



GWI UPDATE – 7 July 2021



World Youth Skills Day is celebrated 15 July each year to shed light on the necessity to equip youth with appropriate tools to enter and flourish in the labour market.

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— Graduate Women International News —

Membership Marketplace: IFUWA and EAUW Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Submitted by Ranjana Banerjee, President IFUWA

As part of the Graduate Women International (GWI) National Federation and Association (NFA) Membership Marketplace initiative, IFUWA and EAUW came together for an NFA-to-NFA project on Sexual Harassment in the Workplace. This endeavour witnessed the development of an NFA-to-NFA project aimed to design, execute, and apply established policies to address this vital area. This initiative succeeded in friendship and camaraderie-building between members of the two GWI NFA countries. Three webinars were created and hosted by IFUWA and EAUW, and the finale was a joint webinar on 29 May. The webinars addressed the common issues concerning professional women facing sexual harassment in the workplace in both the countries. The project highlighted the effective role of the Judiciary and the role of women centric, non-governmental organizations along with the redressal mechanism to deal with it as well as the role of the government in forming laws for women's protection. "The project led us to accept that women suffer from insecurity and safety in their professional lives for which sustenance of a job becomes a problem", said Banerjee. "A safe working place is a much-needed aspect for every woman in today's world. It was attended by 75 members coming from different NFAs. We thank GWI President and Board members for attending the same", she added.

Membership Marketplace: Spanish Speaking NFAs join together for the Cultural Bridge project

The GWI National Federation of Bolivia (BFUW), Paraguay Federation of Graduate Women (PFGW), Spanish Federation of University Women (SFUW), Panama Federation of University Women (PFUW), and FEMU are joining together for a project to establish a virtual cultural forum to foster inclusion and sorority among GWI Spanish-speaking members and, in this way, demonstrating the importance of having a common language and common roots on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. The project will offer cultural enrichment, social action, and organisational improvement segments. Any Spanish-speaking NFA is welcome under request. **For additional information, please contact Project Coordinator, Marité Mehr, at hermanamiento@amum.es.** The Cultural Bridge is constituted for one year, and meetings will take place on the second Tuesday of every other month. For more information, please read the full concept note [HERE](#). **GWI celebrates this wonderful NFA-to-NFA project and encourages other Spanish-speaking NFAs to join the initiative.**

Sudha Srivastava contributes to UK National Writing Day



On 23 June the UK celebrated National Writing Day. This day commemorates the writing creativity, and the power and pleasure that it procures. Sudha Srivastava, GWI BFWG Assistant CIR and President of the GWI Young Member Network has greatly honoured the 2021 theme "Connection" with a beautiful acrostic poem. **GWI thanks Ms Srivastava for sharing her creative and inspiring words.**

GEF expects \$17 billion in commitment to gender equality

The GEF was organised by UN Women and co-hosted by France and Mexico from 30 June to 2 July. The GEF convened governments, international organizations, civil society, youth, the private sector and activists from around the world to make concrete, ambitious and sustainable commitments towards achieving gender equality. During the Forum, the Global Acceleration Plan for Gender Equality was launched. Divided into six [Actions Coalitions](#), dedicated to a specific theme to promote women's rights and gender equality worldwide, the Global Acceleration Plan aims to achieve its gender equality goals within five years, by 2026. They include gender-based violence, sexual and reproductive rights, feminist action for climate justice.

UN Women stated that \$17 billion in commitments are expected from the different governments to act towards gender equality. For many leaders the negative effects of COVID-19 on women and gender equality were a trigger for investment. Indeed, raising funds is crucial to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Gender Equality).

GWI members attended many discussions and panels. As an organisation, GWI strongly supports the Forum's work for women and girls. The discussions were enriching and productive, and forward-thinking. For more information about the GEF and the Global Acceleration Plan, GWI invites you to click [HERE](#).

— GWI Member News —

BFWG hosts emotional COVID-19 Meet & Greet

Submitted by Jasmit Phull, President BFWG

Standing in solidarity with India and other countries going through a humanitarian crisis due to COVID-19, BFWG hosted, on Saturday, 19 June 2021, a Meet & Greet with IFUWA. The event began with a candle lighting ceremony with Ravi Shanker Sitar music in the background. We paid tribute to all lives lost due to Covid. The Speaker, Dr Deepa Agarwal, spoke of her true moving story, how she flew from the UK to look after her mother who was in the hospital suffering from COVID-19 in India.

