



## GWI UPDATE – 28 January 2026



*GWI International Day of Education toolkit 2026*

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

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#### **GWI releases International Day of Education 2026 toolkit**

To mark the 8<sup>th</sup> International Day of Education on 24 January 2026, GWI released a toolkit aligned with the theme, *“AI and education: preserving human agency in an automated world.”* The toolkit presents eight key education trends shaping learning systems globally, from competency-based learning and micro-credentials to AI-enabled personalised learning and employer, education co-creation models. Grounded in evidence from UNESCO, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the World Bank and other international bodies, the toolkit offers a concise framework for understanding system-level shifts in education across diverse contexts. Designed as a practical resource for GWI members and nonmembers alike, the toolkit supports informed dialogue, advocacy, and engagement at national and international levels around the future of education and gender equality. Access the toolkit in English [HERE](#) and Spanish [HERE](#).

To further explore these themes, GWI’s Young Members Network (YMN) launched its 2026 Connect & Grow Monthly Conversation Series on the occasion of International Day of Education. The first session, “The Power of Youth in Co-Creating Education,” took place on 24 January 2026,

moderated by Sudha Srivastava, President of GWI YMN, with spotlight speaker Menna Mohamed (Graduate Women New Zealand), who addressed “More Than Technology: Why Leadership and Identity Matter for Sustainable Change.” The discussion highlighted the critical role of young women’s leadership in shaping inclusive, human-centred education systems in an increasingly automated world. GWI thanks the YMN team, Sudha Srivastava and Menna Mohamed for their collaboration and for promoting an intergenerational dialogue on the future of education, and all participants of this important discussion. Click [HERE](#) to access the recording.

In parallel, GWI Vice-President Education Dr. Shirley Gillett marked the day with a personal reflective essay on education as a lifelong, culturally embedded and transformative process. Drawing on her experience as an educator across diverse contexts, Dr. Gillett reflects on the enduring influence of educational philosophy, the central role of teachers, cultural perspectives on learning, and the opportunities and challenges presented by AI. Her contribution powerfully aligns with GWI’s core value of empowering women through lifelong learning. GWI thanks Dr. Gillett for her thoughtful and inspiring reflection, and for her continued leadership in advancing education within GWI. Click [HERE](#) to access the full essay.

### **2025 Year at a Glance**

The 2025 Year at a Glance provides an overview of GWI’s work and key milestones across the year, bringing together advocacy, education, governance, and communications highlights. It reflects GWI’s sustained engagement at the United Nations, the implementation of education projects and grant programmes, growing member participation, and the outcomes of the 35th Triennial General Assembly and Conference held in Zambia. The publication offers a clear snapshot of how GWI’s global network translated shared priorities into concrete action in support of women’s and girls’ right to quality education, leadership, and equality worldwide. Click [HERE](#) to read it.

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## — GWI Member News —

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### **GWI Immediate Past President President Judge Patrice Wellesley-Cole awarded Order of the British Empire**

Congratulations to St Hugh's Honorary Fellow and alumna Judge Patrice Wellesley-Cole CBE (Law, 1971) who has been appointed a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in the King's New Year Honours 2026 for services to Charity. The award was given in recognition of her work as the President of Graduate Women International. Previously, she served as a Tribunal Judge in London, specialising in immigration, asylum, deportation, and human rights cases from 2002 until her early retirement in 2017.

### **Call for Paper Abstracts for the 11th Triennial Conference of University Women of Asia**

Hosted by the Japanese Association of University Women (JAUW), the conference will take place from 18–20 May 2026 in Tokyo, Japan, under the theme “Wellbeing & Environment.” Bringing together university women from across the region, the conference will feature paper presentations, networking opportunities and cultural activities, including an optional guided excursion and a farewell event with traditional Japanese music. Abstract submissions are open until 31 January 2026. Click [HERE](#) to access the flyer and abstract details.

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## — GWI at the United Nations (UN) —

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### **GWI 70<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the status of Women (CSW70) written statement**

GWI submits its CSW70 written statement headlined, “The Classroom as the First Forum of Justice.” The statement underscores education as the foundation of access to justice, gender equality and democratic participation. GWI calls on Member States to recognise education as a structural pillar of justice systems, to invest in inclusive and lifelong learning, and to ensure women and girls are equipped with the knowledge, critical skills and digital literacy needed to claim and exercise their rights in an increasingly AI-mediated world. Please read the full statement [HERE](#).

### **First-Week Insights from the Crimes Against Humanity Conference**

Representing GWI at the United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Humanity (19–24 January 2026) in New York, Belinda Mason Knierim, President Australia Graduate Women, provides insights from the first week of negotiations toward a dedicated international treaty addressing crimes against humanity, a legal gap long recognised by civil society and governments alike. GWI sincerely thanks Mason Knierim for her engagement in these discussions and for her comprehensive report on behalf of GWI. Click [HERE](#) to read the full report.

### **YMN to host CSW70 parallel event**

Organised by the GWI YMN this Parallel Event titled, From Barriers to Breakthroughs: Pathways to Access Justice for Women, will be held virtually on 12 March 2026 at 9:30 am Eastern Standard Time (to be confirmed). The interactive event, led by a panel of GWI young members from across the globe, will highlight the need of empowering young women through education, mentoring and training opportunities providing solution-driven pathways to access justice. There will be opportunities for audience interaction via breakout sessions, opinion polls and Q&A. See flyer at the bottom of the Update. Register in advance for this event [HERE](#).

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## — Give the Gift of Membership—

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The GWI Independent Member network is growing, with many new members joining from around the world over the past few months. A thoughtful gift for the graduate woman in your life is a GWI membership. There are many benefits of being a member of GWI, including belonging to an influential international organisation composed of graduate women influencing policy and legislation on women's issues at the international level and gaining an international perspective on women's issues through networking activities. Click [HERE](#) to find out how to join GWI.

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## — Did you know? —

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On 23 January 2026, the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) celebrated its 80th anniversary. For eight decades, ECOSOC has provided a platform where countries, experts, and civil society come together to tackle shared global challenges from post-war recovery and decolonization to today's climate and inequality crises. By connecting governments, communities, and partners, ECOSOC turns global ideas into collective action. GWI has maintained ECOSOC status since 1947, making it one of the first ten organizations to gain this special consultative status, a testament to a long-standing commitment to advancing gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide.

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## — Dates and Events —

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6 February	International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation
11 February	International Day of Women and Girls in Science
21 February	International Mother Language Day
8 March	International Women's Day
9-19 March	70 <sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW70)

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Empowering women and girls through lifelong education for leadership, decision-making and peace.

GWl, 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

7-9, Chemin de Balexert, CH-1291, Châtelaine, Geneva, Switzerland

E-mail: [gwi@graduatewomen.org](mailto:gwi@graduatewomen.org) Website: [www.graduatewomen.org](http://www.graduatewomen.org)



## COMMISSION *on the* STATUS OF WOMEN



70th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women  
(CSW70)

**GWl Young Members Network CSW70 Parallel Event**

# SAVE THE DATE

**12 March 2026**

Registration Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/8MgmIKRtTi6bM8KRLZdUYA>

**“From Barriers to Breakthroughs:  
Pathways to Access Justice for Women”**

The event highlights the need of empowering young women through education, mentoring and training opportunities - providing solution-driven pathways to access justice.

The event is highly interactive led by a panel of young women from across the globe, presenting country specific scenario and addressing gaps, challenges advocating real world solutions. The programme is divided into a few engaging sections – panel presentation followed by break-out room discussions led by young women. There will also be opportunities of audience to participate in opinion polls and interactive Q&A.