

# The Countrywoman Magazine

International Magazine of the Associated Country Women of the World

Issue 1, 2024



Associated Country  
Women of the World  
[www.acww.org.uk](http://www.acww.org.uk)  
Registered Charity  
No.1174798



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## The Countrywoman

Issue 1 - 2024

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

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We welcome your submissions for *The Countrywoman* magazine, particularly from first time contributors. Due to ACWW's communications approach, articles may not be printed immediately, but included in the most appropriate issue. We welcome input throughout the year.

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

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## Cover Photo

ACWW World President Magdie de Kock meets with His Excellency Mr Nkosinathi Emmanuel Mthethwa, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Republic of South Africa to UNESCO, and Ambassador to France, during the 15th International Forum of NGOs at UNESCO. Magdie was speaking at the Forum on 'Transforming Mentalities' about the work ACWW does to support the empowerment of rural women in a panel with three other major women's organisations. The photo was taken at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France.

## 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 Members...

Eight months have passed since the 30<sup>th</sup> Triennial World Conference in Kuala Lumpur which was an amazing event and will forever be imprinted in my mind and heart! When I received your vote of confidence and therewith the privilege to serve as World President for a second term, I realised it is not only an honour but also an opportunity to continue building onto everything ACWW has achieved in the first term and looking ahead, securing the “sustainable growth for the future” of our beloved organisation.

There is a seamless continuation of the work from the previous term as a well-established strategy was already in place and a newly elected Board enthusiastically pledged their support to all aspects of this strategy. The applicants for the ACWW Coordinators Programme are increasing as members welcome the opportunity to be more involved with the work of ACWW. The new focus on funding projects was recognised and rewarded within months after introducing the new approach, when ACWW’s Women’s Empowerment Summit in Mongolia was awarded the Incredible Impacts Award by the International Conference and Convention Association and BestCities. You can Read more in the Central Office Report on page 7.

Following the Triennial World Conference, I have taken every opportunity to meet and engage with members. In September and August of 2023, I attended local societies’ Annual Congresses. In October 2023 I braved the unpredictable weather of Northern Ireland when I accepted three invitations to represent ACWW. On a very cold and rainy day I met with the Executive of the Northern Ireland Women’s Institutes in their historic Federation House in Belfast. The warmth and kindness I received made up for the unpleasant weather! Northern Irish hospitality continued as I spent the following three days in the pleasant company of my gracious hostess, Edwina Marr, and her family. I was introduced to members of the Women’s Institutes of Down-Patrick and learned about Northern Ireland’s rich history and the significance of the historic figure of St Patrick. Attending the Annual General meeting of NIWI in the beautiful Manor House Hotel in Enniskillen, I had the honour to address the members as we celebrated the International Day

of Rural Women on 28 October. Later that afternoon, when we drove back to Crossgar, still in the pouring rain, Edwina and I were treated when Margaret Broome, President of the NIWI, took us to Slieve Donard in Newcastle, an impressive Victorian hotel – a perfect ending to my pleasant experiences in Northern Ireland!

The next day I departed for London to attend the final Board meeting for 2023. We were delighted to meet at the new location of ACWW’s Central office, referred to as Madge Watt House. The Board was well received by the Executive Director and members of staff at The Foundry. We left London after a very productive meeting and were motivated to proceed with ACWW’s aims, making a positive impact on the lives of so many people, and well aware of the fact that there is still so much work to be done.

In January 2024, I represented ACWW at an International gathering of Non-Governmental Organisations. The two-day event took place at the impressive headquarters building of UNESCO in Paris, a short distance from the historic Eiffel Tower. I was invited by the President of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee to attend and speak at the 15<sup>th</sup> International Forum of NGOs in Official Partnership with UNESCO.

I was honoured to be included in a panel discussion with presidents of three other global women’s organisations. In my approach to the theme ‘Transforming Mentalities’, I focused on ACWW’s approach to empowerment of women and our views on Domestic Violence. My reference to our recent project and the positive impact on the community of Khovd, Mongolia, impressed the audience and it was followed by interesting and stimulating conversations related to the work of ACWW. The overwhelmingly positive response from the delegation of China to my presentation, is worth mentioning as they, and other NGO’s representatives, regarded ACWW’s work as an example to follow!

The changes around us - whether social, political, technological, scientific, economic, or otherwise - require that we help our members navigate through new and increasingly complex landscapes, which profoundly impact our families and communities. As devoted and well-informed members of ACWW, we have



a responsibility to help shape those new landscapes. All ACWW’s work is focused on enriching your experience as members and empowering women. Therefore, I am always open to feedback and how we can better serve you. Feel free to reach out to me, any of our Board members, or our Executive Director if you have ideas or would like to get involved in any way.

Whilst a new term offers many opportunities it also has its limitations – one of which is finance. The decline in income poses challenges for the Board to expand the work of ACWW. At a recent Board meeting, led by the Treasurer and the members of the Finance and Budget Working Group, we participated in in-depth discussions exploring various ways to address the reality of a deficit budget. You will be kept informed of our plans, but in the meantime, we will be most grateful for receiving additional voluntary donations. Donations support all ACWW’s work, from projects to advocacy to education and awareness-raising. So, if you can, please donate to the unrestricted **Rural Women in Action Fund**, thereby ensuring unrestricted impact! Please visit the ACWW website and be navigated to the portal for an easy and accessible way to make an online donation.

In 2024, the Board, assisted by our staff and supported by our membership, will continue to strive for excellence in everything we do, pushing the boundaries and continuing to make a difference in the world.

As we are moving forward, embracing our theme “Sustainable growth for the future”, let us remember the words of Mahatma Gandhi:  
*“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”*  
Let us therefore continue to serve others with compassion, dedication and humility.

With warm regards,

*Magdie*

Magdie de Kock - World President

# Triennial Address from the World President

Dear Members,  
Honoured Guests,  
Friends,

The Triennium that we start today she is unlike any other in our 94 year history. Standing in the shadow of a Pandemic which highlighted the starkest inequalities in our society, and which still impacts us, often without warning, we must endeavour to achieve significant and meaningful change in our communities.

We have seen and heard so much this week of the resilience of Rural Women. We have read the reports of our Member Societies. We have heard our Area Presidents bring forward updates from their constituents. We have seen now that we are finally able to come together once again, our friendships, and our commitment to each other, have remained as strong as ever.

Vigorous debate has helped ensure that our mandate is strong and clear. The Strategic Plan adopted by the outgoing Board in 2022 offers our incoming team a pathway to achieving successful change – and the Resolutions adopted during this Triennial World Conference ratify this. The Rural Women in Action plan is our future, built on the lessons of the past. It is this balance that I would like to bear in mind today – recognising what our precious Association has achieved in its 94 year history, celebrating our successes, and striving to do more as we continue to move forward together.

The former President of my own country of South Africa, Nelson Mandela, once reflected “As I have said, the first thing is to be honest with yourself. You can never have an impact on society if you have not changed yourself.” Truly, we have spent the past few years having to confront the truths and challenges of our structure, our activities, our priorities, and the drastically changed realities of the world around us. In doing so, we have reflected, considered, discussed, and even argued – but the result is a new Triennium with great opportunities for great impact ahead.

I am honoured by your vote of confidence, and your expression of

faith in my leadership as your World President. I will certainly look forward to a Triennium with fewer tragedies and personal challenges for our global membership and all rural women, but I assure you I will not shy away from the hard work and commitment I pledged in my nomination, and with which I have sought to serve you for the past four years.

In 2019, at our first meeting of the last Triennium’s incoming Board, I asked Trustees for their support as we adopted our Triennial Theme – Our Diversity is Our Strength. We have spent four years finding our strength in each other – and I don’t think we could ever have guessed how much strength we would need, nor how much we would come to rely on our network when faced with separation, isolation, and distance.

I would like to pay tribute to each and every one of our Member Societies, and our Individual Members, for the way they have weathered the storms of the 2019-2023 Triennium. In our first Conference Session this week, we marked the recent 100th Birthday of Past World President Lyndsay Hackett-Pain, and today we welcome our youngest ever Area President, in Tharindra Arumapperuma.

