



GWI UPDATE – 22 August 2018



Members of the Asociación de Mujeres Universitarias de Bilbao (AMUB) celebrate its 15th anniversary.

— Graduate Women International News —

GWI Peace through Education Centenary Conference plans

With Graduate Women International (GWI) set to hold both its 33rd Triennial and Centenary Conference in Geneva 25-28 July 2019, President, Geeta Desai, is in Geneva this week to meet with the Swiss Local Arrangements Committee and to hold personal meetings with key figures from United Nations (UN) agencies and representatives from education and peace organisations to garner support for the GWI “Peace through Education” Conference. In 2019, the organisation will turn one hundred years old and, while our world has changed over the years, what has not changed is GWI founding mothers’ vision and, for this reason the theme chosen for our 100th Anniversary celebration “Peace through Education” is most appropriate.

“Two important reasons for having our 100th Anniversary General Assembly and Conference have always been to enhance relationships within Geneva that we began with this triennium and to introduce our members to International Geneva where groundbreaking research, discussions and actions are taken for gender equality, development and ultimately peace and preservation of human rights. This week we met with University of Geneva Rector, Yves Flückiger, and global decision-makers at UNCTAD, UNDP, UNHCR, WTO, Geneva Peacebuilding Platform, UNOG to ask for their meaningful participation and endorsement of our Peace through Education Conference. We are energised by the enthusiasm of the people we met and we’re looking forward to the next stage of planning” says Geeta Desai, GWI President.

GWI Teachers for Rural Futures students’ progress

The GWI five [Teachers for Rural Futures](#) students recently completed their summer internship that assessed their achievement thus far in the teaching program Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda. Thanks to the support of GWI members and generous donors, these five amazing and talented young

women gained practical experience as teachers as well as university credits during this summer internship, which was hosted at Lunar International College in the girls' home district of Buyende, Uganda. One of the girls, wrote to GWI saying, "Thank you Graduate Women International for the support you have rendered to us because there has been a transformation and at least a step ahead from where we were and looking ahead to transforming more girls to be like us". GWI adds to this by expressing our sincere thanks to all our [donors - current and future](#).

— GWI Member News —

Indian Federation of University Women (IFUWA)'s president paves the future of menstrual hygiene affordability

IFUWA president, Swati Bedekar, is leading the women's empowerment revolution in rural India through sanitary napkins. Establishing low-cost, organic, sanitary pad manufacturing facilities since 2014, the most recent two were opened this year on May 28, World Menstrual Hygiene Day. This initiative is providing employment to underprivileged rural women who work in and run these facilities, promoting their professional development and economic empowerment. Each manufacturing facility produces between 1,000 to 1,200 napkins per day, named "Sakhi napkins", which are priced at ₹2.50 (rupees, 0.36 UDS) per pad, drastically reducing the menstrual hygiene costs for rural women and girls. GWI applauds this commendable initiative which empowers underprivileged women and girls in rural areas by both providing them with employment and by ensuring access to affordable sanitary napkins, hence enabling them to continue pursuing their education and professional development. The project is transforming menstrual hygiene from a supposed barrier to a powerful tool in women's empowerment. If you wish to read more on this, [click here](#).

Spanish Federation of University Women (SFUW) holds Olympic Word Contest and more



Olympic Word Contest participants take a group photo after their video presentations on the representation of women in different forms of media.



SFUW's three constituencies, in Bilbao, Madrid and Marbella, are currently operating their own respective projects, being united in their aim of

supporting young women and girls wishing to pursue further education. Currently, SFUW financially assists these young women and girls with grants and scholarships, particularly in Bilboa and Marbella. As SFUW receives no subsidies from the City Councils nor from the Provincial Councils, the Federation regularly organises events to raise funds for their grants and scholarships.

SFUW's Bilbao constituency, Asociación de Mujeres Universitarias de Bilbao (AMUB) continues to hold its annual Olympic Word Contest, this year having seven groups of boys and girls participating. These groups

were assigned to investigate the role and representation of women in different forms of communication and media outlets. This research was presented through interesting and informative videos by the groups who became aware that women do not occupy the role they deserve in the media and that imminent change is necessary so as to correct this discrepancy. AMUB recently celebrated its 15th anniversary, its founding members being respectively presented with an award of recognition.

