

# THE COUNTRYWOMAN

INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATED COUNTRY WOMEN OF THE WORLD

ISSUE 1 - 2020



## A Royal Craft Showcase

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Introducing ACWW's New Website

ACWW Marks the 16 Days of Activism

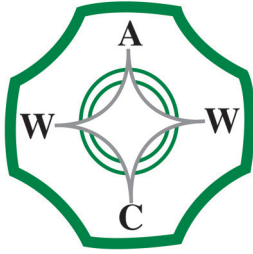


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## The Countrywoman Issue 1 - 2020

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The Countrywoman is the official quarterly magazine of ACWW, and was named by Mrs Alfred Watt MBE, the First President of ACWW in 1933.

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Please note that we welcome submissions for *The Countrywoman*, particularly from first time contributors or those in areas not recently featured. Due to ACWW's strategic advocacy policy, articles may be printed in the most appropriate issue, not necessarily the most immediate. We welcome contributions throughout the year.

The Editor's decision on acceptance and inclusion is final.

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### COVER IMAGE

Her Majesty Queen Azizah of Malaysia, Past World President May Kidd, and Her Majesty's Sister-in-Law HRH Princess Muhaini singing during the recent official State Visit visit to ACWW Central Office

### MEMBERSHIP

As you are aware, all Society and Individual Memberships are due in January. Please ensure that you are fully paid-up in good time, and why not consider renewing now? Just contact Central Office!

## MAKING YOUR MAGAZINE SUSTAINABLE

We deliver *The Countrywoman* in an envelope rather than a plastic wrapper. This is because we use Forest Stewardship Council approved sustainable paper for both the magazine and its packaging. For every tree used in the production of this issue, three are planted in its place. This is part of ACWW's commitment to a healthier planet, and Sustainable Development Goal 12.



# MY DEAR FRIENDS...

## A message from World President Magdie de Kock



This year, like previous years, brings with it changes and opportunities within ACWW. One aspect is Sydney Salter being appointed as Editor of *The Countrywoman*. I am grateful that she will be able to, among other duties, also apply her talents and creativity in this regard. The theme for this issue is Hope and Action and therefore, I will focus on this subject in this, my first message for 2020.

Focusing on hope is what keeps us going and keeps me wanting to embrace the future of ACWW. Hope is truly vital to the well-being of our communities and also to the well-being of ACWW. Our responsibility as leaders is to help build hope for a better future for Rural Women. This hope is not without action, and it is the actions of the Board and Central Office, but most importantly our members worldwide, that will secure better representation of rural women. By maintaining hope and acting expectantly, ACWW can transform people's lives. Communities can benefit from funded projects and members can use information readily available from our website, from Area Presidents and from Central Office. To assist us in this is, among other things, an Action Pack, created and compiled by the CEO and the Staff and approved by the Board to be distributed to members. Included in this pack are posters and booklets explaining the rights of women that are enshrined in international law. It also contains information on the Sustainable Development Goals and offers educational opportunities to be shared with others. Most critically, it offers 100 practical ways that every member can take positive and meaningful action to effect change.

This year I will once again be offered many opportunities to create engagement for our organisation as I will be representing ACWW on various platforms. I will have the opportunity to improve, enhance and expand our work with the United Nations when I will attend the 64<sup>th</sup> Commission on the Status of Women in New York in March. As we celebrate the seventy-third year of involvement with the UN, we look to further securing the role of ACWW at the negotiating table. This year also

marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and we will reaffirm our commitment to achieving the targets set out in this important document.

On my visit to India later in March, to attend the celebration of the Golden Jubilee of CWA of India as well as the Area Conference of Central and South Asia, I will embrace every opportunity given to me to push the debate forward on promoting the key themes: Girls are the future, Rural Health is Vital, Our Network is Key and supporting the UN Decade of Family Farming. Many other topics which assert our existing commitment to empowering women in rural and non-urban communities will be addressed.

Shaping my vision for a new year within ACWW, I carefully read the past six years' Reports of Work released at two previous Triennial World Conferences. I came to the conclusion that as a Charity our organization is doing well. However, one aspect not to be ignored is the decline in our membership – something that needs to be addressed. Business practises – the way a business is being operated- need to be reinvented constantly. However business principals – those values on which a business, or organisation, has been build, must remain intact. The values of our organisation are timeless and transcendent: they define our organisation and tell us who we are – they are what give us and our organisation integrity. Use these principals to promote ACWW wherever you find yourselves to encourage your friends to become Individual members and to urge non-member societies to apply for membership. No matter how well we are doing, we cannot ever afford to stagnate. We need to look beyond the current economic climate and use innovations in technology to stay relevant, help our communities mitigate and adapt to the ever-changing, ever-evolving landscapes in which we live.

As we enter a new year, filled with expectations, the secret is to have hope, to cultivate hope, to spread hope, to teach hope and to embrace hope – like our founders did many decades ago. While hopelessness often paralyses us,

makes us complacent, causes us to give up, hopefulness does the opposite- it's the drive that encourages us to reach our goals and aspirations.

As we look forward to the future and all the opportunities it holds, I often find myself thinking back to the 29<sup>th</sup> Triennial World Conference. This lovely photo, taken by former staff member Viktoria Dimitrova, featuring former committee member Hazel Armstrong, and current committee members Sr Viji and Edwina Marr reminds me that each step forward is taken on the sure foundation of our roots. Rural Women have been acting together through ACWW for 90 years. May the next 90 years bring about the full realisation of that which those who have gone before us strived to achieve.



The Board and I are pleased and proud to be moving forward with all of you, celebrating and championing Rural Women in Action.

All the best

*Magdie*

Magdie de Kock  
ACWW World President

# CENTRAL OFFICE NEWS

## Tish Collins, Chief Executive Officer

On 12 December 2019, Central Office were overjoyed to receive an official state visit by Her Majesty Queen Azizah of Malaysia – the day before she was entertained for lunch at Buckingham Palace. The photographs on page 8 will show you that our premises converted very well into a craft exhibition and reception for the 60 guests we welcomed that day. Core supporters from the Women's Institutes of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland were invited to join us for afternoon tea and meet the Queen. They brought with them some of the finest examples of craft works from around the UK. The Queen, a skilled craftswoman herself, was delighted to meet friends old and new and examine the exquisite handicrafts on display.

Her Majesty was accompanied by her two daughters Princesses Apsan and Jihan, her daughter-in-law Princess Suriya (who was part of the ACWW delegation to the UNESCO Youth Forum in Saudi Arabia three years ago) and sister-in-law Princess Muhaini. Members of the Malaysian High Commission and staff also mingled with ACWW members and a jolly good time was had by all! Deputy World President Alison Burnett gave a welcoming address on behalf of World President Madgie de Kock who was in South Africa. Past President May Kidd was persuaded to play the mouthorgan and lead everyone in a spirited rendition of *Jingle Bells* before playing *Auld Lang Syne* as our guests left. For those of you who use Facebook, you may be interested to know that some 4,848 people have looked at the video clip of *Jingle Bells* posted by ACWW.

As I write, we are just into the second week of the year 2020. The last couple of months have been tumultuous for many of our members and messages of good will, sympathy, and hope for the future have been criss-crossing the globe. Rural women are particularly affected by weather conditions, and changing patterns of climate require adaptation at all levels, from the grassroots to national and international policy. Our members are keeping us in touch with their actions. Through our social media posts, our website and this magazine we are sharing what is being done on a global scale through ACWW advocacy.

I am pleased to say that our two new members of staff have settled in and are fully embedded as part of the Central Office team. Sue Williams, Finance Administrator, has been overhauling some of our procedures with the Treasurer and myself



and we will be taking on a new accounts package to integrate with our database over the next few months to aid efficiency. Jenny Sellers, Projects Administrator, is working through the first stages of assessing non-member applications for project funding and preparing the agenda for the March meeting with Projects Chairman Mabel Moyo. Jenny and Sydney Salter (the new Editor of this magazine) are also preparing the Projects Newsletter which is due in the first quarter of the year and will carry reports of completed projects, some interim reports, and how they relate to ACWW's advocacy work as well.

Having 1<sup>st</sup> January as the renewal date for membership subscriptions meant that Jessica, our Office Administrator, came back from the holiday to a bumper inbox to process. I can assure you this is a delight (not a complaint!) and Jessica will be steadily working her way through the administration, so please understand if your receipt or membership card takes some time to get to you. Thank you all who have paid online this year, that really is a great help and you are in the majority. Nick Newland, our Policy and Communications Manager, has preparations in hand for ACWW's attendance at the annual UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW64) in March. In addition to the World President, UN Chairman and two key staff there will be 10 self-financing members of Committees making up the ACWW delegation. International Women's Day falls on Sunday 8 March and we are planning an event which will be reported in the next issue of *The Countrywoman*. The major theme this year is Beijing +25 – a review of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

May I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year, and I look forward to writing with an update in the next issue.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

I'm delighted to be writing to you for the first time in this new role of Editor. I have corresponded with many, if not most of you, in my previous capacity as Office Administrator- I'm sure you're all familiar with my regular email reply "Please bear with me!" as I took on more work improving our social media presence and working with Nick to produce the awareness-raising materials that I hope you're all finding useful. I'm grateful to Tish for recognising that I'd be more useful in a role that primarily looks at engaging with all the ACWW members through every avenue available to us. ACWW's digital presence and international influence has grown tremendously over the last 5 years, and it is vital that we ensure that the voices of our members are being heard, and that you are kept up to date with the actions of the Board, Central Office, and your sister organisations all over the world. We also want to ensure that you are aware of legislation and international developments that impact rural communities. That is my job, and part of that is compiling and editing this great publication. It is an honour and a responsibility that I do not take lightly.

