools and this includes the development of a comprehensive Sexuality Education Curriculum.

Access to justice, ignorance of the law and economic empowerment remains a mirage for many women in Kenya what can be done to remedy the situation?

One of the main reasons behind this situation is the illiteracy among the women folk. Law as we know it can be quite complex particularly by reason of the jargon it is often packaged in. On the other hand, until recently, the girl child was forced to sacrifice their education for the benefit of their brothers and other male relatives particularly when school fee was not enough. Many ended up married while still minors with barely any education and exposure. The problem is so complex that some do not even know how to read and write. When

presented with challenges that require legal intervention these women are fearful of the unknown and will many times shy off from the justice system. Other times they have a little education that is not enough to help them understand what it means to undertake the process. They prefer to consult the chiefs and local elders who many times are bribed by the offenders leaving the women desperate and frustrated. We must make a deliberate effort to educate women and girls on access to justice and the existing laws and policies that they can benefit from. When it comes to economic empowerment, women largely do not have control over property and family wealth. Even when they toil so hard on farms, for instance, the income goes to the men. We are hopeful that with the new Constitution recognizing women as equal partners and with rights to ownership, this is going to change.

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HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH

[HIGHLIGHT OF THE MONTH WITH THE GRASSROOTS EMPOWERMENT FOR SELF RELIANCE \(GEMS\)](#)

In Sierra Leone like most parts of Africa and Asia, gender inequality is still endemic and women, in many ways, remain the most vulnerable group in society. They are less educated, have less access to decision making, have fewer jobs and less wealth than men, suffer severe cases of poverty and their human rights are often violated. They have always lived on the margins of society and face discrimination and subordination in every aspect of their lives. As a result, they remain heavily under-represented in the political and socio-economic structures of Sierra Leone even though they make up more than half the population. 51% of Sierra Leone's population is female yet only 15.2% of the country's parliament is comprised of women. This is a key concern to Grassroots Empowerment for Self Reliance (GEMS) who is working towards achieving optimal human rights for all and the empowerment of women in their country and in Africa. GEMS seek to promote the dignity and respect of all women and see community rural women as key to a sustainable future. It envisions "a Sierra Leonean society characterised by political, social and economic empowerment of women and a change in public attitude that will ensure grassroots women enjoy peace and security, with respect for their rights."

GEMS is a national women's NGO that was formed in 1998 in Sierra Leone in response to the hardships face by women as a result of the ten year rebel war which had ravaged communities and inflicted untold atrocities on women and children country wide. Its mission is to build the capacity of specifically grassroots women thereby empowering them to become self reliant and participate in decision making processes. It works to achieve its vision and mission through capacity building and advocacy for changes to existing systems and structures that prevent the advancement of women.

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TOP WOMEN PEACE AND SECURITY NEWS

[RWANDA: WOMEN'S ROLE IN PEACE -BUILDING](#)

Source: The New Times

Women and children are the most vulnerable in wars. Considering that mothers are mostly affected by the welfare of their children, war has several negative psychological effects on them due to physical and emotional abuse.

[GHANA: PEACE PROJECT FOR ZONGO COMMUNITIES LAUNCHED IN ACCRA](#)

Source: allghananews

The Islamic Peace and Security Council (IPASEC), on Thursday launched a peace project dubbed: "Ensuring Violence Free 2012 Election in Zongo Communities in Greater Accra Region," in Accra.

TOP VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN NEWS

[SUDAN: HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS CONDEMN WOMAN'S STONING SENTENCE](#)

Source: Sudan Tribune

Human rights group Amnesty International has called on Sudanese authorities to stop the execution a women condemned to stoning for alleged adultery, and release her 'immediately and unconditionally'.

[NAMIBIA: MEN TO PROTEST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE](#)

Source: New Era

Next Saturday at least 1000 men will join hands in a planned march in support of men for healthy relationships and against an upsurge in gender-based violence (GBV).

TOP POLITICAL PARTICIPATION NEWS

[ALGERIA: INCREASE OF WOMEN IN PARLIAMENT IS A STEP TOWARDS GENDER EQUITY IN ALGERIA](#)

Source: UN News Centre

The head of the United Nations entity mandated to promote gender equality today welcomed the increase in women's representation in Algeria's new parliament as a result of elections held last week, and stressed that it represented a step towards democratic reform and gender equality.

