

2013 - 2016



GWI in Action 2013 - 2016



Graduate Women International (GWI)

Introduction

GRADUATE WOMEN INTERNATIONAL (GWI) seeks positive change in girls' and women's lives worldwide through quality education up to the highest levels. GWI takes action internationally, nationally and with communities and individuals, through advocacy and engagement with leaders and policy makers; raising awareness of the issues through its international network; and by taking direct action through grassroots projects.

At international level, GWI works with the world's most respected institutions, international organisations and United Nations (UN) human rights mechanisms. By actively participating in decision-making forums such as the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), and the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), GWI holds a clearly visible position on key education policies for girls and women.

As an organisation, GWI has harnessed the immense power of its network of experienced, highly qualified graduate women to address inequality in education and foster opportunity for girls and women globally. GWI's members connect with key national influencers on a number of issues preventing girls and women from achieving their full potential. These issues vary from early child marriage, safe access to school, traditionally limiting gender stereotypes in careers to gender inequalities that exist in working conditions and pay.

GWI's principles are implemented at community level with innovative projects all over the world. One of GWI's key strengths lies in its membership of international federations and associations (NFAs) in some 60 countries and independent members in many more countries. These local members provide invaluable experience of the local conditions and knowledge of national barriers to girls and women's education. Activities are developed and delivered through these associations and other local partners, to ensure sustainable results through contextual relevance and local ownership.

GWI's

International Projects

GWI HAS DEVELOPED INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS TO FULFIL ITS MISSION. GWI joined the Collaborative for Harnessing Ambition and Resources for Girls' Education (CHARGE), convened by the Center for Universal Education (CUE) at the Brookings Institution and the No Ceilings Initiative at the Clinton Foundation, to unite efforts on girls' education behind five priorities that require urgent attention: Access; Safety; Quality Learning; Transitions; and Leadership. Championed by former United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, former Prime Minister of Australia Julia Gillard and joined by more than 30 global actors from civil society, governments and the private sector, CHARGE will address and advance solutions to issues in girls' education, aligning individual efforts on the five priorities.

As an official partner, GWI pledged to increase the number of qualified female secondary school teachers in sub-Saharan Africa to provide 15,000 girls with improved, high quality learning opportunities. In addition, GWI will support the transition of 10,000 girls from secondary school to university or work over the next five years through a mentoring programme. Recognising the distinct gender gap in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), the mentoring programme will include women leaders in STEM subjects to provide vital role models that demonstrate the possibilities of a career in STEM to girls and young women.

GWI projects *Teachers for Rural Futures* and *Girls' Choices* have been developed at GWI with local input as part of GWI's CHARGE commitment. GWI's NFAs are fully familiar with barriers to girls' and women's education and seek the best ways to overcome them. This combined approach, comprising global support and local solutions, is a resource-effective and sustainable model for achieving GWI's mission.

Teachers for Rural Futures

THE EXPANSION OF PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION

over the last decades has resulted in an increased number of pupils completing primary and transitioning to secondary school. This has led to teacher shortages at secondary level, higher pupil/teacher ratios (PTRs) and the use of under- or unqualified teachers.

Ensuring that girls have the opportunity to complete school and transition to tertiary education or professional work is a key focus for GWI. There is already a global shortage of teachers, so much more needs to be done

to ensure that more women become qualified teachers, and take up posts in rural areas where the shortage of women teachers is most pronounced. Lack of women teachers has been identified as a possible barrier to girls enrolling and continuing in secondary education in rural areas. Research shows that increasing the number of women teachers in schools has a positive impact on girls' education.

In Uganda specifically, there are persistently low numbers of qualified women teachers, currently around 30% in secondary schools, with even lower numbers in rural areas. Girls who do not complete their secondary education are more likely to marry early, suffer health issues to themselves or their children or even fatality through teenage pregnancy. Without education, girls' ability to earn money and break the cycle of poverty is limited. GWI has identified women teachers as holding a unique position of influence in communities as trusted and respected members of society.

Through the project *Teachers for Rural Futures*, GWI aims to reverse the trend and increase the number of women teachers in rural communities, starting in sub-Saharan African countries. The project has begun in Uganda and will be spread to other countries. Currently, GWI is sponsoring Ugandan girls to train as secondary teachers and go back to their rural communities to teach, providing strong role models as women who are professionally qualified and salaried. At the same time these women are in a unique position to provide encouragement and advice to girls at critical stages of their lives, given that they come from the same background as the pupils they are teaching. Through a competitive process, students with an ambition to improve girls' education are selected to join the programme. GWI student teachers in Uganda study at Makerere University, Kampala, and participate in community engagement to build support for girls' education in rural communities.



