

# Organizations Working for Women's Rights

*This edition of Window on the World has brought together just a few of the feminist organizations who attended and contributed to the AWID Forum.*

### **The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID)**

[www.awid.org](http://www.awid.org)

The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) is an international membership organization connecting, informing and mobilizing people and organizations committed to achieving gender equality, sustainable development and women's human rights. Our goal is to cause policy, institutional and individual change that will improve the lives of women and girls everywhere. We do this by facilitating ongoing debates on fundamental and provocative issues as well as by building the individual and organizational capacities of those working for women's empowerment and social justice.

A dynamic network of women and men around the world, AWID members are researchers, academics, students, educators, activists, business people, policy-makers, development practitioners, funders, and more. AWID recognizes that our members are our most valuable resource. We have a broad network of expert, committed members interested in sharing their ideas towards viable solutions for gender equality.

AWID today is an organization of more than 5000 women and men. In total, 10 International Forums have helped to foster a community with common goals and diverse strategies. AWID's mission is to connect, inform and mobilize people and organizations committed to achieving gender equality, sustainable development and women's human rights.

### **Creating Resources for Empowerment in Action (CREA)**

[www.creaworld.org](http://www.creaworld.org)

CREA aims to empower women to demand, create and access their human rights. CREA works from the premise that all women, irrespective of their status, have the inherent capacity to take responsibility for and make choices about their lives. Women are able to articulate and access their rights and emerge as leaders facilitating positive social change. CREA sees itself as a catalyst enabling this change. Access to information and knowledge about the world, and the changing political and economic structures contribute to women having greater control over their lives. CREA aims to draw on collective synergy to help reach common goals.

CREA's current initiatives include:

#### **New Voices, New Leaders**

Building the leadership capacities of women by implementing leadership development

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programmes that address women's rights and empowerment.

### **Creative learning**

Enabling young women leaders to strengthen their work and network with each other innovative learning mechanism.

### **Public education and advocacy**

Creating a broader public understanding of and influencing policies related to women's rights and empowerment.

### **Expanding discourses**

To engage with, support, and broaden, theory – with an emphasis on practice – in the areas of sexuality, gender, health and rights.

## **Gender at Work**

[www.genderatwork.org](http://www.genderatwork.org)

Gender at Work is a new knowledge and capacity building network focused on gender and institutional change. It was created in June 2001 by AWID (Association for Women's Rights in Development), WLP (Women's Learning Partnership), CIVICUS (World Alliance for Citizen Participation), and UNIFEM (United Nations Fund for Women). It brings together development and human rights practitioners, researchers and policy makers to help develop new theory and practice on how organizations can change gender-biased institutional rules (the distribution of power, privileges and rights), values (norms and attitudes), and practices. It also hopes to change the political, accountability, cultural and knowledge systems of organizations to challenge social norms and gender inequity.

The three major objectives are to build strategic and practical knowledge of the change process that leads to institutional change for gender equality; strengthen the capacity of organizations to challenge gender power relations; and to build an informed collective voice to re-shape thinking and practice to achieve gender equality.

The website provides links to Gender at Work's Innovator's Circle, which is an initiative that will bring together the most cutting-edge concepts, theories, and practices of feminists working in a range of areas, and create new thinking, strategies and actions that can advance gender equality.

There is also a link to *Change Catalysts*, which is an action-learning programme on gender and institutional change, a programme to provide a reflective space, facilitative and conceptual help to organizations endeavoring to improve their practice of institutional change for gender equality. You can also enter a password to obtain the organization's E-zine and there is a link to a no borders bookstore at E-change.

## **Women's Link Worldwide**

[www.womenslinkworldwide.org](http://www.womenslinkworldwide.org)

Women's Link Worldwide is an international nongovernmental organization working to advance women's rights through the implementation of international human rights law and the use of international tribunals and strategic litigation.

