

COVID19 - We Are In This Together

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IAW • AIF NEWSLETTER

COVID 19 - we are in this together

Dear Readers

We are definitely in this together.

Thank you so much for all your input from so many places in the world, with many thoughts and sentiments, different and similar challenges. The order of the articles is completely random.

We had originally planned to include different official documents, but in the first place you probably know the most important ones, and in the second place, new are published every day. We ones make one exception. See below.

This is YOUR newsletter

Enjoy reading

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



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Women's Rights and the COVID19 Pandemic

<https://www.coe.int/en/web/genderequality/women-s-rights-and-covid-19>

Les droits des femmes et l'épidémie de COVID-19

<https://www.coe.int/fr/web/genderequality/women-s-rights-and-covid-19>

sent by Heleen Jansen, IAW representative to the Council of Europe,



Today you work, today you earn, today you
eat

by Anjana Basu, India

Lockdown, in a country where many people do not have homes, is a privilege for those who can lock out a virus filled world with a door. For rural women who, one would imagine, had fields to fall back on the problem becomes more complex. Most of those with bank accounts drew money to last them for 21 days but with the lengthening of the time frame, those funds are running out. The Finance Minister promised those with the Govt Jan Dhan Yojana Accounts three months of funds starting from April. However, there are approximately 203.9 million such accounts and the future looks bleak. Separate States too have been allocating funds to the Public Distribution System. But there are 409 million rural women supposed to benefit from these.

Those who relied on daily labour and who, like most rural women had no bank accounts, are at the end of their tether. Piece work for factories has been stopped, so has field work in many cases. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the lockdown with no warning. An estimated 1.3 billion people were given just four hours notice before the decree came into effect. "There is a total ban on venturing out. Stay wherever you are in the country."

Promised relief was given in the shape of food staples across states but not all benefited equally. Whether the women will be able to feed their families with food shortage and police barricades blocking them from the fields is a question that even those with good intentions cannot answer.

Need a ray of hope!

Indian women have to become resilient and focused during this phase

by Vibha Singh

Corona virus has shaken the administration of political and health structure of India. Each passing day of lockdown is bringing new challenges for not only the leaders but even citizens are facing a tough battle. As the focus is on increasing number of patients and economic revamp. There are many issues which have become secondary and are not being raised especially where women are concerned. Women in the workforce in this turbulent phase are going to face job insecurity, additional family burden, mental and physical abuse. Lakshmi, my house help, asked urgently for two-month salary to be transferred to her son's account. She wanted to purchase an LPG cylinder for cooking and some provisions during the lockdown. Both her sons, working as drivers, now have no work and no income, so she has become the sole provider, a cause for increased mental stress along with physical abuse from her husband.

Similar is the situation with many of the white-collared jobs. He is a journalist

Similar is the situation with many of the white collar jobs, be it a journalist, Information technology professional, teachers and sales professionals who have an indecisive future ahead. Many media organization, companies and academic institutions are coming out with new policies during the coronavirus phase due to which many jobs would be wiped out.

Compared to our Western counterparts (working women) where social freedom is not related to economic independence. In India for many women, their jobs are the backbone of their survival. The problem is that at present only 10 per cent of political leaders in India are women who are making policies. Without women in these positions, women's issues from their health to economic participation could fail to be addressed throughout the crisis.



Women's experience of corona virus in the UK

by Helen Self

In this strange new world which we are all experiencing, government seems to be conducted through tweets, sound bites and mantras. They stick in your mind and are surprisingly effective, but they are not policies.

The most overused mantra in the UK is 'Stay at Home-Protect the NHS-and Save Lives' (the NHS being our National Health Service). Another one (used by Cheryl and Lene) is 'We are all in this together', leading to a chorus of voices in the media declaring 'No We Are Not'!

Of course, there are many ways of being marginalised and disadvantaged. We have rough sleepers, illegal immigrants, prisoners (predominantly male), elderly people in care homes (predominantly women), workers on zero hour contracts who do not qualify for government financial support, people of colour, of different religions, freelance writers and actors, and so on.

However, the key decisions about lockdown and containment affecting us all are being made by men in our currently top heavy male dominated government. A female member of the Cabinet recently commented on "the excellence that a diverse range of views brings to decision-making", she was sacked the following

week.

I will illustrate the difficulty shared by many women by describing the problems from the standpoint of a member of my own family. My son and his wife (Tim and Saffora) have a nice house in London and two small children, Isla who is 2 and Noah who is 6. Saffora runs a law firm from her front-room office; she employs two members of staff and a woman who helps with the cleaning. In normal times my son goes to work and the children go to nursery and primary school. All was running fairly smoothly and then suddenly it stopped. The staff had gone, the children were at home and Tim locked in an upstairs room working from home. Saffora writes to me 'Isla is just not letting me work; I ended up having to work from 5 pm, no doubt until late tonight'. Yet she is also told by the Law Society, that if a court case comes up she becomes an 'intermittent key worker'. How does she manage?

