

THE COUNTRYWOMAN

INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATED COUNTRY WOMEN OF THE WORLD

ISSUE 2 - 2020



This Too Will Come to Pass

Friendship Links Update

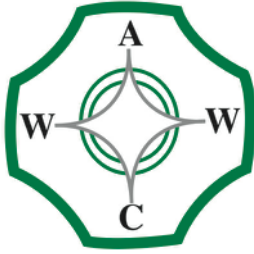
Project Funding during a Pandemic

**Marking the cancelled
Commission on the Status of Women**



Charity No. 1174798

© ACWW 2020 | A1922-90
A04 Parkhall 40 Martell Road
London SE21 8EN



Associated Country Women of the World
A04 Parkhall | 40 Martell Road
London SE21 8EN

Registered Charity No. 1174798

Central Office: info@acww.org.uk
Telephone: +44 (0)20 7799 3875
Website: www.acww.org.uk

The Countrywoman Issue 2 - 2020

© ACWW 2020 A1922-90

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

ACWW CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACTS

Chief Executive Officer

Tish Collins - tish.c@acww.org.uk

Policy & Communications Manager

Nick Newland - nick@acww.org.uk

Agriculture and Engagement Administrator

Editor of *The Countrywoman* Magazine

Sydney Salter - media@acww.org.uk

Projects Administrator

Jenny Sellers - projects@acww.org.uk

Office Administrator

Jessica Green - info@acww.org.uk

Finance Manager

Sue Williams - finance@acww.org.uk

Finance Assistant

Becky Ramsey - finance@acww.org.uk

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.

THE COUNTRYWOMAN

3 MY DEAR FRIENDS...

A message from the World President, Magdie de Kock

4 WHEN PLANS CHANGE

World President Magdie de Kock tells us about her trip to London

5 CENTRAL OFFICE NEWS

Chief Executive Officer Tish Collins tells us how Central Office is working

5 EDITOR'S NOTE

Editor Sydney Salter

6 FINANCE AND MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Treasurer Ruth Cargill

7 C&M COMMITTEE

An interview with Marie Appleton

8 FRIENDSHIP LINKS

How the Programme is moving forward

9 LET'S CHAT!

Talking to your friends and family about ACWW

10 RABIES AWARENESS TRAINING

How to register for this vital, free training opportunity

15 WOMEN WALK THE WORLD

Walks are postponed, but we're moving forward with planning

16 WHAT'S IN A VIDEO

Nick Newland talks to us about all that is involved in video production

17 ACWW AND THE UN

How ACWW fits into the UN, and what all those acronyms mean

19 MAKING YOUR VOICE HEARD

Impact report from ACWW's letter to CSW negotiators

21 PROJECT REPORT

Progress Report from Project 1043

22 PROJECT FUNDING IN A PANDEMIC

How ACWW is safeguarding beneficiaries, evaluators, and your donations

23 A CLOSE KNIT COMMUNITY

Sue Atrill tells us more about knitted jumpers for children

24 HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS

Sydney Salter tells why fake news spreads, and how we can spot it

24 THE BEIJING+25 BANNER

How ACWW has used this amazing piece, and a look at each panel

COVER IMAGE

ACWW Project Partner IRDRP is supporting their community in India by working with their local government to hand out food and food supplies.

MEMBERSHIP

As you are aware, all Society and Individual Memberships were due in January. Please ensure that you are fully paid-up. 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



Feelings are, by definition, hard to put into words. To accurately describe the anxiety now gripping the world is extremely challenging.

As I am writing, my husband and I are in isolation on our farm in a remote part of the country under strict lockdown conditions. Many other countries world wide are also applying drastic measures trying to safeguard their citizens. In consultation with the Board as well as the CEO, I cancelled the meetings of the Specified Committees owing to the announcement of the World Health Organization which, on March 11th, declared the rapidly spreading of the Coronavirus outbreak, a pandemic.

My concerns are for many of our members who will struggle with job losses and family burdens. They are more likely to be single parents or single-income households. They are less able to work from home, and more likely employed in the service or delivery sectors, in jobs that put them at greater danger of coming into contact with the Corona virus. In many cases, their children will not be able to progress their education at home, because parents will not be able to teach them, or their households might lack access to high-speed Internet that enables remote instruction.

With regard to the impact on our beloved organisation, I am sure I am correct when I say that this situation is unprecedented throughout our history. However, in the same way as our smaller communities are 'pulling together' and helping each other, I am sure that this will be the case worldwide and we will all feel a sense of fellowship with our ACWW 'sisters'. We are dealing with the same problems, which can only make us feel closer to each other.

It is clear the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic will disrupt many aspects of our lives – from work to leisure – for the foreseeable future. At least the administrative work of ACWW has not been interrupted as the CEO and members of Staff are working from home thanks to advanced technology.

The image of a leader to always rise to the occasion with the right response, the right decision and the right direction, is based on a misconception and is often far from the truth. However, I would like to share some practical and effective strategies that worked for me in the recent past while

facing unexpected challenges which you might like to apply in your own societies and communities.

- I have learned to keep people informed as well as being well informed myself. When times get tough, it's always tempting to hide, but that's the worst thing one can do. Stay visible and keep people informed even when it's bad news. People don't like to feel excluded from progress or from problems; when you keep them involved, they will be prepared to help.
- I have learned to deal with unexpected events. Life is full of unexpected turns and twists. It could be small things but could also be significant changes impacting one's entire life and the future of a community or an organisation such as ACWW.
- We may not be able to prepare for all the eventualities. Therefore preparedness also means having to be mentally prepared. Include exercise, good nutrition and meditation as part of your life, so that you can handle adversities in a much better way.
- I have learned to seek advice and not to rely solely on my own abilities. Instead of responding rapidly to any event, I seek advice and the opinions of others enabling me to focus on how to address the problem.
- I have learned to stay positive. A positive attitude is an asset in unexpected situations. Sometimes, what seems like a problem, or even a disaster, could be a blessing in disguise. A negative event can awaken ambition, motivation and persistence, which would lead to progress and success.
- I have learned to rely on a solid foundation of inner strength. A state of inner strength brings stability, and a better control of one's mind and actions to enable one to cope with almost any situation. When you are calm, possessing inner peace, emotional detachment and inner strength, external events lose their power over you.

When I was growing up, my grandmother lived with us after her husband passed away and I can recall her saying in times of difficulty:

“This too will come to pass”

Now, more than ever, I have better understanding of her wise words.

Rick Hanson, a psychologist and author seems to share my Oumie's wisdom as he recently said:

“We're all being tested at this time, and we will get to the other side of it, and we'll look back and ask ourselves how we conducted ourselves during this time, including how we treated other people”.

There is no doubt in my mind that ACWW will survive this global crisis and in the process we will keep our Membership connected as we treat one another with respect and dignity in the same way we have done over a period of 90 years.

Being “Rural Women in Action”, the legacy of ACWW will prevail.

Kindest regards

Magdie

Magdie de Kock
ACWW World President

WHEN PLANS CHANGE

Flexibility is key in a global pandemic

When I arrived in London from South Africa, it was all rather different from the trip I had been expecting. I was originally intending to travel to New York, then on to India to speak at the Central and South Asia Area Conference, to attend the Saroj Nalini Dutt Memorial meeting, to celebrate the Golden Jubilee with the members of Country Women's Association of India and then finally to London for our Executive Committee meeting. Rather than the snow of New York, London greeted me with sun, not too warm, but a pleasant day and a chance to catch up with the Central Office Staff and discuss the plans they had hastily put together to ensure that we were marking International Women's Day and the now-cancelled Commission on the Status of Women appropriately, and in doing so keeping the voices of our rural women members on the agenda. The first day was spent with briefings on the changes declared by the UN on arrangements for major conferences like the Commission on the Status of Women and how the World Health Organization were responding to the increasing spread of Covid-19. Four days later, the virus was officially declared a Pandemic, and this triggered various international actions including many meetings being cancelled or postponed. For me personally this included the Central and South Asia Area

Conference, as the Area President rightly took a leadership role in safeguarding her members and postponing this event.

Over the next five days I took part in the filming of 11 videos with Marie Kenny, our UN Committee Chairman, and some of our Central Office staff. The first was on Sunday, when we set off on a walking tour of London accompanied by three members of staff from Central Office, shown historic sites and filming a message for International Women's Day outside St Paul's Cathedral. Later in this magazine there is a detailed look at this process, but



Kinetika Bloco. School-aged students from around London, these musicians brought exuberant talent and energy to Central Office after a long day at school, and were quickly set up and rehearsing. They recorded and filmed our anthem, the Song of Peace, joined by two adult musicians May Thompson and Tom Briers, and conducted by our own Nick Newland. This recording would become the backing music for the Beijing Banner video we filmed earlier in the day, and can also be used for ACWW conferences and other events.



I must say, it was quite an experience! Each video was different, which gave me the opportunity to address various elements of ACWW's work, as well as getting the chance to meet some ACWW members in Essex who we visited on Wednesday 10 March.

We travelled to the village of Hatfield Peverel and met up with long-standing ACWW WI Representative Philippa Croft who had gathered women from across Essex Federation of Women's Institutes to join us in filming our Beijing Banner. After we enjoyed a delicious lunch, we jumped back in the minibus, hired for the day to return to London, where we were meeting 9 young musicians from the group

Unlike many other organisations, ACWW produces all of its videos 'in house'. This means that they are scripted or conceived of, filmed, audio recorded, edited, produced, and published by our small Central Office team. It also means that they really do reflect our organisation, and when you see me or another member of our Board in a video, it is truly a message from ACWW and not the work or ideas of some expensive advertising agency in a city somewhere. This is important because our membership is key to who we are, and our communication should always reflect this. This week in London, and then returning home to self-isolation and social distancing in South Africa, will not fade from my memory soon.



