



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Stacy Dry Lara, GWI Executive Director
sdl@graduatewomen.org, Tel: +41 22 731 23 80

**On World Book and Copyright Day Graduate Women International
underscores the positive impact of language-adapted education on women and girls.**

Geneva, Switzerland, 23 April 2023 –[World Book and Copyright Day](#), (also known as World Book Day) is organised annually on 23 April by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) to promote reading, publishing and copyrighting. The Day celebrates the power of books and reading for the knowledge they share, the creativity they spark, and the worlds they open. Under the auspices of UNESCO's 2023 World Book and Copyright Day theme, Indigenous Languages!, Graduate Women International (GWI) underscores the positive impact of preserving indigenous languages and language-adapted education on women and girls. "Books in many languages are central to Sustainable Development Goal 4 inclusive, quality education which is the essence of GWI's mission", says GWI President, Patrice Wellesley-Cole.

Education based on a mother tongue curriculum incorporating traditional knowledge encourages indigenous girls to stay in schools. GWI also urges that teachers of indigenous students be adequately trained and recruited amongst the indigenous populations themselves, encouraging secondary school girls to continue their education to become educators.

Preserving indigenous languages is crucial amongst indigenous women to increase inclusion, equality, and rights-based knowledge. Many girls do not receive instruction in their mother tongue. Consequently, they are relocated from their communities – which harms their development and contributes to the death of their community's language. Therefore, GWI also recommends governments collaborate with indigenous leaders and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to identify local needs and develop targeted solutions.

Wellesley-Cole emphasises the necessity of such cooperation with indigenous communities to implement existing legislation to protect the language of indigenous people saying, "GWI urges bodies of power to work with national NGOs as a means to collaborate on measurable solutions to local education problems to prevent the erasure of indigenous languages in their country, as well as ensuring the protection of the educational rights and access of Indigenous girls and women".

UNESCO estimates that there are about 7,000 indigenous languages and that an indigenous language is lost every two weeks, resulting in the disappearance of around 3,000 unique languages by the end of the century. The decline in indigenous languages affects new generations of writers, copyrighters, authors of new digital formats, and more and presents significant challenges to preserving indigenous languages.

About GWI: Graduate Women International (GWI) is a membership-based international NGO based in Geneva, Switzerland, with presence in some 60 countries. Founded in 1919, GWI is the leading international network of graduate women advocating for the advancement of women and girls through access to quality education and lifelong training up to the highest levels. GWI is in special consultative status with ECOSOC since 1947 and is an NGO maintaining official relations with UNESCO and ILO.

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

Contributing to the press release is GWI Spring 2023 intern, Alexis Chelle, from Dartmouth College.