FEMINIST VISIONS FOR A JUST EUROPE

A report of the WIDE Annual Conference 2008

9–11 October 2008 - The Peace Palace
The Hague, the Netherlands
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Edited by Marilyn Thomson

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The WIDE Annual Conference provides a space for debate. The presentations given and parallel sessions during the Annual Conference do not necessarily represent or reflect WIDE’s position and may differ from WIDE’s perspective.

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<tr>
<td>ABD</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMwA</td>
<td>Akina Mama wa Africa</td>
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<td>AWID</td>
<td>Association for Women’s Rights in Development</td>
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<td>AWEPA</td>
<td>European Parliamentarians for Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEE</td>
<td>Central and Eastern Europe</td>
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<tr>
<td>COP</td>
<td>Conference of Parties (highest body of the United Nations Climate Change Convention)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSR</td>
<td>Corporate Social Responsibility</td>
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<td>DAWN</td>
<td>Development Alternatives for a New Era</td>
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<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
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<td>EFF</td>
<td>European Feminist Forum</td>
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<td>EPLo</td>
<td>European Peacebuilding Liaison Office</td>
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<td>EU-ACP</td>
<td>European Union–African Caribbean Pacific</td>
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<tr>
<td>GATT</td>
<td>General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs</td>
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<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GPI</td>
<td>Girls Power Initiative</td>
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<td>HIPC</td>
<td>Highly Indebted Poor Countries</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communication Technology</td>
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<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labour Organization</td>
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<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
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<td>FdD</td>
<td>Financing for Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>Free Trade Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender</td>
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<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
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<tr>
<td>MNE</td>
<td>Multinational Enterprises</td>
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<td>MIGS</td>
<td>Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>OECD-DAC</td>
<td>Organisation for European Cooperation and Development, Development Assistance Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>OWINFS</td>
<td>Our World is Not for Sale</td>
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<tr>
<td>TWN</td>
<td>Third World Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNCTAD</td>
<td>United Nations Conference on Trade and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNFCC</td>
<td>United Nations Climate Change Conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNRISD</td>
<td>United Nations Research Institute for Social Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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<td>WSF</td>
<td>World Social Forum</td>
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WIDE is a European feminist network of women’s organisations, development NGOs, gender specialists and women’s activists who are committed to enriching development practice and policy from feminist perspectives with a focus on gender equality, economic development and trade. Since its foundation in 1985, WIDE has built a strong European membership represented by individuals and national and regional platforms in Western and Eastern Europe.

Every year the WIDE network organises a major Annual Conference that creates a space for the WIDE membership and their partners to debate key development and macro-economic issues from a gender perspective. In 2008 WIDE held its conference on ‘Feminist Visions for a Just Europe’ at the Peace Palace in The Hague, hosted by WO=MEN, the WIDE Dutch Gender Platform. The conference examined Europe’s role in the world, viewed through the lens of women’s rights, development and gender justice. The meeting was set against the backdrop of the current shifts in neoliberal economic globalisation, the questioning of US unilateralism and the opportunities offered by the new global players such as India, Brazil and China.

Increasingly finance-led development, growing inequality and deepening ecological crisis makes it critical that European women working in development ensure that Europe contributes responsively to the creation of a new, just and peaceful world order. The WIDE Annual Conference reflected on what role feminists and networks such as WIDE need to play in this process. The focus was on existing European policies for decent work and living conditions for women worldwide in a context of globalisation, feminisation and informalisation of labour, migration and changing aid structures. The conference analysed, strategised and debated not only these current policies but also the feminist alternatives that are emerging in the West, South and East that must shape a feminist approach to global social and economic justice.

Despite a wealth of feminist analysis, gender mainstreaming and concerted efforts by women’s groups to challenge gender bias, multi-national companies, organisations and politics ignore the role women play in trade and social and economic development in their communities and at the national level. As the nation state in Europe is giving way to a stronger European Union (EU), it is critical that gender justice becomes a central piece in a just Europe. The conference gave feminists from the West, South and East the space to promote their vision for a gender and socially just, peaceful world that takes into account feminist analysis and the realities of marginalised women around the world.

Heated debates during the conference included rethinking the concept of development given the changing relations of power and wealth in the world. The conference opened up questions around how feminists can respond to the financial but also food and climate crises and the ways in which feminists living and working in Europe can respond. This report captures the responses of women’s international networks to the policies of global actors such as the World Bank and warns that women’s rights and struggles have been co-opted by international organisations that ‘mainstream’ gender, so that gender becomes a technical fix and loses its political content.

Another recurring debate focused on moving beyond identity issues: what does feminism itself mean? What do we mean by citizenship? What is European? What does social justice mean for migrants in Europe? Women from Eastern Europe contributed by providing important information on their current fights for gender equality and explaining how gender equality policies are not functioning in the expansion of the EU in Eastern Europe. A major issue was the feminisation of labour in the global economy, particularly in Eastern Europe and the South. Economic activities are being de-regulated, and many women’s jobs are moving into the informal economy, as big corporations sub-contract their manufacturing work to a global supply chain where labour rights are often exploitative.

The need to understand gender alongside race, ethnicity, class, age and sexualities was underlined as part of a feminist intersectional analysis and is key to integrating issues around migration and asylum policy. The perspectives of intergenerational solidarity were also highlighted during the conference, with the presence of many young feminist activists attending from the European Feminist Forum.

The ‘reproductive bargain’ emerged as a strong issue for feminism in economic analysis and advocacy, par-
particularly around migrant women who work in Europe without legal protection or labour rights, carrying out domestic and caring roles in the homes of European women and men who enjoy privileged social and economic benefits as citizens.

At the heart of the WIDE agenda was the discussion on how a colonial approach continues in EU trade and cooperation agreements. There is increasing resistance from developing countries to protective EU agricultural policies and subsidies, and the EU’s aggressive trade policies were discussed. Feminists in Europe are joining and supporting women in the South and East and migrants in the West as they stand up for their rights, mindful of the impact of unjust EU global policies in the South and East.

The conference came forward with many ways to respond to these vital issues. How can women’s complex lives and contributions to both the productive and caring economies be recognised in economic policy? How can women move more into political power? How can participants in our different activities ensure money for our work in the women’s movement and non-governmental organisations?

As well as discussing such strategic questions, the conference looked at how to build alternatives to the current unjust world order from a feminist perspective, linking to activities such as the World Social Forum. The vision still emerging is of feminist alternatives capable of confronting the gender inequities of global development, trade and macro-economic models that are based on the economic and political marginalisation of women.

The conference was exciting and inspiring, full of knowledge exchanges, strategising, networking and, most of all, support. The report of the conference shows just what an inspiring three days we had – ones that linked feminist innovation, knowledge and visions on gender, finance and trade, labour, trade unions, social policy, migration and feminist alternatives in the search to move towards a just Europe.

The Report is one of the several reports made of the Conference, using different media. Shahrzad made several video interviews with speakers: http://www.youtube.com/user/ShahrzadNews1001, and a 1001 Seconds long video report: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x7aetz_shahrzad-news-wide-vredes-paleis_news. Shahrzad News is an independent news service that aims to fulfil a need for reliable and relevant information on women and women’s issues in Iran (http://www.shahrzadnews.org/en/index.php5). A Blog was set up where articles from the ‘Daily Visions’ newspaper, which came out each day of the conference, are to be found and radio-interviews with participants: http://feministvisionsforeurope.blogspot.com/.
1. Welcome and Opening Remarks

The conference was opened by Wendy Harcourt, WIDE Chair, and Zairah Khan, Coordinator of WO=MEN, the Dutch Gender Platform, who welcomed everyone to the 2008 WIDE conference. Wendy said that it was a historic occasion to be holding the event at the Peace Palace in The Hague, as it indicated that WIDE’s message can now be heard in key political places. She underlined the importance of WIDE working with partners from other parts of the world from a triangle perspective: West, East and South. Another well known European feminist, Virginia Woolf wrote: a woman’s country is the whole world, celebrating a sense of feminist history where women have taken the lead in world peace. Wendy hoped that during the conference we would explore our connections as women embracing justice and peace in the world. Zairah said she and her colleagues were proud to be the hosts of the conference this year in this historic location, a unique site in the world, built to embody peace. She told conference participants that in The Hague, one hundred and ten years ago, there were protests challenging women’s marginalised position and calling for women’s emancipation and that, since then, women have made great strides. There are still many great challenges for women, families and communities today: in development, trade security and migration. Zairah ended by saying that it is important to have a vision of social change and to question the systems that are keeping these challenges alive in corporate Europe, and to move toward a just Europe with policies that focus on well-being here and abroad.

Bénédicte Allaert, WIDE Capacity-Building Programme Manager, facilitated an interactive introduction with Wendy Harcourt and the 200 participants, from 40 countries. In the session participants were asked a series of questions about themselves (where they came from, what languages they spoke, areas of work, home life, how they saw themselves, their views on feminism, politics, their knowledge of development and human rights and many other questions) and, when these were appropriate to themselves participants stood up. Participants were in turn encouraged to ask questions themselves to the rest of the audience. This fun and light hearted session gave participants an opportunity to start getting to know each other and identify commonalities and what networking is all about.

2 Opening Panel: Situating Feminisms in Europe Today

The first panel, facilitated by Zairah Khan explored the ideologies of feminism situating the different definitions West, South and East. It set the scene for the first day, during which the presentations and group discussions provided an analysis of feminisms in relation to trends in Europe and struggles for gender justice and social change around the world.

2.1 Feminist visions for a just Europe
Wendy Harcourt, WIDE (Italy/Australia)

WIDE has worked on the nexus of gender, development and trade for over two decades. But as we read the headlines today on the multiple financial, climate and food crises we can’t help but wonder: what exactly have we been doing? When we see the situation in the

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1 The Peace Palace houses the International Court of Justice and the Permanent Court of Arbitration, the principal judicial organ of the United Nations. The International Court of Justice was established by a UN Charter in 1945 and the following year began working in the Peace Palace in The Hague.

2 West (Western Europe mainly) The Eastern region (CEE/CIS region- Eastern Europe & Central Asia), and the South (developing countries).
world today, the result of these last two decades have been: growing disparities between rich and poor, increasing poverty, failing trade agreements, huge environmental damage and climate change, and increasing gender disparity and violence on a daily basis. Has WIDE then been, unwittingly, part of some major bluff on the part of the global North that kept up business as usual, despite all the very evident fault lines of the fracturing world order? What has it all been about? All those meetings and papers, and reports that kept the development experts and bureaucrats busy monitoring and measuring, the civil society groups like WIDE lobbying and campaigning, all those experts advising, and governments promising.

When we look at all the fancy advertising, the growing giant retail and supermarket chains, new fancy airports, new global brands, new tourist destinations, we might well wonder where all that energy went. Was anyone listening to our protests at the loss of state autonomy and ownership, privatised water and healthcare, feminisation of the work force (without child care), the increase in maternal mortality, huge increase in youth unemployment, migration, rising fundamentalism and denigration of local cultures and local knowledge of the environment?

Today’s crises show that we were right to raise those questions, and challenge patriarchal injustice, colonialism, gender oppression, military, economic and social power. But were we really doing that as we engaged in gender and development in negotiations at the WTO, the basement of the UN, in the corridors of power in Brussels and in our national government ministries?

Our lives are driven by a perverse globalisation, which is going in the wrong direction. All of these crises cannot be divorced from global tensions marked by unfair trade, skewed development and gender inequality. But these tensions and perversities are not somewhere out there, addressed by gender and development policy that directs a tiny fraction of our inadequate aid to women in other countries. Speaking as WIDE, as women living and working in the different countries of Europe, we have to see that development is not working. We need to go beyond the development heterodoxies, and acknowledge the connections in our lives with those in power in Europe, with our lifestyles, our consumption patterns, and how they impact on women in other parts of the world.

The concept of poverty has proved an ambiguous one feeding into North-South divisions in unhelpful ways given today’s integrated, if asymmetrical, globalised world. Development has become a technical policy regime that obliges Southern citizens to engage in constraining development policy regimes, whereas the responsibilities of citizens in the North are forgotten.

Development is quite clearly no longer answering the issues of today. Even on their own terms, the statements from Paris, Accra and New York say that too.

I do not mean that we forget our work on the gender, development and trade nexus. It is precisely because there continues to be so much inequality, and so much blindness as to what could be possible, that we have to engage in the debates. As women living in Europe we cannot hide our heads in the sand. We have to acknowledge and speak up about our responsibilities and changes in our lives, knowing that the multiple crises we face, financial, food, climate, social, demand multiple solutions from different actors, including those working in development. But it is no longer the case of the rich North bailing out the poor South. Today’s financial crisis shows that all too clearly. We have to work to ensure that the world stops fragmenting along race, class, gender and religious divides.

So what can WIDE do? We need to consider where best to direct our energies. We need to continue our negotiations and advocacy with the development establishment but we need to position ourselves clearly. We are not engaged in these debates innocently. We need to question our own role in a world marked by a development that has led to climate change, water and food scarcity, oil crisis, spiralling consumer costs and deepening gender inequalities. At the same time we also need to continue to build a vision, to network and connect with other feminist groups around the world.

Our fractured global landscape is visibly and interestingly crisscrossed by connections, forged by ordinary people who do not just await their fate. These connections are vital for survival and they give WIDE the knowledge and scope to play a strong and important role in Europe. Loosely connected global networks,

Wendy Harcourt “Our work needs to be informed by the passionately held hope that collectively we can find inspirational and creative ways to bring about political change.”

Wendy Harcourt
movements, and campaigns fought around the world, are a way for WIDE to continue a vibrant engagement with gender inequality and injustice. Through WIDE’s engagements within and outside of Europe with political movements that have challenged development, we can and will continue to strategise and fight against our exclusion from mainstream political processes.

But I would warn that, even while protesting at the disempowering impacts of development, producing counter-knowledge and proposing other practices, women (and some men) engaged in gender and development have been pulled into a development industry. The complex links between health, reproductive life cycles, the caring economy, the market economy, the environment and globalisation have been put through the development machine and emerged as watered down issues that governments could agree to, but, lacked the resources, will and capacity to be carried out. Gender and development policy has become mired in a progressive-sounding orthodoxy that fails to engage with the realities of women’s experience and aspirations around the world. It is important that WIDE, as a European player, refuses to participate in such compromises and demands a change in social norms, institutions and relationships that confront social, economic, climate and gender injustices.

We cannot afford self-congratulatory ‘feel good talk’ about empowering women that pretends to put women at the forefront of achieving peace, prosperity and democracy and development. It is far more difficult and more painful than such statements suggest. Feminists have long known that when women recognise their ‘power within’ and act together with other women to exercise ‘power with’, that they gain ‘power to’ act as agents. Feminist experience has shown that this is a process that is long and complex, there are no shortcuts to gender justice, but it is vital that we strive towards it, with honesty and conviction and no pretence.

WIDE as a network can recognise our own power within and the contradictions and difficulties we face in the agenda we have set ourselves. We need to cut away from the tangle of assumptions and stereotypes that have filled the field of gender and development. Starting from the lives of women here in Europe, as they feel and experience political, social, economic and cultural change, we need to bring critical scrutiny to the taken-for-granted assumptions of gender, trade and development. Opening up a feminist debate on development means asking new questions about what is politics. It is not only about getting women and minority groups into power. It is about vision and building on alternatives. It is not about blueprints but about recognition of difference and strategic agreement on how to move forward, one that is not hampered or weighed down by institutions, management plans, jargon and un-winnable power games. We need to define the rules of the game.

WIDE needs to continue its strategic work, actively engaged in the collective work of transnational feminism fully aware of the intersections of class, caste, race, gender and geographical/post-colonial divisions. Our work needs to be informed by the passionately held hope that, collectively, we can find inspirational and creative ways to bring about political change. It remains important to engage with the European governmental and multilateral gender and development agenda. But, equally important, it is vital for feminists in Europe and elsewhere to continue building collective responses to the deep global inequalities, the pain and the passion that informs our world.

At this Annual Conference we have set an ambitious programme. We want to understand Europe as a global player viewed through the lens of women’s rights and gender justice, in order to facilitate an envisioning process of social change and gender justice. We want to deepen our knowledge on how ongoing reforms on trade, financial mechanisms and development are linked, and how they affect women’s and men’s livelihoods, perspectives and prospects for gender equality. Last, but very importantly, we want to strengthen and formulate alternative visions for a feminist future and build alliances for change. These are all vital and necessary goals for WIDE, our partners and allies.

2.2. Reflections on feminist visions for a just Europe and their implications for practices in feminist transnational cooperation

Thanh-Dam Truong, Institute of Social Studies (Netherlands/Vietnam)

Feminism as a struggle for social justice has a long history. There have been moments of acting together and moments of fragmentation. At this juncture we seem to be experiencing more fragmentation than cohesion. I am conscious of how important it is to move from an abstract to a more concrete understanding of ‘social justice’, and how the grounding of feminist research and advocacy in daily life remains crucial to this understanding. In my current location I benefit from ‘triple privilege’ as a researcher in an academic institution in the Netherlands, a privileged country, situated in a privileged geo-political zone, and working about the lives of people who are suffering from ‘triple jeopardy’: those whose lives have been compounded by a convergence of different crises – financial, social and environmental – without means of redress. This contrast has made me aware that academic performance in a position of
‘triple privilege’ can be at times driven by its own dynamics, leaving the reality of ‘triple jeopardy’ experienced by many people relatively untouched. My attempts to maintain links with social movements and encounter with those suffering from triple jeopardy have revealed many conflicting interests and goals, due to different understandings of what constitutes social justice, for whom and where.

My reflection comes from my own personal history. I come from Vietnam, born during the war with the French and grew up during the war with the Americans, considered the most violent war in contemporary history. In trying to come to terms with broken relations in families, in communities, in schools, and moving along with the society while it was, and still is, feeling fractured, I have learned that the question of national identity is not constructed in the air. It is significant for people in times when geo-political powers are in formation. It is influenced by the ways in which borders and boundaries are marked. The significance of national identity as a construct is inseparable from the material base of geopolitical power and security issues. Although broader cultural streams cut across national borders, people relate to each other through ‘national identity’ more than a given cultural undercurrent, which they may share.

Given this reality, it is important for us to take the meaning of feminist consciousness and visions for justice as something that extends beyond one’s own location. So how do you make your own vision of justice relevant to others? And what can you learn from other’s vision of social justice? We often think that we are strong, but I must say that very often we forget that as humans we are vulnerable to erroneous assessment, scientifically, socially and in every day life. This should guide us to be a little more humble as to what we think as the ‘right thing to do’. So, I would say that strength and vulnerability go together. In that sense, feminist visions of justice have never been something I can take as pre-given, but as something emerging from practice that requires a constant act of bridging perspectives, listening to each other, and the courage to be humble, to accept one’s limited and at times, erroneous, assessment and therefore, to keep an openness to learn from others. Feminist values must be reinvigorated to come to terms with new situations.

**New global trends and old models of social justice**

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are seen as the measure of poverty in the South, but poverty and deprivation now cut across nation-states. Therefore, when we speak of countries like Thailand, the Philippines, Vietnam or Malaysia in the ‘Global South’ by virtue of their GDP, we need to be cautious about what this reflects. In the countries of the so-called East Asian Tigers there are people (though few) who command more wealth and power than an average citizen of Europe. So, it is better to talk about poverty as something that cuts across nations and requires us to look inside a country at the social relations and particular asymmetries, before we look at the relations of inequalities between the rich and poor countries. Poverty now cuts across societies. What we experience today in Europe are the formations of new circles of power and privileges, overlapping with circles of new and old forms of poverty and deprivation. Relations between the rich countries are equalising across countries, they are communicating and trading much more among themselves. Among the poor there is less communication because there is no possibility. Pockets of poverty in different parts of the world are being formed but it is a mistake to box poverty assessment in national frames. And it is important to be much more aware and acknowledge that what is growing in terms of social divisions is a political, social, cultural apartheid on a global scale. It is much more complex than the black-versus-white apartheid system, or the North-South divide.

Thanh-Dam Truong

“…what is growing in terms of social divisions is a political, social, cultural apartheid on a global scale. It is much more complex than the black-versus-white apartheid system, or the North-South divide.”

We need to be much more conscious of how different structures of oppressions and disadvantage (such as gender, class, ethnicity, age) and processes (such as environmental degradation, economic crisis and social distress) intersect with each other and how their impacts converge on the lives of the weakest. In this particular area the specific issue of gender and migration explains some of these points. As a researcher, trying to understand the experiences of women’s everyday life, I think this must be brought to bear on policy
and justice systems. Often we engage with the grassroots, trying to document their experiences and document their voices. And then we leave these voices hanging. We now need women’s voices to interrogate the structures that created the crisis that we are experiencing today. We must move from critical thinking to innovative thinking, and apply these concepts to innovate practice. And here I refer to two innovations that are my favourites.

The first is the concept of ‘triple jeopardy’ that I mentioned earlier. This concept came from black women in the US. It evolved into intersectionality, which helps to show the complexity of oppression through the intersection of multiple systems of discrimination. This insight triggered waves of theorizing and has contributed to changes in the social sciences. But now the concept must test its usefulness in practice and come up with solutions. The other concept is that of ‘portable justice’ that I came across when I was working on migrant workers. The concept was developed by the Global Workers Justice Alliance to ensure the right and ability of transnational migrants to access justice in the host country, even after they have departed. Such a concept did not come from abstract thinking, but from social workers and lawyers providing legal aid for migrant workers, in order to document the abuse of rights suffered and how the justice systems had failed them. These are excellent examples of how research and innovative thinking can be achieved when analysis of everyday experiences has a clear purpose. For women’s studies to maintain its relevance the route has to be more theoretical, more visible and remain rooted in practice.

**EU concentric circles of security**

What does all this mean for feminist and NGOs in the EU? When thinking about social justice in Europe, I do not have the image of a flat landscape but of concentric circles of power. The last decade has seen major changes in EU migration and asylum policy, including a shift in the integration of migration objectives to a trade and aid package to prevent people from entering the EU. These changes mark the formation of a series of concentric circles of security: the inner circle includes the signatories of the Schengen Treaty, which is expected to extend to EU-15 and to EU-27. It is a collective measure of migration control. The inner borderlands include EU countries on the eastern side, which acted, or are still acting, as a source and transit zones for migrants. The outer borderlands include the larger area of North Africa and the Middle East, as a source of ‘unwanted’ migration. The EU policy goal is to turn this zone into a buffer to control migration in return for trade and aid.

The formation of these circles shows that concerns for migration control, through a range of multi-layered mechanisms, seem to have overshadowed the protection of rights and justice for all. Increased militarised control in the outer borderland – often conflating crime with migration – now stimulates responses at different levels. Trade and migration are inter-related spheres, but artificially divided by language, and the rules that govern them. Yet these concentric circles are built on the logic of pro-trade and anti-migration. This is a contradiction in the way human life is organized: more trade means more movements of people. How can governments promote the movements of good and services and keep some people where they are?