For those of you who don't know me, or don't remember my introduction over 3 years ago, I'm Sydney. I'm from a rural-ish community in Georgia USA and have lived in London for 6 years. I love this city, but I feel most at home in the mountains. I love sailing, reading, cycling, and my cat, Captain Flint. I have tattoos and terrible fashion sense, and I always take pictures of my food even when it's not very pretty. I love to cook and I manage a dinner club for international women in London, which is mostly an excuse for dinner parties and eating far too much cheese. That's me, and I'm looking forward to getting to know more of you as we all work together to ensure that the voices of rural women are heard. You can reach me on [media@acww.org.uk](mailto:media@acww.org.uk)





# FINANCE & MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Ruth Cargill, Treasurer and Finance & Membership Committee Chairman

The worst part about being a Treasurer is feeling like you are always asking people to give more money. It does help when you practice what you preach though. I thought I'd set an example by sharing some things I have done recently and some of my plans for this year.

I renewed my membership just before Christmas, I knew I had to do it at the end of the year. The reminder email from the office helped but I did keep putting it off. I renewed it online, and it took less than 5 minutes! I only needed my credit/debit card. If you haven't renewed yet, why don't you do it now? I know you still got this edition of the magazine but you may not receive the next one if you don't.

In the last issue I encouraged members who renewed for 3 years to make a donation of the difference between the annual and 3 year fee. So I thought I better take my own advice and do this too. It was so easy to make a donation to Pennies for Friendship on the new website. Here is how to do it:

1. Go to the ACWW website.
2. Click on the green Donate to Support ACWW button
3. Enter your name, the amount you want to pay in £ and an email address (there is also a space for notes to say how it was raised or if it is from a branch or in memory of someone)
4. Tick the "I'm not a robot" box (thankfully no annoying pictures with traffic lights!)
5. Click the Submit button
6. On the next page enter the details of the credit or debit card you wish to pay with (it accepts Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Maestro, Visa Electron or Vpay) and an email address for the receipt.
7. Click submit.

I received an email receipt almost immediately to my email address. It was that simple.

Since I'm in Australia I used a currency converter to work out an estimate of the amount I wanted to pay in \$AUD to be converted into £GBP. The card I used has a small (2.9%) conversion charge, but this is no different to when I use my card in the UK or make purchases through other online sites, and much cheaper than bank transfer.

I don't usually make new year's resolutions and I'm not a goal setter but I have written myself a "to do" list for this year to help me raise awareness of, and raise funds for ACWW. So I thought I'd share my list



with you – nothing like making your self accountable to the whole world to make sure you do something!

**Make a list of women I could encourage to become individual members of ACWW, and then ask them**

- My sister & nieces
- Friends who have shown an interest in ACWW but aren't members
- Members of my own CWA branch who aren't individual ACWW members

**Make note of "days" I want to use to help promote ACWW in my workplace (a school) and community (check the day of the week they fall on – is it a work day or not?) and start planning what I might do for the first couple at least:**

- Tuesday 11 February – International Day of Women and Girls in Science. Talk to the Head Science teacher at school about how we might do something to promote girls in science
- Saturday 8 March – International Women's Day BBQ / Afternoon Tea with a theme
- Wednesday 29 April – ACWW Day
- Thursday 15 October – International Day of Rural Women
- Tuesday 20 October – World Statistics Day
- Start planning a local Women Walk the World event (school?) – raise funds for Pennies for Friendship
- Run a WE Fund fundraising event
- Donate the same amount as I pay in water rates to the WE Fund Sustainable Water pot
- Need to think of some more ideas

That's my list. What's on yours?

## Memberships

Don't forget that all membership renewals are due in January, and that members who have not paid by 31 March will be lapsed. Please also remember that there are new membership rates.

To pay online, simply visit our website and follow the 'Support Us' link. These rates are shown below:

Category 1 Societies	£110
Category 2 Societies	£69
Category 3 Societies	£55
Category 4 Societies	£37
Category 5 Individual	£26 (£68/3 yrs)

## MEMBERSHIP PAYMENTS USING BANK TRANSFER

Account:  
Associated Country Women of the World

Account Number:  
01244108

Sort Code:  
56-00-33

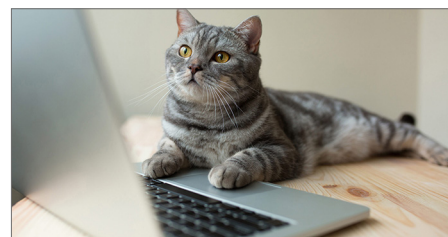
Bank:  
NatWest Bank, 57 Victoria Street, London  
United Kingdom, SW1H 0HP

Branch:  
Westminster

Swift Code:  
NWB KGB 2L

IBAN:  
GB67NWBK56003301244108

If you are sending a bank transfer, please use your name or membership number as a reference. Please don't send cash in the post!



**Membership Kitty says:  
Don't forget you can  
pay online! Visit  
[www.acww.org.uk](http://www.acww.org.uk)**

# Area Focus - Canada

Area President Linda Hoy



Here in Canada we believe that if it wasn't for one of "ours", Margaret Rose Robertson Watt (Madge Watt), the Associated Country Women of the World would not have become an International Organization that has provided opportunities for rural women to articulate their views and find commonality across many countries. In 1909, Madge Watt helped to establish the first Women's Institute in British Columbia. She brought rural women together to learn agricultural and domestic skills and to promote civic reform. She was a member of the Metchosin WI.

After the sudden death of her husband, she moved to Britain in 1913 with her two sons to complete their education. When World War I broke out, many men left their jobs to join the army and navy, so farm and village women had to do the work they had left behind. Madge realised that a concerted, effective agricultural effort was needed in the country and set about spreading the concepts of Women's Institutes that were in Canada.

In 1929, Madge, along with the International Council of Women's president, Lady Aberdeen and general secretary, Elsie Zimmern, organised the first international conference of rural women which was held in London, England.

Following this, in 1933, representatives of 28 agriculture-related women's groups met in Stockholm, Sweden, to consolidate work done at previous meetings. They agreed on the official name for their new world-wide organisation for rural women and also agreed on methods of financing to assure their future independence. Madge Watt became its first President and remained in that position until she retired in 1947. Madge Watt lived in Victoria, British Columbia, during World War II and then lived with son Sholto in Montreal, where she died aged eighty on November 30, 1948. A plain marker was placed on her grave in Mont Royal Cemetery. The Federated Women's Institutes of Canada has since replaced this marker with a stone bearing the ACWW logo and a commemorative message.

As an Executive Officer of the Quebec Women's Institutes, I attended the unveiling of the stone on June 25<sup>th</sup>, 1997. To be present with Lyndsey Hackett-Pain, Hilda

Stewart, Peggy Knapp, Margaret Munro, Sheila Needham, Mildred Keith and other FWIC and ACWW members that day was the national and international link that I needed to connect me to sisters around the world.

That is when and where my interest in ACWW began. My first ACWW World Conference was in Hobart, Tasmania in 2004. I was there representing my society, The Quebec Women's Institutes as a delegate. There was so much to learn about the Associated Country Women of the World that I was overwhelmed. I loved meeting so many beautiful women from around the world and hearing their stories.

Once you return home from a Triennial World Conference, you are enthusiastic about the work of ACWW but may soon come to realise that others at home are not as enthusiastic. Maybe they have not attended an Area or World Conference or are just too preoccupied. However, they support the work of ACWW through Pennies for Friendship and Projects. Sometimes, I'm asked why we write letters of support for resolutions brought forward and passed at world conferences when the issue is not pertinent to us here in Canada. My answer has been and will continue to be, "To support my sisters who are still living without so much that we take for granted."

I have been volunteering with the Women's Institute for 35 years. My mother has been a member for over 55 years. She and my two grown children have supported my involvement with the WI. I can count on them to watch the house and my dog while I travel to places unknown to them but which hold many fond memories of conventions and conferences where I met so many wonderful women. My hobbies include tending my flower gardens and photography.

I have always believed that one must be involved in order to promote anything you belong to. That is why I took on positions at the local, provincial and national levels as committee chairs and President at all levels. I wasn't thinking about putting my name forward for Canada Area President until possibly the next triennium because I had just completed eighteen years on the board of the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada. There was a little nudging from

my friend and travelling partner Sheila Needham and so my nomination was submitted. And here I am – Canada Area President. I now carry the passion of the Associated Country Women of the World within me and I am ready to tell anyone who will listen about this international organisation of Rural Women in Action.

As Canada Area President, first I want to raise the awareness of the Associated Country Women of the World not only in our Societies but also with organisations that have the same focus and commitment that we have. Communication is at the forefront of raising awareness and through social media we can share news coming from Central Office. I promote the use of the website for first-hand information on many topics, both old and new. Writing and distributing a Canada Area Newsletter four times a year to all individual members as well as the seventeen societies that make up the Area is also a vital part of communication. The largest society in Canada is Les Cercles des Fermieres with 30,000 members who are French-speaking. My goal is to work with Central Office and a translator to have some key publications available not only for our Quebec Francophones but other areas around the world who speak French.

