

# Gender and International Development

*Insights from the Field*

Glocal 2018





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# International Development and Gender from a Glocal Perspective

Prof. Guy Harpaz

Women and girls represent more than half of the world's population and hence more than half of its potential. Sadly, realities on the ground rarely reflect this expectation, least of all in the developing world.

Indeed, international development scholars and practitioners have attempted throughout the years to tackle the multifaceted implications of the interface between international development and gender by addressing and analyzing these implications from diverse perspectives, such as education, health, economics, ethics, sociology, political sciences, and law.

One of the UN Millennium Development Goals aspires to face some of the challenging gender-related problems of the developing world, and to advance gender equality and women's empowerment. This attempt was reinforced by Goal 5 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which states that "...women and girls continue to suffer discrimination and violence in every part of the world. Gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and sustainable world. Providing women and girls with equal access to education, health care, decent work, and representation in political and economic decision-making processes will fuel sustainable economies and benefit societies and humanity at large."

The meeting-point between international development and gender has also attracted much interest among many of Glocal's students and alumni. As evidenced by this magazine, many of them either came to us with a meaningful awareness and knowledge of this theme, or gained this knowledge of it during their studies and internships.

Nevertheless, since the establishment of Glocal, some concerns have been raised by students, and subsequently by alumni, to the effect that the program fails to adequately address the link between international development and gender. These critical voices were linked to the well-founded argument that Glocal's curriculum principally contains compulsory classes, leaving insufficient room for academic and practical specialization. It therefore behooves us to address the interface between international development and gender in a more profound and systematic manner.

In response to these critical voices and our scholastic needs, Glocal has in the last two years focused, inter alia, on issues of international development and gender. For example, one of our 2016 Research sections was devoted to a review of recent research on this theme. Our M.A. Research Track, of which I am particularly proud, has already produced one thesis on international development and gender, while further research dissertations in this field are in the pipeline.

The culmination of these academic efforts was the launch, in October 2017, of our first specialized Track, which focused on international development and gender. This Track, launched with the assistance of the Lafer Center for Women and Gender Studies, and taught by excellent teachers such as Dr. Amy Weinreb and Dr. Hadas Yaron, enables the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for the first time in its history to offer a Track – taught in the English language – which is focused on gender. Five of the students of Cohort 8 chose to pursue this Track. We are proud of their pioneering choice and we believe that many will follow in their path in the coming years.

As the Director of Glocal, and as a man who believes that gender and feminism should be the concern and commitment of men and women alike, I take special pride in those Glocal students who have combined these diverse efforts to confront the multidisciplinary implications of this theme and who have tackled and tried to alleviate some of the roots and symptoms of gender inequality. Some of the experiences and insights of these students are expressed in this magazine, and they are moving and thought-provoking.

I want to thank Liel Maghen for his leadership in preparing this Magazine, as well as Gal Kramarski, Hagar Siboni, Daniela Roichman, Allison Sheehan Cohen, Thaiza Diaz, Jacob Sztokman, Naama Hecht, Tamar Almog, Maya Whitefield, Thu-Phung Banh, Adi Mohel, Thukiwe Namfukwe and Elianne Kremer for their important contributions. I am confident that you will find reading the Magazine a rewarding experience.

# A Note from the Editor

Liel Maghen

The 20<sup>th</sup> century might easily be described as the feminist century. In its first half, it witnessed a flourishing movement of various forms of feminism, while in its second, women became a central focus of economic and social development efforts. Since the 1960s, the relationship between gender and economic development has been analyzed and articulated, and a gender perspective has been introduced in the analysis of policies, social structures, and economic dynamics. As a result, numerous organizations and policies focusing solely on women have been initiated with the aim of creating equality between the genders.

However, women are still excluded from decision-making processes throughout the world, and are still marginalized economically, resulting in unequal economies and societies. This is particularly true in the developing world, where traditional mechanisms and discourses keep women in an inferior status to men.

Thus, questions must be asked about whether current development paradigms pay sufficient attention to gender equality. Furthermore, while several organizations see women's empowerment as their main focus, others focus on integration and advocacy, so there is a further question about the most effective approach to gender inequality, even within efforts where it is a priority.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century has seen a further development in feminism: its transformation into a global movement. As exposure to women's rights is becoming more widespread and various campaigns on women's issues have gathered public attention across the world, women's organizations from across the globe are partnering in order to change their local reality. Whether by joining in women's empowerment projects, marching to their respective capitals, or participating in the famous #MeToo campaign, women are mobilizing and stepping up in various ways to change the mechanisms that keep them inferior and marginalized.

As we believe this field is of the outmost importance, and as Glocal opened its first gender-focused Track in 2017, we decided to make gender the focus of this Issue, with a clear goal to highlight the best practices and discourses in gender-sensitive development. This Issue gives a special focus to local initiatives by presenting various projects from across the world, and considers global perspectives

by examining recurrent themes regarding the impact of the work. This is our modest endeavor to present a new perspective on a complex reality and, in so doing, to impact the field by illuminating best practices and success stories from around the world.

This is a special Issue, as it is the first time we have offered a peer-learning review of the articles. Through the process of editing, alumni and students read the articles and presented key comments for improvement. All articles were developed in coordination between students and alumni, with some even benefiting from the support of the academic faculty. In this way, an important discussion about the topic was initiated within the Glocal Community, even among those whose names do not appear in this issue.

I would like to thank the Glocal Program for giving me the opportunity to develop this Issue, Daniel Epstein, Leeor Ohayon and Shira Schonfeld for helping with editing, Alice Niyonkuro and Hagar Siboni for helping with the design, and, of course, the writers for their contributions. I truly hope that incorporating more global perspectives in local discussions will strengthen the work being done in the field. For now, I hope you will enjoy your reading.

*From the Field*

# What Holds Back National Laws from Being Implemented in Rural Morocco?

Gal Kramarski

**Here the author reports on her experience conducting a participatory assessment of needs and knowledge related to rights in the High Atlas region of Morocco. Her account offers insights into the social barriers that may continue to curtail rights of women even after national legislation is enacted to promote them.**

Less than an hour separates Marrakech and the High Atlas Mountains communes. An hour, and an entire world. From landscapes to customs and cultures, the differences are vast, and the reality is different. We often ask ourselves why governmental decisions and laws, which regularly influence development processes, struggle to reach remote areas: is this what keeps rural communities left behind? From August to December 2017, I worked with a team from the High Atlas Foundation to conduct a participatory assessment of needs and awareness of personal rights in the High Atlas region, which included group discussion workshops with rural women. The research showed that before the workshop over 90 percent of them had never heard about the Moroccan law that establishes women's rights. Based on the results of the assessment research, this paper will provide a glance at the reality of rural women in Morocco, presenting their struggles, needs, and their will to learn more and change their current reality.

There is an inevitable link between human rights and development. In December 1986, the United Nations added the Declaration on the Right to Development to its 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The declaration expressed the growing international understanding of the need for rights-based development, and marked a new era in social development. Duncan Green expresses the personal aspect of the Rights-Based Approach (RBA), claiming: "Feeling that one has the right

to something is much more powerful than simply needing or wanting it. It implies that someone else has the duty to respond."<sup>1</sup> According to Green, the legal framework allows "rights-holders" to make demands on those in power, the "duty-bearers," which in many cases are governments. Duty-bearers carry the responsibility to protect and fulfill the rights of all people, particularly of those who come from remote areas.

In 2004, the Moroccan Kingdom joined the global process of promoting rights-based development. Under the new king, Mohammad VI, and in light of international processes promoting equality, changing women's status in Morocco was finally an option. In 2004, following decades of civic struggles, the Moroccan Kingdom enacted the new Family Moudawana Law (مدونة الأسرة), replacing the 1958 Moudawana, which, in fact, did not provide equal rights for women. The new law constitutes a major landmark in the Moroccan women's struggle, as it follows the principle of equality between men and women in families, communities, and Moroccan society.

