

WOMEN'S GLOBAL NETWORK FOR REPRODUCTIVE
RIGHTS

ANNUAL REPORT 2014





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Women's Global Network for
Reproductive Rights

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ABOUT

Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights

WGNRR is a southern-based global network that builds and strengthens movements for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and justice. Our work is grounded in the realities of those who most lack economic, social and political power.

Through critical analysis and strategic actions, WGNRR connects members and allies, builds knowledge, organises campaigns and shares resources. WGNRR works to realise the full sexual and reproductive health and rights of all people, with a particular focus on the most marginalised. We believe that achieving this goal requires transformative social change and use a human rights, justice and feminist framework to advocate and campaign for the changes in social norms, legal frameworks, policies and resource allocation required to reach our goal. We continue to be one of the few member focused global networks that primarily works with grassroots organisations, inclusive and accountable in all that we do. Strongly committed to equality for all genders, WGNRR values diversity and intersectionality. We aim to be self-reflective, and we are independent of political, governmental or religious institutions.

WGNRR has consultative status at the United Nations (ECOSOC).

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PROGRAMME AREAS

SEXUAL RIGHTS FOR ALL PEOPLE

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS OF YOUNG PEOPLE

ACCESS TO CONTRACEPTIVES

ACCESS TO SAFE AND LEGAL ABORTION

ANNUAL REPORT 2014



INDEX

2014 Overview.....	1
Global Advocacy.....	5
Partnerships.....	9
Worldwide Campaigns.....	11
Global Communications.....	15
Strengthening Grassroots.....	19
Youth Engagement.....	20
Highlights from Africa.....	24
Highlights from Asia and the Pacific	26
Highlights from Latin America & the Caribbean.....	28
Our Funders.....	32



OVERVIEW

In 2014 WGNRR celebrated our 30th anniversary by passionately continuing to defend the human rights of individuals including their sexual and reproductive rights. Since WGNRR's inception in 1984 at the 4th International Women and Health Meeting, it has played a critical role in ensuring that global civil society efforts are informed by local and national sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) priorities. We also bring global SRHR perspectives to national and regional advocacy and campaigning. WGNRR is very proud that over the years we have built a network of nearly 1000 members from 88 countries; facilitated the creation of strategic partnerships among members and allies; and, supported a global community of advocates for SRHR. We have accomplished this by building knowledge, developing capacity and strengthening advocacy and campaigning efforts on critical SRHR and justice issues. It is only through joining forces that SRHR advocates have been able to ensure significant and far-reaching changes in the way population, human rights and development issues are viewed and addressed.

We are extremely proud of our achievements in 2014 and believe that the further decentralisation of resources from our network to the regions has increased our ability to enhance the impact of our work at both regional and global levels. WGNRR managed to achieve and in fact exceed the majority of the targets we set ourselves at the beginning of the year. The activities undertaken by our staff has had significant impact on the capacity of our partners to undertake rights based advocacy and we have seen a rising number of influencing actions undertaken by our members at national level. Importantly, we have seen a significant increase in the number of actions targeting policies and practices that limit access to safe abortion, even within highly restrictive settings.

OVERVIEW

From the report below you will see a small sample of the numerous ways in which we advanced our SRHR advocacy. We will continue working towards our goal to formally record and report SRHR related human rights abuses and will allocate additional resources as soon as they become available to achieve this goal. WGNRR has been active at all key international spaces tirelessly advocating to advance SRHR within the post 2015 agenda and ensure that failures to meet SRHR related targets within the Beijing and ICPD reviews were adequately recognised.

An important challenge that WGNRR and her allies faced during 2014 was increased fundamentalisms played out within International negotiations at CSW and CPD where previously agreed ICPD language on family and gender is challenged and at community WGNRR level advocates face intimidation and harassment. WGNRR has worked hard together with key allies to counter the opposition and to protect SRHR advocates and increase recognition of them as Women Human Rights Defenders. We provided over 30 organisations with capacity building on protection systems, monitoring & sharing of intelligence and risk analysis. Our work on stigma reduction and workshops on security issues has led to increased confidence by advocates to work on abortion. WGNRR will continue developing strategic alliances and amplify the collective impact of the work of the SRHR networks.

OVERVIEW

We will continue to work in close partnership with our allies and partners and aim to extend our alliances to include other social movements and gain wider understanding of the importance of SRHR in combatting poverty and addressing inequalities. Our significant engagement in the post 2015 review processes has highlighted the need to more adequately address the siloed approach that the different social movements have adopted during negotiations, and find ways to work more closely together to ensure that the next set of development goals are successfully achieved. Finally we will continue the significant efforts undertaken in 2014 to gain acceptance of the denial of SRHR as human rights violations, and in cases such as denial of abortion, forced and coerced sterilisation and denial of access to services, recognised as Acts of Violence Against Women. WGNRR will continue to be one of the few global networks that works on the neglected SRHR issues, advancing progressive language and a human rights framing in order to realise our goal -Full sexual and reproductive health and rights for all people.