The British Columbia Women's Institute are the hosts for the Canada Area Conference taking place in Sidney, BC from June 13-15, 2020 following the BCWI Convention June 10-13. This is a beautiful part of Canada and we are pleased to welcome World President, Magdie de Kock and Committee Chairmen, Marie Kenny, Sheila Needham and Christine Reaburn as honoured guests. At the Area Conference, I will be challenging our membership to become individual members and for Districts to become society members.

I look forward to the next three years working with and learning from Central Office staff and the Area Presidents and Committee Chairs.



# Communications and Marketing Committee

## C&M Committee Chairman Sheila Needham

Part of my vision for the Communications and Marketing Committee is to reach into the grassroots of our amazing Association. We want to hear from you, the members on whose labour and legacy ACWW is built. The members of the Committee have committed to interviewing individuals to find out about their experience of ACWW. Below, you can read more from committee member Agatha Bianca Bogdan, interviewing Georgeta Havrilet.

*I know that you are part of an ACWW member society, but you are also an individual member. Why did you become an individual member?*

The association which I am a part of, The Woman of The Third Millennium, was set up in December 2002 by Afrodita Roman, the current ACWW Europe Area President. She started by gathering her group of friends who wanted to improve the lives of the women- mothers, children and their families- starting with the motto of our association: "If you educate a man, you educate a person; If you educate a woman, you educate the world".

We have all worked hard for our association to become a part of ACWW. We have made so much effort to show our ACWW sisters that our dreams of what we wanted to achieve for women in our country could be accomplished. At every step, we made sacrifices to help our organisation grow, but we knew from the very beginning that our sacrifices would be rewarded through recognition as a group and as individuals.

After becoming members of ACWW, we met people who are now very involved in our development as an association, in helping programmes continue to grow and contributing to projects which ACWW funded.

I was inspired by Mrs May Kidd who I'm sure everyone knows and appreciates. It is not very often in life you get the privilege of meeting such a strong, sensitive, warm and generous person, who cares about everyone. May Kidd is my role model in everything I have done since meeting her.

In order to find my own spot among the people for whom ACWW had become a way of life, to become more and better informed and contribute to the work financially through my membership fee, I decided to join ACWW as an individual member in April 2013. During the last 6 years as a member I have participated in European and World Conferences; I have gathered knowledge and experience; I have made lots of friends.

Having the opportunity to be a member of this wonderful association - ACWW - I wanted to show my gratitude somehow. I got involved more actively and started searching for new potential members. Through this process, I set up four of the five branches of "Woman of The Third Millennium" in Romania.

*In the 6 years you have been an ACWW member, what has been the most remarkable experience so far?*

Because you asked me about a remarkable experience, I remember what happened in September 2017 when we, "Woman of The Third Millennium", together with Margaret McMillan, the former Europe Area President and, supported by Ruth Shanks, the World President of ACWW at the time, organized a unique, unforgettable European Area Conference, something to remember. Margaret McMillan was a strong, lively woman who always supported and encouraged us to show who we are and how to live up to our potential. I can't forget the amazement in the eyes of the participating members, when that day, during a short trip we visited a small church in Transylvania (Sangeorgiu de Padure) where Countess Claudia Rhedey, the grandmother of Queen Mary and great-grandmother of Queen Elizabeth of England is buried. These are our common roots.

*Has being a member of the ACWW changed your thinking in any way?*

There is no doubt that everything I have done for the Association comes from my wish for helping the ones in need. But ACWW showed me how I can do better: You help someone not by giving them bread, but by showing them how to make bread; not by cutting their bread for them, but by teaching them how to cut it by themselves. This is what I have learned from ACWW.

*Thank you for the interview. Lastly, what message would you like to send to the Countrywoman Magazine readers?*

It is very simple: As Albert Einstein said "Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value."

I trust you enjoyed that interesting interview. If you would like to be interviewed yourself, please contact me at [cmchair@acww.org.uk](mailto:cmchair@acww.org.uk).





# A ROYAL SHOWCASE

## Her Majesty Queen Azizah visits ACWW for a craft showcase

On 11<sup>th</sup> December 2019, ACWW Central Office was transformed. Her Majesty Queen Azizah of Malaysia, a keen craftswoman herself, wanted to see a showcase of crafts made by ACWW supporters in and around the United Kingdom. The Queen has been involved with ACWW for many years, serving on the Board of Trustees as an Area President and supporting the work personally.



Knowing the talent of the membership, we were eager to show off. Quick calls to ACWW representatives all over the region soon turned into special deliveries. It was like Christmas at the office, with each new box containing hand-crafted treasures from yet another friend of ACWW.

The day began with the staff arriving early to transform the office from a hub of computers and meeting space to a showcase fit for a Queen. Computers were hidden away, fitted tablecloths, hand-sewn by the staff, were laid out, and crafts were arranged so that each one was visible. Fruitcake, upside down pear sponge, Victoria sponge, gingerbread, Amish friendship bread, and tiffin turned the boardroom into a feast of homemade treats, and mulled fruit juice insured that no one stayed cold after their arrival.

Attendees began arriving mid-morning, bringing with them the crafts that were too fragile or too valuable to be sent in advance by post. It was at this point that we began to worry that we might run out of space - the quilts alone took up the entire centre display!



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The Queen arrived in the afternoon with an entourage of four princesses, including her sister-in-law who was particularly delighted with the knitted items she found. She also had her Aide de Camp in tow, and a whole host of her Ladies in Waiting, security guards, and drivers.

The Queen greeted each attendee, including the Presidents of the Scottish Women's Institutes and the National Federation of Women's Institutes of Northern Ireland, and the ACWW Deputy President, who brought greetings on behalf of the World President and the Board. There were also representatives from Women's Institutes all over the UK, some who have been faithful ACWW friends for many years, and some who have only recently begun to champion the work of ACWW in their areas.



As the procession began their journey around the room, each representative was able to show craft items to the Queen, sharing stories and inspiration along the way. As the day progressed, conversations shifted to the ongoing work of ACWW and feelings of expectation for the future. Surrounded by the legacies of craftswomen from all over the region, there was a real sense of being able to think about the future knowing that we rest on a solid



foundation built by dedicated members over the last 90 years. Indeed, one representative managed to bring items from her Federation archive, and it was inspiring to see how legacies live on in the creativity and ingenuity of these rural women.



Those who knew the Queen before her coronation in July this year remarked that there is a noticeable difference the size of her security detail, but the Queen herself is the same lively, kind woman known to ACWW for many years. In fact, as soon as the opportunity arose, she turned to former ACWW World President May Kidd and requested a tune. May, who is known for always having a harmonica with her "just in case", gave the key and the whole room broke out into a chorus of *Jingle Bells!* This is the scene you see on the front cover of this issue.



We want to take this opportunity to thank everyone who sent in craft, the Representatives who took the time to collect items from all over their areas, and everyone who came to greet the Queen on her first state visit to the UK. The spirit of friendship, appreciation, and respect that is always evident in ACWW gatherings was present in this event too. Having no more than a month's warning, ACWW members pulled together to put on an event that was truly inspiring and memorable.







# WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU

## Agriculture Committee

### Deputy World President Alison Burnett tells us what the Committee is up to

The Agriculture Committee became part of the ACWW system in 2001, after functioning for 6 years as the Ad Hoc Committee on Agriculture. The Ad Hoc Committee and resultant Specified Committee were tasked with studying ways and means for empowering rural women worldwide to achieve balanced participation in agricultural decision-making. The members of the committee this triennium are Donna Jebb, from Canada, Donna Miller from Jamaica, Gail Bradley and Liz Neale from the UK, and Stephanie Jerabek from the USA.

I'm honoured to have been entrusted with the responsibility of Chairman for this Committee. While my background in agriculture is limited, my experience in ACWW spans many years. If I have learned anything in these many years, it's that the ACWW members hold the key for addressing inequalities in rural, agricultural areas. The members have the experience, and the members have the solutions.

This Triennium, the Agriculture Committee has committed itself to learning from the membership and ensuring that, in partnership with the United Nations Committee and the Communications and Marketing Committee, the voices of agricultural women are heard.

Our focus is being shaped by the UN Decade of Family Farming. This 10-year initiative is looking at Family Farming as the primary way to address global hunger and achieve SDG 2: Zero Hunger for every person everywhere. We think that this goal should be addressed by and for rural women. Rural Girls are the future, and

rural communities must be preserved for the sake of food systems and food security. We have begun to evaluate the state of women in agriculture in the areas in which we, the committee members, reside and will spread this study as the Triennium progresses.

However, if we don't hear from our membership, none of their research or effort will matter. Are you an agricultural woman? Do you live in an agricultural community? We want to hear from you. We want to know, primarily, 3 things:

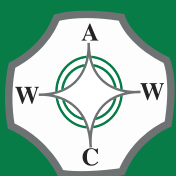


**1. How has your life as an agricultural person or member of an agricultural community changed over the last 20 years? ie. Has your quality of life improved, do you have better or worse access to supplies, support, etc.?**

**2. Do you feel the impacts of climate change personally and/or in your community? How so?**

**3. Do you and/or your community have adequate support from your local and national government? How could this be improved?**

If you want to chat with me about these questions, please feel free to email me at [deputyresident@acww.org.uk](mailto:deputyresident@acww.org.uk). If you want these questions in a survey format to take to a local meeting, please contact Sydney at the Office at [media@acww.org.uk](mailto:media@acww.org.uk)



## RURAL WOMEN IN ACTION

# 2020 Strategic Communications Plan

When considering how we communicate the ACWW message centrally, we have to take into account a whole host of factors. Primarily, our goal is to communicate ACWW's purpose and resolutions as far and widely as possible. When planning what and when to post on the Facebook page, in the magazine, and in newsletters, we take into account factors like ACWW conferences and meetings, input from members, UN observances, committee priorities, and Board direction. We then have to think about campaigns from partner organisations, and how our

communications fit into the overall voice from the charity sector. How do we stand out, without being so different that we become irrelevant?