CENTRAL OFFICE NEWS

Tish Collins, Chief Executive Officer

I am writing the Central Office Report from my kitchen table, surrounded by cats. It has been interesting to see what they get up to during the working day – sleep mostly, plus the occasional request for lunch! This domesticity was brought about by the Covid-19 Pandemic restrictions which have been keeping most of the world in social isolation.



At ACWW we were aware that our computer system was old and no longer supported by Microsoft and in October the Board agreed to Nick coming up with an alternative solution including out-sourcing the IT support. Fortuitously he had done this and prepared a report in advance of the March Committee meetings. As the Coronavirus (Covid-19) crisis was developing, the Commission on the Status of Women conference in New York was cancelled and the decision was taken to not travel there. However, the World President and UN Chairman were able to transfer their flights to London. We arranged a full week of activities, including making ACWW promotional videos and celebrating International Women's Day in Essex with members and the Beijing+25 banner.

As the days went by and a pandemic was declared by the World Health Organisation, decisions were made to cancel or postpone international meetings and our Board members managed to return home safely and go straight into self-isolation for two weeks. The Committee meetings scheduled for the end of March were changed to video-conferences and we urged all members to stay at home and keep safe. On the afternoon of 16 March, the UK Prime Minister announced that the country was going in to a 'lockdown' and only essential travel was allowed. I therefore instructed all ACWW staff that had to use public transport, to work from home, whilst Nick, Sydney, Jenny and I gathered work we would need from the office – I drove with two passengers, Jenny had an hour's run in each direction!

The Countrywoman 2020-2



The Executive took the decision by email to go ahead with the new computer system and Nick immediately set to working with the various suppliers to make it happen. By the end of that week we had the new equipment, that was specially configured for our use, and I was able to drive round delivering to colleagues a week or so later. This means that the staff now all have a securely networked system that keeps our data safe (protecting our members!) and can work pretty effectively from home.

The Specified Committee meetings all went ahead with collaborative working documents before hand and a video-conference to meet up. You will read about some of the decisions and uplifting messages given and received from my colleagues and the World President elsewhere in this magazine.

Please note that, in light of the Covid-19 Pandemic, many of the Area Conferences have been rescheduled. Please find a list below, and check the website regularly for updates.

Central & South Asia Area Conference POSTPONED - More details on rescheduled Conference to come

South Pacific Area Conference POSTPONED - New Dates: 12-15 March 2021

Canada Area Conference POSTPONED – More details on rescheduled Conference to follow

Southern Africa Area Conference Tentatively going ahead - September

Europe Area Conference POSTPONED - New Dates 10-14 May 2021

EDITOR'S NOTE

When I was in university, I studied anthropology before switching my degree to psychology, and one thing that struck me from my studies was how history is organised by crises. I think we are living in a time that will go down in history as defining how we use technology, changing how we work and live, and hopefully realigning our priorities as a society.

In light of the Covid-19 Pandemic, this and the next issue of *The Countrywoman* will be digital only. As mailing houses begin to close and post becomes more and more unreliable, the Executive Committee, at the recommendation of the Communications and Marketing Committee decided that it would be best to send this issue and the next issue by email and post it on the website. Maybe you can use this time to look at the back catalogue that is available on the website and relive some ACWW memories.

If you know of someone who would be interested in the magazine but will not have digital access, please feel free to print it off for them and post it, or drop it by their house. Just remember to observe Social Distancing measures to keep your community safe!

I want to draw your attention to page 24 where I've put a focus called How to Spot Fake News. There is a lot of information going around about the Covid-19 Pandemic, where it originated, how it spreads, and how to stop it. Much of this is untrue, and spread by malicious people looking for clicks and shares that boost traffic to their page. This results in better 'Influence' which is like currency on social media. Have a read, and if you have any questions or concerns about something you've seen on Social Media, I'm always happy to help clarify.



FINANCE & MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Ruth Cargill, Treasurer and Finance & Membership Committee Chairman

Wow, what a different world we are living in now. When I wrote for issue 1, Australia was gripped by bushfires, these coming on the back of ongoing and wide-spread drought. When rain finally fell in February, it was so heavy in some areas that it led to flooding. To all these natural disasters we are now, along with the rest of the world, in various levels of shutdown due to COVID-19. Jobs have vanished overnight, while other jobs have been created. There is a great level of uncertainty and economic insecurity.

Continue supporting ACWW if you are able

Economic insecurity isn't good news for charitable organisations like ACWW. If you are fortunate enough to not have had your income reduced by the current circumstances, then please keep donating to ACWW, be it to the WE Fund or to Pennies for Friendship. If you normally put coins in a collection at your branch or institute meeting, find a jar or container to make your own collection in. Once the jar is full, send your donation to ACWW either directly or through your society.

If "social distancing" or lockdown measures mean you are not using cash at present, here is another way you could give to PFF:

1. Find something that you do regularly around your home – make a cup of tea/coffee, have a bath, do the washing, get groceries.
2. Find a box of matches or set of counters and an empty jar; or put up a tally sheet.
3. Set a value to each match, counter or tally mark.
4. Each time you do your thing put a match or counter in the jar, or mark your tally sheet
5. At the end of the month, count your matches, counters, tally marks and calculate the value of your donations.
6. Donate this amount to ACWW.
7. Start a new collection for the next month.

Maybe you could have two collection points in your house – one for Pennies for Friendship and one for the WE Fund.



What's important

Another outcome of this time is for some refocusing of what is most important in our lives. Have you noticed that supermarkets, schools and hospitals are the essential services that we all need? One of the things I have learned through ACWW is that the things common to women all over the world is that they want access to

- clean water,
- food,
- education,
- medicine or health care

for themselves, their families and communities.

Did you notice that these are the essential services continuing through lockdown and that they also align to most of our WE Fund pots? There are still many parts of the world where these "essential" services are inaccessible and so there is still a need to fund projects in these areas.

Making Members

Lots of people seem to be spending a lot more time online at the moment. If this includes you, how are you using your online presence to let people know about ACWW. You could use this time to educate people about ACWW to prepare them for when you can ask them to join. How are you going with the challenges set in the last issue? Who have you asked to join ACWW? I have given a membership to a friend as a birthday present, hoping that once she has had the chance to read the journal and learn about ACWW she will continue her membership into the future. I had to ask via email, which went something like this:

I would like to give you an individual membership for ACWW (Associated Country Women of the World). I think you would find the work we do interesting. You can find more about membership here www.acww.org.uk/join_acww.html

If you follow the link to Join as an Individual Member you will see the information I would need to provide to sign you up. Let me know if this would be ok.

The response I received was "Yes Please!"

I haven't done so well with my other plans. While I talked to the Head of Science before school started, about doing something for the International Day of Girls and Women in Science, it didn't come off, partly due to it being too close to the start of the year. I am currently working on my plans for ACWW Day.



**Women Walk
the World
has been
postponed.
See page 15 for
more details!**

Committee Focus

C&M Committee Member Kerry Smith

Empowerment, Participation, and a Sense of Belonging

These terms are intrinsically linked in a never-ending cycle. When people participate in something, whether it is an activity or an organisation, it enhances their sense of belonging, and empowers them which ultimately gives them a feeling of wellbeing. And, when people feel empowered it encourages them to participate more and increases their sense of belonging, enhancing their wellbeing. The sense of well-being enables people to participate more, be empowered, and feel that they belong. A strong sense of wellbeing is central to happy and healthy lives, organisations, and communities. This inter-related cycle applies in all aspects of life be it family life, work, education, communities, and even our hobbies, and groups we belong to such as ACWW.



“Participation and empowerment are inseparably linked; they depend on each other to give meaning and purpose. Participation represents action or being part of an action such as a project or a decision-making process. Empowerment grows out of involvement in thinking, planning, deciding, acting and evaluating. The importance of community participation is well established. Participation is a catalyst for further development, encourages a sense of responsibility, uses valuable indigenous knowledge, frees people from dependence on others’ skills, and makes people more conscious of the issues and what they can do about it. Participation results in learning, and learning is often a prerequisite for changing behaviour and practices.”

(Excerpts from: Claridge, T., 2004. Designing social capital sensitive participation methodologies. Report, Social Capital Research, Brisbane, Australia.)

“The importance of individual and

community resilience and wellbeing is increasingly recognised by governments around the world. After a long-time focus on economic growth as the indicator of societal progress, there has been growing recognition of the importance of wider wellbeing outcomes. Social connectedness is a key driver of wellbeing and resilience. Socially well-connected people and communities are happier and healthier and are better able to take charge of their lives and find solutions to the problems they are facing. Three components are important protective factors that support people’s wellbeing and resilience:

Socialising people thrive on interactions with others

Social Support

Emotional: love and caring

Instrumental: help with practical things

Informational: expert advice

Sense of belonging feeling connected to and valued by other people

(Excerpts from: December 2018. “The Measurement of Social Connectedness and Its Relationship to Wellbeing, NZ Ministry of Social Development)

For a non-profit organisation such as ACWW, it is the membership which drives these concepts. It is members’ participation, empowerment, and sense of belonging, which creates the organisation’s well-being, enabling ACWW to carry out its mission to be Rural Women in Action now and into the future. Members are truly at the heart of the organisation.

