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SUMMER SPECIAL
Our editorial team
reviews films, books
and an exhibition

RESILIENCE
What Mozambique
needs after the
devastating cyclones

MENTAL SUFFERING
More professional help
is indispensable in
Liberia



Gender socialisation

Gender socialisation

Reflecting gender roles

Gender roles need to change to stop violence. Henry Cervantes and Britta Wiemers describe how a civil-society organisation in Bolivia is taking preventive action by making young people reconsider gender roles. They both work in the project. Also in Mexico, the road to gender equity remains long, although the country has progressive laws, as Virginia Mercado, a researcher and instructor, elaborates. **PAGES 18, 20**

Education is the key

Education is the best means to fight gender inequality. Frank Masanta Jr., a social activist, presents the case of Zambia. Judy Thuo, chief executive of a bus company in Nairobi, explains in an interview why vocational training matters in the public-transport industry. And Fabian Jacobs of GIZ elaborates, why more education is crucial to create less informal and more formal work in developing countries and emerging economies. **PAGES 22, 27, 28**

Clicktivism

Ghanaian feminists are using social media to change public discourse. They refuse to be intimidated by hateful responses. Ghanaian journalist Kwasi Gyamfi Asiedu assesses the matter. **PAGE 24**

Making sanitary pads

Female teenagers need sanitary pads. All too often, access is considered a luxury in Malawi's rural areas. As a consequence, many girls miss school during menstruation. Journalist Rabson Kondowe describes how an NGO breaks the silence about the taboo issue and teaches girls to make reusable sanitary pads. **PAGE 26**

Creative and committed

Young Arab women have very diverse female role models. They encounter many of them via social media in the whole of the Arab world, writes Mona Naggar, a journalist based in Beirut. **PAGE 30**

Girls and criminal gangs

Sally Atkinson-Sheppard, a criminologist, has conducted field research in Bangladesh and Mainland China. Her results show that girls are both victims and perpetrators of crimes. **PAGE 31**

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Changing roles

Certain norms that define how men and women should be and act have developed over years, in some cases over centuries, and are deeply entrenched in collective memory. They evolve from generation to generation – in the family, at school, at work and in all areas of society. Children and teenagers are influenced by society’s values, coming to identify with them and seeking to conform to them. The process lasts a lifetime and is known as socialisation.

What exactly is expected of men and women is continuously negotiated in social interaction. There are many relevant factors, from grammatical gender categorisation to TV sports reporting. Male and female roles are strongly influenced by tradition and faith. Historically, all world religions represent the dominance of men over women who are required to be submissive. Men, as a rule, are physically superior to women, which is still seen by many men as a licence to use violence to make women and children obey them. Far too many women worldwide – even in enlightened democracies – are exposed to domestic violence, discriminated against in education and at work, raped and harassed.

In enlightened democratic societies today, it is taken for granted that men and women enjoy equal rights and that the inviolability of human dignity applies to all genders – including intersex people, who do not clearly identify with a particular gender. Even women in many authoritarian countries no longer wish to accept their assigned roles. They demand the right to make their own life decisions and to participate in society on an equal basis. The fact that women now have more freedom in ultra-restrictive countries like Saudi Arabia is encouraging. Societal change is possible. The more women’s rights and new role models gain acceptance, the more society will develop in that direction and the more young generations will become socialised accordingly.

Bringing about societal change is also a task for development policy. It is enshrined in the UN 2030 Agenda with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): SDG 5 demands gender equality. Programmes across all sectors need to be designed to promote it. Crucially important for gender equality is the empowerment of women and girls, so they can cast off unwanted roles themselves. But it is equally important to sensitise men and boys. They need to realise what equality means and that everyone benefits when people are treated with fairness and respect whatever their gender. However, it is difficult to establish new roles, as can be seen from western democracies’ decades-long struggle for gender equality. A great deal has been achieved. Women have the right to vote just about anywhere where elections are held. And there are few places nowadays where it is unusual to find women in leadership positions in politics, science and the media.

But much is still amiss. For example, women continue to earn less on average than men. They are less likely to be in technical or mathematical jobs but they still do the lion’s share of domestic work and are largely responsible for bringing up children. The list goes on.

Hopefully, gender equality will one day be a reality everywhere. But a lot more effort will be needed, and it may take quite a while.

► You’ll find all contributions of our focus section plus related ones on our website – they’ll be compiled in next month’s briefing section.



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Summer Special



Recommended reading and more

This year’s summer special comprises of a mix of artistic works once more: the editorial team of D+C/E+Z presents books, movies and an exhibition – all of them tackling issues of developmental relevance.

PAGE 4

Debate



Resilience urgently needed

Following the devastation caused by Cyclones Iдай and Kenneth in March and April, Mozambique must rebuild the provinces that were particularly hard hit, as well as the city of Beira. Friedrich Kaufmann, who heads the South African-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Maputo, and Winfried Borowczak, a consultant, explain why the country does not only have to reconstruct buildings and infrastructure, but also develop greater resilience.

PAGE 15

Liberia lacks psychiatric wards

When suffering a psychotic episode, a person is literally “crazy” in the sense of experiencing and believing things that, to other people, are not real. Professional medical treatment helps, but it tends to be unavailable in low-income countries. The Liberian psychiatrist Selekie M. Tulay Jr. explained matters to D+C/E+Z in an interview.

PAGE 14

A woman in front of items from
Indonesia in the exhibition
“Contemporary Muslim Fashions”
in Frankfurt.



Summer Special

This year's summer special comprises of a mix of artistic works once more: the editorial team of D+C/E+Z presents books, movies and an exhibition, all of them tackling issues of developmental relevance. We would be pleased if our recommendations inspired you, our readers, to read, watch or visit one of the reviewed works.

SUMMER SPECIAL

The value of 158 varieties of cauliflower

We are what we eat. We eat what we reap. We reap what we sow. And we are sowing less and less – or at least less variety. According to the film “Seed”, these days the global food supply is based on just a fraction of the plants that people have cultivated for millennia in every corner of the world. That is a problem.

By Katja Dombrowski

There is much talk about species decline: about how insects are dying on an enormous scale, about the many species that are disappearing before they can even be discovered, about how climate change is destroying habitats. But only a few people are aware that our seeds, the most important foundation of our nutrition, are also being lost: over 90% of all varieties of grains, vegetables and other crops have already disappeared. Many of them had been passed on for thousands of years until industrialised agriculture no longer had any use for them.

How many varieties of kohlrabi are you familiar with? There used to be 55, but now there are only three. Artichokes come

in just two varieties from what was once 34. And the number of cauliflower varieties has shrunk down to eight from an inconceivable 158. These numbers come from the film “Seed: The untold story”, in which US documentary filmmakers Taggart Siegel and Jon Betz convey a sense of the inestimable value of our cultivated plants. They reveal the enormous extent of the loss and tell the story of the indigenous people, scientists and activists from all over the world who are fighting to preserve the diversity that remains.

My spontaneous reaction was: why do we need 158 varieties of cauliflower? But it gave me pause to learn that the varieties that still exist belong largely to Bayer, following its takeover of Monsanto, especially when I read about what that corporation prizes when it comes to cultivation. For instance, the latest cauliflower innovation, “Curdivex”, stays bright white (which sells better) and is easy to harvest (which is good for farmers). Generally speaking, the company prefers varieties with high yields and mass appeal. Resistance to pests and a long shelf life are also important criteria. But in

times of climate change, there is a need for varieties that can withstand drought or high levels of moisture, which might have lower yields, but would at the same time be robust or particularly adaptable. Previous generations of farmers valued such characteristics. But nowadays they rarely decide for themselves what varieties they cultivate. The market is being dictated by others.

It comes as no surprise that the film lays the blame on global biotech corporations. They are reproached for their use of genetic engineering, out-of-control chemical application and, in particular, for the way that sterile hybrids have destroyed agricultural production methods and livelihoods. Farmers cannot reproduce these seeds themselves and must buy new ones every year instead. Many people in India, for instance, could not afford to do so, causing them to sink into poverty and despair. There was a wave of suicides as a result, as the film movingly shows.

The fact that only a fraction of the world’s edible plants are being used poses a risk to the growing global population, which must be fed under increasingly difficult conditions due to climate change, water shortages and soil erosion. The seed guardians who are interviewed in the film describe the difficulty of their work. Seeds don’t keep forever and have to be sown every once in a while. That’s a challenge when you’re dealing with thousands of varieties. Furthermore, seed banks are by no means indestructible fortresses. The film cites the example of Iraq, where US forces intentionally destroyed the national seed bank during the Gulf War in the 1990s. Unique varieties from the cradle of agriculture were irrecoverably lost. The largest and most important seed bank in the world is the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Spitzbergen, Norway. But for one thing, not all cultivated plants are represented there, and for another, it is uncertain how long the permanent frost will continue to preserve them.

Therefore the film is undoubtedly justified in calling on audiences to take this issue seriously and protect seeds. It was unclear to me, however, what I can do about the fact that my supermarket only carries one variety of cauliflower.

FILM

Seed: The untold story. USA 2016, directors: Taggart Siegel, Jon Betz.



Tribal elder and seed keeper Louie Hena in Tesuque Pueblo in the US state of New Mexico holding “Mother Maize”, the ancestor of the maize varieties he cultivates.

SUMMER SPECIAL

Lost childhood

Talal Derki's Oscar-nominated documentary film trains a camera on a radical Islamist family raising its sons to become jihadists in war-torn Syria. It tells a shocking story of a loving father who teaches his children hatred and cruelty.

By Theresa Krinninger

"I killed a bird," young Osama tells his father. "We cut off its head, like you did with that man, papa." Osama lives with his father Abu Osama, two mothers and three brothers in a ravaged village in the northwest of Syria. It is not known whether he has any sisters, the women are never seen. The film is all about Abu Osama, one of the founders of al-Nusra – a Syrian branch of al-Qaeda –, and his sons. The youngest is around two years old and already expected to recite verses from the Quran. The two middle sons imitate their big brother Osama. He is 12 years old and will soon be ready for jihad.

Director Talal Derki returned home to Syria to make the documentary. Posing as a war photographer with Islamist sympathies, he gained the trust of the Osama family. Together with his cameraman, he spent more than 300 days with them. Abu Osama firmly believes in a caliphate, an Islamic society under Sharia law. And he brings up his sons accordingly. The film shows with documentary patience both the gentle and the harsh side of the father.

While Abu Osama digs up mines, the children are left alone, with no toys, no TV, isolated from all external influence. Wrecked tanks and ruined buildings are their playground. They make bombs from harmless chemicals. Their games are inspired by the theatre of war. On one hot day, they splash around in a concrete pit full of water. Osama jumps in shouting "Operation Liberate the Swimming Pool!"

They are sometimes allowed to ride in the car with their father – on an excursion to the former battlefield, for instance. When they get out, Abu Osama warns them to watch out for landmines. He knows the dangers from experience. He is an expert

car-bomber and mine clearer. He fearlessly digs up mines and removes the detonators. But his luck runs out. One mine explodes and tears off his left foot.

While the father slowly recuperates at home, the two oldest sons go to a training camp, where they are groomed as fighters for al-Nusra. The scenes that follow are truly shocking. Masked and in military uniform,

place at present? What is the military objective? And how does village life work amid the devastation?

Derki's decision not to probe was evidently a conscious one, taken to preserve the authenticity of the scenes. With a sometimes unsteady camera and long shots, he creates an intimate relationship between the viewer and the protagonists. Sometimes it is almost too intimate. It is certainly debatable whether exposing children to public scrutiny in this way is ultimately acceptable cinema.

But the film is also about Talal Derki himself. He was born in Damascus and has lived with his family in Berlin since 2014.



Twelve-year-old Osama in a military camp. He is one of many recruits trained for the "holy war".

the boys jump through burning tyres and practise ground fighting. They crawl under barbed wire fencing while trainers fire bullets close to their heads and feet. After the second training camp, Osama is sent into battle. And at that point, the director and the family part ways.

