

GW I EDUCOM WEBINAR ON EDUCATION AND DIVERSITY

Report

22 June 2026

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Date of Webinar: 22 June 2026

Time: 10:00 p.m. Central European Summer Time (CEST)

Platform: Zoom

Host: Stacy Dry Lara, GWI Executive Director

Moderator: Dr Shirley Gillett – GWI Vice President Education (Graduate Women New Zealand)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 22 June 2026, the Graduate Women International (GWI) Education Committee (EDUCOM) hosted a webinar titled "Education and Diversity: Meet EDUCOM." The webinar brought together seven presenters from seven countries to share their expertise on various aspects of diversity and education. The objective was twofold: to educate GWI members on diversity-related topics and to introduce the members of EDUCOM to the broader GWI community.

The webinar was well-attended and received overwhelmingly positive feedback. Attendees described the session as "inspiring," "wonderful" and "a great way to see EDUCOM in action." The diverse range of topics – from inclusive education in rural Zambia to girls' education in conflict zones; provided a rich learning experience for participants.

2. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The GWI Education Committee (EDUCOM) is responsible for advancing GWI's educational mandate, focusing on issues related to women's and girls' education, diversity, inclusion, and leadership. The committee comprises members from across the GWI federation, each bringing unique expertise and perspectives.

The webinar was conceived as a platform to:

1. Educate GWI members on key diversity and education issues from a global perspective.
2. Introduce EDUCOM members to the wider GWI community.
3. Showcase the diverse expertise within EDUCOM.
4. Foster dialogue on pressing educational challenges and opportunities.

3. WEBINAR PROGRAMME

Presentations and Presenters

No.	Presenter	Country	Title
1	Annie Musonda-Mubanga	Zambia	School Leadership and Inclusive Education in Rural and Remote Settings: Realities, Dynamics and Possibilities in Zambia

2	Geneviève Etornam Adukpo	Ghana	A Practical Case Study of Learning with a Disability in STEM
3	Kei Foran	Japan	Can Japan foster a sustainable diverse society with the help of education? A case study for Diversity & Education
4	Anne Headley	Ireland	Diversity in Irish Education: Benefits and Challenges
5	NAHIDE NESRİN KOÇ	Türkiye	Supporting Diversity and Inclusive Learning in the Montessori Classroom
6	Gail Neff	Canada	Education of Girls in Conflict Zones
7	Tzazil Valencia Oseguera	Mexico	Being a Student in Latin America: Learning in Inequality

KEY THEMES

The webinar covered a wide range of themes under the broad umbrella of diversity and education, including:

- ✓ Inclusive education in resource-constrained settings
- ✓ Disability inclusion in STEM education
- ✓ Cultural and societal beliefs about disability
- ✓ Gender-based violence and girls' education
- ✓ Conflict-affected education contexts
- ✓ Educational inequality in Latin America
- ✓ Diversity and inclusion in developed nation contexts (Japan, Ireland)
- ✓ Alternative pedagogies (Montessori) for inclusive learning

4. PRESENTATION SUMMARIES

4.1 Dr Annie Musonda-Mubanga (Zambia)

Dr. Musonda presented on the realities of school leadership in rural and remote Zambia. She highlighted the severe resource constraints, geographic isolation and systemic policy gaps that school leaders face. An estimated 500,000 school-age children with disabilities live in Zambia, of which 250,000 are girls. Cultural beliefs about disability (e.g., attribution to witchcraft or ancestral curses) remain significant barriers. Her presentation made a compelling case for investing in rural school leaders as the solution, with formal established structures to support local initiatives and innovations.

4.2 Dr Geneviève Etornam Adukpo (Ghana)

Dr Adukpo shared a practical case study on supporting a learner with a disability in STEM education. She highlighted the importance of mentorship, inclusive teaching practices, and the need for systemic support to enable learners with disabilities to pursue careers in science and technology.

4.3 Kei Foran (Japan)

Kei Foran explored whether Japan can foster a sustainable diverse society through education. She examined the challenges and opportunities in a culturally homogeneous context and highlighted innovative approaches to diversity and inclusion in Japanese education.

4.4 Anne Headley (Ireland)

Anne Headley discussed the benefits and challenges of ethnic diversity in Irish education. Drawing on her background in human rights law, she examined how Ireland is adapting to changing demographics and what this means for educators and learners.

4.5 Nahide Nesrin Koç (Türkiye)

Nesrin Koç presented on supporting diversity and inclusive learning in the Montessori classroom. She demonstrated how this pedagogical approach can be adapted to create inclusive learning environments for diverse learners.

