

GWI – Organizational Development Process

Phase II: Organizational Readiness Assessment

Group 5 ~~Group 6~~ – Africa Meeting: Wednesday, February 2, 2021

Note: Immediately below, I've included the Background, GWI's Response, Organizational Development Goals and Results So Far to answer the question raised during our meeting of how we see ourselves fitting in with UN agencies.

Meeting Discussion Notes begin after this introduction.

Background:

The effects of the pandemic have been and continue to be devastating for the education of women and girls – setting back women's and girls' education by twenty years in many countries. The UN has urgently called for acceleration in the implementation of the SDGs.

GWI's Response:

To support this acceleration in implementation by adding capacities into the ongoing implementation efforts of UN agencies and nationally designated SDG agencies.

This response is based on GWI's understanding that graduate women have the skills and competencies to respond to capacity needs identified by UN agencies and nationally designated agencies.

Organizational Development Goals:

- 1) To make a measurable difference in the implementation of SDG 4 in our NFA countries by bringing together GWI Headquarters and NFAs to work with UN agencies, national focal points and global decision – makers*
- 2) To work with global funders to develop funding for GWI and its participating NFAs to carry out implementation activities.*

Organizational Development Process Results So Far

Research on the state of implementation of SDG4 and capacity needs of UN agencies and nationally designated agencies, conducted by OD Steering

Committee members in their respective countries, has shown that there are six categories of needs:

- *Building Awareness about the SDGs*
- *Outreach to communities and vulnerable populations*
- *Conducting Community Dialogues*
- *Providing Training and Support based on templates that already exist – not reinventing the wheel.*
- *Policy Review and Development*
- *Data Collection.*

GWl believes that graduate women are eminently qualified to respond to these needs.

Meeting Discussion

During this Phase of its Organizational Development process, GWl is assessing its readiness to carry out its intended work.

The Organizational Readiness Assessment is:

- rooted in looking ahead rather than looking back at the organization's decisions and actions. We honor the past and look to the future.
- a process through which GWl can envision and build a new chapter in its organizational life
- based on nine (9) organizational readiness prerequisites (necessary conditions) that must be met in order to be considered ready
- a discussion that is not so much a debate about the prerequisites themselves as it is a discussion about which actions need to be taken in each system (part) of the organization, to meet the prerequisites.
- These discussions are being undertaken because the GWl Board values the input of its NFAs and would like to build the next chapter in GWl's organizational life together with its NFAs.

The first two Prerequisites were discussed at this meeting.

Prerequisite 1:

GWI (needs) Leadership that has:

- a) Knowledge of the global social- economic space within which GWI operates.**
- b) Ability to negotiate and work with UN Agencies, Global Decision-Making Bodies and Funders on a multi-year basis.**
- c) Ability to manage a global organization.**
- d) Ability to create a united organizational culture of work that is outcomes -based.**

What is a common understanding of what GWI's Leadership (President and board) should look like?

- ✓ Leaders are people who understand the mission of the organization and the changing world in which the mission must be carried out.
- ✓ Leaders understand how to translate the mission into practical work.
- ✓ Leaders must have an understanding of the GWI membership and the importance of member engagement.
- ✓ Leaders must understand how the organization can grow, succeed and thrive.
- ✓ Leaders must understand organizational and financial management - putting our efforts and other resources where they will yield the greatest return on investment.

What are the actions that need to be taken in installing this type of leadership?

- It is not enough to know what we want but to also understand which actions should be taken in other parts of the organization to fulfill these

needs.

- Creating an enabling organizational culture is paramount in first attracting and electing the leadership we need and second to bringing the organization together to carry out its intended work in its next chapter.
- Culture is comprised of the values, attitudes and beliefs of the members, the board and staff.
- Culture can be a driving and resisting force for an organization's goals.
- It is important to permeate an enabling culture throughout the organization (including NFAs) which can be done around a common agenda, taking into consideration the diverse contexts of GWI's NFAs.
- Agenda should be cascaded throughout the GWI organizations.
- Once elected, leadership is responsible for continuing to drive this culture.
- During the remainder of this Triennium, it is important for the current board to create a values-driven culture.
- Culture is created by first determining GWI's values, writing a value statement and then instilling the values within the organization.
- Leadership must be bold enough to understand and encourage the membership – this is an example of a value. To help them recognize their strengths and build on them. Boldness creates a culture of innovation and empowerment. This is the organization that we are creating now.
- Another value is for leadership and members to take a cooperative approach – collaboration should be a mindset.

- A Board Charter will be helpful in exemplifying culture. This is a written policy document prepared by the company's board and ideally reviewed and updated annually. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of the board members, chair, and other key roles to ensure clarity and alignment.
- A board Charter – strategic document - is not meant to be a repetition of governance rules, but instead, to describe organizational culture and to specify how the board would like to work together with and relate to executive staff and other key stakeholders.

What are some of the actions that need to be taken in other parts of the organization?

