

# C@ucAsia

**international coalition of gender journalists**

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# THEORY

photo by Diana Petriashvili

# and

# ACTIVISM

## EDITOR'S NOTE:

One of my friends (let's say, her name is Irina) is very smart. She is a feminist philosopher, a very talented and active one. She has plenty of scientific publications. However, I did not read most part of them. I did my best to read it, but failed to get to the sense through the terms, names, and philosophical schools. Besides this, I have plenty of work, and thus no time. To tell the truth, I believe that my friend writes in too complicated manner, in order to sound more important, showing that she is a big-time scientist.

My other friend (let's say, her name is Aliya) is very active. She heads the shelter for trafficking victims, holds actions, collects signatures, participates in politics, organizes monitorings and media-campaigns. I am sure that she will never read Irina's texts. She neither has time, nor wish to get through the complicated articles. Aliya views herself as 'a good girl,' not at all a feminist. She protects 'traditions' and never blames them in bringing pain and desperation to women...

Both of these women have a joint goal - obtaining gender equality. This is normal. In any field of knowledge there are two sides: theoretic empyrean and everyday life, which needs to be improved.

These two women live their lives and do not come across each other. But once upon a time there is always the day, when people realize that behind the closed doors there was an active work going on. And penicillin, computer or a sensational method of oil distillation is invented.

What about gender? What enters life as the result of theoretic research?

Maybe, these:  
standards of human rights in respect of women, indicators of these rights violation, methods of analysis in different fields, methods of lobbying our interests.

The achievements of recent 15 years are the results of joint efforts of activism and gender science. But still, the task of bringing together two friends of mine remains to be on the agenda. So that the first one would more frequently go out from her crystal castle and help the second one with her everyday work. While the second one would agree with the fact that women's rights are being protected not in the shelter only.

Altyn AKHMEDOVA  
Turkmenistan  
**just life**

photo by Umida Akhmedova



*If you'd ask them, they'd reply:  
"Give us doctors and shampoo first, than talk about gender..."*

Turkmenistan. Summer. It's up to 50 degrees of heat. People work in the fields. The majority of them are women and girls, including very young ones. Their faces are covered with kerchiefs, showing their eyes only - this is the only way to survive in the heat like this.

Women weed the cotton-plants. It is a hard, wasting physical labor, given almost entirely to women. In a family with a husband, a wife and a bunch of kids - women are those who are in charge for taking care of cotton-plants; daughters-in-law, 11-12 years old daughters go to the field every day to weed the cotton. This is how it was 100, 50, 10 years ago, and this is how it is nowadays. Turkmen villager woman gets up early in the morning to begin working in the field by 7 a.m. She makes a short break for a tea (literally only tea) at 10-11, and continues

working. She may take a rest in the shadow from the noon until 3-4 p.m., when the heat reaches its climax. Tea and a piece of pie is all a worker gets for her dinner - because of the enormous heat it is impossible to bring any other meals to the field. But besides this, some women limit themselves in meals in order to treat their husbands and children. Traditionally, Turkmen families feed men and children first, women have only the remaining part of the food.

It's 4 o'clock and she restarts working again to quit after 7 p.m.

It is now time for her to work in the house: cooking, cleaning, doing laundry, milking cow - these are the tasks an average Turkmen woman is in charge for aside from working in the field.

Women do not have time to take care of themselves. It is impossible for them even to take shower with an appropriate hygienic means - this is believed to be an absolute luxury. All they can count on is a couple of buckets of water - in the case there actually is water, as there are many families who have to carry it from distant places. Not all people have soap, and shampoo is really a wonder. Pregnant women can also be frequently seen among other cotton field workers, many of them suffer from anemia. Late Turkmen president ordered to decrease the staff of doctors, which caused closure of village hospitals, and villager women do not get any medical care. On this background, there is the Union of Turkmenistan's Women acting in the country. This social organization operates under control of the president and the government and is being funded by international sponsors to carry-out its gender-related projects. But the Union's activities never reach those women, who weed cotton, make carpets, or sweep the dusty streets of Turkmen towns... These women can not participate in the Union-organized seminar and trainings. But the

Union could indeed organize doctor's examinations for them, so that the specialists would check them directly at the place of their work - that would be a real help.