Apart from a prologue and epilogue, the film offers little explanation. Derki is an observer, not an investigator. Protagonists' comments are spontaneous, so lots of questions remain unanswered. What role do the women play? Where is the fighting taking

This is his second full-length documentary film. It is a very personal search for answers to the complicated situation in his homeland and the question of why people become radicalised and live by the rules of the so-called Islamic State. The documentary may not offer explanations here but it does show one thing with crystal clarity: the children never had a free choice.

FILM

Of Fathers and Sons. Syria, Germany, Lebanon 2017, director: Talal Derki.

SUMMER SPECIAL

“I belong here!”

Many Germans – and also other Europeans – have their issues with ethnic and religious minorities. Equal treatment is laid down by law. Some people, however, do not accept the fact that somebody with a Muslim name or black skin may be a German citizen. They assume that this person is an immigrant and want to know where from. The answer to this question is the title of a book by Ferda Ataman: “Stop asking – I belong here!”

By Sheila Mysorekar

The debate regarding where people belong is not a German peculiarity – it is a global debate. In China, for instance, the Uigurs, a Muslim minority, are being discriminated against by the state; Israeli Palestinians cannot move freely in their own country, and in Myanmar, members of the Rohingya ethnic minority are simply considered as foreigners and denied citizenship. Who belongs to a country and who does not is generally being decided by the biggest ethnic or religious group. Where there is no democracy, minorities are in trouble.

Germany is a country of immigration, and its constitution guarantees religious freedom. People of diverse ethnic and religious groups live in Germany. But this is not so self-evident for everybody. Often, the rightful belonging of a person is put into doubt – for instance with the frequently posed question: “Where are you from?”

The German journalist and author Ferda Ataman has Turkish parents, grew up in Southern Germany and lives in Berlin. In her recently published book, she discusses all sorts of misunderstandings regarding immigration.

Ataman considers the obnoxious question about her origins not as a sign of interest, but of exclusion: “This shows where the enquirer places me: as a non-German. Not belonging.” In and of itself, this is no problem, she clarifies – but considering the structural discrimination of minorities, this difference matters.

Ataman points at studies by the OECD, which unequivocally show that children of

immigrants’ families are being discriminated against in German schools: for example, they have a five times smaller chance to enter a high school than a German child – with equal academic performance!

There are countries like the USA or India, which counteract the structural discrimination of minorities with “affirmative action”, for instance, by reserving a certain number of university places for them. In both countries, however, these policies are being questioned since quite some time.

Ferda Ataman analyses in her book the German debate regarding integration. Even second or third generation immigrants “are considered to have the obligation to fulfil, to assimilate perfectly” – but the criteria for this change permanently. “Apparently, integration has no aim: we will never be real Germans. So why join the game?” she asks polemically.

The debate around identity and belonging is no mere intellectual banter. For populist parties all over Europe, this is

a focal point of their agenda: migration is a crucial topic for bargaining political positions. Right-wing parties push for a strong national state – and this should be aligned along an ethnic homogeneity. “In Germany, our perception of belonging has a lot to do with genes,” Ataman writes. “Germans are those who were here first and therefore always belonged here. Many believe that there is a native people (‘Germans’) that does not change, even when immigrants come on board.”

The demand for an ethnic and religious homogenous national state is not being spelled out clearly, but is disguised in the debate around the issue of homeland. And exactly at this point, it is taken for granted that people from migrant families always locate their home in countries abroad. Ataman comments: “Homeland is for most people a place or a feeling. But if politicians want to exploit feelings, they should focus on those that look into the future and not the past.” That is the forte of this book: it is directed towards the future and offers suggestions for an improved coexistence.

BOOK

Ataman, F., 2019: Hörst auf zu fragen – Ich bin von hier! (Stop asking – I belong here!) Frankfurt a. M., S. Fischer (only available in German).



Author Ferda Ataman.

SUMMER SPECIAL

300 pages, 250 years, eight generations

Yaa Gyasi is a very talented young fiction writer. Her first novel "Homegoing" explores the brutal history of how colonialism and the slave trade affected both West Africa and North America.

By Hans Dembowski

Her plot spans eight generations over 250 years. On a mere 300 pages, she delves deeply into violence, trauma, abuse and dehumanisation. One might say that the book is really a collection of 14 short stories, with each one focusing on one particular individual. But there is an overarching plot. Chapter by chapter, the fates of the descendants of the first two protagonists unfold. The first episode is about an African woman who is forced to marry a slave trader, and the second about her half-sister, who is sold into slavery. The two women do not know one

another. Indeed, none of the book's heroines and heroes (Gyasi pays attention to gender issues) knows the full family history.

Readers, by contrast, get to see the full picture. Gyasi elaborates how identities and attitudes were shaped. Her fictive writing reveals deep emotional truths, with personal traumas breeding long-term anger, fear and depression.

The first chapters are disturbingly brutal, marked by torture, rape and murder. People are torn away from their families and have no control of their fates. Until the end of the novel, life generally remains harsh and mostly unforgiving, but the protagonists increasingly have more choices, and the final generation is free in the sense of contemporary North American aspirations of education and individual prosperity. Moreover, they personally know their grandparents. Family ties are stronger, though still fragile.

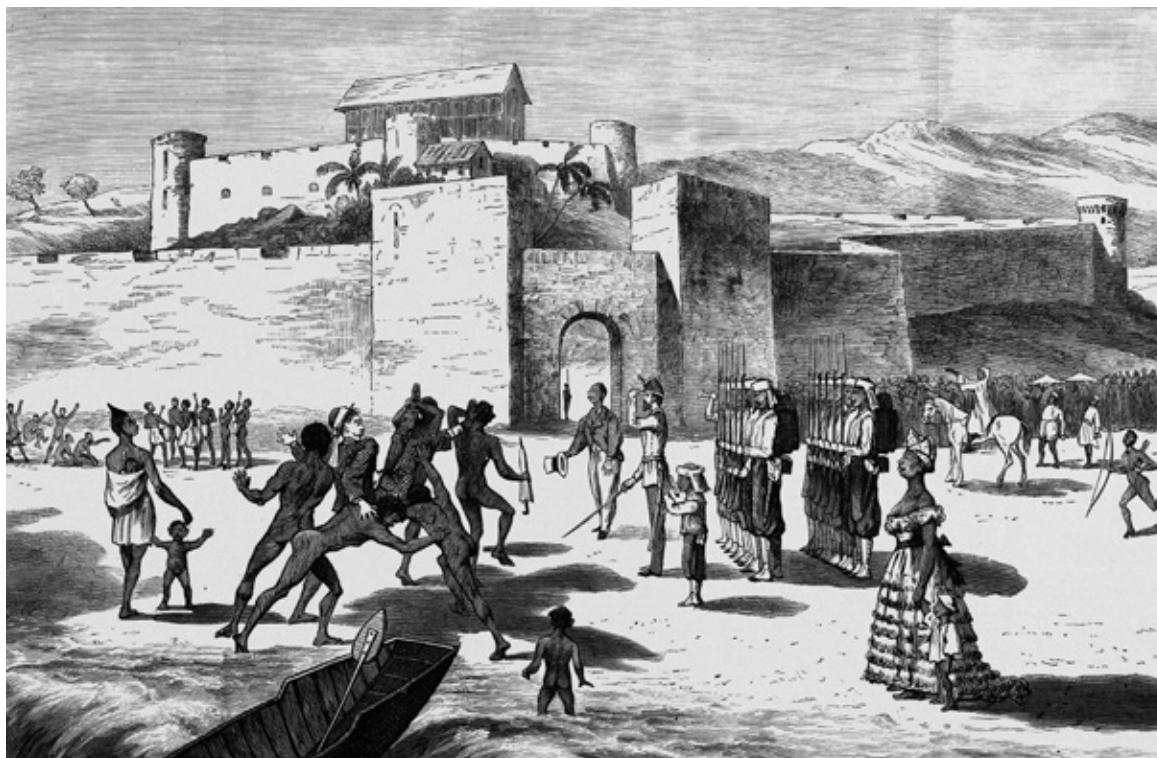
Many important historical events are mentioned, but some are not. For example, Gyasi skips America's civil war. The general trend is towards emancipation in both the collective and the individual sense. Ghana becomes an independent nation, and leaders of the freedom movement are inspired by the assertiveness of black intellectuals from the USA. On the other hand, the author juxtaposes civil-rights activism in America with the heroin epidemic that haunted black urban communities in the 1960s.

Gyasi deserves praise for not depicting West African history as merely one of colonial exploitation. She shows how tribal conflicts facilitated the slave trade and certainly does not romanticise history. She makes an effort to come to terms with it.

Gyasi was born in Ghana, but grew up in the USA. It is not hard to see that Marjorie, the protagonist of the second last episode, resembles her. In the final chapter, both branches of Gyasi's fictive family tree are reunited, but neither Marjorie nor Marcus, the final chapter's main protagonist, are aware of sharing a distant ancestor – the mother of the two half-sisters the plot starts with.

BOOK

Gyasi, Y., 2016: Homegoing. New York, Knopf. (Paperback: 2017, London, Penguin)



Contemporary picture of Cape Coast Castle, a fortress of British slave traders.

SUMMER SPECIAL

Timbuktu – a story of heroes and myths

Timbuktu, the ancient desert city in Mali, has always been shrouded in myths. Charly English's "The book smugglers of Timbuktu" proves that the city has not lost its magic.

By Dagmar Wolf

Founded in the 12th century, Timbuktu developed into an important trading centre by the 14th century, due to its location as a hub between river trade on the Niger river and caravan routes through the Sahara desert. Merchants and caravan leaders spoke of immeasurable wealth and roofs made of gold.

The colonial powers Britain and France competed to find Timbuktu for years. They hoped to unveil the secret of the city – and exploit its wealth. In search of the desert city, daredevil pioneers embarked on long trips many times, but kept failing to reach their destination. René Caillié, a Frenchman, finally made it to Timbuktu dressed as an Arab in 1828. He saw mud buildings and dusty paths, but no golden roofs. Europeans did not believe him at first.

Only 25 years later could Heinrich Barth, a German explorer, confirm Caillié's reports. However, Barth soon discovered a completely different wealth. It had actually been mentioned earlier by Alexander Gordon Laing – a Brit, who got lost during his expedition. In a letter in 1826 he wrote about old manuscripts and collected writings that cast a completely new light on West African history.

Until then, Europeans had assumed that "ignorant savages" lived in the continent's interior. The ancient manuscripts proved that traditions of writing had existed for centuries. Chronicles showed that Timbuktu had developed from a caravanserai to a centre of Islamic scholarship since the medieval period. The manuscripts were mainly Arabic texts. They dealt with a wide range of topics, including astronomy, medicine, history, religion and poetry. There were many legal documents too. Many manuscripts

were privately owned by various families. A proper research institute was only set up in 1973 with UNESCO support with the mission of collecting and documenting these precious artefacts.

When Islamist militias conquered the city in 2012, this treasure was in great danger. In January 2013, the mayor of Timbuktu informed the world that some of the age-old manuscripts had been burned. Charlie English, then head of international news at the British newspaper the Guardian, quit his job, planning to get to the bottom of the story and to write a book about it. The book was published in 2017.

English did extensive research and met Abdel Kader Haidara, a librarian. In a spectacular rescue operation, Haidara in cooperation with several colleagues and other scholars, did their best to smuggle the

valuable manuscripts out of the city. English's book reads like an adventure novel. It tells the story of the book rescue and the history of the city in two parallel strands.

Haidara and his supporters managed to acquire international funds, procured boxes, crates and barrels, and eventually smuggled the historical documents out of the city. They hid them under food on pickup trucks or shipped them on boats past Islamist checkpoints on a small local river. With every trip, they risked their lives once more. According to Haidara, they managed to transfer 377,491 documents from Timbuktu to the safety of Bamako, Mali's capital. Only a few writings fell victim to the Islamists.