Taking all these factors into account, this is an overview of the Strategic Communications plan that has been set out for 2020. Please keep these in mind as you plan your events, and if your society is doing an activity or campaign that falls under these areas of focus, please let us know in advance. This will allow us to include your activities in The

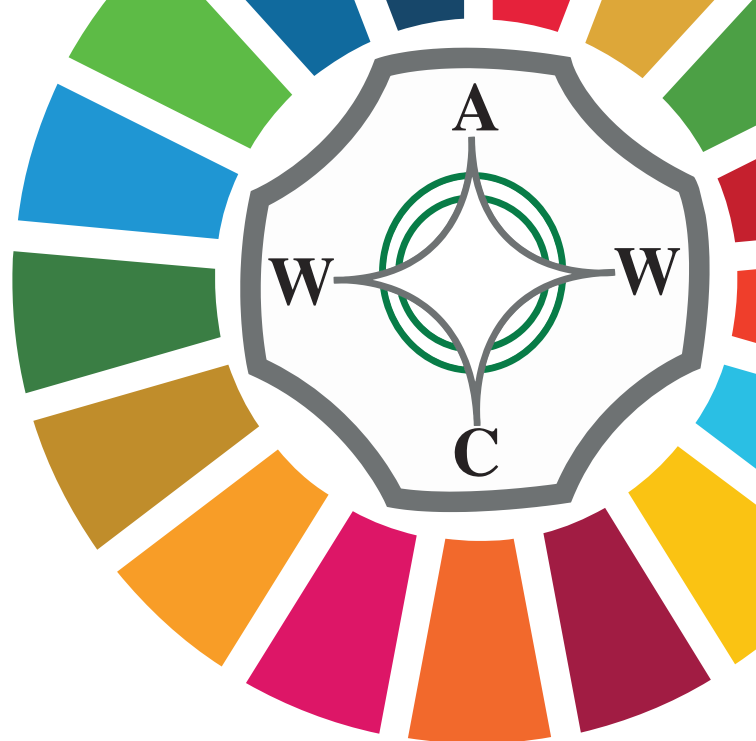
Countrywoman magazine and on social media, and also enable us to accurately report the collective activity of ACWW members. If there is an area that you are particularly interested in and would like resources in advance, please let us know.

Please note that this is a guide only, and is subject to change depending on current events and developments.

January:	The Strength of the ACWW Network
February:	Nutrition and the UN Decade of Family Farming
March:	Women's Rights, Representation, and Participation
April:	Rural Health
May:	Democracy of ACWW and Conferences
1-18 June:	Environment
19 June - 3 July:	Sexual Violence in Conflict and Refugees
4 July - 31 July:	Civil Society Representation
August:	Girls are the Future
September:	Rural Health and Rabies
October:	Statistical Representation
1 - 21 November:	Sustainable Development
22 November - 10 December:	Orange the World



# DO YOU WANT TO BE A RURAL WOMAN IN ACTION?



ACWW is the sum of its members. Without you, ACWW would not be what it is, and would not be able to have the impact that it is having. It is our membership, our grassroots focus, that makes ACWW unique. It is also our membership that holds the power to make real, sustainable change. Rural women are the backbone of families, of communities, of nations. Holding this unique place in society means that rural women are uniquely able to raise awareness and educate. It is with this in mind that we developed the Rural Women in Action pack. You can see a sneak preview in the image below.

Contact Central Office to get your pack and start making real change in your community.





# Projects Update

## Reports from three ACWW-funded projects

### Final Report for Project 1044

### Improved Access to Water in Villupuram District, Tamil Nadu

### India – Society for Women Education and Economic Thrust (SWEET)



This project has provided safe drinking water to the Irula Tribal peoples across four villages in the Villupuram district of Tamil Nadu. The Irula Tribal peoples are considered to be one of the lowest castes in India. This means they are under-represented in local governance, have limited access to employment and resources and are prohibited from accessing public drinking facilities. A lack of access to safe water sources means they must travel to open water sources which are often far away and contaminated, causing illness and risking the safety of the women and girls who disproportionately suffer the burden of fetching the water. The project has helped 2,400 women and 1,925 children living in the Mailam and Vanur blocks of Villupuram district providing water not only to the Irula tribal people but also those from the Aadhiyan tribal community and Dalit families.

the health of the local community greatly and transform the lives of women and girls who no longer have to travel long distances to dirty and contaminated water sources. The WASH awareness camps trained community members on good sanitation and hygiene practices to ensure that the borewell is used to its full advantage to improve the health and wellbeing of the communities.



*The first drops from a new borewell*

SWEET has built four borewells to provide the communities with access to clean and safe drinking water. In their final report, SWEET stated that the following achievements have been made over the duration of the project implementation period:

- Water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) awareness camps were conducted
- Provision of borewells fitted with hand pumps
- Provision of training in maintenance and minor repairs for the local community
- Handing over of the hand pump to the local government for future maintenance and major repairs. It is hoped that closer collaboration with the local government will improve future representation.



*Training in borewell maintenance*



Members of the beneficiary communities have been trained in the maintenance of the borewells and hand-pumps, a vital aspect of the project to ensure the longevity of the new water source. Further support from the local government in the maintenance and major repairs of the borewell secures the sustainability of the project for future generations.



*Quality control at the borewell in Siruvai Village*



Access to safe drinking water will improve



# Final Report for Project 1041

## Improved Water Security for the Girl Child

### Uganda – Foundation for Uganda Women Development (FFUWD)

The main aim of Project 1041 was to increase the access to safe water in Namunsi Parish through the construction of a rainwater harvesting system at the Namunsi Primary School. By the time of Report submission, FFUWD had purchased all construction material and completed the construction of the 13,000-litre tank as planned.

In the Final Report, FFUWD report the following achievements:

- the rainwater harvesting tank was constructed and gifted to the school in a ceremony attended by the ACWW East, West, and Central Africa Area President in September 2018
- as per the school register, the total of 238 girls and 213 boys attend the school on regular basis are using the facilities
- a school user committee has been put in place and is responsible for the maintenance of the facilities – they have agreed on a 200 UGX (around

4p) monthly contribution from each of the parents/guardians to build a maintenance fund. This will also cover any costs associated with the bimonthly cleaning of the tank and the employment of a security guard in vacation periods

The implementing organisation reports that all activities have been completed successfully and that most of the parents were very involved in the process. FFUWD found the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan to be an incredibly useful tool and has the intention to use the framework it offers for their future projects as well.

There has been an increasing demand for similar projects in other schools in the area and the group is intending to replicate the project there as well if they succeed in securing funding for this. However, they have suggested to the candidate schools that shallow wells would provide a more reliable source of safe water, especially during the dry season.

**238**  
girls now have  
fresh water at  
school





# Progress Report for Project 1049

## Sanitary Facilities for Improved Menstrual Hygiene

### Uganda – Community Concerns Uganda (CCUg)

At the beginning of the project, CCUg designed and completed a baseline survey in three schools. 430 girls took part in this survey and CCUg explained that the surveyed population was relatively small due to the fact that some students had already finished exams and left the school. The estimated number of girls attending school who have reached started menstruation is 750, per information provided by the school authorities. Further to this, there are 1,400 total girls attending these schools and regardless of whether or not they have started their period yet, they will benefit from the construction of the latrines.

59.8% of the girls of menstruating age indicated that the previous sanitary facilities at school did not provide privacy. Two of the schools targeted by the project had “safe spaces” for girls. However, both “safe spaces” were located at a distance from the girls’ latrines (50-100 metres). The teachers in the school reported that when girls used these “safe spaces”, many pupils would see them making their way there and know instantly that these girls are on their period. This led to further teasing from the male pupils and increased level of anxiety and stigma associated with this trip to the “safe space”. As a result, fewer and fewer girls felt comfortable using them and resorted to nearby bushes or the latrines available in the schools. 81% percent of the girls interviewed reported that water was not always available and soap even less frequently when they used the school latrines on their period. The results of the baseline survey indicated a clear need for the construction of new, private latrines and training for the teachers in the school which would provide them with the tools to initiate a discussion about menstrual health management among the students.

The aim of the project is to provide three schools with convenient places for girls to maintain a good level of personal hygiene during menstruation and to remove the stigma associated with menstruation among students and teachers. It is hoped that this will encourage girls to attend

school when they are on their period. In their progress report, CCUg reported that the following has been achieved so far:

- Constructed six washrooms in three schools
- Formed three school sanitation committees of adolescents, teachers, school administrators, and parents
- Organised six hygiene awareness sessions in the schools

The project has encountered several challenges. Firstly, a water shortage occurred as the construction took place during the dry season. This was resolved through cooperation with the school administration, who ensured that enough water was available at the construction site. Additionally, some items from the budget saw an increase in pricing and CCUg dealt with this through slight alteration of the tank stand design in order to decrease the price.