Recently, I asked Marie Appleton, a long-serving New Zealand International Officer and ACWW member, what belonging to ACWW has meant to her.

You’ve been a member for a long time now. When/how did you first hear of ACWW and what motivated you to join?

My first introduction to ACWW was when I moved into the Franklin Area. I already belonged to Rural Women New Zealand, but here we had a former National President of our organisation who was determined Members should know about the worldwide organisation we were part of.

If any Member of the Board of ACWW was visiting New Zealand, she ensured an event was held to enable us to learn more of their work. I was fortunate to attend such an event in Auckland where the Guest Speaker was the then World President of ACWW, Mrs. Aroti Dutt (1965-71). What an amazing woman. She inspired me by telling of some of the work she did with women in her own country in order that their lives may be improved. She said of the need to not only talk to women and girls about Family Planning, but how important it was that she go out and talk to the men also, thus she went to men’s gatherings to address the men. From memory this would have been around 1970, so not an easy task. From that time, I was really interested and took every opportunity to learn more of ACWW. Our branch always supported Pennies For Friendship and through our annual Country of Study learned more of countries with sister organisations and hosted a Member from the Indiana Extension Homemakers Association when she was an exchange visitor to New Zealand, sponsored by RWNZ. Then we learned RWNZ was to host the ACWW Triennial World Conference in Christchurch in 1995. We were informed



that in order to attend the conference we needed to be an Individual Member. I was determined to go and so in 1993 I became an Individual Member. I did attend the conference and worked in charge of the roving microphone. This was a privileged position, as I was present for all discussions and was impressed with the standard of

debate and the calibre of the delegates. It gave me an insight which I would not have otherwise received, hence my passion for ACWW and the work it does through the Board and its Members.

What inspires you about ACWW, and keeps you involved?

I am inspired by the different leaders we have had over the years and the reports we receive on the various projects supported. I think of the bonds which are developed and the ways in which Members from different countries support others in times of natural disasters. The fact that it is someone you may have met or read about in the Countrywoman, who brings the need to one's attention makes it so much more personal. We were fortunate to have a former RWNZ President, Mrs. Val Tarrant OBE as Chair of the Projects Committee for six years and she was so enthusiastic, she encouraged many Members to be involved. When our RWNZ Branch has a stall at a local event I always take along some of my Countrywoman Magazines and people going by often stop to talk about some of the articles which helps share the knowledge of what ACWW is attempting to do to support rural women and children.

Are there any personal highlights you'd like to share?

I have been fortunate to be able to attend 8 World and 6 Area Conferences, which have been wonderful experiences, but for me the highlights have been when I have had the pleasure of hosting an Area or World President and sitting quietly at home, my husband and I have heard of the experiences and work they have undertaken on behalf of ACWW, endeavouring to support and promote all that ACWW means. So much more than one can learn from reading a magazine or hearing a talk.

And finally, how do you think ACWW can best make a difference for rural women and girls?

I feel it is really necessary that the work continues, and Members are encouraged to support and talk about the organisation. Our status with the UN is of great importance, but so many do not know of this. Encouragement to support the WE Fund is important so vital work through Projects can continue, as this is a real way of supporting our rural women, girls and ultimately families. Communication and publicity are both needed to ensure more know what ACWW stands for and its work throughout the world.

Friendship Links

An update on ACWW's Pen Friend Programme

When General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) came into effect in April 2018, ACWW brought in an external consultant to review our programmes and policies to help ensure that we are fully compliant with the regulations. The fines associated with a breach of GDPR are substantial, so it is vital that we do everything we can to become and remain compliant. This consultant offered her services pro bono, which was gratefully received, especially considering she is one of the leading consultants for GDPR in the world.

One programme that she expressed serious concern about was the Friendship Links Programme. We were strongly encouraged to review the policies that were in place to protect the data of those involved, and to rethink the programme altogether. In consultation with our consultant, the Communications and Marketing Committee have established a way forward.

The Friendship Links Programme will now be run at Area and World Conferences, so if you want to link up with a pen pal, you'll need to visit the stall at your Area Conference or the World Conference.

We know that this means that people who don't go to Area and World Conferences won't have the opportunity to be involved in the Friendship Links Programme. However, in consultation with our consultant, we have gone through all possibilities for the programme that allow us to remain in compliance with General Data Protection Regulations and this is the only option that allows our members to keep in touch with each other and still remain in control of how their data is stored and used.

Now that the Covid-19 Pandemic has caused some Area Conferences to be postponed you might have to wait a little longer to connect up with your pen pals. However, you can always join the ACWW Kitchen Table on Facebook, which will allow you to connect with ACWW sisters around the world.

If you would like to be a Friendship Links Promoter, responsible for managing the stall at your area conference, please email the Communications and Marketing Committee Chairman, Sheila Needham at cmchair@acww.org.uk.

If you want to connect directly with someone you've met in the ACWW network or read about in the magazine, you can always email Central Office at info@acww.org.uk and we'll do our best to put you in touch.



Let's chat!

Some highlights for when your friends and family ask about the organisation you love

Over the years, we've had members tell us how difficult it is to explain what ACWW is and does. Such an old organisation has had many years to change and adapt, and while our identity has remained constant, the expression of that identity has changed with time and modern technology. Though we have worked hard to ensure that our members have plenty of resources to explain how ACWW works when they are giving talks or presentations at meetings, we know that the strength of ACWW is in the passion of our individual members, and the fact that they want to tell their friends and family.

So, if you've ever struggled to articulate what ACWW is and how it works, we've written a 2-minute introduction to ACWW that covers every element of our work, and should give them enough information so that they can follow up with questions.



ACWW Member and WI Rep Ros Cooper (right) talking to a representative of the Malaysian High Commission at ACWW Central Office

By becoming an ACWW member, you join a network that supports rural women in connecting their voices, so that 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 the empowerment of rural women.

ACWW exists to **amplify** the voices of rural women, collecting factual data on their living conditions and using that information to hold governments to account through our status with the United Nations.

ACWW exists to **connect** rural women, knowing that our voice is so much stronger when we speak together.

ACWW exists to **mobilise** rural women to be leaders in their communities, producing resources that can be used to educate at a grassroots level.

ACWW exists to **empower**. We empower by recognising that rural women have a voice and that that voice has gone unheard for far too long. We empower by funding small-scale, grassroots projects that improve whole communities one woman at a time. We empower by raising awareness of international treaties and agreements that protect the rights of women and by involving our member societies in treaty negotiations at an international level. We empower through friendship and collaboration at our Area and Triennial World Conferences.

Rural women are the backbone of families, of communities, of nations, but they are often a silent support, adapting to change and tragedy with comparative ease. But, they bear the burden of conflict, they go unheard in legislation, and they remain unprotected and unsupported. ACWW **exists to change that**.

Remember, you can always direct people who are interested in ACWW's work to the website. It is full of useful information, posters, and presentations, as well as important documents like the Constitution, Annual Report, and the Triennial Report of Work.

Now is the perfect time...

Take the Rabies Awareness Training!

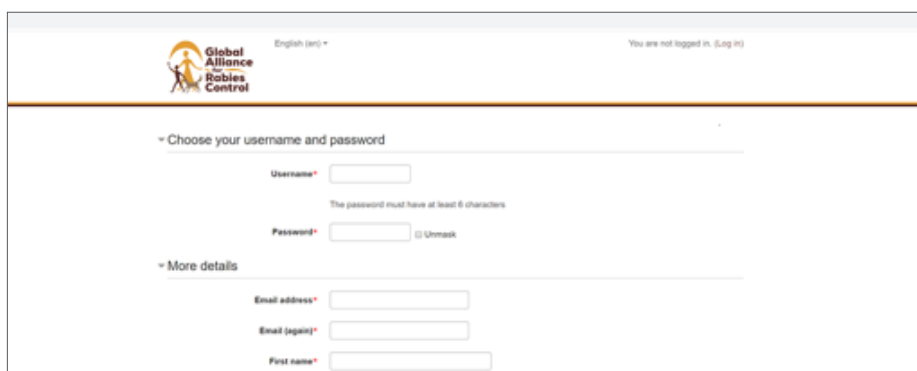
One way that you can contribute to the success of an ACWW resolution from the comfort and safety of your own home is to take the Rabies awareness training that is being offered by the Global Alliance for Rabies Control. Together ACWW and GARC are working to tackle the problem of rabies in rural areas by putting life-saving information in the hands of caretakers. Rural Women are often responsible for family health, and are key to eradicating dog-mediated rabies by 2030. To take the training, visit our website and click on Advocacy and Policy on the top menu, then click on Rabies in Rural Areas:



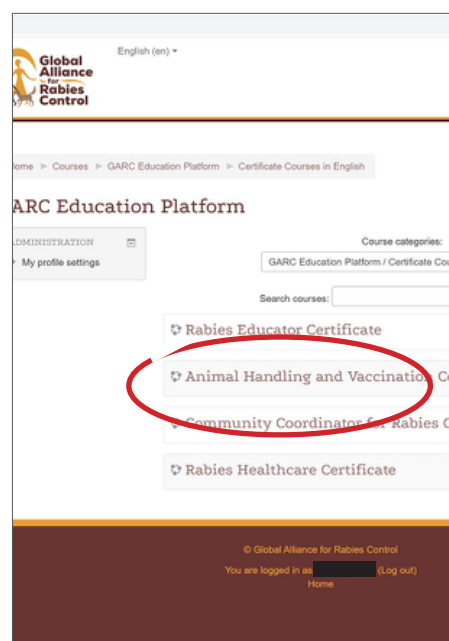
Then, click on the button that says "Learn more about rabies training. This button is a link that will open the Global Alliance for Rabies Control website, and ask you to create an account. You need to create an account to take the training so that if you need to log out and come back, you won't have to start over again. This also allows us to keep track of how many people have taken the rabies training. Don't worry, both GARC and ACWW keep your data securely, in line with General Data Protection Regulations. You can always send us an email if you have questions about how your data is sorted and used.