All members who attended the event had an opportunity to share experiences and comments in the chat box. As news was received of the sad loss of Dr Aquila Islam, CIR of Pakistan Federation of University Women (PFUW) during the event, attendees observed a moment of silence for her. To conclude music was played including an Indian song filmed in London and the Beatles, *Imagine*. A truly moving and an interesting experience enjoyed by all through friendship and unity.

“This event has certainly strengthened the bond and made us so proud to belong to this amazing organisations”, writes Phull. “We received excellent feedback from our own members and members abroad. Truly, a very successful solidarity event that brought us closer to the distant members”, she adds. **GWI applauds BFWG and IFUWA for hosting this special Meet & Greet. The stories shared were touching and meaningful during these COVID-19 times.**

IFUWA “Understanding Feminism in Varying Shades: Impact on Women’s Lives”

Submitted by Ranjana Banerjee, President IFUWA

On 29 May 2021, IFUWA held the “Understanding Feminism in Varying Shades: Impact on Women’s Lives” programme. The programme featured a presentation by Dr. Subhadra Channa, retired Professor of

Anthropology from Delhi University. Dr. Channa spoke at length about the perception men have of women which have come down ages and the way in which society has nurtured them in different instances. She explained that feminism is a perspective of life and the way we look at the world and not to be considered as a stereotypical status. The root of feminism lies in the structural inequality that society has perpetuated. To her Feminism is not merely talking of women's rights but understanding the masculine values that have existed for long to which women have been subjected in everyday life. A large number of IFUWA members and guests participated in the programme and contributed to practical discussions regarding women's status and rights in daily living. "The interactive session offered benefits to our members and was enjoyed by all", said Ranjana Banajee, IFUWA President. **GWl congratulates IFUWA and EAUW on this very successful awareness-raising programme!**

Discover FEMU activities for July

Led by FEMU and the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), the Women's Museum aims to revise the history of Mexico with a gender perspective from pre-Columbian times to the present in order to make women's role visible. The July programme of activities features one of the greatest pioneering Mexican artists, Frida Kahlo, but also highlights the rights of Afro-Mexicans and Afro-descent persons, inter alia. We encourage you to check out the virtual activities programme of July [HERE](#).

— Advocacy —

World Youth Skills Day, Reimagining Youth Skills Post-Pandemic

In 2014, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted a resolution declaring 15 July as World Youth Skills Day (WYSD). WYSD focuses on the strategic importance of equipping young people with skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship. This year's theme Reimagining Youth Skills Post-Pandemic aims to celebrate the resilience and creativity of youth throughout the crisis and focus attention on how technical and vocational education and training (TVET) systems have adapted to the pandemic, participate in the recovery, and imagine priorities they should adopt for the post-COVID-19 world. To highlight the urgency to 'reimagine' education and youth skills, GWI is publishing a [press release](#) urging States to prioritize and commit to skills development especially for women and girls. An accompanying infographic and comprehensive social media campaign will be available in the coming day on [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). Don't miss it!

The observance day insists on the role of Member States and civil society in meeting the needs and aspirations of youth, particularly in developing countries, where many young women and girls are left behind and drop out of school. A global conversation, hosted by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), UNESCO and the UN Office of the Secretary-General on this year's theme will be held on 15 July. GWI encourages registration [HERE](#).

— GWI at the United Nations —

Dr. Maureen Byrne and Maryella Hannum, GWI UN Representatives, New York UNICEF Report

In June, GWI UN Representative, Dr. Maureen Byrne and Maryella Hannum participated in the UNICEF Executive Board Session. The session focused on UNICEF's findings but also on adaptive measures to address COVID-19 (creation of new partnerships, for instance). This was also the announcement of the New Strategic Plan 2022-2025, a plan developed in collaboration with Member States, UNDP, UNOPS, UN Women, etc. The plan will focus on inclusive COVID-19 recovery and the achievement of the 2030 SDGs

with a special focus on SDGs 1-6, 10 and 16. UNICEF is making a shift to include other actors in its policies to maximise its impact. GWI invites you to read the full report of Dr. Byrne and Hannum [HERE](#).