The school also made further in-kind contributions in the form of food for the builders and tools for construction. In the second the part of the project, CCUg will organise four educational sessions concerned with menstrual rights and tolerance, and four sessions working for the improved self-esteem and confidence of adolescent girls. They will also undertake monitoring visits to the three project sites and report to ACWW on their use and maintenance, as well as the way girls who are using them feel about the new facilities.

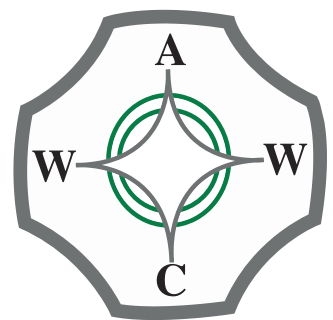


Visit  
[www.acww.org.uk](http://www.acww.org.uk)  
 to donate to the WE  
 Fund: Sustainable Water,  
 Sanitation, and Energy

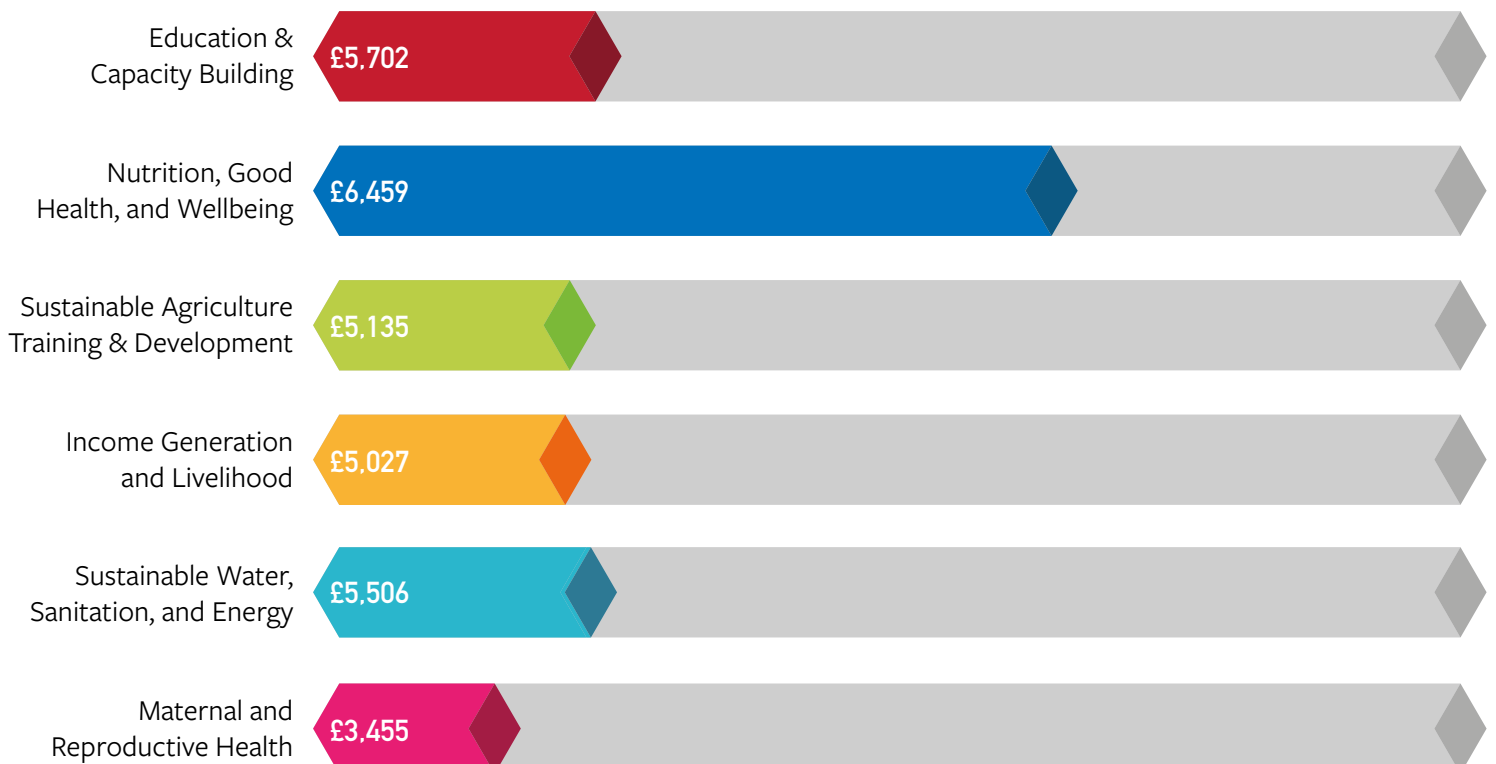
# WE Fund Update

## ACWW members continue to generously support Projects

Due to the timing of the 29<sup>th</sup> Triennial World Conference, the projects committee only met once in 2019. The gap in meetings meant that the newly appointed Projects Committee had more funds to allocate and more applications to consider than normal. They allocated £124,927 (some of which was from residual general projects funds). In 2019 some £115,700 was donated to the WE Fund alone. You read about all the new projects in the last issue of *The Countrywoman*, and below you can see where the WE Fund pots stood after funds were allocated to each of these projects. The next meeting of the projects committee is in March, where they will have a whole new set of applications to consider, and thanks to your generosity, funds to disperse. You can keep up with the current totals in each Pot on our website and as always, if you want to host a fundraising event or encourage your society to donate, please feel free to contact us for fundraising materials.



The totals shown here are the balances after funds were allocated to Projects at the October 2019 meeting of the Projects Committee





# ORANGE THE WORLD

## ACWW Marks the 16 Days of Activism

Each year, ACWW participates in the 16 Days of Activism, a worldwide campaign to end violence against women and girls. Our campaign of awareness raising reached 50,000 people on Facebook alone, and our members all over the world participated in their own areas. Read on to find out more about their activities.

### Nothing Justifies Violence

In Romania, ACWW member society The Woman of the Third Millinium is taking their awareness-raising to the next level: During the 16 Days of Activism, they launched an initiative which will run monthly in schools in their area. The slogan "Nothing Justifies Violence" is an important message for young people to take to heart. Agatha Bogdan tells us more:

*We live in an ultramodern era. Modernity has reached almost everything: in technology, in transport, in communications, in nutrition, but in the civil relations between the sexes it seems we have remained primitive, barbarians.*

*In Romania, 30% of women have been affected by domestic violence, physical or sexual, at one time in their lives. In 2018, nearly 18,000 women were abused within the family and 48 lost their lives.*

*However, these are not reliable statistics. The problem with domestic violence is far worse than that, in reality there are many more families affected and few complaints are ever officially made. Beyond all these numbers and statistics is the reality lived daily, in silence, by hundreds of thousands of women.*

*In order to make change, we must work on prevention and education. We must spread the culture of non-violence.*

*Our Association, "The Woman of the Third Millennium" has already started giving information and advice to those who need it. Our campaign raises awareness of*

*domestic violence and abuse, it educates community members, especially young students, in preventing domestic violence. For this campaign, we have coined the phrase: "Nothing justifies violence" (in Romanian "Nimic nu justifica violenta"). Each of us strongly condemns domestic violence, so those who commit the abuse feel castigated, and most importantly, the victims feel supported.*

*On the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, we organized a 'flash mob' in the largest mall in the city, to launch the campaign and the 16 Days of Activism against Domestic Violence. A group of young dancers performed a piece, exploring the themes of tenderness and violence, love and hate. This artistic endeavour showed we strongly condemn domestic violence and we send our orange message to everyone: Nothing justifies violence.*



Mubalu Women of Hope in Papua New Guinea marked the 16 days with an awareness-raising campaign in their community.

### First mourn, then work for change



To mark the 16 Days of Activism, Prince Edward Island Women's Institutes partnered with the Advisory Council on the Status of Women. All across North America, the Purple Ribbon Campaign is run during the 16 Days of Activism. PEIWI participates by tying the ribbons that are handed out all over the community to raise awareness of gender-based violence, and create a safe space to talk about complex and painful topics.

Each year, the Advisory Council hosts a ceremony of remembrance, which PEIWI attends. This year, their statement of remembrance was this:

*We pause to remember the 14 young women who were singled out and murdered because they were women on that day in 1989 at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique. Most of them were engineering students. One of the victims, Maryse Laganière, was a CUPE member who worked at the school.*

*We also remember the 10 Island women who since 1989 have been killed by partners or someone who knew them. We mourn the missing and murdered indigenous women and girls and the countless others throughout Canada and around the world whose lives were cut short by gender-based violence or who still experience it.*

*After decades of activism, much work still remains. We must recommit to ending gender-based violence and continue the struggle for gender equality. "First mourn. Then work for change."*

## Supporting Survivors in Australia

Knowing that the time immediately after a survivor leaves an abuser is a time of uncertainty and upheaval, CWA Branch Baldvis Belles in Australia have come up with an innovative way to support women in their area - and it has begun to spread!

Baldvis Belles member Linda Tammen tells us more...