As a clearinghouse of legal precedent from national and international courts, Women's Link is a resource for advocates and organizations dedicated to furthering women's rights through legal avenues.

Women's Link attorneys also undertake legal advocacy projects designed to promote human rights norms.

Of major concern is women's right to physical integrity. The right to physical integrity is a fundamental human right that includes sexual freedom and reproductive health and rights. It also includes the right to be free from sexual and other forms of physical violence.

The website includes a database that provides case law and other information on:

- violence against women in all its forms, such as sexual and domestic violence and trafficking;
- reproductive health and rights; and
- gender discrimination, excluding family and labor law.

The website allows one to click on the countries involved in this organization and get information on the Country's laws, legal challenges going on and case law summaries. One can search the database of case law using jurisdiction, texts or issues as search terms.

### **African Women's Development Fund**

[www.awdf.org](http://www.awdf.org)

The African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), which was established in June 2000, is the first Africa-wide fundraising and grant-making fund, which aims to support the work of organizations working to promote women's rights in Africa. The AWDF funds local, national, subregional and regional organizations in Africa working towards women's empowerment.

The objectives of the AWDF are fundraising within and outside Africa, grant making on an Africa-wide basis, communicating the work and achievements of African women's organizations and providing technical assistance to grantees.

The website provides links to resources on the organization's grant-making including the thematic priorities and the criteria to receive grants, its capacity building project and information on its fundraising.

### **Asia Pacific Forum on Women, Law and Development**

[www.apfwld.org](http://www.apfwld.org)

APWLD is an independent, nongovernment, non-profit organization. It is committed to enabling women to use law as an instrument of social change for equality, justice and development. It has a consultative status at the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

APWLD has engaged primarily in policy advocacy, education, training and other activities to address issues and concerns of poor and marginalized women in the region. It has lobbied at regional and international levels for the implementation of government commitments in international conventions and the integration of gender issues at regional and international fora.

APWLD's website provides links to its volunteer/internship programmes, which provide women activist/students with opportunities to work in the area of women's human rights issues on a regional level. There is also links to publications that can be obtained through the website and a link to their networks/links with other women's organizations throughout Asia and the rest of the world.

### **International Community of Women Living with HIV/AIDS**

[www.icw.org](http://www.icw.org)

ICW is an international network that strives to share with the global community the experiences, views and contributions of 19 million women worldwide, who are also HIV positive.

ICW's greatest achievement has been to reach isolated women living with HIV and AIDS and, through support, education and training, empower them to be involved in areas of service delivery and policy that affects their lives and the lives of their children and family. ICW has an excellent record of successful, productive and effective trainings and meetings for positive women.

ICW's collaborative work with other organizations such as the Global Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (GNP+), the International AIDS Society (IAS), International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO), UNAIDS, and various international NGOs, has continued and expanded. ICW's work in these fora focussed attention on HIV positive women across the world.

### **The Women On Web**

[www.womenonweb.org](http://www.womenonweb.org)

The Women On Web site is dedicated to the silence that surrounds the 46 million women each year who have an abortion and to opening a dialogue about this controversial topic. Here you can lend your face to the fight for choice by taking your own photo and placing it on their virtual mural. The site, as noted in the final plenary, displays the faces and stories of women, and men, who support the right to safe and legal abortions.

### **Women on Waves**

[www.WomenonWaves.org](http://www.WomenonWaves.org)

There is also information, provided by Women on Waves on how to obtain an abortion, how to administer an abortion yourself if a legal abortion is not an option, and options for birth control. There is also information about how to support the right to choose, abortion myths from around the world, and one woman's journal about wearing an 'I Had an Abortion' t-shirt in her native Brazil and the reactions she received. This site will change the way you look at the right to choose.

### Global Campaign for Microbicides

[www.global-campaign.org](http://www.global-campaign.org)

The future of HIV/AIDS prevention may depend on the development of microbicides and the Global Campaign for Microbicides, featured in a short film at the Mini Women's Rights Film Festival entitled *In Women's Hands*, provides a wide range of information on the subject.