Kathy Mulville, Executive Director

WGNRR HIGHLIGHTS

2014



Expanding

Celebrated 30 years of working for SRHR and growing a strong network of advocates around the world.



Campaigning

2 campaigns, 100 organizations, 88 countries mobilised to call for women's health and access to safe and legal abortion.



Amplifying

More than 200+ individuals from 100+ organisations gained new knowledge on abortion advocacy, youth SRHR & SRHR of women living with HIV.



Influencing

Making our voices heard and influencing the debate at United Nations Bodies and the Inter-American Commission of Human Rights



Championing

Supported the establishment of 2 abortion advocacy networks in Uganda & Kenya and existing networks in Tanzania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Indonesia and Nepal.



Informing and reaching out

Our multi-lingual website and database was relaunched.



Demanding Accountability

From the United Nations and governments demanding SRHR, human rights and justice.



Shaping Global Policy

For SRHR in the Post-2015 agenda in every region and at the global level



Global Advocacy

As the Millenium Development Goals come to an end in 2015, WGNRR is committed to promote a strong and holistic definition of SRHR in a Post-2015 development framework, ensuring that women's SRHR is central to the discussion and is approached from a feminist and human rights perspective. Towards this end, WGNRR participated in various Post-2015, ICPD Beyond 2014, and Beijing+20 processes.

WGNRR was present and active in major SRHR advocacy spaces such as the 58th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). At the CSW, WGNRR submitted written and oral statements together with the International Community of Women living with HIV and AIDS, UNAIDS, and UNDP. We also organised a key and well attended session on defending SRHR of women living with HIV in health care settings.

Over the course of the Post-2015 processes, WGNRR continued to provide inputs in relation to WGNRR's SRHR priority areas and Post-2015 messaging. We highlighted the glaring omissions in relation to SRHR, and worked with WGNRR members in shaping their messaging for the Post-2015 process. WGNRR's staff also collaborated with partners working in coalition in the Post-2015 process, including the Women's Major Group and the Major Group for Children and Youth in developing SRHR messaging and advocacy priorities.

Global Advocacy

WGNRR considers the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights as a strategic space for defending the SRHR of women in the Latin American region and participated actively in the work of the commission. At the 2014 commission's hearing on the general situation of human rights in El Salvador, WGNRR worked with partners and allies to highlight the injustices and human rights violations generated from the absolute criminalization of abortion in the country.

We also used this opportunity before the Commission to further highlight the plight of 17 Salvadoran women imprisoned as a result of the current national legislation and appeal for their pardon. WGNRR also focused on defending the SRHR of women in the Dominican Republic where despite initial and welcomed efforts by the president to decriminalise abortion on the grounds of rape, incest, when the woman's life and health is at risk and in case of malformation of the fetus, the Chamber of Deputies adopted a bill that upholds the country's absolute ban on abortion, and maintains the criminalization of abortion in all cases. WGNRR called on the president to veto the bill, emphasizing that total ban on abortion is a type of institutionalised violence against women putting women and girls at grave risk.

Global Advocacy

WGNRR's Executive Director, together with 60 global health leaders from more than 30 countries, gathered in Washington, D.C. to make an unprecedented commitment of support for safe and legal abortion for all women. The meeting culminated in The Airlie Declaration for Safe and Legal Abortion calling for the repeal of all criminal abortion laws and universal access to safe legal abortion. WGNRR's Executive Director, also attended the International Summit on Reproductive Choice in Lisbon (Portugal) hosted by BPAS and Catholics for Choice together with Family Planning Association of Portugal and urged the advocates and service providers to work together and ensure that debates on abortion are not led by the opposition but from the perspectives of the lived realities of women.



