



Graduate Women International

Empowering women & girls through lifelong education

GW I 101

An Introduction to GWI

[Graduatewomen.org](https://graduatewomen.org)

CFUW-OTTAWA

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What is GWI?

Graduate Women International (formerly International Federation of University Women)

- an International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO)
- focus on education of women around the world
- primary education is not enough for women to participate fully and take leadership roles
- access to education is a human right
- girls and women are vulnerable and need support
- education for girls and women reduces inequality, stimulates development
- focus of GWI mirrors that of CFUW



Who are GWI Members?

National Federations and Associations

(NFAs)

- 15,000 members from 52 NFAs
- 36 Independent members in 23 countries (where no NFA available)
- Board - 7 members, and several committees
- Staff - 2 plus interns and volunteers





GW I History

The Beginning

- In 1919 Canada, US and Britain founded the
 - **International Federation of University Women (IFUW)**
 - **Canada is a charter member**
- GWI is still part of the CFUW constitution 100 years later
- **IFUW/GWI Founders' Vision:**
- After the horrors of WW1 they believed:
 - women of the world should work together to foster peace, friendship and understanding



GWI History

Important Milestones

- 1920 - countries organized national associations including:
 - Europe: France, The Netherlands, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Czechoslovakia, Sweden
 - South Africa, Australia, India, and Canada, US and Britain
- The first international fellowship honoured Rose Sedgwick (UK) who helped found IFUW but sadly died of flu in 1918

History 1920-1938



IFUW Concerns

- Legal and economic status of women - especially married women
- Growing exclusion of Jewish women from organizations
- Work with the League of Nations
- 1935 - Italian Association "invited" to dissolve by fascist regime
- 1936 – Committee for emergency assistance of university women established
 - Assistance for Women Graduates displaced as a result of war or political upheavals, natural disasters, or other serious emergencies
 - In 1968 renamed **Hegg Hoffet Fund** after convenor for many years, Mme Blanche Hegg Hoffet of Switzerland



“No federation or association shall be admitted or retained as member of IFUW which debars qualified women from membership by reason of race, religion or political opinions.”

IFUW Council meeting in Budapest 1929



History 1939-1946

Wartime management out of UK and US

Most of Europe cut off from participation

Much determination & courage to keep organization alive



History After WW 2

1948 UN *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

IFUW - Early involvement with United Nations

1947-1948

IFUW obtained special consultative status with Economic and Social Council of UN (ECOSOC) and UNESCO



History 1950 - 1979

Special Concerns

- Women and part time work
- Access for women to higher education
 - report submitted to UN Commission on the Status of Women 1958
- Pensionable age for women workers
- Opportunities for women as jurists, architects and engineers
- Matrimonial property, vocational counselling, discrimination on the basis of marital status
- Position of Women Graduates - report 1963
- Access of girls and women to education and leadership roles in society
- Bina Roy Partners in Development Projects formed



History 1979 - 1991

Highlights

- 1979 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (**CEDAW**)
- 1980 **Project Five-O**: collaboration with other organization on community development projects:
 - International Council of Women
 - International Federation of Business and Professional Women
 - Soroptimist International
 - Associated Country Women of the World
- Project Five-O example: headed by Chitra Ghosh, (India) IFUW President 1992-1995
 - school and clean water in Thakurpukur, near Kolkata, India.
- 1980 University Women of Europe founded (UWE)
- 1985 University Women of Asia (UWA)
- 1991 Federation of University Women of Africa (FUWA)



History 1992-2008

Growth of Affiliates and Programs

- **Countries released from Iron Curtain formed NFAs:** Bulgaria, Poland and Romania, - also Zambia
- **1993** IFUW promoted **Vienna Declaration** at World Conference on Human Rights,
- IFUW was the lead INGO forming a coalition on **The Girl Child**
 - focus on holding governments accountable for girls' rights. Part of Beijing Platform for Action
- **1996** IFUW and UNESCO publish ***Women and the University Curriculum: Towards Equality, Democracy, and Peace.***
- **1998** UNESCO World Conference on Higher Education in Paris
 - Debate on Women, Higher Education and Development
- **2008** 60th anniversary of Declaration of Human Rights
- **Bina Roy projects** in 13 countries
 - education and leadership development in developing countries
 - small grants for projects



IFUW 2001

Ottawa

IFUW 2001 - Triennial Conference

- Held in Ottawa
- hosted by Ottawa CFUW Clubs
- Over 900 attended
- from 67 countries

- Chaired by IFUW President 1998-2001
- Canadian Linda Souter





Recent GWI History

2013-2016

2013 – 2016 IFUW Triennial assembly voted for new approach to operating the organization, including:

- spending reserves to build a new INGO
- hiring new staff, finding new affiliates,
- preparing new projects for outside funding
 - **CFUW voted to approve this new approach**

The Board of this Triennial did what they proposed - and also:

- Proposed a new name - **Graduate Women International** which was approved by the members
- At the 2016 Triennial - proposed higher dues to continue the pace of work
 - After much discussion at the assembly - and in the hallways during breaks - the initial proposed rate was reduced but still higher than before
 - In the vote this new rate was supported by assembly **including CFUW**