*We put together packs to give women who have come into our local refuge and are ready to leave and stand on their own - all essentials everybody needs when starting over. The idea is that we give them to the refuges and then when a family has been given help with different services, employment, schooling needs, etc - which can take from 6 weeks to even years - once they are ready to move out, they will receive our kit. They also get extra items that have been donated to us or things our branch adds as well, like our CWA of WA Cookery book, our new branch Tea Towel and Fridge magnet.*

*We started the collection 2 years ago with the idea of creating 10 kits to help the local women's refuge but within a few weeks we already had the 10 kits donated from the public and the community support was amazing. Suddenly our small project had grown and continues to grow today. Our whole community wanted to get involved.*

*We then decided to ask our local KMART store if we could have a display at their entrance so that people could 'just add one extra item to their trolley' when shopping in store. This has been an amazing success. We often have members of the public, employees from the refuges, other community groups, and our children involved in the collections at KMART as well. People love that they are now able to help and they know that what they are donating is actually going to the person at the other end. So many people are affected by domestic violence or know somebody who has been affected so we are providing them an avenue to support people in those situations. It is also great for them to chat to us; we hear so many stories from people and are thanked over and over again for the work that we are doing.*

*On a membership side it is a great activity for our members to be involved*

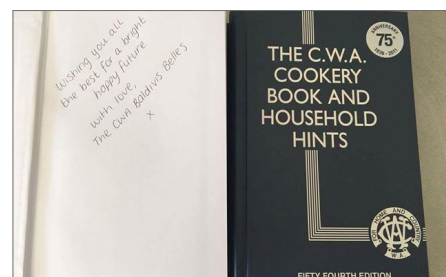


*in as well. Getting out in the public, meeting new people, and doing something for the community that they see the benefits of straight away is a great motivation to our members. It is encouraging when people happily donate the items and we can deliver them to the refuges - we receive consistently positive feedback.*

*Since January 2019 we have handed out 58 of these kits and in the two years since the idea was conceived we have given out nearly 180 kits. We are expanding the number of refuges we are helping and number of people who are receiving the kits. This has also increased our membership as people want to be part of a group that helps the community in areas that interest them and are relevant to the community. Other branches have since taken our idea and adapted it to starter kit cleaning packs and starter kit grocery packs. It absolutely has melted our hearts that our idea has spread to others and other communities are benefiting.*

17

# Change the World



**We still want to hear from you! If you did anything to support the 16 Days of Activism, email [media@acww.org.uk](mailto:media@acww.org.uk) and let us know!**

The Countrywoman 2020-1



# ACWW's New Website

## Nick Newland takes us on a guided tour of ACWW's new online home

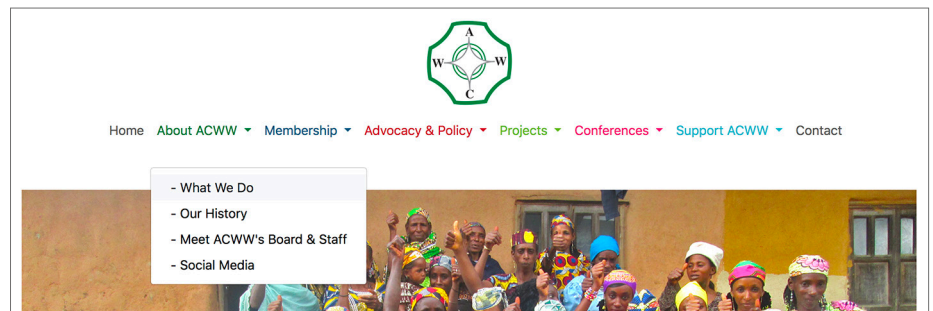
ACWW launched its first website 20 years ago, as the new millennium dawned. Over the years, it has gone through several versions and had a major overhaul in 2016. This included new features such as a private area for members to use (which led to many requests for password reminders!), which led to greater numbers of visitors than ever before.

As with all things technological, times change and methods of communication develop. Many of you experienced frustration with the website not looking great on mobile phones or tablets and iPads. Lots of members wanted new types of resources to use in their local communities, and others wanted to be able to more easily explain what ACWW was to their friends who weren't members.

In 2019, it was agreed to rebuild the website using more modern software and to launch it in a format more friendly to mobile devices which so many of our members use to access it. On 22 November, we launched the new website and so we thought it would be useful to give you a thorough introduction to it!

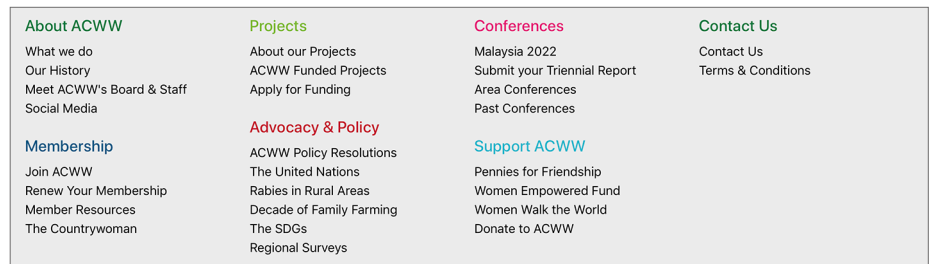
We have already had fantastic feedback, and will always welcome comments, ideas, and suggestions. Please do take some time to explore the new site, and let us know if there is anything you think could be added.

### 1. The Top Menu



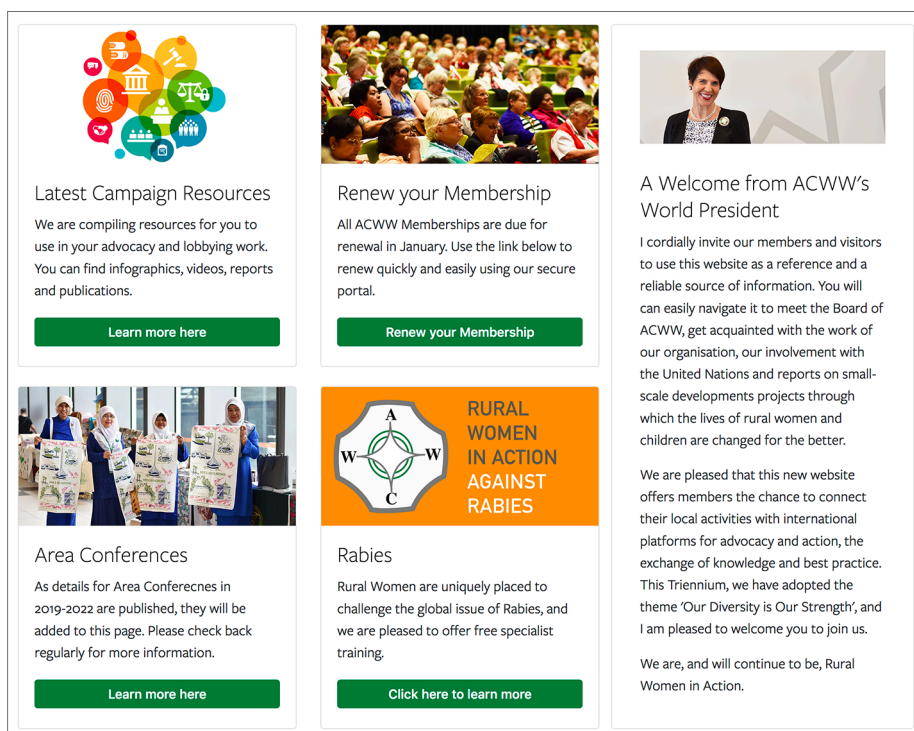
The top menu on the website includes 8 sections, and when you click on each of these you will see a further list of options. On a smartphone or tablet, this menu will appear as a "hamburger" menu, or 3 short grey lines inside a box. If you tap this box, you will see the full list of pages and items appear.

### 2. The Bottom Menu



If you don't want to click through each of the top menu options, no problem! Scroll down to the bottom of the page and you'll see each page on the website laid out in an easy to see and navigate grid. As you can see, you can renew your membership, learn more about Projects, or support Pennies for Friendship- all with one easy click!

### 3. The Home Page



The home page will of course be the first page you see when you visit the website. It features a welcome note from World President Magdie de Kock, and a series of featured articles or pages. Currently, these are the following:

#### Latest Campaign Resources

From posters you can print at home, to videos, to PowerPoint presentations with speaker notes, they're all available on the website.

#### Renew Your Membership

If you want to use the quickest, easiest, and most efficient way of renewing your membership, just click here. This works for individual and Society members.

#### Area Conferences

Get the latest info on what's going on in your area.

#### Rabies

Support ACWW's campaign to reduce global deaths from rabies and pick up some free training along the way!



When you join ACWW, you join a network that allows rural women to connect their voices. We work to ensure the issues they face, and the solutions they raise, are heard and acknowledged by national and international policy-makers and legislators.

ACWW exists for women who want to actively engage with international policy and support and promote the empowerment of rural women.

The easiest way to join ACWW or renew your membership is to do so online, using the links here. If you would rather, you can also contact ACWW Central Office.

You can join ACWW as an Individual (which we call Category 5), or if you are a group or association you can join as a Society Member (Category 1, 2, 3, or 4 depending on size and activities). You don't have to be a member of a society to join as an Individual. If you would like to learn more about Society Membership, please use the link on this page.

#### Joining ACWW

- [Join as an Individual Member](#)
- [Join as a Society Member](#)
- [Renew Individual Membership](#)
- [Renew Category 1 Society](#)
- [Renew Category 2 Society](#)
- [Renew Category 3 Society](#)
- [Renew Category 4 Society](#)

#### 4. Join ACWW

We get lots of people who want a quick and easy way to join ACWW or renew their membership. We've made this more simple than ever, with one page giving you all the options! You can renew by credit or debit card, from anywhere in the world. This is also the most cost-efficient option for ACWW, avoiding costly fees associated with cheques and international transfers.