[GAMBIA: WOMEN, POLITICAL PARTY STAKEHOLDERS' TRAINING ENDS IN JENOI](#)

Source: The Daily Observer

A four-day capacity building training workshop for women and political representatives organised by West Africa Network for Peace-Building (WANEP)-Gambia ended on Thursday at the Jenoi Agricultural Farmers Training Center, Lower River Region.

TOP ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT NEWS

[ETHIOPIA: TRADITIONAL WEAVERS WEAVE THEIR WAY INTO INTERNATIONAL MARKET](#)

Source: EthioSports

Traditional weavers in Addis Abeba are to receive traditional weaving and design training starting this June to help them produce exportable products.

KENYA: KENYAN VILLAGERS GROW THEIR WAY OUT OF FOOD AID

Source: AlertNet

In the remote east Kenyan village of Makutano, Jane Mutinda Maingi is feeding maize to her Friesian dairy cow, bought just a week ago with proceeds from selling produce grown on her one-hectare plot.

TOP HIV/AIDS & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

NIGERIA: ISOLATION, TRADITION, POVERTY DRIVE UP NIGERIAN MATERNAL DEATH RATE

Source: Voice of America

Globally, the number of maternal deaths has been cut in half since 1990. But, in Nigeria 40,000 women die each year because of pregnancy complications. Aid organizations say poverty, isolation and dangerous traditions are the heart of the problem while some mothers say there are simply no doctors at the hospital.

BOTSWANA: WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS – THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

Source: Botswana Gazette

The campaign for the legalisation of abortion in Botswana has taken unprecedented levels in the recent past. The Assistant Minister of Local Government Ms. Tshireletso has called on government to consider legalising abortion. There is another dimension to this issue. It relates to reproductive rights of women and their right to determine when to bear children. Liberty relates to the right to do what is permitted by law.

HUMAN RIGHTS OF WOMEN

SOUTH AFRICA: SOUTH AFRICA'S 'TRADITIONAL COURTS BILL' IMPAIRS RIGHTS OF 12 MILLION RURAL WOMEN

Source: IPS

The Traditional Courts Bill currently under discussion in South Africa's parliament and due to be enacted by the end of 2012 could undermine the basic rights of some of the country's most vulnerable inhabitants: the 12 million women living in remote rural communities across the country.

TUNISIA: TUNISIA'S REVOLUTION IS JUST BEGINNING

Source: IPS

Lingering violence, intolerance and oppression in Tunisia, following the ousting of former dictator Zine el-Abidine Ben Ali in January 2011, tells the revolutionaries who sparked the Arab Spring that their work is just beginning.

GENERAL

GAMBIA: WOMEN PERSPECTIVES VITAL FOR DEVELOPMENT

Source: The Daily Observer

The executive director of African Centre for Democracy and Human Right Studies (ACDHRS) has said that women perspectives are vital for national development.

[KENYA: NEW COMMUNICATION PLATFORM REMOVES EDUCATION OBSTACLES FOR GIRLS IN KENYA SLUM](#)

Source: Global Press Institute

The Talking Box, an initiative for girls in Nairobi's Kibera slum, invites students to write down concerns that they are afraid to discuss with their teachers or parents. Educators say it's reducing school dropouts and improving academic performances.

FEATURED RESOURCES

[UNFPA RESOURCE: "TRENDS IN MATERNAL MORTALITY: 1990 TO 2010"](#)

Source: UNFPA

The number of women dying of pregnancy and childbirth related complications has almost halved in 20 years, according to new estimates released today by the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the World Bank.

"I am very pleased to see that the number of women dying in pregnancy and childbirth continues to decline. This shows that the enhanced effort of countries, supported by UNFPA and other development partners, is paying off. But we can't stop here. Our work must continue to make every pregnancy wanted and every childbirth safe," said Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund.

