



## GWU UPDATE – 09 October 2024



GRADUATE WOMEN INTERNATIONAL TOOLKIT

## International Day of the Girl Child

11 OCTOBER 2024

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

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#### **GWI launches pragmatic toolkit for the International Day of the Girl (IDOG)**

On 11 October, GWI celebrates IDOG 2024 by launching a pragmatic toolkit to demonstrate girls' role in advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The toolkit provides members and nonmembers with practical resources and actionable guidelines to raise awareness and implement initiatives at the local and national levels. This observance day, established by the United Nations General Assembly in 2011, is a powerful reminder of the unique challenges girls face around the world and the importance of promoting their rights. Aligned with this year's theme, "Girls' vision for the future," this toolkit serves as a source of inspiration for collective action for girls' rights and towards achieving the SDGs. **Be sure to keep an eye on our social media channels and visit the GWI Toolkit webpage [HERE](#) to access the toolkit as soon as it becomes available!**

#### **GWI Teachers for Rural Futures scholars mark World Teachers' Day**

World Teachers' Day is held annually on 5 October to celebrate all teachers around the globe. In its commitment to increasing the number of female teachers, GWI's Teachers for Rural Futures programme has been successfully operating for nine years. Since 2015, seven GWI

scholarship recipients from rural Uganda have fulfilled their dreams to become teachers, two more set to graduate in January 2025, and two new students were recently added from the rural Zombo district recently added to the programme. To mark World Teachers' Day, GWI held interviews with three current scholarship recipients. GWI invites you to click [HERE](#) to hear their inspiring stories, learn what teaching means to them, how the programme has helped them, and what they enjoy most about teaching. **GWI is so proud of these scholars!**

### **Save the Date: GWI cosponsors Widows Rights International (WRI) seminar**

Ahead of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) review of the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 30-year review (21-22 October 2024), GWI is proud to co-sponsor the 2-day seminar "Widows: Challenges, Gaps and Best Practices" organized by WRI at the United Nations, Geneva, on 17 and 18 October. Seminar topics include child widows, lack of data, harmful traditional practices, widows and Agenda 2030, and much more regarding widows of all age's rights. This event offers a valuable opportunity to learn about the plight of widows and to raise awareness of the issues faced by widows worldwide. **To learn more about the event please see the Save the Date [HERE](#). The provisional program can be found [HERE](#).**

### **GWI supports the World Menopause Awareness Month**

Since 2009, the International Menopause Society (IMS) and the World Health Organisation have designated October as World Menopause Awareness Month. In the words of the IMS, the "purpose of this observance month is to raise awareness of the menopause and the support options available for improving health and wellbeing." As this year's theme, "Be prepared, not scared," highlights, GWI encourages menopause education for all women with reliable knowledge and resources, empowering them to approach this stage of life with health and confidence.

This year, GWI has taken several opportunities to highlight its commitment to raising awareness about menopause's effects on women. GWI President Patrice Wellesley-Cole presented alongside the United Kingdom's First Menopause Employment Champion, Helen Tomlinson, at the Commission on the Status of Women 68th session parallel event titled, Affects of the Menopause on Women's Access to Work and Social Protection. The session addressed the importance of having access to information about menopause and how this should be a human right for all women: knowing the symptoms is essential for having the right diagnosis for this situation. Additionally, GWI hosted a webinar with Doctors Without Borders about Menopause Perceptions in Africa, especially in a humanitarian setting. The webinar recording can be accessed [HERE](#).

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## — GWI Member News —

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### **University Women Asia (UWAsia) welcomes the new Japanese leadership**

On 6 September, during an online gathering, the Indian Federation of University Women's Associations (IFUWA) transferred the leadership of UWAsia to the Japan Association of University Women (JAUW) for the next three years. Honoured attendees included GWI President, Wellesley-Cole, GWI Vice President Membership, Meera Bondre, GWI Vice

President Projects, Mildred Asmah, IFUWA President, Ranjana Banerjee, JAUW President Mizuko Hasegawa, JAUW Coordinator of International Relations, Kyoko Oi, and Chizuko Suzuki and Nobuko Akita (JAUW), Janice Pan (Hong Kong Association of University Women), Shevata Rai Talwar and Purobi Ghosh Mohan, (IFUWA), and Supinda Lertlit (Thailand Association of University Women). At present, there are eight countries—Bangladesh, Hong Kong, India, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan, Singapore, and Thailand—which form the foundation of UWAsia. GWI aims to welcome UWAsia nonmember organisations back to GWI soon.

The occasion was marked by a heartfelt ceremony, symbolizing the passing of the torch to new leadership. "This momentous transition embodies GWI's commitment to collaboration within our regional groups. I extend my heartfelt thanks to IFUWA for their wonderful leadership. I wish much success to JAUW in this new tenure as we aim to resonate and inspire all GWI regional groups," says Bondre.

During its 3-year leadership tenure, IFUWA organised multiple online programs, benefitting GWI UWAsia regional National Federations and Associations and a conference under the theme "Working Together for a Sustainable Future" held in Pune in March 2024.

### **Irish Federation of University Women (IrFUW) to hold centenary celebrations**

IrFUW plans to open their centenary celebrations with a reception in Trinity College, Dublin on the evening of Friday, 11 October 2024, followed by a conference and other weekend festivities. GWI congratulates IrFUW for reaching this GWI milestone and looks forward to hearing more about the celebrations of this historic occasion.