Feminist visions of a just Europe cannot afford to sidestep the reality of these concentric circles, the construction of identities, and how issues of justice and injustice set in the ways of control. Identity, as something imposed upon citizens located in each of these circles, has full force in terms of rights (or lack thereof) to be mobile and the accompanying privileges. Identity, as something emerging from consciousness and knowledge about the self and others, is fractured. Most people fail to recognise that migration, just as trade, reflects the connections between societies. Governments have opted for free trade policy, without a corresponding concern for what this might do to the mobility of people, the impact of this mobility on care systems and relations, and the reproduction of cultural meanings of ‘mobility’. Perhaps issues related to changing care systems, care work and the migration of care workers, are most illustrative of the inconsistency regarding the relationship between trade and migration and the deeper ethical issues involved.

**Feminist transnational relations of solidarity for justice**

What does all this imply for feminist researchers and their relationships with transnational advocacy groups and NGOs? In trying to answer this question two things came to my mind. The first is about the ABC of feminist research. This methodology tells us that research

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3 This Convention came into effect in 1995; it abolished checks at the internal borders of the signatory States and created a single external border for immigration checks to be carried out. Common rules regarding visas, right of asylum and checks at external borders were adopted to allow the free movement of persons within the signatory States without disrupting law and order. This freedom of movement was accompanied by so-called “compensatory” measures: improving cooperation and coordination between the police and the judicial, and setting up the Schengen Information System (SIS), a sophisticated database used by the authorities to exchange data on categories of people and goods.
should be grounded in women’s lives; be able to translate the hidden private problems they face in everyday life into visible public issues to work towards change; and be able to reciprocate to the subjects of research, rather than extracting information from them for one’s own research career. Beyond the question of equality and respect in the research process, these three principles lay the ground for a relation of solidarity between the researcher and the subjects of research.

The second issue relates to how we act for change. And here the image of a flock of birds came to my mind. I often admire the way birds act together as a flock and how they create amazing cumulative effects but there is no leader. I’ve never understood why they have the instinct to do this. I learnt that birds fly in a flock by following a set of simple rules which are carried out by individual birds, these are: aggregation (or moving towards the flock); steering (or avoiding collision with other birds); and adjusting speed to match the nearest neighbours. The patterns of the flock change due to a wide range of factors external to the flock but, generally, they travel very far together. So this image led me to question in which way can the image of a flock of birds be inspiring for a discussion on a feminist visions for a just Europe? Should it be a just Europe for Europeans only, or should a just Europe also refer to the ways it relates to other countries, to others outside of its security zones?

One of the main problems for us is that, unlike the birds that move on instinct, our choice is based on social thinking about the ethical and political. The decisions we make and how we adjust to others are not always instinctual but socially filtered. So, how do we understand social justice and resolve the difference in meaning we attach to this term, when, as feminists, we tend to assume that we share the same meaning. For those who adhere to neo-liberal values, social justice means more access to markets, more autonomy and self-enhancement. For those who adhere to Keynesian values, social justice means protection and income transfer for the poor, something which the neo-liberalist see as paternalistic and patronizing or crippling creativity, at best, and free-riding, at worst. For those who adhere to the principles of social justice as equality of representation, the term means a struggle against oppressive meanings, or the removal of words, terms, symbols that bear degrading connotations to particular social groups. For those who adhere to an understanding of social justice as something based on the full spectrum of rights (political and civil, economic, social, and cultural) poverty and deprivation is seen as structural violence and, thus, offers a more holistic and systemic perspective than the other remedies we have talked about.

To sum up, we all position ourselves as feminists on this broad canvas of social justice but the difference in the fine lines of interpretation have remained. The ways we are related and connected with each other, our understanding and learning from each other's stories, and the values we hold [and change] can help us to aggregate, steer and adjust speed of action in ways that can produce cumulative effects. The possibility to fly like a flock of birds, hopefully, can be resolved by finding some harmony among the flock itself. This is something that will require a lot of debate during the conference and I look forward to the discussion.

2.3 Young feminists in Europe

Joanna Semeniuk, European Feminist Forum and European Young Feminist Activists Network (Netherlands/Poland)

I will be presenting two initiatives that developed as a response to the fragmentation of the European feminist movement and which are examples of the latest feminist networking and cooperation practices: the innovative European Feminist Forum and the European Young Feminist Activists Network.

Joanna Semeniuk
“Young women are looking for ways to organise without rigid structures or fixed power relations; they value participation and use formats like ‘open space’ to democratise the meetings.”

European Feminist Forum (www.europeanfeministforum.org)

The European Feminist Forum (EFF) was a very special initiative, which came from the recognition that we needed to discuss feminist agendas in Europe because we no longer speak in a common language. The EFF began in 2006 with a bottom up model of organisation
inspired by other social movements. We wanted people to identify the issues, not based on consensus, but by working toward a goal. The idea behind the EFF\(^4\) was strategic and very simple: to see who is out there today in the feminist movement, what issues are coming up, which ones are not, and together, in a debate, work out a few strong agenda points that most of us can agree upon, with a three to five years perspective. At the beginning of 2007 a space for discussions was established on how to re-politicise the feminist movement in Europe. We had many lively discussions through the website and outreach and I feel that we achieved a lot. We are now evaluating the whole process and preparing a report to help with the next steps.

Through the EFF website, 21 Affinity Groups debated urgent issues and shared their information and knowledge. The plan was that the activities of the EFF would culminate with a groundbreaking conference in Poland in June 2008, bringing together 500 feminists. However, for financial reasons the organisers had to cancel the event. The choice was between having the meeting without a prior process and having a process without the meeting. But all the other parts of the project: the Community and Affinity Groups, the debates and discussion papers, the web space and outreach were all a great success.

Some of the interesting highlights of the EFF are that the movement recognised the need for networking and was able to organise such a big initiative, bottom up, and that it self-defined feminism and European-ness. It was a place where different people and different kinds of feminism came together. The working models were tailored to today’s realities: the Affinity Groups were an ad hoc model for a diversified movement; and the “Travelling Circus” (EFF on tour, organizing local meetings and joining local feminist festivals and conferences) was an important tool in building the movement. These allowed us to carry out a mapping of current feminist themes.

The Affinity Groups\(^5\) are open, non-hierarchical and transnational, working groups of feminists that were tasked with preparing content for the EFF conference. They were created spontaneously, bottom-up and are made up of feminists who answered our open call. The groups showed how much flexibility and diversity there is in the feminist movement in Europe. What is more, it indicated that an institutionalised movement does not satisfy people’s needs – we had many feminists joining who were not affiliated with any organisation, who otherwise could not or did not want to be in the movement of networks, NGOs and foundations. We also saw that for newly established, as well as for the long standing groups, it was important to join the EFF because it added the European context and positioning to their own work.

**Emerging themes from the EFF**

Based on discussions so far, the following themes were identified as potential areas to address: economic change in Europe (the labour market, migration and feminist alternatives); women’s physical and sexual integrity (women’s bodies, abortion and the politics of ending violence against women); and strengthening the movement (feminist resource mobilisation and building political power). These issues were debated by a variety of feminist groups, such as:

- the emerging feminist movement of amazing women living in Europe;
- a strong network of Philippine women in Europe striving for the common Migrant Feminist Agenda;
- young scholars debating the precarious labour market;
- feminist men educating boys on violence prevention;
- eco-feminists working on peace and security;
- ICT specialists promoting women’s involvement in technology;
- young and older debating the generation gap.

Currently the organisers are preparing a comprehensive publication\(^6\) (expected in 2009) that will bring together the threads of the discussions among the Affinity Groups and report on the process of the European Feminist Forum. It will present the state of the art in feminist knowledge on the most pressing feminist issues, made up of many different voices; it will map the state of the feminist movement in Europe, and conclude on the possible consequences for Europe.

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4 The European Feminist Forum was created by the following European feminist networks and alliances: ASTRA and the Polish Federation for Women and Family Planning; Babaylan – the Philippine Women’s Network in Europe; Women Peacemakers Program of IFOR (WPP); International Information Centre and Archives for the Women’s Movement (IIAV); KARAT Coalition; the Network of East-West Women (NEWW); the Roma Women’s Initiative and WIDE.

5 Read more on Affinity Groups in the article “Pioneering New Feminist Organizing: Affinity Groups and the Creation of the European Feminist Forum” by Joanna Semeniuk, Gisela Dütting. Accessible online: http://europeanfeministforum.org/spip.php?article4298 lang=en

This article documenting the process of setting the Affinity Groups and the Forum, was written from the perspective of mid-2007, as a chapter of Saskia E. Wieringa (ed.) 2008, Travelling Heritages. New Perspectives on Collecting, Preserving and Sharing Women’s History, Amsterdam: Aksant.

6 A working title of the publication is Feminisms in Europe Today: The European Feminist Forum Experience, by Gisela Dutting, Wendy Harcourt, Kinga Lohmann and Joanna Semeniuk. Read more at http://europeanfeministforum.org/spip.php?article418
tion will be a good starting point for the movement to develop the organisation of the Feminist Forum in Europe.

**European Young Feminist Activists Network**
(www.youngfeminist.net)

This was an initiative taken by some young women that led to the European Young Feminist Activists Network. The interest that the EFF raised among the younger generation shows that the pan-European, or simply the supranational context, is crucial especially for young women. Many young activists are migrants and many participate in other social movements with a strong international dimension, for instance the alternative globalist movement or the LGBT/queer movement.

The network is an informal group of young feminist activists from different European countries. Many of them met at the Young Women’s Institute organised by AWID (Association for Women’s Rights in Development) in November 2006. After the conference, the girls stayed in contact and started to plan to meet again to set up a solid network. They were inspired by the level of organisational and political consciousness of young women from other regions of the world, especially from Latin America. As far as they were concerned, there were no similar initiatives specifically focusing on young women’s issues taking place in Europe. When the European Feminist Forum started up they organised an Affinity Group on intergenerational dialogue, bringing together feminists of different age groups. To begin with a Young Women’s Forum was planned to take place two days before the European Feminist Forum. But in the end a five-day meeting for around 20 young women was held in June 2008 in Warsaw, where we discussed our issues and strategies, such as on the economy, social security, political participation, and how to mobilise young women as they have low participation. It was a diverse group of young feminists, consisting of: young women running their own NGOs, working in bigger organisations run by older women, anarcho-feminists, scholars and students, individuals, disabled women, and young women from the women’s self-development movement. The following are some of the issues that we discussed.

**Networking on a regional and international level**

This comes easy for young women and we value informal relations and networking. Most of the young women are active in more than one movement and are therefore used to linking issues and agendas, they are aware that they are speaking from certain positions and that their voice is one of many. The forms of young women’s activism often have a global reach, for example, Lady Fests. These work well in every country and attract lots of energy but Lady Fests are more cultural than political and there are no political conclusions, besides experiencing the personal is political. When there is a need for it, quick, coordinated, feminist response and direct actions in many European countries are important - for example, in response to a backlash change in law in one country.

**Non-hierarchical and bottom-up structures**

Young women are looking for ways to organise without rigid structures or fixed power relations; they value participation and use formats like ‘open space’ to democratise the meetings. This was also a response to the professionalization of NGOs, which young women are often opposed to, not only for ideological reasons (NGOs becoming business-like) but also because they are unlikely to get paid and/or definite positions there. Also, young women are targeted by the “become a young leader” neoliberal rhetoric of donor organisations and EU-funded youth programmes, which contradicts the reality of local women’s organisations, where young women are denied leadership. (This was one of the findings of research done by the Intergenerational Dialogue Affinity Group for the EFF7). So, young women get involved by organising demonstrations, as volunteers, or by getting jobs as technical support and in administration in NGOs.

**Sustaining activism and self-care**

This is an issue for all activists, but especially for young women, as we are at the point in our lives of making decisions on our future lifestyle and careers. Lots of girls give up their activism in order to earn money in regular jobs and so there is a lack of continuity in young women’s activism as well as a lack of resources.

**Intergenerational relations**

The experience of the generation gap in Eastern European countries was that young women learned about feminism from books and resources but not from their mothers’ generation. The feminist herstory from before the system change is not a common heritage available to young women. The Mapping of intergenerational issues in European feminist and women’s movements conducted in Armenia, Belarus, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland and Serbia, shows the lack of intergenerational connections, transmission and transition, as the main issues the feminist movement faces in

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7 Mapping of intergenerational issues in European feminist and women’s movements (2007-2008), soon available at www.youngfeminist.net
Europe today. According to the authors, the problem of unequal participation of different feminist generations, and the lack of dialogue among them, has resulted in a lack of continuity, sustainability, and an absence of historical perspective in the European feminist movement.

**Politics**

There is low political awareness among young women and they do not identify themselves as “young women” as a specific group, even among activists. The question is then, how to politicise young women activists and make their voices heard? The political issues our network has identified so far as crucial for young women in particular are: the economy and the precariousness of the labour market; social security and backlash policies in Europe, especially on reproductive rights and family related laws.

2.4 Comments and Discussion

A participant from an African organisation stressed that feminist organisations need to work with young women and girls as they are the future; her organisation consciously included them in planning and decision making processes. Then the discussion focused on the use of the term ‘development’ bringing to light diverging views on Wendy’s challenging presentation. A participant from Southern Africa disagreed with the assertion that the term ‘development’ was no longer useful. From her experience the scepticism of people in the ‘North’ that the term is being turned into a technical process between governments does not fit with debates in Africa. She stressed that we should not allow ‘development’ to be co-opted, tamed and transformed like they have done with the concept of gender, which has been mainstreamed into the status quo. In the South development is a very transformative term about growth, improving water access, food production and job creation – the point is, how. Development is about changing relations between people, between men and women, people and governments.

Wendy responded that it is very important to clarify key concepts, such as development, which evolve and change over time. WIDE does engage in progressive, economic agendas that the speaker inferred were a development agenda. The point she wanted to make is that the whole idea of the ‘developed’ and the ‘developing’ world is divisive and does not help us move forward. It is important to scrutinize the power mechanisms that decide who is developed and who is not. This does not mean we do not want clean water for all or secure livelihoods for poor women. What we need to unpack is the development jargon and get to the values underneath which are fundamentally asymmetrical. These asymmetries are not addressed by mainstream (male stream) development and working in ‘development’ can lead to many incongruities as it rarely addresses our feminist issues. As feminists we have to situate ourselves in both mainstream and alternatives to development, to make connections between these and, in a sense, to lean both ways. Perhaps it would be easier to keep the term if we want to reclaim or redefine it. We need to think outside the boxes in which we ourselves have been placed. Wendy stressed it is very important for feminists and for WIDE as a network to engage and challenge from a gender perspective both development and alternatives.

A participant from the UK said it is useful to distinguish between ‘Development’, with a capital ‘D’, which refers to the development institutions and international cooperation, and ‘development’ with a small ‘d’, which is about progressive economic and social change. It is the latter that concerns women’s organisations and networks and this is what we need to re-focus on. She agreed with the Southern African participant that ‘post-development’ academics are talking among themselves and we do not need to engage with them, but given the current financial crisis, this is a good moment to think about the institutions, such as Bretton Woods, which are fractured, and to address international architecture as well as local structures.

In the plenary discussion we questioned some fundamental concepts and particularly our role as feminists in redefining them. This debate was carried forward for further discussion in the parallel sessions.

3 Parallel Sessions

Following the opening panel, participants divided up into four different parallel sessions that aimed to go into greater depth on issues raised in the presentations and to engage participants in a reflective process on fundamental questions relating to our understanding of feminisms in Europe today with a broader international perspective.

3.1 Europe, Europeans & European global players of today in the context of globalisation

**Facilitator: Amandine Bach, European Women’s Lobby (Belgium)**

This group tried to define what Europe is by brainstorming on the visible and invisible face of Europe from their own locations. It was a very wide ranging discussion on the multiple facets of Europe: the people, corporations and governments. It was suggested that the justification of EU policy often comes from corporations,
which are located at the centre, and from national governments. But Europe also consists of trade unions, progressive social movements and of excluded people: migrants, the so-called invisible people, non-citizens that do a lot of the work. Seen from outside —e.g. from South Africa— it is seen as cohesive and as aggressively opening markets for big business. While in Georgia, it is seen as sharing democratic values, it is both a threat and an opportunity. In Italy, when there are repressive polices it is good to have support from others.

In the discussion two faces and contradictions emerged: the Treaty of Lisbon was seen by some as an opportunity to put in place progressive policies at a national level in the face of reluctance by national states. But in Sweden the Treaty was seen as threatening social welfare and democracy, which are being replaced by neo-liberalism and unregulated markets. The recent voting against the EU in referendums in Ireland, for example, showed that citizens in member states do not universally support the EU. Yet, for those countries outside the EU wanting to join it is often seen as the Promised Land.

The group discussed how it is difficult to have one common European identity, as people feel stronger about their own national identity. At the same time, the middle classes in different countries are linked together by consumerism and for many people Europe means the common market. But there are also different alliances (for example, on green issues) where people of different backgrounds come together on issues of mutual concern.

Finally, the group discussed the challenges for feminists in terms of accountability in the EU and proposed a range of actions. The financial crisis presents big challenges and fears, such as: people losing their jobs and the rise of extreme right wing movements. At the same time, it could be seen as an opportunity to re-construct the economic system and power structures.

3.2 Intersectionalities, intersecting lives and realities
Facilitator: Bénédicte Allaert, WIDE Secretariat (Belgium), Speaker: Patricia Muñoz Cabrera, PhD researcher ULB/Free University of Brussels (the Netherlands/Chile) and WIDE member

Patricia began her presentation by situating the notion of intersectionality in its historical, political and theoretical context (see her power point presentation on the WIDE website). The concept of ‘intersectionality’ was coined by the African American legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 but dates back to 19th century, when black feminist intellectuals such as Anna Luisa Cooper and Sojourner summoned US society to take stock of the interlocking nature of gender and racial oppression.

As a concept, intersectionality assumes that individuals have multiple social memberships and that these identities can coexist. Patricia clarified that even though the concept has been often associated with identity politics, it goes beyond this debate to embrace the intersectional nature of oppressive power relations (e.g. race/gender/race/sexuality).

Crenshaw distinguishes between structural and political intersectionality. According to her, these two dimensions enhance problematisation of the multiple axes of subordination affecting women’s lives. Structural intersectionality relates to different institutions, systems and mechanisms of power and oppression; while political intersectionality links macro-analysis, practices and policies and their impact, as experienced by women themselves. To exemplify this paradigm of analysis, Patricia presented a matrix of domination. The matrix clearly shows how oppressions are interlocking and how, complemented with a power analysis, intersectionality can help to identify measures of marginalisation which would otherwise remain invisible (i.e. power differentials amongst groups and movements affected by privileged or social exclusion).

As an analytical framework, intersectionality facilitates establishing links between policies and their impact on the material reality of oppressed social subjects. Because of its emphasis on the often mono-dimensional structures of thought used (by institutions and social actors) to define the world in which we live, intersectionality problematises more appropriately the complex link between the structures, policies and factors generating inequalities and their connection with the micro, or local level. Put differently, intersectionality connects the domain of feminist research on inequalities with impact on women’s livelihoods in various fields of investigation. Crenshaw proved this when she conducted research on migrant women in the US. She demonstrated how policies and policy-makers, by examining only one aspect of the multiple jeopardy of women migrants (gender violence) failed to make an appropriate reading of other factors at work in their disenfranchisement (undocumented legal status, religious or cultural backgrounds).

Participants to the workshop indicated that intersectionality has been used by the UN to identify women who are denied their rights and also in academia to gather data and develop useful indicators. A participant from Bolivia pointed out that intersectionality
remains a concept and that it could generate tensions by privileging the individual in groups or communities where the collective is central to preserve communal cohesion. A number of challenges were identified. Amongst these, the question how to apply intersectionality in practice remains a significant one. It is still a theoretical model and feminist theorists do not always work in synergy with feminist activists or practitioners. However, in spite of these challenges, the group came to the conclusion that it could be a useful tool in developing feminist alternatives to dominant paradigms.

3.3 Opening up concepts of citizenship in Europe and the world
Facilitator: Godelieve van Heteren, CORDAID (Netherlands)

The session on citizenship revealed a plethora of meanings on notions of citizenship. Participants brought forward legal definitions and regulatory frameworks, membership, belonging, actively engaging, participation, responsibilities, rights, entitlements, where you feel at home, family and other relationships. It was a complicated assignment to unpack notions of citizenship.

Real inequalities exist between citizens, especially as citizenship becomes more transnational, and citizenship does not guarantee protection when people cross borders. One participant suggested we should focus on legal definitions and frameworks which are the basis for lobbying. There followed some discussion on who has the power to decide citizenship and how political and legal authorities use citizenship to include or exclude people. As the relationship between state and markets is changing, so citizens are increasingly seen as taxpayers rather than active subjects, but citizens also have purchasing power that can be used to pressurize governments.

It was also suggested that citizenship means belonging to a community but it is also a national identity. However, several participants pointed out that they had a number of identities, holding one nationality while living in another country. The point was also made that within the same family there can be inequalities when different members have different rights and entitlements because of their different birthplaces. It was commented that people have to marry someone from another country in order to change their citizenship. One participant felt she didn’t identify with any of the countries she was legally connected to because she did not agree with the laws and cultural practices, such as religion.

The discussion touched on practical realities: the difficulties for some to travel and the movement of people. In reality issues like freedom and protection depend on the type of passport/citizenship. The citizenship of some is at the cost of the non-citizenship of others and it can lead to fundamental inequalities: different classes exist between nationalities and citizens, with the upper class being more ‘mobile’; while foreigners are not equal to and do not have the same rights as citizens. Some participants suggested that citizenship is getting more repressive and divisive with the inclusion/exclusion of different categories of people and, ideally, we should have a choice to multiple citizenships, particularly in Europe with growing regional identities. However, with detention centres on the borders of Europe to prevent people from exercising their rights, the basis of citizenship was very privileged and based on economic differences and exclusion. It was suggested that we should use a human rights perspective and international instruments to protect individual rights, as human rights cut across national boundaries and are rights that everyone is entitled to, regardless of citizenship.

3.4 Scoping global feminisms in the West, South and East
Facilitator: Jivka Marinova, WIDE and GERT (Bulgaria)

Jivka Marinova suggested that Global Feminism was a theory concerned with the movement of women’s rights on a global scale and then the group discussed what they understood by feminism. It was suggested that it might be better to talk about women’s movements rather than a feminist movement, as there are different types of feminism. Another participant suggested that, instead of ‘feminisms’ it would be better to speak of feminist movements, since ‘isms’ implies some theories cast in stone. During the wide-ranging discussion a number of issues were highlighted: that there is no universal feminism, we should not aim to be the same but celebrate our diversity, and we should not label ourselves, our experiences are different but we can work on common principles to guide our work and that it is important not focus on the definition of universal feminism but to identify common strategies. Another point was made on inter-generational differ-
ences and the importance of giving young women the opportunity to position themselves within the movement but also to appreciate their mother’s position: unity in diversity is the key point.

