

GIFTED WOMEN

Great Ideas For Transformation, Empowerment and Development of Women
SHS/2016/PI/H/8

IN THIS ISSUE

- Editorial
- Point of view
- Frontier Research in Social Sciences
- From Ideas to Action
- Events

A UNESCO-SHS NEWSLETTER

This newsletter aims at raising awareness on advances in the Social and Human Sciences which are directly relevant to the 2030 international development goal of achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

EDITORIAL

“Shining light on women who are already leading”

The potential contribution of women to sustainable development is beyond doubt. The challenge is how to ensure that women and girls fulfil their potential. This is a critical test for the 2030 international development agenda because the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will not be achieved if gender issues are not effectively addressed.

Development needs ideas and values, and women now feature at the forefront of many fields of knowledge. This is particularly true in the social and human sciences, where female scientists and humanists not only contribute through knowledge production but also provide inspiration, as well as role models, for many more women.



Nada Al-Nashif

Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences. UNESCO

Speaking at the opening ceremony for the Global Women Leaders' Forum held in Sofia, in May 2016, the Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova said “We need to shine light on women who are already leading”. To that end, this publication will disseminate the work of women engaged in really making a difference in terms of advancing ideas for gender equality, social justice, and human wellbeing.

This newsletter celebrates the outstanding achievements and contributions of those women. By highlighting a sample of their ideas and accomplishments, this publication aims at showcasing the diversity and the excellence of women’s contributions in fields of competence related to the work of UNESCO’s Social and Human Sciences Sector.

Quote of the Quarter

“How important it is for us to recognize and celebrate our heroes and she-roes!”

Maya Angelou

American poet, memoirist, actress and an important figure in the Civil Rights Movement.



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Maya Angelou

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Ana Silvia Monzón
Monterroso

“Immigration without documents is dangerous for men, but women face even more obstacles. They often have to deal with abuse and financial misery at their destination”

Ana Silvia Monzón Monterroso

Guatemalan sociologist, member of the Scientific Advisory Committee of UNESCO's Management of Social Transformations Programme (MOST)

POINT OF VIEW

Exposing the injustice faced by Guatemalan female migrants

Poverty, lack of job opportunities and violence are causing migration all over the world. More than ten per cent of Guatemala's total population have crossed the US border in search of better jobs. Thousands of people from Guatemala, including women and children, migrate to southern Mexico every year, and thousands of others move on from there to the United States.

The majority of migrants do not have documents when they travel across thousands of kilometres of Mexican territory. They face dangers that range from harsh weather conditions like extreme heat or cold to human rights violations and crimes like robbery, kidnapping, extortion and even murder. Thousands of women and girls are exposed to sexual abuse and rape. The perpetrators include members of gangs and organised crime, human traffickers, employers and staff of government agencies.

After female migrants manage to cross the borders, they again face an adverse situation, because most of them only get precarious jobs. They work on farms, as caretakers or accept jobs in factories, where they have to work gruelling hours in conditions that sometimes seem to resemble slavery. Migrant women's meagre incomes must suffice to cover their basic needs and to send remittances to their families, so many hold two or three jobs at a time. Out of the 400,000 Guatemalan women living in the United States, 330,000 send remittances to their families.

The majority of these women do not have passports or other legal documents. They live in constant fear of being caught and deported, which would put an end to their dreams of a better life for their families and themselves. According to calculations I did on the basis of IOM data, only 25% of the Guatemalan women in the USA are free to travel home, whereas 75 % are “undocumented”.

Ironically, many of the female migrants who fled from situations of violence in their communities and homes, end up confronted with domestic violence once more. Because they do not speak English well and because they do not know US law, they keep silent about such abuse and face the daily aggressions on their own. Such violence and the daily strain of work undermine their physical, mental, sexual and emotional health. These are the hidden costs of migration.

For women, migration typically results in having to struggle hard to secure their own and their families' survival – whether they themselves leave home or their spouses do. The picture is bleak. Nonetheless, there are individual women who manage to excel. They make valuable financial contributions to their families' lives – and to the economy of their nations. Many of them, moreover, are participating ever more visibly in the fight for migrants' rights all over the world, giving a voice to the injustices female migrants face.

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Frontier Research in Social Sciences

Anthropology at the forefront of humanitarian responses

The [Ebola Response Anthropology Platform](#) (ERAP) won [the Award for Outstanding International Impact](#) in the 2016 Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Celebrating Impact Prize.

ERAP was developed as the focal point for life-saving information and dialogue during the Ebola outbreak in West Africa by [Professor Melissa Leach](#), Director of the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and an international team from four institutions. Co-team members, mostly women, are Dr Annie Wilkinson (IDS), Professor James Fairhead (University of Sussex), Dr Ann Kelly (University of Exeter), Professor Paul Richards and Esther Mokuwa (Njala University, Sierra Leone), Dr Melissa Parker and Dr Fred Martineau (both of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine).



