



**Expression of Interest for to the Commission on the Status of Women 68<sup>th</sup> session (CSW68)  
Interactive Dialogue (ID) with youth representatives on the priority theme**

*Prepared by Sudha Srivastava, President, Graduate Women International Young Member Network*

**Opportunity #2 Thursday, 14 March 2024 | 3.00 - 6.00 p.m. EST**

**Topic:** Interactive dialogue with youth representatives on the priority theme: How does your organization work with young people?

**Name of organization:**

Graduate Women International (GWI)

**Website of the organization making the request, if applicable:**

[www.graduatewomen.org](http://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:**

Sudha Srivastava

**Speaker's title/function in your organization:**

President, Graduate Women International Young Member Network

**Speaker's email address:**

[sudha.bfwg@gmail.com](mailto:sudha.bfwg@gmail.com)

**Question 1: How does your organization work with young people? What innovative approaches or policies has your organization adopted to ensure youth participation and leadership? Please share concrete examples where young people have played a pivotal role in your organization's strategies or actions. (300-word limit)**



Graduate Women International (GWI) has a deep history in advocating the rights of women and girls, especially for their education. Our organization was founded in 1919 and is a leading global organisation advocating for women's equality and empowerment through access to quality education and training up to the highest levels. We were one of the first 10 organizations to be granted special consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and we have maintained this status since 1947. We also maintain official relations with UNESCO and International Labour Organisation. For many years GWI has been supporting young women.

In 2019, during the GWI 100th Anniversary Triennial Conference, GWI established a Young Members Network (YMN) lead by YMN President, and team elected from and by young members. Since then, the YMN has been growing in numbers and diversity, advocating and working tirelessly for issues impacting young women.

Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment through Education and training is at the heart of the work of GWI across the globe via National Federation and Associations (NFAs) and Independent Members in 50 countries. YMN is made of young women from GWI NFAs and through various initiatives of YMN President they have been involved in continuous professional development – participating in workshops, trainings, mentoring, conversations/discussions.

YMN participates in ECOSOC Youth Forums, NGO Committee on the Status of Women, New York, youth preparation series, Youth Symposiums. YMN President established a regular structured channel of communication on opportunities available for young women – through monthly letters as well as GWI Update newsletters.

YMN President also serves as one of the GWI Board members and contributes to the strategic planning and execution of the organisations overarching goals. Many young members are leading or are part of various GWI Committees, participating in decision making and shaping the future of the organisation and voice significantly for young women.

**Question 2: In the context of CSW68's priority theme, how has your organization contributed to accelerating gender equality and women's empowerment, particularly in addressing poverty, through youth-led initiatives or programs? Please give examples. (300-word limit)**

Graduate Women International (GWI) Young Member Network (YMN) leadership conducted a four-week certified training workshop for GWI young members to become Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Ambassadors in May 2022. Twenty-six young women are now actively working in 12 GWI countries to localise SDGs, empower women through education and training to help financial inclusion reducing poverty.

In 2023, YMN organised a CSW67 parallel event 'Gender Equality in Digital Education: Young Women and Financial Challenges'. The event addressed gender disparities due to financial factors in accessing technological advances. A range of solutions were presented by young women including public-private partnerships, development finance, education budget and international funding.

A webinar series focused on NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) effect in changing times in collaboration with International Labour Organisation.



GWI Membership Marketplace offers opportunities for members to share knowledge via workshops and courses. Many young women led these courses to create a successful collaboration for early careers and professional development.

GWI NFAs including Ghana, Nigeria, India, Egypt run women empowerment and financial inclusion programmes lead by young members.

GWI has Teacher for Rural Futures Programme in Uganda, supporting disadvantaged young women in rural Uganda to earn their Bachelors in Teaching with the goal they return to their rural communities and serve a role models and female teachers. Since the program inception in 2016, six young woman have successfully graduated from Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda.

**Question #3: Has your organization or coalition produced written materials or engaged in public speaking (conferences, symposia, workshops, etc.) that specifically focus on enhancing gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in relation to poverty, institutional strengthening, or gender-responsive financing? Please share any relevant examples, particularly those highlighting youth engagement and leadership. (300-word limit)**

Graduate Women international (GWI) Young Member Network (YMN) presented a workshop during the 2022 GWI Triennial Conference 'From Growth to Sustainability'.

GWI YMN produced video projects on highlighting issues impacting young women including financial challenges as well as celebrated United Nations special days – International Day of Education, International Youth Day and Women and Girls in Science. All updates are published in GWI newsletter distributed to wider audience outside organisation membership.

GWI YMN is organising a parallel event during CSW68 'Sustainable Financing for Gender Equality: Young Women's Perspective' on 19 March 2024. The event will explore pertinent issues of gender budgeting, financial inclusion, poverty impacting social protection, funding pipeline for young women in disadvantaged background, increasing scholarships and education funds.

A group of GWI young women including YMN President attended CSW67 in-person and engaged in many events at United Nations headquarters in New York, including Youth Forum.

GWI YMN President showed exceptional leadership skills bringing young women together to share and collaborate through monthly conversation series "Professions, Cultures, Friendships" in 2022 and "Growing Together" in 2023/24 – by young women for young women.

In 2020, two GWI young women received 'Young Feminist Award' from Women Have Wings for their youth advocacy work. In 2023, YMN President received 'Iconic Women Creating Better World for All' Award from Women Economic Forum for her contribution towards exemplary entrepreneurship and community work on financial inclusion, youth leadership and mentoring.



GWI YMN conducted youth consultation on CSW68 priority theme and submitted YMN recommendations in January 2024.

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

In person

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

Check box.

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