You can enter your details here. Be sure to keep track of your username and password, as you'll need these to log back into the system later. The demographic data is very important as it allows GARC to keep track of which areas they are reaching, and how effective the training is in reducing the spread of rabies. When it asks for your organisation, be sure to put ACWW, not your local or national society. Don't walk away in the middle of your registration, or it will time out and you'll have to start over!



Once you have clicked submit, you will receive a confirmation email. You need to follow the link in that confirmation email in order to activate your account. Once your account is activated, you'll be able to log in and access the GARC Education Platform. You'll want to start your training with the Rabies Educator Certificate. Simply click the words 'Rabies Educator Certificate' then click the blue button that says 'Enrol Me'




Once you've enrolled, you can begin your training. It is self-paced so you can take as long as you need to.

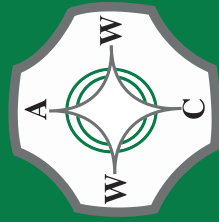
Remember, this training is important not only for those in communities where rabies is an issue, but also for those who travel, or those in communities where rabies could potentially return.

If you have any questions about your account, ACWW's partnership with the Global Alliance for Rabies Control, or Rabies in your area, please don't hesitate to get in touch.





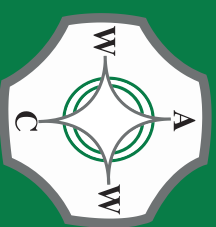
MAY


Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1	2	1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13 World Bee Day 	14	15 International Day of Families	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29 International Day of UN Peacekeepers	30	31



JUN

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2	3	4	5 World Environment Day 	6	7
8 World Oceans Day 	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19 International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict	20 World Refugee Day	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

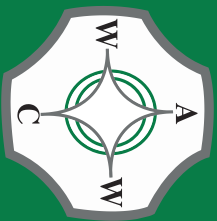


Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	 HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT			17	18 Nelson Mandela Day	19
20	14	15	16	24	25	26
27	21	22	23	30 World Day against Trafficking in Persons International Day of Friendship		
	28	29				

The High Level Political Forum (HLPF) is the part of the UN that is responsible for examining progress on the Sustainable Development Goals. They do this through evaluating different countries each year, giving the country the chance to present a self-evaluation, called the Voluntary National Review or VNR, and then calling on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in that country to give their own review. Because the voices of NGOs are silenced in some countries, or because there are no organisations that represent Rural Women, ACWW steps in to ensure that the voices of Rural Women are heard, and that governments giving inaccurate reports on the state of rural communities are challenged.



AUGUST



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12 International Youth Day	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Women Walk the World

We're still walking, it might just be a bit cooler this year

With the onset of the Covid-19 Pandemic, plans all over the world have had to change, be postponed, or face cancellation. Our yearly fund- and awareness-raising event, Women Walk the World, is no different. The walks that members plan and participate in often involve large groups of people, so they cannot continue in line with WHO advice for physical distancing and isolation. Even if members could walk whilst observing physical distancing advice, we want to encourage you all to adhere to the spirit of the guidelines, rather than the letter. That is to say, we should all be staying inside as much as possible to protect the vulnerable.

This leaves us with a dilemma. Women Walk the World is a key event in the ACWW calendar, and is a significant source of income. We know that donations will be down this year anyway, since member societies aren't meeting and many of our members are facing financial insecurity. It is with this in mind that the Executive Committee have elected to postpone Women Walk the World, to coincide with Rural Women's Day in October. We know that many of you already observe Rural Women's Day, and we hope that you'll show the ingenuity and flexibility so characteristic of rural women when adapting your plans.

We aren't only postponing Women Walk the World - we want to take this as an opportunity to reinvigorate the initiative. In the next couple of months, we will be releasing new fundraising materials, informational brochures, and other exciting media for you to use to plan your event.

Since we will be observing Women Walk the World on Rural Women's Day, which falls next to World Food Day and the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, we will walk under the theme:

#WillWalkForFood Rural Women's Role in Eradicating Hunger

This will not only be a fundraising event, but a chance to help your community understand more about where their food comes from and meet the women involved in community and global food production. It is an educational opportunity, and it places rural women as the key to meeting global food needs, which is a major focus of the UN Decade of Family Farming.

The support of our members is vital. ACWW has continued through 90 years of crisis and trials, and it is our members who push the organisation forward. This year is a trial for us all, but we hope that you will use this opportunity to look forward, to plan for the end of this Pandemic, and consider how you can help ensure that ACWW is able to continue its work well into the future.

Here are some questions to get you thinking about your walk:

How can you use this opportunity to connect your community to the food producers in your area?

How can you involve younger people in your walk?

What are some creative ways to raise funds for ACWW with your walk? Remember the Pennies for Friendship idea: A little bit from many will go a long way!

How can you use your walk to get women in your community interested in the work of ACWW long-term?

United Nations
Decade of
**FAMILY
FARMING**
2019-2028



What's in a video?

Policy and Communications Manager Nick Newland takes us through the process of conceptualising and producing videos

Firstly, you need to establish the purpose of the video and what the best way to communicate your message will be. This involves considering your audience, and the most effective means of communicating your message with them. What is the video intended to tell people, and what format will it be? Is it an animation, like the one produced for the UNESCO Forum on Tackling Inequalities? Is it a member of the Board talking directly to members? Is it an interview?

Once your purpose, content, and format are decided, we start working on pre-production. If the video will need to be either scripted or have talking points for people to discuss, these need to be written and shared with the video participants. They need to feel natural, and genuine, but also be to the point and communicate a lot of information in a short amount of time. We also work out how many cameras we will need to film the video, and if there are other elements like on-screen text to include.



Once the concept and pre-production processes have happened, we get to the fun bit: Filming! Its not as simple as pointing a camera at someone and shouting "Action!", as the first challenge is always lighting. Lighting is often the difference between a professional-looking video and a video that looks like its been filmed on a flip phone in a basement. We have some inexpensive LED lights that we use to light most of our videos when filming at the office, and once the position and seating of the video participants (Stars!) are finalised, we can light them and ensure that we have enough coverage from microphones so that we can hear everything properly. We are still not 100% happy with the audio on our videos, and this has a lot to do with the equipment we are using at the moment. Finally, we get the camera or cameras set up and pointed at the stars, and ensure we have all the right angles for close ups, wider shots,

and coverage from more than one camera whenever possible. To make sure we can synchronise multiple cameras and audio input, we give a loud clap – a bit like the classic 'clapper board' you see on movie sets. Now all that is needed is for everyone to get their lines right – but this normally needs a few takes!

When all the film and audio has been recorded, we load it into a computer programme called Premiere Pro, which is specialist editing software. This allows us to join all the clips or takes together, blend them seamlessly and ensure that everything is as perfect as it can be. It also means we can balance the audio levels and take out much of the background noise that comes with recording in a busy place like London!

Post-Production – when the edit is complete, we can do things like add in extra elements like music or text on screen. The video that we are producing with the Beijing Banner for International Women's Day is our most ambitious yet, it includes: still photos, video from 3 handheld cameras and one aerial camera drone (thanks to Joe Addison for volunteering his time, expertise, and equipment to do drone video for us!), audio recording in the field, a voiceover recorded in the office, a soundtrack of young brass players recorded at ACWW Central Office, and text on screen. These were all compiled over



3 days, and took about 30 hours to film/record/collect... and will take probably the same to edit and get into post-production, which results in a 5 or 6 minute video!

When we are finally happy with all of these elements, we export the file into Media Encoder and wait for it to render into a video format that we can share. This can take anywhere from a few minutes to over an hour depending on the length and complexity of the video. At that point, we post it on our website and our social

Key Stats from ACWW Videos

Since January, videos produced at Central Office have reached more than

12,000
people

Each video gets, on average,

36 shares and
48 likes

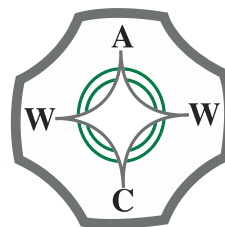
Videos account for
33%
of our total reach, and only

15%
of our digital output

media channels, and hope that you like it and share it! It's a time-consuming, technically difficult process that we are always keen to improve and get better results from, but it means that ACWW can produce videos that would otherwise cost thousands and thousands of pounds to create, reaching a wider audience and raising the professionalism and standard of the awareness-raising materials we create.

The Countrywoman 2020-2

ACWW and the United Nations



A guide to how ACWW works within and alongside the UN system

General Assembly (GA) Security Council (SC) Trusteeship Council International Court of Justice Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Secretariat

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

CEDAW

Committee for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women

For the first time in 2019, ACWW attended CEDAW and gave evidence on behalf of member organisations in the UK for that country's Periodic Review. ACWW evidence was published in the Concluding Observations, calling the country to account for failures on Article 14 relating to Rural Women.