At the very end of the book, English admits that the real number of rescued manuscripts may actually have been smaller than claimed. However, the smaller number hardly diminishes the merit of the rescuers – and it fits the reputation of a city of many legends.

BOOK

English, C., 2017: The book smugglers of Timbuktu. The quest for this storied city and the race to save its treasures. London, Harper Collins.



Numerous valuable manuscripts were saved from Islamists. However, poor storage facilities and harsh climate conditions put them at risk.

SUMMER SPECIAL

The power of superstition

In his debut novel *"The fishermen"* Nigerian writer Chigozie Obioma tells the story of a family struck by devastating tragedy. The driving plot and the author's eloquent, metaphorical style hold the reader in thrall.

By Sabine Balk

The story starts in unspectacular fashion. Nine-year-old narrator Ben and his brothers are bored and hit on the idea to go fishing at the local river of their home town Akure in the south of Nigeria. The boys hope to make some money by selling their catch.

The narrator reports that the Oni-Ala River is strictly off-limits for the boys because it is said to be cursed and to bring misfortune. The youngsters ignore the warning. They find fishing great fun and proudly declare themselves "fishermen". After three weeks, however, they are discovered by a neighbour, who tells their mother.

The mother, who has two other young children to look after as well as a stall in the

market, is livid. She threatens to tell their father, who works for the Central Bank of Nigeria and, after a recent transfer to far-off Yola, only comes home at weekends. The four brothers are terrified of their father, who is a strict God-fearing man and a firm believer that children who break the rules need to be physically disciplined. As anticipated, the father is furious when he hears of the "barbarous act", and he subjects his sons to a merciless beating. The oldest, 15-year-old Ikenna, receives the harshest punishment of all.

The moment marks the beginning of what the narrator calls Ikenna's "metamorphosis". Ikenna feels he has been unfairly treated by his father and gradually withdraws into himself, rejecting his brothers – especially 13-year-old Boja, to whom he has always been very close.

As Ikenna's behaviour becomes increasingly aggressive, his mother tries to find out what is wrong. She (and the reader) discovers what really happened on the last day at the river. The boys ran into the local

madman Abulu, who lost his mind in a car accident and is feared by everyone because of his powers of prophecy. Abulu cursed Ikenna and predicted that he would be killed by a fisherman.

Ikenna immediately assumes that that fisherman must be his brother Boja. Henceforth, Ikenna closes himself off, refuses to have anything more to do with the family and locks Boja out of the room that they share. Everyone finds Ikenna's behaviour increasingly unbearable.

A chain of tragic events is unleashed. And even when the reader thinks there can be nothing worse to come, Obioma continues to unravel his tale, building the climax even higher. The closing pages are riveting. The reader is desperate to know how the story ends.

Apart from the actual storyline, the reader discovers how people tick in Akure, the small town where the author himself was born as one of 12 children in 1986. The novel is set in the mid-1990s and is narrated in retrospect. The narrator's family is very religious, members of one of the many evangelical churches. They live in a house with several rooms and are certainly not poor. The children go to school and have everything they need. But the father's absence and lack of parental control pave the way for disaster.

Christian faith is mixed with superstition. No one doubts the magic powers of mad Abulu. Even Ikenna seems convinced that Abulu has cursed him, and he is driven crazy with fear. He no longer trusts his own common sense or his brothers' assurances that they love him and will never harm him. Their shared past no longer counts. Ikenna even destroys important mementoes which symbolise the bond that unites the brothers.

The narrator never finds out what Ikenna really thinks or how he feels. After the incident with Abulu, Ikenna barely speaks, unable to articulate his thoughts and fears. He rejects his mother's and brothers' offers to talk, leaving the family – and the reader – feeling desperately helpless. After a surprising and dramatic finale, there is a sense that everything that happened in the story was totally pointless and futile.

BOOK

Obioma, C., 2015: *The fishermen*. London, Pushkin Press.



In Chigozie Obioma's novel *"The fishermen"*, a decision to go fishing has disastrous consequences for Ben and his brothers.

SUMMER SPECIAL

Fashion exhibition stirs controversy

On 4 April, the exhibition “Contemporary Muslim Fashions” opened its doors in Frankfurt, its first European venue. The politically-charged topic provoked protests by feminists and threats from right-wing extremists. The exhibition breaks stereotypes and portrays a beautiful variety of female Muslim styles from across the globe.

By Cema Turk

According to the display, Muslim consumers spend \$243 billion on clothing per year.

Muslim influence in the fashion industry is growing and attracting the attention of the world’s top designers – including Christian Dior, Chanel and Gucci. So called “modest fashion weeks” have become common. The exhibit at Frankfurt’s Museum Angewandte Kunst presents the cutting edge of Muslim fashion.

After passing through the high-security bag and body check, one faces a series of black curtains. Behind the first curtain, one can hear a woman rapping. After passing through, one sees a large screen showing

a young pregnant woman wearing a hijab. It is Syrian-American Mona Haydar, whose music video for her song “Wrap my Hijab” went viral some time back. She sings, “even if you hate it I still wrap my hijab”, as if personally addressing critics of the exhibit.

The photographs and videos accompanying the clothing pieces depict women of all colours wearing lip piercings, blue lipstick, colourfully-dyed hair, T-shirts, ball gowns, abayas, yoga pants and suits. Images of Muslim women fencing, hip-hop dancing and skateboarding challenge western perceptions of Muslim women being docile and subservient, living at the mercy of men. Any open-minded person who enters the exhibit with a superficial notion of Muslim women will leave with a much deeper understanding of the diversity of female Muslim identities.

From Nike to Valentino, a wide range of fashion is represented. An interesting item is a flight jacket with the United States’



On display in Frankfurt: a video showing fashion icon Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, the mother of Qatar’s emir, appearing at official occasions.



Islamic fashion is not by definition submissive: sweatshirts by Sarah Elenany and headscarf by Nourka.

first amendment (which guarantees freedom of faith and speech) written across its back in Arabic. Another one is a hijab with the word “feminist” printed across it.

The pieces on display push boundaries at both ends of society’s spectrum. Coordinators of the exhibit have received racist hate mail from far-right extremists as well as criticism from feminists. A group of Iranian women and allies protested the opening with their own “exhibit” against headscarves and female veiling. They wanted to draw attention to the women around the world who are forced to wear Muslim clothing and imprisoned for refusing to do so. They consider the headscarf a symbol of female repression and blame the large brand names represented in the exhibit for not standing up for women’s rights and “selling-out”.

The exhibit did, indeed, address this issue. A video shows Vida Movahedi defying an Islamic regime. Movahedi is an Iranian

woman who was arrested for protesting in Tehran. In the video Movahedi stands atop a metal utility box and waves her white scarf from the end of a stick. The video of the act went viral and inspired protests from other women in and outside of Iran. In the museum, it contrasts to the glittering gowns on display.

The curators present Muslim women who chose their level of modesty themselves as well as women in regimes where they are forced to dress modestly. The exhibit pays tribute to the multi-facetedness of women, their art and fashion – whether wilfully Muslim or not.

While some criticise brands for making clothes specifically for Muslim women, others praise them for their inclusion. Sportswear, for instance, allows women to be physically active and still adhere to their personal standards of modesty. Without the contributions of designers such as Aheda

Zanetti, who created the burkini, athletes and regular women who wish to be healthy would face the obstacle of finding something appropriate to wear.

Patriarchal societies have regulated women’s clothing across societies throughout history. The Muslim women and female designers chosen for the exhibit take this narrative into their own hands and push boundaries to express themselves. Many of the pieces suggest that faith and modernity are not exclusive, especially for younger generations.

This exhibition is not only for Muslims, but also for those living in and curious about the Muslim world. The “Contemporary Muslim Fashions” exhibition remains open at the Museum Angewandte Kunst in Frankfurt until September 2019. It was first on display in San Francisco last year and will move on to New York City after closing in Frankfurt.

Burundi's water sources are drying up

Burundi meets its water needs from sources in its own country. But these sources are at increasing risk of drying up. Erosion must urgently be stemmed, and afforestation is needed too.

According to the Ministry of Environment, Burundi has over 24,000 water sources. More than 10% have already dried up, however, and another 17% are in the process of doing so. Environment Minister Déo Guide Rurema says: "If nothing is done, they will completely dry up as well." Preserving them is very important. Burundi has very few rivers that might supply drinking water. The White Nile has its source in the country, but carries little water here.



Five out of the country's 18 provinces are severely affected: Bubanza in the west, Rumonge in the south, Gitega in the centre and Ngozi and Kayanza in the north. Water scarcity is compounded by fast population growth, which results in more land being used for farms as well as buildings. According to Jeremie Nkinahatamba, general director at the Ministry of Environment, some 100,000 tons of soil are being eroded every year.

Burundi's forests feed most of its water sources, but they too are under threat, not least because people need firewood and building timber. The production of charcoal, which is used primarily for cooking, plays a big role as well. According to Frederick Bangirinama, a professor and environmental activist, the economic metropolis of Bujumbura and the new capital city of Gitega together consume around 70,000 tonnes of charcoal per year. It requires 35,000 hectares of forest to produce that amount. The sad truth is that Burundi's forests are disappearing fast.

In response, the government has launched a nationwide afforestation project. Over 50 million trees were planted on clear-cut mountains in the past two years. Local people are responsible for protecting these trees and will be punished if they don't, Nkinahatamba stressed. Other measures include the digging of anti-erosion ditches and the replacement of eucalyptus trees, which require a lot of water, with other varieties.

There are also private initiatives, such as the Kaze Green Economy (KAGE) project founded by Delphin Kaze, an environmental science student at the Polytechnic University of Gitega. For the past two years, the project has been producing coal from corncobs as an alternative to charcoal. The young enterprise sources its raw material from farmers as well as household waste. It is still struggling with transportation challenges, but its goal is to supply Gitega and Bujumbura with "clean coal".



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MENTAL HEALTH

“Inadequate information causes harm”

When suffering a psychotic episode, a person is literally “crazy” in the sense of experiencing and believing things that, to other people, are not real. Professional medical treatment helps, but it tends to be unavailable in low-income countries. The Liberian psychiatrist Selekie M. Tulay Jr. explained matters to D+C/E+Z.

Selekie M. Tulay Jr. interviewed by Samwar Fallah

Can you briefly explain psychosis and schizophrenia?

Psychosis is a syndrome involving the loss of contact with reality such as hearing voices or seeing things that are not there. False beliefs and suspicions matter too. Psychotic episodes usually first occur between the ages of 15 and 25 years. They can be caused by dramatic events which include – but are not limited to – loss of relationships, war, abuse, discrimination et cetera. Science does not entirely understand this kind of disorders. We know, however, that schizophrenia is a group of psychotic disorders that affect thinking, behaviour, emotion and the ability to perceive reality. It results from a combination of genetic and non-genetic factors such as injury at birth, hormonal imbalance, viral infection, nutritional deficiency and others.

In Liberia, masses of people were traumatised by violence in the civil war. Does that play a role?

Yes, traumatisation certainly matters. Post-traumatic stress disorder means that unpleasant memories haunt people, for example, but not only, in nightmares. Reliving horrific events again and again causes serious stress, making it hard to concentrate on anything else or blending into depression. Psychotic episodes are possible consequences too. Disasters like the civil war actually have long-lasting impacts on people’s mental health.

To what extent is the health-care system able to treat people who suffer psychotic episodes?

They can be managed both in hospitals and outside hospitals. Care can be offered in non-specialised health centres too. Medical treatment is simple and effective. An important part is the use of pharmaceuticals that calm people down. Patients suffering a psychotic disorder typically cannot sleep. They tend to be very agitated and most difficult to communicate with because their perception of reality is so different. Unfortunately, specialist care is only available in towns in 10 of Liberia’s 15 counties. Our health-care system is not capable of treating all people. Especially in rural areas, it lacks facilities and qualified personnel.