In Madrid, SFUW is predominantly focused on publishing books about women who have played important roles within society with presentations and sales of these books held throughout libraries and conferences. Revenue made from the sale of these books finances other projects organised by SFUW such as their writing competitions for university students and is also donated to secondary school libraries, raising awareness of all of the work done by women in STEM-related fields, serving as examples to young girls and youth aspiring to pursue further education.

In Marbella, several activities and events are being held by SFUW members, such as courses in art, history, literature and museum visits. The Marbella association is very active within SFUW and committed to the empowerment of women and supporting social causes; this year being named the Association of Public Utility by the City Council. GWI congratulates the SFUW Marbella association on receiving this honourable accolade.

GWI also applauds as a whole SFUW for its various celebrations and projects and its tireless dedication in assisting young women seeking tertiary education and commitment to the empowerment of women.

— Advocacy —

GWI aligns its mission with the Spotlight Initiative to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls

On 20 September 2017, the European Union (EU) and the UN teamed up to launch the [Spotlight Initiative](#). Called the Spotlight Initiative as a reference to the need for focused attention on the issue of Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG), this emerges as a new effort to unite the international community in the fight to eliminate VAWG in all its forms worldwide. VAWG knows no boundaries of race, class, religion, age, disability or nationality, and approximately one in three women globally will experience violence at some point in their lives. Drawing attention to the pervasiveness of VAWG as one of the most widespread and devastating human rights violations globally, the Spotlight Initiative recognizes the obstacle that VAWG poses to the fulfillment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and associated SDGs. SDG 5 specifically targets gender equality, but the realisation of gender equality lies at the heart of all seventeen SDGs. GWI also recognizes VAWG as a significant barrier to women's and girls' access to a safe and quality education, reducing their future potential and hampering the progress of their nation and the world. Access to an education is in itself a fundamental human right which millions of women and girls around the world cannot achieve, out of fear of abuse, harassment, or other violence at school. Both the Spotlight Initiative and GWI recognize that the only way to achieve the 2030 Agenda is to protect and empower women and girls worldwide. Similarly, in line with the SDGs, the aim of the Spotlight Initiative is to leave no woman or girl behind, focusing its efforts on particularly marginalized women and girls who have been left out of the narrative all too often.

The Spotlight Initiative is supported by a multi-stakeholder trust fund with an initial investment of EUR 500 million, with the EU as the main financial contributor. With this funding, comprehensive programs

will be implemented to target all forms of VAWG, particularly focusing on aspects such as domestic and family violence, sexual and gender-based violence, femicide, human trafficking, and sexual and labor exploitation. By April 2018 donors had contributed \$21,288,600 to help fund the Spotlight Initiative project. Collaboration between the EU and the UN allows for the two international powerhouses to combine capacities, resources, and expertise as a means of most effectively working towards the elimination of VAWG. As part of the Spotlight Initiative, the EU and UN has recently launched #HerStoryOurStory, a [joint campaign](#) aiming to raise awareness of the prevalence and impact of violence against women and girls, while demonstrating that we all – collectively and individually – have a role to play in ending it. Through the use of a web-based video game which challenges players to consider how they would react when faced with tricky situations, the campaign ensures engagement is broadened, fostering an international and local audience.

As the Spotlight Initiative progresses, other donors and partners will be invited to join the EU, allowing the Initiative to broaden its scope and impact in an effort to target and eliminate violence against women and girls worldwide. On the 13th of March 2018 at the opening day of the 62nd Session of the Commission on the Status of Women, experts, Member States and representatives of civil society were brought together to discuss strategies to help implement the initiative. The Executive Director also applauded the #MeToo movement and women in Hollywood as having energized changes in attitudes about sexual harassment and violence against women. Overall, the panelists concluded that “violence against women and girls is one of the worst violations of human rights” and urgent efforts must be made to overcome this violation.

GWI stands with the mission of the Spotlight Initiative, remaining committed to ending VAWG in all its forms worldwide, recognizing the persistent danger that VAWG poses to millions around the world and to the future of our world as a whole. To quote António Guterres, UN Secretary-General, "When we shine a spotlight on the empowerment of the world's women and girls, everyone's future is brighter."
#SpotlightEndViolence #HerStoryOurStory

— Call for applications —

2019 Echidna Global Scholars Program

Echidna Global Scholars leverage developing country perspectives while spending nearly five months at the Brookings Institution in Washington, D.C. As part of their visiting fellowship, scholars pursue research on global education issues with an emphasis on girls’ education. The program is seeking exceptional applicants committed to girls’ education in the global south who seek the opportunity to build their research and analytical skills. Applicants should have a background in education, development, economics, or a related area, a Master’s degree at minimum, and at least 10 years of professional experience. The deadline to apply is **1 October 2018**. You can review details [here](#).

