GWI Legacy of Peace: Promoting Peace through Education

A bit of history: Graduate Women International (GWI), founded in 1919, is based on promoting peace between all nations. WWI had just ended; Dean Virginia Gildersleeve, Professor Caroline Spurgeon, and Rose Sidgwick sat together in 1918 and conceived the idea of a worldwide organisation uniting university women, fostering friendship and understanding to help prevent another such catastrophe.

GWI stands unwavering with women worldwide, fostering solidarity and education, recognizing women's role in peace building, and contributing to a more harmonious and non-violent future.

GWI at the United Nations

GWI actively participated in three Human Rights Councils (Geneva), Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), Economic and Social Council, High-Level Political Forum, Commission for Social Development, Sustainable Development Goal Summit, UNICEF (New York); Conference on NGOs and UNESCO (Paris); Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal justice (Vienna), and more.

- Submitted 7 written statements and delivered 1 oral intervention to the United Nations and its mechanisms.
- Actively participated in CSW67, submitting 1 written statement garnering 12 cosponsors. Organised 2 CSW67 parallel events, with GWI affiliates organising 4 more.
- Submitted 3 comprehensive recommendations for GWI affiliates under review by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
- GWI continued serving as President, NGO Committee on Human Rights and Senior Advisor to the NGO CSW Geneva Bureau.

GWI thanks United Nations representatives Maureen Byrne, Maryella Hannum, Elisabeth Francis, Reinhild Strauss, Dominique Clavatti, Eliane Didier, and Helen Lom for their contributions.

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GWI Membership

GWI fosters an active and engaged member community.

- Successfully on-boarded independent members from 35 countries. Maintained National Federations and Associations (NFAs) in 48 countries.
- Facilitated 7 engaging member Discussion Network dialogues on topics critical to women and girls' relevant topics, such as for World Teachers' Day.
- Membership Marketplace continued the successful Spanish-Speaking Culture Bridge NFA-to-NFA Project, commenced the Connexion Francophone Project, and held a 4-part Japanese Language and Culture course as a Peer-to-Peer activity.
- Organised 12 webinars, with participation from 609 members; 95% of webinar participants would recommend GWI's webinars.
- GWI affiliates in Switzerland (Basel and Geneva sections) and South Africa celebrated 100 years. Women Graduates USA celebrated 15 years.

Young Member Network (YMN)

GWI YMN is comprised of passionate pro-active female change-makers from over 25 countries across the globe, advocating for issues impacting young women/girls. Under the leadership of YMN President, Sudha Srivastava, 2023 highlights of the network include:

- More than 20 new young members joined in 2023; all YMN receive regular communications via the YMN President's Letter who also shares important news/opportunities with the network.
- Hosted YMN parallel event at CSW67 titled, “Gender Equality in Digital Education: Young Women and Financial Challenges”.
- 5 young members, including YMN President Sudha Srivastava, participated in CSW67 in New York in-person.
- YMN celebrated International Youth Day 2023 taking centre stage with a video project under the theme, “Green Skills for Youth: Towards a Sustainable World”.
- Launched a new YMN monthly Conversation Series titled, “Growing Together”.
- Hold regular Meet & Greet session for new members.

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GWI Communications

GWI's mission is propelled forward through a robust communication and social media strategy that includes multiple weekly informational posts, marking of significant international Days of Observance, and press releases, all that passionately foster GWI's 104-year mission of peace through education.

- Posted some 1100 social media posts published across Facebook, Instagram, X, and LinkedIn.
- Audience engagement on Facebook and Instagram increased by 23%, while the Update newsletter engagement reached 40%, documenting a 5% increase since 2022.
- Published 8 press releases highlighting GWI critical viewpoints on education.
- Distributed 26 Update newsletters, totaling some 210 informational write-ups.

GWI International Advocacy

In tandem with activities at United Nations campuses, GWI executes a comprehensive global advocacy strategy.

- Produced Hate Speech Policy Paper with support from UN Under-Secretary-General on the Prevention of Genocide.
- Ran the "UNITE: Educate to End Violence against Women and Girls" poster campaign for the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence.
- Marked 23 annual Days of Observance, with messaging powerful messaging aimed to reduce barriers in education.
- Published 10 infographics in furtherance Days of Observance, of which 6 were featured on the Women's United Nations Report Network.

GWI Projects and Grants

- **Teacher for Rural Futures**
  - Onboarded 2 new students. Three student teachers participated in summer student teaching practice.

- **Hegg Hoffett Committee**
  - Hegg Hoffet Committee reviewed nearly 50 applications and interviewed 5 candidates eligible for grants.

- **Bina Roy Partners in Development**
  - Call for 2024 Bina Roy Partners in Development projects applications issued. The programme will support 5 new projects.

- **500+ Challenge: Power of Many Empowering Education**
  - Launched 500+ Challenge fundraising campaign for the GWI Girls Education for Brighter Futures programme, benefiting 1000s of women and girls annually.

- **Awards**
  - Nominated by the Royal African Society for the 2024 Earthshot Environmental Prize.

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GWI Leadership, Staff, and Interns

Seven 2023-2025 Board Members
Patrice Wellesley-Cole, President, Mildred Asmah, Vice President, Projects, Meera Bondre, Vice President, Membership, Shirley Gillett, Vice President, Education, Shaila Rao Mistry, Vice President, Advocacy, Ujwala Shinde, Vice President, Legal & Governance, Sudha Srivastava, Treasurer

Staff
Stacy Dry Lara, Executive Director

Six 2023 Interns
GWI’s mission is fueled by the invaluable support and contributions of its inspiring 2023 interns. We offer appreciation to: (from left to right) Alexis Chelle (U.S.A.), Salomé Delsaux (France), Paloma Martial (France), Marie Mihalcea (France), Sophia Schaaper (Netherlands), and Sonia Timalsina (Nepal).

Follow us on social media!
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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