Even so, Saffora is probably lucky in comparison with many women who are predominantly in precarious, part time employment. These include shop assistants, hotel staff, hairdressers, waitresses, cleaners etc. Many of these women are already working on the margins and are likely to have difficulty paying for basic necessities in the coming months. The situation for single mothers can be more serious still because they are less likely to have a car and have to use public transport. This too has been reduced and sometimes shut down. For most women the burden of unpaid work has increased, as has the incidence of domestic violence. To top it all many will be living in single rooms or high-rise flats, without access to a garden for the children to play in.

So while women are on the front line caring for c19 patients and keeping the wheels of society turning, men are out in the public domain making the headlines and the policy decisions which affect the lives of citizens. This imbalance of decision-making power affects women's everyday lives and needs to be redressed. Fight for it!





21 Life Lessons from the Pandemic

By Cheryl Hayles, Vice-President North America

1. The same way we mute the microphone while on a Zoom conference and need to unmute before we speak, which takes a few seconds, we should always take a few seconds before we speak!
2. Why weren't you washing your hands frequently before? Wash your hands!
3. The bigger question is, "Why doesn't everyone have clean water and soap to wash their hands?"
4. It's impossible not to touch your face! Pretend you just had Botox injections and can't afford to mess it up.
5. Shaking hands was never a good idea! Just clap your hands when you meet someone. They'll feel great that you are celebrating them!
6. Health care is a birthright. Unthinkable that it is the law to have car insurance in all countries but not health insurance. Insist on universal health care for all!
7. All communities need fully funded and equipped hospitals.
8. Our healers also need protection.
9. Essential workers are indeed essential! Value what is essential. Pay them more!
10. Teachers are professionals, therefore, they can manage groups of children (and their parents) and help them to learn. Thank your teachers today.
11. Learning new information and updating practices are pre-request for survival.
12. Simple tasks like cleaning your house feel like such an accomplishment! It's nice to have time to spring clean.
13. Leaders lead and move people forward in healthy ways.
14. Who you really miss while in lock down is revealing!
15. Who or what you don't miss is also revealing.
16. Suddenly exercise is an essential to health and wellbeing. Thank the dog for holding our hand through that lesson.
17. Relationships matter. Only keep the healthy ones. It's important for your health!
18. Due to systemic racism and sexism some communities are at greater risk

IN CRISIS.

19. Race based and gender based policies are essential in all recovery plans. The voices of vulnerable groups must be at the table!
20. Global health is dependent on individual health. This pandemic has emphatically reminded us that we are all connected.
21. When you wake up each morning it's a big deal! Express your gratitude out loud.



NILOWV'S COVID-19 RESPONSE

Rt. Hon. Dame Esther Uduehi, PhD

President/CEO

League of Women Voters of Nigeria (NILOWV)

In response to Covid-19, the Nigerian League of Women Voters (NILOWV) initiated a National Public Enlightenment Campaign. Several public health messages on hygiene practices, precautions and other safety protocols and principles were launched as part of a national public awareness out-reach in line with WHO guidelines. NILOWV is a non-religious, non-partisan and non-sectional grassroots women's organisation with chapters in 36 states, 774 local government areas and the Federal Capital Territory. Using development communication concepts, our media advocacy enlightens and creates awareness about Covid-19 on a nation wide basis.

awareness about COVID-19 on a nation-wide basis.

For effective impact, our public health and stay safe messages were translated into almost 100 different Nigerian languages including Yoruba, Igbo, Ishan, Edo, Efik, Ijaw, Ibibio, Fulfulde, Hausa; dialects, as well as Pidgin English. The public enlightenment messages were broadcasted as jingles on television and radio stations around the country. We also employed the broad spread of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook to reach Nigeria's youth demography. NILOWV has also created public health posters with cultural relevant graphics and information on hygienic practices and protocols. These posters are distributed and publicised online.

The national lockdown ordered by the Federal Government in Nigeria exposed the gendered impact of the pandemic. It exposed the deep inequalities in our communities, and which ordinarily pose a threat to the rights of women and girls. For example, the economic consequences of the global pandemic have proved particularly hard on millions of Nigerian women who lost their sources of income as a result of having to stay at home. Many of them rely on daily earnings from selling farm produce which mostly fall under the category of perishables such as tomatoes, pepper, and leafy vegetables. They are the major players in the informal sector in Nigeria as petty traders, hawkers, fruit-sellers, hairdressers etc, the sudden loss of livelihood further pushes the women and girls in this category, into poverty and destitution.

Intelligence reports from our networks in the communities around the country show that many women also must contend with increased risks of domestic violence, food deprivation, teenage pregnancy and even child abuse, due to difficulties arising from the prolonged lockdown order and closure of educational institutions. However, NILOWV

directed all its state chapters to step up advocacy against gender-based violence and encouraged women to report any incidents to the appropriate authorities. We have called on the law enforcement agencies to be responsive when they receive reports about domestic violence. This is an on-going deep source of concern for us, especially in the local government areas and wards. Through self-efforts and applying strict social distancing methods, we have established relief pick-up centres in the rural communities for women and girls to collect food packages and hygiene products to cushion the socio-economic impact of the lockdown policy. Hand-washing protocols are also demonstrated near the food collection points to further enlighten the uneducated categories of women.