Though Family Moudawana secured women's equal rights in different aspects, the life of women in rural Morocco, in most cases, remained as it was. In the search for the reasons for that, several different obstacles were indicated. Lack of awareness was the first obstacle to be found. Over 90 percent of the women who took part in the participatory assessment workshops (almost 200 women) shared the fact that they had barely heard about Moudawana before. High illiteracy rates among rural women

1 Duncan Green, *From Poverty to Power: How active citizens and effective states can change the world*, 2nd ed., (Rugby, UK: Practical Action Publishing and Oxford: Oxfam International, 2012), 21, [https://www.oxfamamerica.org/static/media/files/From\\_Poverty\\_to\\_Power\\_2nd\\_Edition.pdf](https://www.oxfamamerica.org/static/media/files/From_Poverty_to_Power_2nd_Edition.pdf)



Picture by Gal Kramarski, Morocco

remains one of the core problems, depriving young girls and women of access to knowledge, and ways to exercise their rights. In one of our workshops, we heard the following story: "My friend opposed the idea of polygamy, but her husband insisted on taking a second wife. In order to take a second wife, he had to get her to sign an official paper. My friend, who is illiterate, was convinced that she was signing documents for pilgrimage to Mecca. Only after he married the other woman, she found out what she had signed on..." According to Moudawana, this woman had the right to oppose polygamy; however, she lacked the relevant knowledge and ability to claim her right. Indeed, we see that less-educated women face more barriers in gaining their rights.

**"Understanding the difficulties these women face, and the clash between local traditions and the innovative national law, Moudawana, was the first step we took while involving the community in the process of using rights to promote development."**

Though a national law exists, local traditions remain highly respected in rural areas, and are considered in most cases as the "formal law," which replaces the national one. As one man explained: "We have a local representative of the government for each area; he is in charge of enforcing national laws. However, before that, each village has its own law -enforcement mechanism.

The family is the first authority to judge, based on family customs and local traditions, which are highly respected. If a family cannot solve a personal debate, they go to their community's formal

authority. This person will always be a man who was born in the village, and who knows the local customs, traditions, culture, and history, and to be able to judge according to them. If there is a clash between the national law and the local one, in most cases he will decide in favor of local traditions." To gain her rights, a rural woman has to go through three different male authorities, starting with her own family, before getting the chance to appear in front of a judge. Another example of that was given in a story about a man who raped a woman; their families forced her to marry him, to cover the shame on both sides (as part of their culture, she needed also to be shamed by the act). We were told she committed suicide shortly after.

Though Moudawana is based on the Islamic Sharia law, rural communities in many cases tend to separate religious orders from local customs. For instance, though divorce is allowed in Islam, most rural communities ban it. Women are threatened with exile from their communities, and as a result, they are forced to "choose" to stay in harmful marriages. It is no surprise, then, that the 2010 Status of Women in the Middle East and North Africa Survey found that 30 percent of men surveyed somewhat or strongly oppose Moudawana, and 52 percent of men surveyed believe that Moudawana gave women too many rights.

Lack of independence was another core issue raised as an obstacle by the women. We often heard the following sentence: "I never left the village by myself; I wish I could visit the market one day." In rural Morocco, it is considered inappropriate for women to leave the village on their own, imposing not only a social obstacle but also a physical one. Gaining the rights that Moudawana is supposed to ensure requires appearing in front of a judge; however in many cases women cannot exit the village on their own. Money is another barrier preventing access to knowledge and tools, as most women are financially dependent on their husbands or families.

Rural communities in Morocco have struggled for years to keep their unique traditions and customs, including maintaining the women's traditional role. In many cases, women in rural Morocco are not aware of any other reality. Many participants were not able to share their personal vision, as they never thought they deserved to have one. For most in these rural communities, national laws still seem detached from their world.

Understanding the difficulties these women face, and the clash between local traditions and the innovative national law, Moudawana, was the first step we took while involving the community in the process of using rights to promote development. In order to make the most of the RBA in remote areas, development practitioners must use participatory methods. Once the community is involved in the process of implementing

national laws, its people will gradually become less alienated from them, and there will be a greater chance for sustained change. The assessment workshops not only helped indicate needs and map women's existing knowledge about their rights, but also contributed to raising a lively discussion about women's rights within these communities, which made rural women active participants in using the RBA to achieve equality and actualize their rights.

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**Gal Kramarski is in her senior year at Glocal. During the program, she interned at the High Atlas Foundation in Morocco.**



Picture by Gal Kramarski, Morocco

*Op-Ed*

# Making Women's Bodies a Site for Political Struggle: The Case of Women Asylum Seekers in Israel

Hagar Siboni

**This article offers criticism of Israel's current policies toward asylum seekers by analyzing their effects from a gender perspective. The author offers a powerful call for the Israeli Government to ensure that women's health and security do not become casualties of these policies.**

Israel has declared that its general policy towards asylum seekers is to limit their number by creating various obstacles that exhaust them and create a sense of desperation, thus coercing them into leaving. Lacking sensitivity to gender differences and unresponsive to women's needs, this policy has particularly harsh implications for women, impacting their individual bodies and placing them at the center of the political struggle.

## Women Asylum Seekers in Israel

Although Israel ratified both the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol, it has been reluctant to host refugees in practice, claiming asylum seekers are labor migrants who threaten Israel's national security as well as its Jewish character. Instead, Israel pursues a policy of temporary non-deportation, which only offers a provisional stay whilst withholding asylum seekers' wages and limiting their access to medical and welfare services while also detaining large numbers of men in a designated detention center.

Public policy implications often impact men and women differently due to social and biological differences. Yet, gender implications are rarely analyzed systematically, thus creating a situation in

which women's individual bodies are directly influenced in the process to advance political agendas. This is particularly true in the case of asylum seekers in Israel. For instance, lack of welfare services for asylum seekers in general may entail no protection for women in cases of domestic violence. Limited access to health services in general may prevent antenatal care (ANC) for pregnant women, specifically.

## Reluctance to Protect Women Asylum Seekers in the Face of Domestic Violence

Israeli law strongly condemns domestic violence and has introduced concrete measures combating violent behavior of this kind. By law, every woman, regardless of age, religion, nationality, or origin, can be referred to a women's shelter when facing physical or emotional danger that prevents her from staying safely at home. Referral channels range from the police to hospitals, to welfare authorities and various NGOs.

In the case of women asylum seekers, however, the state refuses to enforce this law, and denies them welfare services. The official policy allows the referral of an asylum seeker to a women's shelter only in case of immediate danger, and only for a temporary stay. In reality, this limited haven is even less accessible due to complicated bureaucratic procedures, language barriers, and difficulties in proving immediate danger. Women who have tried to seek the authorities' help in cases of domestic violence report a dismissive attitude and a lack of any kind of intervention. This policy, together with the lack of traditional community structures normally used to settle disputes within families, leaves women asylum seekers in Israel without remedies for domestic violence.

**“The consensus among policymakers that the persons in question are not asylum seekers, but rather labor migrants who threaten Israel, allows for strategies with unacceptable implications for women’s rights and human rights.”**

Picture by Hagar Siboni

## Lack of Access to Reproductive Health Services and Antenatal Care

As a matter of policy, asylum seekers in Israel have no access to health services and medical care, except in emergency situations. Thus, medical services are available only to those who can afford them, or for those whose workplaces follow state employment rules and provide medical insurance to employees. This creates a situation where many women can't access reproductive health services, and pregnant women cannot access ANC.

ANC from a medically-trained provider is an essential service for pregnant women, aimed at ensuring healthy pregnancy outcomes. Specifically, ANC also links the pregnant woman and her family to formal health systems, thus increasing the chance of having skilled birth attendants present at delivery, which drastically reduces the risk of maternal and infant mortality. By limiting their access to such services, the Israeli policy creates a situation in which women asylum seekers' basic right to health care is neglected, and their ability to choose the place where they will give birth is restricted.

## Making Women Asylum Seekers’ Bodies Sites for Political Struggle

The consensus among policymakers that the persons in question are not asylum seekers, but rather labor migrants who threaten Israel, allows for strategies with unacceptable implications for women’s rights and human rights. These implications are not small-scale phenomena impacting only a minority of women asylum seekers living in Israel. In fact, most women asylum seekers in Israel are of a reproductive age. Moreover, 80 interviews conducted recently by the Aid Organization for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Israel (ASSAF), revealed that 48 women (60

percent of all interviewees), have experienced domestic violence.<sup>1</sup> This implies that Israel is, in fact, systematically withholding a safe haven for women asylum seekers.

The systematic violation of women asylum seekers' basic rights in the name of the country's security manifests a process of politicization of their bodies. Although it is not women's bodies that are at the center of this policy or the debate over it, the de facto implications discussed above makes them a site for political conflict and thus politicizes them.

