



**Feminist Alternatives to the development of the global economy**  
Network for a democratic control of the financial markets

feministATTAC, a group within ATTAC Austria, is an association of women who are convinced that every genuine emancipatory alternative to the present economic and social system requires the willingness to abolish the existing patriarchal structures. Therefore it is our special concern to analyze the economic conditions from a feminist perspective.

The women of feminist ATTAC want:

- Concepts for a humane globalization in which women can live and participate according to their own needs and desires
- A sustainable democratization of economic policy and of the markets
- Financial markets which promote productive activities of men and women and a humane development of our economic system

We therefore focus our activities on:

- Making sure that the gender perspective will always be considered and will guide all activities within ATTAC Austria
- Analyzing the effect of economic conditions on women in different social situations in Austria and the different regions of the world
- Pointing out concrete alternatives
- Planning and carrying out 'creative actions'

Establishing networks with other women/groups that deal with neoliberal globalization and women's issues

## **FeministATTAC – feminist alternatives in the development of the world economy**

Two months after the foundation of ATTAC Austria a group of women voiced the need for a feminist critique of neoliberal globalization. This became necessary because in many areas, despite being a very dedicated and alternative organization, ATTAC still remains rooted in a male-centered and gender-insensitive analysis. The group feministATTAC was founded that same day and has rapidly grown to be the largest group within ATTAC Austria. In its work feministATTAC focuses on three areas: networking, activism, and feminist analysis.

### ➤ **Networking**

At the moment we are working on establishing networks within Austria. Our next step will be to establish feministATTAC on an international level and in this way enrich the global work through feminist contributions.

### ➤ **Activism**

Through different 'creative actions' we want to draw attention to the fact that women are especially affected by neoliberal globalization and the mechanism of the international financial markets. We want to point out that there are alternatives.

### ➤ **Feminist analysis**

A large amount of feminist literature about the consequences of our present economic system has been published. We attempt to establish a connection between the findings of theoretical analysis and the practical application of these results in everyday politics.

## **How neoliberalism affects women**

The pillars of neoliberalism are large scale privatization, dismantling of the welfare state, de-democratization of economic activities and curtailing the influence of politics to the benefit of the so called Global Players in business life. Women are proportionally far more affected by the negative consequences of these developments than men. The gradual dismantling of the welfare state hits women in two ways:

First, due to their weaker economic position they are usually more dependent on government benefits. Second, they are forced to supply certain social services that used to be supplied by the government. They are usually expected to do so for little or no remuneration and are thus pushed out of the regular labor market entirely or into precarious working conditions.

## **Questioning the prevailing economic theory and perspective**

The prevailing economic theory is characterized by a mechanistic view on the interrelation of the economy and of society. The economic model distorts reality by degrading human beings to sexless factors of production and consumers of products and services and by ignoring the vividness and interdependence of the social and economic system. In spite of this, or perhaps because of this, economic theory has attained a dominating influence on policy making and also on public opinion. Traditional economic theory therefore contributes significantly to a 'disciplining' according to the economic logic. A kind of logic in which the refusal to participate in the neoliberal market processes constitutes an inexplicable and therefore ignored anomaly. There remains no space for human beings as men and women living as fully rational "irrational" beings. The "logic" of the international capital and financial markets is a perfect example. This kind of logic denies female nature and punishes every deviation from the homo-oeconomicus.

This insight makes us question the so-called 'economic constraints'. It causes us to question to what extent our economic environment can be actively created and shaped. The financial markets ask for creativity: not only the Tobin Tax would bring movement to the rigid logic, but also easily accessible feminist market places in which the capital and the energy of women (and men) can be invested into attractive and sustainable shares. The price of these shares should develop a world wide dynamism, not in dollars or Euros but in an index of quality of life. FeministATTAC wants to search for alternatives to the present system also in that direction.

### **A new definition of work**

Another focus point of our activities is the definition of work and the consequences of this definition on women worldwide. The problematic nature of the prevailing definition becomes obvious in the area of subsistence production. As there is not official recognition of housework in any country of the world the major part of women's work ultimately disappears. There is a close connection between making women's work invisible and the very different degrees to which men and women benefit from economic development. The definition of work in the traditional economic system is, like neoliberalism itself, no law of nature and can thus be changed.

### **Creating space – developing alternatives**

Neoliberal globalization needs regulation to make social and economic justice possible and above all to create space and chances for women to live in an economic and the social system according to their needs. The objective of feministATTAC is to help conquer those spaces.