There were various suggestions on how to put feminism into practice. Everyone agreed that solidarity is important and some considered education was the key. In the area of international development co-operation there is a clear difference. A challenge for women’s organisations North and South is confronting our differences and finding a common strategy. It was suggested that we need new tools and new political lenses as we are much clearer on our personal visions but our political views make it harder to come to a common position. While another suggested that, the issues are not so much the divisions between South-East-West, but the political differences between a feminism that is critical of neo-liberal policies and a feminism that is part of it and fear of the feminist label at a time when feminist work is widespread. The group also discussed how WIDE connects with social movements and offers a space, a forum to argue and exchange, to work on a global level toward making changes and sharing visions. It was suggested that at each WIDE meeting capacity building should be included.

Someone commented that the women’s movement has power but there are many clashes inside and that it was important that we passionately clash with each other. There are differences between women and there are different things to fight for in different regions but it is important to work together to build the same visions, promote solidarity between women and get more women into positions of power.
The second day aimed to put our current challenges into context with a focus on gender, trade and economics, and on women’s political and economic struggles for gender equality. The day was organised into two panel presentations in plenary sessions and a parallel session with four separate groups. Discussions highlighted the role and responsibilities of various European actors and examined in detail the areas of global trade and governance, work, food security, peacekeeping, and migration.

4. Panel debate and discussion: The impacts of EU expansion and foreign policy on women in Europe and the world

The facilitator, Anja K. Franck (Department of Human & Economic Geography, Sweden and WIDE member) opened the second day of the conference. She reflected on the interesting discussions and brainstorming from the first day and said that these would be brought together more concretely in the presentations and discussions when we looked at the role of European global players seen through the lens of women rights.

4.1 Yes we can - “Ain’t I a woman?”
Chantal Gill’ard, Dutch Parliament and AWEPA (the Netherlands)

There is a chant heard nowadays throughout the underdeveloped and overdeveloped world that was popularized by the American presidential candidate Barack Obama. This chant: ‘Yes we can, yes we can’ is an affirmation of human spirit, and a ‘No’ to all those injustices that we have inherited from the past and continue to perpetuate in the present. Concretely, class discrimination makes it twice as hard for young, working class girls to actualise their potential; the racial and religious profiling that often leads young black and Asian girls, and those who follow Islam, to feel they are unwelcome in European societies; the sexual stereotyping that makes young lesbian women wonder whether their lovemaking is an affront to nature; and the economic inequality that seriously hampers the reproductive health of girls in the Global South.

In parliament the minister I work with and the Secretary of State I follow, are very strong. We are a coalition partner and have reached agreements that we all endorse, and we do not go beyond these agreements. This puts me in the favourable position, to focus on activities outside of Parliament to make connections and strengthen organisations, companies, and civil society and give them a platform. For example, yesterday I hosted an interesting meeting in Parliament bringing together several big banks and big NGOs, such as Cordaid and Oxfam/Novib and they sat together to talk about financial institutions and how we might work together. I do not know what will come out of this as we have only had one meeting, but I think it is important to create a platform to meet and speak to each other, and start to understand each other’s different worlds. So that banks can have better projects helping the poor in society and NGOs, who do very good work, understand why banks need to make the money in order to give it out. NGOs need to have a more business orientated model, because in the Netherlands we have a long tradition that NGOs get a lot of funding to do their work but, professionally, they could change and they could

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Chantal Gill’ard

“We who believe in equality, justice, and universal sisterhood, must be able to hear the cries of our sisters in those Eastern European countries that are waiting to become full-fledged members of the EU. They are asking us ‘Ain’t I a woman too?’ “

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DAY 2
European Global Players and their Role in the World examined through the Lens of Women’s Rights and Gender Justice
learn. Hopefully, there will be a change in mindset from both sides, that they really can connect and that this will lead to something new, and then we can take steps forward. This is just one example, I also work with another partnership that brings together doctors, midwives, pharmaceutical companies, NGOs and researchers and they are all working together to make sure that we create something different.

I have committed myself, and will continue to commit myself, to making sure that no young girl or a woman in the Global South has to die giving birth. This is our shame. I would like to continue believing and making sure my fellow parliamentarians believe that: ‘Yes, We Can’. I would like to raise another issue: doing justice to our sisters in the underdeveloped parts of Europe. One of the greatest feminists, Sojourner Truth, asked the wealthy men and women in colonial America the serious question: “Ain’t I a woman too?” We, who believe in equality, justice and universal sisterhood, must be able to hear the cries of our sisters in those Eastern European countries that are waiting to become full-fledged members of the EU. They are asking us “Ain’t I a woman too?”. They would like to have the same opportunities that we women who live in the West have. For instance, the right to safe abortion services. I would like to propose that one of the criteria for inclusion in the EU should be that these countries begin implementing programmes that strive to remedy the structural discrimination against women, for instance, against those women that belong to ethnic minority groups, such as the Roma; those women that choose to engage in same sex relationships; those women that practice unorthodox forms of worship; and last, but not least, those women belonging to the working poor.

4.2 European global players and their role in the Eastern part of Europe examined through the lens of women’s rights and gender justice

Kinga Lohmann, Karat Coalition (Poland)

The expansion and enlargement of the EU in Eastern Europe is a significant geo-political change in the region as the previous simplistic West-East divide has been replaced by new categories of countries. These new blocks with regards to their relation to the European Union are the new member states, and accession countries and neighbouring countries that are outside the EU. These three categories are in the process of building their identity, new affiliations and partnerships. Russia is one of the European global players, and it controls and tries to prevent countries from the former Soviet Union to be independent and to have close links with the European Union, for example, the case of Georgia. Following the enlargement of the EU new geopolitical terms were introduced that reflect the new European reality. However, this reality is not yet well grounded in the European mind and the old term: East-West still prevails.

These changes led to the cancellation of some borders and others became much more difficult to cross. There are other consequences such as, who can work legally, who is a victim of exploitation as an illegal worker or has to work in the informal economy, who has access to jobs corresponding to their skills and who is constrained to accept an under-skilled job. This affects women migrants from the global South and neighbouring Eastern European countries trying to enter the EU who face strict visa requirements.

The impact of European Union on gender justice in Eastern Europe

The new member states and accessing countries have benefited from the EU as far as the development of democratic mechanisms is concerned and the adoption of, or work towards adoption of, gender equality laws according to EU standards. However, the impact of the EU on gender justice and a real improvement in women’s status is far from being satisfactory.
The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) regulates the relations between the EU and its closest surrounding countries. The ENP concerns countries in Eastern Europe and in the Caucasus region, such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine, as well as Mediterranean countries Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria and Tunisia. It is stated that the ENP does not seek further EU enlargement, but rather greater political, security, economic and cultural co-operation. Between 2007 and 2013, the ENPI, the financial instrument of the ENP, will provide financial assistance of 12 billion Euros to neighbouring countries. For pre-accession states to the EU there is the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) to assist the candidate and potential candidate countries in the preparation for accession.

The European Neighbourhood Policy for Eastern European countries is very weak in contributing to gender equality. Although it is gender blind, it contains some references to EU laws and documents that include gender equality provisions and policies that have been used as a tool by women’s advocates. Gender equality in Eastern Europe is still far from being recognised as an issue by Eastern politicians and EU officials alike, who do not see the need to introduce a similar process as has been introduced for neighbouring Mediterranean countries. The Istanbul conference on strengthening the role of women in the society introduced a Framework of Action in 2006, to which Mediterranean countries committed, for the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality in the civil, political, social, economic and cultural spheres over the next years, as well as to fight against all forms of discrimination.

Nevertheless, the EU mechanisms and instruments to claim rights are perceived as much stronger and effective in comparison to UN instruments such as CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. The UN recommendations to governments have not been followed-up and there are no mechanisms to implement them. Similarly, it is more effective to submit cases of discrimination to the European Court than using the UN Optional Protocol. On the other hand, the EU documents are weaker as far as women’s rights. So we need to look again at CEDAW and organise a political campaign around women’s rights.

**The role of international donors in Eastern Europe and EU funding**

There is a clear link between geo-political changes and the behaviour of donors in Eastern Europe. A paradox of the current situation is that having closer links to democratic European Union, instead of strengthening civil society, women’s rights and NGOs it has, alarmingly, weakened them. In countries joining, being close to accession or having closer links through a neighbourhood policy with the EU, the financial situation of women’s NGOs has dramatically worsened since 2003/04. One reason for this was that international donors reviewed and withdrew their support. Donors, such as private American foundations and UN agencies that came to Eastern Europe after the Polish ‘Solidarity’ movement, with a ‘democratisation’ agenda, assumed that the EU would guarantee democratic mechanisms. On this basis these donors withdrew from Eastern Europe believing that NGOs in these states would have access to a significant amount of EU funds. However, for gender equality NGOs, the reality was rather different and far from their expectations in relation to EU policies.

Funding available to women’s organisations is scarce. European funds managed by their own government allows some to work (or rather survive), but rarely permits them to follow the mission and strategy of their organisation. The projects they implement have to follow the EU agenda, which does not take into consideration that women have paid a significant social cost as a result of the economic transformation, the introduction of free market economy and the neo-liberal agenda. Women’s NGOs had to abandon their primary function of ‘watching’ the government and influencing its policy and, as a result, the lobbying and advocacy of women’s NGOs became almost invisible.

The other source of funding is the EC call for proposals which promotes project partnership among NGOs. It integrates NGOs from new member states into the European Union but excludes those from outside the EU by placing them in the category of a ‘local partner’. In practice, this means that EU NGOs have a budget for implementation of the project, including operational costs, while the local partner only receives a very small amount for a concrete task. These rules introduced a patronising approach to NGOs in European neighbouring countries, who are not on an equal footing, and do not contribute to the integration of the European women’s movement. Funding for women will certainly be further affected by the current financial crisis. When my country joined the European Union in 2004, friends from the Netherlands welcomed me to the club without funds for the feminist movement. But we must have funding to build a strong women’s movement, so we must join together to demand that the EU increases its support for women’s organisations.
4.3 The impact of expansion of the EU on women in former socialist Yugoslavia
Sonja Lokar, CEE Network for Gender Issues (Slovenia)

The European Union has sponsored a neo-liberal pattern of transition, not only in South Eastern Europe, but in all former socialist countries. If we analyse what this means for women’s movements, for women’s human rights, for democracy and social justice, I would say: we got democracy without women; we got privatisation without workers rights to social and gender justice. These are the consequences of the neo-liberal pattern of transition in our former socialist countries. We had shock therapy transition, step-by-step gradual reforms, stop-and-go transition and, worst of all, transition by war. All these transitions, although different, had very similar trends, although the intensity was different. In the step-by-step, gradual reform, transitions development was not so quick and the consequences of change in the system of property, the parliamentary system and all the political system were not so quickly obvious. But in the shock therapy transition and in the transition by war, it was immediate.

To give a few examples of what these trends of transition looked like. First, everywhere, women were totally marginalised in politics. It was not the case that first we had the war and then we lost women in politics, no, first we lost the women in politics, as in every single country in the Balkans where there were wars, the representation of women in parliament had first fallen below five per cent. Second, in shock therapy transitions, we got privatisation very quickly and with it, we got financial tycoons, corruption and, later on, organised crime and the revival of the economic power of the church, especially the Catholic Church, which profited enormously from the process. Then we got the total opening up to foreign economic interventions and, in shock therapy countries, everything that was worthwhile to sell, was sold. Very quickly, the countries were no longer owned by the people who have worked since World War two to rebuild them and make them economically middle-developed countries. Who is the owner of our countries now? Big European and global corporations, big European banks and European media empires are the owners of our media these days.

The de-regulation of the labour market meant massive unemployment and the loss of workers’ social and economic rights. Now there are fewer permanent job contracts, wages were devalued for a long period of time in transition and, only recently, since transition countries were becoming members of the European Union, wages have started to go up realistically. When the socialist welfare state was dismantled it was replaced with the residual welfare state – the so-called welfare net, with a double track system of human services, the good ones for the rich as they can pay, and the rest for the poor, but they also have to pay because they cannot get totally free services any more. In this package, care work was back on women’s shoulders and we got the revival of conservatism; religious fundamentalism; attacks on women’s human rights, especially the right to freedom of abortion, and the notion that women should be the queen of the home and the mother of the nation. In the war situations rape was used as a weapon of mass destruction.

What was the attitude of the EU in the second phase? Slovenia was lucky because it escaped a war and it made a peaceful, step by step transition. The accession to the EU was on our own terms and not on the terms of the WB or IMF. This had its good and bad sides, but one important point is that in the accession the EU did not take care of women’s human rights. It took care only of the issues connected with competition in the labour market. It set up the rules for the better functioning of the labour market, which means: equality of wages – at least on paper – a ban on discrimination in hiring and firing, and permanent education and training. But looking at other issues, such as pensions or family leave, we have an absurd situation. The benefits women had in the pension system in socialist times were curtailed under the pretext of gender equality. These benefits were there because in the socialist times, and now, women have the biggest burden of care work on their shoulders and they have breaks in their careers. This
was the reason why women were entitled to five years less working time and it was curtailed, not from night to day, but gradually, the direction is there. At the same time, no real efforts were made for men to take on caring responsibilities equally with women. So they call it ‘equality’ but it is actually ‘inequality’. Then there is the discussion on family leave. The European standards are really minimal and it was a big struggle to keep what we already had from the socialist times, it was up to our own women’s movement in my country to fight not to lose these rights. And this is my point: how women will fare and how their rights will be respected in our countries in the accession to the EU: do not depend on the EU but on the power of the women’s movement in each country. In Slovenia we had a strong enough movement to go through this period successfully.

In the Balkans the situation is totally different as it is a post war situation. The EU accepted a big responsibility to help these countries back on their feet and it has established the so-called Stability Pact of South Eastern Europe (SEE), together with other strongest international partners. It was only because the women’s movement was strongly organised, and well connected with the Western women’s movement, that women in the Balkans were able to force the leaders of the Stability Pact to give us the opportunity to establish a Gender Task Force, and then to really change the situation for the better. We won support for the political empowerment of women in the parliaments and now we have six countries with quota regulations in electoral legislation. It means that now, in Macedonia, Kosovo, Serbia and Croatia we have between 20-30 per cent of women in parliament. These are not token women any more, they are women who came from the women’s movement, who fought for the right to transform politics and make it gender sensitive. It works very slowly, but it works. What I suggest is that we lobby the European Commission to demand support for the political empowerment of women, not just to train some women as leaders but to create a women’s movement that will be strong enough to transform politics. We can do this in regional co-operation, in East-South-West co-operation, but we also need a stronger women’s movement in the EU as our partners to fight the bureaucracy and the conservatives in the European Commission.

4.4 Women’s rights in Europe and working with partners in the South

Gigi Francisco, DAWN (Philippines)

Let us take stock of our global context in the financial crisis. I would like to share the analysis of a friend who is an economist and founder of the Freedom from Debt Coalition in the Philippines, this is what he said:

“The US $700 billion dollar bailout provides a useful metric to understanding debt write-offs. With a lot of fanfare, conditionality, public sector reforms, activist efforts and eleven years, the Bretton Woods Institutions, the US, and EU have trumpeted during the Financing for Development review sessions that they have written off in the order of $100 billion in developing country debt. Of course, only a small number of countries benefited. Within two weeks, the US got ready to write-off $700 billion, and then we have to add what the Europeans are writing off. It is unconceivable that HIPC countries, whose debt obligations and arrears are already estimated (unlike the actual cost in the developed countries), will continue to service their debt and undertake conditionality in order to at least partly fund the bailouts in the developed countries.”

This raises the question of the EU contribution to the financial meltdown and the implications as a result, not just for Europe but for development globally. Global governance refers to a diverse range of cooperative, problem-solving arrangements involving global concerns. The world has mechanisms for this: at the centre is the UN, the inter-governmental platform that many of us in civil society believe is the principal space for multilateral actions and to which other bodies ought
to be aligned, such as the WTO, IMF, WB and including the exclusive clubs of G7, etc. and the OECD-DAC. For many years the women’s movements has challenged global cooperative arrangements and so-called consensuses by flagging up women’s human rights, including sexual and reproductive rights, in international agendas and debates especially in the UN where our participation as civil society is institutionalised. But the question for women’s movements now is: what have we really achieved from all these efforts? If we are questioning the EU’s role as a global actor on the global stage, women’s movements also have to question our own tactics and strategies and the results of our actions at a global level.

We certainly have achieved much in terms of elaborating and expanding on the meaning and scope of human rights. However, some writers claim that the women’s movements have also contributed to the emergence of a monoculture of instrumentality that has gradually characterised global governance. For instance, the discourse on rights-based development wherein women’s human rights is central, is being replaced by the technicalities and tools of gender mainstreaming that is premised on a narrow understanding of women’s rights. The switch to gender mainstreaming increasingly led us away from challenging the system, from questioning the ideological frameworks of states and their neo-liberal approach to globalisation. Ironically, gender mainstreaming was an attempt by activists to introduce women’s human rights in various places in order to put in place a more humane and equal world - that is where we started from many years ago but it has led instead to a monoculture of instrumentality. We now face the risk of women’s human rights or aspects of gender equality being exclusively framed by processes where the needs of the market have been prioritised by governments, not least by the EU, in the areas of trade, aid effectiveness (the Paris Declaration), in investments, FTAs, debt and development. There is now a ‘cherry picking’ approach to international human rights which leads to a rather restricted set of women’s human rights and gender equality goals, norms and standards, all tending to emphasize on women taking hold of market opportunities while holding states accountable for a least number of development outcomes for women and the poor.

Linked to this, positive conditionality has been increasingly used as a mechanism by the EU in its international trade agreements, finance and aid policies. Positive conditionality is about promising benefits should the recipient country meet the conditions. Women’s movements in the East and in the South, and some women’s movements in the North, do not agree with this kind of thinking. For instance, a network of women that includes DAWN, WIDE and AWID has come together around the Women’s Working Group on Financing for Development (FFD) to strongly challenge this concept of positive conditionality. We support universal responsibility and accountability for gender equality, and commitments to gender-based monitoring and evaluation tools and methodologies, but these need to be mutually developed by both developed and developing countries and must be able to adequately respond to the issues of developing countries. What we are saying is that the South is contesting the existing mode used to implement a rights based approach to multilateralism that the EU, as a global player, pushes in the international realm. The current approach is an imposition, there is a lot of rhetoric on human rights but in reality the means are instrumental, it is an externally-driven process framed along a single model of development that evidence shows has tended to increase rather than decrease social inequalities. Moreover, concepts such as responsibility to protect human rights could undermine democratic fabric as well as the vibrancy of the social movements in various countries and contexts.

We heard French President Sarkozy speaking in New York recently, and before that, the head of the IMF at the Aid Effectiveness review in Accra, saying that the G7/8 should be expanded to bring in new members that have emerged as powerful developing countries and hence important players in global governance. Even if they bring in four or five more members, the G7/8 will remain a very exclusive club. It is not accountable, has no transparent mechanisms and its mandate limits it to a very managerial approach. Women’s networks and other social movements prefer that discussions and decisions taking place in the G7/8 should instead be moved to the UN which is a more inclusive and democratic platform. There is no ‘one size fits all’ response to the financial crisis. The Women’s Working Group on FFD is saying on the one hand, that we advocate for inclusive processes in the global arena to bring in new mechanisms, new social contracts and new players. But on the other hand, we are also saying that alternative regionalisms and formations that move away from mainstream, singular, political and economic frameworks have to be generated and supported. Domestic policies will have to become more heterodox and, not only address growth imperatives but, equally, address social protection and redistribution, including re-instituting in its legal norms the social obligations of private capital.

4.5 Comments and Discussion

Anja commented that a number of challenges were raised in the presentations on our positioning as a women’s movement and the actions women should be
taking inside and outside of Parliament. Chantal expressed the importance of fitting into parliamentary processes and taking into account different opinions, rather than imposing her own views. While it is important to strengthen connections between parliamentarians and the women’s movement, she said, each has a role, and the role of the women’s movement is to push the boundaries.

Sonja explained that in Slovenia they have a movement which brings together women leaders and activists from NGOs, trade unions, the media, political parties and women MPs. She emphasised, however, that we need a strong women’s movement and strong political parties with feminists in them, and that these elected women need to be strong enough to make their parties prioritise women’s organisations’ issues.

Sonja also pointed out that lack of funds hampered their national campaign to support women in political parties, and that at EU level there is no funding for women’s political empowerment or building the women’s movement, which causes difficulties. In Slovenia, she said, things changed when they received some funding from the Gender Task Force for the political empowerment of women in political parties. They have now established women’s organisations within three parliamentary parties that are working to raise gender awareness. And although they do not have a consensus on many issues, they have been able to build a large coalition on issues on which they do agree. They found that with a consensus and pressure from the trade unions and the women’s movement, politicians had to listen to them.

In contrast, a participant from Albania pointed out that they have only a seven per cent representation of women in Parliament, and have struggled for ten years to get political parties to vote for a gender quota of 30 per cent. They still struggle to get the quota included in electoral law.

Overall, a strong women’s movement is needed in the EU to lobby for changes in its approach to development aid, and the women’s movement should be supported in countries that are not yet in the EU to enable them to move forward. One suggestion, from Gigi, is to examine processes in countries outside the EU to get more women into Parliament and to understand how well gender quotas are working. For example, in Vietnam the women’s ‘machinery’ was perceived as donor-driven and was eventually abandoned, while the traditional political influence of the Women’s Union eventually enabled women’s political leadership within Parliament. There are also examples of grassroots processes in Bolivia and Venezuela, where new women political leaders are rising up as a result of more democratic processes, and not because of quotas.

A participant noted a sense of pessimism in the room, despite the presentation of very positive examples of progress, such as Sonja’s account of the women’s movement’s involvement in Slovenia’s negotiations to join the EU. With all the competing interests the EU institutions are trying to deal with, this sort of example is a healthy sign. Sonja replied that her intention was not to sound pessimistic but to be realistic. We should not expect the EU to work miracles for us – it will not. The EU has its own agenda: getting women into the workforce. For all the rest, get to work, and work with women from the West, because we have the same problems. Strong women’s movements will never be built from the top down – they grow from the bottom up. But they cannot grow without sharing best practices and without any resources. She suggested it was important to think outside the box and, for instance, to dare to form a cross-cutting coalition with political partners on specific issues.

Anja stressed that the way the women’s movement positions itself to promote gender equality in the market economy and within the contemporary development model is important, especially when the EU includes gender issues, labour rights and environmental protection in its external relations with countries applying for EU membership or in trade negotiations.

Another participant responded to Chantal’s point about supporting businesses and agreed that sometimes NGOs demonise the business way of thinking, and this needs further reflection. However, bankers have profited with large bonuses and looked out for their own interests, while NGOs are not for profit. She thought there were risks in cooperation, because they clash on many issues.

Chantal felt it was important to overcome anxieties about working with businesses, because to make change we need a platform to communicate and understand each other; by bringing banks and NGOs together she hoped they would learn from each other and respect each other’s visions. This would make policies more effective because they would reach more people. The women’s movement needs to strengthen itself and move beyond its own community to make changes. Working in partnerships does not mean losing one’s own identity but working toward the same goals. In her view, we have to think intersectionally, lobby for a diversity of things and find common ways of operating.