WGNRR'S GLOBAL ADVOCACY

WGNRR actively participated at:

The 58th Session
of the Commission
on the Status of
Women (CSW58)

The Inter-American
Commission on
Human Rights

The September
United Nations
General Assembly
Special Session on
ICPD Beyond 2014

The 47th
Conference on
Population and
Development
Forum

The Beijing+20
Review Process



Partnerships

WGNRR has been increasingly participating in efforts to integrate SRHR and HIV and AIDS. We have worked in strengthening our alliances with ICW (International Coalition of Women living with HIV), and their regional chapters. With ICW we jointly developed and delivered joint statements in several international forums such as CSW and CPD , and established an exciting new project in Nigeria, with the support of Oxfam Novib and Stop Aids Now. The project aims to bring together activists from the SRHR and HIV communities, in a unified movement to meaningfully improve the provision of SRHR services for all in Nigeria and around the world. Another important goal of this project is to build local skills and develop an advocacy strategy to address SRHR violations in healthcare settings experienced by women living with HIV (WLHIV). In October WGNRR held an inaugural workshop in partnership with ICW Global and ICW West Africa, bringing together SRHR and HIV advocates to form a coalition of CSOs and WLHIV to implement the project. During the workshop, women shared their experiences of accessing SRHR services and gave numerous accounts of how services are limited or denied, especially for young unmarried women. The next stage of the project will provide capacity building on advocacy and campaigning skills. Aside from our on-going partnership with ICW we continued to work closely with the Latin American Women's Health Network(LACWHN) aligning our activities with theirs to ensure maximum impact and avoid duplicating efforts. WGNRR also provided support to the local organizing committee of the International Women's Health Meeting (IWHM) in the Dominican Republic.

Partnerships

WGNRR continues to be an active member of the Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition (WHRD IC). We are a member of the Executive Committee and play an active role in decision making and strategy building to promote the respect and protection for Women's Human Rights defenders, especially in the field of SRHR. In June WGNRR hosted a meeting of networks working on SRHR to explore the shared challenges and opportunities. Discussions explored how better to align work, how to form improved partnerships to enhance our impact and how to pool and share skills and knowledge amongst the networks. The meeting was attended by Asia Pacific Alliance, Women Living under Muslim Laws (WLUML), ICW, WHRD IC, and LACWHN. A major issue discussed both within the networks meeting, echoing concerns of WGNRR, is the rise of conservatism across Europe and the USA donors are reluctant to fund organizations that enacts pro-choice policies. WGNRR is working to overcome these challenges by helping donors understand the need to include abortion as a central component of SRHR programmes and advocating for the inclusion of SHRH language and indicators in international agreements. We have continued our collaborations with other SRHR networks such as Men Engage, providing active support to establish their policy framework ensuring that rights based and feminist principles were included.



Worldwide Campaigns

Our campaigning capacity is growing stronger and stronger. For May 28, International Day of Action for Women's Health 2014 we witnessed for the first time extensive participation from European partners along with partners from every region. We are using social media to reach diverse audiences and we have gained significant levels of online engagement. Together with campaign partners and allies, we ran a successful 24 hour tweet-athon that reached 385,000 people across continents and time zones. WGNRR's team wrote and directed a compelling promotional video in collaboration with Skepti Sketch and animation artist Lindsay Krassin which received around 3,000 views <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RmtW7jEqHPU>

On the ground there were more than 60 events happening in around 30 countries that organized: community vigils, conferences, workshops, press conferences, digital mobilizations, public debates among other activities. In collaboration with 30 partner organizations WGNRR prepared and sent a statement to UN representatives, including Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, calling for a comprehensive, high-quality, and integrated approach to SRHR in the Post-2015 Development Agenda. The letter was based on the May 28 Call for Action and was endorsed by 150 organizations and 72 individuals worldwide.

In 2014 WGNRR led the Working Group on the Day of Action for Access to Safe and Legal Abortion preparations as members of the International Campaign for Safe Abortion. We are delighted with the outcome of the September 28 Campaign as thousands of activists in more than 65 countries spoke out against abortion stigma and demanded access to safe and legal abortion! The campaign had significant and far reaching impact, with WGNRR efforts and leadership being recognized by grassroots members and regional and international partners.

Worldwide Campaigns

Our campaign amplifies our message, not only has the number of activities in the participating countries and number of NGOs involved increased, their impact is also greater. We have seen an increased number of reports of activities in national newspaper articles and in visual media, in all of our working languages. The social media outreach resulted in millions of on-line users participating in on-line discussions with the hashtags #Sept28, #AbortionStigma and #AbortoLegal. Some of the activities on September 28th were carried out by established reproductive rights groups, while other organizations and networks addressed the issue of unsafe abortion publicly for the first time.



Plataforma Decidir Nos Hace Libres



Plataforma Decidir Nos Hace Libres



Plataforma Decidir Nos Hace Libres



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Worldwide Campaigns

We should highlight that the greatest impact of these campaigns was the development of coalitions and broad cross-sector alliances to include human rights organizations, medical professionals, those combating religious fundamentalism and others, as our experience shows that abortion advocacy is most successful when undertaken by a broad alliance of actors. These campaigning events amplified the visibility and efforts of WGNRR and led to new partnerships with organisations around the world. Lastly, WGNRR also sent a letter to UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon regarding his report on Post-2015 and urged the inclusion of an indicator on unsafe abortion.