Looking around me, I see familiar faces of those who return to the Board for second terms or who take new positions. I am also pleased and excited to say that I see new, less familiar faces. If we imagine this Conference to be at the crossroads of our past and our future, then I would like to take a moment’s pause to reflect on the strength of the legacy which guides us, and celebrate that the best may indeed be yet to come.

I stand before you today to announce our Triennial Theme. We must seize the momentum of this week and use it to ensure that we arrive in Ottawa in 2026 as a stronger, broader network of passionately dedicated rural women’s organisations.

As was said when we updated the ‘Objects’ clause of our Constitution this week - this can only be achieved through the strength of our network which includes rural, non-urban, peri-urban,

urban, remote, pastoralist, coastal, and Indigenous communities.

I am therefore pleased to proclaim that the Triennial Theme of the Associated Country Women of the World for the 2023-2026 Triennium will be: **SUSTAINABLE GROWTH FOR THE FUTURE.**

From the crops we celebrated in our Thanksgiving Ceremony, to those planted in our new Climate-Smart Agriculture projects; we reaffirm our commitment to the UN Decade of Family Farming.

As we head towards our next Conference in Ottawa, I remember the Algonquin origin of this word, and reaffirm our commitment to the International Decade of Indigenous Languages.

I would also invite you to reflect on our collective commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and each of our own personal abilities to promote awareness on these issues while reading through the wonderful booklets found in your conference bags

We have a responsibility to continue building our Association towards a bright future with an ever growing membership. We must learn the lessons of Covid-19 and ensure not only sustainability but resilience. We must champion inter-generational cooperation, and celebrate our proud history – each day reaching new members and ensuring we have a proud future.

Earlier in the week, you were promised additional information on the projects of the Rural Women in Action strategy. We were keen to keep the focus on the reporting of the 2019-2023 Triennium, but I am now pleased to confirm that we have a pilot project in its initial stage.

This first project is an Education and Community Development project conducted in partnership with Sain Tus Development Bridge in Khovd province, Mongolia. Though no scoping visit has been undertaken, we are confident in the continued success of collaboration with a long-term project partner. The project is co-funded with UNESCO as part of their Participation Project, and endorsed



ACWW's newly elected Board of Trustees (along with Claire Mahon and Elizabeth Ann Kelly, not pictured) at the conclusion of the Conference

by the Mongolian and UK National Commissions for UNESCO.

It will see 300 women survivors of domestic violence from 16 indigenous groups come together for a Women's Empowerment Summit focused on delivering critical training for women in vulnerable situations. This start to the project follows on from an existing programme by Sain Tus Development Bridge NGO, funded by ACWW – continuing our approach of strengthening a legacy whilst ensuring a positive future.

Further, I am pleased to say that we now have 2 project proposals under consideration. The first is a new project which we are hoping will be implemented in Romania. The excellent first draft proposal provides holistic psycho-social support for Ukrainian refugee children through permaculture; Working on the land, with plants and soil.

Based in a Romanian school granted special dispensation use of the Ukrainian curriculum, there is scope for potential expansion once a pilot has been established as resources such as a manual for teachers to train children using raised growing beds will have minimal on-costs. Teachers will also be trained, building local capacity, and the children will benefit from the holistic care they will receive, and will develop an understanding of growing and agriculture, the better to contribute to rebuilding when they are able to return home.

The project ties in with the Decade of

Family Farming's educational priorities, and responds to the clearly expressed desires of ACWW members globally to support Ukrainian refugee women and their families. As well as being in line with 2016's policy Resolution on Refugees, this project avoids the risk and dangers of working in a conflict zone, or disaster recovery relief.

Lastly, and at the earliest stage of consideration, is a Climate-Smart Agriculture project working with the Salem Horticultural Farmers' Association in Rundu, on the Namibia-Angola border. This would partner with a farming collective of women land-owners, as well as engage with the Namibian Agronomic Board. The initial scoping visit was carried out late last year, and all reports and preparations continue to be positive.

Our duty to the members, as well as our privilege, is to see the Rural Women in Action strategy implemented. To deliver our development projects in partnership with our members, supported by impactful advocacy, and never losing sight of the intention of achieving meaningful change for rural women. In due course, and as these pilots progress, we will publish details and information, celebrating success, and learning with each step.

To my colleagues on the Board of Trustees I say this: Welcome. We have been elected with a mandate for action, and we must now take all that has been discussed this week and redouble our efforts to strengthen ACWW's reach across communities. To our dear Members, we thank you for your trust

and confidence in us. We are relying on you to come on the journey of this Triennium with us, we will do all in our power to ensure your voices are heard on the global as well as the local stage.

We will not rest until every Rural Woman feels she can walk unafraid – to school, to work, to the destination of her choice, and at her own pace. Nor until every Rural Woman feels empowered to use her own voice and speak her truth to power. We must never stop learning, never stop listening, never stop supporting one another, never stop ensuring that each step towards that destination is taken with free will, in safety, and without fear of recrimination.

We are, as ever, Rural Women in Action.

Thank you.

**Magdie de Kock**  
ACWW World President



# Treasurer's Update

Some eight months ago, you, the membership of ACWW, elected me as your new treasurer at the Triennial World Conference in Malaysia. My husband and I often use the phrase "every day's a school day" to acknowledge that we have learnt something new that day and nothing could be truer for me than this phrase during the past eight months. Thank you for your vote last May.

ACWW is at another crossroads in its long existence. You will recall that members agreed deficit budgets for 2023-2025 at the conference. This matter has been a topic of Board deliberations over the past months. The mismatch between expenditure of ACWW and the income to support it, is not new, but COVID, its impact on the ability of member societies to survive, followed swiftly by a cost-of-living crisis across all countries has meant the continuation of a downward trajectory in income.

At the same time, the demands on ACWW to do more work have increased. The new round of project applications shows that the needs of rural women for support are as great, or greater, than ever and the funds needed to give this support have increased. In addition, our reputation with UNESCO and with other countries has led to requests for help to lead on advocacy and projects. Examples of ACWW involvement such as collaborating with UNESCO in creating podcasts, charring committees and speaking at conferences are mentioned elsewhere in this magazine. All this demands more input from our volunteers and staff. For those of us on the Board, we have to balance our enthusiasm for each new initiative with our ability to fund it.

At the Board meeting in February, the Board approved an updated budget for 2024 which was necessary to reflect the greatly increased costs we, like everyone else, are experiencing. But

ACWW can only exist for a short time by drawing down from its reserves.

I am very aware that members feel that communication with them could be improved. The Coordinators initiative is one which we hope will add to the methods of communication between members and the Board.

But the Board also felt that, despite the budget deficit we have, we must continue with plans to appoint a new communications officer to keep members better informed. We hope that the various methods of communication, including output we are expecting from the new communications officer and the large amount of content on our website will help members to realise that ACWW is striving to fulfill our strategy and improve the lives of women worldwide by working with like-minded people locally, nationally and internationally.

In 1939, Dorothy Drage, who was a founder member of one of the first Women's Institutes in Wales and who was then treasurer of ACWW, had the idea behind "Pennies for Friendship". She suggested that if every member could contribute a small coin (equivalent to a British penny) to ACWW in addition to their membership fees, ACWW would have a sure and comfortable foundation. Her idea worked and "Pennies for Friendship" was the lifeblood of ACWW over many years.

More recently, a change in title of our main funding mechanism was needed to reflect our world today, where a British penny is not a unit which many now understand and where it no longer reflects the level of funding we need, nor the interconnection between all aspects of our budget in supporting our work. But if everyone who is a member of ACWW, either as an individual or part of a member organisation gave the equivalent of £1 each year to ACWW it would more



than solve our income problem.

However, I know that even this small amount of money is impossible for many of our members. Some members would be caused embarrassment if asked for this donation or would leave their organization and this would be unforgivable. But I also know that many, many of us can afford to give a regular annual donation and far in excess of £1.

