

## Window on the World

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*This edition of Window on the World presents a survey of some of the key websites of organizations and institutes dealing with new technologies from a development, gender, disability, and ethical perspective.*

### **Action Group on Erosion, Technology, and Concentration (ETC Group)**

[www.etcgroup.org](http://www.etcgroup.org)

For almost three decades, the ETC Group (formerly known as RAFI) has addressed the impact of new technologies on rural communities, and is dedicated to the conservation and sustainable advancement of cultural and ecological diversity and human rights. The ETC Group supports socially responsible developments in technologies useful to marginalized peoples and it addresses governance issues affecting the international community. Read more: 'The potential impacts of Nano-Scale technologies on commodity markets: The implications for commodity dependent developing countries', and 'A tiny primer on Nano-Scale technologies and the little bank theory'.

The ETC group works in partnership with civil society organizations (CSOs) for cooperative and sustainable self-reliance within disadvantaged societies, by providing information and analysis of socioeconomic and technological trends and alternatives.

### **CAMBIA**

[www.cambia.org](http://www.cambia.org)

CAMBIA is an international, independent non-profit research institute. For more than a decade, CAMBIA has been creating new enabling tools to foster innovation and a spirit of collaboration in the life sciences. In Spanish and Italian, CAMBIA means 'change'. This meaning is at the very heart of CAMBIA's mission.

CAMBIA's BIOS Initiative™ (Biological Innovation for Open Society) is exploring new R&D paradigms, practices, and policies to address neglected priorities of disadvantaged communities. How? By tapping the great potential of their own creativity. Our institutional ethos is built around an awareness of this need and opportunity: for local commitment to achieving lasting solutions to the challenges of food security, agricultural productivity, human and animal health, and natural resource management.

### Centre for Enquiry into Health and Allied Themes (CEHAT)

[www.cehat.org/aboutus.html](http://www.cehat.org/aboutus.html)

CEHAT in Hindi means 'Health'. CEHAT, the research centre of Anusandhan Trust, stands for research, action, service, and advocacy in health and allied themes. Socially relevant and rigorous academic health research and action at CEHAT is for the well-being of the disadvantaged masses, for strengthening People's Health Movements (PHMs) and for realising rights to health care. Its institutional structure acts as an interface between progressive people's movements and academia.

CEHAT's objectives are to undertake socially relevant research and advocacy projects on various sociopolitical aspects of health; establish direct services and programmes to demonstrate how health services can be made accessible equitably and ethically; disseminate information through databases and relevant publications, supported by a well-stocked and specialized library and a documentation centre. CEHAT's projects are based on its ideological commitments and priorities, and are focused on four broad themes: Health Services and Financing; Health Legislation, Ethics and Patients' Rights; Women's Health; and Investigation and Treatment of Psycho-Social Trauma.

CEHAT is based in Mumbai and Pune, Maharashtra, India with five field offices at different locations in Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra.

### Centre for Genetics and Society

[www.genetics-and-society.org](http://www.genetics-and-society.org)

The Centre for Genetics and Society is a non-profit information and public affairs organization working to encourage responsible uses and effective societal governance of the new human genetic and reproductive technologies. The Centre supports benign and beneficent medical applications of the new human genetic and reproductive technologies, and opposes those applications that objectify and commodify human life and threaten to divide

human society. The Centre works in a context of support for the equitable provision of health technologies domestically and internationally; for women's health and reproductive rights; for the protection of our children; for the rights of the disabled; and for precaution in the use of technologies that could alter the fundamental processes of the natural world.

The Centre looks at key technologies, particularly human cloning and inheritable genetic modification. It includes the basic science, arguments pro and con, and frequently asked questions. It describes the differences between reproductive and research cloning, and between inheritable and somatic genetic modification. It examines existing and proposed legislation and regulations concerning new human genetic technologies, internationally and in the US and offers an analysis of the political landscape by examining the nature and motivations of advocates and opponents of new human genetic technologies, and the roles played by bioethics, culture, and the media. *Genetic Crossroads* is the electronic newsletter of the Centre for Genetics and Society. It offers analysis, exclusive features, summaries of news and legislation, and pointers to new books and events.