We are acutely aware of the challenge of access to safe domestic water supplies especially in the rural communities, thus we have adapted some of our public health messages taking this into consideration and we are providing alternative sources for hand-washing through donation of buckets and bars of soap.

NILOWV tasked the Federal Government to ensure that women's concerns are also placed at the centre of the Covid-19 response and to also prioritise women and girls during the disbursements of financial and material assistance.

We have vocalised our concerns to remind the Nigerian government of its responsibilities towards the citizenry at these critical times. Several press statements have been released to the traditional and new media calling on the government to include more females as members of the Covid-19 Response

government to include more females as members of the Covid-19 Response Presidential Task Force, because we believe that women form half of the population and these women populate the frontline as nurses, social workers and care-givers and must have a voice in the federal government's response to this disease; similarly, on 10th April 2020, we issued a statement urging the government to review the modalities of disbursement of the intervention palliatives to ensure it reach the grassroots communities. We also chastised the government to be apolitical in the distribution of relief materials and palliatives.

Rt. Hon. Dame Esther Uduehi, PHD

President/CEO

League of Women Voters of Nigeria (NILOWV)



Covid19 - Norway

Karin M. Bruzelius

President

Norwegian Association on Women's Rights.

Thank you to the editors of our newsletter for their initiative to gather reports from the member countries on the situation in their home-countries created by the pandemic. We in Norway are looking very much forward to learn about the experiences of our sister organizations during this, for all of us, extraordinary times.

In Norway the pandemic has caused a disruption of ordinary life in many ways, but I think we must consider ourselves extremely fortunate so far. Society was closed down on March 12th, but we are now slowly opening up some activities. The decision to closing down of many activities in society has had a negative impact on business life and many have lost their jobs, at least temporarily. In many cases it is feared it will be permanent due to their lack of income. On the

many cases it is feared it will be permanent due to their lack of income. On the other hand, Norway as a state has a good economy and several billions have been and will be paid from government funds to help those affected – personally or as a business.

As of today – April 25th – the number of persons that have been found to have been confirmed with Covid 19 is 7 467. Today 118 persons are treated in a hospital. The total number of people that have died due to the virus is 199 (men 53 %). By now 155,125 have been tested, and the number of tests will increase in the coming weeks.

The epidemic changed character in Norway around April 1st. The percentage of women registered then as infected was around 49, but tests have shown that more women have been infected by the virus. In Norway, as in other countries, the first persons with the virus were younger men that had been skiing in Northern Italy and Austria. However, the virus has now been found in all layers of the population, but the center of infection has been – and remains to be – the larger Oslo area. A prevalence of infection has been registered in areas where many immigrants live, and the Government – state and local – has intensified its information to these groups of Covid 19 and the personal security measures that have to be taken.

A larger number of women than men work in the public sector – women represent about 70 % of the employed. Almost one half of women working outside their homes are employed in the public sector, while the percentage in the private sector is less than 60. The public sector in Norway includes hospitals, social care and social services, even though there are some parts that are private. Due to this a very large number of women are through their work exposed to the possibility of being infected by Covid 19. At the same time the number of working hours during the week has increased during the pandemic and the pressure at work has increased. The trade union of the nurses and the employers have entered into an agreement granting additional compensation for working overtime, while the organization representing the municipalities (that are employers of many in this sector) have declined to enter into similar agreements.

In Norway 36 % of the women work part-time. In order to make a living many therefore have more than one job. This is an additional stress factor on women, even more so in these times.

The Government has almost daily expressed its thanks to the persons working in the hospitals and care sector for their work. The fact that most of the work is carried out by women has, however, not been noted or recognized.

As previously mentioned the Government shut down many activities on March 12th. Schools and childcare institutions, universities and most public workplaces were closed and several types of services where there is close contact between people, as physiotherapists and hairdressers, were also ordered to close. Everyone that could work from home was requested to do so. The effect of this has been a shut down of many more places as there are few or no customers. We have also been ordered to keep a social distance of one/two meters and not to visit people in the so called danger zone, either due to age or to previous illnesses. Many of our members do not see their children

and grandchildren and are not allowed to visit relatives or friends in nursing homes or living at home. However, we have all the time been allowed to go out and enjoy parks or nature. Social gatherings of more than five are not allowed. The government is now slowly easing the measures and pre-school children are now back in the nursery schools and the younger schoolchildren will be back in school on Monday 27th of April. Some children have been attending school/childcare all this time due to their parents being in special occupations or the child in need of special attention. The schoolchildren have had to attend school daily – through digital tuition. This has functioned well, but has put an additional burden on their parents (mothers working from home and in addition having to oversee the work done during the day by the children).

Living in Norway, we are fortunate as the government is compensating the loss of income that many experience due to lockdown of workplaces and the letting go of the workers. The government is also trying to keep workplaces alive through financial aid. However, the situation has also shown us that many are dependent on a functioning society. The situation has invited many to creative measures: Concerts or ballet performances in open areas where people have been able to listen from their homes, offers of digital concerts or theater. Gyms sending their members instructions on exercises that can be performed at home.