Winfred and Benadet, GWI student teachers at the start of the project



Winfred and Benadet have almost completed their first year at Makerere University

Winfred and Benadet are GWI's first student teachers in the programme. From a remote and rural area, Buyende, in eastern Uganda, the young women had dreams of going to university; their families would not have been able to support them without GWI sponsorship, a large amount of which comes directly from members. Other sources include the crowdfunding site GlobalGiving and GWI core funding.

The girls are assisted and mentored by members from GWI's member and partner, the Ugandan Association of University Women (UAUW), who believe passionately in changing traditional mindsets. UAUW has completed a community engagement exercise in Buyende, fostering good community relationships and building support for girls' education. Candidates for the next year's academic intake were identified at the same time. This is a multi-year project that GWI hopes will ultimately be taken over by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) in Uganda to ensure sustainability over time.

The next stage of the project will be to expand the programme into other countries.

Girls' Choices

AROUND THE WORLD THERE ARE 34 MILLION ADOLESCENT GIRLS OUT OF SCHOOL. *Girls' Choices* offers teenage girls a programme of workshops and mentoring around topics that will support them to complete school. GWI has developed the framework and source materials for workshops and mentoring, which are provided to and led by GWI members in-country who are champions for girls' education and provide inspiring role models. The project takes place over six months with workshops on public speaking, career development, leadership, gender stereotypes and human rights. Alongside this, the girls receive mentoring and are encouraged to set up girls' groups to continue to develop and work towards their goals.



Girls' Choices participants in Ghana

Girls' Choices provides teenage girls with the space and encouragement needed to explore the possibilities for their future beyond gender stereotypes, creating opportunities for themselves and future generations. *Girls' Choices* has been successfully run in Kenya, Ghana and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with future workshops planned in Fiji and other countries. This too is a project with global applicability and GWI, through its network of NFAs, has begun to roll it out in different regions of the world.

Girls' Choices for Careers Mobile App

GWI IS USING INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT), in the form of a mobile application (“app”) to reach out to young women, encourage them to follow their passions, achieve their potential and help change traditionally limiting career stereotypes. With GWI partners Paper Crown Institute and Orange Device Group, and with active input from a focus group of Rwandan teenage girls, the mobile app is being developed to provide immediate, easy access to material empowering girls to explore possibilities in their lives beyond school. The app allows girls to explore the career choices available to them, and can reach a large number of girls across Rwanda where broadband internet is advanced and available and almost everyone, even in rural communities, has access to it.



Workshop participants from the *Girls' Choices for Careers Mobile App* in Rwanda

The focus group of teenage girls in Kigali, Rwanda, have identified career choices of interest to them, and GWI in partnership with Orange Device Group has developed the app. A local Rwandan artist has developed all the images, rooted in the Rwandan artistic



The *Girls' Choices for Careers* app represents women in a variety of careers
Illustrations by Jean de Dieu Mukonta, Rwanda

tradition. The content has been developed based on local needs and opportunities. The *Girls' Choices for Careers* mobile app will be developed first in Rwanda, then in Kenya and other sub-Saharan African countries.

This app has relevance across the globe where girls lack information and inspiration on the possibilities beyond school. To be developed in other areas GWI will be seeking partners to commit to its development in other regions of the world.

GWI Member Federation and Association Projects

GWI'S MEMBER FEDERATIONS AND ASSOCIATIONS support the mission and vision of GWI through activities in their own countries and communities. Many have initiated exciting and original projects as a direct response to the educational needs of girls and women around them. Examples of the diverse and practical solutions that GWI's members have found to educational and social challenges close to home include addressing barriers to child marriage, literacy and numeracy programmes, skills training for women who have been in prison, economic empowerment and much more.

The Bina Roy Partners in Development (BRPID) Programme

Founded by a long-time member of GWI and first Asian President of the Federation, the Bina Roy Partners in Development (BRPID) programme supports grass roots projects initiated by GWI's NFAs to empower girls and women through education and leadership development. BRPID grants are awarded on a competitive basis to NFAs in countries with a Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, Atlas Method, in the low and middle income categories as defined by the World Bank (i.e. less than US\$12,616 per annum currently). Over the years, this is a programme that has mobilised many GWI members, both on projects and on fundraising.

Through grants from the Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund (VGIF) and donations from members across the Federation, GWI and its members are improving access to quality education, promoting economic development and leadership abilities for girls and women in developing countries through the programme.

Projects include skills training for economic empowerment in Nigeria, health promotion in Sierra Leone and Mexico, job search skills for Cambodia youth and mentorship training in South Africa.