Recent GWI History

2016-2019

On the matter of dues:

After the 2016 Triennial, several NFAs around the world, including CFUW, refused to accept the substantial level of dues increase adopted at the 2016 Triennial, leaving GWI short of operating funds

2017

- Ad Hoc Dues Committee convened to consult with NFAs regarding dues increase
- Special AGM – new dues motion adopted by NFAs
 - Rate that was agreed to at the Triennial was now reduced

2016-2019 GWI Board alleged that previous GWI Board mismanaged funds:

- raised a case against the 2013-2016 board through Directors' insurance,
- A report by GWI on the status of this claim is still outstanding



Memorandum of Understanding

2019 CFUW / GWI MOU

CFUW and GWI entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2019 to remain in effect until 2022 to:

- reduce CFUW unfunded debt
- identify areas of planned CFUW and GWI collaboration
- include measures of financial accountability to which GWI agreed

GW I Triennial 2019

- GWI held a highly successful and **profitable** 100th anniversary conference in Geneva with support from the Geneva and Swiss governments
- Evidence throughout of high regard in which GWI is held by outside agencies: e.g. UNESCO, UNHCR, UNICEF, World Trade Organization, City of Geneva, and more.



Why do some clubs not support GWI?

What they say

- Although CFUW has been a charter member of GWI for 100 years, some now object to the mandatory CFUW membership in GWI
- Some feel their support for GWI is not a significant added value for the funds CFUW contributes to GWI
- Others want to support international work in another way

Yet

- IFUW 2013-2016 board was mandated to spend the reserves and modernize the organization and they did so to good effect
- GWI budgets and financial reports are kept according to Swiss methods and standards which differ in some ways from those used in North America
- through the MOU, CFUW has a close relationship with GWI and can monitor finances

While some do not want to belong to GWI and some want to pay less even than the 21.50 CHF (about \$26) annually we now pay.

- GWI dues are lower than most other INGOs and than CFUW dues
- Costs have risen and GWI supporters think \$26 or even \$35 annually per person per year is good value to help women around the world attain some of the benefits we have



Some believe that CFUW can do international work by itself.

However:

- Large international organizations like the United Nations expect individual organizations to speak only for themselves through their national governments and they look to multi-national INGOs to speak for groups within their member nations
- Canada is only one country with a high standard of living but a relatively small population. We can speak for ourselves but not others
- As women, we are stronger together helping one another to influence women's issues
- As Canadians we have the freedom to say what we want and can be a voice for others who do not enjoy that freedom



Some believe we should focus only on other international women's organizations perhaps multiple organizations.

However:

- GWI is the one INGO whose mandate completely aligns with our own and in recent years has successfully raised its profile on the issues we care about, especially tertiary education for women
- GWI is well respected at the UN and is allied with other international women's organizations

Some want to spend the money locally rather than for an international organization.

But:

- CFUW's mandate includes acting internationally to help women and promote peace



What Does GWI Do?

WE ARE GWI

Advocacy
Programs
Connections
Fellowships
Publications



Advocacy

Aims of GWI in the International World

Education underpins effective change

- **GWI advocates to provide a global voice for women graduates**
 - works for the adoption and implementation of international agreements that protect and benefit girls and women
- **GWI encourages graduate women to use their expertise for change**
- **GWI has volunteer reps at UN and its agencies in Geneva, New York, Paris and Vienna**
 - who attend UN meetings in those cities; make presentations; write reports
 - are in place all year to attend all meetings and network
- **GWI participates in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**
 - several apply to women and education



UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030

sdgs.un.org





UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030

GWI Focus on SDG 4

Sustainable Development Goal 4

1. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
2. Universal agenda applicable to all countries
3. Specific targets for secondary, tertiary and continuing education
4. Elimination of gender disparities

Example of a specific target:

Target 4.1 by 2030

- Ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes



Advocacy through GWI

Graduate Women International through Board, Staff and Volunteers:

- Provides a global voice for women and girls aimed at improving access to education
- Works towards adult literacy, numeracy
- Works toward empowerment of women as leaders and decision-makers
- Works to increase human rights on issues
 - Examples: female genital mutilation, human trafficking, child marriage
- Conducts advocacy training and provides advocacy toolkits
- Advocates on priority issues constantly through social media
- Produces policy position papers for UN agencies
- Participates in the Beijing platform for Action



An Example of a Voice for Others

For Advocacy

Tammy Irwin from CFUW was IFUW Resolutions Chair in 1998

- Uruguay women had no chance for getting action by their government
- BUT with the backing of a powerful women's organization they could approach their own government
- Women at Graz IFUW Triennial in 1998 were working on similar resolutions
- Working together in different languages they included Uruguay women's concerns about violence against women, and the assembly passed the resolution
- IFUW women provided a voice for women of Uruguay



How to Make an Issue GWI Policy

Clubs Contribute to International Advocacy

Process:

- Club takes a resolution to national CFUW Annual General Meeting
- if approved, issue goes to GWI Triennial General Meeting
- Issue can become GWI Policy
- all GWI members can then advocate for it at UN and elsewhere internationally

Example:

- CFUW-Nepean is preparing a resolution on Single Use Plastics,
- includes information about International treaties Canada has signed
 - resolution will go to CFUW clubs this spring, then to next CFUW AGM
 - if approved, will go to next GWI Triennial meeting in 2022

GWI policies have been approved at each Triennial Assembly since 1925

- since 1988 policies have action plans for NFAs to use



Programs

Current Examples

Bina Roy Partners in Development

- partnership – GWI with Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund
- funds small projects in developing countries

University Women Helping Afghan Women (UWHAW) – a CFUW Ottawa initiative.

