

CIR Report, JANUARY 2023

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Overview of GWI 2022

Just to update you on the highlights of the work of the GWI over the past year, who, with only two staff and seven Board members, along with a number of Interns, has served over 14,000 members from around the world, supported 52 international affiliates and gained 37 Independent Members from 22 countries.

More than 1000 GWI members from 45 different countries participated in the webinars that were held. Toolkits were developed to support International Menstrual Hygiene Day, International Day of the Girl, 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence and International Day of Education.

GWI remained an active participant in global affairs in 2021, engaging with the United Nations through written and oral statements, event attendance and communication and collaboration with other international NGOs. The GWI Young Member Network (YMN) is comprised of passionate **change makers and proactive young women from over 20 countries across the globe, advocating** for issues impacting youth.

Given the unprecedented and multidimensional challenges to education systems from COVID-19, GWI initiated an Organisational Development Process, lead by Geeta Desai, in support of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4.

Newly Elected Board of Officers, 2022-25

President: Patrice Wellesley-Cole (BFWG), VP Advocacy: Shaila Rao Mistry (WG-USA), VP Legal & Governance: Ujwala Shinde (IFUWA), VP Membership: Meera Bondre (IFUWA), VP Marketing: Shruti Sonthalia (IFUWA), VP Education: Shirley Gillett (GWNZ), VP Fundraising: Nneka Chiedozie-Udeh (NAUW), VP Projects: Mildred Asmah (GAUW), Treasurer: Sudha Srivastava (BFWG)

STAFF

Executive Director: Stacy Dry Lara, Programme Officer: Alexa Grace (Canada), Sonia Gomez Soria (Spain), Jaden Wong (USA)

January 2022

On 24 **January 2022**, GWI joined with the world in observing **International Day of Education**. GWI membership worldwide celebrated education and the positive role education plays building peaceful societies. GWI voiced deep concerns about the disturbing inequalities in education exacerbated globally by the COVID 19 pandemic, especially the digital divide affecting women and girls. GWI underscores the need for collaborative efforts to raise awareness about the crucial digital learning crisis continuing as pandemic fallout.

Statement by GWI on Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention.

GWI's international network of graduate women, jointly expressed concern for all Turkish women, and stand in special solidarity with our Turkish sisters of Türk Universiteli Kadınlar Dernegi, (Turkish Association of University Women). GWI and all her members urge the Government of the Republic of Turkey to reconsider its withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention, which builds on the standards enshrined in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women as well as its general recommendations.



Women rally in Ankara, Turkey against Turkey's withdrawal from the Istanbul Convention

February 2022

In February, the world saw two important days of observance take place, International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and International Day of Women and Girls in Science. While the days have passed, it is important to continue to raise awareness about the critical barriers to girls' education throughout the year. It should be remembered, for example, that more than 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone FGM. Furthermore, there are an estimated three million girls at risk of undergoing FGM every year. After FGM, girls are absent from school to heal and many suffer infections, trauma and lifelong health consequences such as depression, complications in childbirth and increased risk of newborn deaths, a violation of their human and education rights.

March 22

4 March 2022 Statement on War in Ukraine

GWI Russia to uphold the UN Declaration of Human Rights which both nations have signed. GWI therefore urges the respective parties to end this conflict peacefully and negotiate peace between the two nations; to involve women at the negotiating table and to promote the active participation of children and women in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction. GWI is deeply concerned that women (and girls) will again be the ones who will face violence and rape, as they are always disproportionately affected by armed conflict.

April 2022

Graduate Women International (GWI) Teachers for Rural Futures 2022 Student Teachers

In rural areas of Uganda, a huge number of girls are not enrolled in school or forced to drop out, in part due to a lack of women teachers. Through the Teachers for Rural Future Programme, GWI is committed to increasing the number of qualified and trained women teachers in rural Uganda by sponsoring the studies of young women teachers. Our goal is to increase the quality of secondary education for all, increase girls' access to and completion of secondary education, and provide important role models for girls and their communities.