Some fifteen years ago, within the frameworks of certain gender-related project, high school female students and young women were taught the rules of personal hygiene. Seminars were held at distant villages, after their completion, all participants received the sets of hygienic means. Today, the participants are already in their thirties, but they still remember these seminars

Gender! Many people in Turkmenistan have never heard about it. I asked an official of the local department of the Union of Turkmenistan's Women about what gender problems she has to deal with on behalf of her organization. She thought for quite a while and then said that in her view, all women should read Ruhnama (a two-volume book written by former president Niyazov and believed to be a moral code for every Turkmen). This book can answer any question, she said.



*after working in the field they must take care of the house*

*photo by Umida Akhmedova*

Tatiana ISAEVA  
Ukraine

**I believe!**

# GENDER ACTIVISTS, UNITE!

*theorists and experts, journalists and editors, writers and readers*

*photo by Polina Miloradovich*



Recently, a colleague of mine who is a professional gender researcher, said that she is strongly against of bringing her ideas into broad public. She explained her protest as saying that the researchers do not like when their ideas are being changed.

Of course, there are different viewpoints.

I have an opposite opinion, believing that scientific theorists should have tighter contacts with gender experts working on practice, as it would bring more benefits to the both sides. We do common business after all.

In Ukraine, social organizations are most of those who deal with gender education. These organizations receive grants from international funds and have god opportunities for self-education: they receive plenty of information, participate in various programs, professional exchanges and conferences. Enthusiasts promote the ideas of feminism and gender equality within the broad audience.

What is the purpose of this work? Money? I doubt it. This activity will not help you to solve your financial problems; this is why many of the social organizations' workers have another job, sometimes within business. They chose this occupation, spreading ideas of gender within the broad audience only because they really like it. Working within a social organization grants you the possibility of working for your ideas, the possibility to study, to travel, to find new contacts. But the most important benefit of your gender activism is that you receive the opportunity to implement your ideas under the support of your associates.

After realizing what gender equality is, many activists want to associate others with this idea, as it is impossible to start a new level of the development without reforming the people. The organization I work for, Krona, women's NGO based in Kharkiv, has a good experience

of interacting with the 'theorists.' These people are mostly women, who write about their gender researches in our "Ya" (I) magazine.

In 2006, Women's Participation in Social-Political Life project was implemented in Ukraine. The program was supported by the US Embassy's Democracy Assistance Fund. The program was implemented by All-Ukrainian Network uniting 27 NGOs based in 18 districts of the country. Considering good results, the Fund supported the new program in 2007, Equal Participation in Decision-making for Women and Men; the program has just launched on June 1.

Among the program components there is monitoring of gender equality laws implementation and gender education for journalists. Working with journalists is quite problematic, as only few of them can be considered as gender-sensitive. The goal of the program is creation of such an environment in Ukraine, where women would have equal opportunities at all levels of decision-making. Both theorists and practical experts can contribute to this ultimate goal. The task for us, the gender activists, is to make gender topics more popular for journalists, so that these topics reach broad audience.

But how should we implement this task?

I was impatiently waiting for C@ucAsia's Gender and Media issue to be published. I kept hoping that I'd find the key to the jour-

nalists' hearts. Although, I did not find it, but I found the proof to my belief that an active work with journalists is necessary in order to educate them and to make them our associates. We need to step beyond our specific gender-related magazines, to start writing for a broader audience.

I have a proposal for C@ucAsia writers.

The last issue of Ya magazine (I am its editor) in 2007 will be dedicated to the practice of solving gender problems. It will be introduced at the final conference of the Equal Participation in Decision-making for Women and Men program. I would like to offer to C@ucAsia's journalists writing articles for that issue. Dear colleagues, please let us know about how you discovered the Genderstan country. Why is it important for you? Why do you write about it without receiving neither good payment, nor popularity? We will forward your texts to the regional press-clubs, and internet resources. Probably this will enable us to attract more Ukrainian journalists?