What is the fate or what becomes of people who do not get professional care?

Those who do not get professional care are likely to experience further deterioration of their mental health. Sometimes, they can cause serious harm to their relatives and communities – or to themselves. They are more likely to become suicidal, for instance. Professional care is essential, but after a first

episode, relapses are possible. Some Liberians believe that a mental disorder is caused by supernatural powers.

People who are suffering a psychotic episode are an enormous burden to their families and neighbours. The conventional wisdom is that poor communities in low-income countries often simply tie them down or lock them up in a shed until the episode is over. Sometimes exorcism or some kind of magic is tried too.

Well, what alternatives do they have without access to proper health care? The general public lacks knowledge of mental illnesses and especially psychotic disorders. It is very important to raise awareness and improve access to professional medical services. Inadequate information itself causes harm, but adequate social infrastructure is indispensable too. Liberia has nearly 5 million people, but only one home for mentally ill people. It is located in Monrovia, the capital city, and it accommodates patients with many different conditions, including substance abuse, anxiety, depression, epilepsy, bipolar and manic disorders, psychosis and schizophrenia. It would be good to raise awareness and build more mental-health facilities. Both would help to change people’s perception of mental disorders.

SELEKIE M. TULAY JR.

is the psychiatrist who heads the mental-health clinic of the Ganta United Methodist Hospital in Liberia’s Nimba County.

<http://gantahospital.com>



The injuries from the civil war in Liberia are not only physical.

RESILIENCE

More than just a slogan?

Following the devastation caused by Cyclones Idai and Kenneth in March and April, Mozambique must rebuild the provinces that were particularly hard hit, as well as the city of Beira. Hopefully the country will not only reconstruct buildings and infrastructure, but also develop greater resilience.

By Friedrich Kaufmann and Winfried Borowczak

An international donor conference on 31 May and 1 June recently generated \$1.2 billion in financial commitments for the reconstruction of Mozambique. That is just over a third of the \$3.2 billion that the Mozambican government has estimated that it needs (also see our comment in D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2019/05, Debate section).

The outcome of the donor conference must have been sobering for Mozambique and its government. The provisional reconstruction plan presented at the conference was also disappointing. It contained little more than conventional ideas aimed at restoring the status quo. Due to the structural corruption at all levels of the state and administration, mega financial scandals and widespread self-enrichment, donors were sparing with their commitments.

Attempts to improve resilience were limited to more stable buildings and undertaking largely cosmetic measures to safeguard Beira from flooding, whether from the ocean or the rivers Pungué and Buzi. Further improvements are also planned for the city's drainage system. But all the participants ought to have been aware, particularly during these weeks, of the fate of the town of Sofala. The former trading post, located just 30 kilometres south of Beira, had to be abandoned almost 140 years ago because it could no longer keep the ocean at bay.

Sofala was founded in the 9th century to the south of the estuary of the Buzi and Pungué rivers. For 1,000 years, the city was the southernmost port of call for Arabian, Persian and Indian traders and served as a hub for trade with the African interior. The primary trade was in ivory, slaves and gold.

But at the end of the 19th century, everything came quickly to a close. A few mostly minor changes to the coastline, along with the complete lack of coastal protection and the restrictive customs policies of the Portuguese colonial regime spelled the end of the city. Nowadays only a few ruins can be spotted in the ocean from the beach.

Beira took over Sofala's role. It seemed like a suitable place to settle when it was founded, around 1880, but now hundreds of thousands of people are threatened by flooding. That's because far more than half of the city's almost 600,000 residents live below the sea level, which is steadily rising.

Furthermore, none of the rivers in central and northern Mozambique have efficient river dikes or developed flood plains (retention areas). In past years, there have been efforts to revitalise the dilapidated drainage system, but large parts of Beira are still under water during every rainy season. Along the river courses, flooding repeatedly causes drowning and destroys harvests.

The situation presents several dilemmas. Keeping the city of Beira in its current location will require incalculable ongoing expenditures for the construction and maintenance of real dikes, as well as for the further rehabilitation and operation of an efficient drainage system. The same is true

of river dikes. Preventing residential construction in retention areas will be next to impossible. The farmland along the rivers is among the most fertile in the entire country.

There is no institution in Mozambique that can even come close to solving all these problems. Who would be capable of implementing at least a partial removal of Beira to higher ground, or the necessary clearance of the floodplains?

And then there is Mozambique's notorious corruption. Donors who want their funds to go to reconstruction projects and specific target groups through state channels have to assume that some of this money will wind up in the bank accounts of high-ranking representatives of the state and administration. The announcement at the conference that a hastily-formed, government-run "Office of Reconstruction" will be subject to strict international financial audit must therefore be greeted with scepticism.



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A street destroyed by Cyclone Idai in Nhamatanda, about 50 kilometres from Beira.

Letters to the editor



HARDLY ANY FORMAL EDUCATION FOR POOR KIDS

D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2019/05, Focus, interview with Sivali Ranawana: “Fierce competition” Prof. Ranawana is certainly right in most aspects, and I am grateful that he calls “free education for all” a myth. While there definitely is a large impact of private institutions (in the other countries of South Asia even more than in Sri Lanka) he sadly ignores (maybe because he wasn't asked about it) the fact that large portions of society receive hardly any formal education. That isn't just due to social upheavals (e.g. the civil war in Sri Lanka which deprived hundreds of thousands of decent education), but is mainly due to the fact that rural education, education for slum dwellers and education for special groups (e.g. dalits, tribals, certain minority groups) is very limited.

Even if these kids have access to a school, they can hardly follow what is being taught, because they start

from a much lower level of education or they live in fractured families (because father or mother work abroad). Sri Lanka has a great system, but something is wrong if a school director tells me how grateful he is for the extracurricular training our local partners give, because “for the first time in history some of our kids made it through the exams that allow them to visit one of the more privileged secondary schools or colleges”. I understand that our German development funds are mainly distributed via bilateral agreements between our and the local governments, but we also need to know that this automatically excludes the poorest of the poor and, sadly, in South Asia these are many dozens of millions.

Another aspect that is only partially addressed is the fact that many well-educated people in these countries can hardly get a job, because there aren't enough qualified jobs available. I am certainly grateful for every highly qualified specialist that serves in our country in our companies, hospitals and institutions of learning, but I doubt that is a solution for the countries of South Asia and migration in general. In total, we have to reconsider very carefully how we approach these issues in the future. The present solutions don't work as well as we often believe.

Dr. Hermann Gschwandtner is the President of the German NGO Helping Hands in Gelnhausen.



CONFIRMATION FROM A BIRD'S-EYE PERSPECTIVE

D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2019/04, Focus, interview with Ibrahim Manzo Diallo: “The flow has not stopped”

Thank you very much and congratulations on this text! In a study by the European Parliamentary Research Service about the European Council, I found a passage which precisely confirms the observations of Katja Dombrowski's interview partner from a bird's-eye perspective: “Analysts note, however, that since 2015, EU action to address irregular migration has gradually led to the instrumentalisation of development policy instruments for migration management purposes. The EU Trust Fund for Africa and the migration partnerships prioritise the management of irregular migration through the use of different policies and tools, including development aid. The partnerships have explicitly introduced conditionality to cooperation with

third countries on return and readmission of irregular migrants.”

Dr. Hans-Jochen Luhmann is Senior Advisor at the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy.

INFORMATION ON THE “POOR AND POWERLESS”

D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2019/04, Focus: “The refugee challenge”

Let me congratulate you on the D+C/E+Z journal devoted to “The refugee challenge”. It provides very much needed information on education and related issues, especially disadvantaged groups, the poor and powerless. The journal addresses these from many angles and provides information from different countries around the world.

I enjoyed reading every bit of it. I have been an avowed reader of D+C/E+Z for over a decade. Invariably it provides very succinctly information about the “poor and powerless” from different perspectives and appeals to both the practitioner and the researcher. I wish the policymakers and politicians take note of the recommendations.

As we know well, education is the basis for the development and progress of humanity.

Dr. Somaratne Banda Ekanayake is CEO of the Association for Educational Research and Development in Sri Lanka (AERDSL).



A man paints a mural of Alaa Salah, who became a symbol for the demonstrations against the military government in Sudan.

Gender socialisation

Ideas how men and women have to behave are deeply rooted in the collective memory of societies. They are strongly influenced by tradition and faith. Most societies consider the man dominant and superior to the woman. These values are the basis for how children and youth are socialised. Today, enlightened democratic societies believe that men and women have equal rights.

Many women no longer want to submit to men and fight for their right to equality. But there is still a lot to do concerning information and sensitisation. This is also a task of development policy.



This Focus section directly relates to the UN's 5th Sustainable Development Goal (SDG): gender equality.

Preventing violence

Violent behaviour is learned. It is reinforced by patriarchal structures and a belief in male superiority. A civil-society organisation in Bolivia is taking preventive action by making young people reconsider gender roles.

By Henry Cervantes and Britta Wiemers

Violence is not an innate biological characteristic; it is learned – like so much else – in the socialisation process. The psychologist Philip G. Zimbardo defines socialisation as “life-long learning and personal reproduction of socially acceptable behaviour patterns, values and norms”. Attempts to prevent violence must thus focus on aspects of socialisation.

Gender plays a significant role in any socialisation process, especially when the results include violent individuals or communities. Within the field of women’s and gender studies, there is a broad consensus that gender is a social construct. According to gender researcher Judith Lorber, the con-

struction of gender is a “social institution” based on three structural principles:

- 1) People are divided into two social groups: men and women.
- 2) Discernible differences between them are socially constructed.
- 3) Genders receive different treatment, which is legitimised with those differences.

Socialisation takes place in the family as well as in societal institutions such as school, state, media and church. In most societies, the process is influenced by patriarchy, a social system in which men have a privileged position. The system is thus based on an unequal power relationship between men and women.

Traits such as empathy, sensitivity, devotion and altruism are assigned to the female role, while features like superiority, dominance and looking down on women are associated with the male role. Internalisation of these roles undermines women’s

self-confidence and causes them to underestimate their abilities. At the same time, stereotyped gender roles make it hard for men to identify their own needs. All too often, they are unable to recognise and communicate feelings like grief, fear or shame. They even fail to see them in others.

Sociological research shows that structural and individual violence are parts of the hegemonic male role – even though it varies, depending on historical context and in interaction with other markers of “identity” such as class, ethnicity, religion and region.

MASCULINITY AND VIOLENCE

Studies by the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) show that men “are much more likely than women to be both perpetrators and victims of diverse forms of interpersonal violence”: men commit 95% of murders and account for 81% of the victims.

Even though women and girls make up a far smaller percentage of murder victims, they are disproportionately represented worldwide as victims of gender-based violence – in all its forms from domestic



Emancipating women in Bolivia to overcome gender-based violence and discrimination.

violence to femicide. In 2017, the UNODC found that 137 women and girls a day died as a result of violence by a relative or partner.

In some parts of the world, the World Health Organization (WHO) says between one and two-thirds of women become “victims of physical and/or sexualised violence” at some point in their lives. The ratio indicated for Bolivia is an astounding 75%.

The way in which gender roles are defined and learned has a crucial bearing on the development of violence. Without critical analysis of how genders are socially constructed, violence prevention can have only limited impacts.

STRENGTHENING WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Centro Juana Azurduy (CJA) is a civil-society organisation based in Sucre. It has worked for nearly 30 years on strengthening women’s rights. One of the focus issues is preventing and prosecuting gender-based violence. “Gender role assignment is highly polarised in Bolivia, and that is clearly visible in everyday life,” says Martha Noya, the CJA director. She points out men’s structural privileges, an idealisation of violence and the fact that men often use violence as a first resort – whether in domestic conflict situations or elsewhere. CJA worker Lila Carrasco bemoans that violence is commonplace both within the family and in Bolivian society generally.