There is a worry with respect to the effect that the close down of society has on vulnerable children and women living in violent relationships. The schools and nursery schools have been open to these all the time (in addition to children with parents that work in essential functions). This far an increase in cases of domestic violence has not yet been reported, but there is a general fear that we will see an increase when we return to a more open society. Hopefully the government – central as well as local – will increase its efforts to aid those that have been and are victims of domestic violence/social control/sexual assaults. The Norwegian Association will request that these effects of the shut down will be given special attention in the following years.

The Association will also forward a request that the persons carrying the heaviest burdens should receive additional wages and compensation. We will also request that the society is better prepared in the future to handle an illness of this type.

The Norwegian Association should have held its biannual conference in March, but we had to cancel the meeting. We now hope to be able to hold an abbreviated digital meeting before the summer of 2020. As the mandated period of the present board has been extended until a new conference is held, the general activity of the Association has been low. However, we are all now learning to participate in digital meetings.

Those of our members that are working from home while they are supervising their children (doing schoolwork or playing) generally experience a tough time. Some of them worry in addition whether they and/or their partner have a workplace when they return to some form of normality. Those of our members that are pensioners are financially secure, but miss seeing their families and friends, being able to attend meetings, theater, concerts and cinema.

There is a general fear among our members of what type of society we are heading towards. The pandemic has shown us that in some states the road to

closing down borders and turning inwards is very short. We are also afraid of attempts to destroy international institutions. In our opinion an institution such as WHO is more necessary now than ever. It is our opinion that IAW should, through its members, argue for democratic, non-nationalistic values.

Women in Norway are in many ways in a positive situation. Of course, there are problems that need attention such as domestic violence. However, the situation of women in the developing parts of the world as well as those in refugee camps will need a lot of attention in the near future. The lack of social infrastructure exposes women and their families not only to the virus but as well to hunger, lack of possibilities to work. We will have to support their development.

Oslo, 25th April 2020

COVID19 and RACE in the USA

by T. Russell, USA

As an African American female living within the US in the time of COVID-19, my greatest challenges combating the virus remains access to affordable and safe healthcare, and protection of work following the virus. In COVID America, my very life and future are at risk.

With a disproportionately growing number of African Americans dying as a result of complications resulting from the virus, it is hard to not become hopeless or disengaged during an otherwise seemingly unifying crisis.

In fact, for states where African Americans are disproportionately susceptible to the influences of poverty and access to healthcare, *such as Louisiana*, 70% of deaths resulting from COVID-19 are attributed to people of color (Charen, 2020). When compared to national death rates, we see a significant change with only 33% deaths linked to African Americans. With such staggering numbers, it is hard to fathom the challenges faced by people like me, and other vulnerable populations working to combat this highly lethal virus.

Changes to affordable and universal healthcare, restricted access to testing, and a national shortage on personal protective equipment, have all proven fatal for most facing virus. Even worse for people of color seeking access to preventative measures. Due to a large portion of African American and minority populations holding positions within the service industry, these groups are likely to come into contact with people who have indeed come in contact with the virus.

As such, enforcing a **Stay at Home** mandate is our only weapon. As carriers of the disease may appear asymptomatic, quarantine and isolation that exceeds the incubation period will reduce the spread and protect openly exposed groups. Yet, many like me, may have to choose between keeping their jobs and saving their lives and that of others.

We must rethink our economical values and instead work to protect our

we must rethink our economical values and instead work to protect our vulnerable and at risk populations. To be healthy and safe demands that everyone remains in quarantine until proper testing and preventative measure are in place. This means the local fast food employee, front desk agent and hotel concierges, even our favorite beautician that performs miracles with every appointment, all get to stay safely at home. We can't continue to enable the destructive nature of this virus within our country. We must protect our vulnerable and at risk populations. We must protect my people *-the odds are already against us.*



Coronavirus in Amsterdam, the Netherlands

by Arina Angerman representing IAW in Board European Women's Lobby

In our door to door free paper of the council of Amsterdam there is 'Information in English' too.

I live in an 'intelligent lockdown' until Wednesday 20 May. Bars, cafés, restaurants and coffee shops are closed like saunas, gyms and businesses in contact-based industries (hair salons) too. All gatherings - like SAIL2020 - are prohibited until Tuesday 1 September. Most important measures are: 1.5 m distance and stay at home. I can do grocery shopping which makes it possible to walk almost 30 minutes a day. At home I participate three of four times a week in what is called on television (TV) 'the Netherlands in motion' (15 minutes).

As a result of a vlog which mentioned obese a journalist discovered me on Twitter and I had an interview with her and a beautiful picture in a national newspaper. At that time we had in the Netherlands a big discussion about who with coronavirus can get access to intensive care (IC). My concern was do I get an IC bed?

I remain a #hashtag activist and support actions on gender equality (SDG5) and implementation of the Istanbul Convention on Twitter at national, European and UN level.

As a Board Member of European Women's Lobby (EWL) we have weekly online meetings about the impact of COVID-19. Marion Boeker (alternate BM) and I

contributed to EWL Policy Brief: Putting equality between women and men at the heart of the response to COVID_19 across Europe.

