



GW I UPDATE – 22 January 2020



On 24 January, GW I celebrates the second International Day of Education.

— Graduate Women International News —

On International Day of Education, GW I recalls its achievements in the field of education

International Day of Education was introduced in 2018 by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly to celebrate the role of education in development and to demonstrate the world's political will towards providing quality education to all and achieving sustainable development by 2030. With over 100 years of experience in advocating for safe access to quality, lifelong education for all women and girls worldwide, Graduate Women International (GWI) celebrates this year's International Day of Education by commemorating its many achievements towards its mission. The GWI General Assembly has adopted numerous policy resolutions concerning the right to education, several [Bina Roy Partners in Development programmes](#) strive for educating women in various areas, the five girls supported by the [Teachers for Rural Futures](#) project graduated this January, and [grants and fellowships](#) are awarded each year to support women in accessing education. Furthermore, GWI collected interviews from its many members around the world in a mosaic video. The participants were asked to answer one of the following questions: *What is the role of education today? What more can be done to improve education for women and girls in your country? Why are you a member of GWI?* The video will be published on 24 January. To draw further attention to issues of education, follow and share GWI's comprehensive social media campaign towards International Day of Education and have a look at the [Facts & Figures Infographic](#) published on GWI's website and social media channels. Also, British Federation of Women Graduates (BFWG) member Sudha Srivastava shared with us her [Education Acrostic](#) specially created for Day of Education. Thank you very much, Sudha. Let's celebrate the achievements of education together!

Coordinators of International Relations play important role at GWI

According to Article II (5) of the 2019 GWI constitution (available in the Members Corner of the [GWI webpage](#)), each GWI National Federation and Association (NFA) "appoints or elects a Coordinator for International Relations (CIR) to its executive body". CIRs play a critical role at GWI in that they are responsible for "stimulating interest in international relations and for cooperating

with the other NFAs; CIRs are the “liaison officer between her NFA and GWI Headquarters”. Consequently, the CIRs form an essential part of the GWI leadership structure; their work is aimed at supporting their NFA President, and for the GWI Office they constitute the connecting link to the NFAs. For instance, CIRs provide the GWI Office with details on how their NFA is advancing the GWI mission/vision; they contribute to the Member News section of the Update; they keep the GWI Office informed about leadership changes. GWI sincerely appreciates all that the CIRs contribute to the organisation.

— GWI Member News —

IFUW’s work is examined in Ph.D. dissertation at University of Geneva

Marie-Elise Hunyadi, Ph.D. student at the Department of Education at the University of Geneva, presented on 22 November 2019 her dissertation examining the work of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW) between 1919-1970 towards promoting women’s access to higher education and academic titles. Attending this event was Monica Chirita Leménager, President of the Geneva Chapter of the Swiss Association of University Women (ASFDU). In the first part, the thesis analyses IFUW’s unique position within the constellation of international women’s organisations, and questions IFUW’s foundation oscillating between pacifism, feminism and internationalism with regard to the needs of the new generation of women graduates. In the second part, the thesis then examines the steps IFUW took to promote the internationalisation of women’s access to higher education and careers, in particular with regard to the organisation’s fellowships and grants programmes. Finally, the thesis explores the network of collaboration between IFUW and the big international organisations, which allows spreading reciprocally the ideals and actions of the organisations involved. GWI congratulates Ms. Hunyadi’s extensive research into its organisation’s work and wishes her all the best for the future. More information on the thesis and its presentation can be found [HERE](#) (French only).

Head start to 16 Days of Activism with seminar on cultural perspectives of VAW



Ms. Sahar Gamal, (4th from the left) and Dr. Magda Omar (3rd from the right) with speakers from the seminar.

To kick off the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) campaign from November 2019, GWI Independent Member Sahar Gamal and Egyptian Association of University Women (EAGW) member Magda Omar, attended on 24 November 2019 a seminar on the topic “Violence against Women (VAW): Cultural and Health Perspectives” organised by the Women Studies and Social Transformation Programme (WSST). This seminar was a cooperation between WSST of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina and the International Representative Committee of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. It mainly focused on how to combat female genital mutilation (FGM) and domestic violence. Speakers included representatives of UN Women, UN Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), the National Council for Women,

the University of Alexandria and various non-governmental organisations (NGOs). To symbolise a world of zero tolerance against all forms of GBV, the Bibliotheca Alexandrina was lit in orange, the colour associated with the 16 Days of Activism campaign. GWI thanks Sahar Gamal for this important contribution to our 22 January Update.