- Promotes education and awareness about Afghanistan
- raises funds to support girls to attend university

Girls Choices - partnership with Orange network (mobile network in Africa and Europe) to support education for girls in Rwanda

Teachers for Rural Futures (Uganda) - trains women teachers in order to encourage girls to attend school

Olympes de la Parole - speaking competition for high school students about issues relevant to gender and women, and equality of boys and girls. Model developed in France, now run by several affiliates in their countries



Bina Roy Partners in Development

Dr. Bina Roy (India) IFUW President 1971-1974

Dean Virginia Gildersleeve (USA) IFUW President 1924-1926, 1936-1939

GWI works with the VGIF Projects Development Committee

- funds small projects proposed by women to assist women
- Recent projects in India, Mexico, Nepal, Turkey and African countries

Examples:

- A science lab in Ghana
- Gender-based violence awareness training in Sierra Leone
- Oral health training in Mexico
- Creative writing for gender equality in South Africa
- Women's human rights and how to exercise them in Mexico



University Women Helping Afghan Women

GWJ Offers a Forum for NFA Programs to be Acted upon and Expanded:

UWHAW: A CFUW-Ottawa initiative aims:

- To inspire women to learn about the situation of women and girls in Afghanistan
- To raise awareness of such locally, nationally and internationally and
- To support them to achieve an education by raising funds for girls scholarships at Gawharshad University in Kabul

Local: This program was developed in a local CFUW club

Expansion: National

- Interest in the topic expanded nationally and resulted in the formation of the CFUW Afghanistan National Study Group

Expansion: International

- GWI offered the opportunity for this topic to be shared and discussed at Triennials through NFA seminars and workshops in Istanbul and Cape Town
NFAs went home and developed programs in their own countries ie. Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand
- GWI NFA-to-NFA Partnership
CFUW is working with GWI-NL on a joint project on the significance of the Afghanistan peace negotiations for women
- NFA to World Network of GWI NFAs
Through GWI, CFUW and GWI-NL will take this issue to NFAs around the world in a world-wide webinar in April, 2021

Replication and Improvisation: The process of learning about an issue, raising awareness about it, and providing support can be replicated by other GWI members for a different but significant issue anywhere in the world.



Girls Choices

GWI and ORANGE PARTNERSHIP

Aim

- to assist girls to complete school and enter tertiary education or workforce before marriage

First project

- Rwanda: high school girls have mobile phones
- Girls receive education on their phones

Orange

- mobile internet network provider, active in Africa and Europe
- provides the mobile network

GWI

- provides education content



Graduate Women
International (GWI)

A PROUD MEMBER OF GWI

Connections

MEMBERS ONLY

Women can connect with each other to work together for a stronger voice

- making use of communications technology or In-person when possible
- Webinar series – provided by members
- GWI Discussions Group by email

GWJ Membership Marketplace

- NFA-to-NFA projects (national association to national association)
- Example: CFUW & GWI-NL: *Perilous Significance of the Peace Process for Afghan Women*
- Peer to Peer projects –open to individuals – described on GWI website
- Example: *Spanish language lessons: Bolivia*



GWI Members are All Over the World

We are 15000 Women in 75 Countries





Fellowships

And Awards

Hegg Hoffet Fund - as noted previously

- Began in 1936
- Assistance for women graduates displaced as a result of war or political upheavals, natural disasters, or other serious emergencies

GWI Fellowships and Grants – awarded each Triennium

- 3 fellowships for research by women graduates
- 5 awards



Publications

GWI Produces:

- Toolkits on advocacy issues for use by clubs or individuals
- Reports and Policy papers - members only
- Press Releases
- Brochures
- Manifestos about education
- Newsletter - “Update” biweekly.
 - you can sign up for delivery to your email



CFUW is Part of GWI

CFUW Goals Align with those of GWI

As part of GWI

- we focus on the education of women around the world
- primary education is not enough
- issues that keep women from education are part of mandate

GWJ Women

- volunteer as advocates at all the UN agencies
- conduct projects on the ground to assist women
- offers grants, fellowships, for need or where education is disrupted
- with staff publish toolkits – e.g. how to advocate
- are connected to members around the world



You are Part of GWI

Through your CFUW membership

- **You can stay in touch** with International issues about women
 - receive the **GWI “Update”** to your email
 - access the GWI members corner of the website
 - Join the GWI Discussion Forum
 - participate in GWI webinars
- **You can take your passion international**
 - through policy development
 - through peer to peer connection
- GWI website: **graduatewomen.org**