I hope you all stay healthy till we meet again (online or offline)!

Voices from Vietnam

Learning to value silence and reflection during the pandemic

by Dana Nairn, Vietnam



Photo courtesy Nguyen Ho Nhat Thuan



Photo courtesy Anneth Medina

In Vietnam, during the ongoing pandemic, there have been extended social distancing measures. Vietnam reported its first two confirmed cases of Coronavirus in mid-January and to date there have been approximately 270 cases and no reported deaths. The low infection rate has been praised globally due to tough measures Vietnam immediately took, such as quarantines and border closures.

During shutdowns and restricted movement, these women were asked what they were doing to get through the uncertainty.

Nguyen Ho Nhat Thuan is the owner of VSenFood, a plant-based food manufacturer and distributor. She's been working from home and lives with her mom, dad, one younger sister and a kitten named Paté.

Thuan passes the time doing yoga, working and in self-contemplation. "I'm surprised that I'm quite calm during this time," she says. "While people spend their time worrying about the virus, I take this as an opportunity for transforming myself and my business."

Her biggest hope right now is "the earth [will stay] less polluted and wild animals have more space for themselves," she says. She says, "The earth has a chance to get balanced and healthy." Thuan firmly believes in compassion and kindness in life and especially during these difficult times.

"Without love we cannot do anything, it's the fuel of life!."

Anneth Medina, from Mexico, has lived and worked in Saigon since 2018 and is a clinical psychologist and educator. She has been working from home and lives with her husband Tom.

Anneth says she's also doing yoga along with meditation, reading books she didn't have time for before and cooking. "I am especially exploring new ideas

and analyzing myself," she says. "It's a great time for introspection." She recently founded the Meraki Project to "simplify psychological concepts" and share mental wellbeing with others.

She says right now, while not ideal, is a "unique opportunity to reconnect with ourselves, to value simple things, like our freedom, seeing smiles." She says we each have to ask ourselves, "What could I have done with that time if I wasn't complaining or being frustrated?" She feels it's important to take responsibility for ourselves, mentally and physically.

"We will overcome this," she says. "Life is not perfect, but we are strong because we can adapt."

Both women agree when the restrictions are lifted they are going out to dinner with friends and plenty of hugs.

Dana McNairn works in gender and development, and is an author and writer based in Ho Chi Minh City since 2009.



Because of the corona crisis we are forced to recognize the value of care work

by Charlotte Møller, Denmark

We now have a unique opportunity to translate the worship of these /

we now have a unique opportunity to translate the worship of these / heroines in care work into concrete recognition in the form of better pay and applied resources.

Before the corona crisis the care work in hospitals, homes for the elderly etc. was quite downgraded, both in relation to wages and appreciation.

This kind of work is often referred to as women's jobs - in our very gender divided labour market. The wages are low, the working conditions are bad and it is not very prestigious or well respected. But this work is absolutely essential to society even if it has been neglected and made invisible. This view is part of a long tradition where the Patriarchy has downgraded and ignored women's work.

But now everybody is queuing up to thank and pay tribute to the hard working nurses and other caregivers. They have become the pillars of society in whom we put our trust. - But it has always been like that, also before the Coronavirus.

But will we remember this after the Corona? We now have a unique opportunity to transform this appreciation into concrete action so it can be reflected in pay and working conditions. Now there is a chance to recognize the true value of care work and elevate low-paid and undervalued professionals. And not spend it all on aid packages to businesses.

Another theme in Denmark during the corona crisis has been the problem of increased violence against women in the families. The Danish Women's Society's shelter was among the first to point out this problem of lack of room for women at the shelters to the Minister for Social Affairs. This has led to an emergency shelter for women exposed to violence, financed by the government.





Corona stopped biggest NATO military manoeuvre in Europe for 25 years

by Heide Schütz, convener of the Peace Commission

Among the many scary, tragic and difficult consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic there has been a clearly positive result, too. The NATO manoeuvre *Defender 2020* was to bring 37,000 US combatants and complete military equipment to Central Europe. It was to move towards the NATO eastern border of Europe in a bold pose of military strength towards Russia. Transport and other preparations had already started when in some US bases on German ground cases of infection among civilian employees were proved. Moreover, high-level military staff had been exposed to personnel that were tested positive of COVID-19 later. Earlier peace and climate organizations had mobilized civilian protest against this manoeuvre since it was a very aggressive gesture towards Russia and the danger of the beginning of another cold war became evident. It also meant a lot of waste of money that would be needed to combat poverty, poor health conditions etc. and help implement the SDGs. The pollution of the atmosphere by the thousands of tons of fuel needed for the transport of the troops from the US to Europe and further on within Europe towards the east was to be enormous, another terrible threat to climate collapse.

What the voices of the peace community and large parts of German civil society did not achieve: the virus did. Thus officially the manoeuvre *Defender 2020* was "modified in size and scope" and since March 13 "the movement of all personnel and equipment from the US to Europe has ceased". The official announcement read further: "Our priority is to maintain the health and safety of our personnel and family members while implementing protective measures"... BUT it also read: "Our nation, our Army, our allies and potential adversaries should know that our soldiers remain ready", US Army Chief of Staff, March 10, 2020.