This process of politicization is also evident in the recent policy proposal made by Israel's Minister of Interior, which includes enforcing laws prohibiting the employment of asylum seekers. This proposal, which will push asylum seekers into greater poverty, entails distinct repercussions for women, as in the face of no legal employment, along with the need to provide for themselves and their families, many more women asylum seekers may be pushed into illegal sex work.

Although the recent policy developments towards refugees in Israel require immediate scrutiny to prevent the violation of human rights for the entire community, the need to analyze it through a gender perspective is also pressing. The bodies of women asylum seekers should not become sites for political conflict in the quest to limit asylum seekers' numbers in Israel.

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**Hagar Siboni graduated from the International Relations Department of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 2016. She currently studies at Glocal in the 7th cohort.**

<sup>1</sup> "Asylum Seekers who are Victims of Domestic Violence: The next murder is around the corner," (Aid Organization for Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Israel, November 2015), 1, <http://assaf.org.il/en/sites/default/files/u8/Asylum%20Seekers%20who%20are%20Victims%20of%20Domestic%20Violence.pdf>

## Analysis

# The Hijab in Indonesia: An Investigation into the Unprecedented Rise in Women Donning the Traditional Headscarf

Daniela Roichman and Allison Sheehan Cohen

**The authors of this article consider the recent rise in the number of Indonesian women who wear the hijab by drawing on academic research to explore their decision to do so and the external factors that structure it.**

Indonesia is the world's most populous Muslim nation, with 88 percent of its approximately 261 million people self-identifying as Muslims. In terms of customs, however, the way people practice religion in Indonesia varies significantly from the Middle East, where Islam originated. Veiling, for example, is widely considered a Middle Eastern custom that until recently was only embraced by a small minority of the rural population and the older generation. In the past two decades, however, there has been a rise in the number of women wearing the hijab, fueled primarily by young, well-educated women from urban areas.<sup>1</sup> While Javanese women have long played prominent roles in family and public life, enjoying the right to own farm land, operate small businesses, participate in schooling, and even initiate divorce,<sup>2</sup> this trend toward veiling poses questions about women's status and place in contemporary Indonesian society.

Ethnographic research in Indonesia reveals the motives of young Muslim women in donning the hijab to be intricate, often

stemming from a desire to reconcile increased dedication to Islam and the values espoused therein, reflecting a new awareness and a deepening understanding of their religious duty. According to Nancy Smith-Hefner, women oppose the idea that external pressures influence their decision to veil, stressing the deeply personal character of the practice. Considering that veiling is a relatively new and foreign practice in Indonesia, which is not always welcomed by the older generation, women who do don the veil undertake this practice in defiance of the wishes of parents, husbands, and other figures of authority. Hence, rather than demonstrating women's lack of autonomy and heavy reliance on their parents, it points to women's agency, autonomy, and choice.<sup>3</sup>

While women's testimonies reflect a commonality in understanding that the decision to veil must be voluntary and stem from a woman's own awareness and individual will, pressure to veil does surface in multiple accounts, according to Suzanne Brenner. Indeed, many women who do choose to veil do so, among other reasons, because of strong pressure from friends or siblings. Such findings undermine the assumption that veiling is the sole result of a woman's free choice and a manifestation of her agency.

The implications of such choice on women should also be considered. According to Brenner, while choosing to veil may indicate a woman's autonomy and the ability to choose for herself, veiled women inevitably need to comply with various social norms that women who do not veil are not expected to obey.

1 Elizabeth M. Bucar, "Secular Fashion, Religious Dress, and Modest Ambiguity: The Visual Ethics of Indonesian Fashion-Veiling," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 44, no. 1 (2016): 68-90.

2 Nancy J. Smith-Hefner, "Javanese Women and the Veil in Post-Soeharto Indonesia," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 66, no. 2 (2007): 389-420.

3 Suzanne Brenner "Reconstructing Self and Society: Javanese Muslim Women and 'The Veil,'" *American Ethnologist* 23, no. 4 (November 1996): 673-697.



Smith-Hefner cites holding hands with male friends, avoiding tight clothes, and swimming as examples of such behavioral restrictions. Hence, careful consideration must be given to the idea that greater autonomy in personal choice does not automatically signify greater freedom. Indeed, a woman who chooses to veil often must act in ways that are decidedly more constrained than before veiling.

Looking at this practice from a different angle, Elizabeth Bucar reports that in recent years veiling has also become a form of fashionable self-expression, with a growing movement of women wearing the veil for merely aesthetic reasons. Veiling, and most especially fashion-veiling, challenges both Western constructions of beauty and the moral authority of the male clerics. In doing so, veiling might be considered a form of liberation, allowing Indonesian women to determine the weight, virtue, or value of the veil, and by extension, Islamic dress in general. By redefining the functionality of the veil, women are also challenging notions that equate the veil to inward piety.

Veiling, according to Brenner, is also a way to challenge the Western notion of modernity. Increased dedication to Islam offers a way for Indonesians to validate their sense of belonging to the modern world without having to adopt a consumerist or self-indulgent Westernized lifestyle, which in the eyes of many Indonesians lacks morality and religiosity. By identifying with the international Islamic community, they join a modern, global fellowship of Muslims who imagine themselves united in a shared set of beliefs and values. Therefore, as Smith-Hefner argues, veiling functions as a symbol of participation in a world that is at once modern and Islamic.

In addition, particularly among the ultra-religious Salafi women in Makassar, wearing the full chador (“cadar” in Indonesian) allows Salafi women greater visibility in the public sphere. Women who wear the chador and are actively involved in the Wahdah Islamiyah movement are no longer kept in the background. Instead, these women play an integral part in the recruitment of newcomers, and therefore in the continued development of the movement. Yet, it is critical to consider that wearing the chador is a precondition for that participation, and hence women’s agency depends on it. We learn from Smith-Hefner that veiling can also be a precondition for feeling secure in the public space, and may therefore be suggestive of disempowerment. Interactions within the coed framework of the university experience, Smith-Hefner tells us, have caused some university students to consider veiling as a means to enjoy freedom of movement while protecting against unwanted male advances and harassment.

**“Veiling, and most especially fashion-veiling, challenges both Western constructions of beauty and the moral authority of the male clerics.”**

Ultimately, women reported a multitude of reasons behind their decision to veil, not always relying on merely one. Their decision, it should be emphasized, is not always separated from the wider social context and the fear of suffering from a variety of societal implications. Hence, we suggest further research on the micro level to more fully understand the most prevalent motives for veiling, as well as consistent monitoring to better understand the trend as it evolves. Such an investigation should be focused on the decision-making processes of individuals, considering external factors that contribute to and affect it, rather than focusing on its outcome, which might be easily misinterpreted when removed from the broader cultural context. As such, it is crucial to consider social context in order to make sure that a women's own individual preferences are the main factors that determine her decision, and not external pressure.

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Alison Sheehan Cohen graduated from Glocal in 2017. She currently works at the African Refugee Development Center (ARDC) in Tel Aviv.

*From the Field*

# Innovative Education for Girls and Women in Rural India

Thaiza Diaz and Jacob Sztokman

**In this article, the authors detail the various challenges that exist in educating girls in rural India. They then offer three approaches to overcoming these obstacles and promoting education for girls in underserved rural villages.**

Jyoti is a vivacious, energetic eight-year-old girl from the remote village of Bendgaon in the rural Palghar district in India's State of Maharashtra. Jyoti has never opened a book, and her family did not send her to school for a variety of cultural and socio-economic reasons, unlike her brother who was sent to school, as boys' education is valued. The local school is five kilometers away, too far for a girl to walk by herself. Jyoti's parents would prefer her at home, learning to cook and maintain a household. Not that an education would help Jyoti much; teaching methods in the nearest school are rigid and archaic, the teachers undertrained and unreliable. Besides, by the time she reaches adolescence, she would have likely dropped out of education anyway, either to prepare for marriage or simply because she would have begun menstruating.

Jyoti is not alone. According to the 2011 Census of India, only one out of every 100 girls in rural India reaches twelfth grade. The organization Educate Girls found that 2.5 million Indian girls have never been to school – in part because only 55 percent of schools have toilets for girls.<sup>1</sup> The Nielsen Corporation reports that 25 percent of girls quit school when they begin menstruating because they have no sanitary facilities.