September 28





Global Communications

Our achievements of communications strengthening are successfully illustrated by the impact and visibility of WGNRR in the different social media and communication channels. One of this year's major tasks for WGNRR was to start the process of updating the members' database. These efforts culminated in the launch of the new website on World Population Day, a day when the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights reaffirmed its commitment to grassroots-led activism and facilitating networking efforts through virtual spaces. Together with an improved design, functionality and navigation, the new website offers a comprehensive membership based database of grassroots organizations and activists.

In providing this interactive platform, WGNRR hopes to further facilitate contact among SRHR advocates, enable information sharing, and catalyse partnerships. Existing and new WGNRR members will be able to create and view individual or organizational profiles outlining fields of work, priority areas, and types of collaboration sought. A major feature is an advanced search function that enables members to filter organizations and individuals according to region, country, field of work and other criteria, and strategically search for partners with whom they can undertake mutual advocacy and campaigning initiatives and actions. The database is a result of years of work, and is a major milestone in WGNRR's efforts to reinforce connections among SRHR activists and organizations around the world. WGNRR welcomed both longstanding and new members into the new database, and firmly believes that only by joining hands can we achieve positive and meaningful change at global and local levels.

Online Reach



2 million impressions
on social media

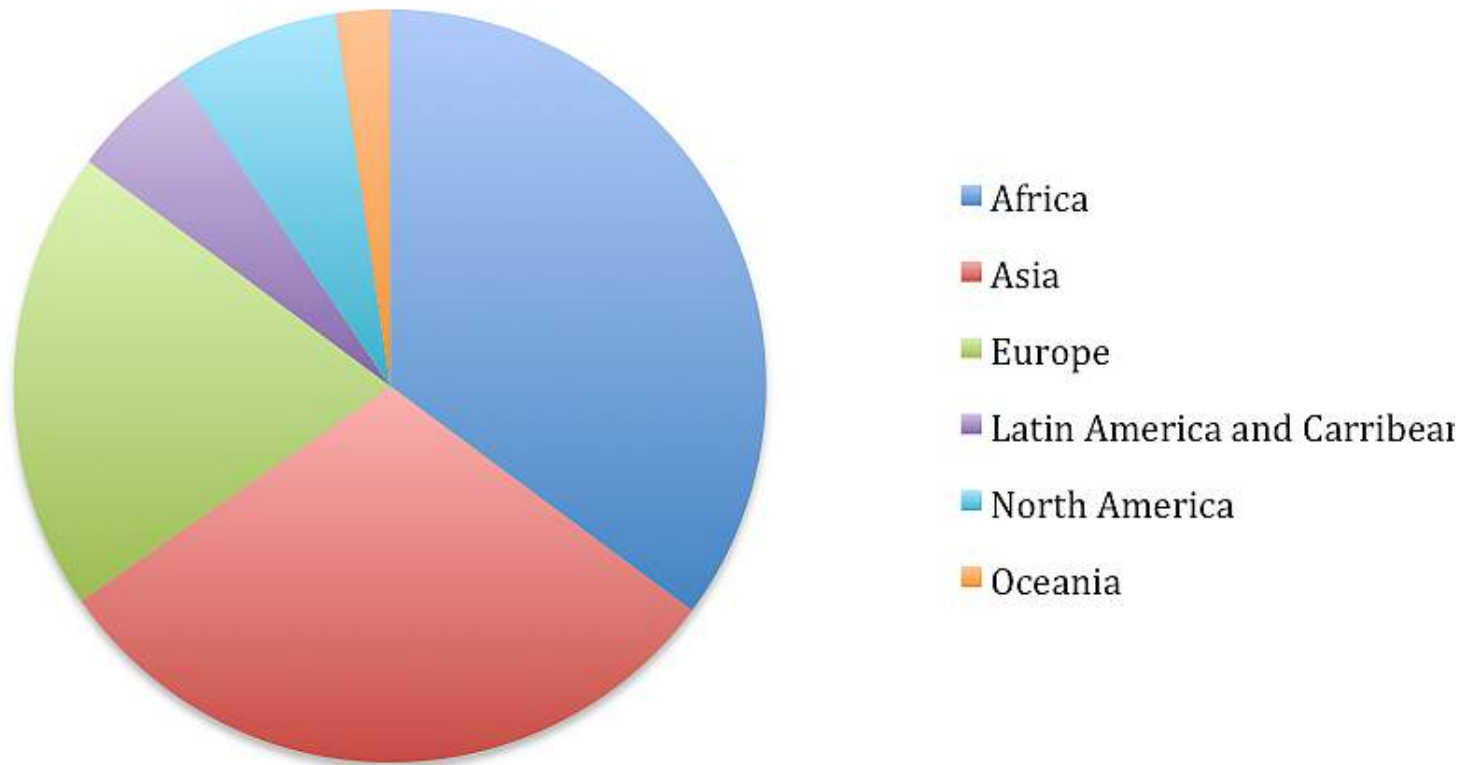


8983 page views,
4358 sessions

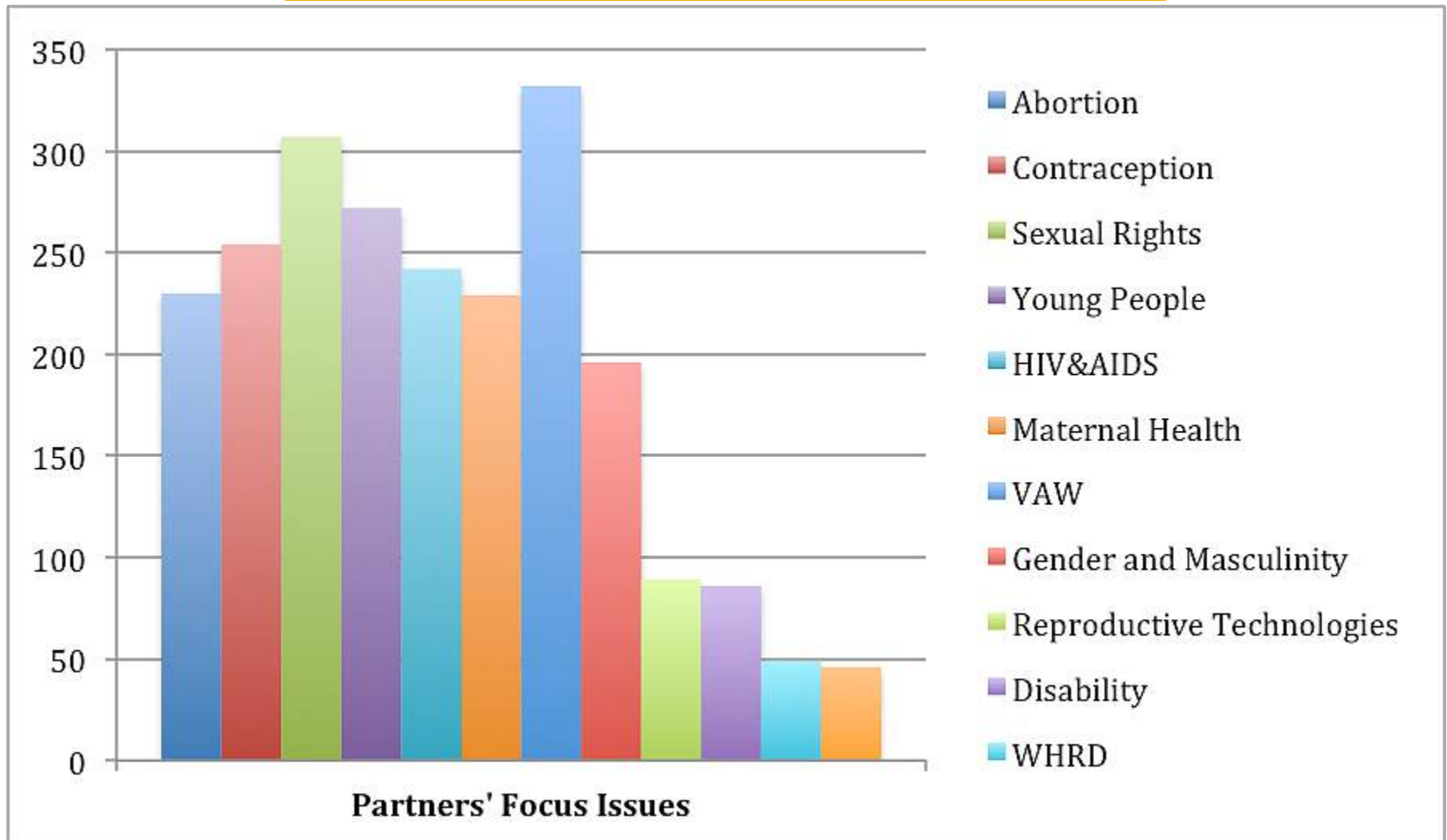


1130 downloads,
36 blog posts

Members per region



Focus Issues





Strengthening Grassroots

We are especially proud of the impact of our work in developing the skills and capacities of our grassroots members. These capacity building efforts are evidenced in the hugely successful Safe Abortion Advocacy Project which was extended during 2014 to two more countries (Kenya and Uganda.) Previously WGNRR had established projects in Malaysia, Pakistan, Nepal, Nigeria and Tanzania. The Abortion Advocacy Project aims to increase organizational ability to develop, share and jointly implement strategies to advocate and campaign to increase access to safe abortion and to understand and address abortion stigma at community level in countries where the program is being implemented.