The best way to secure *health and safety* for the military and civil society is to stop war and its preparations altogether! Well, this time it was COVID19, that stopped the horrific manoeuvre *Defender 2020*, who or what is going to stop the next one? We do not look out for another virus or the comeback of Corona, but this year's clearly positive effect of it should not be overlooked either. Heide Schütz, convener of the Peace Commission

Sheltering in Place with IANCI

SHeltering-in-Place with IANGEL

By **Andrea Carlise**

As I begin my 7th week of sheltering-in-place in Alameda, California, I am consumed with guilt for feeling annoyed, depressed and anxious. While I know that I am privileged and immensely fortunate to be able to work from home and have a home to work and live in, I am experiencing moments of fear, anxiety, boredom and a simple desire to have a great meal at a restaurant with friends or go to a baseball game. I have found comfort, however, in Zoom meetings, coalition-building and online solidarity.

My “day job” is leading the International Action Network for Gender Equity and Law (IANGEL) as its Executive Director. IANGEL is an international network dedicated to advancing gender equity and protecting the human and civil rights of women and girls through peaceful legal means. The nonprofit was founded in 2013 to harness the power of pro bono legal assistance, connecting it to the cause of women’s rights locally, nationally, and around the world. As the only full-time paid employee of IANGEL, to quell the feelings of isolation, I had taken refuge in working in a shared space sublet from another nonprofit that also works for women’s human rights. I enjoy the camaraderie of working together and am finding working from home more difficult than I had anticipated. Yet it is IANGEL’s work to improve gender equality that is sustaining me.

IANGEL focuses on education, advocacy and pro-bono engagement for reproductive justice, peace and security, and empowerment for women and girls. As we face this global pandemic here in California and throughout the U.S., challenges and opportunities in each of our focus areas are amplified.

Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are being restricted under the cover of COVID-19. Texas is one of several conservative states that have pursued limits on abortion during the pandemic. Though the states claim these limits are aimed at ensuring medical resources are available to those with COVID-19, the restrictions are designed to curtail the human right to decide when, if and how to have children. Preventing women and girls from obtaining abortion care during this pandemic is shameful. I am grateful that in California, our state constitution guarantees the right to privacy and abortion care. IANGEL is committed to ensuring that California youth are aware of these reproductive rights and the precarious nature of reproductive freedom in our country. To this end, we are developing a curriculum to teach high school-age students their legal rights to sexual and reproductive healthcare while inspiring the next generation of SRHR activists.

As members of IAW are all likely aware, COVID-19 has increased the prevalence of gender-based violence globally. As a member of the Coalition to End Violence Against Women and Girls Globally, IANGEL is urging the U.S. Congress to adopt specific measures that prevent, mitigate, and respond to the disproportionate effect COVID-19 is having on women, girls, and other

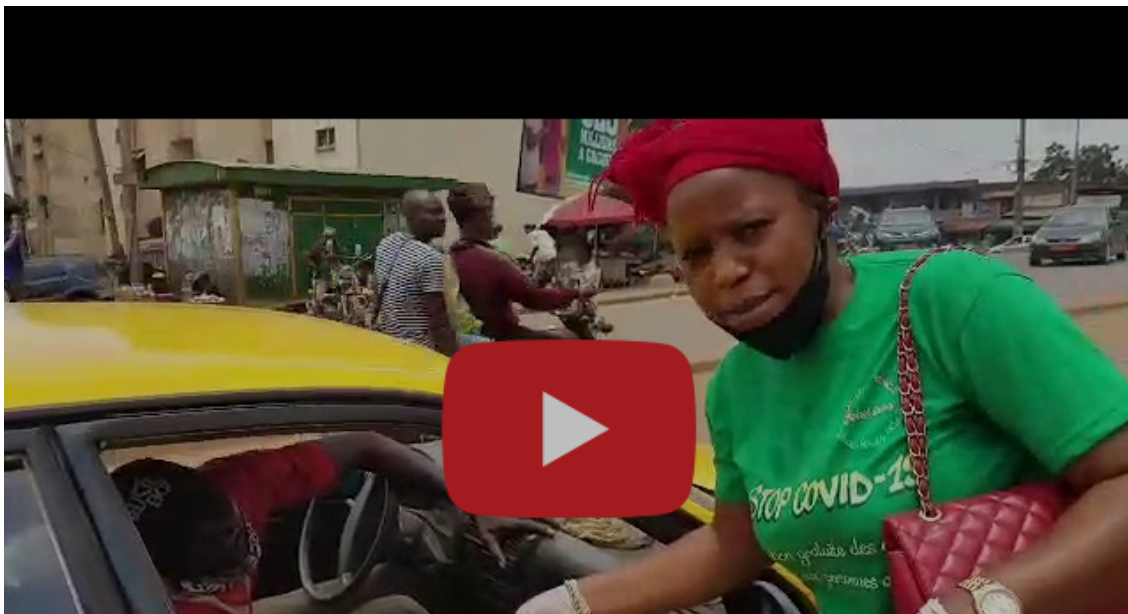
survivors of GBV globally. We are also working state-wide to support survivors of human trafficking. IANGEL has asked California's Governor to invest additional resources to protect those who are and will be more vulnerable to trafficking in the aftermath of COVID-19. It is critical that survivors of GBV have access to legal rights and protections at this time. Through local partnerships, IANGEL is currently developing a new educational initiative to equip lawyers who have not previously represented GBV survivors with the knowledge needed to represent complex cases.