May 22

Organisational Development (OD) Project

GWI has been carrying out an OD process focusing on SDG 4, Quality Education for all, initially identifying where NFA countries lie in relation to implementation and completion of this goal. Ireland has scored well on this one, placing in the top 4 countries - but still has a way to go, of course. The second phase of the OD process looked at the relationship between GWI, the NFA's and potential funders to partner with to achieve this goal (e.g. the UN,). While completing this phase, it was decided to focus on the relationship between GWI and NFA's, as concerns were expressed by most representatives that the relationship needs attention. For example, there was a feeling that communication seemed to be primarily one way - GWI to NFA's; that many NFA members were unaware of the advantages of being part of GWI and unclear on its work and operations; that some of the work of GWI might not be relevant to all NFA's. A pause was suggested to review these findings. As a result. GWI proposed a renewed and more robust relationship model which requires commitment from both parties (GWI and NFA's). In order to develop this successfully, GWI called on all NFA's to vote in favour (or against) on June 1 -2nd, who approved the model.

June 22

12 June 2022 marked the 20th anniversary of **World Day Against Child Labour**. Under the theme "Universal Social Protection to End Child Labour" GWI, together with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), called for increased investment in child-sensitive social protection systems to protect children from falling prey to forced child labour and remaining in the labour activities in lieu of school. "Education is key to tackling child labour, especially the education of women and girls", said GWI President Terry Oudraad. "When women are educated, their children are far less likely to be involved in child labour".

Investing in girls is the right thing to do; investing in their education yields significant returns. Women and girls, everywhere, must have equal rights and opportunity, and be able to live free of violence and discrimination.

July 22

On World Youth Skills Day, Graduate Women International urged states to invest in quality education and training for young women and girls.

Globally, young people make up 18% of the population but 40% of the unemployed (UNESCO). On top of these numbers, in low-income countries, only 85 young women are literate per 100 literate young men (UNESCO). “Education is the most impactful strategy for change. Educating young women and girls significantly increases their access to formal jobs in the long term”.

Currently 43.2% of the world's working-age women are employed, compared to 68.6% of working-age men (ILO). Action is clearly needed and GWI is committed to empowering young women and girls through the acquisition of new skills.

GWI welcomed a new association in Spain

With the founding of the Spanish Association of University Women (SAUW) of Murcia. SAUW Murcia is comprised of 22 women whose president is Francisca Liaño. Francisca has been following GWI activities for years and was able to create the Association in Murcia, a city with a well-known University, with the support of NFA's in Bilbao, Madrid, and Marbella.

GWI also welcomed the Thailand Association of University Women (TAUW).

Being an active member again will provide several opportunities to learn, share, and support each other on many essential issues of women and girls. GWI congratulated TAUW and sent a warm welcome for re-affiliating.

September 22

Young Member Network President Letter. In her latest monthly letter GWI YMN President, Srivastava warmly welcomed three new members to the YMN in July, Deborah Adeyemo from Nigerian Association of University Women, Eveline van Eerd from GWI Netherlands, **and Gisele Scanlon from Irish Federation of University Women.** More new members from Spanish Federation of University Women and one from Argentina are in process. Additionally, Srivastava announced the YMN workshop, “Graduate women at the grassroots level: Localizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through capacity building, awareness raising, outreach, community dialogue, data collection, training, and support”, to be held as part of the [GWI General Assembly and conference](#). In her newsletter Srivastava shares August's motto, “Intergenerational

Solidarity: creating a world for all ages! Solidarity across generations is key for sustainable development”.

NOVEMBER 2022



Graduate Women International

From Growth to Sustainability

**34th Triennial
General Assembly and Conference**

(to be held virtually)

11 November - 13 November 2022

General Assembly 2022

Graduate Women International hosted the 34th triennial General Assembly and Conference virtually on 11-13 November 2022 in collaboration with the Indian Federation of University Women's Associations.

Under the theme, From Growth to Sustainability, the event examined education and prepared participants to renew and rebuild Graduate Women International as a substantial contributor to the global, national and local acceleration and implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 4.

Over 300 GWI members from 40 GWI national federation and association countries registered for the event. The General Assembly voting delegates elected new GWI 2023-2025 Board of Officers and Committee members, adopted [10 new policy resolutions](#), and IFUWA shared a beautiful [cultural experience video](#). Participants heard from several [2022 GWI fellowship awardees](#) and two of the [GWI Teachers for Rural Futures](#) students. On the third day of the event, the [From Growth to Sustainability Conference](#) offered 14 workshops and 11 seminars on various topics in line with the theme and five subthemes of the 34th triennial General Assembly and Conference.

GWI offers its warmest thank you to members who participated in the event, send appreciation to the outgoing 2019-2022 Board of Officers and Committees, and congratulations to all newly elected 2023-2025 Board of Officers and Committee members.

Ends