



GWl United Nations Representative Advocacy Report Vienna 2023

GWl advocacy goals

1. 100% of United Nations Member States commit to policy, legislation, budget, and infrastructure to facilitate transition of girls from primary to secondary school and ensure gender parity and gender equality throughout secondary education by 2030.
2. By 2030 100% of United Nations low-income Member States have increased access to tertiary education for girls and women by 50%.
3. 100% of United Nations Member States commit to and implement policies for continuing education to empower women throughout the life course, within the formal and informal economies.
4. Influence the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.
5. All 17 SDGs will include girls' education targets.

Meeting attended: (place, date, time, name of meeting):

'Ending Harmful Practices; preventing violence and ensuring access to justice – good practices'

Side Event – CCPCJ 32nd Session,
Thursday 25/5/23: 9-10 am,
Vienna International Centre

*** This Side Event was co-sponsored by GWl ***

Subject of meeting:

Harmful Practices continue a scourge for millions of women and girls in many countries. This side event discussed obstacles and good practices concerning Child Marriage and FGM, how to increase knowledge and change attitudes (including the important role of education), develop and support implementation of appropriate laws and policies, and support community-level transformations of social norms and practices concerning these topics.

The event was sponsored by Zonta International, Soroptimist International, **GWl**, the Alliance of NGOs on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, the NGO Committee for Sustainable Development, Vienna, and the NGO Committee for CSW, Vienna.

Panellists were Ute Scholz, President, Zonta International; Umyma El Jelede, Women's Health Care Centre, FEM Süd; myself for GWl. Moderator was Linda Witong, Soroptimist International. Nankali Maksud, Coordinator of the 'UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage', contributed an introductory video message.

Ute Scholz spoke about the challenges of ending Child Marriage, highlighting the UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme, supported by the governments of Belgium, Canada, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway and the UK, and by the EU and Zonta. This prioritises actions in 12 countries where Child Marriage is highly prevalent. She presented the results of a very successful project in Odisha State in India, where the ‘Say No to Child Marriage’ campaign has been supported by many communities – and villages have been proudly declaring themselves to be ‘child marriage free’.

Umyma El Jelede spoke about ‘Good Practices and Strategic Measures against FGM in Austria’, highlighting that practices such as FGM also continue in certain communities in developed countries. She runs a successful programme that engages communities in the fight against FGM and spoke of the need also to educate doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers.

I spoke, as had been requested, on i) why Women and Girls’ education is so important to ending harmful practices and ii) GWI’s advocacy on behalf of women and girls’ education (see below).

The side event was well attended and very well received.



The three presentations – Zonta International, FEM Süd, GWI

Refers to SDG no #: (please reference)

3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 16, 17

What GWI [resolution\(s\)](#) does your attendance relate to? (i.e. Tolerance of Minority Groups (5), FGM (6), Human Trafficking (7), Child Marriage (8), etc.)

6 and 8

Intervention by GWI rep: (what you did)

In my remarks, I presented GWI, our purpose and vision – and then spoke on why education is a pivotal driver of change and improvement in societies where harmful practices are prevalent. For instance:

For child marriage,

- Girls with at least a secondary education are often spared early marriage.
- Keeping girls in school is proven to help.
- Parents who believe that an education will enable their daughters to secure a better future are more likely to protect them from child marriage.

If girls were educated in low income countries, 64% of child marriages could be avoided. 59% fewer underage girls would have children.

For FGM, education:

- increases awareness of the health risks and dangers of FGM
 - shifts attitudes about its acceptability.
- Girls whose mothers have a primary education are 40% less likely to suffer FGM than those whose mothers have no education.

I then presented GWI's advocacy process on behalf of women and girls' education – our resolutions (quoting our resolutions on child marriage and FGM), our press releases, social media, advocacy toolkits and info-sheets, showing examples of our Infographics; our advocacy at the UN, including our oral and written statements; our programmes and projects in support of our advocacy goals e.g. Bina Roy Partners in Development projects, Teachers for Rural Futures, the Hegg Hoffet Fund, our mentoring programme.

Personal observations:

As I was putting my presentation together (many thanks to Stacy for her support), I realised again how very good GWI's Advocacy toolkits / Infographics are. Perhaps we at GWI take them for granted but they are a wonderful source of facts, information and guidance and are the envy of other NGOs. There is much on the GWI website that is so relevant and informative on all the important questions facing women and girls today. I had good feedback on this aspect of my presentation.

It was also very nice to be working on a side event with Zonta and the Soroptimists. We have so much in common in our advocacy objectives.



Speakers L to R; Elisabeth Francis, Ute Scholz, Umyma El Jeledé; screenshot showing speakers and Moderator, Linda Witong; Nankali Maksud, Coordinator UNFPA-UNICEF Programme to end Child Marriage

How this serves GWI members:

Harmful Practices continue to impact the lives of millions of women and girls – 640 million girls and women who are alive today were married before they were 18; 12 million girls become new child brides each year; at least 200 million girls have undergone FGM. We at GWI, and all in civil society, must do all we can to eradicate them.

Elisabeth Francis
GWI UN Rep Vienna