The education of girls in India is vital, not only for the girls in question but also for entire communities and societies. A great deal of research has demonstrated that when girls in developing communities are educated, the benefits create ripple effects for entire villages and regions. However, achieving this means overcoming centuries-old social and cultural attitudes and practices.

## Origins of Educational Inequality

The Indian educational system has long been influenced by religious and political powers that have an interest in retaining social hierarchies and inequalities. In the Hindu caste system, elite priestly castes learned scripture while warrior castes learned methods of war. Traditional schools called gurukuls catered to higher castes, while lower castes were denied any formal education. Although literacy rates steadily increased under British colonial rule, the Western educational system implemented in villages was rigid and geared toward educating the masses in ways that could best serve the colonial powers. Simultaneously, the educational system was geared towards boys, favoring males from select social classes, and ensuring that the most rigid hierarchy – the gender hierarchy – stayed in place.

The current Indian educational system mirrors the antiquated British colonial educational framework in its structure, function, and attitudes toward gender – especially in vulnerable rural communities. While more affluent urban schools have adopted progressive approaches to education, these changes have yet to reach more remote rural areas. The 2009 Right to Education Act (RTE) guarantees the fundamental right of education for all and is a major step forward. Tellingly, however, this law includes a threat of imprisonment for schoolteachers and headmasters who do not allow girls or members of low castes to enter – offering a glimpse into the power of existing social attitudes. Although the RTE law has resulted in massive increases in the number of students enrolled, it has failed to raise the quality of education to meet the needs of girls and lower caste members.

The result has been that children from vulnerable communities, especially girls, have slipped through the educational cracks, with family commitments or economic pressures taking precedence over their education.<sup>2</sup> Girls in this culture are often valued more for their servitude towards family than for their minds.

1 Jacqueline Bhabha and Anisha Gopi, *Triggering Success: Innovative Interventions to Promote Educational Access in India*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Southeast Asia Institute, 2016), 10, <http://www.educategirls.ngo/pdf/Triggering%20Success%20Innovative%20Interventions%20to%20Promote%20Educational%20Access.pdf>

2 Sabrina Fernandes, "Girls Versus Boys: Parents' Attitudes Toward Children's Educational Attainment in South Asia," (Population Association of America Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, 2006), <http://paa2006.princeton.edu/papers/60544>.



Picture by Jacob Sztokman, India

**“Initiatives that are top-down or that fly in like helicopters onto the ground without engaging with members of the local community are doomed to failure.”**

## Girls' Education

Over the past few years, a shift in the attitude towards girls' education in India has begun, thanks to the work of a plethora of educators, researchers, policymakers, and activists. Many NGOs and think tanks are working on powerful initiatives to bring much-needed education to girls in the most remote rural areas of India.

However, even the most well-meaning initiatives sometimes fail to bring girls into the classroom. The primary obstacle is not always the lack of initiatives; sometimes the biggest obstacle is a system of entrenched cultural beliefs and practices.

According to research by UNICEF<sup>3</sup> – and confirmed by our experience working with vulnerable communities in remote rural regions of Maharashtra, India – three key factors are crucial for enabling the best possible outcomes for educating girls in remote rural areas: innovative pedagogy, community empowerment, and holistic child development.

## Innovative Pedagogy

The first obstacle to girls' education is archaic teaching methods and the lack of proper training for educators. The idea that rural children of all castes deserve the same progressive pedagogy as everyone else is sometimes considered radical. Changing this attitude in order to enable rural children – both girls and boys – to have access to quality education is the first step in advancing girls' education. Such a change entails not only breaking out of the old “chalk and talk” methods but also recognizing the potential of each child, no matter who they are.

## Community Empowerment

Initiatives that are top-down or that fly in like helicopters onto the ground without engaging with members of the local community

are doomed to failure. This is a lesson that is constantly being learned in the world of development, and girls' education is no different. Change only happens when local community members take charge and are fully empowered as agents of change. Where NGOs work with local women and seek to educate them as teachers and counselors, change will happen more readily. When local women become school leaders, the girls in class – as well as the boys – see their teachers as role models and internalize the potential of women.

## Holistic Child Development

When working with vulnerable communities, it is not enough to provide literacy without attending to other crucial elements. A child who comes to school hungry or is malnourished is unable to receive the greatest benefit from his or her lessons. Education for vulnerable communities such as remote rural girls must also mean attending to health, nutrition, and hygiene, alongside literacy. For girls there is a crucial extra component: schools must find solutions for menstruating girls. This means providing adequate bathroom facilities, hygiene products, and proper education regarding the body. It also means teaching the girls and their families that they can continue to study well into adolescence and beyond.

Taken together, these components offer the best chance of success in educating girls and empowering women. Every time a girl is educated, the entire community benefits.

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<sup>3</sup> “Basic education and gender equality: Indian girls demand equal access to education,” UNICEF, April 11, 2005, [https://www.unicef.org/education/index\\_25979.html](https://www.unicef.org/education/index_25979.html)

## Analysis

# The Gender Paradox of Human Trafficking: The Triple Role of Women

Naama Hecht

**This article examines the complex relationship between women and human trafficking, analyzing their respective roles as victims, perpetrators, and agents for change. The author draws on experiences in northern Thailand to detail measures that are being taken by and for women to address the issue of human trafficking.**

The International Labour Organization's (ILO) recent estimates suggest that around 40 million people are trapped in some form of modern-day slavery,<sup>1</sup> an umbrella term that also encompasses many forms of human trafficking. Defined as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons by use of force or other means of coercion with the purpose of exploitation,"<sup>2</sup> human trafficking includes forced labor, sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, organ harvesting, and forced begging. Despite extensive efforts to combat trafficking in persons, and despite the eighth Sustainable Development Goal's explicit call to take immediate and active measures to eradicate the phenomenon, human trafficking remains a grave global concern.

The role women play in this phenomenon is complex. They are primary targets of human trafficking, involved in carrying out the atrocities of trafficking, and, as I learned during my internship at the Center for Girls (CFG) – a local grassroots organization operating in

northern Thailand's remote border region of Chiang Khong – they are also part of the solution.

## Women as Victims

Despite the fact that the share of male victims has seen an increase in recent years, victims of human trafficking continue to be predominantly female. According to the 2016 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report authored by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), women and girls together account for 71 percent of the total number of known victims. This is partly traced to a consistently higher demand for females, as over half of all human trafficking victims are channeled into the sex industry, but it is not the sole explanation. In many parts of the world, traditional views entrench the perception of women as less valuable in their own eyes as well as those of their community and family, ultimately generating a narrow expectation of the lives they can expect to lead. Confined to specific fields of work and/or facing limited access to education, women's financial prospects diminish, making them more susceptible to exploitation and inherently easier to prey upon.

In northern Thailand, I have seen how these perceptions help to increase the vulnerability of women. As a source, transit, and destination country for human trafficking, Thailand, particularly its rural north, is a focal point of trafficking within the region. This region's proximity to the Golden Triangle, one of the world's most infamous drug and human trafficking routes, its proximity to source countries such as Laos and Myanmar, and the general vulnerability of the local population – a large majority of whom belong to stateless hill tribes that are denied the rights and protections awarded to Thai citizens – make human trafficking a constant threat. Yet women face even greater risk due to ingrained

1 Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage, (Geneva: International Labour Organization, 2017), 5, [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms\\_575479.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/@dgreports/@dcomm/documents/publication/wcms_575479.pdf)

2 For the full definition, see Article 3 of the UN's Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children (2000). <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ProtocolTraffickingInPersons.aspx>



Picture by Naama Hecht, Thailand

gender bias and the inequality, discrimination, and abuse that emanate from it.

### Women as Perpetrators

Although they are the primary victims, the proportion of women engaged in the act of trafficking is also significant. Recent estimates by the UNODC find that 37 percent of those convicted for their involvement in human trafficking are women, a higher proportion than for any other international organized crime. Holding low-level positions or leadership roles, women are observed throughout the trafficking process as recruiters, traffickers, or beneficiaries. Many times these women were themselves victims of human trafficking and are either forced to traffic others or are promised rewards in return. Although human trafficking is often conducted using coercion, force, or deception, trust is also a key element. For this reason, women, who are often seen as more trustworthy, especially in the eyes of other women and girls, have an added advantage as perpetrators.