#### 5. Past Triennial World Conferences

We have heard your calls, and have now placed an archive of photographs from the past two Triennial World Conferences online. You can browse through them, but also have the ability to download them all with the click of a button! As time allows, we will work our way through the archive and see what we can add to this from previous events. If you happen to have good quality images, get in touch!

#### 6. Online Donation Portal

Want to support ACWW? Don't want to mess around with sending cheques? Can't remember your PayPal password? No problem! On the website's homepage, and on the Pennies for Friendship and Women Empowered Fund pages, you can find a quick and easy online donation portal which will allow you to make donations safely and securely.

### Online Donation

Name *	Total
<input type="text"/>	<b>£0.00</b>
First	
<input type="text"/>	
Last	
<input type="text"/>	
Donation Amount *	
£ <input type="text"/> . <input type="text"/>	
Pounds Pence	
Notes	
<input type="text"/>	
Please provide an email address: *	
<input type="text"/>	
Please check the box below. *	
<input type="checkbox"/> I'm not a robot	reCAPTCHA Privacy - Terms
<input type="button" value="Submit"/>	



The Triennial World Conference is ACWW's highest deliberative body, and passes policy resolutions when it meets every 3 years. Interrupted only by the Second World War, ACWW's members have come together every three years since 1930.

- [Photos from Melbourne 2019](#)
- [Photos from Warwick 2016](#)

# THE COUNTRYWOMAN

The International Magazine of the Associated Country Women of the World

ACWW publishes a quarterly magazine, *The Countrywoman*, which is circulated globally to our Members and supporters. We use Forest Stewardship Council approved sustainable paper for both the magazine and its packaging. For every tree used in the production of an issue, 3 are planted in its place. We are proud to work with a local, family-owned printer in the UK called Polstead Press.

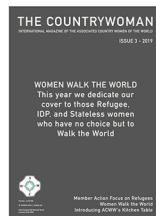


Below you will find a digital archive of *The Countrywoman* covering every issue since March 2016. To download an issue, just click the button below any of the cover images.

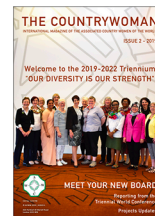
[Visit Polstead Press](#)



[Download Issue 4, 2019](#)



[Download Issue 3, 2019](#)



[Download Issue 2, 2019](#)



[Download Issue 1, 2019](#)

#### 7. The Countrywoman Archive

ACWW's flagship magazine launched in 1936, printed and posted to every member around the world. Member Societies only receive one copy, and people often ask if we can find them copies of older articles. We have therefore included an online archive of the magazine in PDF

format on the website. Currently this goes back to April 2016, but as time allows we will digitise older issues of the magazine and add them to the archive. Eventually, we will go all the way back to Issue 1. You can access this page and download any and all copies to read at your leisure, and they even work on phones or iPads!

## DO YOU LIKE IT?

We'd love to hear your feedback about the website, and anything you think could be improved. Just send us a quick email to [nick@acww.org.uk](mailto:nick@acww.org.uk)



# Member News

What members are up to around the world

## Digital Literacy is Vital



Knowing that digital literacy is vital for women's empowerment in a changing world, Sarawak Federation of Women's Institutes in Malaysia hosted IT training for 34 women in Sebuyau Village. The women learned how to compose documents in Microsoft Word, how to work with Excel, and how to use email as a method of communication. The women reported feeling more confident in their digital abilities by the end of the course, and SFWI hope that the training will benefit the women as they look for work.



## Join the Conversation

We know that every member's voice should be heard. That's why we've created ACWW's Kitchen Table. Some of the most important conversation in the life of a family happen around the kitchen table, and ACWW is one big, complex family. So pull up a chair, and join the conversation!

We use the Kitchen Table to consult members on things like merchandise and promotional materials, and to get your feedback on ACWW initiatives and actions. To join, visit ACWW's Facebook page. Click or tap the button that says 'Groups.' You'll

be prompted to answer some questions - we've set these questions up so that the group can remain a safe space for ACWW members and supporters. If you don't answer the questions, we won't approve your request.

If you're not on Facebook, but still want to be part of the conversation, just give us a call at the Office and ask "What's the latest gossip around the kitchen table?" We'll fill you in, and make sure that your voice is counted in the replies to any consultation or feedback.



## A Women Walk the World Challenge

We hear from C&M Committee Member, Moira Hammond

The popular ACWW event 'Women Walk the World' first took place in 2012. It was the idea of the then Treasurer, Alison Burnett, who wanted to organise something that not only raised the profile of ACWW but also generated funds. Her aim was that ACWW members worldwide could all take part and she suggested that, at 10 a.m. local time, groups could set out on a walk dedicated to ACWW: it could be as simple as a daily task of fetching water from a well, or as ambitious as an adventurous hike. Because of the various time zones, this meant that, over a 24-hour period, somewhere in the world, women would be walking on behalf of ACWW. The date chosen was the 29 April, ACWW Day, which conveniently happened to be a Sunday. Since then, Women Walk the World has become an annual, worldwide tradition.

Walkers from Suffolk East Federation of Women's Institutes (SEFWI) raised the profile of ACWW as well as a considerable amount of donations in their Women Walk the World event. Their walks ranged from strolls around their town or village to hikes across country. Interestingly, most involved coffee and cake too! Some enjoyed fantastic weather, while others resembled drowned rats by the end of their walk. Participants were requested to calculate the total number of miles each group walked (i.e. the distance multiplied by the number of walkers). Many dogs accompanied the walkers and there was deliberation as to whether canine mileage could also be included, but it was felt that, with the advantage of four legs, they were not accepted!

This year they are challenging other women's groups to beat their previous total which was a massive 380 miles!

Will you take on the challenge with your local group?



# Get to know Central Office

## Two new members of staff introduce themselves

Late last year, Jenny Sellers joined the team at Central Office, replacing Viktoria Dimitrova who left to pursue further study. She tells a bit more about herself below:

### *Welcome to ACWW!*

Thanks! I'm excited to be here and get stuck into projects!

### *Where are you from, and what did you do before you came to ACWW?*

I've moved around a lot growing up abroad in the USA, Turkey, and Romania but most recently, from Brighton where I was studying for my Masters in Gender and Development at the Institute of Development Studies. During and between my studies I've spent the last few years in Ghana, Kenya and Uganda working predominantly on maternal and reproductive health programmes for local and international development organisations.

### *What exactly is your job at ACWW?*

I am the Projects Administrator, which means that I process all the applications for funding that come in from member and non-member organisations. Once I receive the applications, I assess them against our funding criteria and send the short list over to the Projects Committee Chairman, Mabel Moyo. During the Projects Committee Meeting I support the Chairman and the Committee in the process of choosing the projects to fund and take these to the Board for approval. In between Project Meetings, I get the funding out to the new projects, produce progress and final reports and get everything sorted and ready for the next round of Project Meetings!

### *What do you do in your time off to relax?*

On the weekends, I love to go back to Brighton to be by the sea, I practice yoga and will be joining a new choir in January.

### *What are you most excited about at ACWW?*

What attracted me most to ACWW was the commitment to funding women's projects from the grassroots up. Small grants to local organisations allow the funds to go exactly where they are needed to the most vulnerable in society. My background is in maternal and reproductive health, so I am really excited to make sure ACWW funds some truly excellent projects in this area.



Many of you remember Manisha Vora, who was the Finance Administrator with ACWW. She retired in 2018, and after the Executive Committee and CEO took some time to evaluate ACWW's financial reporting and ways of working, Sue Williams joined the team as Finance Administrator late last year.

### *Where are you from, and what did you do before you came to ACWW?*

I'm from the Southern boundaries of Greater London – Worcester Park in Surrey, near to Epsom (home of The Epsom Horse Race Derby!). Before I came to ACWW I was semi-retired for a year and before that I worked for the NHS at Kings College Hospital (which is the local hospital to the Central Office) for around 11 years and looked after the Finances of 3 of the clinical divisions of the Hospital – preparing budgets and management accounts mainly. Prior to my spell in the National Health Service I have also worked in the Charity Sector for 5 years in Epsom, where I was the Management Accountant for SeeAbility (Royal School for the Blind).

### *What exactly is your job at ACWW?*

My role is Finance Administrator which involves day to day bookkeeping, management accounts, and other Finance related work including petty cash, payment of suppliers and expenses and income and expenditure analysis.

### *What do you do in your time off to relax?*

I love to read and am a football fan so enjoy catching up with my team's game at the weekend. I am also teaching myself Spanish as a hobby. I am also a volunteer Secretary of a local Scout Group and am a Trustee on the Committee of the Charitable Organisation which runs the residential care home where my mother lives.

### *What are you most excited about at ACWW?*

I'm excited about the opportunity to be involved in an organisation that provides support to women across the globe in the way that ACWW does. I have always been an ardent supporter of women's rights, gender equality and support for women in challenging situations so am very pleased at this stage of my career to have the chance to contribute to a venture such as ACWW and to use my finance skills in a useful way and get involved in the Charity's activities whenever appropriate.



# ACWW and UNESCO

## From June and the G7, to Challenging Inequalities in December

### ACWW Chief Executive Officer Tish Collins reports from the UNESCO International Conference at the G7: 'Innovating for Girl's and Women's Empowerment through Education'

As a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in consultation with the Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), ACWW was invited to attend this special conference in Paris on 5 July 2019. It was called by Jean-Yves Le Drian, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France; Jean-Michel Blanquier, Minister for National Education and Youth of France; and Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of UNESCO, to coincide with the G7 meeting being hosted by France in Biarritz.

