

GENDER MACHT ARBEIT

Friday, 4th May 2012
BERN

Working and living conditions from a feminist perspective
International conference from WIDE Switzerland

The deepening of the global financial and economic crisis has triggered an acute crisis of care work and state provision sector. Within this context the conference "Gender Macht Arbeit" organized by WIDE Switzerland seeks to find answers to the following questions: how do societies go about organizing care and social provision services? Who does this work and under which conditions? Who has access to social welfare against the backdrop of severe state budget cuts and of increasing privatization of welfare services? How do households in the North and in the global South cope with the situation and what is happening on the globalized care work markets? Where do we stand with regards to women's rights, time and money?

The WIDE conference investigates the transformations of gender power relations in the area of paid and unpaid work through the lens of a transnational feminist perspective and focuses on four thematic areas: household economy, health care system, globalized work, and public finances. The conference brings together experts and activists from the field of development, migration, social and economic policy and invites them to present different perspectives on the conference topics as well as results of their research in this area. All interested women and men are warmly welcome to join us in discussions, analyses and debates on work, gender and the care economy.



WIDE Switzerland is a network of NGO representatives, academics and activists working in the field of gender and development. The objective of WIDE Switzerland is to investigate Swiss development policies as well as economic and social policy with a focus on gender relations, to engage in public debates and to promote networking and knowledge dissemination in these subject areas. WIDE Switzerland is a national platform of Women in Development Europe (WIDE Europe).

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The conference focuses on four thematic areas surrounding transformations of work processes and power relations, and raises questions about shifting borders among and between genders, between paid and unpaid work, and between the North and the global South.

Time and money:

Household economy and precarization of working and living conditions

State budget cuts and the increasing economization of the development sector have put numerous households all over the world under severe strain. The reasons behind this lie not only in the added financial burden due to shrinking or missing salaries, but also in extra work load and extra costs in employment, in care work at home as well as the organization of the different work spheres. What are the intersections of the precarization of the working and living conditions in the OECD countries and in the global South? How do women in different households and environments cope with the growing lack of money and time?

To spare or to care?

Reform of the health care system and its implications

Current dynamics in the reform of national health care systems is a prime example of the mounting pressure that the economy exercises on the person-related service sector. In times like this, when the time- and labour-consuming care work is subjected to purely economic criteria of rentability, this cannot but have considerable implications on the quality of the care work itself and on the working conditions in the care sector. Women in the CIS and CEE countries have become the main agents of the transnational care and domestic labour migration, and they are more than familiar with new and old dependencies due to the outcomes of health care system reforms in their home countries. In this panel we seek to bring together transnational gender perspectives on money flow and working conditions in the health and care sector, on new care arrangements, and last but not least, on the issue of care drain.

Globalized work and transnational care:

Who has access to social welfare and “welcare”?

Numerous civil society initiatives have attempted to address the issues of social and economic risks of employment, and of loss of employment, in the context of global labour markets. We look at the issues through the eyes of the care economy and raise the following questions: Who has access to social welfare and social security benefits, and based on what kind of economic contributions? How can we make the real lives, rights and aspirations of migrant workers the starting point of a gender-just debate?

Saving and spending:

Public finances and the care economy

State finances play a decisive role in establishing and maintaining gender equality. Gender responsive budgeting enables us to make unpaid care work visible within national economies, and helps us to analyze and influence state budgets. But how do we define gender equitable taxes or social insurances? What happens in times of “crises” when typically public expenditures that benefit women get cut? Which are the public expenditures that should not be cut under any circumstances, if a state is to truly promote gender equality at all levels of the state structures?

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PROGRAMME

	CHAIR WIDE Coordination Office Lilian Fankhauser ICFG Franziska Müller cfd		
09.15	WELCOME from Vice-Rector of the University of Berne, Prof. Dr. Doris Wastl-Walter		
09.30	GENDER RELATIONS AND POWER STRUCTURES IN THE CARE ECONOMY Shahra Razavi, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development UNRISD, Geneva		
	COMMENT Ulrike Knobloch, Department of Sociology, University of Fribourg		
10.30	BREAK		
11.00	KEYNOTE LECTURES		
HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY	Christina Klenner The Hans Böckler Foundation, Düsseldorf Christa Wichterich sociologist, university lecturer and consultant on gender and development, Bonn		
HEALTH CARE	Ewa Charkiewicz Feminist Think Tank, Warschau Pierre Gobet University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland, Lausanne		
GLOBALIZED WORK AND SOCIAL WELFARE	Luzenir Caixeta maiz – Autonomous Centre for and by Migrant Women, Linz		
PUBLIC FINANCES	Katharina Mader Institute for Institutional and Heterodox Economics, Vienna University of Economics and Business		
13.00	LUNCH		
WORKSHOPS	1 HOUSEHOLD ECONOMY TIME AND MONEY: PRECARIZATION OF WORKING AND LIVING CONDITIONS 14.00-15.30	Marina Blagojevic Institute for Criminological and Sociological Research, Belgrade Christina Klenner Christine Michel Labor union Unia, Bern Christa Wichterich Michèle Amacker Department of Sociology, University of Fribourg (Chair)	2 HEALTH CARE TO SPARE OR TO CARE? REFORM OF HEALTH CARE SYSTEM AND ITS IMPLICATIONS Ewa Charkiewicz Warsaw Pierre Gobet Susy Greuter social anthropologist, Basel Roswitha Koch Swiss Professional Association of Nursing and Health Care Workers, Bern (Chair)
	15.30	PAUSE	
WORKSHOPS	3 GLOBALIZED WORK AND WELFARE TRANSNATIONAL CARE: WHO HAS ACCESS TO SOCIAL WELFARE AND „WELCARE“? 16.00-17.30	Luzenir Caixeta Jacqueline Heinen International Council on Social Welfare ICSW, Geneva Jelena Lenggenhager education and gender specialist, Berne Yvonne Zimmermann SOLIFONDS, Zürich Sarah Schilliger Institute of Sociology, University of Basel (Chair)	4 PUBLIC FINANCES SAVING AND SPENDING: STATE FINANCES AND THE CARE ECONOMY Ewa Charkiewicz Katharina Mader Annemarie Sancar Deza Gender Advisor, Bern (Chair)
Plenum	17.30	Gender and work: future perspectives and policy in Switzerland Margret Kiener Nellen Member of the Swiss National Council Annemarie Sancar Sarah Schilliger Pierre Gobet Christa Wichterich Inés Mateos Education and diversity specialist, Basel (Chair)	
	18.30	ROUND OFF WITH SOUP KITCHEN	
	20.00	End of conference	

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