### **The new Māori queen is announced following King Tuheitia's passing**

Last week, following a period of recovery from heart surgery and just days after celebrating the 18th anniversary of his coronation, the Māori king passed away. His 27-year-old daughter, Ngā Wai hono i te pō, was chosen as the new queen and she was announced at a gathering at Tūrangawaewae Marae, which is the seat of the Kiingitanga or Māori king movement. She was blessed with the same Bible that was used to anoint the first Māori king in 1858 and sat in front of her father's coffin, wearing a wreath and a cloak as prayers and chants were performed ahead of his burial. A flotilla of carved war canoes, or waka, then transported the king to his final resting place on Mount Taupiri, sacred to the Māori people. This appointment of a woman as queen not only is a historic and symbolic generational shift, but a positive influence on younger Māori members. Importantly, the selection of the new queen highlights a commitment to women's education and empowerment, as she holds a master's degree in Māori cultural studies and teaches kapa haka, the Māori term for performing arts. **GWNZ empowers women to pursue similar paths of leadership through education, fostering the next generation of women leaders to impact their communities.**

### **GWI invites contributions to the 105-Year Heritage Fundraising Wall**

The virtual Heritage Fundraising Wall, created to commemorate GWI 105th anniversary, is still open for your contribution. GWI expresses immense gratitude to those who have contributed to advancing girls' education and supporting its mission. **Click [HERE](#) to make your donation.**

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## — GWI at the United Nations —

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### **GWI cosponsors “Geneva Calls: A Pivotal Moment for Older Persons’ Rights” side event**

GWI celebrated the International Day of Older Persons on 1 October by participating in a Human Rights Council side event panel discussion organised by the NGO Committee on Ageing in Geneva. This event aimed to explore the developments and actionable pathways for Member States and all stakeholders to further the human rights of older persons. The insightful contributions from the speakers led to valuable discussions on the need for binding international and intergenerational legal frameworks, as well as collaborative strategies to uphold and advance these rights. Through its support of this event, **GWI calls on the urgent need to combat ageism and promote an inclusive approach that respects and values the diversity of older persons.**

### **GWI participates in Summit of the Future Debrief**

On 26 September, following the Summit of the Future (SotF), GWI took part in a virtual debrief organised by Centro de Pensamiento Estratégico Internacional (Cepei) and the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD). During this session, leading Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) practitioners reviewed the Summit's key messages and discussed next steps for the final five years of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Drawing from the discussion and its review of the Pact for the Future, adopted as the Summit's outcome document, GWI voices continued concern about the significant absence of education in both the Pact and the SotF. The Pact not only fails to sufficiently address the challenges faced by disadvantaged women but it also overlooks education as a powerful tool to overcome many barriers, particularly those faced by women and girls. While various topics—such as gender equality, climate change, peacebuilding, and cultural cohesion—were addressed, the omission of education is a major oversight, especially given its centrality to long-term development. Without prioritizing education, efforts to achieve the SDGs will likely fall short.

As the debrief outlined actions for member states to bring the Pact to life, GWI noted the lack of concrete education commitments. Consistent with its pre-SotF position, GWI continues to advocate for the integration of education into global governance and calls on member states to prioritize it as a crucial component of effective global policies.

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## — Give the Gift of Education —

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GWI is thankful for the generous support of the Teachers for Rural Future programme. This support has made a tangible difference in sustaining the programme, which is significantly impacting young women's education in rural Uganda. This progress is a testament to your generosity and its impact on these young women's lives. GWI invites you to see [HERE](#) interviews with our scholarship recipients, conducted on the occasion of World Teachers’ Day 2024. To contribute to more female students from rural Uganda, GWI encourages you to click [HERE](#). Thank you for making such a meaningful difference!

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— Did you know? —

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**Virginia Gildersleeve: a visionary educator pioneering women's empowerment**

Did you know that World Teachers' Day is celebrated annually on 5 October? To honor teachers worldwide, GWI shares the inspiring story of Virginia Gildersleeve who played a key role in founding the International Federation of University Women (IFUW), from which GWI has since evolved. Born in 1877, Gildersleeve was an exceptional student who completed her PhD and pursued a successful academic career as a lecturer, and ultimately dean of Barnard College at Columbia University. In 1919, alongside Caroline Spurgeon and Rose Sidgwick, she co-founded IFUW dedicated to promoting international cooperation and peace, believing that women could effect change through dialogue and learning from one another. Her exceptional work with IFUW and leadership at Barnard College led to her appointment by President Roosevelt in 1945 as the only woman in the U.S. delegation to the San Francisco Conference, where the United Nations Charter was drafted. She was a practical visionary, whose contributions on the global stage highlight the significant impact that teachers and education can have on driving meaningful change worldwide: teachers do more than instruct, they cultivate future leaders, break down barriers, and inspire transformations that resonate far beyond the classroom. **Virginia Gildersleeve remains a remarkable figure for GWI, inspiring our mission to empower women and girls worldwide through education.**

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— Dates and events —

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11 October	GWI toolkit for International Day of the Girl publication
15 October	International Day of Rural Women
17 October	International Day of Eradication of Poverty
17-18 October	Seminar by Widows Rights International
24 October	YMN Mentoring Series 3/4
25 November	YMN Mentoring Series 4/4
10-21 March 2025	CSW69
10 - 13 Sept 2025	GWI 35th General Assembly and Conference, Location: TBD

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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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