Finally, IANGEL is informing the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights via a paper on Women, Cultural Rights and Climate Change which will include an addendum addressing the impact of COVID-19. Climate change, like COVID-19, has laid bare society's systemic inequities. Gender mainstreaming must be implemented in all work addressing both climate change and COVID-19 to correct for these embedded injustices. The paper also highlights the positive impact women can and will have on mitigation measures addressing the climate crisis. Women are essential to the development of meaningful and effective responses to the climate emergency and to this pandemic.

Despite the collective sorrow and loss we are enduring, IANGEL's work brings me solace and purpose. Knowing that we are all in this together helps me process the difficult emotions that arise as a result of this "new normal." As we navigate this global state of suspension, the time to pause and reflect presents an enormous opportunity to re-set priorities for transformative gender justice.

In the spirit of resiliency through the arts, I share [this song](#), "Coronavirus Blues," recently written and recorded by IANGEL board president and founder, Nancy Newman, and friends.

In solidarity! --Andrea Carlise





CEFAP , Cameroon, led by Anne Pelagie at work fighting corona

Lockdown in Cambridge

by Jocelynn Scutt

The lockdown in Cambridge is having an extraordinary effect. Restrictions on movement seem to emphasise characteristics in people. In my own small political group of County Councillors, one has almost disappeared - then revives to assert his (sic) 'authority' by announcing a long list of offices he holds, as if to annihilate any initiative on the part of others. Another (not one to whom the first objects) has spread her realm, so as to pronounce upon anything and everything to do with the County Council, stressing opinions as if they are fact - which they must be because they are hers. A third shoots up on e-mail or in Zoom meetings after long silences, to express petulant demands that she be listened to.

A fourth maintains focus on the sole area of her responsibility, reporting at length during meetings then disappearing between times. The fifth suffered a breakdown in confidence and went off elsewhere. The sixth straddles the fence in the hopes of gaining the leadership with a unanimous vote - because no one else stands. The seventh, of course, is yours truly ... spending time teaching online and working to deadlines ...

and planning another book because I now have 6 hours a day up my sleeve which I did not have previously.

Living in Cambridge and teaching at the University of Buckingham meant, pre Covid 19, a coach ride on the X5 for three hours at first light, then 3 hours return in the dusk and the darkness ... three to four days a week. Can you imagine the bliss of not having to spend those hours on a moving vehicle where it really is impossible to do anything consistently constructive. Poetry can be written in the head - and scribbled on spare scraps of paper. The phone comes in handy to read e-mails and Facebook and Twitter ... and reply and respond and share ... but time-wasting. Reading assignments is possible. Reading texts is sometimes a 'can do'. But junk reading of crime novels is really all the brain can truly cope with at crack of dawn, or returning after a day's solid teaching and meetings, meetings, meetings ...



It's not all work indoors at a



computer screen, though. The rules here are capable of enabling triple journeys out: once to buy essentials - eggs, rice, carrots, apples, diet Coke ...; once to go chemist-wards for soap and vitamins and handwash and essential creams or skin balm; once for recreation - which means a long, long walk over the bridge and through the park and around the flower gardens and up Castle Mound and across the green then back through the Wessex Place cut through ... Each excursion requires hat, sunglasses and scarf wound suitably around the lower face to serve as a facemask ... hence, the Invisible Man haunts the streets of Cambridge, an HG Wells' character revived ...



COVID-19: The Italian Model

by **Valeria Mangani**

IAW representative to FAO and UN

Agencies based in Rome

April 25 2020

Everything happened so quickly. In the first week of the new decade, the spotlights of the whole world were directed towards the emergency that was beginning to take place in China, and little did we know that soon enough that same emergency would have stained us in Italy too. Not only has Italy been the first European country to suffer numerous infections from COVID-19, yet, other European countries and governments were incredulous in seeing how the

Italian healthcare system was overwhelmed.

We were not ready for such a sanguinary and invisible enemy, and we took two weeks to organize a solid system to contain the Coronavirus. After all, globalization brings massive advantages, however, since it nowadays just takes few hours of air flight to reach the opposite side of the globe, infections such as COVID-19 may easily be spread globally in a matter of days

Italy has been the first European country to apply (useful yet restrictive-two months of total lockdown) measures against Coronavirus, however, several doubts remain as the "Phase 2" of COVID-19 approaches Italy from May 4th.

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has led the first phase of the full lockdown in Italy by alternating very confusing orders to strict restrictions on national television.

Apparently, Conte's blemished management led President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella to rely on former Vodafone CEO (Vittorio Colao) to take full control of "Phase 2", leading a special task force formed by former and current top level executives, technicians and doctors to superintend and lead Italy out of the Coronavirus outbreak.