I want our organisation to survive and to continue with the work for which we are continuing to gain international acclaim, but, most of all, I want us to continue with advocacy and directed support, trying to improve women's human rights, life chances and health. We are up for this task and I hope, with your help, our organisation can do this.

With sincerest best wishes

*Angela*

Angela Cassells  
Honorary Treasurer

It is easy to make donations on our website: [www.acww.org.uk](http://www.acww.org.uk)

Using the 'Support' tab on the top menu, then choose 'Support ACWW', and this will take you to a safe and secure page where you can make your donation.

Thank you for your support!

# Central Office Update

It seems almost impossible to believe that we are already in February 2024. Since the Triennial World Conference, Central Office has moved from its previous location at Parkhall Business Centre to The Foundry, near the famous Oval Cricket Ground in London.

The Foundry is home to a wonderful collection of organisations, which all work towards improving the lives of others. There are local, national, and international organisations which focus on gender equality or human rights, and we have already found so many like-minded colleagues across corridors or in the communal kitchens. Included among the residents is the Orchid Project, which works to end Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting - ACWW has worked with Orchid Project in the past, and we are glad to now be sharing a location.

In November last year, we welcomed the Board of Trustees to The Foundry for the first time, and they were able to see the smaller, more compact office space that we now occupy, and to use the communal meeting room maintained by The Foundry for all residents.

We have recently started digitising historic membership records, which offers the opportunity to both add to our useable archive and reduce the physical space needed to store such paperwork. There are photographs depicting intrepid women pioneers for women's rights from all over the globe and spanning nine decades. With ACWW's centenary coming up in 5 years' time this archive will be a great resource.

ACWW has always had a small staff, and currently we are smaller than we have been for many years. However, we are about to shortlist from the applications for the Communications Officer post, which replaces Sydney Salter who previously held this role. Sadly, the delay in being able to recruit for this position has meant that ACWW's external communications have been less busy than we would normally aim for, and this is the reason that we were unable to send out a second issue of

*The Countrywoman* in the latter half of last year. We have heard your concerns regarding communications, and assure you that they are being addressed; I am looking forward to introducing you to our new Communications Officer once they are in post.

One very positive update I can bring you regarding the Central Office staff is the appointment of Uju Maduforo as Finance Manager in October 2023. Uju quickly became a key part of our team, and brings with her a wealth of experience in finance and operations in NGOs and registered charities. I am grateful to have Uju with us, and know that you will welcome her as and when you interact with her.

This leads us to an update that our finance team are well ahead of previous years, and are currently finalising the 2023 accounts ahead of the formal audit. This is really positive, and sets a good standard as we work towards the 2026 Triennial World Conference and appropriate reporting.

Also connected to finance is the very good news that in November 2023, and after a 3-stage application process, ACWW was shortlisted by the International Conference and Congress Association and BestCities Alliance for their 'Incredible Impacts Award'. After giving a full presentation on our recent Women's Empowerment Summit in Khovd Province, Mongolia, ACWW was awarded the first prize, and won \$20,000 USD to continue our work for women's empowerment in rural communities. As well as the financial prize, ACWW has received a significant amount of international press attention and many opportunities to raise awareness of our work. It is a great confirmation of our approach to projects work, and we are grateful for the financial support from ICCA and BestCities.

The World President has held the first of her online Area meetings with South Pacific and this will be followed up with Area Presidents and members in the other eight Areas in the coming months.



The Board has now approved and welcomed ACWW Coordinators representing societies in 18 countries. These give Area Presidents a direct link to member societies in their Area and some are now having Area meetings online in addition to the monthly global meetings so they can really develop excellent two way communications.

ACWW is the unique association that brings together country women's groups large and small to address matters aimed at empowering rural women and their communities. The Board strategy of widening awareness and seeking to interest new sources of support for our work in line with ACWW's vision and mission in no way seeks to replace member societies. We need and value the traditional support from such societies and individuals to continue in this difficult economic climate. The work of advocacy and projects in building the capacity of our member societies is vital. This is why the Board are seeking to supplement this with appropriate strategic partners.

One good example of this was our collaboration with UNESCO and Police Scotland which yielded impactful and sustainable results for the Women's Empowerment Summit in Mongolia.

I look forward to writing further updates in the next issue, and wish you all a positive 2024!

*Tish*

Tish Collins  
Executive Director

# Meet your new Board for 2023-2026



**Magdie de Kock**  
World President  
*South Africa*



**Irene Chinje**  
Deputy World President  
*Cameroon*



**Angela Cassels**  
Trustee and Honorary Treasurer  
*Scotland*



**Vanda Gagiano**  
Trustee and Honorary Secretary  
*South Africa*



**Claire Mahon**  
Trustee and Board Lead on Partnerships  
*New Zealand*



**Anne Innes**  
Trustee and Board Lead for Knowledge  
Sharing and Local Activities  
*Canada*



**Edwina Marr**  
Trustee and Board Lead for  
Community Transformation and Projects  
*Northern Ireland*



**Dr Elizabeth Ann Kelly**  
Trustee and Board Lead  
for Advocacy  
*United States of America*

ACWW's Board of Trustees is elected at the Triennial World Conference and takes office during the Closing Ceremony, and until they hand over to their successors at the close of the following Conference. Reflecting the Resolution passed at Conference, the Board have agreed new titles for those holding office this Triennium, and these are shown here. We are proud to introduce your elected Board of Trustees for the 2023-2026 Triennium.



**Marie Kenny**  
Trustee and Area President  
for Canada  
*Canada*



**Irene Hinds**  
Trustee and Area President for Caribbean,  
Central & South America  
*Trinidad and Tobago*



**Tharindra Arumapperuma**  
Trustee and Area President for Central  
and South Asia  
*Sri Lanka*



**Clare Jethwa**  
Trustee and Area President for East,  
West, and Central Africa  
*Kenya*



**Afrodita Roman**  
Trustee and Area President  
for Europe  
*Romania*



**Cora Sayre**  
Trustee and Area President for  
South East Asia & the Far East  
*The Philippines*



**Dr Marina Muller**  
Trustee and Area President for  
Southern Africa  
*Namibia*



**Lyn Braico**  
Trustee and Area President for  
the South Pacific  
*Australia*



**Bonnie Teeples**  
Trustee and Area President for the  
United States of America  
*United States of America*

# Your Central Office Staff



**Tish Collins - Executive Director**

I joined ACWW in 2014, when I returned to London from a previous job as Director of Fundraising at a Cathedral in the Midlands of England. I grew up in London, and studied Economics and Economic History for my BA, and Agricultural Economics for my MSc, in the UK and in East Germany. I've spent my life working for charities and non-profits, starting with the National Farmers' Union, and including several years as Director of the London Irish Women's Centre, where I also advised London Councils on gender, issues affecting minority communities, and social care policy. I'm passionate about women's empowerment, and ACWW's global work.



**Nick Newland - Advocacy Director, Chief Privacy Officer**

I grew up in London, and all the way through school I had a passion for the United Nations, and a belief that whilst the system wasn't perfect, the only way the world would improve was if nations were able to sit, talk, and negotiate. I joined ACWW in 2016, having previously worked as a university lecturer and teacher, specialising in 18<sup>th</sup> Century Czech music and training new academics. When not at ACWW, I enjoy painting and reading, and rare opportunities for sailing - I qualified for my skipper's license in 2019. At work, I am responsible for coordinating our advocacy work and bringing the voices of our members to the table, as well as data protection and events.



**Uju Maduforo - Finance Manager**

I'm British born but I'm of Nigerian heritage. I've had the privilege of growing up and living in several countries - Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Switzerland, Ghana and UK. Maybe as a result I'm fascinated by people and culture and consider myself a world citizen who has learnt from and tries to live by the best traits of the cultures I've been exposed to thus far. I'm also a mum of two teens, an advocate against abuse, fierce champion of girls and women's empowerment, and I'm an author - a children's book celebrating culture (no surprise there). When I'm not doing all of that fun stuff, you'll find me nose deep in my other loves - numbers, spreadsheets and reports as Finance Manager at ACWW.