Call for papers for the Graduate Women Zambia (GWZ) International Conference

GWZ shall host an International Conference (**1-2 October 2018**), with the theme focusing on “Women as Anchors of Development and Sustainability”. The deadline for submission of abstracts is **30 August 2018**. For more information please contact gwzconference@gmail.com or [click here](#) to view the call.

— GWI at the United Nations —

GWI gears up for the upcoming 39th session of the Human Rights Council (HRC)

With the UN's HRC 39th session set to begin on September 10 in Geneva, GWI plans and prepares for its participation in the various scheduled discussions and events. GWI shall begin by first attending the Organisational Meeting for the HRC 39th session on 27 August, then continuing covering the ongoing events until the session ceases on 28 September. The HRC sessions provide a powerful platform for GWI, positioning the organisation to raise awareness about specific mission-related issues that promote safe access to quality education for girls and women and by offering a global voice for women graduates, working for the adoption and implementation of UN international agreements that will protect and benefit all girls and women. GWI today submits a written statement to the Council titled, *Child Widowhood: A Neglected Gender and Human Rights Violation*.

— Give the gift of education —

The **Hegg-Hoffet** Fund for Displaced Women Graduates was established in 1936 as an emergency fund to help graduate women deprived of the right to work, and in many cases the right to live, in their native countries. GWI recently supported the purchase of neuro and biopsychology textbooks for one of our grantees. These books will contribute to the advanced studies in psychology of our recipient who has expressed much gratefulness. This Hegg Hoffet Fund assists graduate women who have been displaced due to war, political upheaval, or gender related atrocities such as rape, honour crimes, forced marriage, and FGM. It provides short-term grants to help women adapt and integrate in their new country, such as providing financial support for language lessons, or tuition grants to re-enter a professional field. Displaced women deserve the opportunity to rebuild their lives and use their education and skills in a new country, but it cannot be done without your generous donations and support. [Donate today](#).

— Did you know? —

The report describing the events during the years of 1939-1946 discloses that, even during the hard years of the war, GWI, formerly the International Federation of University Women (IFUW), still worked hard to assist refugees and to guarantee the same opportunity for women. In Europe, large groups of refugee and war victims were situated in France, Great Britain, Sweden and Switzerland. It was therefore on the National associations in these countries that the responsibility fell for helping these victims.

The French Association, working in secret through two main centers, Paris and Toulouse, gave regular or occasional financial assistance to one hundred and four graduates and students. Among those assisted were graduates from Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Greece, Great Britain, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Spain. A particularly valuable scheme was organised to help internees, by which French members adopted some hundreds of graduates and students in prison and in concentration camps, supplying them with fresh bread, wine, books, clothing, sheets, medicines, etc. Their French "godmothers" brought or sent these gifts to their respective adoptees in the camps fortnightly, maintaining regular correspondence with them. The franc association spent 151 000 francs on these relief schemes, receiving substantial contributions to its Relief Fund from the IFUW and the American Association of University Women (AAUW), and the National Associations.

— Other information and events —

4 September	Widows' Rights International – Child Widows Panel, House of Lords, London
8 September	International Literacy Day, Global
10-28 September	Human Rights Council, 39 th Session, United Nations, Geneva
17 Sept-5 October	Committee on the Rights of the Child, 79 th session, United Nations, Geneva
20 September	WG-USA East Coast Regional Conference, Philadelphia, USA
21 September	International Day of Peace, Global
22 September	BFWG Seminar on Women's Suffrage in the UK, Manchester
1-2 October 2018	GWZ International Conference, Lusaka
5 October	World Teachers' Day, Global
11 October	International Day of the Girl Child, Global
15 October	International Day of Rural Women, Global
17 October	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, Global
22 Oct-9 November	CEDAW, 71 st session, United Nations, Geneva
24 October	United Nations Day, Global
25-28 July 2019	GWZ Peace through Education Convention, Geneva

Follow us on social media!



Empowering women and girls through lifelong education for leadership, decision-making and peace. GWI, formerly IFUW, is in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1947 and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.

Graduate Women International

Chemin du Grand-Montfleury, 48 CH-1290, Versoix, Geneva, Switzerland

E-mail: gwi@graduatewomen.org Website: www.graduatewomen.org

Copyright © 2018 GWI. All rights reserved.