The report "Trends in maternal mortality: 1990 to 2010", shows that from 1990 to 2010, the annual number of maternal deaths dropped from more than 543,000 to 287,000 – a decline of 47 per cent. While substantial progress has been achieved in almost all regions, many countries particularly in sub-Saharan Africa will fail to reach the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target of reducing maternal death by 75 per cent from 1990 to 2015.

[TOWARDS A PARLIAMENTARY STRATEGY FOR AFRICAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND GENDER EQUALITY](#)

Source: European Parliamentarians with Africa

While it is a recognised universal fact that eliminating gender inequality and achieving women's empowerment are paramount to achieving the Millennium Development Goals, progress with implementation of the MDGs is the slowest in those areas that depend most heavily on improving the status of women and girls. Therefore on the occasion of the Belgian EU Presidency, the Association of European Parliamentarians with Africa (AWEPA) saw the opportunity to further its aim to help speed up implementation of these vital goals.

The seminar titled "Uniting parliamentary efforts to end violence against women in Africa" was an excellent opportunity to have an open discussion about the important role parliaments can and do play in ending violence against women in Africa.

Besides being an opportunity to learn, meet and develop new projects, this seminar also served as a base for a parliamentary resolution (see conclusions of this seminar) and two parliamentary guidelines on FGM/C and UNSC Resolutions 1325.

We hope you find this booklet useful as a guide which gathers knowledge and experiences shared by high-level specialists with a special focus on women's rights in conflict areas and

the abandonment of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), demonstrating that effective actions can be taken to end violence against women.

MEWC BLOG

[WOMEN RAPED AND BUSINESSES DESTROYED ON OLE DUMA ROAD - NAIROBIE](#)

Author: Oliver James

"The very day that the Stop Rape Campaign was launched in Nairobi 18/5/2012, seven women were raped on Ole Dume Road, Kilimani. One of the women was heavily pregnant. The police were there and let it happen. There has been a complete media blackout. Kenya has a long way to go. Launching is one thing - stopping these crimes is another. Shame on Kenya. Below is an account by a survivor"

On Friday 18th May at 3pm I was seated in my work place with other employees when I heard the sound of a lorry entering the business center which is opposite Bangladesh High Commission on the Ole Dume Road. I heard the sound of people like in a mob as they jumped out of the lorry. Shortly afterwards big men entered the business where I was with pangas and steel bars and started to slap me and beat me and those with me.

I thought that they were City Council and I asked them for their papers – and they answered in slaps and beatings. They then started to touch me and harass me. I fought them with all my might and ran. Two of my friends were not so lucky – the door was closed and I heard the screams as the rape began. In the rest of the compound there was chaos: cars were being destroyed, Lorries were parked outside as they packed the equipment from the businesses, people were crying.

[Read More](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS

[EMPOWERING ENTREPRENEURIAL WOMEN: HOW TO START AND RUN YOUR OWN SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS](#)

Date: 23 June 2012, 10:00 to 16:30

Location: Tindlemanor; 52-54 Featherstone St., London

Every Woman deserves the right to learn how to generate income and be self-employable. In today's turbulent job market, every women needs to equip themselves with the skills needed to generate income from their ideas.

Programme Details

This one-day course is designed to educate women on the entrepreneurial skills needed to turn their ideas into commercial successes.

The course will take candidates through business planning and implementation, identifying and winning new customers and financial management.

The course is highly practical and interactive and will provide candidates with practical case studies, worksheets and templates that they can use immediately. Participants should come

prepared to work on and develop their own unique one page business plan during the program.

DIALOGUE FOR ACTION AFRICA

Date: 11 June 2012, 09:00 to 17:45

Location: Libreville, Gabon

The Cecilia Attias Foundation for Women, in association with Mrs. Sylvia Bongo Ondimba, First Lady of Gabon, is proud to present the Dialogue for Action Africa, an international forum dedicated to promoting health and well-being for all women. On June 11, 2012 in Libreville, Gabon, the Dialogue for Action Africa will bring together an exceptional group of speakers and participants – NGO leaders, government officials, academics, business leaders, and medical experts – to discuss innovative solutions to the most pressing problems that African women face. This unique, day-long session will include action-driven discussions, informed by the diverse experiences of our esteemed participants.