This was also apparent in northern Thailand, where girls often find themselves lured into the sex industry by women who themselves work in the industry. Often this is done by women they know, perhaps acquaintances or family members, who do not necessarily do it out of malice, but rather for lack of knowing better, believing that it is the norm or simply a good way for girls to make a living. At a local shelter housing teenage girls who had been identified as being at risk of falling victim to trafficking, I met several young girls who were there on account of this well-known danger. One girl was at risk because her mother was a sex worker, while another had a sister plying that trade. Because of the high odds that these young girls would follow in their footsteps, they were brought to the shelter, which offered them a protective and supportive home.

### Women as Activists

Nevertheless, women are also to be found at the forefront of the struggle to abolish human trafficking. In the course of my internship, I saw local women come together to take an active stand against the continued practice of trafficking within their

communities and witnessed their incredible efforts to end the imminent threat by addressing key issues.

Recognizing that the underlying causes that make women in the region vulnerable to trafficking include their impoverished circumstances, gender inequality, and lack of familiarity with their rights, CFG supports local women in their efforts to address these shortfalls. Led by a clear participatory approach, CFG works in close partnership with community representatives, and its projects aim to empower women and help them become agents of change. By educating them on their rights, increasing their understanding of what is considered abuse and trafficking, and developing their self-confidence and leadership skills, it pushes them to harness their potential and channel it towards protecting not only themselves but also those around them.

Indeed, these women can already be credited with considerable accomplishments. Firstly, the recent elections of women to several influential leadership positions in their villages have brought communities closer both to a change in attitudes towards women and to laws and policies that will protect them. Secondly, the successful establishment of communal social enterprises has strengthened women's economic independence and reduced their risk of falling victim to exploitation. Thirdly, the formation of a strong network of women who act as watchdogs in their communities has raised awareness and increased reporting of the trafficking, abuse, and exploitation that occur in these communities.

Change is gradual, but the change that I have been seeing is promising, and it is the women who are leading this change. Taking charge of their lives and fearlessly tackling root causes, they are playing an instrumental role in the battle against human trafficking.

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Naama Hecht is in her senior year at Glocal. During the program, she interned at the Center for Girls, a grassroots organization in northern Thailand.

## Interview

# Lessons from Meghalaya: The Story of Hasina Kharbhih

Tamar Almog

**Below is a profile of Hasina Kharbhih, an activist and social entrepreneur from northeastern India. The author uses insights from Kharbhih's life to reflect on how other women in the global south might become catalysts for change.**

The world as we know it is based on given foundations of power, which are nurtured by social norms, and are often too difficult to alter. An individual's place of birth, nationality, and socio-economic background determine what the rest of his or her life will look like with greater probability than we would wish for. In a canonical paper, Peggy McIntosh points out that the term "privilege," specifically that of a white male, is "an invisible package of unearned assets,"<sup>3</sup> paving the way to various professional successes. What then, may enable a non-white woman living in the developing world to become a social entrepreneur, both voicing her most relevant opinions and impacting many other people's lives? What would be her own "invisible package"?

Let us try and answer these questions in the best way I know of – telling a story. Hasina Kharbhih is a social entrepreneur in the field of child rights and women's empowerment, operating internationally. Her home is located in the center of Shillong, the capital of Meghalaya, one of the eight northeastern states of India. This area is known to be more tribal, and, as some might say, alienated from other parts of mainstream India. People here look, dress, and talk differently. Long Jainsens replace saris. Kharbhih's house is a traditional Khasi home. We sat together in her living room, decorated with artifacts she had collected from around the world and diplomas documenting her many achievements.

Hasina's long change-making journey goes back to her 8th grade

year, which served as a starting point. "We were to participate in a group called LTS - Leadership Training Services – that brings together young people from school. Every Saturday and Sunday we had time to do social work, and serve the communities – going to hospitals, cleaning up, storytelling with the elders, the street children. We had various activities and I just loved it," Hasina told me.

When high school ended, Hasina decided to take it a step further: "I felt so lost that this part of life was not there anymore when we have completed our school, so I decided to get a group of friends who were very much active with me, and said, 'Let's form an alumni group together. Let's get back to what we like to do.'" The group initially met in Hasina's home, trying to figure out how to form an initiative that had never been done before. After initiating a few successful fundraisers, Hasina had realized that there was a need for a more structured organization, and then came the birth of Impulse NGO Network, the organization that Hasina runs today, decades on. While the objectives and strategies had drastically changed, the main vision stayed intact: to promote the well-being of the weak and less-protected while raising awareness of the government's responsibility for its people's rights. Specifically, Hasina focuses on the prevention of child labor and human trafficking as well as on the promotion of child rights in Southeast Asia.<sup>4</sup>

Knowing that her parents wanted first and foremost to assure her academic success, young Hasina had to think and act creatively in order to continue her other pursuits without defying them. At the age of 17, during college enrollment, she made an unusual request to her parents: to study at a morning college, knowing that studying during early hours could allow her to work on Impulse NGO Network during the daytime. "I could have said that what I

3 Peggy McIntosh, "White privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack," *Peace and Freedom*, July/August 1989

4 For further information about Hasina's venture, see <https://www.hasinakharbhih.com/>



Picture by Tamar Almog, India

started was so precious to me, and that I don't want to give up, but that was not something they would buy into. They have made their point clear: you need to do well academically. Therefore, I said that getting up for the 6 a.m. class would help me be even more productive; I will do better and will have more time to study." As we sit in her home now, Hasina's mother is smiling at us, sitting next to the fireplace: "My parents tried to support me, but they could not understand," Hasina explained. "It took them almost 8-10 years of my work to really understand what it is that I am doing here. Then they felt very proud."

When she was 18, another important event took place. Hasina came to the realization that a large decrease in child labor in Meghalaya could be achieved through the employment of mothers as female artisans. Hasina based this diagnosis on the idea that "if the village women's income would grow, they won't have to send their children to work." Hasina went forward and boldly sent a hundred letters to importers around the globe, informing them about locally handmade designs in rural Meghalaya. This fruitful

act not only turned out to be the starting point of her major economic livelihood initiative, helping rural women from three different countries to generate money from hand-woven art crafts, but it also taught Hasina a lesson about the results of a young person's determination: "When you are young, you don't mind making mistakes. You are always aiming to do better, overcoming obstacles. That is the nature of starting young, exploring, proving yourself that you can do, that you can make that dream a reality."

Hasina's story reveals the role of strong personal characteristics in becoming a social entrepreneur – persistence, creativity, willingness to work hard, a drive for change, and even bravery. These characteristics serve as protection in the face of professional and local challenges embedded in the multiple-marginal position of being born a woman in a tribal region in the global south. Yet, reading between the lines, we can identify two more major astory shows, starting young enables one to dream further, make mistakes and recover faster, and therefore critically change one's career path. Secondly, Hasina is a member of the Khasi tribe, known to be one of the only matriarchal societies in the world. Being the youngest daughter in the family, she was destined, by tradition, to inherit the family assets and take charge of the household, and therefore have more power compared to other women in the developing world. As Hasina puts it: "being in a Khasi society, the equality of men and women is there, women do well because you have equal opportunities in all fields."

**"Hasina's story reveals the role of strong personal characteristics in becoming a social entrepreneur – persistence, creativity, willingness to work hard, a drive for change, and even bravery."**

"I am coming from a small place. To do what I was doing, from the time that I was doing it, is still a big question for many people." As Hasina herself puts it, her story is inspiring and exceptional in a way that makes one question if it can even be repeated on a greater scale. Yet, an inductive analysis, unpacking the "invisible package" of this case, has revealed the effects of three influences: personality characteristics, gender dynamics in the community, and starting young. While the first two are difficult to alter, it is possible to create an atmosphere that will encourage young women to accomplish their dreams and become agents of change on their own, which could potentially catalyze the rise of female leaders across the global south. This insight should stand as a basis for interventions that aim for sustainability.