To view electronic version of Ya magazine, please proceed to the below link:

[www.krona.org.ua](http://www.krona.org.ua)

You can reach me at the following e-mail addresses:

[tisaeva@ukr.net](mailto:tisaeva@ukr.net)

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I strongly believe in our fruitful cooperation!



CaucAs + Ya = CaucAsiYa?

photo by Diana Petriashvili

Tsitsino JULUKHIDZE

Georgia

**apropos about female journalists**

# WE HAVE OUR OWN INTERESTS WITHIN GENDER

making job more comfortable



*photo by Polina Miloradovich*

family or career - this antagonism  
made many talented women quit their jobs

GenderMediaCaucasus filmmakers Soso Mchedlishvili, Saba Amirejibi and Lela Arabuli have recently presented their new documentary. The film tells about two generations of Georgian female TV journalists. One is very young, who has just started her career; while another one is the veteran of the national television, Ms Lia Mikadze. These women do not speak about gender, they do not ask themselves abstract questions. They simply speak about their work. The young girl tells about her expectations, the older one tells about her long life within the television. She says that she had to divorce her first husband, who wanted to see her at home, not on TV. She says that the reason for her second divorce was the same. An adult daughter of Ms Lia Mikadze recalls her childhood, saying that she missed her mom a lot all the time, and kept dreaming about her mom becoming a housewife.

Lia lived in the same city, but her working place was arranged so that she was under constant

press. The same system is being operated nowadays, just as this field can never be more friendly towards people who work within it. The new generation that begins working at TV does not even consider this situation to be unfair, and, in order to soften the pressure it lowers the standards of professionalism. This is why the television loses quality, moral, dignity and responsibility.

I used to have a friend, a young journalist who really wanted to work for a newspaper. She worked on free lance basis, but wanted to become a staff professional. She got married. Her husband had no doubts about her professionalism and talent, but once they spoke about the perspective of her job within a newspaper, he said: "But you won't have time for the family, if you work as a journalist. Good-buy, dear newsroom.

Why should women face this choice? Why can't they be devoted to the job they love? And why men never have to choose between these two, the family and the career?

Ruta PELS  
Estonia

## media

# MONITORING - SCIENCE OR PRACTICE?

*researches do not have significant impact on everyday life*

Mass-media does not like media monitorings, if they are not ordered by the media. Independent results cause media's disappointment and irritation, while the results obtained by a competitor medias simply drive another media source mad. When you study the figures of some media monitoring, you can always understand wither it is the source's own research or someone else's. Of course, the 'own' monitoring will show correct development, while the competitors will misrepresent facts. Poor reader, whom should he believe?!

It should be well-understood: independent researches are the most trustworthy. But even independent studies cause harsh criticism. Medias claim that they chose wrong methods, wrong extracts and will finally let you know that you should not be doing the research. The Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) was held on February 16 2005, aiming to find out how are women represented in the media sources. The monitoring was simultaneously held in 76 world's countries. Journalists and representatives of social organizations watched, listened and read information pieces, filling-in corresponding questionnaires. The collected material was processed and analyzed by sociologists; one year later, on February 15, 2006, the results were officially published in all the countries of the world.

In Estonia, none of the monitored media sources reacted to the national results presentation. Articles on the monitoring appeared only in those newspapers, magazines and news portals, which did not take part in the monitoring.

According to these results, up to the half of all the reporters, 46 %, were women. But only 24% of women were main heroes, experts, interviewees of news articles! The increase in number of female journalists can be explained simply: young men do not like the idea of working for smaller pay. They especially ignore radio, and prefer newspapers, where salaries are higher.

In their everyday practice media managers and journalists do not tend to think about gender balance. Even those media sources that are headed by women, are gender-insensitive.

When heading to the European meeting of GMMP groups' heads in Zagreb, I grabbed Postimees, the newspaper we monitored. On that day, there were six photographs on the newspaper's front page, and all these were photos of men. Although, the newspaper's editor in chief is a woman.

It turns out that monitoring, and good technologies is not everything. Besides this, accurate practical work is necessary for using the results as a tool for conviction.