Regarding the way that the women’s movement
engages with businesses, Gigi considered it important to look at regulatory frameworks and the functioning of companies, but not in isolation from social policies and political freedoms. She felt that in the past few years the women’s movement has fragmented and compartmentalised, and the way it engages with power, influence and monies overall were problems to be addressed.

A participant commented that the EU demands protection of the intellectual property rights of European businesses and increasing access to the economies of less developed countries, particularly in Africa, in sectors such as agriculture and in industries where many women earn less than one euro a day. She wanted to know how we could improve gender equality and women’s rights in these sectors.

Another point made was the issue of funding for the women’s movement in Eastern Europe. A participant considered that the unhappy marriage between feminism and neo-liberalism has to be resisted, as it transforms the women’s movement and leads to competition between women’s organisations in the East, West, North and South; young women are competing with older feminists, so it is important to resist the logic of the market.

5 Panel debate and discussion: The Global Tug of War for Market and Means

The facilitator of the session Elisabeth Moder, a member of the WIDE Board (Austria) introduced the members of the panel whose presentations would cover a wide range of topics: global markets, labour and the economy and would continue the rich discussions we had started in the previous session.

5.1. Feminisation of labour in the global economy: challenges and opportunities,
Ruth Pearson, University of Leeds (UK)

We have to deconstruct a number of different concepts and trends in relation to the feminisation of the labour market. The expansion of female employment in labour intensive export industries in the 1980’s led me to the analytical concept that corporations were targeting women’s “nimble fingers” to achieve flexibility, productivity and responsibility - a rather hegemonic concept. At an analytical level that argument still stands but the nature of women’s employment has changed globally. It is not just in manufacturing, we have also seen an expansion of employment for women in non-traditional agriculture, particularly in East Africa and South America, such as in labour intensive horticulture exporting fruit and vegetables to the North so that we can have these on our table all year round.

There has been an expansion in health tourism, so that it is now cheaper to go to India for a kidney transplant or cosmetic surgery, and this is a sector that depends on women’s work. There has also been an increase in personal and domiciliary services and many women from the South are employed in northern countries to supply services such as care of the elderly, cleaning in homes, the public sector and in private industry. Women migrants also work in the entertainment, leisure and the sex industries. We have seen the expansion in information and communication technology (ICTs) from data entry work, to call centres and customer services in banks or insurance companies. So there has been a huge growth in women’s work in the global economy. These changes are not just in the markets in the North and South, there has also been an increase in intra-regional trade between higher and lower wage economies in the South and between East and West Europe.

Another change we have seen extensively is increasing informalisation which is closely associated with feminisation, as many new jobs for women are in unregulated sectors. In certain parts of the world and in certain sectors, activities that used to be regulated
China’s entry into low-cost manufacturing is phenomenal, reflecting a new structure in the world economy. And, in the current crisis, so is the role of these countries (Brazil, Russia India and China) regionalisation is changing and the way in which economic migration has changed that does not get much discussion, is that a lot of migration from southern Africa is related to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. The people who are doing these caring jobs in the North have migrated because they have economic responsibilities to support households affected by HIV.

A research project on migrant workers from Burma in Thailand and China, reflects the growth in intra-regional and national migration and the range of work situations of migrant women from Burma. They often work and live in the same household with the extended family of the Thai employer, working 12–14 hours per day, with one day off a month and they are not allowed out of the compound: this is exploitative labour.

As a result of macro structural economic policies, women have increasing financial demands to cover basic household needs, such as user charges or school fees. With the proliferation of micro-credit, many women have been setting up small business projects financed by these funds. However, for many poor women, this is a way to get hold of cash to pay for household reproductive needs, rather than to build up a business - that is survival, not enterprise.

**Challenges from a world in chaos and in change**

With the rise of China and others, the so-called BRICKS (Brazil, Russia India and China) regionalisation is changing and, in the current crisis, so is the role of these countries, reflecting a new structure in the world economy. China’s entry into low-cost manufacturing is phenomenal in its impact, because China is able to undercut cheap labour from many other countries and is displacing employment opportunities, for example, in Central America and parts of Asia and Africa, making the aspirations for industrialisation in manufacturing an impossible dream for some countries. It is also pushing more employment into exploitative conditions in the unregulated sector. That is certainly the Thai story, although it is not the story you get from the Thai government.

The changing world economy is creating a demand for agriculture and mineral products and diverting countries away from producing food for their own population into commodities for export. One of the words we have not yet heard at this conference is ‘sustainability’. Moving developing economies into a new export nexus is a threat to their long-term sustainability and the implications of this for the new international economic order is unknown.

**Challenges**

This is quite a difficult scenario and doesn’t leave much room for optimism. It is harder to campaign about labour rights, which the ILO calls the Decent Work agenda, because people are interested in the survival of the economic system. Many campaigns and policies focus on wages - a living wage, a minimum wage – which makes it harder to talk about the ‘reproductive bargain’. This would focus not only on women’s opportunities or equality but also be a real commitment to support combining productive and reproductive work in a non exploitative manner. This point is central to my analysis: it means that people’s individual wages should not have to provide for all the reproductive costs of labour or the household. And it is not just a question of wage levels, because what the wage covers varies so much in different economies, so a dollar a day in one place means something very different in another. This is where the feminist economic message has to be, the demand for public provision of education, housing, sanitation, utilities and pensions, needs to be met. We keep coming back to women having to balance reproductive opportunities or equality but also be a real commitment to support combining productive and reproductive responsibilities and it should not just be individual women, it has to be a social, collective, responsibility, we have to re-focus our analysis and our campaigning back on to this issue.

**The ethical turn back**

We have been quite self-righteous in the North about the growth of ethical trade and free trade and how we can, in our consumerist way, act in solidarity with exploited workers and producers in the global South. But in the financial crisis ethical trade is in peril and self-interest is re-asserting itself. For example, a statistic in the British press this week was revealing, it said...
that the sale of organically produced eggs has gone down by 25 per cent. It shows how, as a consequence of the financial crisis people are looking for cheaper goods, are less concerned with ethical issues and are increasing shopping at Primarks. If people buy less and are less interested in paying the real price, a fair price, for their products, the volume of demand will fall having an impact on the producers. An enormous challenge for international feminist dialogue is how to marry these two agendas: the ethical versus the financial, as people will be looking at their own interests and North–South solidarity will be weaker as their agendas conflict.

Corporate Social Responsibility: in bad times as well as good?

There have been a number of initiatives of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) such as Fairwear and the ETI (Ethical Trading Initiative), in which corporations have signed up to codes of conduct or moved in this direction, but is not yet clear whether these will hold in times of crisis. Whether labour standards will weaken in a race to the bottom, which will further oppress women workers, and whether CSR is here for the bad times as well as the good, remains to be seen. The business case for ethical trade is going to be undercut by intense competition and it is not clear what will happen to these multi-sector initiatives.

Funding for women’s economic rights work

Another on-going concern is the drying up of funds for women’s rights work, particularly economic research. The report by AWID: Where is the money for Women?9 asks what is happening to funding to support women’s innovations and it does not paint a bright picture. If investment income is drying up, how will WIDE support autonomous women’s organisations? The IMF is now saying that there is a recession and that the financial crisis is now “affecting the real economy”. There is such an anxiety about accumulation and value that women’s concerns are most probably going to be sidelined to a marginal issue.

Re-thinking the feminisation of employment

We need intelligent strategies, such as the Clean Clothes Campaign in Amsterdam, which campaigns to support women workers. More focus is needed on local initiatives that don’t depend on global aid but on solidarity from the bottom up. It is important to keep working at a global level on trade agreements, not just for better wages, but on the wider issue of the reproduction of the labour force. This means moving beyond issues of wages to the reproduction of people and articulating this, as it is what the feminist economics movement is all about. However, it is also important to recognise and support the proliferation of different organisations working on labour and economic rights issues as the ILO only recognises the role of employer members and the Trade Unions.

Doing development in a downturn

An economic downturn makes it more urgent to understand and promote the issues raised by the feminisation of the labour force in different contexts: geographical, political and sectoral. We should take heart from the speed with which Northern governments have come to the aid of finance capital. Effectively the state has (partially) nationalised the banking sector, coming to the rescue of its own finance capital. Do not let them ever tell us: “we cannot afford it, there is no money” because this shows that when capitalists need money for their own sustainability, they find it.

Confronting capitalism in a crisis

The feminisation of labour is not just about getting more women into the wage economy but women’s struggle for employment in a context in which they should not have to bear the whole cost of reproduction. There are alternative economic propositions, such as the “Maria tax” or hypothecated corporate taxation,10 solidarity funds and community currencies. There are also arguments for conditionality on aid to finance and re-train redundant workers, to provide pensions and housing; there are also proposals for gender equity clauses to be included in the WTO to mainstream gender into international trade. More thought is needed on this range of alternative economies and we should put some of these issues back onto the agenda again.

Women should not always have to be the super-flexible to ensure our survival: women organising together is the way forward in these challenging times.

5.2 European players in the global system, aid effectiveness and financing for development

Dot Keet, AIDC (South Africa)

We are all engaged here on a very strong common
denominator – the understanding of the gender dimension of economics, of trade, social policy and processes. I want to focus on some specific issues and common misconceptions and think outside of the box. We have to be quite thorough in our discourse as we have in our gender challenge to current paradigms and take up a set of other related misconceptions that have become part of common speech which can misdirect our analysis and take it away from crucial aspects and real alternatives.

What do we mean by the role of Europe? Looking at it from the view of the South, the Europe we have to deal with is three-fold: the EU institutions - the EC, the Council and the European Parliament - the powerful European corporations and, very differently, it is the people, organised and unorganised. As a shortcut I will refer to the EU but, to clarify, I am not talking about you. So what is this Europe that we see from the South? In the colonial era Europe structured and then re-structured the economies of Africa and other colonies to serve Europe’s strategic interests, to supply raw material and, later, labour. In the post-colonial era European partnership and aid largely reinforced the orientation of these countries toward Europe and increased their dependency. This was reinforced by the nature of the policies and aid they were giving, for example the Lomé Convention, to continue exporting agricultural products, timber and so on, to the EU.

Europe played a very powerful role in the setting up and shaping of the WTO. As we know, the WTO is a universal and powerful instrument to force countries that require aid and trade to fit in with its regulatory requirements. The EU was upfront in driving these trade related policies and programmes, in TRIPs (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) and in trade liberalisation. The EU was very notable in making sure that polices and programmes were paced and phased in such a way that the EU could still preserve its own defensive policies for its own vulnerable sectors, particularly agriculture. The USA was very insistent on defending their clothing and textile sector and required exemptions and exceptions, what they called peace clauses, for themselves at the same time as they were imposing challenges and policy restrictions on other countries in the WTO.

From the late 1990’s the EC was very upfront in terms of expansion of investment, competition policy, government procurement and services being incorporated into the WTO, and its remit being widened. The EU interest was in opening up the service sector, through the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) as, by then, the weight of the European economy had shifted toward services. Asian countries were taking over manufacturing and Europe was going for high value added, high tech, services. By the end of the last century 60 to 70 per cent of Europe’s combined GDP was in services: banking, transport, communications, auditing, legal, environmental services and, today, services are the biggest sector of employment in Europe – about 70 per cent of employment – and they are central to the Global Europe Strategy that was framed in Brussels in 2006.

Europe, the US and Japan are finding increasing resistance from developing country governments to their protective agricultural policies, their subsidies and the expansion in the role and power of the WTO. That is why the WTO Doha round negotiations reached an impasse, which represents a success, not a failure. There is enormous resistance, social movements are informing and advising governments of the South and there are alliances that can block the agenda of the WTO. But the EU and the US, as major powers, don’t give up easily. As they became aware of greater and more effective resistance from within the WTO, they went outside it, with the vast proliferation of FTAs. They are pressing all countries, stronger countries like Brazil, India or Korea, and even weak countries in Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific, to accept these free trade agreements under the cover of Economic Partnership Agreements, which are now a major challenge for the very future of small struggling economies.

The important point about these partnership agree-

 Dot Keet
“Aid is not an expression of support, it is not a productive, a constructive, relation at all. Aid is a major expression of broader and deeper problems, it is part of the problem and not the fundamental solution.”
ments and Free Trade Agreements is that they are not only about trade. What Europe is demanding now is investment liberalisation and full access and rights of entry to all sectors for their investors. They are demanding that the right of access to government procurement for big projects in these countries should be opened up to tenders from EU corporations. These are called new generation issues and the EU is being very aggressive, even with very small economies in Africa and the Caribbean, insisting: if you want trade and access to Europe you have to give Europe access to your economies. This is much further than the IMF or WB ever achieved. This is much further than the WTO achieved and that is why we talk about ‘WTO plus’. This is the face of Europe. This is how countries of the South have been experiencing Europe’s role in major international institutions and in the major bilateral and regional agreements and negotiations in which they are engaging with Europeans.

Turning to Aid Effectiveness and the FfD discussions, we are entering the terrain of donor governments. It is their interests that are driving finance for development and setting the terms and conditions for the more ‘effective’ application of their financial and technical aid. I always say ‘aid’ in inverted commas because I don’t regard it as that, it is all about control. This discussion is located within existing relations and within the status quo. But we need to get away from discussing reform as a technical thing and challenge the assumptions that underlie it. Aid is not an expression of support, it is not a productive, a constructive, relation at all. Aid is a major expression of broader and deeper problems it is part of the problem and not the fundamental solution.

Alternative perspectives and solutions

We know the facts on poverty: more than a billion people are living in absolute poverty, 70 per cent of them are women, 140 million children, and so on. However we measure or define poverty, we have to be very careful to avoid slipping into the language of poverty alleviation and poverty reduction. That is the language of the MDGs, diverting attention from the real solutions to poverty. They look at these countries as being innately and irredeemably poor and the poor themselves as being responsible for their poverty. The focus is on local and internal factors but we need to recognise, and expose, the far more powerful, external factors creating poverty in these countries. The real sources of poverty are the systemic forces that are supported by the same governments’ policies that created poverty in these countries. The OECD points out that since Gleneagles aid has actually been going down by eight per cent a year. So we can expect that with the current financial climate it is going to become even tighter. Many well-meaning people and committed activists in Europe are insisting on the 0.7 per cent of GDP target for their government’s contribution to aid. This is a derisory response to poverty and an inadequate response to the widening gulf between enriched and impoverished countries. Aid creates dependency: political, social, psychological dependency, and there cannot be relations of equality and mutual respect between unequal partners. We have seen this in the negotiations on the EU-ACP economic partnership agreements as government after government collapsed. It was not just the fear of losing their access to trade with the EU but also of losing aid, because they depend on the EU underwriting their government budgets, which is up to 80 per cent in some countries.

First, we have to change the policies and institutes that create the need for aid. Second, we have to re-establish the policy rights of governments and people and remove the right of the EU to use aid to dictate or influence particular policies. Governments are supposed to change their policies according to European fashions and it is not just governments but also European NGOs. The major problem with this aid is that it is tied aid. EU has proudly announced that henceforth only 40 per cent of EU aid can be tied -they have finally admitted that this is a major feature of European aid – a vast proportion of the other 60 per cent will never reach developing countries, it will go to European NGOs, consultants, researchers and European companies to carry out analysis, training and evaluations etc., so this aid never reaches our countries, except indirectly.

There has been a vast expansion of trade in the past two decades, which is very unevenly distributed around the world. In some areas it has gone down and some countries have lost out very profoundly. Latin America’s share of world trade went down from 11 to 8 per cent; Africa’s share went from about 10 per cent to less than 3 per cent of world trade, despite having 11 per cent of the world population, which is a very big distortion. Trade is not unquestionably positive and the growth of trade can make countries vulnerable to external shocks. China is going to discover in the coming years how vulnerable it is, as it is so dependent on its export of manufactured goods, it will have to re-think
its economic policies. Countries need trade but it should not be the dominant sector of their economies, especially for the poorest countries in Africa, as a heavy dependence on trade exposes them to these external shocks.

The answer from many well-meaning Europeans is to talk about fair trade: give better prices and support to: small producers in developing countries, coffee and cocoa cooperatives or flower growers. The problem with that approach, however, is twofold: it reflects and reinforces the role of suppliers to rich economies of the North; and it is not developing and diversifying their own economies, not adding value, not creating employment. What they need is to develop and diversify production. So fair trade is seductive, but it is a dangerous diversion of Europeans away from the real challenge, which is how these countries are going to be supported, be enabled to develop their productive capacity, so that they are not so dependant on external trade.

Another issue that many European NGOs support and European governments talk about is the need to give better market access into the EU, which sounds really positive. However, there are so many barriers (tariff barriers and non-tariff barriers) and very selective policies within Europe to protect European producers. Even under hypothetical, optimum market access, this is not the prime problem for many countries in Africa and the Caribbean: productive incapacity is the problem, as they don’t have the range and variety of products to compete in the EU market. Their problem is not trade, it is productive capacity and this is what needs to be tackled.

We can expect a growth in protection in the US and Europe as the forthcoming decline and recession kicks in. If European’s feel a need to protect their own land, environment, small producers, businesses and economies, that is their choice. However, they must recognise the right of weaker economies to protect their own producers and economies. No economy has developed without protection and subsidies, it depends how you use them and modify them. So, in the South we need the right to safeguard and support our producers and the right to have protection policies - this was one of the major breakdowns in WTO discussions. The challenge facing the countries of the North is, in fact, to re-direct and reduce international trade. Production needs to be redirected to local markets, to national and regional markets and we have to reduce international trade. The peoples of Africa and Europe must work together for a different international economic system to that promoted by the WTO. A real partnership between African and European peoples and their governments is possible, and essential for our mutual benefit, and as part of broader co-operation between all the peoples of the world.

5.3. Compounded insecurities and vulnerabilities of migrants in Europe

*Brid Brennan, Transnational Institute (Netherlands/Ireland)*

In terms of dealing with the migration question we need to get outside the box of the compounded insecurities and vulnerabilities of migrants. We continue to look at migrants through this prism of vulnerability but my departure point is that the inequality and injustice, discrimination and racism in the treatment of migrants in Europe are part of a constructed framework that is completely devoid of human rights. The second aspect I want to emphasise is that migrants are establishing themselves as one of the most interesting, and significant, political actors and protagonists in this moment of crisis in the global neoliberal paradigm. But we have to get outside our boxes to look for it, find it, and experience it.

The EU and its construction is one of the most highly contested questions on this continent at the moment. We have just seen the debacle of the Lisbon Treaty, the recycling of the European constitution, the reformulation of the Treaty and, now, our elites are in a big dilemma: what to do with the Irish “no” in the referendum.

*Brid Brennan*

“...it is really important to explore the distances between movements, especially the distances between the women’s movement and certain parts of the migrant movement. There is so much common agenda it can only be a very exciting mix for the future.”
Sarkozy and company have made several visits to Dublin to persuade the Irish population, but when is a no a yes? That is the main discussion at the moment among the elites. The construction of Europe is an important focus WIDE has given to this conference, but we can’t deal with 100 years of history in five minutes, so at the risk of being very shorthand, I will refer to two or three very crucial moments. The Second World War was not just a struggle against fascism; there was a struggle to construct a socialist Europe. This resulted in the division of Europe, but also in a certain social democratic consensus of how Western Europe would establish itself: a consensus about workers rights, equalities inside Europe, women’s role in the economy and women’s rights.

In the period of reconstruction after the War, the European steel and coal community was established. This was a capitalist project to continue a certain neo-colonial policy in the South but also to construct a force of workers and production in Europe and a policy of integrating migrant labor; so-called guest-workers, into the European economy. Another defining moment was the articulation of the Single European Act in 1986, one of the founding treaties of the EU, establishing the single European market, where migrants, terrorists and drug traffickers are all dealt with in the same paragraph. When the Maastricht treaty was signed and sealed there were about a thousand protesters, these were migrants from all over Europe. So there was a strong sense already within the migrant community that the construction of the EU would be a bleak place and there was a sense that this was a fortress Europe that was closed towards the outside world. We are currently looking at the approved European Return Directive and the proposed pact that is coming on asylum and migration. The European Return Directive is, no matter in what language we spell it, an expulsion directive and it is no wonder that the more enlightened lead- ers in the South led the way in protesting against it. It was highly contested in the European Parliament, though it was passed with more than 300 votes in June 2008. It was highly contested by migrants and their organisations and by human rights networks. Amnesty International spoke out against it; the EU Commission on Refugees and other human rights organisations spoke on it. It is quite a notorious piece of legislation and since it was passed it has come onto the social movements’ agenda, including in debates at the European Social Forum. The piece of legislation that is coming down the line on asylum and migration is already signed and sealed. This is the other extraordinary situation we have in Europe when, not only are comprehensive policies on trade and investment, like the Global Europe policy, passed in rather non-transparent fashion, despite disagreement in the EU, but also matters that will be in the pact on immigration and asylum. In the past 15 years in the EU discussions in the area of migration and refugee policy have been secretive and, side by side, have come this contextualization of security. We are witnessing the rapid expansion of the building of detention centers all over Europe and of militarised borders between the Mediterranean, Europe and Africa. Aid is being tied very closely to the involvement of North African governments in securing Europe’s borders by the arrest and detention of the flow of migrants. In France, development aid and migration are being handled within the one ministry, so this might also be the future for Europe.

This is a very stark expression of state violence toward a whole sector of people who happen to be migrants, many happen to be black, but we also have Eastern European migrants. A report by UNITED, an anti-racist network that has done a quite meticulous monitoring of deaths, shows that more than 6000 people have died since 1993 as a result of these kinds of practice. In the Netherlands there was a fire in the Schiphol detention centre where 14 people died but none of the people responsible, including the security companies who run it, have been prosecuted. We also have mass police raids, for example, in the summer of 2007, 111 migrants, mainly African, were picked up at a cultural event in Amsterdam. Within weeks the vast majority were deported without process, debate or discussion, in conditions where even their Dutch partners could not have access to them. We don’t quite have Guantanamo but we are in an extremely delicate situation as far as human rights are concerned. It is not just the rhetoric the EU brings to the South about human rights it is the question of implementation and construction of regimes. The whole regime around asylum and migration at the moment is legitimised, because it is passed by all the processes of the European Union, the Commission, the Council, the Parliament, and national legislation falls in behind. But it is eroding established consensus on accepted human rights. We can see it in the treatment of migrants, not only mass raids on cultural events and in churches but also reports of people being detained and kept incommunicado until they are put on planes to leave the country.

It is a very stark picture but it is not a pessimistic one, because inside this regime there is extraordinary political energy, innovation and creativity in dealing with the situation. There are two main trends which are hopeful. One is within the migrant sector itself where there are various responses: campaigns, engagement with governments, discussions with the police, protesting on the streets and strikes. In Paris migrant workers have occupied their company premises to demand their rights. We have a serious situation in Europe on the
question of reproductive labor. In many cases this has been contracted out to migrant women, who are expected, and it is taken as norm, for them to work in Europe without papers. There have been significant campaigns to change that situation but it continues in many countries. In migrant communities there has been an intensification of efforts to build transnational coalitions. Last Saturday in Amsterdam there was a conference initiated by a whole spectrum of migrant communities from different national backgrounds and from different continents. This is an indication that spaces are also opening across migrant communities.

