



**Expression of Interest for to the Commission on the Status of Women 68th session (CSW68)
Interactive Dialogue (ID) #1 with the expert panel on the priority theme.**

Prepared by Stacy Dry Lara, Executive Director, Graduate Women International

ID Date/Time: Monday, 18 March 2024 | 10.00 am – 1.00 pm EST

*Topic: Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls
by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective*

Name of organization:

Graduate Women International (GWI)

Website of the organization making the request, if applicable:

www.graduatewomen.org

In which country is your organization based?

Switzerland

**If this expression of interest is being made on behalf of groups of groups of organizations, caucuses,
or coalitions, please list the organizations that make up the group/caucus/coalition (must have
consultative status with ECOSOC):**

It is not

Name of the speaker:

Patrice Wellesley Cole

Speaker's title/function in your organization:

President

Speaker's email address:

pwellesley@aol.com

**Question 1: Does your organization work on financing for gender equality in the context of
addressing poverty and inequality? (300-word limit)**

Graduate Women International (GWI) is an organization that works towards the intersectionality of gender equality, poverty, and inequality. Education has been at the core of GWI's approach for 105 years. By advocating for the safe access to quality education and lifelong learning, GWI enables



women to start and sustain businesses, afford education and healthcare, and sustain their financial independence.

Through its Bina Roy Partners in Development (BRPID) projects, GWI addresses education and financial barriers faced by women and contributes to broader efforts in poverty alleviation and reducing inequalities. GWI recognizes that economic empowerment and financial literacy are essential for advancing gender equality. As such, its BRPID projects offer livelihood skills building, financial literacy, human rights, and employability skills training and are more aimed at enhancing women's economic autonomy and employment opportunities.

Importantly, GWI also recognizes the root causes of inequalities within financial systems that marginalize women. Through advocacy and partnerships, GWI works to promote equal access to financial services and financial literacy to create an enabling environment where women can fully participate in economic activities and benefit from financial resources.

GWI's projects also emphasize the importance of education and capacity-building in financial literacy and leadership skills. By equipping women with the necessary knowledge and skills, GWI empowers them to make informed decisions about their finances, enhancing their economic resilience and well-being through skills-building and literacy classes.

GWI's work on financing gender equality within the context of addressing poverty and inequality is significant and a long-term commitment. GWI will contribute to breaking the cycle of poverty and inequality through education for many more decades through its flagship BRPID projects and annual international advocacy and communication strategies.

Question 2: Based on your organization's work, what social/economic/fiscal policies would be most effective in ending women and girl's poverty?)

Based on Graduate Women International's (GWI) extensive work, our global network of graduate women advocates for a comprehensive approach to ending women and girls' poverty through education and fiscal policies that address the root causes of gender-based economic disparities.

First and foremost, investing in education is paramount. Safe access to quality education equips women and girls with the skills and knowledge necessary to secure better employment opportunities, thereby lifting them out of poverty. GWI supports policies that focus on ensuring equitable access to education, including eliminating barriers such as gender-based violence, child marriage, online access, and lack of resources.

GWI international advocacy involves implementing policies that facilitate women's participation in the labor market, including equal pay for equal work, affordable childcare services, and equal access to employment information and training. Additionally, GWI advocates for policies that address discriminatory laws and practices for ending women's and girls' poverty. GWI advocates for policies that aim to eliminate gender-based discrimination. Legal reforms that promote gender equality and protect women's rights are indispensable in creating an enabling environment for women's economic empowerment.



Adopting progressive fiscal policies that prioritize investment in social services, infrastructure, and poverty reduction programs is critical to the work of GWI. This includes increased public spending on education, healthcare, and social protection.

Question #3: Does your organization work with or represent constituencies including trade unions/women's collectives/worker movements advocating for the rights of women and girls living in poverty?

Yes, Graduate Women International (GWI) collaborates closely with and represents various constituencies, including trade unions, women's collectives, and worker movements to advance its mission of safe access to quality education as a means to alleviate poverty and other barriers to education. Our partnerships are diverse and strategic, recognizing these groups' pivotal roles in advancing gender equality and social justice.

GWI maintains special relations with the International Labour Organization (ILO), which formulates policies focused on addressing labor issues. Through this collaboration, we contribute to developing gender-sensitive policies and advocate for their implementation to promote fair wages, safe working conditions, and equal opportunities for women in the workforce.

Additionally, GWI's global network of graduate women actively engages with trade unions to advocate for equal pay, livelihood skills training, and other initiatives to enhance women's economic empowerment. As part of our Membership Marketplace, affiliates in India and Egypt came together to compose an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) to investigate sexual harassment cases in the workplace. Project leaders trained India and Egypt GWI members on how an inquiry is conducted and how they can help victims get justice from an ICC. At the same time, participants gained an understanding of the country's legal framework to avoid any injustice to either party with the aim of forming women's movements to eradicate harassment in the workplace. This project can be conducted across all sectors of working professionals, including corporate and government sectors, as a means to influence.

By working hand-in-hand internally and with trade unions, women's collectives, worker movements, and the ILO, GWI amplifies the voices of marginalized women and advocates for policies and initiatives that address their country-specific needs and challenges.

Organizations selected to speak from the floor may do so in-person or virtually (via live remote connection). Please indicate your preference:

Recorded Statement

Please confirm that the speaker is registered and approved for CSW68:

Check box.

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