



Graduate Women International

Empowering women & girls through lifelong education

## GWI UPDATE – 5 July 2023



Join the Graduate Women International (GWI) 500+Challenge fundraiser and be one of 500 monthly contributors to the Girls Education for Brighter Futures programme.

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### — Graduate Women International (GWI) News —

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#### **500+Challenge: The Power of Many Empowering Education fundraiser**

Education is the key to unlocking a brighter future for girls, women, communities, and nations. That's why GWI invites you to join its 500+Challenge: The Power of Many Empowering Education fundraiser. The fundraiser strives to rally the support of 500 compassionate individuals to make small, recurring donations to the GWI Girls Education for Brighter Futures Post-COVID-19 programme. For more than 100 years GWI and international network of graduate women have advocated for education rights and for the elimination of barriers to education for girls and lifelong learning for all women. Every contribution has the power to change lives. Whether it's \$5, \$10, \$20 per month your donation will directly support the GWI's Girls Education for Brighter Futures Post-COVID-19 programme. GWI invites you to visit the programme website [HERE](#) to learn more about the programme attributes and join the 500+Challenge. Together, let's empower girls, transform lives, and build a better world through education.

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### — GWI Member News —

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Visit of the Byodoin Temple with Kyoto branch members and Dr. Janice Pan



Dr. Janice Pan with JAUW President Iwamura and ex-President Kano

## Japanese Association of University Women hosts Dr. Janice Pan, Coordinator of International Relations of the Hong Kong Association of University Women

In May, the Japanese Association of University Women (JAUW) had the pleasure of hosting Dr. Janice Pan, Coordinator of International Relations (CIR), of the Hong Kong Association of University Women. Dr. Pan arrived in Tokyo the night before and visited the JAUW headquarters the next morning. There, she had an engaging discussion with President Michiko Iwamura, former President Takayo Kano, and three other JAUW members. During their one-and-half-hour discussion the two GWI affiliates exchanged ideas on the scholarship programs of each association and explored the possibility of a GWI Membership Marketplace program between the two affiliates. In Nara, Dr. Pan received a warm welcome and was given a tour of Nara Women's University by the Branch Head. She had the privilege of visiting the first engineering department in a Japan women's college/university and was introduced to the professors' labs. Finally, the Kyoto Branch members took Dr. Pan on a sightseeing trip, and they all enjoyed a delicate obento (lunch-box) lunch and maccha (green tea) ceremonial service together. This friendly exchange was enjoyed by all and left feelings of optimism and future growth of both associations.

## GWI marks the Independence Day of the Democratic Republic of Congo



Flag of the Democratic Republic of Congo

On 30 June 1960, the Democratic Republic of Congo gained its independence. This day marks the beginning of a new era for the people of Congo who fought for years to obtain self-determination. This date commemorates the strength, the power and resilience of the Congolese people. This year's theme for Congo Independence Day is "*Unity and Progress: Embracing the Future Together.*" This theme allows reflection on

how the people of Congo can build a nation that will be unified and prosperous. It also emphasises the necessity to bring individuals and communities together as they are all sharing the same goals for the future. GWI supports the aspirations of unity and progress of the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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## — GWI at the United Nations —

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### Guidebook on State Obligations for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence launch

As part of the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council 53rd session (HRC53), GWI participated on 22 June in the side event to launch the Mukwege Foundation "*Red Line Initiative*", a global campaign to eliminate the use of sexual violence in conflict. The release is the first from the "*Guidebook on State Obligations for Conflict-Related Sexual Violence*". The guidebook compiles all the applicable international law and norms relating to conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) into an online compendium with an aim to inform States in a comprehensive manner of their current obligations under international humanitarian law, international human rights law, and UN Security Council resolutions that form the Women, Peace and Security agenda. The overarching goal of the project is to develop a comprehensive, accessible, and useful tool. During the HRC53 side event, Dr. Denis Mukwege said via video message, "We can no longer simply react after the facts. CRSV can no longer be accepted as a collateral damage. Time has come for States to react". **GWI encourages the download and wide distribution of the guidebook that can be downloaded [HERE](#).**