IDS researchers discussing Ebola and Development

Within weeks of the World Health Organisation declaring Ebola a public health emergency of international concern in August 2014, Professor Leach with a team of anthropologists and knowledge exchange experts set up ERAP, enabling social scientists to provide co-ordinated advice and support to outbreak control workers on the ground.

“Public health responses were faltering often for social and cultural reasons,” Professor Leach points out. *“We were able to feed social science into the emergency responses, helping to make them more effective.”* Ebola, she stresses, could only be contained by working with local people in a sensitive and respectful way, building on their own knowledge and adaptations, rather than trying to impose disease control measures on them.

With its website accessed by more than 16,000 users, ERAP delivered advice online and face-to-face to policymakers and practitioners in identifying and diagnosing cases, managing death and funerals, caring for the sick and improving communications and community engagement.

ERAP directly shaped response activities in Sierra Leone including implementation of locally appropriate community care centres, safe burials, social mobilisation approaches and vaccine trials as well as delivering pre-departure training on engaging effectively with socio-cultural practices for 362 clinical personnel. ERAP shaped not only on-the-ground action in West Africa but also informed UK government strategy.

The judging panel of the prize stated, *‘it’s clear that the ERAP team had a direct impact on lessening the amount of deaths and spread of Ebola by ensuring that learning from years of research in the area was highlighted to the right people in the right organisations’.*

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Heba Hayek

“It’s true that we might not have the bricks needed to rebuild our countries, but we do have the tools required to rebuild those people that have been left to fight another day”

Heba Hayek

Student, the Islamic University of Gaza. Participant in the NET-MED Youth Project

From Ideas to Action

Empowering and Supporting Communities through Debate

Heba was born in Gaza and studies English Literature at the Islamic University of Gaza. She is the co-founder of the first debate club in the Gaza Strip that has since become a Debate, Dialogue and Discussion (DDD) club. After taking an intensive course on DDD in the US, Heba developed a plan to include sustained dialogue sessions in the debate club as a tool to teach people how to express themselves freely and create a positive environment. A survivor of three wars, Heba believes that creativity and debate are vital tools in rebuilding a community, and that valuable lessons can be learned from the experience of living under military occupation.

“Me and my friend, Basel, started the first debate club in the Gaza Strip three years ago. In the world of occupation in which I live, my people and I have always suffered from disempowerment as both individuals and a nation, not to mention the lack of basic human rights. This has led to people being less understanding of each other and more concerned with their individual, rather than their collective, survival. I believe that debate helps to promote freedom of expression, mutual understanding and active citizenship, things that got buried during the years of conflict.

“We debate so many different issues in our debate club, and there’s a really great focus on women’s right and youth participation in decision-making. On International Women’s Day, we’re running a debate about how to encourage more women to get into STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and mathematics). It’s going to be a very strong and empowering one.

“Debate is a very strong form of empowering and supporting communities which are in desperate need of building a better environment for new generations to find ways to exert their freedom of expression. I fully support each woman who contributes to the work we are doing or who wants to set up her own initiative, whether it be DDD or anything else.”

[CLICK HERE TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE DEBATE CLUB & TO SUPPORT THEIR CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN](#)

NET-MED YOUTH

is a three-year project (2014-2017) implemented by UNESCO and funded by the European Union. We empower young women and men to be full participants in building their communities and to be agents of positive transformations in their region.

[LEARN MORE HERE](#)

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“The empowerment of women and girls through national policies is an important part of combating trafficking. A gender perspective should be applied when adopting and implementing measures to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings”

Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children, 2006

Events

Pre-African Development Forum on “Migration and Africa’s transformation - the gender dimensions” - 2017, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) announced the organization of the Tenth African Development Forum (ADF) on the theme “Migration and Africa’s transformation”, in 2017. Originally scheduled for 13-17 November 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the event has been postponed to complete the consultative process to identify members of the African High Level Panel on Migration, derived from Resolution ECA-L3 adopted at the AUC/ECA Conference of the African Ministers of Finance, Economic Development and Planning.

In the framework of that Forum, the UNECA African Centre for Gender (ACG) and the Capacity Development Division (CDD) will organize a Pre-African Development Forum on “Migration and Africa’s transformation - the gender dimensions”.

The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute estimated there to be 2.7 million victims of trafficking around the world, and of these 80% are women and children, often from developing regions such as Africa. This is a one of the most pressing gender issues inherent in regional and international migration which demands our full attention.

Understanding and identifying the gender dimensions of migration, with its links to Africa’s structural transformation, is indeed an important first step towards achieving the main goal of the ADF which is to provide Member States with evidenced-base policy options to harness migration for the structural transformation of the continent.

The Pre-Forum is a high-level policy dialogue whose main promise is to bring a gender dimension to the conceptualization discussions and framing of the nexus between migration and Africa’s structural transformation.

The event will bring together representatives from Member States, experts in migration and gender, as well as representatives from research institutions, academia, civil society, and development partners.

[FOR MORE INFORMATION, CLICK HERE](#)