Accent Photo

During 2014 we delivered workshops and trainings to more than 400 activists





Youth Engagement

On International Youth Day 2014, the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR) joined advocates worldwide in calling for efforts to support young people's mental health, so that they can lead lives free from isolation and unnecessary shame, and openly seek and access the services and support they need to live full and healthy lives. In particular, WGNRR called attention to the importance of full access to critical sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services, including safe and legal abortion, for young people's mental health and wellbeing.

On December 1st 2014, World AIDS Day, the International Community of Women Living with HIV (ICW)'s Chapter for Young Women, Adolescents, and Girls (CYWAG), and the Women's Global Network for Reproductive Rights (WGNRR) emphasized through a statement, the need to realize the sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of young women and girls living with HIV. As part of WGNRR's ongoing commitment to supporting youth leadership, WGNRR enabled through its ECOSOC status, the attendance of two youth advocates at the 47th session of the CPD and at the September UNGASS enabled the attendance of three youth advocates from member organizations.

Further to the lead role WGNRR played in coordinating the 2012 Global Youth Forum (GYF) in Bali, and in line with WGNRR's priorities to strengthen and support existing youth leadership and activism in SRHR, WGNRR continued to play an active role in the Youth Leadership Working Group (YLWG), established to ensure the inclusion of the Bali Declaration in ICPD Beyond 2014 and Post-2015 processes.

Youth Engagement

WGNRR remains committed to collaborating, strategizing and acting with other YLWG member organizations to ensure that youth are represented and heard in global advocacy spaces. As part of these efforts to amplify the SRHR demands of young people WGNRR's Advocacy Officer provided coordinative support for the CPD47 Youth SRHR Caucus, and collaborated with YLWG members in producing joint oral statements reflecting youth Post-2015 priorities, one of which was read by WGNRR's Chair of the Board.

Moreover, as part of the YLWG WGNRR helped secure the inclusion of a youth speaker in the Special Session of the General Assembly in September on the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the ICPD. In addition to our work with the YLWG, WGNRR is also active in other collaborative spaces on youth SRHR, among them the Youth SRHR Post-2015 Strategy Group, and the Task Force for Youth-Friendly Post-Abortion Care. WGNRR maintains close ties with global, regional and national youth-led and youth-serving organizations such as CHOICE for Youth Sexuality, the Youth Coalition for Sexual and Reproductive Rights, ARROW, ARI, Elige, Samsara, and RAHU, among others.

Youth engagement

20% of all participants in WGNRR activities are young people.



Regional Highlights

Latin America &
the Caribbean



Africa



Asia &
the Pacific





Highlights from Africa

In Africa WGNRR has actively worked with its strategic partners at the grassroots level to empower its members and allies to take actions that contribute to the creation of enabling environments for women to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights. Actions were geared toward increasing and building membership capacity on joint human right based abortion advocacy and campaigning for sexual and reproductive rights. WGNRR increased the number of its new members in the region by adding 21 organisations to our network and strengthened connections between members, alliances and other SRHR platforms at national levels as well as participating at the High Level Regional Strategic Meeting on 'Strengthening African Women's Voices in the Post-2015 Processes'. WGNRR chaired the commission that produced the Kampala Civil Society position statement for the post 2015 consultation process which included the recommendation on Universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights. The statement tackled the unacceptably high levels of maternal mortality, teenage pregnancies, transmission of STIs, HIV/AIDS in the region. WGNRR led the Abortion Advocacy and Campaigning project (AACP) building and strengthening advocacy on safe and legal abortion in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania and Nigeria. We also conducted a series of capacity building workshops for SRHR activists on human rights based advocacy and abortion stigma reduction. In Tanzania, WGNRR supported our lead partner, the Women's Promotion Centre (WPC), in leading the development of a common strategy that could help members of the Coalition to Address Maternal Mortality due to Unsafe Abortion and its Complications (CAMMAC) address abortion-related stigma. This support included the facilitation of a 3-day workshop geared towards enhancing CAMMAC members' advocacy skills on safe abortion, stigma reduction strategies, values clarifications as well as providing inputs into the review report and the abortion reduction strategy document for the Coalition.