What's most impressive is not just that President Mattarella didn't entrust Giuseppe Conte to lead Phase 2 (as Conte is a lawyer, and not a specialized politician or manager), yet, the very peculiar element is that this special Italian task force includes a board of 17 skilled individuals, and not even one woman is present in this special committee. Furthermore, the Government is spending highly on this expert committee. Just think that Mr. Colao is paid 130.000,00 euros for this new one-year contract, whilst SMI, entrepreneurs, traders and artisans are starving and bankrupt due to the lockdown crisis.

This special task force has been entrusted to decide when and how Italy's most important productive sectors must re-open, as well as taking care of the medical and economic repercussions of the country, and the fact that this task force is composed by 100% male figures makes it quite biased, especially when talking about productive sectors that usually are managed by women. What's more paradoxical and absurd is that the domestic economy (managed by women in the majority of households since the dawn of time) has now been consigned to a 100% male task force! Because of this, a parliamentary question has been presented from a female deputy of the opposing political party.

It goes without saying that this does not mean that men are unable to manage women-related businesses, however, what can certainly be said is that in several cases, women could present a different point of view, hence facilitating the decision-making process and making it even more objective and well thought out.

Last but not least, not including women in the special task force may also seem

an affront to all political disputes advocated by women in the name of equal opportunities in the past decade. Women will follow all restrictions, though they have high responsibilities for their families and businesses. Even after the epilogue of the lockdown, we must keep in mind the great consciousness that this lockdown period has taught us: we do not need so many expensive accessories to embellish ourselves, we should just take care of us, eat healthy food and drink at least 2 litres of water per day. Let's stick to slow food and slow fashion vs fast food and fast fashion, which are not sustainable and may eventually accelerate the exploitation and damage of the planet.

All Pakistani Women Association

by Ruhi Sayed

All Pakistan Women Association has launched an awareness and safety drive along with food grains distribution in an effort to support those who are unemployed and facing difficulty in supporting their families during this lockdown. The COVID-19 pandemic has strongly impacted the livelihood and food security of millions of people across Pakistan. Reaching out to our community through our staff and volunteers to our poorest and most vulnerable communities including widows, daily wagers, who may not be able to claim daily ration and get access to food and nourishment. We immediately started our drive at the beginning of shut down i-e 23rd March, 2020. A successful fundraising campaign was initiated by APWA with the support of its friends. To date we were able to support almost 2000 families. In Phase 1, we identified areas and distributed ration bags with 10 bars of soap to each family.

In phase 2, we ran the cash delivery drive to almost 50 families ie to widows, women with disabilities and transgenders. Masks and sanitizers were also distributed.

We are expanding into phase 3 in the 2nd week of May, which further includes ration pack hygiene and menstruation kits.

APWA believes that together we can be part of the effort to support the most vulnerable segments of our population.



Report from Togo

by AKAKPO Adjoa Thérèse

Coordinatrice

ONG La Colombe

Votre gouvernement prend-il en considération la position des femmes dans cette situation?

- **Les personnes vulnérables font l'objet d'une attention particulière. Parmi elles figurent des femmes. Ces personnes bénéficient de transfert d'argent toutes les deux semaines d'environ 10 euros.**
- **Il n'y a pas une intervention spécifique aux femmes**

Expériences personnelles - que faites-vous pour y faire face?

- **Installation de dispositif de lavage de mains**
- **Respect des mesures barrières**
- **Travail non urgent à la maison**
- **Distribution de riz aux jeunes femmes des maisons voisines**

Votre organisation fait-elle quelque chose?

- **Emissions radios**
- **Diffusion de spots sur le Covid19**
- **Elaboration d'un plan de Riposte**
- **Recherche de financement**

Qu'est-ce qui vous préoccupe le plus?

- **L'après Covid19. La phase de reconstruction et de relèvement**

Selon vous, que devrait-on faire pour protéger les femmes et les filles?

- **Sensibiliser le public à travers radios communautaires et rurales**
- **Organiser l'accueil et l'écoute des femmes traumatisées par le Covid19**

Témoignage :

Nom et Prénom : AZAKPE Esse

Sexe : Féminin

Age : 42 ans

Lieu de résidence : Lomé Togo

Mon travail : revendeuses savon et pagnes en détails au marché quatre jours par semaine.

Bénéfice mensuel : environ 20 euros

Nous sommes 4 personnes dans la famille (mon mari, mes deux enfants et moi).

Mon mari travaille dans la maçonnerie. Ce n'est pas toutes les semaines qu'il participe aux charges du ménage.

Depuis l'avènement du Covid 19 les gens ne viennent plus au marché comme avant. Mon bénéfice a chuté à 10 euros. C'est seulement le savon que j'arrive à vendre. Les gens n'achètent plus de pagne car plus d'activités festives, religieuses.

Les dépenses avant s'élevaient à 18 euros avant la pandémie.

Il y a un manque à gagner. Cette situation agit sur la qualité de notre alimentation.

J'ai aussi peur pour ma famille par rapport à la contamination au covid 19 car nous sommes dans une maison de location avec d'autres personnes.

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