HLPF

High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Review process for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which includes countries presenting Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs). In 2019, ACWW presented two responses, on behalf of Member Societies in Lesotho and New Zealand, and drafted the response statement and policy brief in response to the Cameroon government with input from Member Societies and our Area President.

Functional Commissions

CSW

Commission on the Status of Women

Principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. It was established in June 1946 and is responsible for monitoring and reviewing progress and problems in implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and in mainstreaming a gender perspective in UN activities.

Each year the Commission negotiates a text (the 'Agreed Conclusions') which all countries adopt and agree to abide by. **ACWW works to influence this through national governments, and has contributed to the text of the Agreed Conclusions in 2018 and 2019.**

Other Functional Commissions include:

- Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
- Narcotic Drugs
- Population and Development
- Science and Technology for Development
- Social Development
- Statistics
- United Nations Forum on Forests

- Established by the UN Charter in 1946, principal body for coordination, policy review, policy dialogue, and implementation of Sustainable Development Goals.
- Central mechanism for the activities of the UN and Agencies, and supervises work in economic, social, and environmental fields.
- **ACWW has held Consultative Status since 1947**

Want to know more about ACWW's advocacy work and its impact? Visit our website and look at the Advocacy and Policy pages

Funds and Programmes

- **UNDP**
UN Development Programme

- **UNEP**
UN Environment Programme

- **UNFPA**
UN Population Fund

- **UN-Habitat**
Human Settlements Programme

- **UNICEF**
UN Children's Fund
ACWW formerly held Consultative Status until c.2012

- **WFP**
World Food Programme

Specialised Agencies & Bodies

- **FAO**
Food and Agriculture Organisation
Leads international efforts to defeat hunger and malnutrition. Publishes annual Status of Food Security and Nutrition (SOFI) Report. Lead Agency in the Decade of Family Farming. ACWW has held **Consultative Status** since 1947

- **UNESCO**
UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
Headquarters in Paris, France. Consultative mechanism is the International Conference of NGOs, and ACWW works with the NGO Liaison Committee to ensure Rural Women are kept on the agenda. ACWW has held **Consultative Status** since 1948

- **UN WOMEN**
Entity for Gender Equality & Empowerment of Women
Founded in 2010 and operational from January 2011, UN Women are the international coordinating organisation for gender equality. Also the supporting body / lead agency on the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).

- **IFAD**
International Fund for Agricultural Development

- **ILO**
International Labour Organisation

- **IMF**
International Monetary Fund

- **UNIDO**
UN Industrial Development Organisation

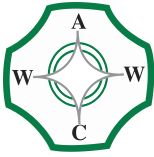
- **WHO**
World Health Organisation

- **UNHCR**
UN High Commissioner for Refugees



ACWW and the 2030 Agenda The Sustainable Development Goals, or SDGs or Global Goals, are a shared agenda to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and protect the planet. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted in 2000, were aimed at an array of issues that included poverty, hunger, disease, gender inequality, and limited access to safe water and sanitation. Enormous progress was made on the MDGs, showing the value of a unifying agenda underpinned by goals and targets. Despite this, the indignity of poverty has not ended for all.

The SDGs, and the broader sustainability agenda, go much further than the MDGs, addressing the root causes of poverty and the universal need for development that works for all people. The SDGs seek to finish the job of the MDGs, and ensure that no one is left behind. ACWW is committed to the SDGs, and we hope that you will commit yourself to them too. Success is not guaranteed, and we must all - Governments, Civil Society, and individuals - do more to ensure that they do not fail.



Board of Trustees

World President
Magdie de Kock



Deputy World President
Alison Burnett

UK Mission to the United Nations
One Dag Hammarskjold Plaza
885 Second Avenue
New York New York 10017
USA

Treasurer
Ruth Cargill

Secretary
Christine Reaburn



24 February 2020

Committee Chairmen

We, the undersigned Civil Society Organisations, coordinated by the Associated Country Women of the World,

**Communications
& Marketing Committee**
Sheila Needham

Call upon the gathered Ministers and representatives of Governments at the sixty-fourth session of the Commission on the Status of Women to note the following points when finalising the Political Declaration on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women;

Projects Committee
Maybel Moyo

1. Women's rights are human rights, universal and unalienable and as such it is critical that human rights are not removed from the document;

United Nations Committee
Marie Kenny

2. Agreed language must be protected as the consensus opinion of Member States, and is crucial to future progress;

Area Presidents

Canada
Linda Hoy

3. It is necessary that future working methods include measures to make accountability and progress-tracking a reality;

**Caribbean, Central,
and South America**
Ms Irene Hinds

4. Text such as "women and girls who experience multiple forms of discrimination have made the least progress" must be recognised as a form of victim-blaming, and removed from such documents. States Parties must acknowledge their own responsibility for future progress. With reference to the end of the first paragraph 6, we would suggest replacing the text with "women and girls who experience multiple forms of discrimination have seen the least progress".

Central and South Asia
Sister Lucas Arul Seeli

East, West, and Central Africa
Irene Chinje

Submitted with respect for your consideration by the Associated Country Women of the World, and co-signed by the 185 organisations in 35 countries listed on the following page who collectively represent 11,951,950 women globally.

Europe
Afrodita Roman

Southern Africa
Dr Marina Muller

South East Asia and Far East
Norjanah Razali

South Pacific
Gail Commens JP

United States of America
Bonnie Teeples

Magdie de Kock
World President
Associated Country Women of World

Chief Executive Officer
Tish Collins

Amplifying your voice at the United Nations

The Commission on the Status of Women in 2020

Each year, the United Nations convenes the Commission on the Status of Women at its Headquarters in New York. This is a two week gathering of governments, UN bodies, and civil society organisations and NGOs like ACWW - all brought together to discuss women's rights and agree new standards for action.

In every five year cycle, there is one Review Year which evaluates progress, marks anniversaries, and tries to cement achievements. The other four years feature a negotiation on a document called the Agreed Conclusions - in effect an international treaty which all governments commit to achieving by the next review cycle.

2020 was due to be a Review Year, marking 25 years since the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 5 years since the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals, and several other anniversaries. In the end the main conference was not able to happen because of the Covid-19 Pandemic, but there was a series of negotiations which started in February and which aimed to agree a Political Declaration on behalf of all governments.

In mid-February, ACWW was invited to a private briefing from the United Kingdom Government Equality Office, which gave an overview of the progress in negotiations, and which asked for input on the political declaration. There were some very troubling indications from the negotiations and draft text, including removal of references to women's rights as human rights, attempts at changing 'agreed language' which protects rights in existing treaties, and switching the blame for slow progress from governments to women globally.

Whilst ACWW represents millions of women worldwide, we felt it important that with such an opportunity to have input into a UN process at this high level, we reach as many of our members as possible. A letter to the UK negotiators was drafted and circulated to all member societies for agreement - it must be said that we were thrilled with the response!

In just five days we received a huge number of messages from members and even other organisations outside of ACWW who wanted to support our letter to the UN. Individuals contacted us and asked how they could promote it to their branches, and we saw a superb response from countries across the world.

The letter was sent to the UK negotiator on 24 February, and we received the response below shortly thereafter. To protect the privacy of the negotiator, their name has been redacted.

Dear Nick,

I wanted to reach out to say thank you very much for your efforts in bringing together such an impressive group of stakeholders to support the letter from the ACWW in regards to CSW. The active engagement of civil society organisations and indeed colleagues like yourself really helps to ensure the UK approach to CSW negotiations is aware of the views of engaged civil society partners and takes them into consideration. As chief negotiator for the UK in the CSW Political Declaration process, I can say that having your letter was useful in showing that the world was watching with keen interest for the outcome of our discussions and that there were expectations to be met.

I am sorry that due to the Coronavirus outbreak, CSW proper had to be postponed. We were looking forward to welcoming you and colleagues back to New York for a good two weeks of discussion and celebration. Despite this, I trust that our work will continue.

Thank you again for your work and your good collaboration.

When the Political Declaration was published on 9 March, we were pleased to see that three of the points raised in our letter had been listened to and their impact was visible in the Declaration. Sadly, our fourth point had not survived

185
Organisations Signed

35
Countries

Representing
11.95
million women

the negotiating process and the text did indeed include 'made the least progress'. However, because of ACWW's intervention we did see the inclusion of rural women in the list of specific groups suffering the least improvement globally, as you can see in this extract:

"that significant levels of inequality persist globally, that many women and girls experience multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, vulnerability and marginalization throughout their life course, and that they have made the least progress, which may include, inter alia, women of African descent, women with HIV and AIDS, rural women, indigenous women, women with disabilities, migrant women and older women"

It is through these processes that we can seek to achieve real change, with all governments now committing to this renewed Political Declaration, and giving us a mechanism for monitoring their action. It is not a perfect system, but by your brilliant response, and involvement in it, you have ensured that the voices of rural women are amplified and, crucially, heard at the international level. Thank you for your commitment, involvement, and for acting so quickly!

Projects Update

Progress Report from Project 1043

Based in Tamil Nadu in southern India, the Rural People Development Society (RPDS) is a secular grass-roots level organisation formed to enhance community development in rural, tribal and urban settings. RPDS works to educate vulnerable women and children on ways to use the opportunities and natural resources available to them.