**Jenny Sellers - Projects Grants Officer**

I joined ACWW in 2019 as the Projects Administrator and over the past five years have taken on more responsibility, including leading ACWW's safeguarding and managing our grantees and new projects. I have a background in Gender and International Development and a masters from the Institute of Development Studies. My particular interest is in the intersect between women's empowerment, climate change, and the agricultural sector and the potential for positive change that this creates. Over the past decade I have worked in a number of different contexts including in sexual health and rights NGOs in Ghana and Uganda and non-formal education for street children in Kenya. This has given me great experience to bring into my role at ACWW.



**Casey Daudelin - Engagement Officer**

My name is Casey and I am the Engagement Officer. I am from New Jersey in the USA and have been living in the UK for 3 years. I lived in Edinburgh for a year while pursuing my master's and moved down to London in August 2022, where I began working for ACWW. As Engagement Officer I stay in touch with members, which I love! I handle all incoming communications to Central Office, am the administrator for our ACWW Coordinators network, and manage incoming society membership applications. I am a former competitive swimmer and free time I enjoy being active; swimming laps and going to the gym. I am also a huge bookworm and can be found reading a lot!



**Rebecca Ramsey - Finance Officer**

I am ACWW's new Finance Officer, having started the role in September 2023, but I've been working for ACWW since 2016 and have covered various roles within the organisation in that time, including but not limited to, dealing with memberships, administrating conference and supporting the varied needs of the Executive Director as her PA. So, although my focus is now Finance, I have a really good working knowledge of many aspects of the organisation which means I am well placed to collaborate with colleagues in other departments. I work part time for ACWW because I also work freelance as a professional singer and am a busy mum to an energetic 10 year old.

# Join our Coordinators Network!

ACWW are encouraging all Member Societies to nominate an ACWW Coordinator to ensure your society stays up to date with the latest ACWW news and activities, and to give us feedback on issues of local importance, raising local voices to an international level.

Our aim is to have a contact person in each Member Society (at local, regional, and national levels) to be a genuine and diverse representation of our total membership. Coordinators promote ACWW within their own society and will have regular opportunities to meet online with each other, Central Office staff, and members of the Board. By building relationships with one another and their Area Presidents, Coordinators can assist in developing the ACWW network in her area.

Coordinators will receive support from ACWW such as ad hoc brainstorming with staff about awareness raising, presentations, fundraising ideas and resources, among a variety of other materials. This will help Coordinators share information about ACWW to their societies and communities and encourage fundraising and memberships.

We are so grateful to the Coordinators who are already up and running, and we can see the benefit and impact of their engagement.



Above: Coordinators get early access to resources like these packs which are created for campaigns such as the '16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence'

The nomination process is easy, and ensures that Member Societies are fully engaged with what is going on within ACWW, so there couldn't be a better time to join in.

To learn more, please visit our website homepage at [www.acww.org.uk](http://www.acww.org.uk) and click on 'Nominate Coordinator' or contact Casey Daudelin, our Engagement Officer, at [casey@acww.org.uk](mailto:casey@acww.org.uk)

## ACWW launches new podcast with UNESCO

Since 1947, ACWW has held Consultative Status with UNESCO and is considered an "NGO in Official Partnership". This gives us the opportunity to work alongside UNESCO on topics of mutual interest and benefit. We are delighted to announce a new joint project with UNESCO, which will launch on 8 March 2024.

This new project is a podcast on the topic of Women's Leadership - a really exciting opportunity to present to the world some of our members who are shining examples of leadership at the local, regional, and national level. Working with UNESCO, we will also address the critical element of this, which is of course - WOMEN's leadership!

We started recording content in early November 2023, and in early episodes we will be covering topics including "Gendered definitions and the evolution of leadership", "Women in Agriculture - Seeds of Empowerment", "The Impact of Climate Change on Rural Women" and "The Role of Women in Peacebuilding".

The Podcast is being produced in-house, jointly between ACWW and the Social and Human Sciences sector at UNESCO, with the full support of UNESCO Assistant Director-General Gabriela Ramos, who will also appear as a regular contributor to episodes.

ACWW World President Magdie de Kock will feature in the first episode, which is due to be broadcast to celebrate International Women's Day on 8 March 2024, alongside the Assistant Director-General.

We are really excited to be launching this ambitious new programme, which will be available on ACWW's website, UNESCO's website, as well as wherever you normally get your podcasts. We are planning to have a broadcast schedule with one episode published per month, and there may well be special episodes released in between if the topic or opportunity arises.

Keep your eyes (and ears!) peeled for this exciting new project, and we look forward to welcoming you as our first listeners!





Associated Country Women of the World  
17-25 November 2022



World 30<sup>th</sup> Triennial World Conference  
May 2023

# Updates from Triennial World Conference

Thinking back to May 2023, the 30<sup>th</sup> Triennial World Conference opened our eyes to the rich and varied culture of Malaysia. As well as usual policy debates and the election of a new Board of Trustees, this Conference offered incredible opportunities to learn more about the beautiful country and its people, re-ignite old friendships, and make new ones.

Hosted by Her Majesty Queen Azizah of Malaysia, and the Women's Institutes of Pahang, this Conference offered a touch of glitz and glamour unlike any other. The Opening Ceremony was held in the Grand Putrajaya Ballroom at the Putrajaya Marriott Hotel, and was hosted by His Majesty King Abdullah and Her Majesty Queen Azizah, and attended by a significant delegation of local dignitaries. The flag procession featured students from the Multi-Media University and musical accompaniment was provided by a band from the Malaysian Army.

The energy of the Opening Ceremony would remain throughout the Conference, with formal sessions punctuated by wonderful dinners (the International Buffet one night, a Malay Set Dinner the next, then an Indian Set Dinner, and a Malaysian Street Food Showcase. A multi-course Chinese Feast completing the tour of Malaysia's diverse heritage and culture) and activities such as the day of tours and the Malaysian handcraft market.

The Thanksgiving Ceremony took place on Monday, with outgoing Committee Members in attendance participating, led by members of the outgoing Board of Trustees and joined by Past World President Mrs Ruth Shanks AM. The Ceremony included a memorial to those members of ACWW who passed away during the 2019-2023 Triennium, and the opportunity to celebrate ACWW's past, present, and future.



*Above: The Opening Ceremony of the 30th Triennial World Conference, in the presence of His Majesty King Abdullah of Malaysia, Her Majesty Queen Azizah, and ACWW World President Magdie de Kock.*



*Above: The Opening Ceremony also included the traditional procession of the flags of every country with ACWW Member Societies, carried in Malaysia by students from Multi-Media University under the instruction of their professor, Ts Natalya Rudina Dato Samsuar*



*Above: During the Thanksgiving Ceremony, the World President invited the outgoing Committee Members, Board Members, and past World President Ruth Shanks AM to participate.*

*Right: Michael Crockatt, President and CEO of Ottawa Tourism became an unofficial member of the Canada delegation during the Triennial World Conference as he attended to help introduce participants to the 31<sup>st</sup> Triennial World Conference which will be held in Canada's capital, Ottawa. Michael is proudly wearing one of the stoles worn by all members of the Canadian delegation and took part in many of the activities to get a real sense of an ACWW Conference. Ottawa Tourism is supporting ACWW's event in Ottawa, which will be held in April 2026 at the Westin Hotel.*



One memory that will remain with everyone who attended was the very special Royal Gala Dinner, hosted at the National Palace in Kuala Lumpur. The evening started with delegates gathering in all their finery in the lobby of the hotel, then boarding 11 double-decker coaches. The buses were escorted to the palace through the busy traffic of Malaysia's capital city by police outrider motorbikes, their blue flashing lights lighting up the trees that line the main roads.



*Right: Delegates and Proxy Delegates from East, West, and Central Africa with outgoing Area President Irene Chinje and incoming Area President Clare Jethwa*

Once everyone arrived, they were ushered into a beautiful reception room where all the flags of ACWW's member countries were displayed. Attendees then proceeded into the ballroom where the dinner was hosted, with what felt like hundreds of tables set in gold and brocade. A sumptuous meal was served over many courses and entertainment provided by young performers who danced and sang. Generously Hosted by H.M. Queen Azizah, joined by Royals from across Malaysia, the event felt like a perfect celebration of our time in the country.