IAUW participates in International Day to Combat Violence against Women

On 27 November 2019, the Israel Association of University Women (IAUW) participated in a meeting held in Israel's House of Parliament to address issues related to VAW. Members of Parliament organised this meeting in cooperation with the Israel Council of Women's Organisations, of which IAUW is a member. The Panel consisted of 40 participants from Israel's Parliament and representatives of various women's organisations. IAUW was represented on the Panel by its Deputy President, Ms. Ora Sharon. About 200 people attended the session, of which 10 were members of IAUW's executive. Most speakers emphasised the difficulties activists face in the fight against GBV, such as unwillingness to prosecute the perpetrators and indifference shown by authorities, and hence the need for more effective laws. The audience was particularly moved by instances of extreme violence put forward by the Panel. Two Members of Parliament described how close relatives of them were murdered, which highlighted the fact that GBV affects all layers of society. To bring the meeting to a close, several participants visited a shelter for battered women, which featured a large enclosed area where children could play safely in the open air, as well as a fully equipped kindergarten. GWI is pleased to see how well represented IAUW was at this event, particularly considering that GBV is one of the biggest obstacles to the advancement of GWI's mission of providing access to quality education to all women and girls worldwide. GWI commends IAUW for their participation in the noteworthy Panel.

— Advocacy —

Action Coalition themes announced for Generation Equality Forum in Mexico and Paris

On 20 January 2020, UN Women, together with feminists across the world, and the Governments of Mexico and France, announced the [Action Coalition](#) themes for the [Generation Equality Forum](#) to be held in Mexico City and Paris later this year. The Action Coalitions are global, innovative partnerships with governments, civil society, international organisations, and the private sector, to catalyse collective action, drive increased public and private investment, and deliver game-changing results for women and girls everywhere. The Generation Equality Forum, a civil society-led global gathering convened by UN Women and co-hosted by the Governments of Mexico and France, taking place in Mexico City from 7 to 8 May, and in Paris from 7 to 10 July 2020, will launch the following six catalytic Action Coalitions: (1) Gender-Based Violence, (2) Economic justice and rights, (3) Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), (4) Feminist action for climate justice, (5) Technology and innovation for gender equality (6) Feminist movements and leadership. For more information on the Generation Equality Forum 2020, click [HERE](#). GWI proudly participated in the Generation Equality Forum held in Geneva in October 2019 and intends to be equally represented at the equivalent events in Mexico City and Geneva. Let's take action together to promote gender equality!

— GWI at the United Nations —

GWI participates in Norwegian Mission strategy launch to eliminate harmful practices



GWJ participates in the strategy launch at the UN Office in Geneva.

On 14 January the Norwegian Mission launched its 2019-2023 strategy to eliminate harmful practices like child marriage, FGM and son preference, which sets on cooperation activities relating to education, health care, gender equality and human rights efforts. The very broadly composed panel consisted of Norway's Minister of International Development, Mr. Dag-Inge Ulstein, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Ms. Michelle Bachelet, UNICEF Representative (Geneva) and Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia, Ms. Afshan Khan, His Excellency (H.E.) Mr. Ahmad Andisha, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Islamic

Republic of Afghanistan, Dr. Adebisi Adebayo, Programme Advisor of the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices (IAC) as well as Ms. Monica Ferro, Geneva Office UNFPA Director, who moderated the event. All panellists congratulated Norway on this important initiative and elaborated their viewpoints and experiences. Mr. Ulstein emphasised the importance of prioritising the most marginalised and furthest behind because they tend to be the most exposed and subjected to harmful practices. Ms. Michelle Bachelet stressed that measures taken against harmful practices needed to tackle the underlying socioeconomic reasons while focussing on interlinkages between them. She also mentioned the importance of granting women and girls equal rights to inheritance and land for them to become economically empowered and to enable them to access quality education. Ms. Khan warned that if efforts to reach Sustainable Development Goal 5 were not accelerated, 150 million girls would be married off and another 60 million girls would be mutilated by 2030. She also emphasised the need to involve men in action plans and to invest in the skill development of girls. H.E. Andisha explained how the influence of religious leaders should be used to ensure sustainability in improving the situation of girls. Finally, Dr. Adebayo spoke for civil society, which, according to her, benefits from a less formal approach by being closer to the people concerned. Her work unites religious and community leaders, the media and young people in an education and training approach. In the wrap up discussion, many governments and organisations congratulated the panellists for their efforts. Among them were the European Union, the World Health Organisation, the Government of Sweden and UN Women. GWJ was honoured to be part of this important and very well attended launch. We firmly congratulate Norway on taking the lead in this critical initiative and hope for a fruitful collaboration between all parties involved. Let's take a stand together against harmful cultural practices! For more information on the strategy, click [HERE](#).