### The Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)

[www.genderhealth.org](http://www.genderhealth.org)

The Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE) is a US-based non-governmental organization focused on the effects of US international policies on the health and rights of women, girls, and other vulnerable populations in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. CHANGE believes that every individual has the right to the basic information, technologies, and services needed to enjoy a healthy and safe sexual and reproductive life free from coercion and preventable illness.

CHANGE's mandate is based on the premise that it is the responsibility of US organizations, connected to US constituencies, to foster accountability of US government's policies abroad. Its overarching goal therefore is to ensure that US

international policies and programmes promote sexual and reproductive rights and health through effective, evidence-based approaches to prevention and treatment of critical reproductive and sexual health concerns, and through increased funding for critical programmes.

### **The Choice is Yours**

[www.innovationwatch.com/commentary.choiceisyours.htm](http://www.innovationwatch.com/commentary.choiceisyours.htm)

Gregor Wolbring's column 'The Choice is Yours' highlights scientific and technological advances and poses questions he hopes readers will think about in relation to nano-technology and other issues that he is engaged in (see his lead article in this journal issue). He believes that engagement of the global community in the discourse of science and technology research and development is essential if negative consequences are to be avoided.

### **Committee on Women, Population, and Environment**

[www.cwpe.org](http://www.cwpe.org)

The Committee on Women, Population, and the Environment is a multi-racial alliance of feminist activists, health practitioners, and scholars. It is committed to promoting the social and economic empowerment of women in a context of global peace and justice; and to eliminating poverty, inequality, racism, and environmental degradation. CWPE aims to support women's right to safe, voluntary birth control and abortion, while strongly opposing demographically driven population policies. It challenges the belief that population growth is the primary cause of environmental degradation, conflict, and growing poverty and works to provide a broader analysis that reflects the complexity of these issues and locates the true causes in a global economic system based on exploitation, profit, and consumerism, the structures of patriarchy and racism that underlie it, and the militarism that enforces and perpetuates it.

By focusing on emerging political issues and alliances, CWPE works to expose the human rights violations that follow from population-based analyses – such as welfare 'reform' and immigration control in the North, and increasing population control in the South – and to attract political attention and grassroots action on these subjects.

CWPE is committed to bringing feminist activism and analysis closer together at local, regional, national, and international levels, and to working in partnership with community activists and organizations. Their current programmes include: building collaborations among the public health, drug treatment, and reproductive rights communities to resist the unethical tactics of the cash-for-sterilization programme known as CRACK; monitoring and opposing quinacrine chemical sterilization; providing new analysis on the experiences of women of colour with the violence of law enforcement; opposing the 'greening of hate', the penetration of the environmental movement by conservative anti-immigrant individuals and organizations and campaigning against immunological contraceptives and dangerous contraceptive practices.

### **The Council for Responsible Genetics**

[www.gene-watch.org](http://www.gene-watch.org)

The Council for Responsible Genetics fosters public debate about the social, ethical, and environmental implications of genetic technologies. Founded in 1983, CRG is a non-profit, non-governmental organization based in Cambridge, Massachusetts. CRG works through the media and concerned citizens to distribute accurate information and represent the public interest on emerging issues in biotechnology.

CRG believes that the public must have access to clear and understandable information on technological innovations. The public must be able to participate in public and private decision-making concerning technological developments and their implementation. In addition, they are concerned that the new technologies must meet social needs and that problems rooted in poverty, racism, and

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other forms of inequality cannot be remedied by technology alone.

Programme areas include: Genetic Determinism; Cloning and Human Genetic Manipulation; Genetic Testing, Privacy and Discrimination; Biotechnology and Agriculture; Biowarfare; Genetic Bill of Rights; Women and Biotechnology; Genetics and the Law; Boston University Biodefense; Campaign for the Peaceful Development of the Biological Sciences; and Safe Seed Project .

CRG also publishes a bimonthly magazine, *Gene Watch*, the only publication of its kind in the US. *Gene Watch* is dedicated to monitoring biotechnology's social, ethical, and environmental consequences. Since 1983, *Gene Watch* has covered a broad spectrum of issues, from genetically engineered foods to biological weapons, genetic privacy and discrimination, reproductive technologies, and human cloning.

### Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation

[www.dhf.uu.se/](http://www.dhf.uu.se/)

The Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation was established in 1962 in memory of the second Secretary-General of the United Nations. Two programmes are of particular interest in relation to development and technologies.

The first is New Threats to Security: Technological Transformation, Corporate Concentration, and Environmental Challenges. The programme explores the emerging threats, including the societal and environmental implications of new technologies such as nano-technology, biotechnology, robotics, and applications of cognitive sciences. Current activities include efforts to establish an International Convention on the Evaluation of New Technologies (ICENT). The Foundation is also exploring various dimensions of the concentration of corporate power and possible implications of the new, giant market for trade in greenhouse gas emission rights under the Kyoto protocol.

The Foundation also has a long-standing engagement in health politics. Part of WHO's ground-breaking 1978 Alma-Ata declaration on 'Health for All' was conceived at an 'Another Devel-

opment in Health' seminar at the Foundation in 1977. Building on this tradition, the Foundation played a major role in the planning, organizing, and implementation of the first People's Health Assembly in Bangladesh at the end of 2000. The PHM emerged out of this effort and has now taken a leading role in global health politics. A global network has been formed and major efforts are now being made to put this 'new' issue on the global political agenda including looking at pharmaceutical drug policies and the containment of antimicrobial resistance.

### Demos Institute UK

[www.demos.co.uk/](http://www.demos.co.uk/)

Demos is a think tank for everyday democracy. They believe that everyone should be able to make personal choices in their daily lives that contribute to the common good. Their aim is to put this democratic idea into practice by working with organizations in ways that make them more effective and legitimate. They focus on: public services; science and technology; cities and public space; arts and culture; global security; and public communication.

Demos partners include policy-makers, companies, public service providers, and social entrepreneurs. Demos is not linked to any party but works with politicians across political divides in eastern Europe, Scandinavia, Australia, Brazil, India, and China in order to analyse social and political change.

Their current projects in area of technology and science include: Nano-dialogues: four experiments in upstream public engagement; The Atlas of Ideas: China, India and the new geography of science; Better Humans? and Nano-technologies, risk and sustainability.

### Disability Awareness in Action

[www.daa.org.uk/](http://www.daa.org.uk/)

Disability Awareness in Action (DAA) is an international human rights network, run *for* and *by* disabled people. Their website is how we pass

information and news to disabled people – and our representative organizations – around the world. DAA's efforts are particularly focused on people in developing countries. Most of DAA's information comes from disabled people themselves; and their aim is to ensure that disabled people have access to any and all information that concerns our human and civil rights.

### **Gender and Justice in the Gene Age?**

[www.gjga.org](http://www.gjga.org)

On 6 and 7 May 2004, 65 feminist, social justice, women's health, disability, and human rights activists, academics, writers, and others met in New York City to work toward a framework for assessing new reproductive and genetic technologies from a social justice perspective.

*Gender and Justice in the Gene Age: A Feminist Meeting on New Reproductive and Genetic Technologies* was co-sponsored by the Committee on Women, Population, and the Environment; *Our Bodies, Ourselves* (OBOS), and the Center for Genetics and Society.

This website is a record of the *Gender and Justice in the Gene Age* meeting. The *Gender and Justice in the Gene Age* meeting provided an opportunity to begin charting a path that simultaneously protects women's rights, health equity, and access to abortion, while it promotes responsible social governance of reproductive and genetic technologies. Participants came together with the hope of developing a strong feminist and social justice voice that calls for responsible social governance of these new technologies, and that effectively participates in the ongoing debates about them.

The meeting focused on reframing the debate about reproductive and genetic technologies to make it clear that strong support for abortion rights can and does co-exist with healthy skepticism about emerging technologies. It aimed to foster dialogue between feminist and disability rights communities, and between academics and activists; and to broaden recognition of the new and emerging reproductive and genetic technologies as key women's health and women's rights

issues. For more information about the meeting please contact:

### **The Global Forum for Health Research**

[www.globalforumhealth.org](http://www.globalforumhealth.org)

The Global Forum for Health Research is an independent international foundation promoting more health research to combat the neglected diseases and conditions that are major sources of ill health in developing countries and to reduce other inequities in health and health research.