Finland: Let's Read Together

Fleeing war and persecution from around the world, a rising number of refugees and migrants have been entering Europe; this number has already passed 100,000 in 2016 alone. It is a challenge for European countries to integrate refugees and migrants into their societies, overcoming issues such as illiteracy - nearly two-thirds of refugees and migrants are illiterate. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), women and children make up about 55% of the arrivals and are simultaneously the least educated and the most vulnerable to discrimination. Through its *Let's Read Together* programme, the Finnish Federation of Graduate Women (FFGW) offers language teaching to migrant women, providing them with a bridge to literacy, integration and empowerment.



Mothers can come to *Let's Read Together* groups with their babies and toddlers



Learning the language is important, but getting to know each other and making friends is the way to real integration

FFGW have set up a voluntary network to offer Finnish literacy teaching to women. The network currently has more than 400 teachers and over 1,600 students across Finland. The programme leads the way in empowering migrant women in Finland through reading and beyond, and provides an example to be followed across Europe.

This project demonstrates the value of being able to share initiatives between national groups under the umbrella of an international organisation such as GWI. Resources can be shared and lessons learned integrated into new iterations of projects in other countries or regions. Following the successful Finnish experience, *Let's Read Together* is being replicated, with some adaptation, in Egypt.

Turkey: the Friendship Bridge Project

The Turkish Association of University Women (TAUW) started the Friendship Bridge Project in 2008 to support female university students financially and lead and encourage them to ascend to high ranking decision-making positions. A defined list of individual men and women sponsor one student for the duration of her studies. In addition to a small monthly grant, TAUW builds "Friendship Bridges" between donors and students, based on matching the donors' professions with the students' study areas. For example, a lawyer may support a law student, providing the student with both financial support and study and career guidance. Some 700 students are currently benefitting from this programme and 500 more have already completed it.

The Friendship Bridge students are from communities throughout Turkey and are able to advocate in their communities at the local level to build support for girls to gain a higher education and put an end to child marriage. TAUW trains the students in advocacy and community sensitisation, providing the students with tools and strategies for their advocacy projects. Over their summer break, the students undertake their community activities, advocating to families, local leaders and women’s groups, to end child marriage. The students provide an important link between TAUW and their local communities, to disseminate advocacy messages against child marriage from an insider perspective.

Canadian University Women Ottawa Raise Scholarship Funds for Afghan Girls in Kabul

The Gawharshad Institute of Higher Education (GIHE) in Kabul, Afghanistan, was founded in 2010 specifically to educate students, both male and female, and from all ethnicities and religions, to take leadership roles in a future Afghan government. Afghan physician, human rights activist and visionary, Dr. Sima Samar, who established the successful institute, emphasises that classes are mixed and curricula stress democracy and human rights.



Graduates from Gawharshad Institute of Higher Education, Kabul. Photo: Falah Malik

Women in Ottawa’s Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) group, inspired by the eloquent Dr. Samar, formed a group, *University Women Helping Afghan Women* (UWHAW) to advocate and to raise tuition money so that the poorest Afghan girls in Kabul have the opportunity to attend GIHE. Ten of the scholarship girls funded by the Ottawa group have graduated and 20 more are now in classes.

To ensure women’s participation, a Women’s Empowerment Centre was created at Gawharshad, directed by Professor Nasima Rahmani who finds the funds and the girls



Professor Nasima Rahmani, Director of the Women’s Empowerment Centre

to attend. She encourages them to succeed and to find employment or further education. Graduates often become the sole wage earner in families, which empowers their role in the community.

Mahmooda, a graduate of GIHE, says: “Many generations of Afghans missed educational privileges, and many children missed educational opportunities because of poverty. I was one of those children, and was not happy with my life. I hope now to be able to help make a difference in children’s lives.”

Many of our NFAs are extremely active in raising funds for scholarships for girls and women to continue their education, for university degrees, for graduate study, or for training and skills development that will enable them to further their careers. On an annual basis, GWI and its NFAs together give away in excess of US\$2,500,000.

For more information on our global membership and our projects please visit www.graduatwomen.org

Looking Beyond the Present

As the world around GWI becomes more unstable and economic conditions get tighter, GWI will ensure that quality education is firmly at the centre of international and national policy makers' preoccupations. GWI will continue to put education at the forefront through its advocacy and the work it does with its partners in-country. We will change the world, one girl at a time.



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This document represents a snapshot of projects that GWI and the member federations and associations of GWI are running. It is based on information that was provided to GWI and is not a comprehensive portrait of all the varied and interesting projects that are carried out. For more information please visit the GWI website (www.graduatewomen.org).

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