### HRC53 side event on the role of education to eradicate child marriage

Under the auspices of the HRC53, GWI participated on 23 June in a side event about eliminating child marriage sponsored by Girls Not Brides, Plan International, Save the Children and Rozaria Memorial Trust. Expert panellists noted that today 12 million young girls are forced into child marriages without any say in the matter. Sadly, these marriages often become a life sentence, leaving the girls with no

means to leave or dissolve the marriage, preventing them from attending or completing school. Panellists urged that education plays a crucial role in addressing and ultimately ending child marriage. By empowering girls and providing them with educational opportunities, the circle of child marriage can be disrupted. Faith Mwangi-Powell, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Girls Not Brides, expressed the importance of education by stating that she was only able to become the CEO because she had the privilege and opportunity to go to school. Child marriages are a violation of human rights, and panellists urged that society and governments must adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards it. Panellists summed up the side event by noting that addressing child marriage requires a multi-faceted approach, involves not only education but also efforts in healthcare, economic empowerment, gender equality and human rights. By integrating education into broader strategies, more just and equitable societies are created where all girls have the opportunity to fulfil their potential and live free from harmful consequences of child marriage. As an official partner of Girls Not Brides, the eradication of child marriage is part of GWI's advocating strategy. To this point, GWI previously released an HRC written statement on the recognition of secondary school being a mean to reduce child marriage. GWI encourages you to read this statement, click [HERE](#).

### **GWI participates in Special Rapporteur on the right to education 25th anniversary**

In 1998, the Commission on Human Rights, now recognized as the Human Rights Council since 2006, passed a resolution to establish a Special Rapporteur (SR) to concentrate on the right to education for a term of three years. Given the importance of the mandate, the HRC has consistently passed annual resolutions related to the SR on the right to education. The current HRC53 session is no exception. During the side event, a group of panellists including Mr. Vernor Muñoz Villalobos, former SR on the right to education and Sobhi Tawil, Director Future of Learning and Innovation for the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) discussed the evolution and impact of the right to education since the creation of the education mandate in 1998. They pointed out that conflicts and the COVID-19 pandemic have had a disproportionate effect on the right to education of women and girls. Additionally, the panellists emphasized that current education models are no longer suitable for the situation of youth and changing learning methods. The concept of a new social contract for education was introduced as a possible solution for the evolution of our world. Inclusiveness of education was also a prominent topic presented by the panellists, highlighting the need for education to be accessible for everyone, especially disadvantaged groups such as women and girls. The panellists noted that there has been a certain regression in the right to education, particularly for girls in some countries who are prevented from attending school due to their gender. Ms. Farida Shaheed, from Pakistan appointed SR on the right to education in 2022, participated in this discussion and emphasized the importance of more resources and a deeper understanding of the new challenges surrounding this right. Education is not just about individual learning, but also about learning to live together. GWI is supporting the objective of a world in which education is entirely inclusive through its fundraising, programs, and the work of its different NFAs.

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## — Give the gift of Education —

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GWI invites you to Give the Gift of Education. By participating in the GWI 500+Challenge you will be supporting the Girls Education for Brighter Futures post-COVID-19 program. By donating \$10 or \$20 every month, you'll be supporting GWI's advocacy efforts to enhance education opportunities for girls and provide training for women at all levels. To join the challenge and make your donation, simply click [HERE](#). Thank you for your support.

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## — Did you know? —

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GWI has maintained special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council since 1947. It is worth noting that GWI was one of the first 10 organisations to earn such status. This news was announced during the ninth Conference of GWI, formerly International Federation of University Women held in Toronto in August 1947. This status allows organizations to actively participate in ECOSOC's sessions such as the current HRC53, fostering an opportunity to share expertise and collaborate with member states and other stakeholders. Organizations with special consultative status can advocate for their causes, influence global policies, engage in dialogues with member states, raise awareness about critical issues, and contribute to shaping international norms, frameworks, and agreements. However, this status also implies certain responsibilities, such as adhering to UN Charter principles, maintaining a constructive approach, and regularly reporting on activities to demonstrate ongoing engagement.

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## — Dates and events worth noting —

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10-19 July	High-Level Political Forum, United Nations, New York
15 July	World Youth Skills Day, Global
30 July	World Day against Trafficking in Persons, Global
31 July	Pan African Women's Day, Global
9 August	International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, Global
18-19 September	SDG Summit, New York

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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.

### **Graduate Women International**

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