— Call for applications —

Ph.D. Position in Quantum Optomechanics at University of Copenhagen, Denmark

The Niels Bohr Institute of the University of Copenhagen is looking for a Ph.D. candidate with a Master's degree in physics or related fields to advance their research in the field of quantum optomechanics for a period of three years. Key tasks as a Ph.D. student in this position are managing and carrying through their research project, attending Ph.D. courses, writing scientific

articles as well as the Ph.D. thesis, teaching and disseminating of their research, supporting the department and staying at external research institutions for a few months, preferably abroad. **Deadline to apply is 15 March 2020.** For further information on the position or to apply, click [HERE](#).

Postdoctoral Association in Biological and Environmental Engineering at Cornell University, USA

The Department of Biological and Environmental Engineering at Cornell University is seeking a Postdoctoral Research Associate specialising in climate impacts on food-energy-water (FEW) systems. The postdoctoral associate will join an interdisciplinary team examining agricultural-to-energy transitions and their implications for the broader FEW-system in New York State. The position starts on **16 August 2020** and includes a 12-month initial appointment with the possibility of renewal pending satisfactory performance. For further information on requirements or to apply, click [HERE](#).

— Give the gift of education —

What better way to start the year than by giving the gift of education to rural women and girls in Uganda? GWI directly addresses the lack of women teachers as a barrier to girls' secondary education by sponsoring girls from rural areas in Uganda to qualify as teachers through the [Teachers for Rural Futures project](#). An increase in qualified women teachers in rural Uganda will have a huge impact on girls' education in the country. The project aims to enable some 2500 more girls to attend school over ten years. Educated girls and women are better equipped to participate effectively in society, to protect themselves from harm and to care for their children. Children of educated women are healthier and far more likely to go to school, hence the project creates long-term positive effects for generations. We invite you to contribute to our Global Giving campaign that enables young women to achieve their potential, inspire girls to go to school and build more prosperous communities. [Give today](#).



The five participants of GWI's current Teachers for Rural Futures project.

— Did you know? —

Unfortunately, GWI can only send 20 delegates to the session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) held in March every year at the UN in New York. This year is no exception. However, not being able to attend this year's CSW session does not mean that you have to miss out! In our modern times, everything is available online, which means you can follow the CSW sessions thanks to the UN Web TV live and uninterrupted! GWI proposes that you gather together with your fellow NFA members, your colleagues, friends, and family, and make this an unforgettable moment within your community! Access the UN Web TV page [HERE](#). All further information on the 64th CSW session can be found [HERE](#).

— Other information and events —

20-31 January	Universal Periodic Review Working Group, 35 th session, United Nations, Geneva
24 January	International Day of Education, Global
6 February	International Day of Zero Tolerance of Female Genital Mutilation, Global
10-28 February	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 75 th session, United Nations, Geneva
11 February	International Day of Women and Girls in Science, Global
24 Feb-20 March	Human Rights Council, 43 rd session, United Nations Office, Geneva
1 March	Zero Discrimination Day, Global
8 March	International Women's Day, Global
9-20 March	Commission on the Status of Women, 64 th session, New York
7-8 May	Generation Equality Forum Mexico
19 May	5 th Edition of the Swiss Olympes de la Parole, Switzerland
25 May-5 June	International Labour Organisation Conference, Geneva
7-10 July	Generation Equality Forum Paris
18-20 September	Centenary of the French Association of University Women (AFFDU)

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.

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