High-Level Political Forum, 6-15 July 2021

The High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) is the UN's central platform to discuss and follow-up the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 Agenda. This year, the HLPF focuses on sustainable recovery from COVID-19. The HLPF will review Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 1 on no poverty, 2 on zero hunger, 3 on good health and well-being, 8 on decent work and economic growth, 10 on reduced inequalities, 12 on responsible consumption and production, 13 on climate action, 16 on peace, justice and strong institutions, and 17 on partnerships in depth. In line with the 2021 theme, GWI submitted a written statement highlighting the interconnection of poverty, corruption and education. GWI's full written statement is accessible [HERE](#) (p.280). Moreover, we invite you to register for the different events [HERE](#).

Paraguay, Singapore and Sierra Leone under review at the 38th session UPR

The Human Rights Council's (HRC) UPR is a unique process which involves a periodic review of the human rights records of all 193 United Nations Member States. The UPR, based on equal treatment for all countries, provides an opportunity for all States to declare what actions they have taken to improve the human rights situations in their countries and to overcome challenges to the enjoyment of human rights. From 3 to 14 May 2021, UPR held its 38th session, where three GWI NFA countries were under review: Paraguay, Sierra Leone and Singapore. Recommendations are as follows:

[Paraguay](#) was recommended, inter alia, to accelerate its efforts in the inclusion of indigenous and Afro-Paraguaya populations in schools, but also to implement a comprehensive sex education in the formal system. With regard to [Sierra Leone](#), this country is encouraged to pursue its efforts to improve access to education for all girls, especially by ensuring the inclusion of pregnant girls in schools following the lifting of the ban in March 2020, among others. [Singapore](#), for its part, was notably urged to include in its Constitution a definition of discrimination against women, but also, in the field of education, it was encouraged to push girls to choose non-traditional fields of study as a mean to moving towards greater gender equality. GWI invites you to click on each country name to access their latest UPR documentation, and to the outcome of the review which will be released soon, [HERE](#).

— Give the gift of empowerment —

Graduation season is upon us: with the turn of a tassel, a new generation of female leaders and changemakers emerges, carrying with them an incomparable sense of pride, accomplishment and hope for what's yet to come.

One way of celebrate the accomplishments and limitless potential of the graduate women in your life could be to make a donation in their name(s) to our new [Girls' Education for Brighter Futures Programme](#), which directly supports GWI's advocacy work and microprojects held throughout the world to remove socio-cultural, gender-related and economic barriers girls face towards education endeavours. To contribute to GWI's work towards the safe access to quality education and to raise awareness about the gender barriers in education please click [HERE](#).

Alongside, why not [give the gift membership](#) to the outstanding graduate women in your life? GWI membership allows graduate women to join the leading women's international organisation that works to empower girls and women through access to lifelong, quality education and training. Give the gift of

membership to become part of a global community, a diverse and dynamic community of graduate women dedicated to making the world more just and sustainable for all.

— Thank you Clémence Mathiaud —



GWl sincerely thanks Clémence Mathiaud, GWl Programme Officer, for her years of exceptional work and dedication to GWl. We will miss her sunny spirit and we wish her the utmost success as she sets forth on new adventures.

— Dates and events worth noting —

21 June-9 July	Human Rights Council, 47th session, United Nations Office, Geneva
6-15 July	High-Level Political Forum, New-York
15 July	World Youth Skills Day, Global
30 July	World Day against Trafficking in Persons, Global
9 August	World's Indigenous Peoples, Global
12 August	International Youth Day, Global
8 September	International Literacy Day, Global
14 Sept-2 Oct	Human Rights Council, 48th session, United Nations Office, Geneva
18-20 September	Centenary of the French Association of University Women (AFFDU)
21 September	International Day of Peace, Global
5 October	World Teachers' Day, Global
11 October	International Day of the Girl Child, Global
15 October	International Day of Rural Women, Global

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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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