The conference had three main aims: a) to highlight innovative initiatives and solutions to improve girls' and women's access to quality education and learning opportunities that empower them and develop the knowledge and skills needed for life and decent work; b) to provide space for new collaboration initiatives to promote girls' and women's empowerment through education; and c) to encourage collective action to fulfil the 2030 Agenda commitments related to girl's education, girl's and women's empowerment and gender equality.

The French G7 presidency has made the education and empowerment of girls and women a key priority in the fight against inequality. They recognise that girl's education is one of the most important investments for development because it provides not only individual but also societal benefits. When girls go to school, their lives and those of their children, their families, their communities, and their countries improve. They acknowledge that promoting such empowerment through education is key to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 5 on gender equality and SDG 4 on inclusive, quality education and lifelong learning.

There were a number of impressive speakers including a minister from Mali who spoke of the riches of her country, that there needed to be a shift in thinking, and a will to invest in education for girls rather than ostentatious expenditure by some of those in power. She expressed anger that in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century women were still being treated as second class citizens. Meetings such as this were important because they showed the ambassadors and ministers from the many countries

present what was required and that paths to women's empowerment were mapped and known, and would be supported by NGOs.

Special guest Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Prize Laureate, was an inspiration. Her unwavering belief in the justice of education for girls was impressive. She made a short speech and presented awards to young women ambassadors on behalf of the Malala Foundation. We heard from each of them about the adverse conditions in which they lived and worked to give encouragement and support to other young women and girls.



*Nobel Peace Prize laureate Malala Yousafzai speaks to French President Emmanuel Macron at the G7 Summit in Paris, July 2019*

The final speaker was Emmanuel Macron, President of the French Republic, who spoke about the practical steps he had initiated in making quality education genuinely accessible to girls and women especially in less developed countries and in rural areas. He said that a large fund was established with contributions from many European countries, but it would not just be handed out as grant aid as in the past. This time there would be inspection visits, proper evaluation to see that the money was being spent appropriately and that girls were genuinely able to access quality education – this entailed the provision of sanitary facilities, of safe transport, of freedom from abuse by teachers and male students and, where hostel accommodation was provided, freedom from abuse by so-called carers.

ACWW's access to meetings like this is an important part of our Consultative Status, as it is a two-way street. We need to ensure that governments hear the voices of our members, but also that members get the information and updates they require. Processes like issuing responses to the Voluntary National Reviews on the SDGs, and accessing UNESCO Forums give us critical opportunities to raise the volume of our members' voices.

### UNESCO's NGO Forum on Tackling Inequalities provided ACWW the opportunity to focus the discussion on the rural-urban divide, as Nick Newland reports...

On a rainy Monday morning, in a Paris beset by a transport strike, UNESCO opened its doors to representatives from more than 100 organisations for a two-day Forum on Challenging Inequalities. To maintain our Consultative Status, ACWW is required to attend these Forum events and they normally offer an opportunity to raise the experiences of our members and the issues they tell us about. On this occasion, we had a rather different level of access because we had been invited to chair a high-level thematic discussion on Tackling Inequalities through Policy Reform.

The session on Tuesday morning was a panel discussion which featured His Excellency Hans Wesseling, the Permanent Delegate to UNESCO of the Kingdom of the Netherlands; Councillor Abioseh Wilson of Freetown, Sierra Leone; Prof. Wie Yie, Dean Engineering & IT at Mahsa University, Malaysia; Deputy Dominique Potier of French National Assembly; and Mr Robert Napier, President of the European Student's Union. The session was chaired by Nick Newland, ACWW's Policy and Communications Manager.

The panel opened with introductions of the speakers, and then Mr Wesseling gave an account of his experiences in the field, seeing the importance of rural people being involved in the peace building process after a conflict. Professor Wie Yie explained how the investment in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects has seen a significant improvement in the uptake of studies by women, but that if women are to progress into these careers then further changes must be effected by institutions. A genuine change in dynamic, to a system that welcomes, respects as equals, and values the involvement of women has, when implemented (such as at her University in Malaysia), seen significant change for women, but also in departmental success and efficiency.

Councillor Wilson discussed the value of self-respect, and community development agendas which include women from the earliest stages. In a post-conflict country, Councillor Wilson has seen dramatic changes in the number of women involved in local and national politics, and the positive impacts this has on everyone's lives.

Deputy Dominique Potier sits in the French National Assembly (parliament), and represents a rural community in Central France. He brought a message of structural change, where local policies reflect the often discussed 'public-private partnership', but where local arrangements have prioritised the public over private and ensured that the voices of constituents are heard when local government makes decisions. He is advocating for similar changes at the national level from within the National Assembly.

The final speaker on the panel was Robert Napier, who kindly agreed to join the panel the day before, having been stranded in Paris by the transport strike. He replaced another speaker on education who was unable to attend because of the strike! Mr Napier is President of the European Union of Students and brought updates on the work undertaken by the Union to unite the voices of students around Europe, and tackle injustices at the most fundamental levels - focused on access to meaningful, quality education at all levels and ensuring that financial prosperity was not the key to access decent education.

After the speakers had made their introductory statements, I posed several questions for them to discuss. One of these was whether our current systems were able to see progress, for concepts like the Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved, when so much of the world's energy, financial focus, and political will is distracted by conflict and war. Though offering different views on the order of resolution, each panellist agreed that whilst war is profitable for governments and more important than the wellbeing of their own people, it will be nearly impossible to achieve lasting and sustainable equality.

After a spirited question and answer session with the NGOs in attendance, including an opportunity for panellists to ask the audience questions to inform their policy reform agendas, we closed the session for lunch. More than 20 questions were taken by the panellists, and the commitment by several to continue conversations has already borne fruit.

ACWW has been asked to join the Steering Committee for the next UNESCO NGO Forum, which focuses on Global Citizenship. This is a fantastic opportunity for ACWW to ensure the debate includes rural women and that their voices are heard, but also lies in support of our 1953 resolution on Citizenship and Women's Responsibilities.

2020 is a year of important anniversaries for the UN and its agencies and we are pleased that ACWW will be returning to such a crucial role on the world stage, and ensuring that our Rural Women in Action are recognised for the critical work they do in every part of the world.

# The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

The most significant step for women's rights in the 1990s came not with CEDAW, but with the Global Conference on Women which resulted in the 1995 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Below we reproduce an article printed in the January-March 1996 issue of *The Countrywoman*:

*"Some 30,000 women from 185 nations came to Beijing for the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women which endorsed a blueprint to advance women's rights into the next century. Delegates approved a consensus Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Conference resolutions which emphatically equated women's rights with human rights resisted any backtracking on agreements reached at the Cairo Population Conference. The Platform for Action reaffirmed that reproductive rights rest on the recognition of all couples and individuals to make their own decisions about the number and spacing of their children.*

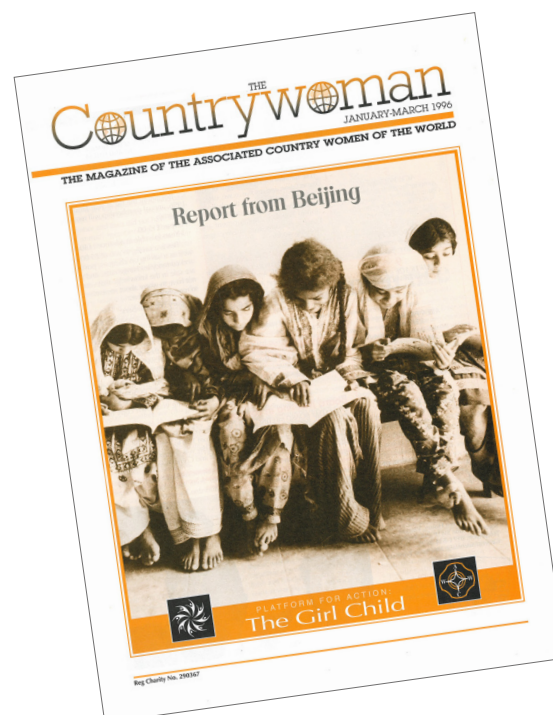
*ACWW's delegation of five was headed by World President Lyndsay Hackett-Pain, with Ingunn Biurkeland, UN Committee Chairman, who coordinated ACWW's workshop 'The Potential and Strategic Importance of the Girl Child', which was opened by Yrsa Berner, European Area President who acted as moderator.*

*The President introduced the workshop theme, referring to what UNICEF calls the "apartheid of gender", beginning for girls at birth and blocking avenues of development. It was imperative that the Platform for Action formulates programmes to address gender-based disadvantages to foster progress towards gender equality. Opportunities provided today which are vital for the girl child to reach her full human potential, will also determine the quality of human development for generations to come.*

*The International community is becoming increasingly aware of the importance of the girl child for the future stability of families and society. Measures taken to ensure equality and equity also make good economic sense. ACWW is urging communities and society at large to demand effective action by their governments in support of the girl child."*

As you will know, ACWW's commitment to working with the United Nations has been consistent since 1946, and indeed started with our collaboration with the League of Nations Nutrition Committee as we offered expertise on rural women.

Over the next year we will bring you updates of our advocacy work, amplifying your voices, concerns, issues, and solutions. Holding governments to account in their promises to rural women is, and always has been, a critical element of ACWW's work and in 2020 we seek to include as many of your voices as possible in our work on representation. Please keep an eye out for surveys, interview requests, and questionnaires coming your way - we need to hear from you!





# #WeAre



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