*we counted it. What next?*

*photo by Umida Akhmedova*

## **APROPOS 'THEORISTS' TO 'EXPERTS'**

Dear colleagues,

editorial board of the Journal of Social Policy Study is happy to inform you about the creation of the blog aimed at widening intercourse with the readers. To reach the blog, please follow the link:

<http://jsps-journal.blogspot.com/>

We will be glad to receive your feedback and to consider your remarks regarding the magazine, your new ideas on future issues' topics, any proposals that would help us improve the quality of publications in general.

Besides this, we propose to you to share your opinion regarding the issues of the day, social policy, development of research methods, new publications, monographs and study books. The editorial board is interested in finding new writers, including critics and columnists.

*Pavel Romanov,  
Yelena Yarskaya-Smirnova,  
Saratov, Russia*



*Who am I - a scientist, or an activist?  
Docent Larisa has no time to think about it, she has too much work to do*

*photo by Polina Miloradovich*

## **INFORMATION CONSULTATIONS CENTER**

### **as the result of joint efforts of researchers and activists**

the center's work was launched  
**in Petrozavodsk**  
under the support of  
**International Organization for  
Migration**

Within the frameworks of the human trafficking prevention project in Russia, corresponding researches are being held in three pilot regions. With this purpose, information-consultations centers were set up in Petrozavodsk, Astrakhan, and Moscow. The centers assist to unveiling trafficking victims, offer consultations help in the filed of migration, employment and corresponding risks.

Karelian information-consultations center is headed by Larisa Boichenko, docent of general legal sciences chair. This is a good example of a scientist's successful work in the field of practical activism. The first month of the Center's work demonstrated that there are many people who are in real need for assistance like this.

*Vera Khevsurishvili,  
Petrozavodsk, Russia*

Diana PETRIASHVILI  
Georgia

## two stories

# MANANA

*"Where does your mommy work?"  
"My mommy is a star."*

The conversation is over, five-years-old Manana hurries home, to see her mom. She will see her only if she's lucky today - on TV. If she's not, then she will hear her voice off-camera.

Manana sits down in front of the TV and listens attentively to her mom's voice. She misses her. Manana lives at her grandma's and visits her mom only once a month.

Manana's mom is young and very successful. She's a "TV star," as Manana puts it. She works a lot and earns quite a lot too. At first sight, the situation seems to be perfect: an independent young woman achieved at her work place more than her male colleagues. But your opinion will change once you meet little Manana, who knows by heart the schedule of TV news reports. You will find out that quite often Manana fails to stay with her mom, when there some news appear and the latter has to leave for urgent business trip. This is when Manana has to return to her grandma and restart watching TV.

"What else can I do? I have to be in a whirl," Manana's mom says.

"To be in a whirl," actually means "sacrificing." Sacrificing your family in the sake of career, or - you career in the sake of your family. The overwhelming majority of our women still have to make this choice. The situation is the same as some fifty years ago, or maybe even worse. As presently we openly speak about equality, about duties distribution and harmony. And it does not make our lives any better.



*photo by Diana Petriashvili*



photo by Umida Akhmedova



Nurzhan TULEGABYLOVA  
Kyrgyzstan

**values**

# YOUTH CHOOSES GENDER EQUALITY

*it sensibly sees the reality and builds new life strategies*

We live in the world that is getting more and more complicated. Rapid changes in science and social life are quite a big challenge for us. It is especially challenging for the youth, to whom the future belongs. It is great if education and science can become a support for the youth's outlook. An example of active participation in the life by older generation can also be very important. What do young people think about it? What scenario of gender interaction do they like? I asked this question to my students, and here is what they replied.

ASEL, 2ND YEAR STUDENT:

Today, there are many men who have two or three wives. All of these wives are unhappy. I don't think a man himself can be happy in a situation like this. We live in the society that submits this fact, as it does not take any measures to oppose this situation. More than that, polygamy is likely to be discussed by the country's parliament! This is an absolute nonsense, as polygamy is legally forbidden in Kyrgyzstan. But it still exists! And these legal norms do not play any role; they represent hypocrisy on the state level - justifying polygamy with "humanistic," "democratic," and "demographic" argument. It is hypocrisy that polygamy will improve the status of certain single and divorced women.

The scariest is that even some young people support this idea.