The second trend relates to the tsunamis of crises and the response of social movements in analysing and dealing with these, especially in Europe. What we have seen in the run up to the European Social Forum has been very encouraging. Various movements: the environmental, the women’s, the trade campaign and the migrants’ came together to construct joint analysis and presentations at the ESF. This is not yet the main expression, but it is very indicative of where the trend is going and there are reasons to be optimistic. In the South there has been a much more integrated social struggle, which combines multi-sector struggles. In Europe, unfortunately, that has not been the case, especially over the past 10-15 years when there has been an extreme fragmentation. The women’s movement in Europe has had a great herstory, but it has had it in its own sector and in its own remit.

There are real challenges involved in this, it is not easy. Funding has been used to starve women’s movement out of existence and some of the migrant movements can barely exist. The vast majority of migrant effort in the Netherlands is from their own labour but also their own resources and so we need to build a coalition. Because we are in a WIDE context here, it is really important to explore the distances between movements, especially the distances between the women’s movement and certain parts of the migrant movement. There is so much common agenda it can only be a very exciting mix for the future. I think it will be really important at this moment in time, with the big institutional crisis in Europe, which maybe is not so dramatically felt as the food, energy or financial crisis, but we need to find the most fruitful terrain for common struggles and strategies. The other area which is quite difficult is the distance between the migrant movement and the labour movement; though with the impact of Global Europe and the rise of organised precarious workers, this is also going to be a more fruitful coalition.

To conclude, actions are needed not just on strategies and responses to policy regimes but also in the area of analysis. Sometimes it is not easy to find the articulation of migrant movements, partially due to language and all kinds of intersections in the European arena. But the third World Social Forum on Migrations, which was held in Madrid from 11-13 September 2008, a gathering of over 3000 people of mainly grassroots migrant organisations, had a very comprehensive analysis of the issues we are talking about, from the global paradigm to the European context. They put out a statement that is quite enlightening. I expect the same for the civil society migrant forum to be held on the occasion of the second Global Forum on Migration and Development that will be held in Manila, the Philippines, in October 2008. The call sent out by the migrant movement is a document that makes essential reading for anyone in Europe or globally, it is a call for change.

5.4. Comments and Discussion

Following the panel presentations the discussion was briefly opened up to questions and comments from the floor. A participant from the Philippines asked the panel whether, as a result of the financial crisis, the EU and the US will continue to pursue the same trade policies put forward at Doha or whether there will be increased protectionism, and should the women’s movement prepare an action plan. Another participant suggested that there is a gap between migrant women and feminist women, and stressed that everyone needs to mobilise and take responsibility to support migrants and ensure that human rights are integrated into migration policies.

Brid responded that no EU government has signed the International Migration Convention, so they brought it back onto the agenda at the citizens’ forum in October. At the UN there are discussions on drawing up a convention on domestic workers, with domestic work being recognised as a category for migration. She felt that we still have the same dynamism to respond to the situation within the women’s movement today.

Dot considered that the presence of 16 million migrants and refugees in Europe today was vital not only for their individual survival but also for Europeans. As well as campaigning for the rights of migrants in Europe, she thought an important dimension is what is pushing them to come here: unbelievable poverty and exploitation in their own countries. She stressed that to solve the problem of poverty in Africa we have to look at the
causes and to give people dignity and stability.

Africa has a debt of $240 billion (41 per cent of its GDP), as only the extreme end of its debt has been cancelled. The IMF and WB have not admitted their mistakes leading to the current financial crisis, and they should be closed down. Europeans have a powerful contribution to make – investigating and exposing what EU corporations are doing in the South – and European civil society organisations must not get involved in massaging the EU aid role.

Ruth agreed that the WB had been amazingly silent recently – it must be thinking about how it can reinvent itself. She considered that the IMF and the European Development Bank also have to take responsibility for the crisis. There needs to be a change in architecture in the WTO and GATTS, which will look very different in 15 years time, if we survive the current crisis.

6. Parallel Sessions

6.1. New trends in migration in the context of Eastern Europe
Facilitator: Ewa Charkiewicz, Feminist Think Tank and KARAT (Poland)
Speaker: Elena Tyuryukanova, Centre for Migration Studies (Russia)

Ewa introduced the session by outlining some of the key issues relating to migration patterns in Eastern Europe as a result of changes in the EU. For example, Poland is not only a sending country of migrants but is now also a recipient from Ukraine and other neighbours. There are changes in the patterns and context of migration and changes in the care economy. There are migrants who leave for economic reasons and others, in more privileged situations, who leave for education or professional reasons. Some migrants improve their situation and some are vulnerable to violence and abuse of their human rights, as a result of poverty and the restructuring of local economies. Many migrant women are the main breadwinners and, even though there are gender pay gaps, women transfer more to their family than men. In Poland, remittances pay for the financial shock therapies. Ewa stressed that it is not just the market but also state politics that affect the lives of migrants. She gave the example of women who go into care work in the Netherlands, who lose health rights at home and do not have access to benefits in the Netherlands. She considered that Eastern European women could learn from the example of the Filipino migrant networks. She also suggested that having an Ombudsman for migrants might help them to get access to justice.

Elena gave an interesting and detailed presentation of the key findings from her study on the feminisation of migration and labour in Russia. The study was carried out because of a lack of empirical and survey data on women’s migration. In her presentation she referred to some of the key findings. She explained how the division of labour influenced the migration agenda as the growing service economy demanded cheap female labour (two-thirds of all jobs are in the service sector). Half of the legal migrants work in the informal and shadow economy. They are often young girls, with low levels of education, who migrate for a diversity of purposes: to earn money to support their families back home but also for marriage. Women migrants often do dirty and dangerous jobs in trade, services, domestic and care work and in the entertainment industries.

She explained that female migration has specific characteristics: low wages and flexible work, weak regulations and massive violations of human rights. She outlined the many forms of exploitation experienced: forced overtime, working without remuneration, limitations of freedom, threats, fraud, blackmail, physical violence and coercion into prostitution. Migrant workers also have poor living conditions, compared with local women. There are many barriers for migrants in terms of visas, work permits and registration that are difficult to overcome and, even when they are employed in the formal sector, labour rights are not secured.

Elena explained that there are no structures to protect migrant rights in Russia and even if they go to court few migrants win their cases. Her study had shown that very few migrants knew where to go to get access to justice and also that 60 per cent of the Russians surveyed were unwilling to help migrants. There is little support from the trade unions but a few NGOs are trying to help migrants, but the migrants run the risk of losing their work or of being deported, so it is difficult to develop activities on migrant’s rights. She concluded that there is a gap in Russian migration regulations and a lack of services and support for migrants.

In the discussion that followed participants raised a number of issues related to the reasons for women migrating and what their working and living situations

14 Money that migrants send ‘home’ from abroad.
are when they have crossed borders. The example was given of Bulgaria, where migration is mainly economic: to support their families but there are also those who leave for education. Migrants also come to Bulgaria to start their own businesses, for example Arabs, Chinese and Japanese, and others pass through trying to get into the EU. Trafficking is also an important issue as it is a transit country and Bulgarian women are also trafficked. An important issue highlighted in the diaries of migrant women is the amount of debt they accumulate because of the cost of migration. There is a debt industry that has developed that charge migrants high interest rates, so they easily fall into a debt trap. In Poland there are very low standard of housing for migrant workers and an informal market has grown up around them, for example, to transfer money home.

The participants gave examples of migrants starting to get organised. Generally there is a lack of support for migrants and the main sources are the churches and/or the mosques. The Catholic Church in the Netherlands and Ireland encourages migrants to meet and exchange information by offering venues but they are not organising migrants. There are some forms of self-organisation and self-help movements, especially in Germany. In some cases women act as intermediaries to find jobs and housing for migrants but they can also be exploitative. There is solidarity but migrant organisations are very fragile. One participant stressed that migrants are extremely marginalised and gave the example of Roma people who face discrimination throughout Europe. The participants discussed the different benefits and conditions offered to migrants by the receiving countries. In the Netherlands domestic workers from the Philippines who have their own self-help organisation support undocumented workers who do have legal rights and Dutch women help them with jobs and by lobbying for changes in policy.

6.2 Illegal migration and trafficking: strengthening women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights

Facilitator: Saskia Bakker, Aim for Human Rights (Netherlands)
Speakers: Grace Osakue, Girls Power Initiative (Nigeria) and Aniek Wubben, Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights (Netherlands)

Saskia introduced the presenters explaining that Grace would give a Southern perspective and examples of what can be done to empower women to prevent trafficking and migration. Aniek would give a Northern perspective, presenting the case of undocumented women in Europe and how their reproductive health rights could be protected.

Loeky Droesen, from Aim for Human Rights introduced the HeRWAI Toolkit, which her organisation had developed to enable organisations to use human rights to reach their Reproductive and Sexual Health Rights goals. She added that people migrate in the hope of improving their lives and therefore the poverty-aspects of migration and trafficking should not be forgotten. She said that human rights-based approaches helped to find solutions rather than only focusing on the severity of the situation.

Grace is one of the founders of the Girls Power Initiative (GPI), which operates in the south of Nigeria, where there is extreme poverty and high unemployment rates. Grace explained that one of the main reasons for illegal migration is because it is very expensive to migrate in a legal way. The people that used to arrange legal migration are now arranging for girls to work abroad as sex-workers. The parents of these girls agree to this in the hope that their daughters will bring home a lot of money. The GPI tries to help by empowering girls to say “no” to trafficking. They have different strategies to reach this goal, such as arranging hands-on experiences and internships for the girls to develop their self-confidence. Another important strategy is raising public awareness through a newsletter, television and radio. Grace pointed out that it is important that the girls should not be isolated in their fight against trafficking and, therefore, GPI tries to influence stakeholders, like teachers and the police. GPI has given talks in schools about illegal trafficking and participates in the ‘Day against Trafficking’. They have been working since 1993 and have seen results: they now have much higher levels of awareness about illegal trafficking in urban areas but a huge challenge now is to create the same awareness in rural areas, because trafficking is shifting to these areas.

Aniek (WGNRR) conducted research on the access of uninsured and undocumented migrants to obstetric care in Amsterdam. A draft bill of the Dutch government proposed changing the compensation system for health care providers caring for undocumented patients. Under this bill they would only receive 80 per cent compensation in the future, instead of 100 per cent in the current situation.

In her research Aniek used the “Millennium Development Goal-Health Rights for Women Assessment” Instrument designed by WGNRR. This new toolkit incorporates the HeRWAI which Loeky mentioned at the start of the session. The research identified the different stakeholders (health care providers, municipalities of Amsterdam, the Dutch government and the EU) with responsibilities for the health of migrant women. The research focused on the draft
bill and the findings were targeted at the Dutch government, which is responsible for promoting and implementing human rights in their policies.

The interviews with undocumented women and midwives identified their needs and the many barriers they face when seeking obstetric care, which ranged from anxiety, to lack of money and lack of knowledge. From these findings it became clear that if the draft bill was implemented in its current form, access to obstetric care for these women would deteriorate even further. In order to prevent this, Aniek, on behalf of WGNRR, and supported by five human rights advocacy organisations, lobbied the government to gain access to obstetric care for undocumented women. As a result of their work an amendment to the bill was accepted, which made an exception in the case of obstetric care providers who will continue to receive 100 per cent compensation.

Saskia then opened the discussion encouraging participants to talk about their own experiences of migration and trafficking and to share their views on using human rights to improve these situations. A participant from Mali said that her country is a country of transition and many girls, for example from Nigeria, get stuck there on their way Europe. She was not aware of any NGO’s working in Mali with trafficked girls or helping them when they return to Nigeria. Grace also explained that there is a new phenomenon of re-trafficking when girls do return home to Nigeria, if they do not meet their family’s expectations they are sent back to Europe. The participant from Mali also emphasised that there are problems for girls who are stuck in Mali, who never reach Europe, and many never go back home.

A representative from Mama Cash stressed the importance of collaboration between NGO’s in Africa and Europe. Grace gave the example of a Dutch NGO called BlinN that is working with an NGO in Benin. They are developing training for ex-sex-workers, offering them micro-finance as an alternative for income generation. A participant from Russia pointed out that we should also look at the demand-side of trafficking to solve this problem and another participant from Eastern Europe gave the example of her organisation that provides sex education for adolescents.

The facilitator summarized the key points made in the session: people should be able to move to countries and not be exploited. In order to tackle trafficking, cooperation is important between countries (Mali & Nigeria) and also between stakeholders (media and police). It is important to keep in mind that women coming to Europe would prefer not to leave their own country; it is a decision made out of necessity. The demand-side of trafficking should also be taken into account. The Dutch example showed that lobbying can be successful and help to change or improve women’s rights, and this experience underlined the importance of working together.


Facilitator: Ted L.E. Strop-von Meijenfeldt, EPLO (the Netherlands)
Speakers: Isabelle Geuskens, WO=MEN and IFOR/WPP (Netherlands) and Seconde Nyanzobe, Search for Common Ground (Burundi)

Isabelle gave an account of how the UN Resolution 1325 on women and armed conflict had come about starting from the Beijing Platform for Action and explained how it has been implemented in the Netherlands, in the form of a National Action Plan (NAP) drawn up in 2007 by representatives from the Dutch government and civil society. Since the creation of the plan, a Dutch 1325 NGO working group meets to discuss progress once a month, and with the Dutch government twice a year. She gave the example of Liberia where in the post conflict situation more women are in power, but even though there are women soldiers and policewomen, there is still an increase in the number of rapes. This showed that it is important to not only focus on including more women in peace building efforts, but also to redefine and broaden the concept of security, and include this perspective in National Action Plans. In addition, she suggested that it is important that NAPs include clear monitoring and evaluation systems with achievable targets, as there is often a lack of clarity on goals and targets. It is also important to have ministerial backing for the NAP, and to know who the focal points are at different levels to ensure ownership and accountability. Last, but not least, it is important that resources are attached to National Action Plans.

Seconde is from Burundi in Central Africa and works with Search for Common Ground, a NGO that works in conflict countries, where women are often the victims. There has been war in Burundi since 1993 and many people have been killed or displaced. There are many widows and women are in a very insecure situation with lack of food, access to clothes, water, health care and education for themselves and their children. Their situation forces many women into prostitution, migration or polygamy. She has had many opportunities to work on the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 with different target groups and has the experience of developing a national action plan. The security council
Resolution 1325 was adopted by the UN on October 31st, 2000. It recognises the impact that conflicts have on women and girls and calls on states to treat them not only as victims but also as actors in peace processes and reconstruction. This Resolution can be summarised by three Ps: prevention, protection and participation.

When Seconde began working with members of parliaments in 2006 she found that many did not know the content of the UN Resolution, which made it difficult to implement. Others were reluctant to implement it because it broke with Burundian culture where men are considered the decision-makers. Many changes and special mechanisms are needed for women to be considered as actors in the process, as women are only seen as beneficiaries. She outlined a number of other challenges, such as the absence of policies and practices, reflecting a lack of will of the Burundi government to implement the Resolution. There is also a lack of information and the resolution has not been translated into local languages so only a limited number of people are aware of its contents. There are many economic issues such as a lack of resources for demilitarization and reconstruction, women’s organisations also lack funds and women are financially dependent on men. Another important challenge is in the contrast between access to justice and Truth and Reconciliation tribunals. There is zero tolerance for rape in the UN resolution but it is not punished in Burundi, so she questioned the role of tribunals in the case of restorative justice. Resolution 1325 is a good tool and it gives women’s organisation a mandate but much more needs to be done. Seconde suggested a number of actions they can take in order to make changes: women must network and work together to search for information and allies; lobby the state for a National Action Plan and identify indicators to monitor and evaluate its implementation. She was convinced that if women work together they will achieve their rights.

In the discussion that followed participants raised a number of issues, such as the sexual misbehaviour of international troops. It was felt that the UN already has strong rules to deal with this situation and there is a new UN Resolution, SCR 1820 which make it clear how to deal with sexual violence and rape during wars. There is no European action plan on UN 1325, groups are lobbying for one but participants in the session were not optimistic about achieving this. Someone mentioned experiences of good practice that were developed in the Balkans in the post conflict situation there but there was not enough time to go into details in the session. However, it was felt that they could learn from experiences in different countries. There was discussion of possible strategies such as training men to be involved in implementing the UN Resolution and involving women in transitional action plans.

In conclusion some concrete suggestions were made, such as: giving more support to women in order for them to develop their own action plan, and governments and international actors ensuring that women are actors in the peace process and women themselves have to find allies to support their actions plans. It was also suggested that women’s organisations in the West should pressurise for a gender task force to implement the UN Resolution. Much work remains to be done but there was optimism that women can succeed.

6.4 EU trade agreements on agriculture and the food crisis

Facilitator: Franziska Müller, Swiss Working Group on Gender and Development (Switzerland), Speaker: Naty Bernardino, Asia and Gender Trade Network (Philippines)

Franziska introduced the speaker explaining that the focus of the presentation would be EU trade policies in agriculture, although there are many other factors that influence the food crisis such as agricultural policies, climate change and environmental issues.

Naty began her presentation by saying that the huge subsidies to EU farmers allows them to export their goods at prices much lower than their production costs and that this has led to dumping and unfair competition. She then referred to the less documented gender related impacts of the food crisis they had experienced in the Philippines, such as an increased time burden for women, less access to education and girls dropping out of school early. In her presentation she referred to the findings of research carried out by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) that looked at cyclical (short term) and structural (long term) factors in the food crisis and their implications. She also mentioned that the food crisis has had a huge impact on people who have to spend 60 percent or more of their income on food, which, according to the ADB research, affects up to two billion people in Asia. Naty considered that the research missed the point about liberalisation, as the report states that it has not gone far enough when, in her view, liberalisation has gone too far. She discussed the gender impact of the food crisis and the strategies of the peasant movement to respond, for example they have called on the government to ‘junk the failed neo-liberal economic model’.

In the group discussion that followed a participant stressed that the EU suggests only one remedy: more liberalisation and more open markets. Another consid-
ered that it is important to take into account the linkages between technology and environmental issues in agriculture. Naty said that one of the problems is that there is not enough research and more data is needed, particularly on the direct and indirect gender impacts, as well integrating information on gender and small farmers. An example was given of fish farmers in India who had been informed in advance and so had prepared for the food crisis. Whereas Zimbabwe had carried out its own structural adjustment programme and did not take into account the needs of small and median farmers. Two years later they ended up with a food crisis.

In terms of strategies, the group agreed that more lobbying should be done at the EU and policy level. It was suggested that we should concentrate on changing the financial architecture and strengthening national policies to support the basic survival of people.
In the final day participants reflected on how to move forward towards a just Europe through alliances across social and political actors and the ways in which WIDE is engaging with potential allies. The session began with a keynote presentation from a social movement activist and then participants broke into small groups to discuss responses to the challenges of the current financial crisis and to come up with alternative strategies. In the workshops that followed later in the day participants heard about and discussed the strategies of different organisations and movements that are building processes in Europe and globally with different partners from the West, East and South.

7 Alternatives & Consolidating Feminist Visions with other Movements

The facilitator for the session, Sonja Lokar (CEE Network for Gender Issues, Slovenia) introduced the keynote speaker and the discussants, explaining that they had decided to reorganise the format of the session in order to give participants a chance to discuss strategies and ideas for action to take forward. The discussants would also contribute their views on the next steps for the women’s movement in the light of the global financial crisis.

7.1 Reflections on new forms of organizing and the challenges that lie ahead

Speaker: Nicola Bullard, Focus on the Global South (Thailand/Australia)

Discussants: Rasa Erentaite, New Generation of Women’s Initiatives, (Lithuania) and Ewa Charkiewicz, Feminist Think Tank and Member of KARAT (Poland)

I would like to share some reflections on the past ten years of being part of what has been called the anti-globalisation movement or, the term that I prefer, the global justice movement. In 1997, I started working with Focus on the Global South in Bangkok, Thailand. Focus is a relatively small activist research NGO with the very ‘modest’ goals of: dismantling oppressive economic and political structures and institutions and creating liberating structures and institutions; democratising control over capital and resources; and promoting demilitarisation and peace-building, instead of conflict. Unfortunately we haven’t achieved our goals yet, much to the consternation of our funders, but we have evolved a methodology that is somewhat different from the usual NGO approach.

In Focus, we have always tried to work closely with social movements and activists, locally, nationally and internationally, in an effort to link the local with the global, and to provide intellectual and organizing resources, which can strengthen their own struggles, build alliances and solidarity, and give visibility to alternatives. I would like to share two examples how we have done this. We have also self-consciously adopted the expression “global South” to highlight the fact that the processes of neo-liberal globalisation have created small pockets of the “South” in the North, and similarly, small pockets of the privileged “North” in the South.

The first is in our campaigning around the WTO negotiations. Following the “Battle of Seattle” in November
1999, an international network called Our World is Not for Sale (OWINFS) was formed. Initially this was a coalition of NGOs, predominantly from the North but with some strong voices from the South, in particular, Third World Network (TWN), DAWN and Focus. Through very intensive engagements and debates over many years, drawing on the direct experiences of the impacts of trade liberalization, solid research and policy analysis, and the concrete practice of working together, the network has grown to several hundred members from South and North and including all sectors – trade unions, farmers movements, women’s and consumer organisations, people living with HIV and AIDS, campaigns on privatisation and debt, researchers, national and regional coalitions, and so on. We have developed what we call an ‘inside-outside’ strategy of working to dismantle/derail the WTO negotiations, in the framework of a strong critique of free trade and neo-liberal economics and institutions. This strategy allows many different types of groups to work together – from lobby NGOs to mass movements. But always in the framework of shared agreements and objectives which are shaped largely by those most affected by WTO rules, for example, people living with HIV and AIDS (on the question of patents) and farmers (in agricultural issues).

Although it is obvious that many governments in the South have been key to blocking the conclusion of the Doha Development Round, I have no doubt that many of these governments would not have had either the courage or the information to do this without the pressure coming from below and from inside and outside the negotiating rooms and corridors. The tragedy of Farmer Lee killing himself in Cancun, the power of women tearing down the barricades surrounding the convention centre and then walking away, the spectacle of Korean farmers solemnly paying tribute to Mother Earth along the Causeway of Hong Kong Island, or Filipino fisher folk building boats and sailing a flotilla past the WTO on Lake Geneva, have left an indelible impression on the media, the public and on the government negotiators. The strength of OWINFS has been its capacity to build strong alliances between different sectors, different regions, and different organisational forms, to develop strategies and adopt tactics that have strengthened the positions of the movements, yet delivered critiques and analyses inside the negotiations which also emboldened (or shamed) governments. The inside track has never undermined the outside track, and the “technical” NGOs have served the movements rather than being co-opted by the institutions. Our mission was not to make the WTO “better” but to expose the deep structural inequalities and the ideological limitations of free trade. In this respect, my estimation is that OWINFS has succeeded, and the understanding, the friendships and the trust that we have built along the way are not only sustaining, but a key to our success.