*Above: The opulence of the Royal Gala Dinner was certainly an experience no one will forget!*

As the Triennial World Conference began to wind down, many attendees shared their plans for onward travel and new adventures. The Closing Ceremony marked the end of one Triennium and the start of the next, with a powerful address from newly re-elected World President Magdie de Kock. The Closing Ceremony introduced the new Board of Trustees to the Membership, and as it drew to a close, the Board processed down the stairs and into the audience accompanied by the swirling strings and poignant trumpets of Handel and, in the blink of an eye, we were off and headed towards Ottawa - the lights changed, and so did the music - now to a well-known anthem by Canadian artist Shania Twain.

Our thanks go to our gracious hosts and all involved, and we look forward to seeing you in Ottawa in April 2026!



*Left: The final moment of the 30<sup>th</sup> Triennial World Conference - as the Board led off the stage, a triumphal fanfare by Handel gave way to Shania Twain as we all danced and sang, heading towards Ottawa for the 31<sup>st</sup> Triennial World Conference, in April 2026.*



*Far Left: It very much felt like the whole of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya had come together to welcome us to Malaysia!*

*Left: Throughout the Triennial World Conference the cultural performances and exchanges gave each and every attendee a unique opportunity to get to know the country, and each other.*



*Far Left: Students from Multi-Media University in Putrajaya practice for the flag parade during the Opening Ceremony.*

*Left: At the end of the Conference, World President Magdie de Kock greets members of the Hostess Society. On behalf of all the attendees, she expressed sincere thanks for a job well done, and their continued commitment over an extended Triennium which had been affected by Covid.*



*Left: For decades, members of ACWW have joined together in singing the Song of Peace to a stirring arrangement of Sibelius' tone poem 'Finlandia'.*

# A personal reflection from the World President



*Top: In every circumstance I am supported by my wonderful husband, Johan, and I was grateful that we got the opportunity to share the experience of this Triennial World Conference together*

*Above Left: As we all know, re-connecting with friends is always a special treat during the Conference. It was such a pleasure to spend time with past World President Dato Ursulah Goh, past World President Ruth Shanks, and H.M. Queen Azizah, taking me back to earlier years serving together on the Board*

*Above: H.M. Queen Azizah kindly signs a copy of her recent publication with a personal message*

*Left: After a challenging few years, it was very special to have time in person with Irene Chinje, to reminisce about her two terms as Area President for East, West, and Central Africa, and celebrate her election as Deputy World President.*

# Women Walk the World 2023...

Every year, members around the world gather to celebrate ACWW Day on 29 April. Since 2012, this celebration has included the annual "Women Walk the World", with members, friends, supporters and families walking outside (and even inside!) to raise awareness, money, and support for ACWW. These photos are from last year, and give you something to inspire 2024's efforts!



## Prince Edward Island, Canada

In eastern Canada, PEI Lieutenant Governor Antoinette Perry, Minister Responsible for the Status of Women Natalie Jameson, Marie Kenny (then ACWW UN Committee Chairman, now ACWW Area President for Canada), PEI Women's Institute (WI) Provincial President Miriam Lank, and Department of Agriculture's Andrea Triolo along with board members and friends of WI walked the Victoria Park boardwalk in Charlottetown to unite in their support for rural women and developing projects across the world. The annual ACWW Women Walk the World event is a quiet fundraiser and gathering to celebrate the impact of rural based women being the foundation of their families, communities, and countries.

## Pictou District WIs, Nova Scotia, Canada

Members of Pictou District Women's Institutes, Nova Scotia, walked outside and inside at the Spring meeting for their Women Walk the World event.



## Terrigal Evening Branch, CWA of NSW, Australia

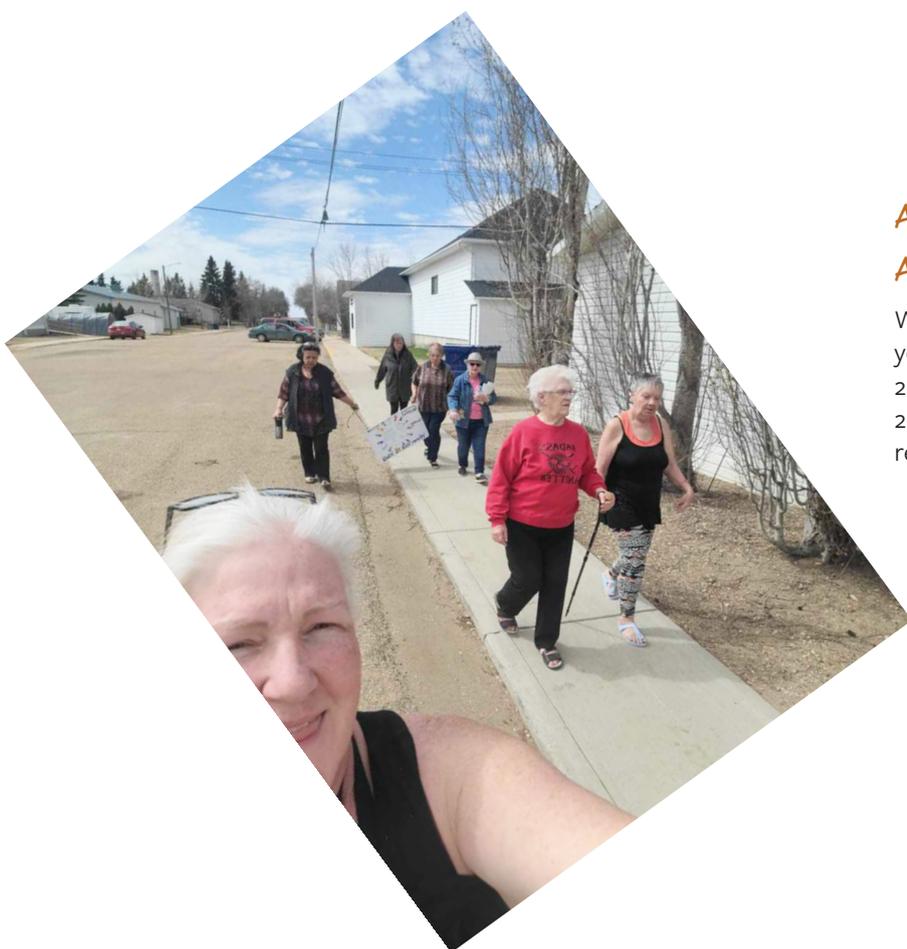
On 25 April, Terrigal Evening Branch planned a Women Walk the World. It rained the whole morning and some decided to put it off for a drier occasion.

The 5 of us decided to 'tread the boards' however and still went, doing 2.6 km across to the Haven from the surf club, walk by the pretty succulent garden behind the footy club and then around the dog 'off leash' area so Jatz could have a run. Back at the surf club the cup of tea was very welcome. And ... we raised \$159.65 for ACWW Women Walk the World. This was sent in by Linda Roberts, and the photo shows Nola, Linda, Susan, and granddaughter outside the surf club cafe.



### *Gwent Federation of Women's Institutes, Wales*

These three photos were sent in by ACWW Coordinator Anita Hobbs, and show her merry band of adventurous walkers (and pooch) who set out to celebrate the work of ACWW. The beautiful wall hanging in the centre photo was donated by Gilwern Women's Institute. The walkers enjoyed decent weather and were led the whole way by their four-legged friend!



### *Argyle Branch Alberta Women's Institutes, Canada*

Women from Argyle Branch have walked every year since Women Walk the World began in 2012. All the ladies present agreed that 29 April 2023 was the best weather ever, and they're ready to get out again and enjoy 2024's walk.



## *...and getting ready for 2024!*

As we prepare for Women Walk the World 2024, we are producing a new leaflet which will be available from Central Office in digital or physical form by the time you are reading this magazine - if you'd like to order some please contact [casey@acww.org.uk](mailto:casey@acww.org.uk)

For the last two years, we have offered members the opportunity to host Fundraising pages on our website for Women Walk the World - and this year is no different. Get in touch if you'd like to organise one; it's easy, and a great way to support ACWW.

