Treasurer Report Following the 2017 Audit

The audited 2017 financials of GWI show, for the first time in four years, a positive balance of 33'868 Swiss Francs. Left with no reserve after the last Triennium and with a negative end-of-the-year balance of -321'664 Swiss Francs in 2016, it was an exceptional achievement of the current Board and the Executive Director to turn around the financial situation of GWI within one and a half years.
This only became possible due to many drastic austerity measures taken by the Board in 2016 and 2017 to match revenue with expenses. These measures included letting go staff in the office, moving to much nicer, cheaper office accommodation, reducing accounting expenses, changing auditor and cutting travel expenses of the Board and the Executive Director. Today, we can say that our financial situation is stabilised for the 2016-2019 Triennium and beyond. This was also confirmed by the auditor.

Another hallmark of 2017, which was very positively received by the Board, was the outcome of the electronic ballot on the dues increase. This ballot became necessary because the NFAs found it difficult to pay the dues increase as voted for at the General Assembly in 2016, which was for 10 Swiss Francs in 2017, 6 Swiss Francs in 2018 and 6 Swiss Francs in 2019 (for the countries with the highest dues). Given the extent of the objection by the NFAs, the Board had no choice but to defer the increase, which meant that the budget for 2017 had to be immediately adjusted. In October 2017, after an extensive consultation with our members and with the indispensable and highly-appreciated help of the Ad Hoc committee members, the proposed dues increase of 7 Swiss Francs and an amended version of the budgets 2018 and 2019 were accepted by a large majority.

The reason for the dues increase of 7 Swiss Francs was to enable the recruitment of a staff member for the office. However, the excess of dues paid in 2017 by the NFAs who paid the increase was requested, in most cases, to be returned in 2018 which decreased the predicted revenue for 2018. To compensate for the loss, the Board decided to delay the recruitment of a staff member until 1 September 2018.

It was my top priority to make the financial reporting of GWI transparent and understandable to all our members. With the expert advice of our accountant Catherine Herbez and Olivier Volper (licensed auditor, PKF) as well as with the collaboration of the Executive Director and the Board, important changes were implemented:

i) Procedures for record keeping of financial transactions related to projects (Fellowships, Bina Roy, Hegg Hoffet) were established,

ii) Our monthly financial reports, in P&L format, list all movements of restricted funds in a separate section and

iii) The expenses of the Board are shown separately under *Governance*. These expenses include travel expenses and expenses for governance such as ballot fees.

iv) The other expenses are now assigned to two major groups. One group named *Programme* includes expenses that directly serve our members such as policy and advocacy, contributions to regional meetings, membership development, marketing, the GWI website, webinars and our programmes *Teacher for Rural Futures* and *Girls' choices app*.

The other group named *General Administration* includes bookkeeping and auditing costs, IT maintenance and infrastructure, office rent and salaries. These expenses are also essential in keeping GWI operational.

The Finance Committee (FinCom) has been provided with financial reports throughout the years 2017 and 2018 and has made two recommendations to the Board: one on a change in auditor and the other on the ballot in October 2017.
Currently, the Board is supported by FinCom in establishing the budget for the Centennial Conference and General Assembly in 2019. In the near future, FinCom will commence work on recommendations for the dues and the budget for the Triennium 2020-2022.

Katharina Strub
GWI Treasurer
Geneva, 16 May 2018