



Graduate Women International
Empowering women & girls through lifelong education

GW I 201

A Brief Look at
Programmes (Projects) and Advocacy

GW I website: Graduatewomen.org

Prepared by CFUW-Ottawa March 8, 2021



What is GWI

Graduate Women International: 15000 members in 75 countries

Where We Work



National Federations or Associations (NFAs) in 52 countries

Independent members in 23 more countries

Women we can work with on projects and advocacy

Part of Civil Society



GWI is Unique Among INGOs

Two things that distinguish GWI

- **GWI focuses on education** - especially tertiary education for girls and women
 - GWI is concerned about **BARRIERS** to education
 - Other INGOs concerned with education focus on primary education
- **In GWI, advocacy of an issue can move from Local concern to International**
 - Members can bring forward issues, make them a local concern
 - Issue can then go to National and to International - UN and other forums
 - We believe this is unique to GWI



Projects and Advocacy in GWI

All Project are Advocacy

Advocacy: an activity that aims to influence decisions

- Within political, economic and social institutions of society
- Includes **communicating, raising awareness**
- Goals to promote actions and change in institutions, and
 - Change ideas in relevant audiences over time

Projects are one form of advocacy

- Realistic, visual, boots on the ground



History

IFUW from 1919, the beginning of the Women's Movement

- 1935 Assistance for women graduates in trouble, war, political upheaval, disasters
 - Became the Hegg Hoffett fund for Displaced Women Graduates - still at work
- 1939-1946 Wartime management out of UK and US
 - Women courageously crossed the treacherous Atlantic to keep the organization alive.
- 1946 Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) started
 - IFUW and GWI active in annual meetings of CSW
- 1947-48 IFUW obtained Special Consultative Status with
 - United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
- 1995 Beijing Platform for Action - Women's rights -
 - IFUW worked on The Girl Child, one of 12 areas of concern in Beijing Platform
 - 1990 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by 196 countries, But not the US



The Story of Poland

Cut off during WW2

1939 Elected President: Lektor S. Adamowicz of Poland

- within a month of the conference, she was out of touch,
- living in Nazi-occupied Poland, hungry but coping, some food parcels reached her
- After the war, board member brought her to Stockholm to recover
- 1947 she went back for her country - she believed in freedom

Behind the Iron Curtain, Polish women were not allowed to organize

- 1990s, after the fall of the Soviet Union
 - Polish women had been IFUW members 50 years before
- Young President of the new Polish federation appeared at Geneva office of IFUW
- Brought a cake with candles, tears pouring down her face, to celebrate that they could organize





Projects: Girls Choices

Action with Advocacy

- Education on How to Overcome Barriers to Education
 - girls explore possibilities to overcome barriers
 - early marriage, teenage pregnancy, gender stereotypes, cultural prejudice,
 - responsibility for domestic duties and caregiving
- GWI partnership with Orange Device Group
 - Orange provides network, content by GWI
 - teenage girls in Rwanda, immediate, easy access to material - smart phone and mobile signal
 - inspired to complete school, transition to tertiary education or professional work
- Applicable to other countries, now in Kenya and Uganda
 - In Africa and South Asia, boys remain 1.55 times as likely to complete secondary school as girls.



Teachers for Rural Futures

Women teachers in Rural Uganda



January 2020, the first five graduates

- Many girls in Uganda not in school
- Lack of women teachers in rural Uganda
- Become qualified secondary school teachers and
 - Advocates:
 - Ambassadors for girls education
 - Role models for young women
- Now sponsoring 4 new young women
 - Funded by City of Geneva and donations from us



UN Sustainable Development Goals for 2030

sdgs.un.org





University Women Helping Afghan Women

GWI a Forum for NFA Projects to be Expanded

LOCAL: UWHAW: A CFUW-Ottawa initiative aims:

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

NATIONAL Expansion:

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

INTERNATIONAL Expansion

- At GWI Triennials - shared and discussed through NFA seminars and workshops in Istanbul and Cape Town
Other NFAs 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 24, 2021

REPLICATION and improvisation:

Any different but significant issue can use the same process:

- learning about an issue, raising awareness about it, providing support
- replicate by other GWI members anywhere in the world



GWI WEBINAR: CFUW & GWI-NL



Saturday, April 24, 10:00 am – 11:30



Afghanistan Peace Negotiations: Their Perilous Significance for Women in Afghanistan



Dr. Sima Samar
Physician & Human Rights Activist
Founder of
Afghanistan Independent Human Rights
Commission



Dr. Habibi Sarabi
1 of 4 Women
On the 42 Member
Negotiating Team in Doha



Mary Akrami
Executive Director of
Afghan Women Network &
Member of Afghanistan's High Peace
Council