Noya stresses the need to consider different perspectives when analysing violence and conflict. The country’s social movements, she says, are not aware of gender perspectives. They almost exclusively see conflicts in terms of class and ethnicity. Nonetheless, women’s rights activists have made a difference.

In light of the patriarchal structure of Bolivia’s state, CJA tries to strengthen equal participation of women in socio-political affairs. Today, 51% of all elected political offices are held by women. According to Gretel Lambertin, who is in charge of CJA’s advocacy work, that results from “a long hard fight by the women’s movement”. She considers it a sign of “very important progress”.

Structural equality needs to be achieved within political parties and organisations. Otherwise, policies to prevent acts of violence and punish perpetrators will not be implemented. One strategy is to



strengthen women’s knowledge and skills so that they can adopt a feminist perspective as political office-holders. With an eye to achieving that, the CJA is running pioneering courses at a political-leadership school in Chuquisaca Department. The course focuses on deconstructing and reconstructing gender roles in patriarchal Bolivian society. The idea is to strengthen participants’ self-confidence and communication skills, raise awareness of socio-political dynamics in Bolivian history and promote the attitudes and capacities that enable people to resolve conflicts by non-violent means.

The CJA has years of experience in youth violence prevention. The project “Super Defensores” (“Super Defenders”) is based on an educational concept, with youngsters teaching one another about their rights, including the one to physical self-determination. They learn to understand gender stereotypes, for instance, and how to prevent violence at school. In the 14 years since the project was launched, more than 50,000 children have profited from it.

NEGATIVE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

As elsewhere, social media play an increasingly significant role in gender socialisation in Bolivia. Ana Lilian Ortega is a journalist and heads the CJA radio station “Radio Encuentro”. She believes that most Bolivian media convey “violent, racist, misogynist messages”. In her eyes, the way “femicide and other forms of gender violence are reported leads to more violence”. She thus sees a need for “action to help youngsters make conscious and critical use of such media” and wants the media to opt for anti-violence approaches in reporting.

For this goal, CJA is strategically upgrading its radio operation to a multimedia format, using social media like Facebook, Twitter or Instagram as additional channels. It encourages young people to participate as protagonists in the radio programme and to interact with others on the various platforms. Ortega explains that young people are involved in the development of the programme on issues such as partnerships, sexual relations and racist or sexist discrimination. The goal is to trigger “reflective processes among the public”.

Conceptual debate and research as well as 30 years of CJA experience allow the following conclusions to be drawn:

- Any measure that is intended to prevent violence needs to meet the specific needs of children, men and women.
- To work with women and girls, the emphasis needs to be on overcoming discrimination. They have to be informed of their rights so their self-confidence is strengthened. They must be enabled to challenge – and ultimately change – unfair power structures.
- Work with boys and men should focus on promoting recognition of their power and undeserved privileges. They must be encouraged to live masculinity in ways that are based on equality, respect and non-violence.

LINKS

Centro Juana Azurduy (CJA):

<http://centrojuanaazurduy.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/Centro-Juana-Azurduy-Bolivia-269393446440891/>



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Unequal opportunities

In regard to gender equity, Mexico has progressive laws. Nonetheless, women face multiple discrimination in daily life. The road to true gender equality remains long.

By Virginia Mercado

In every culture, specific mechanisms and structures cause men and women to assume different roles. Mexico is a multicultural country, but nonetheless, some aspects of women's roles are the same throughout the nation. Specific groups add aspects of their own, but long-established behaviour patterns and traditions matter very much. In general, sensitivity, a willingness to forgive, fragility, humility, obedience and taciturnity are considered specifically female traits.

Age-old gender stereotypes permeate relationships. That is true both in urban and rural areas. Many women have to ask their husbands for permission if they want to find a job or study at a university. Typically, men are in control of money and the family's property. Most parents decide to pass on their fortune exclusively to their sons. Moreover, they prioritise the sons' education. These attitudes limit women's independence and restrict their influence. The rules of patriarchy are unwritten, but they seem so self-evident that even women endorse them.

Women are expected to always look pretty and attractive. It is their job to keep alive their partner's sexual desire. That both husband and wife are responsible for the success of a marriage is increasingly acknowledged. That is also true of both having important roles to play in raising children. Nonetheless, women typically bear the main burden of managing relationships and looking after children. They are also the ones who take care of sick or elderly relatives. Household chores are left to them as well.

When our women's soccer team wins a game, more sexist comments are posted than congratulations on social media. The same trend was evident when Yalitza Aparicio, an indigenous actor, was nominated for an Oscar. Social-media comments stated that she neither looked good nor acted con-

vincingly. Sexist and racist attitudes obviously still prevail in many Mexican minds.

It is becoming ever more evident that women long for encouragement, deserve to be promoted and need safe spaces to interact with one another. Women's solidarity has begun to grow, but all too often, women take part in criticising other women without noticing that they themselves are affected – at least potentially. That is the case, when sexual abuse is discussed on social media, for example. Far too many comments focus on how the victim behaved. All too often, women are the authors.

On the upside, the #MeToo movement is making a difference. It has revealed just how normal it is for women to suffer sexualised aggression in many different contexts, from family life to the workplace,

from schools to government institutions. It is generally estimated that 3 million sexually abusive incidents occurred from 2010 to 2015, ranging from molestation to rape. In the vast majority of these cases, no charges were filed, as the governmental Executive Commission for Paying Attention to Victims (Comisión Ejecutiva de Atención a Víctimas – CEAV) reports. Femicide, the murder of women, is another major issue (see box, next page).

FATHERS DON'T DROP OUT OF SCHOOL

Education is the key to changing established power structures. Even though the law enshrines equal access to education for people of either sex, lecturers still ask young women who study engineering, for example, why they have chosen a male curriculum. If a young woman chooses a course considered more suitably female, however, it is often joked that she is just bridging time until her wedding. If a girl or young woman gets pregnant, she drops out of school or



Role models matter: Yalitza Aparicio (right) was nominated for, but did not win an Oscar for her role in *Roma*, which won the award for the best foreign language film while the jury considered Alfonso Cuarón (centre) the best director.

university – not the father. At the same time, families put young women under pressure to marry and have babies. The strong influence of the Catholic Church, moreover, means that virginity and motherhood are of great symbolic importance. This context helps to understand why abortion is increasingly being criminalised in Mexico. In the past, abortions were legal in most Mexican states:

- when a woman was a rape victim,
- when her health was at risk, or
- when the physical or mental health of the child was at risk.

Some conservative states, however, have recently passed more rigid legislation. For example, Nuevo León in the Northeast has ruled out abortion altogether. The state constitution was amended with the goal of protecting life, starting at the moment of conception. Abortion is now illegal there, even after rape. Prison sentences are possible.

Mexico City is the only place where it is legal to terminate a pregnancy in the first 12 weeks. Nonetheless, pro-life groups try to influence women's decisions. It adds to the problems that women who have had an abortion are often ostracised socially.



Another serious issue is child marriage. According to Girls not Brides, an international umbrella organisation of civil-society agencies, 26% of girls in Mexico are married before the age of 18 and four percent are even married before their 15th birthday. To protect the rights of children and youth, the Senate last year adopted reforms of civil law that rule out child marriage.

There have been embarrassing episodes in politics moreover. Obligated to meet gender quotas in municipal elections, parties listed female candidates, but later put them under pressure to step down in favour of their male deputies. Mexicans use the word “Juanitas” to describe this practice.

On the other hand, 241 women and 259 men are currently members of the national assembly, while 63 women and 65 men serve as senators. According to the national election commission (Instituto Nacional Electoral – INE), the two top-tier legislative bodies were never before this close to gender parity. However, there are still only two female governors (of 31) and only 545 female mayors (of about 2,400).

Changing the attitudes that lead to gender inequality in Mexico is a long-term task. Permanent awareness raising and teaching are necessary, and so are laws and policies that ensure that every person, whether man or woman, can claim their full rights. Women in positions of leadership can make a difference – not least because they serve as role models.



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Killed for being female

Femicide is a hate crime. It means that someone is killed only because she is a woman.

Among the 25 countries with the highest rates of femicides in the world, 14 are Latin American and Caribbean. Femicides occur frequently in Mexico for example, but do not lead to court proceedings in most cases. Violence against women is rooted in a “context of impunity based on a patriarchal system of inequality and social exclusion”, according to the non-governmental Mexican Commission for the Defence of Human Rights (CM-DPDH).

The rule of law is weak in Mexico, and many violent crimes go unpunished – including femicides. UN statistics show that in Mexico an average of seven women are murdered daily. While some of these crimes are linked to organised crime, others are plain gender-specific violence. Justice in Mexico, a non-governmental organisation based in San Diego, California, bemoans that impunity is “characteristic of Mexico’s culture”.

Authorities tend to neglect hate crimes against women. According to the National Citizens’ Observatory on Femicide, between Janu-

ary and June 2017, 800 women were murdered in 13 states across Mexico. Only 49% of the deaths were investigated as femicide. “We still have a long way to go before the authorities take prompt action to safeguard the lives of women,” says María de la Luz Estrada, executive coordinator of the Observatory, an alliance of 49 human-rights organisations from across Mexico. Their activism has increased accountability. The courts are hearing more femicide cases. The statistics are confusing, however – not least because different governmental institutions use different definitions for femicide. At the same time, it is worrisome that the police tend to have only a very poor understanding of gender issues. To

improve matters, these things must change.

There are many civil-society organisations working towards ending the violence against women in Mexico: Nuestras Hijas Regreso a Casa, Red Mesa de Mujeres, El Closet de Sor Juana, Las Hijas de Violencia and many more. These groups organise campaigns, rallies and marches in order to keep femicides in the limelight.

In 2017, a permanent exhibition on femicide in Mexico titled “Feminicidio en México. ¡Ya basta!” (Femicide in Mexico. Enough is enough!) was opened in the Museum of Memory and Tolerance. This collective space for remembrance has a clear message: Gender-based violence is unacceptable. (vm/my)

“Once you learn to read”

If you want to reduce gender inequality, schools are a good place to start. Zambia is a good example.

By Frank Masanta Jr.

Zambia recorded high growth rates in recent years, but it is still haunted by inequality. It has a Gini index of 57.1, which means that social disparities are pronounced. However, women and girls are disadvantaged in particular.

Gender inequality is one of the barriers on the way towards becoming a prospering and inclusive economy. With a population of about 17 million people, the country must do more to develop human resources. If things do not improve, the government's vision of Zambia becoming a middle-income country by 2030 will not come true.

The UNDP Gender Inequality Index (GII) reflects three dimensions of gender-based inequality: reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity. In 2017, Zambia's GII value was 0.517, with 124 other countries ranking above it.

Other statistics confirm the problem. Illiteracy is more common among women than men. Only slightly more than a quarter of Zambian women (25.7%) reached second-

ary level school education. The men's share is not quite twice as high (44.2%). According to UN data, women's labour-market participation was 78.3% in 2015. The comparative figure for men was 95%. About 51% of the population is female, but women only hold less than 12% of the seats in parliament.

According to the 2012 Labour Force Survey, almost two thirds of farm work is done by women. However, they do not enjoy equal rights, as men normally own the land and control vital inputs such as fertiliser. In wage employment, women are concentrated in the lowest paying sectors and non-technical jobs.

About 60% of Zambians are poor. All too often, they are pressed into choices that worsen female poverty. Since mothers tend to be less educated than fathers, they also tend to have less say within the family. Typically, parents prefer investing in their sons' education, neglecting the daughters. A considerable number of girls opt for sex work to earn some money, running risks like HIV/AIDS infections and pregnancies which then force them to drop out of school.

Time poverty compounds the problems. Apart from earning some money, women do all the household work. On average, they are busy for 12 to 13 hours per day (including weekends), while men's jobs are

done after six to seven hours per day. Household chores are vitally relevant, of course, but they do not show up in national accounts.

