



Advocacy Report

Side Event

**27th Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal
Justice (CCPCJ)
2018, UN Vienna**

16 May 2018, Vienna International Centre

Subject of Meeting:

**‘Make Young People Aware of and Protect Them from the Dangers of
Cyberspace’**

This side event was co-sponsored by GWI.

Cyberbullying has become a fast growing problem in our societies, severely affecting the social and psychological wellbeing of an increasing number of young people. It can have a very damaging impact on the development of girls and young women. This side event at the 2018 CCPCJ (the UN’s principal policymaking body in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice – the annual Session of the CCPCJ in Vienna is an important opportunity for GWI advocacy on crime related issues) was co-sponsored by GWI, together with Zonta International (main organizer) and the International Federation of Business and Professional Women (IFBPW).

Panellists were:

Barbara Buchegger – Safer Internet

Daniel Fuhry – Federal Ministry of the Interior, Austria

Eileen Focke-Bakker – Vice President of GWI

Catherine Bosshart-Pflugger – Vice President of IFBPW

Ingeborg Geyer from Zonta International acted as Moderator.



The Panel – from left, Eileen Focke-Bakker, Daniel Fuhry, Ingeborg Geyer, Barbara Buchegger, Catherine Bosshart-Pfliger

Barbara Buchegger presented ‘Prevention Models under the European Perspective.’ Saferinternet.at is the information and coordination centre for safer internet use in Austria with a special focus on children, youth, parents and educators. She talked particularly about cyberbullying and sexting, describing the problem(s) and sharing tips as to how to deal with them.

Daniel Fuhry, from the Cyber Crime Competence Center of Austria’s Ministry of the Interior, spoke to the need for international co-operation and co-ordination in effectively combating cybercrime with children and young people. He presented data for Austria, focussing on the three most frequent types of abuse – cyberbullying, cybergrooming, and sexting and child abuse material.

Eileen Focke-Bakker, our Vice President for Membership, gave an excellent and comprehensive speech. She emphasized that the subject is of great importance and that GWI believes that it requires immediate actions from governments, social media companies, parents, schools and NGOs. It relates directly to GWI’s mission that awareness through education is essential for women’s empowerment, in this case especially for prevention of harmful practices in cyberspace. The importance of education, at all levels, as a first line of defence against cybercrime in all its forms cannot be emphasized enough. GWI advocacy towards cybercrime in general but specifically towards cybercrimes against women and girls is focussed on prevention through awareness education. She said “Maximizing the opportunities that the internet brings to girls and young women while also closely managing the threats and dangers will be one of the main challenges our future generations will face. Young women must be made aware of what these threats are. But it is of importance that they also know what measures to take.” Educational measures should be implemented at all schools to address all forms of bullying including



cyberbullying. GWI strongly emphasizes that education is the key to achieving full awareness and involvement to mitigate the above threats.

She said that GWI has addressed cyberbullying both in policy and in practice. As to policy, she mentioned GWI's Resolution No 1 about bullying and cyberbullying at schools, which serves as guidance for our country organizations and our advocacy work. As to practice, she said that we are participating in various projects. For instance, GWI co-created the Girls' Choices mobile app and one of our members participated in the development of a smartphone-based safety planning intervention tool.

She quoted GWI's resolution on bullying and cyberbullying that focuses on school level measures and recommends the following actions:

- Address bullying in schools with a school policy of zero tolerance and teacher training in anti-cyberbullying tactics and share information on cyberbullying programmes and legislation
- Recommend teaching students of all ages, parents and teachers to be sceptical about information posted on the web as a proactive measure. This includes asking questions like who put up the information, why was it posted and what was the objective?
- Teach children to report cyberbullying behaviour. Schools have many programmes to use for addressing bullying behaviour by students and staff.
- Create and share programmes for children who show signs of being a bully, including learning how to control feelings/emotions.
- Urge governments to act on their obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, including Article 19.

Eileen concluded that there is an urgent need for awareness-raising campaigns, educating women and girls about the dangers of cyberspace, about their legal rights and about available support services. "The internet can bring huge advantages for women and girls – and women and girls can use it to achieve many positive goals - but we have to learn to deal with the dark side. Repression is necessary but prevention is far better. Managing cyber threats needs an integrated proactive and reactive approach; otherwise measures will be inefficient and ineffective." She confirmed that GWI strongly believes in zero tolerance for cybercrimes against women or girls and will act accordingly through our mission of prevention through awareness, and awareness through education.



Eileen making her speech

Catherine Bosshart-Pflugger from IFBPW also spoke to the importance of education in dealing with the problem and elaborated on noticing first signs of abuse on a young person, the role of parents and of schools.

After the speeches, there was a lively Q&A and an interesting discussion ensued as to the importance of education in addressing the opportunities and challenges of the internet.

This was a very successful side event – subsequent feedback has been excellent. We were very pleased that GWI could co-sponsor it and that Eileen was willing to participate and share her views. The event was very well attended. Despite there being seven events at the same time, over 50 people came; the room was full, with people standing! Over half the attendees were from UN entities and government delegations – the remainder from other NGOs. This is clear evidence of the high importance and focus around the issue. We are hopeful that the event will serve not only as a forum to highlight the issue, but will also have a tangible impact as to UN and government takeaways from the Conference, and also on the views and actions of other NGOs. Attendees were not only from EU / more developed countries, but also from Ghana, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Mexico, Thailand, Tanzania etc. It is good to think that the suggestions made by Eileen and the others at this event may have a positive impact for girls and women in these countries.

Thanks to Eileen – and to the great help and support of Stacy in Geneva – we have been able to use this side event to increase the visibility of GWI at the UN Vienna. Copies of the GWI manifestos were printed and available to participants. We were well supported by the GWI NFA in Austria – the VAOe. Many thanks in particular to VAOe President Elisabeth Gyoerfy for her support and previous President Ingrid Nowotny, who was able to attend. Many thanks also to Ingeborg Geyer, the lead organizer at Zonta International and who is also a GWI member.



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Panellists and Organizers ahead of the meeting. Ingrid Nowotny 2 from left; Eileen 3 and Elisabeth 2 from right

Elisabeth Francis
GWI UN Representative
Vienna