Highlights from Africa

In Nigeria, WGNRR supported our lead partner, Generation Initiative for Women and Young Network (GIWYN), in strengthening the National Coalition Advocating for Safe Abortion (NACASA) and reviewing their advocacy action plan. This support included a 3- day workshop aimed to increase the knowledge of local advocates with skills on human rights protection and reporting mechanisms; equip them with skills to discuss and share information on abortion related issues to address stigma in their communities; and strengthen collaboration among abortion advocates so to jointly work on a common agenda. With close technical support from WGNRR, grassroots based networks, namely Community Network for Reproductive Health Rights (CNRHR) in Uganda, and WGNRR Alliance Kenya (WAK)/Kenya, organized community dialogues to discuss the consequences of unsafe abortion in their communities and the importance of access to safe abortion in Kampala and Nairobi respectively. The events were attended by activists, health professionals, CSOs representatives ,opinion leaders including religious leaders and key affected population including sex workers, refugees, drug users, slum dwellers, women living with disabilities, and women living with HIV/AIDs. In Senegal, WGNRR provided its SRHR advocacy expertise in a regional workshop aimed at designing a platform to empower youth SRHR organisations in 4 francophone African countries, namely, Senegal, Mali, DRC and Niger. This platform responds to the great need to strengthen the advocacy capacity around SRHR in Senegal and the other countries and give youth a voice to advocate on SRHR. This workshop resulted in a comprehensive plan for a regional youth SRHR advocacy platform that will enhance linking and learning between different organisations (in Africa) that have experience in advocacy for SRHR.



Highlights from Asia & the Pacific

The year 2014 started with the 7th Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights (7APCRSHR) which was held on January 21-24, 2014 in Manila, Philippines. The Conference themed "Examining Achievements, Good Practices and Challenges: Towards a Strategic Positioning of SRHR for All" brought together more than 1500 sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) activists, Asia Pacific government officials, medical professionals and private sector representatives to share good practices, to discuss arising challenges and the possible ways to overcome them, and to strategize on the best ways to advance and expand SRHR initiatives in the region. WGNRR was actively involved in 7APCRSHR as a member of the national implementation team and co-organized satellite sessions on making the SRHR development goal a reality, on unsafe abortion in Asia and on linkages between SRHR and HIV movements. WGNRR staff and Board members chaired a number of conference sessions on improving access to youth friendly services and medical abortion, advancing SOGI rights, and building partnerships and alliances. In February WGNRR joined the One Billion Rising Campaign in the Philippines, this global campaign called on women survivors of violence and their supporters to gather outside places where they are entitled to justice – courthouses, police stations, government offices, school administration buildings, work places, military courts, places of worship, homes, or simply public gathering places where women deserve to feel safe but too often do not. Throughout the year WGNRR campaigned for full implementation of the RH law in the Philippines and contributed to the social media campaign #Yes2RH. WGNRR was part of the organizing committee for the Women's Networking Zone at AIDS2014 in Melbourne, Australia. During the conference WGNRR and ICW jointly led a particularly successful panel session Women Living with HIV which focused on the ways donors could facilitate the integration of SRHR and HIV issues.

Highlights from Asia & the Pacific

Advocacy and influencing activities in the region included statements and mobilization of partners on the anti-LGBTQI Bill in Kyrgyzstan; celebrated with the Philippine SRHR advocates the approval and constitutionality of the RH Law; and together with partners in Asia Pacific, WGNRR issued a statement on non-recognition of SRHR during the 3rd Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). WGNRR also participated and contributed in the regional advocacy meetings organised by allies in the region such as the Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), Asia Pacific Alliance for SRHR Conference and UnZip the Lips where WGNRR led discussions reproductive rights; linkages between key affected women and girls with human rights, SRHR, and gender inequality within Beijing +20 and the post-2015 framework. In preparation for the Philippines Beijing +20 Review process, WGNRR was part of the "write shop" organized by the Philippine Commission on Women to review the Philippine implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. WGNRR actively participated in the Regional Beijing +20 Review process as a member of the CSO Steering Committee that organised the CSO Forum on Beijing +20 and provided strategic support for member engagement during the Asian and Pacific Conference on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Beijing+20 Review. WGNRR supported the participation of 12 partners from India, Indonesia, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines and Sri Lanka to attend the regional review process and held a members meeting to strategise for the inclusion of abortion rights language at the back-to-back conferences. During the CSO Forum, WGNRR along with Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (APA), ARROW, Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN), International Planned Parenthood Federation, SARO and the International Women's Health Coalition organised a parallel session on "SRHR in the Beijing +20 and Post-2015 Agenda: From Commitment to Accountability." Participants in the interactive workshop identified urgent SRHR issues and key recommendations for governments in the region, and specifically demanded the recognition and inclusion of SRHR language in the Beijing +20 review.