Cultural norms contribute to gender inequality. Early marriages are common for girls, which means they stop going to school and assume household duties. This tradition exacerbates population growth because young wives start having babies as teenagers. Another consequence of early marriages is the perception that wives are not their husbands' equal partners, but should obey them. Women who have more education generally understand contraception better and are more likely to convince their partners of using them.

If women are to contribute fully to development, they must be empowered to identify and grasp opportunities. Education is the key to unlocking women's potential. As Frederick Douglass, the freed slave and early proponent of black empowerment in the USA said: “Once you learn to read, you will be forever free”. Illiteracy is indeed a significant barrier for many underprivileged women in Zambia.

GOVERNMENT AMBITIONS

Zambia's government wants to address gender inequalities. The Patriotic Front, the currently ruling party, even appointed a female vice president. Inonge Wina is the first woman to hold this high office.

In 2012, the government created the Ministry of Gender and Child Development



Women of the Patriotic Front, a political party in Zambia, celebrating international women's day in 2016.



(MGCD). It has since revised the gender policy, which was first adopted in 2000, and published the 2014 National Gender Policy. It is designed to achieve full participation of both women and men in the development process.

The government has spelled out several healthy ambitions. It wants to see 50% of the land allocated to women. It intends to have girls readmitted to schools if they dropped out because of pregnancy. The government aspires to improve education opportunities and health-care services. It has committed (in coordination with other regional governments) not only to quality sex education, but also to ending forced marriages as well as child marriages. Moreover,

it wants to boost women's labour market participation rate, including in well-paid, high-skills positions.

It is one thing to define targets, and another one to actually hit them. Success will depend on improving girls' education. The lack of education permeates all dimensions of gender inequality in Zambia. Typically, uneducated parents perpetuate traditions that negatively affect their daughters' future prospects. At the same time, belief in superstition and witchcraft are particularly common among those who did not spend much time in school.

Education has the potential to address all the challenges associated with gender disparities. A 63-country study by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) found that expanded female education resulted in better farming practices. The data showed that this had contributed to about 40% to the reduction of malnutrition in the countries concerned from 1970 to 1995. After primary school, an additional year of schooling adds 12% to a women's income, according to IFPRI, and reduces the probability of becoming a teenage mother by 7.3%.

Every additional year of school is thus valuable, even if a girl ultimately does not graduate. Concluding secondary school

is obviously rewarding too, however. The point is that education helps women make informed decisions and empowers them to participate in meaningful ways in politics, social matters and economic development – whether at the level of the family, the community or the nation. Moreover, better education enables them to take better care of their own health and the wellbeing of their families in general.

Better opportunities for women and girls would indeed improve Zambia's outlook dramatically. International research shows that women and girls tend to spend 90% of their incomes on family matters. The comparative share for men is only 30% to 40%. For this reason, the entire agenda of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) hinges on SDG 5 (gender equality). If societies are to manage the transformation to sustainability, women and girls must certainly be empowered to be drivers of change.



FRANK MASANTA JR.

is a community leader and social activist in Zambia. In 2011, he started the Sun-spring Charity School in

Ng'ombe, a disadvantaged neighbourhood. (see box below).

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Closing gender gaps in an NGO school

The motto of “leave no one behind” makes equality a beacon of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Gender equality is an important aspect, including, though not only in education (see main story). Girls from poor families in particular are often at a disadvantage.

Sun-spring Charity School (SCS) is a non-governmental initiative. We operate an almost free school for underprivileged children in Ng'ombe, a low-income township near

Lusaka, the Zambian capital (see my essay in D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2016/01, Focus section). We do our best to contribute to SDG achievement, including in regard to gender justice.

The school enrolls an equal number of boys and girls. We avoid stereotypical characteristics. No, it is not true that “boys don't cry”. Nor is it true that “girls don't fight”. Language of this kind restricts students' scope for personal development. Moreover, SCS

uses gender-neutral language. When and where appropriate, students are encouraged to opt for words such as chairperson rather than chairman or chairwoman. We suggest they avoid gendered terms like “guys”, which may make female students feel excluded.

SCS is serious about the UN approach to preventing school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV). All our teachers are bound by a code of conduct accordingly. They must sign it when taking up their jobs. It is fully understood that male teachers and boys are typically the perpetrators of SRGBV, so the school encourages them to become champi-

ons in the fight against gender-based violence. We praise girls who report any suspicions to the relevant officer. They can also use an anonymous comment box. SCS takes part in international campaigns to fight gender-based violence. One of the priorities is to create a safe environment for all learners. There must be no bullying, no corporal punishment and no discrimination.

Aware of the disadvantages girls generally face in Zambia, SCS has also created a Girl Child Education Center in another township. We are determined to contribute to closing existing gender gaps in education. (fm)

Clicktivism

Ghanaian feminists are using social media to change public discourse. They refuse to be intimidated by hateful responses.

By Kwasi Gyamfi Asiedu

“I didn’t identify as a feminist for a really long time,” says Nana Ama Agyemang Asante. She is a Ghanaian writer and journalist. Although she grew up in a home where she was encouraged to question gender stereotypes, Asante didn’t come across words like “feminism” or “patriarchy” until she was in university. The reason was probably that, for a long time, women’s rights activists in Ghana preferred to use terms like “women’s empowerment”, “gender advocacy” or simply “human rights” to make their points. As Asante recalls, “feminist” was “what men called you if they wanted to insult you.”

Nowadays, “feminist” is a term embraced by ever more women in Ghana. Asante and others were at the forefront of reclaiming the term and mainstreaming it. An outspoken political and social commentator, Asante was, for a long time, the only female co-host of any of Accra’s popular radio breakfast shows. Though gender equality is a principle of Ghana’s constitution, societal progress has been slow.

Asante is among a new generation of feminist activists. They use social-media platforms to critique the male-dominated society and expose the contradictions of patriarchy. Asante says that there are limits to what is permitted to say in mainstream media. “There are so many things I can do at Citi FM, but some views I cannot express on the radio,” she reports. Social media is the space where she can rant and challenge outdated ideas. For her tweets, she has been called a witch and a misandrist.

NO PUSSYFOOTING

Other feminists are just as outspoken online. “Men who think women belong in the kitchen are the same men who want a female doctor when their wife gets pregnant,” read a recent meme posted on Our Collective Vagina (OCV). This Facebook page was created by

Maame Akua Awereba in January 2018. She also set up the sister page called Dear Survivor, which allows victims of sexual violence to share their stories anonymously.

“I think in many ways, I have always been a feminist,” Awereba says. When she was a little girl, there were things at school or church that made her think “this does not make sense”. For example, she recalls that girls were taught how to behave in ways that would make boys treat them well. Even back then, Awereba felt that boys’ behaviour should not be seen as girls’ responsibility. In the same vein she now insists that rape and sexual assault must never be blamed on the way a women dresses. Men are responsible for men’s actions.

OCV is a “truly feminist” Facebook page, its founder says. Awereba started it because she felt the information available to Ghanaian women was insufficient. “I realised that a lot of feminist platforms here were quite diplomatic about the issues, and they were basically pussyfooting.” She says she is straightforward and wanted a space where feminists could express themselves without risking to be hounded by people who oppose them.

Unlike other feminist pages, OCV does not tolerate comments from anti-feminists. It does not even accept invitations to debate. OCV deletes, reports, blocks or sim-

ply ignores hateful comments. As Awereba explains, the mission of the page is “to put out information and give feminists a safe space.” OCV is known for dark humour and satire.

It does not bother Awereba that critics accuse her of having created a “feminist echo chamber.” She asks rhetorically: “Is it not necessary?” As long as men dominate social life, she argues, women need safe spaces, and the mere fact that this question arises at all shows that male dominance is a problem.

Social media is a powerful tool. It allows people previously excluded from public discourse to find their voices and build alliances. On the downside, many people do not have access to the internet in Ghana and other African countries. High costs and poor infrastructure mean that many people cannot make use of this tool.

Indeed, Ghana’s clicktivist feminists tend to be from well-to-do families. Asante’s father was a lawyer and a traditional chief, so she had a relatively comfortable life. Similarly, Awereba’s parents are educated professionals. Some say that the privileged backgrounds insulated them from the experiences of poorer women who face real gender violence in Ghana, such as rural women who are absurdly accused of “witchcraft” and banished into inhospitable camps in the north of the country.

Such criticism will not silence the social-media feminists, however. “I can’t help the fact that I was born in a middle class home,” Awereba says, and adds that she feels duty-bound to use her privilege to



Twitter activist Nana Ama Agyemang Asante.

fight for those who suffer more. In her eyes, one does not have to experience an injustice personally to know it is wrong – and fight it.

Another common criticism of clicktivism is that it does not achieve much on the ground. Asante disagrees. She has over 21,000 Twitter followers, and is convinced that online communication reverberates offline.

HARSH FEEDBACK

By mid-May, the sharp tongue and witty approach had won OCV almost 10,000 likes on Facebook. However, success has made Awereba a target of aggression. That was evident when OCV and another social-media feminist group called Pepper Dem Ministries were at the forefront of a censure campaign in late 2018. They demanded that the mobile-phone company Huawei cancel its partnership with a popular comedian, who had made jokes about sexualised violence and earlier had even invited people to post “rape techniques” on social media. He also works as a primary school teacher, but only received a caution letter from the Ghana Education Service. OCV and Pepper were



appalled – and had to face a flood of hateful responses.

Asante had a similar experience. Her name trended on Ghana’s Twittersphere after she described as “predatory” the actions of a popular actor. The married male actor had been filmed making unannounced visits to the dorms of female students at a university and surprised them with an uninvented hug on Valentine’s Day.

Both women have received rape threats on social media, and both felt forced to take steps to ensure their safety and mental wellbeing. Asante considered going offline, but she decided she would not be pushed away by trolls. Awereba has deleted all online photos of her son in order to protect him, but she too is eager to keep on

fighting: “Online activism has brought down governments,” she says, “it can bring down the patriarchy.”

Nana Darkoa Sekyiamah of the Association for Women’s Rights in Development (AWID), an international non-governmental organisation, appreciates the social-media approach to spreading the message. “Feminists know that the personal is political and has deep impact on our society,” she points out. Online activism benefits teenage girls who deserve to understand the society they live in and can learn a lot from online role models.

LINKS

- Nana Ama Ageymang Asante's twitter feed:**
<https://twitter.com/justnanaama>
- Our Collective Vagina:**
<https://www.facebook.com/OurCollectiveV/>
- Pepper Dem Ministries:**
<https://de-de.facebook.com/PDMunlearningToxicNarratives/>



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Making sanitary pads

Female teenagers need sanitary pads. All too often, access is considered a luxury in Malawi's rural areas. In many African countries, a substantial number of girls drops out of school after their menstrual cycle has set in.

By Rabson Kondowe

In the lack of menstrual products, many girls miss school when they have their period. A UNESCO report estimates that at least one in ten girls misses school every day in sub-Saharan Africa. Far too many girls even drop out completely once they begin menstruating. They are likely to marry early and contract HIV/AIDS, continuing a vicious cycle of deprivation and misery. The stigma and shame surrounding menstrual hygiene are a huge challenge. That many schools do not have proper toilets compounds the problem.

For most girls, the menstruation period per month is four to six days. If it starts on a Sunday, the student is likely to miss lessons for the next five days. On average, a girl

misses five days per school term. Therefore, menstrual health campaigners in Malawi are trying to change the narrative and break the silence.

Since 80% of Malawi's people live in rural areas, these campaigners must reach out to village teenagers. They teach them to make reusable sanitary pads from locally available materials such as cotton, pieces of cloth and various fabrics. Participants learn how to sew the pads.

In the Mulanje District, one of the civil-society organisations involved is YONECO (Youth Net and Counselling). McBain Mkandawire, its executive director, says: "We want to make sure that girls are in school and they don't have to miss classes once they begin menstruating, we want them to have access to sanitary pads in order to manage their menstrual processes while they still attend classes."