I don't want to live in the society, where there is violence against women, where there is polygamy, where women fail to reveal themselves as equal citizens. I think all of us should know our rights and should bravely defend them. Which means changing yourself and changing people who surround you.

SALTANAT, 1 YEAR STUDENT:

My father took practically no part in my upbringing. It is very hard to remember if he had ever took us to school or helped to do homework. Indeed, I perfectly remember father's presents - expensive toys, books. It was a normal situation for our family. My mom was in charge for taking care of the house, while father bringing money and presents. Everyone had his role.

The role of the father, who took paternity leave is absolutely unacceptable for overwhelming majority of our men (however there

are single examples of the opposite in Kyrgyzstan) - because of culture, traditions, customs. If you take paternity leave, people will label you as henpecked men. I don't think an average man can undertake such a serious step.

Men have far more opportunities than men. They can build a successful career, create a family and have 'personal life' of their own. But all of them are deprived of emotional contacts. They do not have tight relationships with their own children, neither they have good contacts with other family members. This is very important! I am sure that not all men want to be 'machos.' But the society tends to have this stereotype about men.

However, new relationships and new rules appear in the life. Today's youth will live in the new world. And it needs to be prepared so that the changes are harmonious. I think our country lacks good youth policy, which would include an important part on gender equality. This is really the society's break into the future.



It is obvious that the youth should learn gender equality rules. It is also obvious that girls like to learn it more

*photo by Diana Petriashvili*

## SCIENCE AND PRACTICE of rights protection

### IN LITHUANIA

#### SEXUAL HARASSMENT FACT PROVED FOR THE FIRST TIME

The fact was proved by the Equal Opportunities Control Service. As ITAR-TASS was informed by the Service head Aushrine Burneykene, guilty of harassment was officially warned.

The investigation began after construction firm personnel manager addressed to the service who claimed that her boss offered

her job in exchange to sexual relations. The declarant presented record of the conversation along with the evidence of her colleague.

Previously, analogous appeals to the Service remained to be unproven; in number of cases declarants declined their claims.

According to the equal opportunities law adopted in 1999 in Lithuania, for sexual harassment besides official warning, the Service can set penalty of 29 -580 Euro or forward the case to the court.

According to the results of the research held in 2006 by the sociologists of Vilnius University, 21 percent of women and 21 percent of men faced sexual harassment at least once a year.

Source: NEWSru.com

<http://www.newsru.com/crime/25sep2006/sex.html>

Received through [www.owl.ru](http://www.owl.ru) listserve



## HOT NEWS FROM INDIA

### PRATIBHA PATIL, INDIA'S FIRST WOMAN PRESIDENT

Pratibha Patil, 72, elected India's first woman president Saturday, 14 July, was virtually unknown until recently, but she has a wealth of political and administrative experience garnered over a long career. A lawyer from the small town of Jalgaon in India's western Maharashtra state, Patil is a member of the Congress Party. She has held several important ministerial portfolios in the Maharashtra government over a decade from 1978. These included public health, education, tourism, housing and urban development, social welfare and cultural affairs.

## important !

Patil won her first election to the Maharashtra legislative assembly in 1962, at the young age of 28, and has won all the elections she has contested since. She has been a member of parliament and was deputy chairman of the Rajya Sabha, the upper house, for a year in 1986-87.

After her last tenure as a lawmaker in parliament ended in 1996, Patil went into the political wilderness till she was made governor of northern Rajasthan state in 2004.

Patil was handpicked for the post by Sonia Gandhi, Congress Party president and chairperson of India's ruling alliance. Both the posts of governor and now of president, say analysts, are rewards for Patil's unwavering loyalty to the Nehru-Gandhi family.

Patil, who always has her saree pulled over her head in the way of conservative married Indian women, has said she is aware of the responsibilities attached to India's top job. "There have been attempts to tarnish my image. But I will do my duty rightfully if elected," she said at a meeting with legislators...

Source: Khaleej times Online

[http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle.asp?xfile=data/subcontinent/2007/July/subcontinent\\_July891.xml&section=subcontinent](http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle.asp?xfile=data/subcontinent/2007/July/subcontinent_July891.xml&section=subcontinent)

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