In 2019, ACWW funded a new RPDS project called Cow Rearing for Income Generation. The project aims to ensure the livelihood of 20 widowed or unmarried women from a marginalised tribal community. In many communities in India, unmarried or widowed women are considered a burden by their families, often excluded from community activities and face financial insecurity in old age. By promoting economic empowerment through income generating activities, RPDS aims to provide these women with a sustainable livelihood.

The project is currently halfway through its planned activities. The beneficiaries have attended personal development workshops which focused on establishing self-esteem and leadership skills and promote feelings of empowerment and decision-making power among the women. This reportedly led to some of the women being in better decision-making positions in their own family structure regarding their children's education and household decisions.

RPDS provided the beneficiaries with loans to purchase cows as well as training on cow-rearing and organic fertiliser production. The production of manure has seen great success as more members of the self-help group have purchased cows and contributed to the supply. This has increased land fertility and will aid agricultural production. The project also established a revolving seed fund, so far, eight members of the group have received instalments to facilitate economic empowerment. The project is on track to make a sustainable and positive change to the lives of these women.

20
unmarried or widowed
women given the
opportunity
for financial
independence



Personal Development Class



Signing the register



Kaliyammal aged 39, has one child and lives with her parents that she also cares for. While she was working as a daily wage earner, she had little income and no job security. This meant that she was unable to send her child to school. With help from RPDS, Kaliyammal attended training sessions on cow rearing, and the production of milk and other dairy products such as curd, buttermilk, butter and ghee. She was also able to obtain a loan from RPDS to purchase a cow.

With hard work and support from RPDS, Kaliyammal is able to pay back her loan and earn a profit of around 250 to 310 Rupees (£2.50- £3.20) each day through cow rearing.

Karuppi aged 42, is married with four children. Her husband's alcoholism made him unable to provide for their family, driving them into poverty. Unable to afford to send her children to school, Karuppi contacted RPDS for help. Joining the Self-help Group funded by ACWW, Karuppi was given training and received a loan for the purchase of a cow. Now able to generate income from the milk and other dairy products she can produce from her cow she is able to bring home a profit of at least 250 Rs (£2.50) a day which has enabled her to send her children back to school.



Project Funding in a Global Pandemic

How ACWW is safeguarding our project beneficiaries, evaluators, and your donations

As the events around the global Covid-19 pandemic unfolded, ACWW was faced with a very serious question over Project Funding. Many of our project beneficiaries had already indicated that project activities would cease in line with local stay-at-home advice, and banks were warning of delays in transferring money. In light of this, knowing that we could not, in good conscience, encourage beneficiaries to proceed with project activities, and knowing that projects funds could suffer due to quickly fluctuating transfer rates, the Executive Committee took the difficult decision to delay the next round of project funding to October. Those applicants whose applications were due to be deliberated on at the March meeting of the projects committee have been informed, and are understanding of the unusual situations we are trying to navigate.

This means that all donations will also hold over until October, and that the projects committee will deliberate on the applications meant for March and the applications meant for October. It promises to be a fairly intense 2-day meeting!

All of your projects donations are still earmarked for projects and their direct associated costs, in line with the WE Fund pot you donated to. Your specified donations will still be used for projects, just not until October.

In the meantime, we have quite a few projects reports to send out over the next couple of months, and don't forget that you can download the 2019 Projects impact report from the website!



Beneficiaries from Project 1055 in Mongolia take a financial literacy course (above), and practice their sewing skills (below)



A Tight-Knit Community

ACWW member Sue Atrill tells us how it all started

Over the last few years, ACWW has, at various points, collected knitted jumpers for our Board members to take to children in need. We met up with Sue from Hampshire Federation of Women's Institutes, who told us a bit more about how this initiative was started.

To begin, I want to stress that this isn't about me but the knitters of Hampshire WIs and the children in Zimbabwe who receive these jumpers.

Hampshire WI has a record of supporting people in other countries. In 2003, Irene Johnstone from Zimbabwe Federation asked to meet some of those who helped with supplying writing materials for children in Zimbabwe. She and her husband were welcomed to WI House and explained how much the writing supplies we had collected and sent had helped the children there. Irene told us about other

needs, and we all considered how we could best support. There had been another very successful initiative to knit jumpers for children in Kosovo and after discussion, it was agreed this could work for Zimbabwe.

Finding someone who would receive and distribute them at the other end was a concern but there were a number of WIs in Zimbabwe then, so they all got involved. We were advised that Bertha Jambaya and Mabel Moyo of the Jekesa Pfungwa Vulingqondo would be also able and willing to help with distribution.

I used the Federation Newsletter and the Hampshire website to inform and encourage and convey thanks that came through. We started to receive more information as to the preferred colours - there are none; sizes- although small jumpers look cute, we were advised that older siblings who cared for the little

ones were in just as much need and were envious too, which I suppose is normal for children. We supplied the same pattern that was used for Kosovo.

We were informed that many of the recipients were AIDS orphans and the older children have to grow up very quickly to be the main carer for their brothers and sisters. We were reminded that it is cold at night there and children were in need.

In the early days, jumpers were distributed at the trustee meetings of Zimbabwe WIs but with the number of WIs diminishing and the poor state of the roads, it soon became an impossible task. There is now only one WI in the country.

Several members of the Zimbabwe WI changed, some moving back to the UK and life got harder and many WIs closed. Sue van Niekerk was the treasurer of the Zimbabwe Federation and agreed to receive the parcels and had contacts who took the parcels to children's homes and schools.

The total would be hard to estimate but somewhere in the region of 50,000 jumpers were sent, but over the last year or so, the authorities have imposed a levy of US\$1 on each parcel, which proved too much for private individuals to pay due to the state of affairs that exist.

Sadly after nearly 15 years, this had to all stop. I was very unhappy but didn't feel that I could coordinate payments for the import of Jumpers. In the last couple of years though, ACWW central Office began receiving jumpers, and Board members from Africa began taking them back in their luggage. This means that the jumpers reach needy children without incurring unreasonable charges for recipients.

Our Board members work with a number of societies all over the world who are involved with vulnerable children. They are thrilled with the response to this initiative and hope that they'll have your blessing to take these jumpers to needy children all over the world.



How to Spot "Fake News"

How can we know what's real in the era of 'Fake News'?

'Fake News' is a phrase that brings on instant feelings of frustration when I hear it. So often, it is bandied about to attack journalists and well-meaning reporters whose take on an issue doesn't align with a particular party-political stance. Rather than actually engaging with an issue, we can lob 'Fake News' like a verbal grenade to obliterate any opportunity to examine the beliefs we hold in the light of new information.

All that said, there are very real and serious concerns about the spread of false information, and the targeting of vulnerable people to help spread it. From here on, I will use the phrase 'False Information' instead of 'Fake News.'

Before we can look at how false information spreads over social media, it is important to consider why false information is valuable. We all know that emails can carry viruses, and we shouldn't click on pop-up ads. These can introduce viruses and malware, infecting your system or holding your data to ransom. Nowadays, we're pretty well conditioned to recognise these feeble attempts at bypassing our security settings, and happily delete emails claiming to 'release footage from your webcam if you don't follow this link and send bitcoin.'

What is a bit more confusing is the spread of false information on social media. Why even bother to try to spread false information? To take a real life example, there was a popular video from a facebook page called '5 Minute Crafts' that went viral last year, claiming to expose fake ingredients in food- fibres in packaged bread, plastic in cheese, filler in supplements, and so forth. They showed experiments claiming to prove their hypothesis, and they succeeded in drawing people in who were convinced by their claims. Another example goes even further, and drew in news outlets all over the world. Someone claimed to have found shards of glass in their pack of baby wipes. Mothers everywhere were in fear that they would shred their baby's bottom with compromised wipes, and stocks in the company plummeted. The only problem? None of it was true. There was no glass in the pack of wipes. There is no glass used in the production process of wipes.

So why? We've been taught to follow the money when we want a cause. Figure out who benefits, and you'll find the

motivation. But in order to make sense of why false information spreads so rapidly on social media, we need to look at a different type of currency: Influence.

Influence. Influencer. These words are synonymous with curated instagram feeds and constantly changing and often problematic trends. Influence is the currency of social media, and the best way to gain influence is to 'go viral.' When you 'go viral,' meaning your posts are reaching lots of people all over the world, you may get contacted by companies who want brand ambassadors or advertising. You get free stuff from companies you work with. Eventually, your influence will turn into money if it is sustained.

How does this relate to the transmission of false information? Well, it would seem that the information people like to spread and the information that is the boring truth aren't always the same thing. Content creators will prey on the goodwill of the average social media user (in the case of the baby wipes) or fear around food additives (in the case of the 'fake food' video) and create content that people want to share to protect their friends and families. This content 'goes viral' on the back of good intentions, the page (and the person running) become influential, and they can turn that influence into ad revenue and brand perks.

It is very rarely obvious when someone is spreading false information. Most of the time, if you dig deep enough, you'll find someone benefiting from the spread of false information, but unfortunately, some people just like to sow chaos, seeing how far a chain message or bit of false news will go. The golden nugget for these people is to try to get an actual news agency to pick up the false information.

So, how can you recognise false information, especially if you're seeing all your friends and family share it? Here are a few pointers:

- If a post starts with "My [friend] had a [relative] who works at [authoritative job] and they say....." This is not necessarily true, and people create posts like this to sound authoritative. It only takes a moment to investigate the claims a post like this makes by using reputable sources, or a fact-finder like snopes.com. A general rule of thumb: If you're not willing to investigate, don't share.