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**Tamar Almog graduated from Glocal in 2017. She is currently finishing her master's thesis at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.**

## *A Project at a Glance*

# Go: Creating Sustainable Local Economies in Nepal

Maya Whitefield

Recently, GO-Micro-Entrepreneurship Development and Tevel b'Tzedek have come together in a joint venture in order to continue to create sustainable local communities in Nepal. The goal of the joint venture "GO" is to support entrepreneurs in the transition towards sustainable independence by the development of micro-businesses. Tevel b'Tzedek is an Israeli NGO that believes in working together with impoverished communities to enhance their livelihood, capacity, and Well-being. Tevel b'Tzedek provides the platform, infrastructure, and knowledge in the field of community development with over a decade of experience in Nepal. GO-Micro-Entrepreneurship Development provides knowledge in the field of micro-entrepreneurship with vast experience working with women in the establishment of their businesses in Israel. Additionally, they supported the construction of the work outline of the project based on the model that was developed in Israel.

The project is being implemented in communities that Tevel b'Tzedek works with, both in rural villages in Nepal's Ramechhap district and in Kalimati, an impoverished neighborhood in Kathmandu. The pilot consists of twenty entrepreneurs in various stages; some are beginning to form a business and some are looking to expand their existing venture. The businesses are in numerous fields such as commercial farming, noodles-making, running a general shop or stand, tailoring, local crafts (such as carpets and Thangka paintings), and more.

We have come to understand so far that there are differences between the needs of the entrepreneurs in the village and those in city. In the village, there are better support systems, social capital,

and more access to local financial systems needed for business management, such as cooperatives. This is due to the fact that usually it is easier to form a microfinance group in the village. These benefits in the village can be crucial to the success of the entrepreneur.

The pilot project takes place in villages that Tevel b'Tzedek is phasing out from after four years of work. There is a synthesis between the phase-out process, which encompasses the transfer of full responsibility to the community, and the work model of the project. One of the core beliefs of the project is that most of the "knowledge" already lies with the entrepreneur. A big part of the work involves assembling the knowledge and emphasizing the strengths of each entrepreneur. The local staff work closely with the entrepreneurs; they provide knowledge and skills on a personal and group level, which includes building a business plan, identifying the vision of the entrepreneur, breaking it down into goals and a work plan, marketing, financial work in regards to the household and business, offering institutions as sources for a loan, group support, and more.

The potential impact of the pilot is to promote a sustainable local economy. The income of individuals, families, and the community as a whole will grow, creating job opportunities and the chance for people to sustain themselves in the village rather than having to look for financial opportunities elsewhere. This pilot can therefore help reduce migration to cities and thus reduce related vulnerability, which is a current issue in Nepal.

The central working assumption that drives the pilot is the



Picture by Maya Whitefield, Nepal

## **“We have come to understand so far that there are differences between the needs of the entrepreneurs in the village and those in city.”**

importance of proactivity, initiative, willingness of the entrepreneur, and the aspiration she has to build or expand her business. The spirit of the entrepreneur becomes important when entrepreneurs decide to take action on the current situation relating to themselves and, as a result, to the community. In some of the communities we work with, there is a severe lack of water and local traditional agriculture is not sufficient to create sustainable income, which has led people in the village to create new opportunities for work and manifest the “entrepreneurial” spirit. Every business that sprouts from the community increases the overall income of the municipal unit. For example, one of the entrepreneurs we work with intends to open a shop that will sell groceries that are not attainable in the village. In this way, people from the community will buy these groceries in the local market instead of driving to Kathmandu or other cities. If people in the community have more income, there is a bigger chance that they will stay in the village instead of seeking

job opportunities elsewhere. Finally, people who find their current income insufficient and need to adjust its source can do so, young adults and families can find a source of income in the village and stay, and the community’s welfare will be more sustainable.

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Maya Whitefield is in her senior year at Glocal. During her internship, she was the project manager of the “GO” pilot project in Nepal, which is a joint venture of Tevel b’Tzedek and GO-Micro-Entrepreneurship Development. Over the past two years, Maya has facilitated Tevel b’Tzedek’s Fellowship program.

*From the Field*

# Gender Development in the Digital Age: ICT Training for Tanzanian Schoolgirls

Thu-Phung Banh

**This article examines efforts to empower young Tanzanian women by leveraging opportunities in information and communication technology.**

## Industrial Revolution

The mechanization of the textile industry in Britain in the late 18th century marked the first industrial revolution. Two centuries later, the second industrial revolution arrived with the age of mass production and automated manufacturing. Since the mid-20th century, humankind has been experiencing a groundbreaking transformation in how we produce and consume, in a third industrial revolution described as an intersection where the lines between physical, digital, and biological technologies are blurred.<sup>1</sup>

History suggests that industrial and technological advancement constitute key vehicles of economic growth, improved standards of living, and material affluence, which contribute to development. However, if previous industrial revolutions are measured by global economic and social inequality, it remains unclear how much progress has actually been achieved. Nonetheless, many still cling to the expectation that developing countries will seize this opportunity to eradicate existing inequality and contribute to economic, social, and environmental development in a sustainable manner.

<sup>1</sup> Klaus Schwab, "The Fourth Industrial Revolution: what it means, how to respond," World Economic Forum, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-what-it-means-and-how-to-respond/>.

## Internet Penetration and the Gender Gap in Tech

According to the International Telecommunications Union, as of 2016 there was a 12 percent gender gap in Internet usage across the globe. When it comes to the least developed countries, this number is up almost 30 percent. This statistic is also suggestive of women's participation, achievement, and continuation in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) education as well as in the information and communication technology (ICT) sector. In Tanzania, the ICT sector has particular potential to empower women; the World Bank reports that Internet penetration in the country remains relatively low at 13 percent, while women make up almost half of the labor force – mainly in the informal economy. Recognizing this potential, there have been many initiatives from both the public and private sectors in Tanzania. I have had the privilege to take part in one of these initiatives – Apps and Girls.<sup>2</sup>

## Apps and Girls

Considering young girls as agents of change and future leaders, Apps and Girls strives to provide young girls aged 13-19 with entrepreneurship skills and technical tools so that they can solve problems within their communities by leveraging technology, creating sustainable social enterprises, and bridging the gender gap in the ICT sector. To achieve this, Apps and Girls offers young girls a wide range of support, including technical training

<sup>2</sup> For more information, see [www.appsandgirls.com](http://www.appsandgirls.com).



Picture by Thu-Phung Banh, Tanzania

courses (coding and web development), soft skills workshops (entrepreneurship, presentation, and design thinking), hack-athons, boot camps, local and international competitions, and internship opportunities. In addition to this, the organization accommodates and mentors its beneficiaries through a three-year incubator program. As part of the mentorship program, the girls also get the opportunity to visit companies, organizations, and public offices in order to learn how they operate and explore their areas of interest.

### Personal Experience – Lack of Access

Working with young girls from public secondary schools in Dar es Salaam, I saw first-hand their passion for learning beyond what their schools could offer. Lack of access to ICT knowledge and guidance is the main obstacle in empowering these girls. I visited three school labs where the IT infrastructure was not advanced enough, but the students were eager to gain as much knowledge as possible from their technical training sessions. I met Asha and Fatma Abbas, who travel at least four hours back and forth just to get more knowledge and guidance. There is something about coding that attracts these young girls, many of whom code with pen and paper since access to a computer is not a given. I asked myself many times: What can the public and private sectors do to improve these girls' access to the world of information on the Internet?

### Personal Experience – Disparity Between Public and Private Educational Institutions

Another thing that I came across was the disparity between public and private educational institutions in Tanzania. While the recent establishment of free primary education has increased the number of enrolments, the quality of education has decreased drastically due to lack of resources. Private schooling has become the ideal option for those who are in search of better education and who can afford it. Perceiving public education as lacking quality and existing only for disadvantaged children, Tanzania's middle and upper classes prefer to enroll their children in private schools.<sup>3</sup> Based on my observation, the low-quality education has direct impact on students' motivation, achievement, and confidence. I met several female managers with private school backgrounds who expressed different attitudes and perceptions compared to others who were educated in public schools. Empowerment goes together with self-confidence; I was told that the girls do not lack ideas to change the world. However, there are few initiatives to help young girls build the confidence in themselves to pursue them.

<sup>3</sup> "Low quality of public schools drives parents towards private education in Tanzania," (ActionAid, 2017), 2, [http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/tanzania\\_policy\\_paper.pdf](http://www.actionaid.org/sites/files/actionaid/tanzania_policy_paper.pdf)

### Personal Experience - Public Sector's Involvement

During my time in Tanzania, I met so many inspiring girls who hold ideas or leverage technology in order to solve societal problems, such as offering sexual health education to teenagers or creating employment opportunities for housewives. I had the pleasure to mentor some of them, and to make sure that their ideas received sufficient support to materialize. Some of these ideas have received international attention. For instance, one of the projects consisted of developing an app to detect fake or expired medicine. My mentee and I met with the Ministry of Health and received interest, enthusiasm, and support to develop the project further. This is a good sign that organizations within the public sector are interested in supporting these young change-makers.