Mkandawire says that the initiative also helps to avoid HIV/AIDS infections. He points out that poor girls who desperately need money are likely to resort to prosti-



tution. By tackling menstrual hygiene, YONECO is reducing the financial pressures they face. He points out that the sanitary pads that are sold in retail shops are often unaffordably expensive. The programme gets support from the non-governmental agency Global Fund through Action Aid and Christian Aid.

Self-help is therefore essential. YONECO organises adolescents in girl clubs. With support from the Global Fund, it has taught almost 2,700 girls the necessary skills since 2006. They also distribute pads in schools free of charge. Pads are also sold at affordable prices in shops. To the same extent, this has become an income-generating activity.

The pads are very easy to use. They must be washed after use and can last for close to a year, reports Elita Lijoni, one of the girls involved. She says that school attendance has improved: "We are happy to be dealing with the issue of school dropout among girls in our area, we want to make sure that they complete their education and, thereafter, meaningfully contribute to the development of the country."

Thoko Masauli, another girl in her club, says they want to reach out to as many schools as possible. "We hope to extend supplying the pads beyond our district."

LINK

YONECO:
<https://yoneco.org>



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The screenshot shows the YONECO website with a green header and navigation menu. The main article features a photo of a group of girls in a classroom, some holding up white sanitary pads. The text of the article describes the training session in Mulanje District and quotes participants and project coordinators. The website also includes a search bar, a 'STREAM YFM ONLINE' section, a 'THE HELPLINE APP' section with a Google Play logo, and a 'RECENT POSTS' section.

YONECO organises adolescents in girls' clubs.

Front-face customer care

In Nairobi, the bus lines are run by private-sector companies. Citi Hoppa is one of them. Chief executive Judy Thuo emphasises quality service. She explains why vocational training is important, and why it is particularly important to provide job opportunities to young women.

Judy Thuo interviewed by Hans Dembowski

What difference does vocational training make?

It is important in any industry. Staff must understand the product, deliver good services and keep their skills up to date. Citi Hoppa moves human beings around in machines. We must keep them safe, so we need competent drivers, who know how to navigate difficult road conditions and competently interact with other traffic participants ...

... without appropriate training, they will probably try to drive as fast as possible.

Yes, impatience is the character of youth, which is why we don't employ anyone under the age of 32 as a driver. Understanding the difference between transporting goods and people is essential. It is not just about using different kinds of vehicles and getting from A to B. Comfort matters very much, which is why conductors are just as important as drivers. They do not merely sell tickets. They usher in the passengers and take care of them.

How does vocational training change staff psychology?

Building self-esteem and self-confidence is actually a major part of the training. Our industry is semi-informal in Kenya. It is generally thought to only offer jobs of last opportunity. When they start working for us, people's self-esteem is very low. If they do not value themselves, however, they will not value others, so one of our tasks is to show them that they are indeed valued members of society. Doing that actually involves some rather personal matters, such as what clothes to wear or handling their money responsibly. Typically, they do not have much

formal education and many come from rural areas, so they have to adopt urban norms. Life is very difficult for them, and they only rarely get an opportunity.

Is the situation the same for young women, or are they basically expected to marry early and raise children?



Conductor on a Citi Hoppa bus.

Yes, I'm afraid that is what awaits the majority of economically marginalised young girls. It makes the outlook even darker that they are unlikely to find a prosperous husband. Without an education, young women struggle to get good jobs.

Do you focus on hiring women?

We are definitely an equal-opportunity employer. After all, I am a woman myself. That said, the circumstances are not family-friendly. Our shifts either start very early in the morning or end very late at night. Mothers who must take care of small children find it hard to cope with that kind of schedule. In our country, however, most of them have some kind of help: grandmothers and other relatives step in. If mothers

earn money, moreover, they can pay baby-sitters.

Do you have female drivers?

Yes, we do, but so far, there are only two. It is far more common for women to work as conductors. We have recently introduced a new premium brand. We call it Citi Hoppa Next. On these buses, we rely exclusively on female conductors. We have thus created a special space for female employment. The passengers actually appreciate it, because women make them feel safe due to women's generally more nurturing outlook. Now we

could have a long debate on why that is so, but for our purposes, it is more important to acknowledge that it is so.

Are you trying to hire more female drivers?

Well, we are not deliberately searching for them, but if we have a job opening and a woman applies, we will certainly consider her favourably. Of course, we also employ women as accountants and other office jobs.

How do you provide vocational training?

Well, the state of vocational training in Kenya is not very good. To improve things, the government has introduced technical-training schools with curricula for plumbers or electricians, for example. That policy is beginning to deliver results, but there is no



school for public transport so far. We actually started our own training facility in 2004, where we basically teach people how to work as drivers and conductors. We also convey some mechanical skills et cetera. The most important thing, however, is front-face cus-

tomers care. Our drivers are typically former conductors who have a better understanding of what is needed than former truck drivers. Our approach is actually quite successful, so other transport companies have been poaching our staff. Some of those companies have also become involved in our training facility, which is good. Ultimately, however, I think the government should set up a meaningful vocational-training programme for our industry.

As a woman in a position of top leadership, do you consider yourself a role model?

No, that is not how I see myself. I am a woman, who has had opportunities and was able

to grasp them. In return, I hope to provide others, and in particular women, with opportunities.



JUDY THUO
is the chief executive of Citi Hoppa, a bus company in Nairobi. It focuses on safety and passenger comfort.

Because of its contribution to making urban development more sustainable, it has received loans from DEG, the German development finance institution. Hans Dembowski met Judy Thuo when visiting Nairobi invited by DEG.

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Better education and training

In developing countries and emerging markets, a large share of the people work in the informal economy. Women are even more likely to do so than men. From a developmental viewpoint, relevant questions include: How can informal work be made more decent and productive? And how can the transition to formal employment be facilitated?

By Fabian Jacobs

Around 2 billion people in the world work in the informal economy. That is more than 61% of the world's economically active population. In South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, the informal employment ratio is well above 80%. In the industrialised world it is only around 18%.

Marginalised groups and people with little education often cannot find formal jobs. In many cases, informal work is the only option they have for earning a living. The informal economy thus secures livelihoods and a future to those who have no access to formal employment. Moreover, to many teenagers and young adults with no formal educational or vocational qualifications, informal employment is the only opportunity to acquire work experience and skills.

The problem is that the informal economy is fraught with problems – both at the individual and societal levels. For various reasons, informal workers are particularly at risk of poverty. Because of educational shortcomings and insufficient access to capital, informal businesses' productivity tends to be low. Accordingly, incomes tend to be lower and less secure than in the formal sector. Moreover, informal workers are much more exposed to impacts of illnesses or disability. Their employers provide no social protection.

At the same time, the informal economy deprives the state of tax revenues it urgently needs to fund public services. That is especially serious in developing countries and emerging markets. In the informal sector, moreover, the scope for state control and regulation is small. All too often, international labour standards ("decent work") are not observed (see Focus section on "Informal and formal employment" in D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2017/10).

Globally speaking, there are more men than women in informal employment, but the opposite is true in developing countries and emerging markets. In sub-Saharan Africa, in particular, women are disproportionately likely to be informally

employed – often in exceptionally precarious conditions. They work as domestic workers, for example, or as members of a family that owns a business that they contribute to. An important reason is that cultural norms tend to restrict women's freedom to work in many places. Unequal access to education and training also matters, of course.

FROM INFORMAL TO FORMAL WORK

Education and training are crucial factors in facilitating the transition from informal to formal employment. The higher a person's level of education, the less likely that person is to be informally employed. The connection between education and formal employment has been documented by studies in all world regions. More than 90% of all adults in the world with no formal education work on an informal basis. Among those who have graduated from secondary schools, the figure is only around 50%.

Better occupational skills boost productivity in informal businesses, facilitating higher-quality products and services. Vocational training can thus help pave the way to formalising a company. On the other hand, jobseekers who have acquired formal vocational qualifications have proved their proficiency and are thus more attractive to formal employers. Beyond that, additional opportunities of further training and education are likely to open up, when trainees attain formal qualifications.



Informal workers mostly have a lot of skills: tayloring class in Senegal.

To reach informal workers, the public vocational-training system needs to ensure access. Training centres and vocational schools often have high enrolment barriers, including course fees and educational requirements.

Indirect costs are another challenge. Informal workers generally cannot afford to forgo their incomes, so they cannot participate in full-time training. If they are to benefit from what training institutes and educational establishments offer, these institutions must not only provide easier access. They must also tailor programmes to the needs of the informal sector. One option is to set up short-term or evening courses that can be attended after work and that cater to the educational level and to the qualifications required by the target group.

Flexible, non-formal training programmes have poverty-reducing potential. This is especially true for women, who often must do household chores on top of contributing to the family income.

Another way to make vocational training more inclusive is to upgrade existing apprenticeships. A traditional apprenticeship is a socially recognised and culturally established form of training in small informal enterprises. Apprentices work alongside experienced

skilled workers and are thus taught the basics of the respective trade or occupation.

This type of training is widespread and sometimes even more relevant than the public vocational-training system. This is the case in many sub-Saharan countries. For youngsters from disadvantaged backgrounds, in particular, apprenticeships offer access to training and employment. A cost-effective and efficient opportunity to improve employability is to promote and formally recognise traditional training systems of this kind. To help gear apprenticeships more effectively to modern requirements, it can be useful to link on-the-job training to class-room lessons in vocational schools.

For apprentices, such link-ups with government-run vocational training institutions has an additional advantage: formal certification becomes feasible. The systematic provision of further training to those who instruct apprentices in informal businesses will also contribute to raising standards. Wherever possible, efforts to improve apprenticeships should be made in cooperation with local groups and associations that exist in the informal economy. Moreover, care should be taken to ensure equal access, regardless of gender to ensure that women

can benefit from traditional apprenticeships too.

Opportunities for informal workers can also be improved by formally recognising and certifying informally acquired occupational skills. People working in the informal economy generally have lots of experience-based knowledge and practical skills. To make them more visible, it makes sense to verify and testify them. That will not only boost people's self-esteem, but also enhance their job-market opportunities.

LINK

GIZ, 2019: Toolkit – Learning and working in the informal economy.
<http://www.giz.de/toolkit-informelle-wirtschaft>



FABIAN JACOBS worked on the GIZ “Toolkit – Learning and working in the informal economy”, which provides an overview of

vocational training in the informal economy. In addition to background information, the toolkit presents tried and tested approaches.
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Creative and committed

Young Arab women have very diverse female role models. They encounter many of them via social media in the whole of the Arab world.

By Mona Naggar

If you ask young Arab women about their role models, the answers are very diverse. To be picked as a positive role model from the Arab world, various aspects seem to be important – including civic and social engagement, individuality, creativity, but also good looks.

Rahma Al Tamimi is 25 years old. She studied social work and is now a youth tutor for a civil-society organisation in Irbid, a town in northern Jordan. She says Nada Nasser is her role model. She knows her from the internet.

Nasser is Kuwaiti and very creative. She designs fashion, writes books and is active on social media. She has more than 90,000 followers on Twitter. Nasser writes clever tweets about her daily experiences with the people around her, but she also voices self-doubt and is critical of society. Nasser is good-looking and has no qualms about making private issues public. She displays vulnerabilities, but also musters the courage to make herself heard in a conservative society, where even educated and active women still face many obstacles.

This mix fascinates Tamimi in Jordan. The young woman is ambitious and dreams of becoming a well-known writer with a large readership. Like her paragon, Tamimi uses social media and already has more than 5,000 followers on Facebook. She feels encouraged by other women who try to assert themselves in restrictive surroundings.

