



IFUW Update – 29 October 2014

International News Round-Up: October 2014



“2095: The Year of Gender Equality at Work, Maybe” (World Economic Forum Blog, 28 October 2014)

According to the recently published “[Global Gender Gap Report 2014](#)” prepared by the World Economic Forum, it may take until 2095 – a further 81 years – before the gender gap is closed completely. The report, which examines the gender gap across health, education, economy and politics, highlights the narrowest gap in education (96%), while the most flagrant gap remains in political empowerment (21%). The Nordic countries of Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark top the rankings in terms of gender equality, while newcomer to the Index Rwanda scores seventh in the top ten. Nicaragua and the Philippines also rank highly, coming in at numbers six and nine respectively. Since the last report published in 2006, female participation in politics has seen positive developments, where there are now “26% more female parliamentarians and 50% more female ministers than nine years ago.” Despite the progress being made in closing the gender gap, worrying trends have nonetheless arisen where certain countries have seen the gap increase across certain sectors: “nearly 30% of countries have wider education gaps that in 2006 and 40% of countries have wider health and survival gaps”. [Read more.](#)

“Despite So-Called Ceasefire, Boko Haram Killings Continue” (CNN, 23 October 2014)

Hopes that a recent truce supposedly reached between the Nigerian government and Islamist group Boko Haram would see the return of some 200 kidnapped schoolgirls have not yet materialised. On the contrary, there have been alarming reports that a further 60 girls and women have been abducted by the group in October from Christian villages in north-eastern Nigeria. Boko Haram – which stands for “[Western education is sin](#)” – began its terror campaign in northern Nigeria back in 2009, with this year seeing a particular surge in violence, including thousands of killings at the hands of the group. Read more [here](#). You can help keep international attention and political pressure on the release of the girls by joining the #BringBackOurGirls campaign on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

“The Insidious Form of Domestic Violence that No One Talks About” (Huffington Post Women, 21 October 2014)

It’s not only physical abuse that defines domestic violence; financial entrapment is also a worrying power-play amongst partners, where women are particularly vulnerable. “Experts agree that economic abuse, where one partner controls the other’s access to finances, plays a pivotal role in trapping women in abusive relationships.” Economic abuse can take the form of the abuser sabotaging employment, controlling finances, causing debt or instilling economic unpredictability – the latter seeing the abuser arbitrarily offering and withdrawing access to money. [Read more.](#) IFUW highlighted the importance of

teaching girls and women financial literacy skills in order to mitigate the risk of economic abuse and to empower them to achieve financial independence. Read the press release [here](#).

“Why are Women Leaving Science, Engineering and Tech Jobs?” (Fast Company, 15 October 2014) <http://www.fastcompany.com/3037075/strong-female-lead/why-are-women-are-leaving-science-engineering-tech-jobs>

A sense of isolation, biased evaluations and lack of female mentors are amongst the top reasons why U.S. women are 45% more likely than male counterparts to leave a career within science, engineering and technology (SET) in the first year. The study, conducted by the [Center for Talent Innovation](#), highlights the “lingering old boys’ club attitude” across the SET sectors as a significant factor in making women feel segregated in the male-dominated professions. Similarly, professional appraisals also negatively affect female employees, where 72% of the women surveyed said they had experienced gender bias during performance reviews. Within technology specifically, figures reported that 88% of women received critical feedback compared with only 59% of men, often seeing female employees being branded as “abrasive”. [Read more.](#)

“Why Single-Sex Education is Good for Girls” (Forbes, 15 October 2014)

Research suggests that girls who are enrolled in single-sex schools “are more engaged and exude more competence and competitiveness” – an atmosphere where girls can refine their leadership skills “without a male presence”. To prepare girls for professional and entrepreneurial roles, it is critical to extend secondary school curricula beyond English and math and to incorporate skills-based learning including business, technology and engineering. Companies stand to benefit from an increased number of women in managerial positions as strong cooperation and communications skills mean that women leaders create more effective teams. [Read more.](#)

“Unicef: Girls in Latin America, Caribbean Remain Vulnerable” (Latin American Herald Tribune, 9 October 2014)

A recent report from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), on the occasion of the International Day of the Girl Child, highlighted specific areas of concern amongst the female adolescent population in Latin America: “Discrimination, early marriage and pregnancy, gender violence, domestic labo[u]r, sexual exploitation, human trafficking, lack of access to health care and limited educational opportunities” are among the major problems, said Bernt Aasen, the [Unicef] Regional Director for Latin America and Caribbean. High rates of teenage pregnancy is a particular issue, where teen mothers account for 20% of all births in the region. Read [more](#).

“Poor Sanitation Torments Life for Women in India” (MSNBC, 25 September 2014)

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimates that 1.8 billion school days worldwide are lost due to poor water supply and sewage facilities at education institutions. In India, infestation of mosquitoes, insufficient menstrual hygiene supplies and lack of hand soap in schools are particularly problematic issues for girls, often resulting in many of them staying at home. In addition, it is often the responsibility of girls and women to fetch drinking water, where they frequently have to walk long distances in order to reach clean supplies. This amounts to 40 billion hours a year that girls and women lose by completing the onerous chore. Watch the video report [here](#).

“Teen Girls Take Swipe at World Hunger with Google Science Fair Idea, Remind Us All to Dream Big” (Huffington Post Women, 25 September 2014)

Three Irish teenage girls have been awarded the grand prize at Google’s global science and technology competition for their innovative research in increasing the rate of germination and the overall yield in cereals such as barley and oats. Their hard work and dedication – which lasted over 11 months and included 125 experiments – was recognised at the prestigious science awards and heralded as a significant contribution in tackling the growing global food challenge. [Read more.](#)



Empowering women and girls through lifelong education for leadership, decision-making and peace. IFUW is in special consultative status with ECOSOC and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO.

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