### Personal Experience – Private Sector's Involvement

Needless to say, it is important to mention the crucial role of the private sector in the field of ICT for development (ICT4D). As part of my work with Apps and Girls, I reached out to many tech corporations for potential partnerships. Surprisingly, most of them expressed interest in supporting the initiative and agreed that it is important to empower more girls to pursue education and careers in the ICT sector. While corporate social responsibility (CSR) is still a relatively recent concept among local companies, the initiative has received both in-kind and financial support as part of CSR efforts by multinational tech corporations that operate in Tanzania.

**“Empowerment goes together with self-confidence; I was told that the girls do not lack ideas to change the world. However, there are few initiatives to help young girls build the confidence in themselves to pursue them.”**

### Closing

Tanzania still has considerable work to do to empower more women to participate in the formal economy – especially in the ICT industry. However, observing the many initiatives to equip girls with technical skills and ignite their confidence, can-do attitude, and creativity, I can see that Tanzania is equipping itself in order to be part of the ongoing socio-technological changes. The future looks promising, and I believe in the many bright young girls in Tanzania as the next generation of leaders who will play a central role in their country's development.

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**Thu-Phung Banh has a BBA degree from Haaga-Helia University and was also a fellow at the Israel-Asia Center. She currently studies at Glocal and participates in various STEM initiatives that promote girls' empowerment.**



*From the Field*

# Sports and Development from a Gender Perspective: The Value Sports Ofek Leadership Program for Young Female Athletes

Adi Mohel

**In this article, the author reflects on some of the difficulties facing female athletes in Israel today, then describes her experience working in a leadership program that seeks to address these issues.**

Tasnim, the Value Sports facilitator at the Ofek Leadership Program for female athletes in Nazareth and Shefar'am, drew an especially turbulent session to a close. The subject addressed was portrayals and representations of female athletes in society and the media. The session began with scattered photographs of female athletes in the room – a few photos demonstrating their strength during athletic performance, others featuring them holding a ball and smiling while wearing a dress and a face full of makeup, and others depicting them nude as part of a fundraising campaign. Tasnim then asked: "Who do you identify with? How would you want your picture to be taken?" The team members shared their choices and a heated debate commenced. While some identified with the more professional photographs, others felt there was a gap between being feminine and being an athlete. After the session ended, the debate continued into the night on the WhatsApp group: Can a pregnant woman still be an athlete? Is pregnancy a social or a biological barrier? Although they had been playing together for years, it was the first time the athletes had a chance to share their experiences, feelings, and thoughts on the matter with one another.

In other parts of the country, athletes from all sectors of society and

geographic areas were looking at those exact same photographs and asking similar questions. Issues raised included fears of social rejection by family and peers outside of the world of sports, social disapproval of their choices in life, a lack of role models, difficulty equating athletic qualities to feminine ones, and fears of looking masculine. All these issues sound familiar to me; they remind me of the experiences I myself had as a female athlete. At the end of the day, it was those exact issues that shaped my social awareness and drove me to work at Value Sports and to establish a project that combines both my love for sports and my passion to promote women's rights.

## Female Leaders in Sports are Needed!

Apart from enhancing health, wellness, and quality of life, participation in physical activity and sport develops skills such as teamwork, communication, goal setting, leadership, and other achievement-oriented behaviors that women and girls may not be exposed to in other contexts. Indeed, "sport provides women and girls with an alternative avenue for participation in the social and cultural life of their communities and promotes enjoyment of freedom of expression, interpersonal networks, new opportunities and increased self-esteem."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Women, gender equality and sport, (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs: Division for the Advancement of Women, 2007), 3, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/public/Women%20and%20Sport.pdf>



Picture by Adi Mohel, Israel

Although participating in sports offers so many physical, psychological, and social advantages, girls and women from all sectors of Israeli society still face social barriers that often prevent them from partaking in them. The femininity and sexuality of female athletes is continuously questioned by their environment. Every girl learns as part of her socialization process that “throwing like a girl” (meaning like herself) is always a bad thing.

As in many other areas – politics, health, and education – there is a gross underrepresentation of female athletes in key positions in sports organizations. Surrounded by male coaches, managers, and male-dominant sports media, female athletes often find themselves as outsiders in sports without female role models to look up to. According to research done in the United States in 2010 on women’s coverage in the media, coverage of women in the sports media is only about 4 percent, and it often relates to the athlete’s physical appearance or her feminine qualities, rather than her athletic aptitude.<sup>2</sup> Physical education and coaches’ courses still teach from a “one size fits all” perspective based on models derived from work with male athletes. As a result, female athletes are faced with the options of either adapting to a system that is not suited to their needs or quitting.

The International Working Group on Sport for Development and Peace addressed the urgent need to create a pool of talented and

inspiring female leaders in sports in order to create role models and mentors for young girls.<sup>3</sup> The contributions of women, particularly in leadership positions, can bring diversity and alternative approaches and expand the talent base in areas such as management, coaching, and sport journalism. As the UN Division for the Advancement of Women has claimed, the presence of women as leaders in sport can affect wider perceptions about women’s aptitudes for leadership and decision-making, especially in traditionally male-dominated domains.

### The Value Sports Ofek Leadership Program

The goal of the Ofek Leadership Program is to mentor girls in sports clubs to recognize and enhance their sense of agency, self-empowerment, and independence, and to become influential role models to others on and off the field. Each sports club participating in the program assembles a leadership team of 10-12 young female athletes between the ages of 14-18, who meet twice a month for an eight-session workshop led by a Value Sports facilitator. During the workshops, the athletes work on attaining and strengthening key skills such as teamwork, communication, goal setting, self-efficacy, and leadership. As part of the program, group participants choose a project where they can transmit the experience and skills they have acquired to younger girls in their sports club or in their schools.

2 Michael A. Messner and Cheryl Cooky, “Gender in Televised Sports: News and Highlights Shows, 1989-2009,” (University of Southern California Center for Feminist Research, June 2010), <http://dornsifecms.usc.edu/assets/sites/80/docs/tvsports.pdf>

3 Marianne Meier, “The value of female sporting role models,” *Sport in Society* 18, no. 8 (2015): 968-982.

The Ofek Leadership Program encourages the creation of female athlete communities within the male-dominated sports world. During the year, leadership teams from varied sectors and geographic areas meet together to discuss mutual strengths and challenges in creating an efficient network of young female athletes dedicated to promoting women's sport.

Developing leadership skills among young athletes fosters bottom-up personal growth that may affect young participants and female sporting role models themselves. As Marianne Meier argues, female sporting role models instill leadership skills both explicitly and by example, which in turn increases their own capacities.

The program also creates a top-down process within the sports clubs by working with key characters such as managers, coaches, and athletes' parents. Value Sports provides these agents of change with new tools and perspectives to support female athletes. Inculcating a gender perspective in the sports club creates a long-term process, which affects future generations of female athletes.

Reflections by coaches included: "This process is definitely helping me understand the girls better, improving our mutual communication, empowering them, and increasing girls' attendance," and "The girls from the leadership group keep asking me about the younger girls and when can they come and cheer them in their games."

Our measurement and evaluation results show a significant change in the unity and communication of teams. Athletes participating in the program have reported feeling more confident with their teammates: "In the beginning of the year I felt I was alone in this team and that none of the other players was trying to make friends with me. Now they are my best friends." One said: "I got to know a different side of the girls in my team, and learned how to support them in stressful situations."

The results also showed improvements in the athletes' self-efficacy and ability to handle failure and stress. Above all, many of the participants were surprised to realize for the first time that they could be looked up to as role models: "This project has strengthened my personality. Today I feel more confident and I am no longer afraid to speak in front of a group."