For young Palestinians, combative figures in particular serve as female role models. A well-known example is Ahed Tamimi, the Palestinian schoolgirl who protested against the occupation and was jailed by the Israeli army for several months in 2017. Palestinian artists who are politically active are often seen as role models too, for instance the late singer and activist Rim Banna. For

many years, she fought her cancer. Even after chemotherapy, her pictures were often seen in the streets of Ramallah.

Another Palestinian role model is Dalal Abu Amneh, a 36-year-old scientist and singer. She is successful in both her jobs beyond Palestine.

Salah likes to refer to Sudanese history. The reason is that women used to have a strong role there. She claims her country's past for herself, thus creating a new idea of female identity and wrenching the privilege of interpreting historical power relations away from men.

Indeed, female figures from Islamic and even pre-Islamic times keep serving as role models. These historical women tend to combine several characteristics as well: creativity, individuality and sometimes also political engagement.



Young Syrian women in Beirut.

A more recent role model is Alaa Salah from Sudan. Earlier this year, she became a symbol of Sudanese people's demand for freedom. At a rally in Khartoum, the 22-year-old had spontaneously climbed on a car and started to chant slogans in front of the crowd. Photos show a courageous and beautiful young woman with big earrings and wrapped in a traditional white shawl. Internationally, she now embodies the resistance of the Sudanese against the dictatorship, in particular the resistance of women against political oppression and discrimination.

Women in the Arab world are often oppressed and discriminated against. But young women in particular are reconsidering their position. They look for new female role models who are strong, resourceful, educated and assertive. This is a good sign for the future.



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Criminal girls

Not much is known about the gender dynamics of organised crime groups. Teenagers and children are often affected, as comparative research from Bangladesh and China shows.

By Sally Atkinson-Sheppard

At first glance, Bangladesh and China are very different countries. According to the World Bank's criteria, China is an upper middle-income country. By contrast, Bangladesh is the largest least-developed country according to UN classifications. Confucianism underpins Chinese culture, while Bangladesh is a majority Muslim country. Under colonial rule, Bangladesh was part of British India. While imperial powers exploited China in the 19th and early 20th century, the country was always nominally independent.

Yet there are similarities. Both countries faced fundamental change in the 1970s. Bangladesh won independence from Pakistan in a bloody liberation war in 1971. In China, the Cultural Revolution and Mao's leadership ended in 1976. Both countries also experience high levels of organised crime.

In Bangladesh, organised crime groups are led by "mastaans". These groups often operate in collusion with state agencies and offer social protection to those living in slums or on the streets. In China,

organised crime groups also act in alliance with corrupt politicians and the police, providing illicit livelihoods to those who work for them.

In both countries, large numbers of children are marginalised. Street children are among the top social concerns in both countries. In Bangladesh, millions of children live on the streets or in slums. In China, street children tend to be migrants who have moved to cities in search of work and are denied the rights of people who are formally registered as residents of these urban areas.

It is important to consider the gender dynamics of criminal groups. The similarities between both places are interesting. Our research focused on organised crime in Dhaka and several places in mainland China. Typically, gangs mainly consist of male members, and the bosses are usually male. We found only one female boss, the wife of a Bangladeshi mastaan who took over the responsibilities for running the group.

In Bangladesh, it is boys and young men who are most likely to become embroiled in the lower echelons of crime groups. They conduct what I consider to be "illicit labour", engaging in a variety of criminal and violent actions on the streets. This kind of "work" is dangerous, but the young people involved in this illicit labour

lack any other alternatives (see my contribution in the Focus section of D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2018/04).

Girls, on the other hand, are more likely to be involved in sex work and to become the victims of sexual exploitation. When girls do partake in illicit labour, it is largely in support of wider activities of crime groups, and the boys and men that work for them.

A social worker who works with street children in southern China described the differences between girls' and boys' experiences on the streets: "Because of the low education level and lack of professional skills, street children are very likely to engage in illegal activities." After dropping out of school, many girls make a living as prostitutes. It is not uncommon for their mothers to work in the sex business too. The social worker reported that some teenage boys and girls live together, renting cheap accommodations. "The girls sell their body, and boys steal and work for the older bosses." Similar patterns are evident in Bangladesh too.

MISLEADING THE POLICE

There are other ways in which Bangladeshi gangs use girls. Girls and young women increasingly engage in illicit labour on behalf of the mastaan groups. One young Bangladeshi male informed us that mastaan groups are aware of the police clamping down harder on boys than on girls. Therefore, the mastaans convince girls – rather than boys – to do things like sell drugs, steal things or spy on other criminal groups.

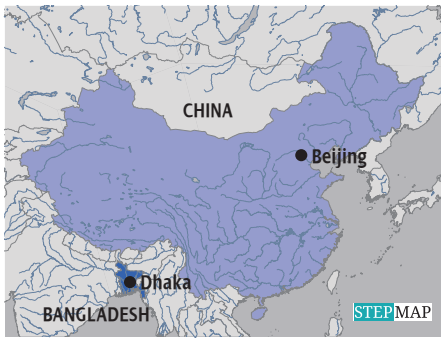
Another young person explained why: "If any girl is caught by the police with drugs she has a much better chance of getting off than boys (...). She will try to convince the police that she is a good girl, and even if the police don't believe her, she is likely to get a lawyer at the police station."

This suggests that girls are less likely than boys to face criminal prosecution and reflects prevailing gender stereotypes in Bangladeshi society.

Yaba, a drug that consists of methylamphetamine and caffeine, is a popular drug in Bangladesh, though it is illegal. Gang members report that organised crime groups increasingly use female recruits as drug dealers; a specific mechanism to avoid police prosecution. An interesting question arises: Will the girl drug sellers of today become the women dealers of the future?



Teenage sex workers in Tangail in Bangladesh.



WOMEN'S ROLE IN HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Another category of organised crime in which women play important roles is human trafficking and kidnapping. A gang member in Bangladesh said: “An older woman will kidnap a young girl and sell her abroad or to a different place here.” It is easier for women than for men to win a girl’s trust and then abuse it. All too often, young women are forced into prostitution or bonded labour.

Research in China revealed a similar picture. Young migrant women and the daughters of migrant parents are often traf-

ficked into sex work or forced to do low paid work in beauty salons or Karaoke bars. The data showed that this typically facilitate a girl’s entry into sex work. One social worker explained that “middle-aged women coerce girls into selling sex”. Women are thus both victims and perpetrators of gender-specific crimes.

Overall, the nature of organised crime groups needs further research. Mafia organisations are, by their very nature, not transparent, so it is difficult to understand the nature of these groups. The similarities between the two seemingly different countries suggests that more comparative research could lead to important insights. This includes a wider exploration of the role that men and women play in criminal groups and how young people become embroiled in the lower echelons of these criminal enterprises, as both victims and offenders.

It is important to interview the children and teenagers themselves. The voices of children help us to better understand organised crime and the roles that girls and boys play, as both are victims and offenders in these criminal groups. Gender differences

are important; and understanding them matters if the violence and exploitation that criminal groups commit is to be tackled effectively. One should not forget: young perpetrators are guilty of serious crimes, but they are also victims themselves.

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Use the gender lens

The SDGs were adopted by all member states of the UN. A UNESCO report on gender equality in education demands that action must follow words. The authors propose using a “gender lens” to bring attention to social inequalities and reduce them.

By Cema Tork

In 2018, UNESCO published its sixth gender review in the context of the Global Education Monitoring Report. The idea is to track progress towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This agenda commits to the principle that men and women must benefit equally from development. The UNESCO report focuses on SDG 4 (“ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”) and SDG 5 (“achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”).

The good news is that overall, the world has achieved parity in all levels of education except for tertiary education. The bad news is that there are disparities at national and regional levels, which get worse at higher levels of education.

The report extends beyond comparing the number of boys and girls in classrooms. Instead, the first part deals with the critical issues which cause gender disparities in education, including health, water and sanitation. The second part explores incentives and retribution measures that can serve SDG achievement. Ideally, governments and schools should make sure that standards are followed, and independent institutions – such as journalists, courts and NGOs – should monitor and judge their performance.

WHAT STILL NEEDS TO BE DONE?

The report introduces the term “gender lens”. It means that gender should be considered in every aspect of life. The goal is to recognise and address discrimination. In regard to education, relevant domains include:

- gender norms,
- values and attitudes,

- non-educational institutions,
- laws and policies,
- distribution of resources and
- teaching and learning practices.

For instance, the report uses a gender lens to scrutinise the lack of women in leadership positions worldwide. Across all OECD countries, women are the majority of lower secondary teachers with 68%, but only hold 45% of principal positions. The discrepancy between male and female leadership generally increases with the level of schooling. In Rwanda, for example, women make up 30% of primary school principals and 19% of sec-

ondary school principals. The authors argue that without equal female representation at every level – from school committees to legislative bodies – women’s influence is stifled, at least to some degree. They warn this can slow down and sometimes even prevent any progress towards equality.

Commendably, the UNESCO authors turn the gender lens upon the UN. They recognise that the UN, which facilitates and partially funded the study, is a role model and want it to implement its ideals as a “crucial first step” towards equality. The UN, of course, has not achieved gender equity in leadership.

The report demands that UN, multilateral agencies and national governments create more space for women in top leadership positions. To achieve this, the report outlines the successful use of quotas in countries such as Sweden, Italy and Uganda. The use of quotas in these countries has led to more women in top jobs – and sometimes to more educated and better qualified leaders. Quota enforcement brought countries closer to meeting their targets. Women in leadership, furthermore, are role models who encourage girls to aim just as high as boys.

The report points out that gender equality in education is not an isolated topic. It is interconnected with all other spheres of society. Thus as gender equality improves

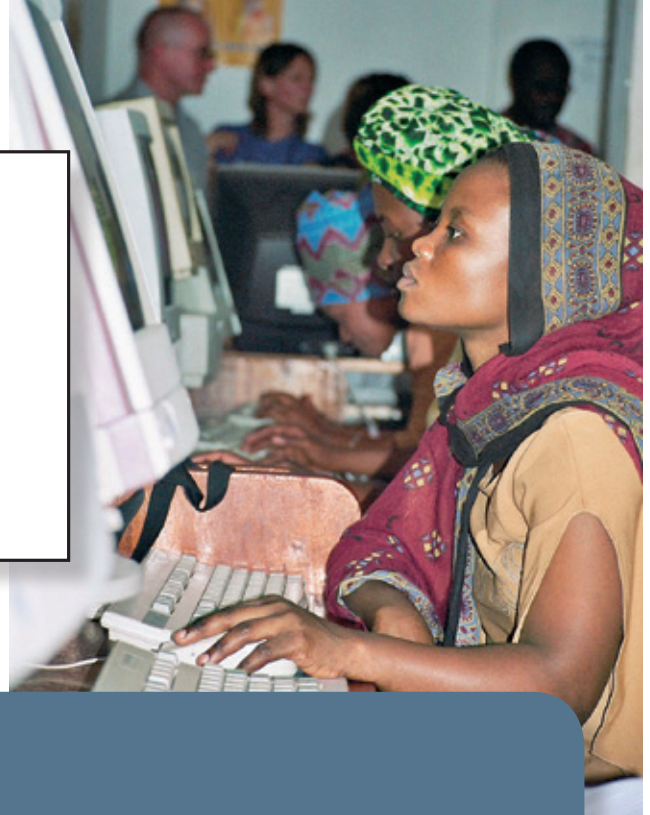


Michelle Bachelet, the UN high commissioner for human rights and former president of Chile, is a rare example of female leadership at national and international levels.

in education, it also improves in health, government representation, the workforce et cetera. According to the authors, whether one is a student, parent, teacher, government official, woman or man, one must view education and policy through the gender lens – and then take action to improve matters.

LINK
Global Education Monitoring Report:
https://en.unesco.org/gem-report/2018_gender_review

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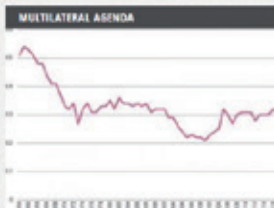
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