The second space or process that has been transformative in terms of how Focus has “worked” in the global context has been the World Social Forum. Again, Focus made a deliberate decision to be part of the WSF at the very beginning, seeing this as an important and unique experiment in creating new ways of doing politics and building movements. The WSF is an open space, where the plurality of movements and visions can find expression within the framework of the Charter of Principles. I recommend that you read it. Not only does the Charter take a clear position against neoliberal politics, polices and institutions, but it is clear in its opposition to militarism, patriarchy, sexism, racism, xenophobia, and imperialism, and it contains an explicit commitment to consensus, diversity, plurality, non-violence and democracy. Of course there are many criticisms of the WSF, and many would raise questions about what the WSF has achieved and whether it is sustainable. Much of this is valid and fundamental if the WSF is going to continue to grow and evolve to serve the movements. But for now, I would like to focus on the positive aspects, or at least the positive aspects from my perspective.

The power of the WSF is that it is developing a methodology that protects the open space, that respects the autonomy of movements, refuses single thinking, vanguards, hierarchies (at least, explicit ones) and domination. Consensus, convergence, and complexity, as opposed to voting, sectarianism and reductionism, are essential to the richness, and difficulties, of the WSF. It is confusing and contested, but also marvellous and surprising. In terms of results and legacies, I believe that the Forums (whether they are local, regional, global) have been wonderful experiments in building politics from the bottom up, across movements, across continents, across political ideologies, and across identities. They have also tapped into the desire of progressive and radical movements to find a new way of “doing politics” that is as much about contesting power as it is about building alternative spaces.

In both the WSF and OWINFS, the voices of the South have been heard, not through interlocutors, but directly. Movements, such as La Via Campesina, have contributed powerful critiques of agri-business and offered equally powerful alternatives in their advocacy of food sovereignty. The anti-war movement, debt campaigners and the landless movements, have been powerful forces in terms of agenda setting. Women’s movements have also been present, but there is still a big contribution that feminist activists and intellectuals can make in terms of alternative paradigms and new thinking.
Both OWINFS and the WSF are reflections of the age we live in: the age of networks, mobility, information, Facebook and multiple identities; where the constant interplay between the local and the global, and the intense interconnectedness that we experience daily because of the forces of globalisation, creates the possibility for constructing shared visions and common actions. They also reflect an assessment that change, transformation and justice will not be realized without strong counter-hegemonic forces, which are horizontal, plural, democratic, inter-sectoral, grounded in and driven by the movements, and able to take up complex and broad agendas. They are also attempts to create new (often virtual) spaces for acting and organizing together, with an explicit intention to challenge and dismantle the structures and institutions of (neo-liberal) power.

We are now facing two huge and interconnected systemic ruptures: the "shaming" of finance capital (heralding the official end of the free-market myth) and the ecological crisis, expressed as climate chaos. These challenges are so huge, so complex and so urgent that we need to gather all our forces and all our intellectual powers. We are living in the moment where ideas really do matter. The neo-liberal ideologues and the co-opted politicians and institutions have run out of ideas, and the public has lost its faith. But I fear that we — the global justice movement that has, for decades, been pointing out the folly of unregulated finance capital and endless consumption -- have arrived at this historic moment with our hands empty; the best we can propose is a kind of green Keynesianism as a way out of the ecological/economic crisis. For some, this may be good enough and for capital, the compromise will be acceptable in the short term. But we must do better. At a minimum we need to use this moment of hesitation by the rich and powerful to expand the public domain (transport, services, commons), to expand collective social rights and to expand local markets/local economies.

Feminists have a tremendous contribution to make to this debate: what we are seeing is the triple crisis of accumulation, reproduction and the environment, a triple crisis recognised by feminist thinkers almost 20 years ago. In 2008, what is the feminist vision of a just world? How can the women’s movements and feminists respond to the financial and climate crises? What can you bring to the table in terms of proposals and alternatives? How can we work together to build shared visions across movements, which are, not only feminist but also ecological, emancipatory and just?

7.2. Discussion and breakout groups

Following the presentation the participants broke into small groups in the conference hall to reflect on issues raised in Nicola’s presentation and discuss how the financial and ecological crisis will affect the people we are working with and our own agendas. Participants brainstormed on possible responses on these challenges and came up with a wider range of proposals and alternatives.

Ewa started off the discussion, reflecting on the presentation the previous day by Ruth Pearson, whose analysis of the financial crisis from a feminist perspective brought our attention to the issues of reproduction, and linked it to Nicola’s presentation on the financial crisis and the environmental crisis. Ewa said she was reminded of a book by DAWN on crises and alternative visions published some times ago, which was her own entry point to feminism. The discussions started at the Women’s World conference in Nairobi, Kenya, by women from the South who came to the analysis of triple crises: the accumulation of capital, of human reproduction and the ecological crisis which DAWN framed as the crisis of soil, water and air. She thought that this integrated framework was very relevant to the problems of today although the world has changed since then. And, she stressed, it is essential to bring together the crisis of reproduction and the role women play in it with the financial and ecological crisis.

Ewa also suggested that we are not victims of the financial crises, we are integrated in the system, as the financial system is dispersed within society, in our pensions, our healthcare, how we buy our products, all these pieces are integrated in the way financial flows are organised in society and we are governed by finance. We are integrated with the ecological crisis as consumers and very often we do not have the opportunities to consume in a different way. The whole system has enormous impacts on human reproduction and more costs are transferred to this domain: people work longer hours and faster, which affects their health and this transfer the costs to the household and social reproduction. She proposed that we had to think, not only in terms of the triple crises, but also in terms of how we are integrated as social movements and how we are controlled. In Europe we have the neo-liberal paradigm which tells us that the market is good for women and that market equity is the same as equality. She expressed concern about the new conservative forces that are cooperating in order to control people, these new conservatives and fundamentalists have moved in to replace spaces and communities destroyed by neo-liberalism. She stressed that we have an old enemy without a new name and we have to
name this new-old enemy and ask ourselves how we fit into these spaces.

Rasa talked about coalition building. Consolidation and cooperation with other social movements is a powerful tool, through which a feminist perspective can be strengthened both through the process for consolidation, as well as through a more powerful joint impact on the issue of concern. However, it might be an area where the potential could be more fully explored and employed. Who are the best allies and partners of feminist movements locally and globally today? What conditions shape the actual cooperation from the local and global perspectives? Are donors and networks applying policies, which facilitate productive cooperation and alliances? How are good practice examples on consolidation and cooperation shared among feminists? All of these questions are important and need an extensive discussion. From the perspective of a young feminist NGO in Vilnius, Lithuania, of which she was a co-founder and an active member, she would like to share her experience of a campaign they initiated and in which they build a broad coalition.

Probably the most successful and productive initiative from the perspective of collaborations was a reproductive rights campaign initiated by their NGO in March-June 2008. The aims of the campaign were to protect the right to abortion in Lithuania, as the ban was gaining increasing support at the parliament, and also prevent discriminatory family policies, which were at that time in the stage of the final parliamentary voting. The urgency of the situation was obvious, and it made this situation a very favourable opportunity for building alliances. Efforts for cooperation were successful, which turned this campaign into a truly joint action, consolidating not only different feminist groups, but also new left, LGBT and youth activists. First of all, this campaign mobilized different feminist groups and the response and involvement from the more established women’s groups was really strong. It is very important to emphasize that the campaign has served as a possibility for, young feminists, to empower and “validate” their own position inside the movement. Though at the beginning they felt some hesitation and distrust from the more established women’s groups to join the campaign, the urgency and seriousness of the situation did not permit them to stay looking from the outside.

The collaboration with other activist groups was also very salient and important. The communication and exchange with the emerging new left group called ‘New Left 95’ was very important. The LGBT youth activist organization ‘Tolerant Youth Association’ and youth centre for reproductive and sexual education, ‘In Corpore’, were key partners in the campaign. And the cooperation with other youth groups, so called, alternative scene members, was also of crucial importance. Activists, volunteers and supporters from the alternative music, anarchist and ecologist scene were among the main contributors to the joint action. Individual allies from academia, media, arts and even women-run business have also contributed to the campaign. However, many people, who supported our position but were not activists or members of NGOs or other organized groups, were not very active. One of the reasons might be that they perceived it to be an “activist issue” rather than everybody’s concern.

The campaign taught them that consolidation and collaboration do not always have to be happening between different movements. It is not less important to think of co-operation with any other initiatives, groups or actors, and even with individuals, who share a common position on the issue of concern. The pattern of these joint actions might not be some kind of formalized co-operation, but rather a vivid grassroots flow of ideas, communication, experience and joint activities. Second, the campaign has presented an opportunity to evaluate the importance of a particular context, which is shaping the alliances and collaborations. Third, current forms of work in the NGO sector does not always allow for flexible and effective consolidation, because NGOs are pressed to function and build their agenda as solely project-based entities, rather than sensitive and flexible critical power. For example, there were organizations which did not join the campaign because of their project-based orientation, even though the issues at stake related to their work. In this case a policy from the donors was needed to promote and facilitate consolidation, rather than closure and isolation.

**Feedback from the small group discussions**

This session provoked very heated and passionate discussions and a wide range of positive suggestions. Interestingly, a number of similar proposals for action on how to respond to the financial crisis at different levels were made by the different groups. Several suggestions were made to work toward an international coalition of different women’s groups but also to come up with local solutions. It was proposed that WIDE should build on its work on the links between trade, migration, development and gender to better understand the financial crisis. We need an analysis of the financial crisis from a feminist

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15 This is a summary of her presentation that she could not fully present at the conference.
standpoint and from the bottom up, to make visible issues that are impacting on women at a grassroots level. It was suggested that WIDE could contribute a strategic and analytical response in partnership with feminist networks such as DAWN and feminist economists to analyse what is happening at the macro level but also look at the local level at the situation in different parts in the world. In this analysis we need bring in the reproductive (care) economy, linking it to trade, development, gender and migration.

It was suggested that responses are needed to the immediate, intermediate and longer term challenges and to find alternatives and that we need to operate at different levels: the local community, at the national and regional, and the international level. It was also proposed that we must make personal and individual changes in our consumption lifestyles and that we need societal changes. Another group supported the idea that different responses are needed and that an urgent issue now is deconstructing what is happening and exposing the problems for what they are, as there is a lot of emphasis on how everybody is working together, that the banks and the IMF can solve the problems. We should say quite clearly that these are not the people we want dealing with financial issues, they failed us and we need alternatives.

It was strongly felt in several groups that it was important to speak out and say that women should not pay the price for what is happening and that it is women's time, bodies, work, and responsibility that will help people survive the crisis. Another proposal was to provide women with information to explain why this crisis happened, and that if the banks collapse people should be aware that this might mean no money for our pensions. The group agreed that this moment could be an opportunity to consolidate the feminist movement so that we have a shared vision and response. Another reflection was that in the longer term women need to build from a position of strength, act strategically and get into powerful positions to ensure that women do not pay the price.

Another group considered that the financial crisis and the crisis in leftwing political parties opened up new spaces for a feminist perspective. They proposed linking up with networks like the European coalition “Seattle to Brussels” and others that are working to hold corporations to account. They called on WIDE to seriously prioritise these links with new networks that work on these issues and these coalitions have become more important in the financial crisis. Several groups suggested that we should ensure that feminism is included in larger debates such as on climate change and to work through coalitions with green movements and trade unions and that we should also engage with politicians and support groups like Make Poverty History, to monitor the situation.

Other suggestions were for concrete changes at the micro level, starting with a bottom-up approach, which included exchanges of time and skills, to create a local level economy where money is not necessarily the driving force and we should be looking at the potential of a non-monetary approach to value things. The system in place needs to be based on principles that have the environment and human rights at the centre and it was important for people to agree basic principles that everyone could agree on no matter what religion or background: that would be the basis of reforms. Another proposal was to share different experiences and to have a dialogue with women from the South who are living in undemocratic, authoritarian societies but are also integrated into the global society so they know both the fallacies and inadequacies of liberal democracies and the realities of neoliberal policies. Another group said that women from all the regions are going to be impacted in the same way and they also considered it was important not to make a divide between the environmental and the economic. Other suggestions were to ensure that in our national media there are more economic alternatives proposed and that different voice are heard. We should generate a public debate about different economic alternatives. These already exist, such as social currencies, but they need to have more coverage and debate.

At the end of these presentations, the panel reflected on the wider ranging discussion and recommendations. Ewa considered that an immediate response should be given to the media and we should clearly state that women are not ready to pay for the financial crisis, that there will be conditions for the bailout of banks, which will have to follow the principles mentioned in the discussion: based on human rights and on solidarity. Second, we have to deepen our feminist analysis of the crisis and prepare alternative solutions, bringing together all the knowledge we have and then dispersing this knowledge, but also use the reactions and the everyday life experience of our grassroots. She considered that another urgent activity is to immediately open a public debate with women in our own countries on the crisis and possible solutions.

Sonja agreed that it was essential to consolidate our movement or solutions could be imposed that could be harmful and she stressed that we have to use all our networks and knowledge to advocate, lobby and put pressure on the big actors and big international NGOs. It is also very important to have a direct link with the media; as there is a vacuum of new ideas and it is a
critical moment to have a real say in the public space and we should not waste this opportunity. Nicola said she had found the discussions very exciting, with some fantastic ideas and said she was really happy that we had this chance to generate some energy and propositions. She agreed very much with the comment made that the ecological and economical are inextricably linked and this was a very important addition to the discussion. Going back to her original topic on coalitions, she agreed that it is absolutely essential that everyone present: the women’s movement, the feminist movement and women’s organisations, should link with other movements on this. The counter-veiling forces are so powerful that there is no way the women’s movement or the trade movement can do it alone. She emphasised that the only way that we can make any difference is by working together.

8 Strategy Sessions

8.1 Women organizing for changes in working conditions: A case study by KARAT Poland

Facilitator: Gisela Dütting, Independent Researcher and Member of the EFF (Netherlands)
Speaker: Aleksandra Solik, KARAT (Poland)

The session focused on developing potential strategies to address the violation of women workers rights. Aleksandra presented the case of women employed in the big supermarket chains in Poland and the actions that have been taken by them to claim their rights. She gave the historical context of the situation: the heritage of the former socialist system meant that workers rights’ were seen as an obstacle for the development of the free economy and bringing the supermarket chains to the country was seen as a sign of development. She highlighted the socio-economic situation of the women themselves, their lack of skills and threats of unemployment. She also said that there was no connection between the feminist and trade union movements and a lack of gender sensitivity in the trade unions.

“Women organizing for change” started in 2003, following the first case won in the court by a worker of the supermarket chain Biedronka for not being paid overtime. Nevertheless, after three years of fighting, winning the case and getting a new job, the women stopped fighting. Women workers in the supermarkets did not recognise the gender aspect of the situation. Since then there have been more cases of violations of workers rights taken to courts. These cases were won and there was significant media coverage, which increased awareness among the public in Poland. The second turning point was in the early 2008 with a protest by women workers in TESCO, a big supermarket chain where working conditions are relatively good but salaries are low. This time the feminist movement responded and women protesters held a demonstration in Warsaw that received wide media coverage.

KARAT carried out research which showed that, although the situation in the labour market has changed (in term of lower unemployment), the working situation in the supermarkets remained more or less the same. Although labour legislation in Poland is very good, the challenge is in its implementation. The main
problems identified by the research were: low salaries, workers having to work overtime without sufficient recognition, no days off, work schedules used as a punishment when workers tried to claim their rights, resulting in exhaustion; no connection with the trade unions and no awareness about gender discrimination among workers or in the trade unions. KARAT created a common platform consisting of women’s NGOs, feminists, lawyers, researchers, workers, and journalists in order to work on recommendations for the super markets. They also advocate for CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility).

One of the issues raised by participants in the discussion was on the feminisation of work in this sector, as women workers are concentrated in certain jobs and are more affected by exploitative working conditions. Women are most frequently employed as cashiers, while men hold jobs as security guards with better pay and conditions. Another issue identified was on capacity building on gender with trade unions; an example was given of supermarket managers setting up their own trade unions in Latvia. The group also discussed concerns about bridging the gap between women activists and women workers. Participants agreed that actions should come from the bottom up and that women organizing for change should never be the victims of their own actions to defend their rights.

In the second part of the session participants broke into small groups to develop a strategy on the basis of the KARAT case study. They came up with a number of recommendations:

- Supporting women workers who file cases of violations to help them to deal with the consequences and to support them throughout the whole process. The biggest challenge is to avoid stigmatising the women that have decided to claim their rights.
- Building big alliances (workers, NGOs, trade unions, lawyers) based on the KARAT example.
- Forming partnerships with migrant communities as many supermarkets employ migrant women.
- Raising awareness of gender discrimination in trade unions and bridging the gap between feminist and other women.
- Using human rights instrument as part of the strategy with companies as Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) doesn’t address gender equality. The Gender equality index is another tool to explore using.
- Documenting the struggle and getting wide publicity of these issues is very important. The turning point in Poland was the success of the women filing the case in 2003. We need successes!

The short case study report in English will be available on KARAT website.

8.2 Organizing migrant domestic workers in Europe
Facilitator: Filomenita Hagsholm, KULU and Babaylan (Denmark/Philippines)
Speakers: Fe Jusay, RESPECT (Netherlands/Philippines), Anna Zobnina, MIGS (Cyprus/Russia)

Filomenita introduced the speakers and the topic of the session. Fe, coordinator of RESPECT, a network of migrant domestic workers, began her presentation by introducing the context of her work. Domestic service carried out by migrant women has grown as a result of globalisation and the increasing demand for their labour in the North. She said, for example, that 3,000 women migrate from the Philippines every day, many of them to work in domestic service. She felt that there was a double standard because there is a demand which leads to undocumented workers coming to Europe, but at the same time it is not recognised as a category of employment for the purposes of getting a visa and labour rights. In the Netherlands they had a very successful campaign for the regularisation of illegal migrant workers and in June 2006 migrant domestic workers were accepted as members of the Trade Unions.

In Europe, there is a growing demand for domestic workers as more women go out to work and they need someone to help take care of children and the elderly and to provide a range of services. Migrants are employed as carers, cleaners, cooks, housekeepers, gardeners, drivers and au pairs, but these tasks are often not recognised as work because they are carried out in a private home and therefore these workers are denied basic rights. Because it is invisible, domestic workers are open to exploitation and abuse. Fe gave an account of research carried out among migrant domestic workers that highlighted the multi-faceted discrimination they face and a wide range of labour rights violations, including: no written contracts or social benefits, no payment for days lost due to illness, employers withholding passports and threatening to report them to the police, abuse and sexual harassment. Fe then talked about an organisation of migrant domestic workers in the Netherlands whose main demands are to get recognition of domestic work as proper work and to be protected by labour legislation and immigration rules. Their strategies are to: empower women and support each other; develop links and networking; and carry out advocacy, lobbying and campaigning. Fe mentioned some of the many challenges the organisation face, such as lack of funding, because they cannot open a bank account. They are working to make their issues...
visible in Holland using theatre as a means to work with the police, policy makers and activists in order to raise awareness. Their goal is to lobby at the EU level to get recognition for domestic workers as migrants and as workers.

Anna presented the findings of a European study carried out by the Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies (MIGS) in Cyprus. The research looked at policy approaches for the integration of migrant domestic workers in the EU and the strategies of domestic workers with regard to employment in five countries: Spain, Germany, Italy, Greece and Cyprus. The study also aimed to investigate the reasons for the growing trend: an aging population in Europe or skills and labour shortages. Some of the key findings in the study were that the needs and specificities of migrant women are not acknowledged in the legal framework; and that gender mainstreaming is absent from almost all migration policies and analysis, despite attempts in the EU to acknowledge the needs of different groups of immigrants. EU integration policies are aimed at “skilled workers” and do not take into account that a large number of migrants are low-skilled workers and that many are undocumented. The issue of undocumented workers is not addressed at all and policy-makers do not recognise the domestic sector as a part of the productive economy. There are no state mechanisms to protect labour rights of domestic workers, for example through inspections of working conditions. Yet there are many violations taking place in the private sphere (for example, live-in conditions, round-the-clock availability, abuse and gender and race discrimination).

Anna then mentioned some of the recommendations in the study to improve the legal and employment situation of domestic workers. First, that the legality to stay in a country should be separated from the legality to work, and there should be a category of job seeker’s visa to allow migrants in to a country in order to find work. Second, migrant workers’ rights and job security should be institutionalized through proper contracts and definition of duties; finally the study suggests that domestic workers skills and experience should be recognised through professional development and accreditation.

There were several questions for the speakers such as on the number of domestic workers and on actions taken at the international level. Fe explained that it was difficult to collect accurate statistics about the number of migrant domestic workers because many are undocumented and afraid to come forward. Trade Unions are not always cooperative because the issue of undocumented migrants in this sector raises political issues for them. Anna explained that at an international policy level there have been successes, for example, the ILO is proposing to draft a bill protecting the rights of domestic workers in private households, as no International Convention exists protecting the rights of domestic workers.

In the discussion that followed, representatives in the audience of a Dutch based Filipino organisation of migrant domestic workers called KoopNatin, were asked to talk about their activities. They are a self-help organisation that supports migrant domestic workers through skills training and micro credit. They also have a Forum Theatre, which has been very successful and performs in schools and at events to raise awareness of the situation of migrant domestic workers. Another participant, a Latin American woman who is an illegal migrant, talked about their efforts to form a similar organisation among Latin Americans living in the Netherlands. They come from many countries: Peru, Venezuela, Brazil, Bolivia for example, and there are specific issues for them because of their language and culture. Many are undocumented and some are working for important people, so they fear speaking in public or being part of an organisation, as it might lead to them being deported. So the organisation is only at the very initial stages but they have made contact with RESPECT and they want to network and learn from other groups on how to move forward. Several participants were eager to make contact with the organisations of migrant workers and to explore further with them ways of working together.

8.3. Trade union and NGO responses to rights violations in European supply chains
Facilitator: Pauline Overeem, GoodElectronics (the Netherlands)
Speaker: Marieke Koning, ITUC (Belgium)

Marieke gave a presentation on the response of trade unions to labour rights violations in general and more specifically in European supply chains. She talked about the structure of the international trade union movement and gave examples of several cases to illustrate the possible responses based on the ILO Decent Work Agenda, which comprises international labour standards on employment, social protection and social dialogue. She referred to the ILO declaration on the fundamental principles and rights in the workplace; the Tripartite Declaration on Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy; and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (MNE) and its complaints mechanism. She also talked about initiatives at different levels undertaken by the ITUC, together with NGOs like the Clean Clothes Campaign, to protect labour rights and the current ‘Decent Work, Decent Life for
The participants raised a number of questions on the presentation and on the effectiveness of the strategies used. They touched on the problem of the statistical data used by the trade unions, which are based on labour force surveys, as often these are inadequate as they do not reflect unpaid work or the increasing flow between the formal and the informal economy and other atypical forms of employment. Another important issue raised was the ability of the ITUC, and its affiliates, to monitor and supervise the full supply chain and to put pressure on companies to take responsibility for workers’ rights. There was also discussion and some critique of the tripartite framework, which does not usually include NGOs in the social dialogue with trade unions and employers; on the indicators used for social protection purposes and of the solutions suggested such as the social clause in trade negotiations, which is resisted by developing countries.