4.6 Gail Neff (Canada)

Gail Neff addressed the education of girls in conflict zones, highlighting the unique vulnerabilities and resilience of girls in war-affected regions. She emphasised the importance of targeted support and advocacy for girls' education in these contexts.

4.7 Tzazil Valencia Oseguera (Mexico)

Tzazil Valencia Oseguera examined student inequality in Latin America, focusing on how structural inequality shapes educational outcomes. She highlighted the experiences of students in Mexico City and the challenges they face in accessing quality education.

5. AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

5.1 Overview

The webinar received overwhelmingly positive feedback from attendees. Comments were collected throughout the webinar via the Zoom chat and in follow-up communications. A total of over 100 participants from across the GWI federation attended, representing countries including Ghana, Japan, Ireland, Türkiye, Canada, Mexico, New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, India, South Africa and Zambia.

5.2 GENERAL COMMENTS

From	Comment
Gretta Mills (New Zealand)	<i>"The variety of topics shared have been fascinating and thought-provoking. Thank you."</i>
Rae Duff (New Zealand)	<i>"Thank you for the wonderful Educom presentations. It was a great way to see Educom in action, using the skills of its members and modern technology to its advantage in this conflicted world. I am delighted to see GWI in such good heart."</i>
Cat Sutherland (Scotland)	<i>"Well done everyone – what a range of skills there are in our EDUCOM."</i>
Rebecca Alonso (Ireland)	<i>"Thank you all. Perfect introduction to EDUCOM."</i>
Meera Bondre	<i>"Great presentations."</i>

Rojasree (India)	<i>"Hello everyone! Greetings all the way from India!"</i>
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5.3 COMMENTS ON SPECIFIC PRESENTATIONS

Presentation	From	Comment
Annie Musonda-Mubanga (Zambia)	Joy Hurst (Vp Legal Governance, Cfuw)	<i>"Great presentation Annie. In particular your conclusions which are applicable everywhere."</i>
	Patrice Wellesley-Cole	<i>"Annie thank you. Excellent presentation I learned so much. Congratulations."</i>
	Lucia Guzmán (Femu-Mexico)	<i>"Thank you, Annie. Congratulations from the Mexican Federation of University Women (FEMU)."</i>
	Iman Elishawaf	<i>"Well done Annie. ❤️"</i>
	Carrie De Silva	<i>"Loved the line... 'school leaders are not the problem, they are the solution waiting for support'."</i>
Dr Geneviève Adukpo (Ghana)	Patrice Wellesley-Cole	<i>"Greetings from a very hot North London. Fascinating paper, Genevieve thank you."</i>
	Lucia Guzmán (Femu-Mexico)	<i>"Genevieve: How nice to see you again! Congratulations from the Mexican Federation of University Women (FEMU)."</i>
Kei Foran (Japan)	Chizuko Suzuki (Jauw)	<i>"Thank you Kei, for such an interesting presentation on the situations in Japan regarding education for diversity!"</i>
	Dr Linda Coles (Canada)	<i>"Kei, Very interesting! I can see some similarities within our country, Canada."</i>
	Gisele Scanlon	<i>"Well done Kei. Love the plural idea."</i>
Anne Headley (Ireland)	Gisele Scanlon (Gwi Vp Advocacy)	<i>"Well done Anne. We're not in the World Cup but you did Ireland proud!"</i>
Tzazil Valencia (Mexico)	Joy Hurst	<i>"Thank you Anne [Tzazil]. Great example of how a country can adapt constructively to changing demographics."</i>

5.4 OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

From	Comment
Joy Hurst (VP Legal Governance, CFUW)	<i>"It would be great to share the innovations of educators..."</i>
Joy Hurst	<i>"Funding to support technology to facilitate assisted learning would be a great project."</i>
Joy Hurst	<i>"I hope we will have access to the ppt after this webinar."</i>
Gretta Mills	<i>"Supporting teachers in their roles with their students – a great idea Pat!"</i>

Carrie de Silva	<i>"Loved the line... 'school leaders are not the problem, they are the solution waiting for support'."</i>
Liette Michaud (Canada)	<i>"Inclusive education without the appropriate professional services for special needs students and their teachers has been a problem in my home province in Canada. You've identified the crux of the matter. Thank you."</i>
Terry Oudraad	<i>"Most interesting presentations Genevieve & Annie, learned a lot and girls need our support."</i>
Prof Anne Sikwibele (Zambia)	<i>"Good discussions and lessons. Each country shows some challenges and initiatives. It seems the budgets go across as a challenge and if we could have more funding more could be achieved both for students and for teachers and other resource needs. Also collaboration, networking and exchange of ideas could help."</i>
Rae Duff	<i>"What hasn't been mentioned today is Women in Leadership – GWI members can be the leaders in education – there are still few women in leadership positions in our Universities and in technology – it is still a man's world!"</i>
Gretta Mills	<i>"Where to put our efforts and resources? Support & encouragement for teachers and other educators to teach girls and women at all stages of learning? How & where requires more thought, discussion & planning..."</i>

6. KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE CHAT DISCUSSION

Topic	Comment
Documentation of innovations	Joy Hurst: <i>"It would be great to share the innovations of educators..."</i>
Technology funding	Joy Hurst: <i>"Funding to support technology to facilitate assisted learning would be a great project."</i>
Sharing presentations	Joy Hurst: <i>"I hope we will have access to the ppt after this webinar."</i>
Women in leadership	Rae Duff: <i>"There are still few women in leadership positions in our Universities and in technology – it is still a man's world!"</i>
Teacher support	Gretta Mills: <i>"Supporting teachers in their roles with their students – a great idea Pat!"</i>
Online education	Rojasree (India): <i>"How online qualification and education can impact this educational importance and stability throughout the world."</i>
Budget challenges	Anne Sikwibele: <i>"It seems the budgets go across as a challenge... collaboration, networking and exchange of ideas could help."</i>
Intersectional challenges	Liette Michaud (Canada): <i>"Inclusive education without the appropriate professional services for special needs students and their teachers has been a problem in my home province in Canada."</i>

7. OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

The webinar achieved its objectives of educating GWI members and introducing EDUCOM members to the wider federation. Key outcomes include:

1. Increased awareness of diversity issues across different national contexts.
2. Recognition of EDUCOM's expertise and the value of its diverse membership.
3. Inspiration for further action – as noted by Gretta Mills, the webinar raised important questions about supporting teachers and students.
4. Strengthened global connections among GWI members and presenters.
5. Identification of common challenges – budget constraints, teacher training gaps, and the need for documentation of innovations were recurring themes.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the webinar and the feedback received, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Document and share innovations – The grassroots innovations shared by presenters (e.g., local teaching aids, girls-only safe spaces) should be compiled into a resource document for GWI members.
2. Share presentation materials – Make the PowerPoint presentations available to attendees and the wider GWI membership.
3. Explore a project on funding for technology – Joy Hurst's suggestion of funding technology to facilitate assisted learning could be a potential EDUCOM project.
4. Consider a follow-up webinar on Women in Leadership – Rae Duff's comment highlighted the need for continued focus on women in leadership positions in education.
5. Explore CSW 2027 participation – The webinar content is highly relevant to the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) agenda. EDUCOM should consider submitting a parallel event proposal for CSW 2027.
6. Continue regular webinars – Given the positive response, regular EDUCOM webinars could become a valuable resource for GWI members.
7. Develop a feedback mechanism – A brief post-webinar survey would help capture more structured feedback for future events.

9. CONCLUSION

The GWI EDUCOM Webinar on Diversity was a resounding success. It showcased the depth and breadth of expertise within EDUCOM, educated GWI members on critical diversity issues, and inspired meaningful dialogue about the future of inclusive education. The positive feedback received underscores the value of such initiatives and the importance of continued collaboration across the GWI federation.

As one attendee noted: *"The variety of topics shared have been fascinating and thought-provoking."* Another described the webinar as *"a great way to see EDUCOM in action."*

The committee looks forward to building on this momentum in future activities, including potential projects, conference contributions and future webinars.

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

EDUCOM extends its sincere gratitude to:

All presenters-

Dr Annie Musonda-Mubanga (Zambia), Dr Geneviève Etornam Adukpo (Ghana), Kei Foran (Japan), Anne Headley (Ireland), NAHIDE NESRIN KOÇ (Türkiye), Gail Neff (Canada) and Tzazil Valencia Oseguera (Mexico) – for their excellent and insightful presentations

The Webinar Moderator-

Dr Shirley Gillett for moderating the session so effectively and providing thoughtful leadership throughout

The Webinar Host-

Stacy Dry Lara, GWI Executive Director, for creating the flyer, co-organising the webinar logistics, setting up the Zoom meeting link, handling all the presentations and connecting us all across the globe – and to Tzazil for receiving and collating the individual powerpoints into the required format for Stacy.

All attendees and Participants-

for their active participation, thoughtful comments and for making the session a rich learning experience

Graduate Women International Board-

for supporting the committee's work and providing the platform for this important conversation

Report Prepared by:

Dr Annie Musonda-Mubanga

EDUCOM Convenor (Zambia)

Date: 21 July 2026