The materials produced this year for Women Walk the World have come after input and consultation with our Coordinators, and we are so grateful for their time and effort in working with us to ensure all ACWW members have great resources.



# 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence

Every year, ACWW joins activists all over the world to campaign for the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence. This runs every year from November 25, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, to December 10, Human Rights Day.

As well as local activism, the campaign seeks to raise awareness of legal frameworks and standards such as the International Labor Organization Convention 190 which links domestic violence and the world of work. The campaign was initiated in 1991 by the first Women's Global Leadership Institute, held by the Center for Women's Global Leadership (CWGL) at Rutgers University.

In 2023, we produced a pack of resources for members to use for their local activities and advocacy - they were sent out via online newsletter and were available on our website for members to download and share or print. To make life easier, they were a size that could be printed on any standard size of paper, and could be shared on social media, sent to local politicians, put up in libraries or community centres.

These resources were downloaded more than 4,000 times between from our website, social media channels, and newsletter and were shared widely by our members.

We wanted to share an overview of the resources, some updates from ACWW Coordinators, and ask for your input and feedback for later in 2024. ACWW Coordinator Carol Gupwell, in England, shared that her WI and other local groups held a candlelit march to mark the 16 days, whilst Hania White reported that the National President of the Federated Women's Institutes

## 25 NOVEMBER

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

to

## 10 DECEMBER

Human Rights Day

rural women in action

Associated Country Women of the World

**One in three** women experience **physical or sexual violence** at least once. **Violence against women and girls is one of the most prevalent and pervasive human rights violations. The solution lies in robust responses, including investment in prevention.**

**We call on governments worldwide:  
Invest in prevention to eradicate violence against women and girls.**

of Canada had given national talks on ACWW's participation in the campaign. Marilyn Tangey, from Country Women's Association of Victoria, Inc., highlighted a walking event in central Melbourne joined by many community organisations, whilst Ruth Gibbons in Lancashire, England, shared that her WI hosted an event with 120+ people raising funds for ACWW. Eva Radoiu, of the Women of the Third Millennium in Romania detailed how they were involved in local campaigning including guides to safe use of the internet and social media, as well as her society organising food packages for underprivileged families before Christmas.

**We would love to hear what your Society does in your community for this campaign, and get your feedback on what sort of resources would be helpful for 2024. Just send us an email to [casey@acww.org.uk](mailto:casey@acww.org.uk)**

**16 Days of Active Gender-Based**

**Technology-facilitated violence against women and girls**  
The lack of a common definition of technology-facilitated violence (TFV) on the lack of comparable data at a global level. But available evidence on regional levels confirms high prevalence.

In 2021, about half of women (49%) reported being involved in online harassment at some point in their lifetime.

**26 NOVEMBER**  
Thinking about safe online spaces and technology-facilitated violence against women and girls.

**16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**

**Femicides – killing of a woman or female family member**  
In 2021, around 45,000 women and girls worldwide were killed by someone in their family.

While 56% of all female homicides are committed by only 11 per cent of all male homicide suspects.

**We call on governments worldwide to invest in prevention to eradicate violence against women and girls.**

**27 NOVEMBER**  
Remembering all those who have lost their lives because of their gender.

**The impact of COVID-19 on violence against women and girls**  
The COVID-19 pandemic has intensified violence against women and girls (VAWG) and has also exposed and exacerbated deep structural inequalities, reversed decades of progress on women's participation in the labour market, raised the number of women living in extreme poverty, and increased the burden of unpaid care and domestic work, all of which exacerbates the risk factors and drivers of VAWG.

In 2021, since the pandemic began, 45% of women reported that they or a woman they know has experienced a form of VAWG. 70% of women said they think verbal or physical abuse by a partner has become more common. 40% felt that sexual harassment in public spaces has worsened.

**We call on governments worldwide to invest in prevention to eradicate violence against women and girls.**

**28 NOVEMBER**  
We need action today, tomorrow, and everyday.

**16 Days of Active Gender-Based**

**Laws on violence against women**  
At least 162 countries have passed laws on domestic violence, harassment in the workplace. However, even when laws exist, they are not always compliant with international standards and recommendations.

In 2022, the Republic of Congo and Côte d'Ivoire enacted legislative forms of domestic violence, while the Republic of Congo, Indonesia on sexual harassment in the workplace, including criminal.

**We call on governments worldwide to invest in prevention to eradicate violence against women and girls.**

**29 NOVEMBER**  
Supports the Commission on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

**16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**

**Reporting of violence against women**  
Less than 40% of the women who experience violence in their lifetime report it to the police.

In the majority of countries with available data on this issue, less than 10% of those seeking help reported to the police.

**We call on governments worldwide to invest in prevention to eradicate violence against women and girls.**

**30 NOVEMBER**  
Calling for gender-responsive law enforcement and implementation of legal protections already in place.

**16 Days of Active Gender-Based Violence**

**734 million women – almost 1 in 3 – have been subjected to physical and/or sexual intimate partner violence, non-partner sexual violence, or both at least once in their life**

The rates of depression, anxiety disorders, unplanned pregnancies, sexually transmitted infections, and HIV are higher in women who have experienced violence compared to women who have not, as well as many other health problems that can last after the violence has ended.

24% of adolescent girls aged 15–19 have experienced physical and/or sexual violence from an intimate partner or husband. 14% of young women aged 15–24 experienced this in the past year.

**We call on governments worldwide to invest in prevention to eradicate violence against women and girls.**

**1 DECEMBER**  
World AIDS Day

**16 Days of Active Gender-Based**

**Risk factors of violence against women**  
A regional analysis of Women's Health Surveys conducted from Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago who were in relationships with men who had attitudes and behaviors that were dominant predictors over women and perpetrate gender inequality experienced lifetime and current intimate partner violence, women's bodies, autonomy, and contact with others are at increased risk of intimate partner violence.

**We call on governments worldwide to invest in prevention to eradicate violence against women and girls.**

**2 DECEMBER**  
Gender Equality is a human right. Violence against women is a human right violation and leads to higher rates of physical violence.

**16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**

**Economic costs of violence against women and girls**  
Violence against women can result in significant costs to the state, survivors, and communities. Costs are both direct and indirect, and tangible and intangible. For example, the costs of the salaries of individuals working at shelters are direct tangible costs. Costs are borne by everyone, including individual victims/survivors, perpetrators, the government, and society in general.

In Egypt, some 500,000 working days are lost each year due to marital violence, and the health sector bears more than \$2.5 billion in costs to serve just one quarter of 600,000 of survivors.

In 2021, gender-based violence across the European Union was estimated to cost around €364 billion a year. Violence against women makes up 7% of this cost, amounting to €289 billion.

**We call on governments worldwide to invest in prevention to eradicate violence against women and girls.**

**3 DECEMBER**  
Violence starts young, and all young people need education on consent, sexual safety, and positive behavior.

**4 DECEMBER**  
International Day of Banks. Every effort invested in promoting violence against women is a step towards a safer, more equal and progressive world.

**16 Days of Active Gender-Based**

**Climate change and violence against women and girls**  
Climate change and slow environmental degradation exacerbate the risk of violence against women and girls due to displacement, resource scarcity and food insecurity for survivors.

Following Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the rate of rape among women displaced to trailer parks rose 53.6 times the baseline rate in Mississippi, USA, for that year.

Research shows an increase in trafficking from an estimated 3,000–5,000 annually in 1990 to 12,000–20,000 per year after the 2015 earthquake.

**We call on governments worldwide to invest in prevention to eradicate violence against women and girls.**

**5 DECEMBER**  
World Soil Day

**16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**

**Trafficking in persons**  
In 2020, for every 10 victims of human trafficking, four were adult women and about two were girls.

Analysis of court cases shows that female victims of trafficking are more likely to experience violence at the hands of traffickers than male victims.

**We call on governments worldwide to invest in prevention to eradicate violence against women and girls.**

**6 DECEMBER**  
Trafficking is a global problem, and requires global action. Support survivors, don't re-victimize them.