- Medical advice should only ever be shared directly from reputable sources (The WHO, actual doctors you know are real doctors, hospitals, national medical authorities). A friend saying "My friend who works at the WHO says..." is not a reputable source. Go to the WHO facebook page, or share links directly from the WHO website if you want to share medical advice on facebook. Additionally, local experience does not negate international or national facts. In a real life example I saw this week, someone said "I work at a hospital and their beds are all empty, so the government is lying about a lack of capacity for covid patients" Their limited, local experience does not mean other information isn't true.

- 'The Truth About' videos should always be investigated before sharing. Sometimes, just looking through the comments on a video will show where someone has weighed in with facts and sources disproving the video.

- If it sounds like a conspiracy, it probably is. Phrases like, "the government don't want you to know" and "what your doctor isn't telling you" are indicators for false information.

- Facebook already has permission to store and use all of your photos, and the data you give them, plus the apps that you give permission to use facebook. Copying and pasting anything to your status does not undo the terms you agreed to when you created your account, or at each facebook update. Everything that asks you to copy and paste something into your status to 'fix' a perceived facebook problem is fake.

- Don't forward chain messages. Ever. Even if it looks really cute, or you think someone would appreciate it. If you are being asked to forward a message, it is not for the purpose of spreading kindness, it is far more likely to spread a virus a hack attempt or someone trying to trace a network of contacts. In the end, you help infect and entire network

I hope this information has been helpful, and if you want to learn more about how to recognise 'Fake News' and keep yourself safe online, you can visit <https://en.unesco.org/MILCLICKS>. This is a UN initiative to help people improve their media and information literacy, and could be a really good way to spend your time in lockdown!

ACWW's Beijing+25 Banner

Marking the 25 years since the Beijing Declaration, and highlighting the challenges still facing rural women globally

As we reported in the last issue of The Countrywoman, ACWW attended the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, and committed to helping achieve what became known as the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The Platform identified 12 Critical Areas of Concern which needed to be solved if women were to achieve true equality, and governments achieve completion of their commitments.

In March 2020, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women was to focus on celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration, and many governments congratulate themselves on a 'job well done'. ACWW, critically aware of how far the world is from addressing the 12 Critical Areas of Concern, decided that whilst attending CSW we should help illustrate the reality of life for rural women globally.

We wrote to member societies around the world, and invited them to participate in contributing a piece of craftwork to a large banner that would be unveiled in front of UN headquarters on 8 March, International Women's Day. Sadly, because of the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic, CSW this year was cancelled and we were unable to display the banner but the contributions received from all over the world were beautiful, emotionally charged, and powerful messages of hope in the face of incredible challenge.

Each of the 12 Critical Areas is addressed both as the original point recorded by the UN, and with an update on the current reality facing rural women. These craft pieces take many forms, from appliqué to painting, embroidery to patchwork, felting to barbed wire! They are unique, and reflect the communities they come from. We are so very grateful to every society who agreed to contribute, and the wonderfully skilled individuals who brought their ideas to fruition. We are pleased to showcase each one on the following pages, and will raise as much awareness of them as possible over the year ahead.

A final note - each of these panels will be auctioned off at the next Triennial World Conference in 2022, in support of ACWW's advocacy work. If you would like to own a piece of history, this is your chance!



The first panel shows the Beijing Declaration logo, and highlights the road from Beijing, through the Millennium Development Goals, to the Sustainable Development Goals, but points out rural women are marking the continuing challenges. Panel drawn by Nick Newland, ACWW Central Office



Women and Poverty

Made by Donna Henderson, Canada

Title: Road to a Better Life,

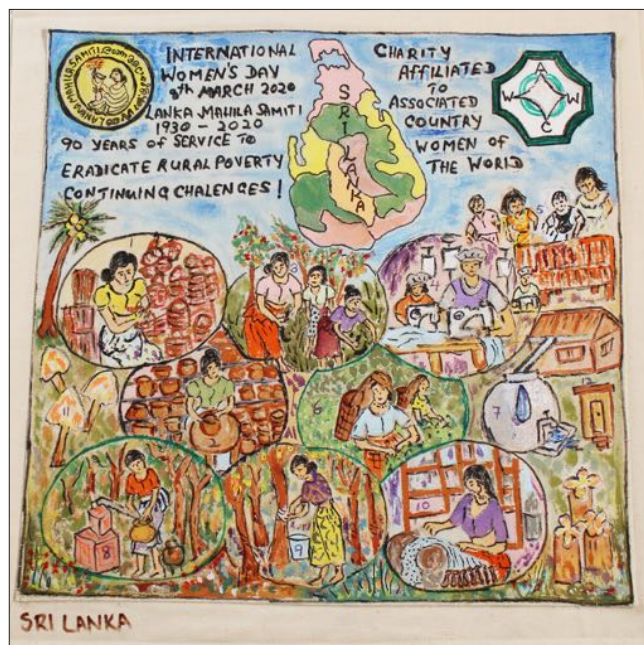
'My view of this topic resulted in this square. Both city and rural women experience poverty. Foreground depicts bleakness and the women are on the road to better lives through education. ACWW provides opportunities for women to learn the skills that lift them to a better life. Actually, I believe ACWW provides us all with the opportunity to be better people through the caring and sharing of women.'



Women and Poverty: Continuing Challenges

Made by Thilaka Perera and the women of Lanka Mahila Samiti, Sri Lanka

This contribution illustrates the challenges relating to poverty which face the rural women of Sri Lanka in many forms. It also marks International Women's Day, and Lanka Mahila Samiti's 90th Anniversary year in 2020.

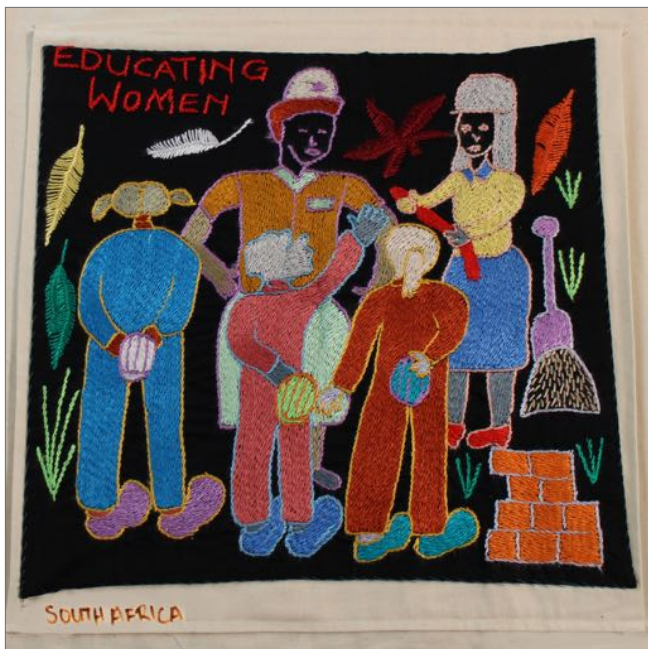


Education and Training of Women

Made by the women of the Women's Institute of Pahang, Malaysia

'Teach a Woman, you Teach a Nation; Skill a Woman, they Skill the Nation' says this contribution from Malaysia. Each nation on earth contributes to a pencil writing in a school book, broadening our understanding and strengthening our global education.





Education and Training of Women: Continuing Challenges

Made by Savannah Chauke of Mapula Embroideries South Africa

Mapula (Mother of Rain) Embroideries are original, designed and hand made by about 150 women. Their work hangs in museums and private collections worldwide. Embroiderers work at home and from a base at the DWT Nthathe Adult Education Centre with the Sisters of Mercy in the Winterveld, 40 km northwest of Pretoria. Since 1991 the income has empowered the women, helped them feed and educate their children and improve their lives. Mapula Embroideries is now an independent trust.



Women and Health

Made by women of the Federation of Women's Institutes of Trinidad and Tobago, Trinidad and Tobago

This deeply quilted contribution illustrates the visible (the blue, black, and red heart in the middle) and invisible (the red outlined hearts on either side) challenges to women's health. The overall theme follows the traditional colours of the Women's Institutes of Trinidad and Tobago, red, white, and black.



Women and Health: Continuing Challenges

Made by Jenny Sellers, Projects Administrator, ACWW Central Office

This square indicates the lack of disaggregated data in a health setting that influences medical funding and decision making.

Violence Against Women

Made by Szabo Maria of the Women of the Third Millennium, Brasov Branch, Romania

The idea and concept was by Georgeta Havrilet of the Women of the Third Millennium, Targu Mures Branch. The pattern's drawing for sewing was by Melinda Puskas, traditional motifs from Barseiland and its surrounding community. "You will see in the panel in a very suggestive way, a woman and a child, hiding under an umbrella from an other person's aggressive palms and fists. It is related to the "violence against women and children."



Violence Against Women: Continuing Challenges

Made by Ruth Shanks AM, past World President of ACWW New South Wales, Australia

This piece highlights the impact violence against women has in all communities around the world, irrelevant of age, religion, employment, race, or any other characteristics. Many of you will be familiar with quilts made by past World President (2013-2019) Ruth Shanks, and this is one of two featured on the banner as she kindly agreed to contribute a second when someone was unable to take part.