- Writing job descriptions –while there is a prescriptive part to all job descriptions – we must not be too prescriptive. Job descriptions should also be driven by organizational values. Focus on Leadership Style – getting the Board to work together, having great communications skills, implementing policies. We should also be careful not to rule out people with leadership potential because they don't have enough experience - we pride ourselves on being an organization that helps women move into leadership positions.
- Choosing technologies to recruit. Training leaders to use technology to manage and grow the organization-
- Reviewing structures: for example, the Constitution, organizational policies, etc. Reviewing current /developing new policies to safeguard the organization.
- Important to note that it's not enough to have the policies in place and known to the President, Board and Staff. The broader leadership – the General Assembly - must be educated in its policy and constitution-driven exercise of power in terms of accountability and transparency.

Prerequisite 2:

GWl headquarters and NFAs are committed to working with UN and other agencies to build capacities into their ongoing programs to expand these programs in NFA countries.

GWl has a loose, distributed structure. NFAs and GWl Headquarters do not traditionally work together on specific projects.

How do we get the NFAs to commit to working together with GWl Headquarters?

- Common definition of Commitment– something has been discussed, clearly articulated and agreed upon and is in writing.
- Agreements with NFAs will not be uniform – they will take into consideration the context of each NFA or region. Agreements will understand and respect the diversity of our NFAs. The ideals embodied within the Agreements may be same for all NFAs because these reflect the organizational ideals. Scope of activities will be up to the NFAs and funding will be proportionate to scope of activities. It is a bit difficult to pre-emptively think about this – at this point it is speculation. We will need to have common platform and adapt from there.
- GWl’s Bina Roy projects are microcosms of the macrocosm of funded projects and activities we hope to undertake.
- There is a template for an agreement that NFAs have signed for funding for Bina Roy projects – while the projects we are contemplating will be much bigger, a scaled- up version of this template should be reviewed.
- In Sierra Leone, the Bina Roy project was about the NFA members building awareness of WASH among women in the marketplace. The projects and activities we anticipate are similar. In fact, our research shows that UN agencies have identified the need for awareness – building and community dialogues around the topics of WASH. Our anticipated activities in Sierra Leone will probably run along the same lines as the Bina Roy project. DRC

also ran a Bina Roy Project and signed a MOU with GWI in 2019.

- A project implementation recommendation is that GWI have global reporting system which participating NFAs will sign on to making financial and programmatic tracking and timely intervention easier. There is a high probability that the UN agencies use such a system and if it comes to that, we will all get trained in its use.
- NFAs do not have to recruit new members who may have certain competencies for instance Accounting to carry out the work we envision with the UN. The UN believes and has stated that all stakeholders can contribute to SDG implementation. While NFAs will have to be accountable for funds that they receive, it is more a matter of carefully tracking expenses and documenting and relating them back to funded activities rather than a matter of financial or cost accounting.
- There are no technical skills required on the part of the NFAs either. GWI will work with its NFAs. What is really needed is for NFA leadership is to become knowledgeable about the scope of work undertaken by NFA, to motivate its members, complete the work in the manner required and to maintain transparency with GWI headquarters so that GWI can support the NFA.

Other comments on the relationship between GWI and its NFAs

- NFAs have always been independent. Broadly GWI requires them to pay annual dues and their constitutions to state that they have missions similar to that of GWI and that they belong to GWI. The triennial meeting (AGM) is where business is conducted, learning is shared and friendships among members are created and rejuvenated.
- GWI respects the autonomy of the NFAs. The goals for GWI's new chapter do not take away their autonomy. The goals really focus on coming together in the advancement of SDG4 and to making a measurable impact in our NFA countries. We come together to work on similar implementation activities but in our own respective ways

- There is a widespread belief that NFAs will welcome the chance to work together because the world is different, resources are limited and members will respond favorably to a concerted and focused mission-related effort.

Concluding thoughts:

- Most NFAs felt that they needed more support from GWI. It is possible that many members don't hear about or see the support that GWI provides on a year-round basis because GWI is only able to communicate with NFA leadership – it does not have the email addresses of NFA members.
- That apart- NFAs feel that members find it too difficult to pay dues – they have many more members but they report only the dues-paying members to GWI.
- NFAs really need training around retaining members. For NFAs that speak a language other than English, it is very difficult for NFA leadership to translate. When NFAs have received Bina Roy grants, members have rallied but at all other times, they are not present.
- Translation is an important issue to consider in working together.
- Another important point for GWI Board to consider is that women are interested in belonging to an international organization but on a continuing basis do not feel the international connection and experience.
- GWI needs to create greater awareness for members about the work that GWI does – is doing.
- There should be an orientation for new members every so often conducted by GWI Board. Many new members within many NFAs get no orientation at all.

- We want to be cautious when talking about funding for NFAs. The funding is to support activities. We would like to think that we are operating on the principle that even volunteers need to be reimbursed for their project- related expenses.
- It would be helpful if volunteers received some sort of honorarium for their services
- In recent budget applications, funders (for example the Rotary World Funds) have included a new budget item line: Incentives for engagement in programs.