A number of strategies were put forward such as partnerships between trade unions and NGOs, which could open the space for discussing the scope of feminist analysis of the labour markets and workers’ rights. It was important to find common ground for co-operation and resistance to neo liberal policies, especially in the conditions of the financial crisis, but also to put pressure on the trade unions to move away from the prevailing male domination and respond to women’s needs in globalisation.

8.4 Why should we care about care?

Facilitator: Franziska Müller, Swiss Working Group on Gender and Development (Switzerland)
Speakers: Mascha Madörin, Swiss feminist economist and researcher on the Care Economy (Switzerland). Discussant: Wendy Harcourt, WIDE (Italy/Australia)

This session began with an introduction to the theme by Franziska. She then asked the participants to think for a few minutes about three questions that relate to the care economy in our personal lives: How many hours have you spent the day before you came to the WIDE Annual Conference: buying or cooking food? Cleaning, washing clothes, ironing? Caring about others (family, friends and/or neighbours) to let things working well when you are out of your home?

Mascha started her presentation by giving some historical background. The reproductive or care economy has been an issue for research and discussion for feminist economist North, South, and West since the 1970’s and today we are living a tremendous crisis in the reproductive economy throughout the world. In relation to Europe, it is the first time that the “financial centre” is suffering a deep financial crisis which is going to have a wide impact such as: restrictions in social services provision, health, raising children, pension schemes and others. Southern countries have been experiencing this for many years so we have lessons to learn from them.

She presented the research project that she is working on with UNRISD. It is a three-year project that began in 2006. It is a comparative research on the multiple institutions of care (households and families, states, markets, and the not-for-profit sector), their gender composition and dynamics, and their implications for poverty and social rights of citizenship. It is empirical research on the care sector in different developing regions and aims to connect the analysis to some of the conceptual debates on care, taking developed capitalist economies as its point of reference. The research spans across eight countries in four different regions: Argentina and Nicaragua; South Africa and Tanzania; South Korea and India; Switzerland and Japan. In each region they have identified one country with a more developed welfare infrastructure and another with a less developed one; and all countries have at least one recent Time-Use Survey (TUS) available. The project combines a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods to examine how care is provided in different countries. The research seeks to understand the gender inequalities and power dynamics that are embedded within different institutions and to capture the implications of different care arrangements for those who provide care, on a paid or unpaid basis, in terms of poverty and access to social rights (differentiated by class, gender, race or caste). The institutions involved in the provision of care may be conceptualised in a stylised fashion as a “care diamond”, to include the family/household, markets, the public sector, and the not-for-profit sector. The type of care being studied (care of children, the elderly, and the chronically ill) varies across countries. The UNRISD study highlights that the care economy is not only a Northern issue, the main question to answer: Who does what and in what conditions? And what are commonalities of care in North, South and West? What always happens in times of economic crisis is that women pay the consequences with an increased workload.

In her presentation Wendy introduced some key issues related to the care economy. First, the need to integrate into a feminist analysis of the care economy, the role and place of women migrant worker who are assuming great part of the care work in households and in public and private social services, and the consequences for them. Migrant women as domestic workers are still...
invisible in development analysis. Second, the analysis of global body politics should include the ways the crisis in the care economy is affecting women’s bodies. Finally, she considered there is a need to revalue care, which should not be seen as a burden, but a source of pleasure and a source of life. Care is crucial for the development of societies and people. Women want to care and men should too, but caring should not be penalised by social, political and economic structures. As feminists we should claim the right to care, the positive sense of care must be regained.

In the discussion that followed a number of important questions were raised and issues identified for further research. An important issue is men’s responsibilities in care and how to ensure that they are sharing care work. Is it a question of educating men or of valuing care work? Mascha mentioned that one of the findings of her research was that in households where there are shared care responsibilities between men and women, men usually use their time taking care of the children, while women continue doing the “dirty” work (cleaning, washing clothes).

A number of important points were made by participants especially that care should be a key principle in social, economic, cultural and political organisation. Welfare states and socialist states proposed sharing the costs of reproduction and they expanded the concept of the care economy to social provisions. However, the current trend in neo-liberal, capitalist, economies is to transfer care responsibilities to people, that is to say, to women.

It was suggested that we need to examine the changing composition of households and the invisible side of the household economy: domestic work and how this is related to wider systemic questions. There is a need for more disaggregated data on the issue of class in the analysis of the care economy. Are women an oppressed class in themselves? What about women in a position of exploitation of other women? Where to place the construction or deconstruction of female identity in the debate on the care economy? What about culture? It is enough to value care economically and to improve the availability of time?

At the end of the session Franziska asked the participants to reflect again on their own caring role, to assess the paid and unpaid substitutes for their daily care work during their absence and to figure the amount and the specifics of care work for preparing the following conference lunch.

8.5 Open Spaces

In the afternoon four ‘Open Spaces’ showcased the work of different organisations and discussed different strategies of their work on key issues: economic justice, climate change, young women’s leadership and building a European feminist movement. The reports of these sessions can be accessed via the WIDE website: http://www.wide-network.org/index.jsp?id=380 These sessions are called ‘Open Spaces’ since they provide the opportunity for organisations to facilitate their own sessions.

9 Wise Women Panel: Reflections on the Conference

Following an established WIDE tradition, the last plenary featured four ‘wise women’ representing different ages and experiences in the West, East and South. The WISE women shared their thoughts on the conference proceedings, presenting their own feminist visions for a just Europe and a just world, reflecting on points of convergence and divergence in feminist organising and alliance building, speaking from the head (what had inspired them from the presentations and discussions, or anything new they had learned); from the heart (what had moved them); and, finally speaking with their feet (what actions would they be taking as a result of the conference).

Zohra Khan, (UK Gender and Development Network and One World Action (OWA, UK/South Africa) felt that the conference had very ambitious aims and was taking place at a time when there is a global financial crisis, the extent of which is unknown. World leaders (such as Gordon Brown) are even co-opting the language we use by talking about equity and justice in the global economy. However we know that they mean something very different from our understanding of justice and equity. What is clear about the financial crisis is that the poor will pay the price through loss of jobs and increased food and energy prices – profits are always privatised and losses socialised. She felt that there is a window of opportunity for us to put forward feminist and socialist alternatives to the current neo-liberal models. A key theme of the conference was the need for more radical and progressive thinking on alternative strategies

A second issue/question that arose at the conference was whether a global, transnational feminism was possible. Zohra felt that despite our differences and diversity, it was necessary and urgent to have a collective vision and therefore a global feminism is possible and
desirable. Feminists in the North must also ensure that they continue to engage with trade and aid policies here and make donor institutions much more accountable to citizens, North and South. Through her work with women’s organisations at OWA, she has learned that Southern partners insist that OWA works within EU institutions to change them, to bring Southern voices to the corridors of power and create spaces for them to engage with European policy makers to influence them. A provocative issue that had come up at the conference was the role of men in the feminist movement especially in the session on ‘Why we should care about care’. She reflected that she was only able to be at the conference here because a man, her partner, was looking after their child. So, men’s role in care work is vital for women to be active citizens and a challenge for WIDE is to look at the role of men in the care economy. However, Zohra was not in favour of current trends where funding is being diverted away from women’s organisations to organisations that work with men. She argued that although this work was important, women’s organisations should not be short changed. She thought there should be not only a twin-track approach to achieving gender equality, but a triple-track approach that ensures that women’s organisations receive support and funding, alongside support for activities targeting men.

Gigi Francisco, (Development Alternatives with Women for the New Era, Philippines) thought that during the conference there had been some good exchanges of political ideas emerging on the contextual side North-South-East, but there was never enough time for thinking. She felt that at other WIDE conferences interactive approaches had been more successful than they had at this one, and that interactive processes on feminist subjects are worthwhile having. Speaking from the heart, she had felt a yearning in the conference discussions to interconnect and move more explicitly as a social movement, as feminist actors. At the same time she felt a dilemma as to what it is to be a social movement, whose members share a social critique as well as political processes and visions. We want to look at ourselves and interact, but Gigi was not sure whether we really do constitute a movement, even if there is a feeling of wanting to be one. A social movement is not just about taking care of ourselves but also taking care of the social collective as an alternative vision & process. She was reminded of an old Persian saying: the young walk with their heads looking up to the sky, because they are looking for a vision, but the old walk with their heads looking at the ground because they look at their footprints and this sentiment, she felt, is what is demanded of us as feminist political subjects and of our social movement.

Evgenia Ivanova, (Centre for Gender Studies, EHU, Belarus) had heard different perspectives, problems and similar concerns and had learned at the conference that some prefer theory and others activism. What she had really liked was the sharing of ideas and values and that a coalition between women’s movements and feminism was not an issue. She would have liked to learn more about how to empower women, especially young women, to take on leadership and control. She felt that women in western Europe had dif-
ferent priorities than in other countries. She had heard a strong argument that it is our money and we do not want governments to misuse it but this is not the case in countries where women do not participate in the labour market, do not pay taxes or have a bank account, so this argument would not work for them. In terms of building a European identity, she felt that we are very different, similar in some respects but we have different experiences and access to resources; we do need a strong European movement and we need to share knowledge to lobby and help other groups. She had been left with a number of questions about citizenship and what this meant: acting in the public space but also having a private life, on whether we can share citizenship and human rights. For Evgenia, it was not about individuals but about being a member. It is about participation and positive alternatives. She had two suggestions for WIDE for future conferences: it would be important to have sessions to explain concepts and theories as participants had different levels of understanding and knowledge and not everyone could follow the theoretical. She also proposed that there should be a crèche for women who were not able to leave their children so they could come to the conference.

Ruth Pearson (Leeds University, UK) said she had not been to a WIDE conference for eight years and saw a greater maturity in the strengthening of a Europe-wide women’s movement, although there are different perspectives for Europe, North and South. She felt that the issues have shifted from development to being about co-operation, to women and globalisation Europe. She suggested maybe the network should be called WAGE not WIDE. She had heard a different perspective on neo-liberalism and this discussion was valuable and had enriched us as Europeans. In her heart, she had hopes and fears: fear that the financial crisis will provoke an economic protectionism that will lead to a breakdown in solidarity. She warned that we should be aware of this but felt that collectively, we can and should make a response. The commitment of the interns and volunteers during the conference had reaffirmed her faith in collective actions. Ruth said that her heart is willing but her feet are weary. This is the moment to bring to the fore the centrality of Keynesian economics, and as feminists the reproductive economy. The moment when we can make the case of the importance of the care economy, all the things that capitalism takes for granted, and does not pay for. We need to articulate alternatives and she suggested that WIDE could work with DAWN and come up with a proposal for ‘a new dawn-new deal’ to insert into the spaces we are active in.

Wendy Harcourt said that the conference had been very motivating especially on the way women can respond to the financial crisis. She had heard some initial ideas that WIDE could put together at the WIDE General Assembly, especially focusing on the reproductive/productive economy and around gender and globalisation. She said that as we move to the next WIDE conference we need to be clear what we mean by care and come up with some suggestions on how to develop these ideas. Speaking from her heart, she spoke of her passion to find alternatives. When speaking from her head, she acknowledged also the fear that we are not certain where that search may take us. She said that many of us are passionately looking for alternatives to the present economic system and we should be honest with each other about how hard it is to not be sure what we are looking for. It is therefore crucial to network and build solidarity. We need to build the trust among us so that we can speak about our visions and about our insecurities and uncertainty about what actions to take. And in envisaging and speaking together we can find the way. Speaking from her feet, she indicated that it may appear she is now taking different pathways as she finishes her term as Chair of WIDE. She will go back into research and analysis but not leave WIDE. Rather she looks forward to contributing now in a different way to WIDE, most of all in the search for alternatives, complementing her work of the last four years as Chair of WIDE.

Closure of Conference and Vote of Thanks

The conference ended with a vote of thanks from Wendy Harcourt on behalf of WIDE to everyone involved in the organisation of the conference in the Peace Palace and especially to the hosts WO=MEN. She also thanked all the speakers and facilitators who took up their roles and responsibilities, to the programme and organising committee and a special mention for the interpreters Gabrielle and Cindy and the technical support who facilitated communication. A very special mention and thanks was given to the staff of WO=MEN who worked hard to make this conference a success: Anjani Abella, Vanessa Hoen and Zairah Khan.

Zairah Khan gave on behalf of WO=MEN a special mention and gratitude to all the many volunteers, the social committee for organising the party, the media team who produced the blog, documentary and newsletters and the board of WO=MEN for all their efforts. She also thanked the WIDE secretariat and all the funders that made this conference possible.
APPENDICES
ANNEX 1: Conference programme

FEMINIST VISIONS FOR A JUST EUROPE
WIDE Annual Conference 2008
09 – 11 October 2008
The Peace Palace - The Hague, The Netherlands

DAY ONE (09 OCTOBER, THURSDAY):
RETHINKING FEMINISMS IN EUROPE TODAY IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL CHANGE

Goal: The first day will explore the ideology of feminisms historically situating the different definitions of feminism, West, South and East. The day will engage participants in a reflective process that will help shed light on the important questions that touch the roots of our different understandings of feminisms in Europe today from a broader international perspective. It will provide the basis from which the Conference can look at feminisms in Europe in relation to contemporary trends in Europe and feminists' struggles for gender justice and social change around the world.

Side Event: The first day concludes with WIDE's traditional Herstory Walk. During this activity, delegates will visit historical sites in the Hague tracing some of the key moments of women's activism in the Netherlands.

0830 – 0930  Participant Registration
(Peace Palace Foyer)

0930 – 1100  Interactive Introductions - Welcome
(Academy Hall)
CO-FACILITATORS:
Bénédicte Allaert, Coordinator (WIDE Secretariat, Belgium)
Wendy Harcourt, WIDE Chair and Editor-In-Chief
(Society for International Development, Italy/Australia)

1100 – 1130  Tea Break (Foyer)

1130 – 1300  Opening Panel: Situating Feminisms in Europe Today
(Academy Hall)
FACILITATOR & INTRODUCTION:
Zairah Khan, Coordinator
(WO=MEN, Netherlands)

SPEAKERS:
Wendy Harcourt, WIDE Chair and Editor-In-Chief
(Society for International Development, Italy/Australia)

Thanh-Dam Truong, Associate Professor (Institute of Social Studies, Netherlands/Vietnam)

Joanna Semeniuk, Member and Affinity Groups Assistant
(European Feminist Forum and IIAV, Netherlands/Poland)

1300 – 1400  Lunch Break (Foyer)

1415 – 1600  Parallel Session: Scoping global feminisms in the West, South and East
(Academy Hall)
Parallel Session: Intersectionalities, Intersecting lives and realities
FACILITATOR:
Jivka Marinova, Member of the WIDE Board, Executive Director (GERT, Bulgaria)

FACILITATOR:
Bénédicte Allaert, Coordinator (WIDE Secretariat, Belgium)
900 – 0930 Participant registration

0930 – 1100 Panel presentations and discussions: The Impacts of EU Expansion and Foreign Policy on Women in Europe and the World (Academy Hall)

SPEAKERS:
Chantal Gill’ard, Head of the AWEPA Section in the Dutch Parliament (European Parliamentarians for Africa – Netherlands)

Kinga Lohmann, Executive Director (KARAT, Poland)

1600 – 1630 Tea Break (Foyer)

1630 – 1730 Facilitators’ Reflections on the Day: Where to go from here? (Academy Hall)

FACILITATOR: Zohra Khan, Chair
(UK Gender and Development Network, UK/South Africa)

SPEAKERS: All facilitators in Parallel Sessions

1800 Herstory III: A Feminist Walk through the Hague

DAY TWO (10 OCTOBER; FRIDAY):
EUROPEAN GLOBAL PLAYERS AND THEIR ROLE IN THE WORLD EXAMINED THROUGH THE LENS OF WOMEN’S RIGHTS AND GENDER JUSTICE

Goal: The second day will contextualize our current challenges with a focus on gender, trade and economics and women’s political and economic struggles for gender equality. The day will highlight the role and responsibilities of various European actors in advocacy strategies for resistance and change. The discussions will look at the areas of global trade and governance, work, food security, peacekeeping, and migration.

Side-event: WO=MEN, Dutch Gender Platform will host a conference party and networking event for day two of the WIDE AC. This networking event will provide a space for participants to learn more about each other and enjoy the a capella music of Lélé Mam – an all women’s Dutch choir that renders various types of world music from different cultures around the world.
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<td>1100 – 1130</td>
<td>Tea Break (Foyer)</td>
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<td>1130 – 1300</td>
<td>Panel presentations and discussions: Feminization of labour</td>
<td>Elisabeth Moder, Member of the WIDE Board, Project Manager (HORIZONT3000, Austria)</td>
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<td>The Global Tug of War for Market and Means</td>
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<td>SPEAKERS:</td>
<td>Ruth Pearson, Professor (University of Leeds, UK)</td>
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<td>European players in the global system, aid effectiveness and FFDs</td>
<td>Dot Keet, Member of the Board (AIDC, South Africa)</td>
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<td>Compounded insecurities and vulnerabilities of migrants in Europe</td>
<td>Brid Brennan, Alternative Regionalisms Coordinator (Transnational Institute, Netherlands/Ireland)</td>
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<td>1300 – 1400</td>
<td>Lunch Break (Foyer)</td>
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<td>1400 – 1530</td>
<td>Parallel Session: Militarism, Peace and Security: 1325 – Challenges and Opportunities in National Action Plans</td>
<td>Ted L.E. Strop-von Meijenfeldt, Member (EPLO, Netherlands)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Academy Hall)</td>
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<td>SPEAKERS:</td>
<td>Isabelle Geuskens, WO=MEN Board Member &amp; Program Manager (IFOR/WPP, Netherlands)</td>
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<td>Seconde Nyanzobe, Senior Trainer (Search for Common Ground, Burundi)</td>
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<td>Parallel Session: EU trade agreements on agriculture and the food crisis</td>
<td>Franziska Müller, Platform Representative (Swiss Working Group on Gender and Development, Switzerland)</td>
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<td>SPEAKER: Naty Bernardino, Co-Coordinator (Asia and Gender Trade Network, Philippines)</td>
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<td>Parallel Session: Illegal migration and trafficking:</td>
<td>Sasokia Bakker, Programme Officer Women’s Human Rights (Aim for Human Rights, Netherlands)</td>
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<td>Strengthening women’s sexual and reproductive health and rights</td>
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<td>(Arbitration Room)</td>
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<td>SPEAKERS:</td>
<td>Grace Osakue, Coordinator (Girls Power Initiative, Nigeria)</td>
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<td>Parallel Session: New trends in migration in the context of Eastern Europe</td>
<td>Ewa Charkiewicz, researcher and member (Feminist Think Tank and KARAT, Poland)</td>
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<td>(Old Library Room, Peace Palace)</td>
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<td>SPEAKER: Elena Tyuryukanova, Director (Center for Migration Studies, Russia)</td>
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**DAY THREE (11 OCTOBER, SATURDAY):**

**BUILDING A FEMINIST FUTURE: ALLIANCES FOR A JUST EUROPE – STRATEGY SESSIONS**

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| 0930 – 1100 | **Panel presentation and discussions:** Feminist Visions with other Movements | **FACILITATOR:** Sonja Lokar, Chair (CEE Network for Gender Alternatives & Consolidating Issues, Slovenia)  
**SPEAKER:** Nicola Bullard, Senior Associate (Focus on the Global South, Thailand/Australia)  
**DISCUSSANTS:**  
Rasa Erentaité, Program Director (New Generation of Women’s Initiatives, Lithuania)  
Ewa Charkiewicz, researcher and member (Feminist Think Tank and KARAT, Poland) |
| 1100 – 1130 | **Tea Break**                                                       |                                                                                   |
| 1130 – 1300 | **Strategy Session: Why should we care about care?**              | **FACILITATOR:** Franziska Müller, Platform Representative and officer peace politics (Swiss Working Group on Gender and Development and CFD, Switzerland)  
**SPEAKER:** Mascha Madörin, Independent Researcher & Consultant (Switzerland)  
**DISCUSSANT:** Wendy Harcourt, WIDE Chair and Editor-In-Chief (Society for International Development, Italy/Australia) |
|             | **Strategy Session 2: Organizing migrant domestic workers in Europe** | **FACILITATOR:** Filomena Hagsholm, Platform representative and Executive Board member (KULU and Babaylan Europe, Denmark/Philippines) |
SPEAKERS:
Fe Jusay, Coordinator (R.E.S.P.E.C.T. Network in Europe, Netherlands/Philippines)

Anna Zobnina, Research Associate (MIGS, Cyprus/Russia)

Strategy Session: Women organizing for changes in working conditions: A case study by KARAT Poland
(Facilitation: Gisela Dütting, Independent Researcher and Member of the EFF (Netherlands))

Speaker: Aleksandra Solik, Programme Manager (KARAT, Poland)

Strategy Session: Trade union and NGO responses to rights violations in European supply chains
(Facilitation: Pauline Overeem, Coordinator (GoodElectronics, Netherlands))

Speaker: Marieke Koning, Equality Officer (ITUC, Belgium)

1300 – 1400 Lunch Break (Foyer)

1400 – 1530 Open Session: Economic Justice Fund
(Open to participation: Mama Cash, Netherlands)

Open Session: Feminist Responses to Climate Change
(Co-organized by KULU, Denmark and Focus on the Global South, Thailand)

Open Session: The African Women’s Leadership Institute
(organized by Akina Mama wa Afrika, UK and Uganda offices)

Open Session: Feminist Forum for Europe
(organized by the Editorial Team of the European Feminist Forum Publication)

1530 – 1600 Tea Break (Foyer)

1600 – 1700 Facilitators’ Reflection of the Day
(Facilitation: Wendy Harcourt, WIDE Chair and Editor-In-Chief (Society for International Development, Italy/Australia))

SPEAKERS: All Facilitators

1700 – 1800 Wise Women Panel and Presentation on Reflections on the Conference
(Facilitation: Wendy Harcourt, WIDE)

Chair and Editor-In-Chief (Society for International Development, Italy/Australia)

SPEAKERS:
Zohra Khan, Chair (UK Gender and Development Network, UK/South Africa)

Gigi Francisco, Regional Coordinator for Southeast Asia
(Development Alternatives with Women for the New Era, Philippines)

Ruth Pearson, Professor (University of Leeds, UK)

Evgenia Ivanova, Coordinator (Center for Gender Studies, EHU, Belarus)
| 1800 | **Vote of Thanks** (Academy Hall) | **Wendy Harcourt**, WIDE Chair and Editor-In-Chief (Society for International Development, Italy/Australia)  
**Zairah Khan**, Coordinator (WO=MEN, Netherlands) |
ANNEX 2:
Biographies speakers and facilitators

BÉNÉDICTE ALLAERT
Bénédicte Allaert has been working for the WIDE network in various capacities since 1994 (information officer, project manager and currently capacity-building program manager). She has, amongst other things, coordinated WIDE’s 5-year programme on economic literacy (2002-2007) as well, the network’s project focusing on the EU-Latin America free trade agreements back in 2000 -- an innovative project at that time, which included gender specific analysis of trade agreements and the development of gender and trade indicators. Besides her professional commitment, she is engaged as a Board member in a Belgian feminist organisation called ‘Le Monde selon les Femmes’ and is involved in various grassroots initiatives focusing on environmental issues.