**16 Days of Active Gender-Based Violence**

**Violence against girls**  
During the past decade, the global rate of child marriage has declined, with the global proportion of young women aged 20–24 years old who were married before the age of 18 decreasing from nearly one in four in 2010 to almost one in five (19%) in 2022. However, the profound effects of the pandemic are threatening this progress, with up to 10 million additional girls at risk of child marriages in the next decade due to the pandemic.

School-related gender-based violence is a major obstacle to universal schooling and the right to education for girls. Globally, one in three students, aged 11–15, have been bullied by their peers at school at least once in the past month, with girls and boys equally likely to experience bullying.

While boys are more likely to experience physical bullying than girls, girls are more likely to experience psychological bullying, and they report being made fun of because of how their face or body looks more frequently than boys.

**We call on governments worldwide to invest in prevention to eradicate violence against women and girls.**

**7 DECEMBER**  
Focus on Violence Against Girls

**16 Days of Active Gender-Based**

**Female Genital Mutilation and**  
At least 200 million women and girls aged 15–49 have undergone female genital mutilation in 31 countries where the practice is prevalent.

In sub-Saharan Africa, one in four women and girls has undergone female genital mutilation. But levels vary widely across the region.

There are still countries where female genital mutilation is at least nine in 10 girls and women, aged 15–49 years, have undergone female genital mutilation, with no more than 1% of girls and women in Cameroon.

**We call on governments worldwide to invest in prevention to eradicate violence against women and girls.**

**8 DECEMBER**  
Female Genital Mutilation and Cutting are forms of gender-based violence. Hidden but visible, they are and should be.

**16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**

**Violence against women**  
Across five regions, 62% of women participants reported psychological violence while serving their terms. This includes humiliating sexual nature, threats, and mobbing. Worry about this type of violence, and nearly half (44%) reported recent violence towards them or their families. 45% had been subjected to physical violence.

A global survey showed that 72% of women journalists have been attacked or abused online in connection with their work, and they were most often identified in association with high-profile news events (64%), and human rights (63%).

**We call on governments worldwide to invest in prevention to eradicate violence against women and girls.**

**9 DECEMBER**  
We need more women in leadership roles locally, nationally, and globally – but there must be safety for these in those roles.

**16 Days of Active Gender-Based Violence**

**Human Rights Day**  
10 December 2022 marks the 75th anniversary of one of the world's most groundbreaking global pledges: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This landmark document enshrines the inalienable rights that everyone is entitled to as a human being – regardless of race, colour, religion, sex, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

"We must stand firm against rising intolerance and build a future of dignity, security, justice & human rights for all."  
UN Secretary-General António Guterres

**Women's Rights are Human Rights**  
**We call on governments worldwide to invest in prevention to eradicate violence against women and girls.**

**10 DECEMBER**  
Human Rights Day



Above: The Women of the Third Millennium in Romania have a long history of marking this campaign and regularly gather to share classes, experience and expertise and ensure that they are making a difference in their local community.

Below: ACWW Area President Afrodita Roman uses an ACWW poster on CEDAW, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women to members of The Women of the Third Millennium.



# Women's Empowerment Summit: Khovd

The Khovd Women's Empowerment Summit is the culmination of our first pilot project under the Rural Women in Action programme, and took place 11-13 August 2023 in Khovd province, Mongolia. It brought together 328 survivors of domestic violence from Indigenous, nomadic herding communities, and built on the long-term partnership with local NGO, Sain Tus Development Bridge. We are delighted to bring you this update and reflection on the hugely successful project.

## The Summit

Domestic violence is currently being reported as affecting a minimum of 50% of rural women in Mongolia, so strengthening the independence and empowerment of Indigenous and rural women in this region is critical.

To help address this, ACWW launched the Women's Empowerment Summit initiative in Khovd, with our long-term local partner, Sain Tus Development Bridge NGO, in August 2023. Sain Tus Development Bridge has been working in the western region of Mongolia since 2005 to provide women in Khovd Province with information, build capacity mobilise action. This increases the participation of women in the development of the country, supports initiatives of self-development, and contributes to the protection of human rights. As an organisation the prevention of violence against women and girls is their top priority.

The Summit was jointly funded by ACWW and UNESCO under the 2022-2023 UNESCO Participation Programme. We are grateful to UNESCO, as well as the UK National Commission for UNESCO and Mongolian National Commission for UNESCO for their support of the grant and enabling this important Summit to take place.

### The Summit had four main objectives:

- To increase capacity for local activities addressing violence against women and girls
- To build community links between nomadic Indigenous groups for learning and solidarity
- To develop advocacy skills for local women, and
- To address policy and law-enforcement inaction regarding violence against women and girls

Over two days the summit engaged over 300 women from 12 nomadic communities from the far west of Mongolia. Priority to attend the summit was given to survivors of domestic



*Above: Participants gather for the opening of the Women's Empower Summit 2023 in Khovd Province, Mongolia. Hosted by Sain Tus Development Bridge, co-funded by ACWW and UNESCO.*

violence, and workshop sessions within the summit focused on challenging stereotypes, interrupting the chain of abuse, preventing sexual harassment and developing community action plans against domestic violence. As a well-known domestic violence mediation and service provider, Sain Tus Development Bridge were able to signpost many of the participants to vital social support and health services.

During the summit, 12 survivors of domestic violence approached Sain Tus Development Bridge in need of assistance. Sain Tus was able to help and provide mediation services, survivor protection services, and social welfare services for these 12 women.

The summit also included workshops on community safeguarding, financial literacy, human rights and citizenship, and advocacy. It was also a crucial chance for networking, as the nomadic attendees rarely gathered at events this large. Because of the opportunity to come together and exchange opinions, 120 women organised themselves into 12 groups to cooperate for increased their incomes. Becoming a member of a savings and loans group is an effective method of increasing financial stability

and income, and the women will be working together collectively in the fields to grow vegetables and process milk products.

While the majority of those in attendance of the summit were women, five men were able to benefit from the experience of being present in a female-focused and female-led learning space. Male participation in the fight against domestic and gender-based violence is vital for systematic change. The men at the summit created a small club to continue their learning with the assistance of Sain Tus Development Bridge to improve men's engagement in the fight against gender-based violence.

The summit also presented a chance to promote cultural expression, with a Harvest Festival including performances of traditional dance, music, and Tuvan throat singing. Many of these traditional arts and music practices are registered on the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list as in Need of Urgent Safeguarding to prevent it from dying out. With the summit bringing together such an intergenerational and multi-ethnic group of women the event was able to promote these art forms to a wide audience, and of course celebrate.



## Our Funding Partner

In line with the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, we applied for external partner funding to support this project.

The Summit was jointly funded by ACWW and UNESCO under the 2022-2023 UNESCO Participation Programme. The Participation Programme functions as a vital complement to UNESCO's regular activities by analysing, evaluating and facilitating the implementation of national, sub-regional, inter-regional and regional projects submitted by Member States and NGOs directly related to the activities of the Organization.

Furthermore, it is employed by UNESCO to strengthen the partnership between the Organization and its Member States as well as between the Organization and Non-Governmental Organizations in official partnership with UNESCO. Thus the Participation Programme enhances the inclusive and generous spirit of UNESCO's noble mission.

## Our Delivery Partner

We are grateful to the Domestic Abuse Co-ordination Unit of Police Scotland who have contributed to the delivery of the Women's Empowerment Summit with expertise on tackling Domestic Violence.

According to the Mongolia government, 85% of women in Mongolia suffer Domestic Violence at some point in their adult life. All participants of the Summit are survivors of Domestic Violence, and this is a crucial aspect of local government policy focus.

The presentation from Police Scotland explores the reality of policing Domestic Violence in the context of a diverse, geographically dispersed region with a large rural population.

Police Scotland, the national police service of Scotland, kindly collaborated with ACWW in creating new resources in Mongolian for the project participants.

## Project Partners



# Planting the Seeds of Peace

We are delighted to announce the first of our new Rural Women in Action projects will be launched in early 2024... so read on to learn all about it!

