



Indonesian, Pakistani and Iranian women demanding their rights

## WEMC Consortium Advisory Group (CAG)

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## Key Partners of the WEMC Consortium

1. **Lead Partner:**  
**Southeast Asia Research Centre (SEARC),**  
City University of Hong Kong, China  
<<http://www.cityu.edu.hk/searc>>
2. **Shirkat Gah Women's Resource Centre (SG),** Pakistan  
<<http://www.shirkatgah.org>>
3. **Centre for Environment, Gender and Development (ENGENDER),** Hong Kong  
<<http://www.engenderhk.com>>
4. **Department of Community Health Sciences, Aga Khan University (AKU),** Pakistan  
<<http://www.aku.edu/chs>>
5. **International Gender Studies Centre (IGS),**  
Queen Elizabeth House, Oxford University, UK  
<<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~cccrw>> / <<http://users.ox.ac.uk/~qehwemc>>
6. **Semarak Cerlang Nusa (SCN),** Indonesia  
<<http://www.scn-crest.org>>
7. **Solidaritas Perempuan (SP),** Indonesia  
<[http://www.solidaritas-perempuan.org/sp\\_ind/](http://www.solidaritas-perempuan.org/sp_ind/)>
8. **Women Living Under Muslim Laws (WLUML),** Regional  
Coordination Office – Asia / **Concordia University,** Canada  
<<http://www.wluml.org/english/index.shtml>> / <<http://www.concordia.ca>>

Each WEMC partner works closely with interested individuals, groups and institutions, including universities, research centres and collectives.

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Baoan women, China



Javanese dancers, Indonesia

## Women's Empowerment in Muslim Contexts

*Gender, Poverty and Democratisation  
from the Inside Out*



Participatory Rural Appraisal, Pakistan



Women demonstrating, Iran



## What is WEMC?

WEMC stands for 'Women's Empowerment in Muslim Contexts: gender, poverty and democratisation from the inside out'.

WEMC is a Research Programme Consortium (RPC) that first came together in 2005, through the partnership of universities, research institutions and non-governmental organisations from several countries.

The WEMC programme of research, capacity building and communication was launched on 1 July 2006, to:

- Make visible the strategies that are indigenous and meaningful to women in asserting their rights
- Support women's initiatives to overcome forces that impoverish and marginalise them, including those with Islamist political agendas
- Promote women's empowerment as democratisation from the inside out



## Why WEMC?

There is a broad consensus on what the priorities are for achieving women's empowerment, [but] there is little knowledge of how to achieve women's empowerment.

(DFID 2005)

WEMC was formed to address this gap in knowledge and practice – that is, how to achieve women's empowerment in the face of disempowering forces, old and new.

## What does WEMC do?

WEMC:

- Does research on women's indigenous empowerment strategies, past and present
- Mobilises support from policy and decision-makers for women's initiatives to change disempowering policies and practices
- Facilitates meso-level linkages to support women's empowerment
- Builds the capacity of partners and women at the grassroots to analyse their situations and experiences, and to articulate their needs, concerns and demands for change
- Identifies and promotes good practices in governance and development that support women's empowerment
- Communicates research findings, new insights and relevant information, through diverse means, to women in communities studied, as well as audiences at different levels

## WEMC core concepts

WEMC analyses how women seek to transform disempowering forces in Muslim contexts. WEMC has identified the following as core concepts:

1. Women's empowerment means an increased capacity to make autonomous decisions that challenge and change unfavorable gendered power relations.
2. 'Democratisation from the inside out' happens when women, as agents of their own empowerment, negotiate and transform the power relations that affect their lives.
3. Formal and non-formal power structures, operating at micro and meso levels, block national policies and programmes intended to support women.



Indonesian migrant workers in media training, Hong Kong

## WEMC research sites

WEMC explores women's diverse strategies for empowerment in four nodal countries (China, Indonesia, Iran and Pakistan), as well as among two cross-border populations (Afghan refugees and returnees, and Indonesian migrant women workers).



Women in Pakistan, Iran, China and Indonesia



## Who benefits?

- Women and girls facing impoverishment and disempowerment at sites of research and beyond
- Women's groups and other civil society organisations
- Local, regional and international development agencies
- Research institutions and centres for advocacy
- Policy makers, implementers, decision-makers, other agents of change