AMANDINE BACH
Amandine Bach is policy officer and project coordinator at the European Women’s Lobby. She monitors and tries to influence immigration, integration and anti-discrimination policies enriching these policies from a feminist perspective. She also coordinates a project that aims to amplify migrant women’s organisations voices, tabling their issues and concerns at the level of the European Union. Amandine holds a B.A. in Political Science and a Master in Development Studies. She is currently completing her Ph.D. research on Migrant Domestic Workers in Belgium. Amandine previously worked as a consultant for WIDE on the project ‘A gender perspective in the privatisation of public services’ and was also researcher at the Catholic University of Louvain. Her main areas of research are gender and migration, gender and development and fair trade.

SASKIA BAKKER
Saskia Bakker is manager of the Women’s Rights Team of Aim for Human Rights. She took a lead in the development of the Health Rights of Women Assessment Instrument (HeRWAI), which is now being used by organisations in different countries as an advocacy and lobby tool for the advancement of women’s rights. Saskia has an educational background in anthropology with a specialisation in gender and development. She is also a specialist on human rights and international law and has had experience working in developing countries including Tanzania and Pakistan.

NATIVIDAD Y. BERNARDINO
Naty Bernardino is Regional co-coordinator of the International Gender and Trade Network in Asia and a Research Fellow of the Integrated Rural Development Foundation based in the Philippines. Having worked with farmers’ organisations for more than 15 years, she has conducted research studies on the impact of agricultural trade liberalisation on small farmers in the Philippines, agrarian reform, and agrarian social movements, among others. In IGTN, she has written analytical papers on the gender implications of bilateral FTAs such as the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement and the proposed EU-ASEAN FTA. She is currently doing her Master’s degree in development economics at the University of the Philippines.

BRID BRENNAN
A Transnational Institute Fellow, Brid is originally from Ireland, who had lived and worked in the Philippines for many years, and has been based in The Netherlands for more than a decade now. She is co-founder of the European Solidarity Centre for the Philippines and most recently, RESPECT, a Europe-wide anti-racist network campaigning for migrant rights in Europe, particularly for the rights of migrant domestic workers. Brid who co-ordinates TNI’s Alternative Regionalisms programme, has been following trade and investment issues and TNCs related to regional integration and peoples alternatives, particularly in Latin America, Caribbean and the EU. In 2007, she co-edited the Forum Section of Global Social Policy with Cecilia Olivet and contributed an article entitled ‘Regionalisms Futures: The Challenges for Civil Society’.

NICOLA BULLARD
Nicola Bullard joined Focus on the Global South in Thailand in February 1997 and is currently its Senior Associate. Before that, she worked in Cambodia, Thailand and Australia with human rights, development, and women’s organisations and with trade unions. She has also worked as an editor, journalist and publisher. Nicola studied international relations at the Institute for Social Studies in The Hague, and education, geography and urban sociology in Melbourne. She is Australian.
**EWA CHARKIEWICZ**

Ewa Charkiewicz is an academic researcher and activist with an interest in critical globalization studies and in feminism and ecology as new social critiques. She taught in the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague, coordinated the World Bank External Gender Consultative Group, and worked with DAWN as its research coordinator on sustainable livelihoods. Ewa also once held a Rockefeller fellowship on engendering human security at the National Research Council on Women in New York. Since 2005, Ewa has been involved with the Feminist Think Tank in Poland. Her publications include co-authored books and reports. She is now writing a new book on a feminist Foucauldian analytic of transition ‘from plan to market’.

**RASA ERENTAITE**

Rasa Erentaite is co-founder and project director of the young women’s NGO New Generation of Women’s Initiatives (Vilnius). She is an active participant in the women’s movement in Lithuania and is also involved in regional feminist movement building. In 2006, Rasa was also coordinator of the Intergenerational Feminist Dialogue Affinity Group of the European Feminist Forum process. Prior to these, she coordinated counter-trafficking projects in Lithuania and the Baltic States and has experience counselling women migrants and women in prostitution. She is also an experienced facilitator where she was involved in several workshops that focus on issues of sexuality; the ‘power and gender’ nexus; and alternative and ‘fun’ ways of organising feminist movements. Rasa holds an M.A. degree in gender studies obtained from the Central European University in Budapest.

**JOSEFA ‘GIGI’ FRANCISCO**

Josefa ‘Gigi’ Francisco is regional coordinator for Southeast Asia of the Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), a global southern feminist advocacy network and sits in its Governing Council. She is also Asia co-coordinator of the International Gender and Trade Network, the Secretariat Coordinator of the UNESCO Women’s Studies/Gender Research Network and is Chair of the International Studies Department at Miriam College. Her over two decades of activism and work in the development sector, movement building and international cooperation is manifest in her leadership and involvement in the arenas of NGO governance; organizational assessment, planning and development; and training and module development in the Philippines, within the Asian region and globally. She has conducted various research studies on issues of gender, poverty, trade and development and feminist movements and resistances and has been invited on numerous occasions as an expert voice on issues of gender and women’s rights in mainstream and alternative fora.

**CHANTAL GILL’ARD**

Chantal Gill’ard is member of the House of Representatives of the States General in the Netherlands. She is with the Social Democratic Party (PvdA) and is its spokesperson on development cooperation and medical ethics. Chantal is also head of the...
AWEPA section in the Netherlands. She is a strong advocate for women’s rights and was key in negotiating a public-private partnership on the Millennium Development Goal 5. These parties consist of midwives, gynaecologists, NGO researchers and pharmaceutical companies. On her initiative the Dutch Parliament is organising with the WHO and the IPU an international conference on MDG 5 which is intended to lead to a Roadmap for Parliamentarians. Eighty Parliamentarians worldwide are expected to participate this event, November 2008. Chantal is a trained scientist in Biotechnology and specialised herself on the ethics on reproduction technology. She holds a MA in Biotechnological Law and Ethics from Sheffield University, UK.

WENDY HARCOURT
Wendy Harcourt has been Chairperson of WIDE since December 2005. She is a long-term member of WIDE and was a member of the WIDE Steering Group from 1987 to 1995. Wendy is the Editor in Chief and Senior Adviser of the Development Journal of the Society for International Development (SID) - an international development NGO based in Rome, Italy and is author to numerous publications and articles. She has written extensively on the issues of globalisation, alternative economics and gender, reproductive rights and health, culture and communications.

FILOMENITA MONGAYA HØGSHOLM
Co-founder and current Executive Board member of Babaylan Europe and Babaylan Denmark (Philippine Women’s Network in Europe), Filomenita Høgsholm represents the KULU platform at the WIDE Steering Group. Gender and ethnic equality are at the core of Filomenita’s interest areas as a journalist, documentary filmmaker, lecturer-publicist who works primarily with ethnic minority women: migrants, refugees, asylum seekers using the vehicles of culture and media, on or off formal workplaces. Since 2000, Filomenita has been involved in organising a series of south-north-south dialogues in Dignity to address the problems women face in a globalising world. Appointee to several governmental as well as civic committees tackling integration and anti-discrimination issues in Denmark for decades, she has been key in tabling the cultural and political issues of many minority women at the UN Social Summit and Women’s Conference in 1995.

EVELYONDIA IVANOVA
Evgenia Ivanova is coordinator of the Center for Gender Studies at the European Humanities University. She has a Master of Arts in Gender Studies and a Master of Arts in Sociology of Law. Between the years 2005 – 2006, Evgenia was project manager of a UNDP project that sought to ‘develop in-house and in-country capacities in mainstreaming gender concerns in all UNDP areas and country programmes’.

FE JUSAY
Fe Jusay is coordinator of R.E.S.P.E.C.T. – a European network of migrant domestic workers organisations, trade unions, NGOs and supporters that campaigns for the rights of all migrant domestic workers in private households, both women and men, regardless of immigration status. Since its inception, R.E.S.P.E.C.T has expanded to include self-organised migrants in the UK, Greece, The Netherlands, France, Belgium, Portugal, Italy and Ireland. Since moving to the Netherlands in 1985, Fe has been involved in mobilising migrant domestic workers and facilitating the enlargement of their voices within civil society. She is also Coordinator of the Women’s Programme of the Commission for Filipino Migrant Workers – a pioneer MDW organisation in Europe that has gained tremendous success in having the work of MDWs recognised and regulated in their host country. Fe has a long history of solidarity with women and between the years of 1994 – 1999, was involved in the Foundation against Trafficking in Women in the Netherlands. In the late 1990s, she became a member of the Philippine Women’s Solidarity Group in the Netherlands.

DOT KEET
Dot Keet was born in Zimbabwe where she spent many years undertaking research and university teaching in a number of countries in southern Africa including Tanzania, Zambia, Angola and Mozambique. She was engaged in the liberation struggles in several Southern Africa countries and held the position of Senior Research Fellow in the Centre for Southern African Studies in the School of Government at the University of the Western Cape. Dot’s work currently focuses on political economy analyses and policy engagements with social and labour movements, independent NGO and university-based and inter-governmental research and policy development bodies in South Africa, in the Southern African region and throughout Africa, and internationally. She also worked with a variety of development and environmental NGOs, women’s organisations and trade unions in the Southern African region and more broadly throughout Africa. She is on the Boards of key South African economic policy institutes including the Alternative Information and Development Centre and BioWatch SA, and is on the Board of the Transnational Institute.

ZAIRAH KHAN
Zairah Khan is coordinator of the Dutch Gender Platform, WO=MEN. WO=MEN is a platform member of WIDE and this year’s host organisation of the WIDE
Annual Conference. WO=MEN is both a member organisation and network, with 50 individual and institutional members in the Netherlands and approximately 600 contacts in the Netherlands and abroad. The main activities of WO=MEN are directed to linking of its members, promoting cooperation between different organisations and women’s groups and lobbying for international women’s rights and gender equality in the Dutch context. Zairah has a background in social studies, specifically identity and globalisation, and in media and communications. As an activist she is connected to several young women’s networks in the Netherlands.

ZOHRA KHAN
Zohra Khan is gender policy co-ordinator at One World Action, a British NGO. Prior to joining One World Action, she worked in South Africa as a legal researcher for the Commission on Gender Equality, a statutory body established to promote and protect gender equality in the new South Africa; and as senior researcher at the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation, in Johannesburg. At One World Action, her work focuses on gender equality issues in trade and aid in the context of British and European Union policy towards southern countries. She is currently conducting research into the impact of the new EU Economic Partnerships Agreements (EPAs) on women livelihoods in Southern Africa. Women’s rights, violence against women and gender and development issues are a particular focus of her advocacy, campaigning and writing. Zohra is active in European women’s networks. She is South African and has been based in London since 2002.

MARIEKE KONING
Marieke Koning is equality officer at the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Equality Department in its headquarters in Brussels. She is a specialist on gender issues and works in the spaces of trade unions, the workplace and society at large. Specifically, she cooperates with and provides assistance to women trade unionists worldwide, lobbying and advocating for gender aware policies. Marieke was responsible for coordinating the two year campaign and research on Decent Work, Decent Life for Women which was launched in March 2008 and published in the Gender Pay Gap Report. As of date, the campaign is now participated in by 89 national trade union centres in 56 countries worldwide. The campaign empowers women workers with a focus on promoting maternity protection; workers family responsibilities; equal remuneration; and anti-discriminatory practices within the rubric of the CEDAW and the MDGs. Marieke also actively participates in international lobby efforts for women workers in spaces such as the United Nations and the International Labour Organisation among others. Prior to ITUC, she was involved with the Dutch National Trade Union Center (FNV) where she coordinated campaigns for youth employment, in particular – young migrant workers.

KINGA LOHMANN
Kinga Lohmann initiated and co-founded KARAT Coalition – a regional coalition of organisations and individuals that advocates and lobbies for gender equality across Central and Eastern European and CIS countries. Since 1997, she has been involved in the coalition and currently serves as its Executive Director. Kinga’s activism and advocacy for gender equality and women’s rights is manifest in her continuous efforts of contributing to women’s movement building in national, regional and international fora (i.e. European Feminist Forum), as well, in her written work. She was responsible for contributing to and co-editing various reports, publications, articles and papers on women’s status in Central and Eastern Europe (including women’s status in the labour market); impacts of EU accession on women; the role of women’s NGOs in the advancement of gender equality; and financing for women’s empowerment in Eastern Europe. Kinga is a member of the WIDE Steering Group.

SONJA LOKAR
Sonja Lokar was born in Zagreb, former socialist Yugoslavia. A sociologist, reformer of the League of the Communists in Slovenia in 1986 through 1990 and a Member of the Parliament from 1986 through 1992, Sonja is one of the leading figures of the CEE Network for Gender Issues. She served as the Chair of the Stability Pact Gender Task Force from 1999 and in 2008, was invited to be a member of the European Commission Expert group on Women in Decision Making.

MASCHA MADÖRIN
Mascha Madorin is an economist and expert on theoretical and applied issues of feminist economics. She works as an independent consultant and is currently participating in a country-level research team which is part of an ongoing UNRISD Research focusing on the Political and Social Economy of Care spanning eight countries from four regions. Mascha is an active member of the Swiss Working Group on Gender and Development.

JIVKA MARINOVA
Jivka Marinova lives and works in Bulgaria and is a board member of KARAT, a WIDE regional platform. She is founder and executive director of the Bulgarian Foundation, Gender, Education, Research & Technologies (GERT). She has years of solid experience as a member of women’s networks, as a trainer, speak-
er and rapporteur. She is a trained ICT engineer, a women’s rights advocate and had been involved in women’s issues and gender research since 1998. Her specific interests are in anti-violence education, women’s reproductive rights and women’s economic and technological empowerment.

ELISABETH MODER
Elisabeth Moder is project manager at HORIZONT3000 in Vienna. HORIZONT3000 is one of Austria’s largest development cooperation organisations. Elisabeth is also in charge of the gender desk at HORIZONT3000. She has been an active member of WIDE’s Austrian platform for many years and was the Austrian representative in the WIDE Steering Group from October 2004 to December 2005. She has been on the WIDE Board since December 2006.

FRANZISKA MÜLLER
Franziska Müller holds a MAS in Cultural and Gender Studies and works for the feminist peace organisation Christlicher Friedensdienst (CFD) in Switzerland. Her main topics of interest are peace, migration policies and the Middle East. She has an academic background on history and communication and previously worked as a freelance journalist and editor for various publications. She is a member of the Swiss Working Group on Gender and Development and serves as its Platform Representative to WIDE.

PATRICIA MUÑOZ CABRERA
Patricia began working in the field of development cooperation in 1995, with “specific focus on sustainable livelihoods, agriculture and food security/sovereignty. Between 1994 and 2000 she also had the opportunity to work on policy analysis related to debt and World Bank poverty reduction policies. Between 1997 and 2003 she worked for Oxfam Belgium and Netherlands (NOVIB) as a programme manager for Central America and the Caribbean. She is currently in the last year of her PhD at the Free University of Brussels, Belgium. Her main area of research is theories of empowerment and their link with emancipatory narratives. At the WIDE 2008 General Assembly held after the conference, she was elected as one of WIDE’s boardmembers.

SECONDE NYANZOBÉ
Seconde Nyanzobe is senior trainer at Search for Common Ground in Burundi. Search for Common Ground is an organisation that works on peace and security issues which focuses on building the capacity of all groups in Burundian society to collaborate and manage conflicts in a peaceful way. As senior trainer for an organisation that also emphasises on democratic participation of all groups in society in all facets of conflict resolution, management and peace building, Seconde additionally contributes to these initiatives by lobbying for the betterment of women’s positions and increasing women’s visibility in these initiatives.

GRACE OSAKUE
Grace Osakue is a women’s rights activist and sexuality educator based in Nigeria. She is co-founder and coordinator of Girl Power Initiative (GPI) – an organisation that empowers young girls and women through programmes that promote and enlarge sexual and reproductive health and rights. Grace is a key figure in the development of GPIs comprehensive curriculum for the promotion of SRHR which has led to the overall empowerment of young women and girls, as well, resistance to and a reduction in incidences of trafficking amongst the youth.

PAULINE OVEREEM
Pauline Overeem is coordinator of GoodElectronics – an international network that advocates for sustainability and promotes human rights in the global electronics industry. GoodElectronics brings together various NGOs, trade unions, academics, researchers and social activists. Prior to her work with GoodElectronics, Pauline worked with the India Committee of the Netherlands and was involved in its programme on corporate social responsibility. A long time activist with an impressive resume of work experience in the development sector, she has been involved in the promotion of human rights for over a decade. Pauline worked for years with Oxfam-Novib and preceding that with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (HCHR), during its field mission in Rwanda. Pauline holds a doctoral degree in Asian contemporary history from the University of Amsterdam.

RUTH PEARSON
Ruth Pearson is chair in Development Studies at the University of Leeds, having previously served as Professor on Women and Development at the Institute of Social Studies in the Hague, the Netherlands. Ruth is among the first scholars to have questioned the nature and implications of women’s expanded role and participation in global production and the labour force in the 1970s and is author to numerous publications on the issue of women’s labour with a current focus on regulation, codes of conduct and corporate social responsibility. She has conducted extensive research in Latin America including Argentina, Mexico, Bolivia, Ecuador and Cuba. Her current research projects are on the topics of Burmese migrant workers in Thai border industries and industrial militancy of South Asian women in the UK labour market. Ruth is also an experienced gender consultant who had been invited to evaluate the gender programmes of international organisa-
Gender and Development Studies at the Institute of Thanh-Dam Truong is associate professor in Women, violence in today’s society. towards efforts of building a culture of peace and non-violent law with a specialisation on human rights. She has worked, both paid and unpaid, within the field of development co-operation, human rights and democratisation processes. As a consultant, she currently focuses on mobilising feminists in Europe for the European Feminist Forum. Joanna is active in the Young Feminist European Network and works as an Affinity Groups Assistant at the International Information Centre and Archives for Women’s Movement (IIAV) – an international information centre and archive for the women’s movement in Amsterdam.

ALEKSANDRA SOLIK
Aleksandra Solik joined the KARAT Secretariat as its programme manager in 2006 but was engaged in its activities much before. An activist with a background on mechanical engineer, she has been active in the women’s rights movement since the early nineties. Her thematic areas of interest include international women’s rights mechanisms, reproductive rights and gender mainstreaming. In KARAT she is responsible for its women’s rights program (e.g. promotion of CEDAW, other UN human rights mechanisms as well as women’s labour rights). Aleksandra was co-founder of KARAT Coalition and served as a member of its Board from 2005 to 2007.

TED L.E. STROP-VON MEIJENFELDT
Ted Strop-von Meijenfeldt is chair of the platform ‘Women for Sustainable Peace,’ and actively participates in initiatives focusing on women, peace and security in EPLO and the WO=MEN Working group on 1325. She is also chairperson of the Board and consultant to the Netherlands Expertise Centre Alternatives to Violence (NEAG). Ted has a background in international law with a specialisation on human rights. She has worked, both paid and unpaid, within the field of development co-operation, human rights and democratisation processes. As a consultant, she currently focuses in the field of alternatives to violence, contributing towards efforts of building a culture of peace and non-violence in today’s society.

THANH-DAM TRUONG
Thanh-Dam Truong is associate professor in Women, Gender and Development Studies at the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) where she has been on the staff since 1982. She received a Ph.D. in political and cultural studies from the University of Amsterdam in 1988. Prior to her present appointment she worked from 1973-1976 with the United Nations Development Programme in New York and in West Africa. Thanh-Dam is one of the first scholars who wrote an academic analysis on sex tourism: ‘Sex, Money and Morality: Prostitution and Tourism in Southeast Asia’. Her continued interests in gender, culture and social justice have brought her to new areas of research on the gendered dimensions of global/local interactions and the challenges these pose to the field of human development and human security. She is also chief co-editor of the journal: ‘Gender, Technology and Development’.

ELENA TYURYUKANOVA
Elena Tyuryukanova is director of the Center for Migration Studies in Moscow and senior researcher at the Institute for Socio-Economics Studies of Population at the Russian Academy of Sciences. She received her Ph.D in sociology from the Moscow State University and her main area of interest is the study of international migration and its relationship to the economy and society. In connection to this, her most recent research focuses on investigating the links between illegal migration and the shadow economy, abusive practices in the labour market and trafficking of human beings. She is an expert in the field of migration and had been invited to lend her support to projects spearheaded by institutions such as the IOM, ILO and OSCE. She has an impressive resume of working on counter trafficking projects in Russia during her association with TRACCC and has produced numerous articles and publications relevant to her field.

GODELIEVE VAN HETEREN
Godelieve van Heteren was trained in Leiden and London as a physician and international health systems researcher. She held the position of European and International Health Systems Specialist at the Wellcome Institute in London and was for over a decade engaged as a university lecturer on health and social systems at the University of Nijmegen Medical School. In 2002, she became a member of the Parliament in the Netherlands with portfolios related to health, national and international disasters and crises. She became chair of the European Affairs Committee of the Dutch Parliament and since spring of 2008, was appointed as Director of the Dutch international aid agency Cordaid – a co-financing institution with 1000 partners worldwide. Godelieve is also vice-chair of Nieuwsfoort -- the Dutch international press center in The Hague.
Aniek Wubben is project assistant at the Women’s Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR) and is author of a 2008 report entitled Violations of Human Rights in the Netherlands published by the network in its newsletter. In this report, Aniek investigated a proposed draft bill modification of the Health Care Insurance Law of the Netherlands that deals with access to obstetrician care by uninsured and undocumented pregnant migrant women. Through her research and lobby efforts, and in collaboration with other Dutch-based institutions, the proposed draft bill amendment was successfully put to a halt. Aniek teaches at the Free University in Amsterdam and holds a degree in Health Sciences specialising in International Public Health.

Anna Zobnina
Born in Russia, St. Petersburg, Anna Zobnina is currently based in Cyprus completing her Masters degree in sociology and working as a Research Associate for the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies. She is a double bachelor degree holder with a BA in Russian language and literature obtained from the St. Petersburg State University and a BA in English language and literature from the University of Nicosia, Cyprus. In fulfillment of the requirements to her current studies, Anna is writing her thesis on Trafficking in Women for Sexual Exploitation. As Research Associate in MIGS, she is involved in several of the organisation’s projects which include supporting its CEDAW awareness raising campaign, conducting research on the demand for sexual exploitation of women in Cyprus and on the EuroMed Role of Women in Economic Life Programme.