Highlights from Latin America & the Caribbean

2014 was a busy year for WGNRR's recently established office in Mexico City. WGNRR's presence in the region has been increasing both in terms of reach and number of activities on the ground with members and allies. WGNRR presence in Mexico has greatly increased our visibility within the region and better supported our joint working with Latin-American partners. It has increased our capacity to identify ways to amplify the work of existing organisations and networks within the region and identify opportunities for joint projects. The added value of WGNRR's presence in the region is that we offer a centralized mechanism for the national and regional organisations to disseminate their information and requests for collaboration in campaigning activities within other regions and across the globe. We have successfully worked to connect the September 28th activities in LAC with activists in other regions coordinating the Sept 28 campaign with them and disseminating their **call for action**. Also this year we have followed up our MoU with LACWHN to undertake joint efforts in the region, especially for campaigning's and membership, helping to strengthen our relationships and to increase members in the region. During 2014, WGNRR's advocacy efforts in Latin American were particularly focused on two priority countries: El Salvador, and the Dominican Republic. Both countries' legislations are highly restrictive and endanger women's right to health and life. In both countries we worked with an alliance of organisations to provide technical support and taking a lead on behalf of the organisations in management and logistics of the international events.

Highlights from Latin America & the Caribbean

In El Salvador, WGNRR's participated in a strategic meeting for the decriminalization of abortion in the 7 countries that have a total ban on abortion, organised by our local partner, Agrupación Ciudadana por la Despenalización del Aborto. WGNRR shared the Mexican experience and global strategies for the decriminalization of abortion. WGNRR joined human rights advocacy organizations in petitioning the Salvadorean Legislative Assembly for pardons for the 17 women who were charged for having abortions after suffering obstetric emergencies and were later convicted of homicide. WGNRR and our partner Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL) highlighted the human rights violations committed as a consequence of the total ban on abortion, the plight of the 17 wrongfully imprisoned women, and the threats received by women human rights defenders at a hearing on the situation of human rights in El Salvador convened by the Inter-American Human Rights Commission (IACHR). Following the hearing WGNRR continued to raise awareness raising of the dire situation faced by the 17 Salvadoran women imprisoned for abortion-related charges through media, including television in Mexico. WGNRR participated in discussions centred on young women's priorities relating to public policy in Mexico City, highlighting the importance of engaging young women in public policy discussions, as well as ways in which such discussions could be used to further improve the wellbeing of young women.



Latin America & the Caribbean

To commemorate September 28, WGNRR jointly hosted and organized with regional and national partners a panel event in El Salvador, to raise awareness of the human rights violations resulting from the complete ban on abortion in the country. The panel featured a variety of international and local women human rights defenders and authorities, and was followed by a visit to some of the unjustly imprisoned women. WGNRR also led the creation of a strategic group including Agrupación, CEJIL, Amnesty International, The Center for Reproductive Rights and WGRNR, in order to jointly create synergies and strategies towards the freedom of **Las 17** and the decriminalization of abortion in El Salvador. As a result of these joint efforts, the group submitted an Urgent Action to several United Nations Special Rapporteurs, that later resulted in a communication of the United Nations System to El Salvador recommending the decriminalization of abortion at least on some grounds and calling for the review of the 17 cases. Women's human rights defenders undertook a follow-up action in front of the Supreme Court of Justice in El Salvador and presented new evidence highlighting inaccuracies in medical opinions that were used to unjustly condemn the 17 women to 30-40 years of imprisonment. Finally, WGNRR presented a letter to the Consulate of El Salvador in Metro Manila, Philippines and in Mexico City demanding justice for these women. Our work in 2014 formed the basis of our "Words of Hope" Campaign, aimed at collecting postcards with messages from all over the world to be delivered to the 17 imprisoned women. These efforts contributed to the release of Guadalupe who was granted a pardon and Mirna who was released after serving her prison sentence in 2015. The remaining 15 women are currently serving 30-40 years sentences.

Latin America & the Caribbean

In the Dominican Republic, WGNRR successfully secured a hearing in the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. WGNRR and Partners Submitted A Shadow Report on Women's SRHR in the Dominican Republic in response to the follow up report of the recommendations made by the Committee of Experts of the Belem do Pará Convention Mechanism to the States.

We also submitted Urgent Actions to the UN Special Rapporteurs urging them to call the Dominican Republic parliament to pass the bill where abortion was decriminalised on some grounds. Both bodies released a letter to the State calling for the review of the abortion legislation. WGNRR also submitted several letters to the President and to the Congress calling for the revision of the Penal Code. Due to advocacy efforts, the Dominican Republic eventually liberalized its abortion laws in 2015.



Funders

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