We believe that more health research needs to be devoted to improving the health of people in developing countries.

The Global Forum is working to: change the priorities governing how existing resources for health research are used; encourage new resources that will be directed to research in the neglected areas; and foster research in the neglected areas to reduce the burdens of disease and disability.

### **Hands Off Our Ovaries Campaign**

[www.handsoffourovaryes.com](http://www.handsoffourovaryes.com)

Biotechnological research and development often affects women more directly than men. In the case of human embryonic cloning, women's health and safety have already been affected – adversely. Sadly, there have been too many instances of coercion and deception, and violations of informed consent. Left uncontrolled, research demands will place undue burdens on young, poor women.

Hands Off Our Ovaries is calling for an immediate moratorium on egg trafficking and asking that serious research be undertaken on the drugs involved, the short- and long-term effects on women's bodies, as well as the scientific justification for the research objectives. It is also necessary to allow time for the issues associated with intellectual property to be addressed comprehensively. The group state that the sociological consequences of gamete donation merit considerable and serious deliberation.

### **Indigenous Peoples Council on Biocolonism**

[www.ipcb.org](http://www.ipcb.org)

The IPCB is an indigenous organization that addresses issues of biopiracy. It began its work in 1993 to oppose the Human Genome Diversity Project (HGDP), a project so fraught with ethical and scientific problems it failed to get endorsement from the National Science Foundation, or UNESCO. The IPCB assists indigenous peoples in the protection of their genetic resources, indigenous knowledge, cultural and human rights from the negative effects of biotechnology.

The IPCB provides intervention and technical support to tribes who are negatively impacted by genetic research, as well as those tribes who are interested in proactive protection.

### **The Institute on Biotechnology & the Human Future**

[www.thehumanfuture.com](http://www.thehumanfuture.com)

The Institute on Biotechnology & the Human Future (IBHF) offers assessments of the scientific benefits and risks of new developments in biotechnology, while at the same time analyzing their cultural and ethical significance. The Institute couples continuing academic and policy research with the ability to provide advice and analysis to businesses, professional organizations, consumer groups, and policymakers. It is able to draw on the resources of many scholars and opinion leaders through its wide network of fellows and links to many other organizations.

The Institute serves as a place where leading individuals from a wide range of cultural and political persuasions can work together and exchange understandings about recent developments in genetic and reproductive technology; to move toward a greater understanding of shared goals; and to develop joint efforts to examine and assess developments in biotechnology in terms of risks, benefits, impacts on cultural values, and challenges for cultural institutions.

The Institute is also linked to the Illinois Institute of Technology's (IIT's) Center on Nano-tech-

nology and Society, [www.nano-and-society.org](http://www.nano-and-society.org) an affiliate of the IBHF, at Chicago-Kent College of Law. It has been created to catalyze informed interdisciplinary research, education and dialogue on the ethical, legal, policy, business, and broader societal implications of nano-scale science and technology – all with a special focus on the human condition. See also *Nano & Society*, a monthly electronic newsletter, and *Nanologues*, a print series on specific nano-related topics.

### **OBOS or Women's Health Book Collective**

[www.bwhbc.org](http://www.bwhbc.org)

OBOS, also known as the Boston Women's Health Book Collective (BWHBC), is a non-profit, public interest women's health education, advocacy, and consulting organization. Beginning in 1970 with the publication of the first edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and continuing for over 35 years, OBOS has inspired the women's health movement by producing a book that makes accurate health and medical information accessible to a broad audience by weaving women's stories into a framework of practical, clearly written text. OBOS believes that women, as informed health consumers, are catalysts for social change and that they can become their own health experts, particularly through discussing issues of health and sexuality with each other. It also strives to ensure that women as health consumers have a right to know about controversies surrounding medical practices and about where consensus among medical experts may be forming and in the work they show how a pathology/disease approach to normal life events (birthing, menopause, aging, death) is not an effective way in which to consider health or structure a health system.

OBOS has just published the eighth edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves* and continues to develop and maintain a companion website for the 2005 edition of *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, as well as acts as a key voice in policy, advocacy, and educational efforts related to women's health through its advocacy and public voice programme.

*Compiled by the Editor*