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**Adi Mohel graduated from Glocal in 2014. She is now working as a group facilitator and program manager at Value Sports in Israel.**

**"The goal of the Ofek Leadership Program is to mentor girls in sports clubs to recognize and enhance their sense of agency, self-empowerment, and independence, and to become influential role models to others on and off the field."**



Picture by Adi Mohel, Israel

## A Project at a Glance

# Girls Read: A Method to Reduce HIV/AIDS Rates in Zambia

Thukiwe Namfukwe

Before joining the Glocal Program, I was fortunate to work as the district project coordinator in a project called Girls Read in Ndola, Zambia.

This project, conducted by the Forum for African Women Educationalists of Zambia (FAWEZA) in partnership with Population Council and World Reader (with funding support from the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)/USAID's DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored, and Safe) project) included a two-year program that was implemented in 36 schools in the three districts of Chingola, Ndola, and Lusaka. The project, which targeted a total of 1,152 adolescent girls aged 12 to 19, aimed to decrease the phenomenon of girls prematurely leaving school, a phenomenon with many harmful consequences and strong links to HIV/AIDS.

Focused in selected schools with high percentages of overaged girls, both in rural and peri-urban environments, the project had three key components: after class safe spaces, parent engagement meetings, and e-reading. The project also involved two mentors per school that mentored the girls on a regular basis, taught on topics relating to public health, and conducted fun learning activities using the e-readers (Amazon Kindles) provided to them. As a result, the girls have stronger contact with the institution and its staff and thus tend to remain in school.

This project was a part of the DREAMS initiative, which is an ambitious \$385 million USAID effort to reduce HIV prevalence among adolescent girls and young women in HIV priority areas.

As a component of this initiative, the two-year DREAMS Innovation Challenge was meant in part to address this issue of girls prematurely leaving school.

Although I had been already working with FAWEZA before the project started, I was eager to join this specific project because of its unique approach. My role was critical because besides conducting all activities and ensuring mentors delivered the curriculum to the girls, I was key in ensuring cooperation and collaboration between the different stakeholders, including the government, school managers, donors, implementing partners, parents, and, most importantly, the participating girls themselves.

I was privileged to see the first year of the project conclude with the first group of girls successfully graduating after 19 sessions. The greatest joy was to see girls graduate from the program more empowered with skills and knowledge on HIV/AIDS prevention, pregnancy, goal setting, effective communication, and assertiveness. Additionally, it was empowering to see how the parents and teachers appreciated the project and were inspired to create similar initiatives that encourage girls' schooling in their communities.

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**Thukiwe Namfukwe is in her 1st year at Glocal. Prior to joining the program, she worked as the district project coordinator of the Girl Read project in Zambia.**

*From the Field*

# A Woman's Response: The Gender Dimension of Humanitarian Crisis Intervention in Peru

Elianne Kremer

**The article below describes the author's experience working with IsraAID to respond to the floods in Northern Peru in March of 2017. In particular, it emphasizes the specific needs of women in humanitarian crises, and considers how IsraAID's response may have helped address these needs.**

In March 2017, a series of floods struck the north of Peru, leaving 162 people dead, 38,500 houses destroyed, and nearly 400,000 buildings damaged. Around a million people were directly affected by this humanitarian crisis and almost 800,000 have become internally displaced.

In terms of the local economy, 50,154 hectares of agricultural land have been lost and 107,827 more hectares were severely affected, leading to growing unemployment and a scarcity of basic food. Regarding public facilities, 3,266 educative institutions and 1,044 health centers were affected.

In post-disaster situations, displaced communities are often forced to settle in refugee and internally displaced person (IDP) camps, whether in the same location or in a new geographical area. The collapse of community life causes constant mental stress and can augment drug and alcohol abuse, crime, and domestic violence. When humanitarian crises take place, the situation becomes of particular concern for women and girls, as they can be the victims of these phenomena.

Besides these risks, the conditions of displacement, overcrowded camps, lack of privacy, lack of lighting, and limited and unsegregated washing facilities increase the risks of gender discrimination and gender-based violence. Therefore, sexual violence is common in humanitarian crisis settings, reaching an estimated rate of one in five displaced women who will experience sexual violence. The impact of this sexual violence can be devastating, and may include physical consequences including injuries, diseases, and unwanted pregnancies.

In addition, the area affected by the floods may already have a history of gender discrimination, leading to male-dominated camps, where women are excluded from decision-making mechanisms. In such situations, women are neglected and marginalized when aid is distributed, and thus tend to suffer in higher levels from scarcity.

Throughout this year, I had the opportunity to work with IsraAID in Peru, responding to this crisis and being involved in the evaluation of the work carried out in the country. This work was divided into two main fields. The first focused on the provision of water, sanitation, and hygiene solutions, with IsraAID's wash team working directly with the local population in distributing hygiene kits and filtered water; providing containers for safe water storage; teaching the communities how to building hand-washing stations, latrines, showers, and fly traps; and even increasing hygiene awareness through hygiene promotion workshops.

The second field focused on the provision of mental health services. Due to the severe psychological mark that the floods left on the affected communities, many adults and children were identified with signs of depression, panic, and anxiety. IsraAID's mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) team worked directly with the affected communities, offering them tools to cope with their trauma and psychological first aid. Moreover, IsraAID partnered with a local association called "When the Arts Attack" and trained this group to provide psychosocial support in emergencies, using methodologies of expressive arts to support children and teenagers in coping with their feelings after the crisis.

The evaluation was extremely important for us. It assisted us in reviewing our methods of implementation and considering how to improve them in order to give voice to the affected communities that are ultimately the owners and beneficiaries of our actions. In this basic evaluation, we learned that we increased the level of hygiene and sanitation for the general community, reduced risks of death due to vector-borne diseases, and introduced technology that can provide clean water on a regular basis, preventing locals from getting sick from drinking contaminated water.



Picture by Oren Yogev, Peru

**“As I used a drill to perform the installation, an eight-year-old child came by and asked, Are you going to do this? And I said to him, Yes. Why not? He said, I didn’t know that women could do this. I smiled at him and said, Both men and women can do the same things.”**

In addition, this detailed evaluation helped us in exposing an impact that was not identified throughout our ongoing work: the strong impact on women. According to our studies, constructing separate showers within shelters and opening them throughout the day allowed women and children to feel safer when taking showers, thereby increasing their use and probably reducing the risk of sexual harassment.

Moreover, when conducting the evaluation, we noticed that indirect impact became very central in the respondents’ narratives. For example, Nestor, one of our local partners, who joined the technical aspects of the construction, clearly expressed the view that the lesson of working together as a group and with the community was more essential than the technical knowledge he received. According to him, this method of local participation strengthened the community after their collective trauma and gave an answer to their pain. Furthermore, we identified that the partnership between local and foreign women in the construction work changed the dynamics of the local gender roles and exposed the importance of collaborating with all members of the community – including women – in the ongoing work.

This reminded me of an incident I had in Piura. In that area, we were working very intensively because of the large distances between schools. We usually visited three schools per day to do hygiene promotion activities for the teachers, and install sawyer filters and soap dispensers in bathrooms and kitchens. One time, in the Hermanos Melendez School in Piura, it happened that we were short on time so we divided our tasks; while Oren, my colleague, did the hygiene promotion and installed the filters, I installed the soap dispensers in the bathrooms. As I used a drill to perform the installation, an eight-year-old child came by and asked, “Are you going to do this?” And I said to him, “Yes. Why not?” He said, “I didn’t know that women could do this.” I smiled at him and said, “Both men and women can do the same things.”

In order to assist the community beyond the crisis, it is clear that these projects should be aimed towards a long-term intervention. Besides the need to construct a safe source of water as well as for sanitation and hygiene education on a larger scale, the impact on women should be further studied. Our immediate conclusion about the gender aspect of our work raises questions about the impact on local culture and dynamics as well as the sustainability of this impact. It must therefore be examined through a long-term analysis. Unfortunately, we were constrained by the need to provide an evaluation in only in a few weeks after the interventions and thus could not establish sufficient conclusions.

When we left, I reflected on how important my presence as a woman doing typically “manly stuff” was. Again I realized that the impact we had in every single place we went was much broader and powerful than we even imagined.

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**Elianne Kremer graduated from Glocal in 2017. She is currently a research assistant at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.**



**Glocal International Development is an innovative, interdisciplinary M.A. program offered by the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. This 18-month program aims to provide students with the academic theory and background, as well as professional skills and tools to work with communities across the globe. An integral part of the program is a four months internship in a developing country, which offers an opportunity to gain meaningful experience from the field.**

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