## About the project

Planting the Seeds of Peace is a 12-month programme designed to develop and implement a practical training course for Ukrainian refugee children centered around the ecological growing of plants and vegetables. The project will be implemented in Bucharest, Romania, at a school hosting 200 Ukrainian children.

The project will be implemented by ACWW Member Society the Geopolitical Alliance of Women, a Ukraine-based women's organisation passionate about promoting women's inclusion in society, and the Association of Ukrainian Romania Teachers who will be assisting in the implementation of the training.

Since the outbreak of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, Romania has hosted over 140,000 refugees from Ukraine. As many of these are children, providing opportunities for them to continue their education is vital. Many are placed in Romanian schools which causes initial challenges due to not speaking the language. Many Ukrainian parents were worried that language barriers would cause young children to fall behind in their education. In 2022, Anna Sushko who previously ran a kindergarten school in Kyiv, set up the Education Hub 'Uruguay' as a solution to this challenge.

Children that have had to flee due to conflict have already lost so much. They lose their homes and their loved ones, a sense of safety and routine. Without education the impact and trauma of displacement will affect their futures. For children affected by conflict, school is more than just a place to learn. It can provide a sense of safety, community, and relief from the devastating effects of war.

The aim of the project is to help children recover from the stress and trauma of war through the therapeutic practice of gardening. The participants will attend



*Above: Ukrainian refugee students at our delivery partner school in Bucharest, Romania, are integrating into the Romanian school system, whilst maintaining the Ukrainian curriculum they started in. 'Planting the Seeds of Peace' will enrich this curriculum with therapeutic gardening and will help the students recover from trauma through a practical and conscious approach to agriculture and horticulture.*

monthly classes during the school year to gain knowledge of horticulture. Alongside this, the participants will attend practical gardening sessions.

The project was conceived to help children impacted by the conflict in Ukraine to recover through a practical and conscious approach to agriculture and horticulture. The children will learn about growing plants, soil restoration, and climate change. The practice of gardening has been proven to be a very

therapeutic tool for those who have suffered trauma, has been found to reduce stress, anxiety and depression, and improve psychological wellbeing.

We expect to have some further exciting announcements regarding this project, which we hope to make soon. If you want to support ACWW's projects, you can make a donation to our Rural Women in Action Fund, which covers all our activities to support rural women and their communities.

# Rural Women New Zealand Annual Conference

In late November 2023 ACWW board member and Lead for Partnerships, Claire Mahon, attended the Annual Conference of Rural Women New Zealand (RWNZ).

This conference was the first in-person conference for RWNZ since 2019, due to COVID cancellations. So there was a certain buzz of excitement in the air. Attendees gathered in Christchurch, known as New Zealand's "garden city", which is one of the most interesting cities in the world because it was decimated by multiple earthquakes in 2010 and 2011, killing 185 people and destroying so much of the city that 1,500 buildings had to be demolished. Now it is a "revitalised" city, which makes for extremely interesting new architecture and a very deliberate process of reimagining what the city should look like. This is the urban area that serves as the main entry to one of the most productive rural and agricultural areas in New Zealand, the Canterbury Basin.

Our conference started with the Opening Ceremony, where as part of the delegation of dignitaries I was asked to read the welcome message sent by Lyn Braico as the Area President for South Pacific, welcoming delegates on behalf of ACWW - thank you Lyn for sending this. The next day I gave the keynote address at the start of the Annual Meeting, where I represented World President Magdie de Kock and the Board, and presented an update from ACWW. There was much interest in the connection between RWNZ and ACWW and I was very warmly welcomed by all.

We've been hearing about some of the very innovative activities and projects that have been run by members throughout the country, and as part of the conference there is the Annual Rural Women in Business Awards, an event that traditionally attracts a lot of media attention.

It was heartening to see that at the opening ceremony there were 5 Members of Parliament in attendance, and the only reason there was no Minister is because the newly elected coalition government was still in formation after the election - it is likely that one of the MPs who attended will be the new Minister of Agriculture and/or Minister for Women. RWNZ have a great relationship with government here, across all the major political parties, and are viewed as an important voice for influencing policy-making for rural women.



*Above: Former ACWW Area President for the South Pacific Jeanette Tarbotton with current Board Member Claire Mahon, and RWNZ Board Member Sharron Davie-Martin, who received the 2023 RWNZ President's Award for her extraordinary service as Chair of the Rural Women Adverse Events Relief Fund Committee.*

During the conference I met Jeanette Tarbotton, who is a former ACWW Area President for the South Pacific, one of only two from New Zealand (and the only one still alive). She was the Area President before Ruth Shanks, and regaled me with stories from her many visits to ACWW members throughout the Pacific. She asked me to pass on her greetings to you all!

During her time as Area President she hosted and was Chair of the organising committee for the 1995 ACWW Triennial World Conference in Christchurch, which was attended by 900 ACWW delegates. After not

yet having had a chance to grab a nap since arriving over 12 hours ago from my 2+ days of travel (I left Geneva at 4am on Tuesday and arrived in Christchurch at lunchtime on Thursday, it's now just after midnight), I can't imagine so many of our members making such a long trip to the bottom of the Southern Hemisphere these days! Congratulations to all involved in putting together this impressive Conference, I look forward to the next.

*Claire*

Claire Mahon  
Trustee, and Board Lead for Partnerships

# Transforming Mentalities

In October 2023, ACWW received an invitation for World President Magdie de Kock to attend and speak at the 15<sup>th</sup> International Forum of NGOs in Official Partnership with UNESCO. This event took place at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France on 24-25 January 2024.

ACWW was invited to join a panel titled 'Approaches to Women's Empowerment', and featured the World Presidents or equivalents for four major women's organisations - Business and Professional Women International, Soroptimist International, and Zonta International, as well as ourselves. The panel was moderated by Claire de Senneville, Projects Director at Make Mothers Matter, another women's NGO.

This presented an opportunity to introduce more than 350 NGO representatives in person and online to the work of ACWW, our approaches to collaboration with Member Societies in our Projects, and how our broad membership informs our policies and activities. We were invited to participate by the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee, the body that represents all 420+ NGOs who hold partnership status with UNESCO; ACWW previously served on the Committee for 2020-2022, and our Advocacy Director Nick Newland is currently the elected Chairperson of the International Conference of NGOs and President of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee.

The Forum brought together a diverse array of participants, including NGOs, civil society organizations, academia, policymakers, and Ambassadors from South Africa, Brazil, and the Representative of Québec. In fact, the youngest participant was 10 year-old Roux Ridler, who travelled from British Columbia, Canada with her mother Tracy who was speaking on the need for engagement with Indigenous communities such as her own, the Tsimshian.

The theme, 'Transforming Mentalities,' underscored the need for a collective effort to address societal challenges by reshaping attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives. The Forum aimed to explore innovative strategies, share best



Above: ACWW World President Magdie de Kock with Ute Sholtz (Zonta International), Maureen Maguire (Immediate Past President Soroptimist International), Caroline de Senneville (Make Mothers Matter) and Catherine Bosshart (Business and Professional Women International).



Above: The closing of the 15th International Forum of NGOs featured Angela Melo, Director of the Division for Research, Ethics, and Inclusion in the Social and Human Sciences sector of UNESCO and Julien Pelleaux, Director of the Division of Partnerships at UNESCO and was chaired by Nick Newland, President of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee.

practices, and promote partnerships that contribute to the transformation of mentalities on a global scale.

Inclusive education emerged as a key driver for transformative change, fostering understanding, empathy, and acceptance across diverse communities. Our organization can explore initiatives that promote inclusive educational practices to contribute to this process.

The Forum opened with presentations from the President of the Liaison Committee, and Gabriela Ramos, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, and the two days of panels, presentations, and discussions gave varied and powerful perspectives on how we can all move

towards meaningful change and transformed mentalities. ACWW is grateful to the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee for the invitation to attend; as well as our in-person presence, many ACWW members joined online after the invitation was sent out with the World President's newsletter.



Above: 10 year-old Roux Ridler with Lynn-Marie Angus and Tracy Ridler from BC, Canada



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