Women and Armed Conflict

Made by Ann Eccleston of Northern Ireland Women's Institutes, Northern Ireland

Ann was kind enough to send a detailed description of her creative process, a little of which is shown there: 'When I had the first meeting about the making of the collage with Sophia Maybin and Edwina Marr... I was astonished with the amount of children caught up in conflict as they clung to their mother's breasts, the mothers arms laden with small children and babies as they ran in fear, and there was a look of trauma on all their faces. So, Trauma was a word featured. I used two pictures of little boys just standing one against a brick wall and another clinging onto barbed wire. The two boys looked like they were in despair. So, Despair was a word featured...' This is a stunning piece which needs to be seen up close to really appreciate how detailed it is.





Women and Armed Conflict: Continuing Challenges

Made by Irene Chinje, ACWW Area President for East, West and Central Africa, Cameroon

'The rural woman as a mother, wife and sister still has her role to perform as a nurturer and custodian of culture despite any conflict. The family at this time looks up solely to her for their feeding, health and economic stability. With all the insecurities, she still has to till the land to grow the crops for the family's survival and its economic needs. The image is a tired woman carrying a baby whose daily existence is wrecked by conflicts. There is a hoe in her hand, an AK47 by her side to protect herself and the child and a basket of her weathered produce. The environment and climate are unfriendly, the soil depleting due to the harsh climate. She has all of these challenges to handle coupled with the insecurities and long-term effects of the conflicts, making access to basic amenities difficult as there is naught in social or economic gains. Her basket is half-filled, an indication of bad yield. She can barely take, hence she is tattered and dishevelled.'



Women and the Economy

Made by Christine Andreassen of the Norwegian Women and Family Association, Norway

'We see restricted access to education as a continuing challenge to women's economy.'



Women and the Economy: Continuing Challenges

Made by Tish Collins, Chief Executive Officer, ACWW Central Office

'This panel represents women multi-tasking to complete the many demands on her. Symbolism includes feeding and nurturing children and domestic animals, being under time-pressure to complete unpaid tasks for home and paid work outside the home. The statistics, taken from an Indian survey, represent the continuing imbalance of paid and unpaid work between men and women.'

Women in Power and Decision Making

Made by Kay Denise Smith, United States of America

'My interpretation of this brief is to show this young woman, in her colourful headwear raising her hand to: Vote at a meeting; To be recognised at a meeting; To signal that she is the leader and that others are to follow her. I feel her motion could be any of the above and demonstrates power and decision making.'



Women in Power and Decision Making: Continuing Challenges

Made by Dr Marina Muller, ACWW Area President for Southern Africa, Namibia

Area President Dr Marina Muller highlights the need for Education, Vocational Training, and Community Development programmes and projects to achieve gender equality and better representation by women; she gives the figure of approximately 30%, but states: 'We Will Get There Though'.

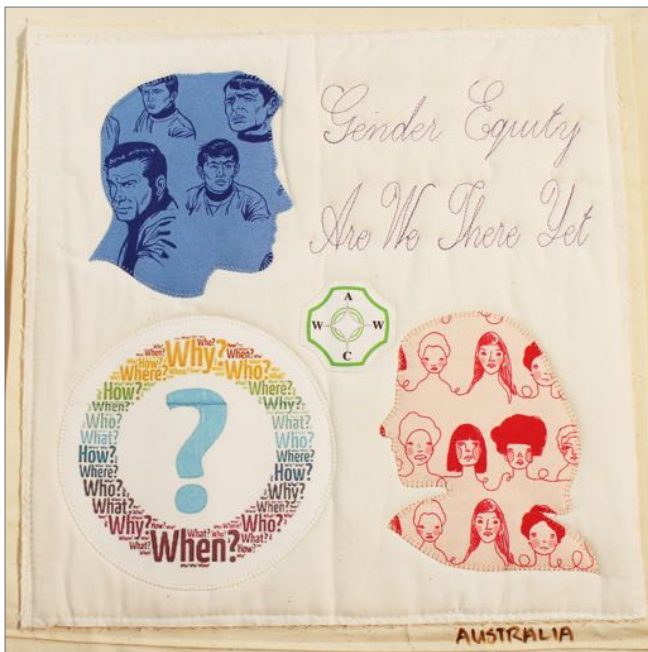


Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women

Made by Magdie de Kock, ACWW World President South Africa

'This fabric painting highlights the importance of health care for mothers and babies. Access to medical care, hospitals and clinics is non-negotiable and should be made more accessible to women and children. It is especially important in the stages of post-natal and ante-natal care.'





Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women: Continuing challenges

Made by Ruth Shanks AM, past World President of ACWW New South Wales, Australia

The second of Ruth's two contributions, this poses the question: Gender Equity: Are we there yet?



Human Rights of Women

Made by Snoekie Erasmus and Dorah Matshe, South Africa

This colourful contribution was a collaborative effort and shows a traditional graduation cap, Africa, and the uphill struggle for young women's education.



Human Rights of Women: Continuing Challenges

Made by Tish Collins, Chief Executive Officer, ACWW Central Office

'Women's Rights are Human Rights. The eight embroidered words represent the major headings recognised as universal human rights. The three dolls are to represent women of the world joining hands in unison to work for these rights – inspired by my attendance at such international gatherings as ACWW Triennial World Conferences and the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations.'

Women and the Media: Continuing Challenges

Made by Sydney Salter, Agriculture and Engagement Administrator, ACWW Central Office

"This needle-felt piece was inspired by the pressure put on women by popular media to conform to very narrow, western, and often white standards of beauty. A woman looks at herself in the mirror, but can only see herself in the light of the judgements cast on her by media. She is unable to see herself objectively, and the lies she believes about herself are perpetuated because her insecurity is a source of profit for the cosmetics, diet, clothing, and fitness industries."



Women and the Media

Made by Tatyana Lazareva, Women's Union of Russia

'Russian artist, needlewoman, teacher, laureate of the "Patchwork of Russia" exhibition, author of books about patchwork, author of the Russian nation dress program for its modern development "Russian dress: traditions and modernity". The name of the work: "Ни дня без строчки" It is a wordplay in Russian: "Not a day without a line", meaning not a day without a stitch or a sentence because in Russian both of them are spelled the same- "строчка".



Women and the Environment

Made by Ann Irving, New Zealand

'This screen print is of Rural Women New Zealand's 300 acre forest and wetland called Castledowns Wetland Dipton. The plants pictured are Carex or native tussock and love to have their roots in the water of the pond. The wetland, which is 12.4 ha, has not had much attention over the 90 years that we have owned it, but now it is appreciated for the value to our water systems. Our Southland area women and the Dipton area landcare group are cutting tracks, killing animal and plant pests, and making it a great place for children to visit to enjoy the wilderness and play in the small creek. We also love the experience of working hard and finishing the afternoon with afternoon tea.'



Women and the Environment: Continuing Challenges

Made by Amanda Bowles and Ann Dodson of Hampshire Federation of Women's Institutes, England

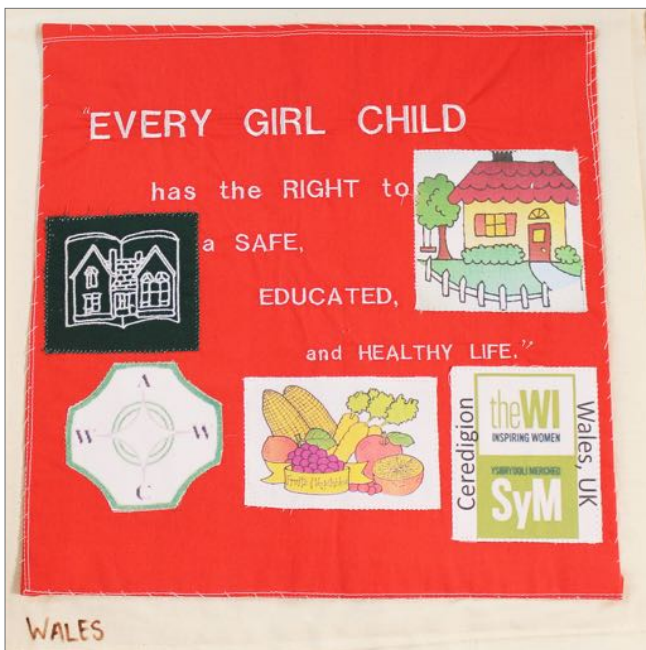
This beautiful contribution features several forms of artwork, including embroidery, fabric painting, and quilting.



The Girl Child

Made by Eluned Davies, Beti Wyn Davies and Margaret Fogg of Ceredigion Federation of Women's Institutes, Wales

'Every girl child has the right to a safe, educated, and healthy life' states this colourful contribution from Wales. It also features the logos of ACWW and the Women's Institute.



The Girl Child: Continuing Challenges

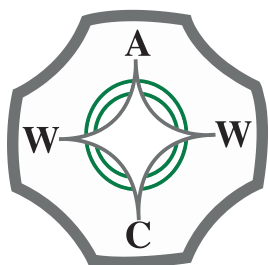
Made by Selina Makwaha of Mapula Embroideries, South Africa

A second contribution from Mapula Embroideries, this illustrates the need for young women to work, and contribute to their communities, often to the detriment of their education and personal development.





'This fabric painting highlights the importance of health care for mothers and babies. Access to medical care, hospitals and clinics in non-negotiable and should be made more accessible to women and children. It is especially important in the stages of post-natal and ante-natal care.' ACWW World President Magdie de Kock



Associated Country Women of the World
A04 Parkhall | 40 Martell Road | London SE21 8EN
CIO No.1174798

info@acww.org.uk | www.acww.org.uk | +44 (0)20 7799 3875



THE GLOBAL GOALS
For Sustainable Development