As discussed in many sessions at the AWID Forum, the key to stemming the spread of HIV/AIDS is involving women in the fight and addressing their specific concerns. Microbicides, as described in the film and online, will be an important tool in the fight against the AIDS pandemic because they can be applied topically and can be used without a partner's knowledge. This could be the tool that finally allows women to take control of their own sexual health.

Microbicides are still in the research phase and need public support to gain funding. The Global Campaign for Microbicides uses a 'broad-based, international' approach to educate the media, the public and policy-makers on the benefits of microbicides and to request more government and private funding of their development. The site has the film available for purchase, an online petition to sign, and information about how to lobby decision-makers to provide more funding for microbicide research.

### International Museum of Women

[www.imow.org](http://www.imow.org)

The International Museum of Women, founded in 1985 as the Women's Heritage Museum, is based in San Francisco and provides an online, multilingual exhibit of the stories, photographs, and poetry of women living in the world today.

The Goals of the Museum are:

- To be an institution that honors and values women, past, present and the futures they are creating.
- To accurately incorporate women into the historical record through both global and gender perspectives.

- To contribute to a culture where all women have a voice and participate fully in the societies they inhabit.
- To build global understanding by fostering international dialogues and promoting social, economic, cultural, and political equality.

On International Women's Day, March 8, 2006, they will launch an exhibit called *Imagining Ourselves: A Global Generation of Women*, focusing on young women and their perspectives.

### Breakthrough

[www.breakthrough.tv](http://www.breakthrough.tv)

One of the themes that emerged from the AWID Forum, the involvement of young women in the feminist movement, is represented by the creative efforts of Breakthrough. Breakthrough encourages young people to use creative expression to encourage social justice and equality.

Their interactive website lists:

- Upcoming film festivals and exhibitions.
- Polls that allow the voices of young people to be heard.
- Ideas about important social themes like sexual and reproductive rights, women's rights, human rights, race and immigrant rights, peace and security, and caste equality.
- Ways to promote the activism of young women and men through art, media, and self-expression. *Speak Out! Girls, Creative Vision and Globalisation*, one of their films, was shown at the Thursday evening film festival and was sampled at the final plenary, and highlighted the opinions of young women about racism, sexism, and globalization.

### Indigenous Information Network

[www.laneta.apc.org/rci/ing/](http://www.laneta.apc.org/rci/ing/)

The Indigenous Information Network, created in 1997 by Servicios Profesionales de Apoyo al Desarrollo Integral Indígena (Professional Support Services for Integral Indigenous Development), provides listings of indigenous organizations in the Americas and gives them a forum to disseminate their information.

There are also listings of indigenous literature, news postings from the organizations, and links

to useful websites. Most information is available in English and Spanish.

### **That Takes Ovaries**

[www.thattakesovaries.org](http://www.thattakesovaries.org)

*That Takes Ovaries*, a book and play comprised of short stories about the bold, and creative lives of empowered women, was featured at the Friday evening event, Movers and Shakers, Divas and Changemakers and in a Saturday afternoon session. *That Takes Ovaries* shows that women can be just as fearless, outrageous, and ferocious as those 'with balls,' and have the courage to show it.

The site has information about the book as well as information regarding open mike nights, readings and play performances across the country.

### **Go Home Baby Girl**

<http://www.cbc.ca/sunday/missingwomen.html>  
*Go Home Baby Girl*, a film by Audrey Huntley, provides a glimpse into the little publicized femicides of indigenous Canadian women. Following one family as they come to terms with the unsolved murder of their daughter/sister, the film shines a spotlight on a trend that has been ignored by the mainstream Canadian media, public and law enforcement. The website explains the project in detail and gives links to information about missing and murdered indigenous women in Canada. The film will air on Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in the nearfuture.

*Compiled by Melissa M. Haniewicz and Sheryl Beckford*