

rural
women
in action
Associated Country
Women of the World

The Countrywoman Magazine

International Magazine of the Associated Country Women of the World

September 2026



*Grounded Locally, Leading Globally:
A New Triennium, and a New Era for ACWW*

Meet your new Board of Trustees
ACWW Project Impacts
Triennial Report of Work... and much more!



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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 Due to ACWW's communications approach, articles may not be published immediately, but included in the most appropriate issue.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

Newly elected ACWW World President Marie Kenny of Canada stands with immediate Past World President Magdie de Kock of South Africa after the closing of the 31st Triennial World Conference in Ottawa, Canada in May 2026. Marie's Presidency introduced the new Triennial Theme of "Grounded Locally, Leading Globally", reflecting ACWW's mission to ensure that rural women are connected with every level of decision-making that affects their lives, and that we as an organisation never forget our heritage, history, and modern reality as an organisation of, and for, rural women.

Making your magazine sustainable

For many years, *The Countrywoman* magazine was printed on Forest Stewardship Council approved sustainable paper, and delivered in a paper envelope rather than a plastic wrapper. Recognising both the environmental impact of printing and international postage, and financial cost, this is the first issue of a new digital-only edition of *The Countrywoman*, an idea first mooted back in 2016!

Greetings everyone...

I am Marie Kenny, and I am deeply honoured and truly humbled to have been elected World President of the Associated Country Women of the World. Thank you.

It is both a privilege and a profound responsibility to hold this role, and I do so with gratitude, respect, and a strong commitment to serving our organization and its members to the very best of my ability.

I would like to begin my first President's Message in *The Countrywoman* magazine by telling you a little about myself.

I am from Prince Edward Island, Canada's smallest province. Our family farm was located on the eastern side of PEI, where I grew up as a farmer's daughter and the second youngest in a family of nine children. Life on the farm taught us the value of hard work, as there was always plenty to do. There was also time for fun, horseback riding along the ocean shore in the summer and skating on frozen ponds in the winter. My parents raised us to be honest, hard-working, and resilient.

While attending college, I married my high school sweetheart, Cecil Kenny. We have shared 53 wonderful years' together, raised four children of whom we are very proud, and are blessed with twenty grandchildren. Cecil owns and operates a plumbing and heating business. Most of my working career has been engaged in relief and development work at local, national and international level. In my spare time, I enjoy gardening, walking on the beach, painting, and spending time with family.

My mother was a Women's Institute member, so when Cecil and I moved to the community of Brackley, I joined our local WI branch. It was a wonderful way to meet women in the community and volunteer in support of local projects and events. Today, I am a Life Member and Past President of both Brackley WI, the PEIWI and the Federated Women's Institutes of Canada.

After attending my first ACWW Canada Area Conference, I was captivated by the opportunity to be part of an international organization dedicated to empowering rural women and improving the lives of millions of women and their communities around the world.

ACWW has a remarkable legacy of empowering women, strengthening communities, and promoting education, friendship, and sustainable development across the globe. I have always been inspired by the dedication, compassion, and resilience of its members. Together, we represent countless cultures, experiences, and perspectives, yet we are united by a common purpose: improving the lives of women, families, and rural communities.

As we look to the future, I believe ACWW is well positioned to continue making a meaningful difference. We face challenges that affect communities around the world, but we also have extraordinary opportunities before us. By working together, listening to one another, embracing new ideas, and building on our shared values, we can strengthen our organization and expand our impact.

The theme I have chosen for this Triennium: "ACWW: Grounded Locally, Leading Globally," speaks to the importance we place on our grassroots members and the vital role they play in driving positive change.

Our focus will be on improving communication, engaging members, and empowering societies across our network. In a world where division can often be loud, ACWW reminds us that a unified voice, built on respect and understanding, is a powerful force for change. We believe that inclusiveness and teamwork are not simply ideals; they are essential ingredients for real progress and meaningful action.

I believe ACWW is more than a network. It is a movement. A movement that believes in grassroots development, community empowerment, and the idea that every woman, no matter how remote her village or how limited her resources, has value, strength, and something important to contribute.

Women's rights and equality are not simply women's issues. They are human rights issues.

By working together, advocating for change, and lifting one another up, we can help create a world where future generations of women thrive, lead, and break barriers without limitation.



My commitment to you is to lead with integrity, openness, and respect. I will listen carefully, encourage collaboration, and work to ensure that every member feels valued and heard. Our diversity is one of our greatest strengths, and together we can continue building an organization that reflects the hopes and aspirations of all our members.

No President accomplishes anything alone. Success comes through partnership, teamwork, and the willingness of members to contribute their talents, ideas, and passion. I invite each of you to join me as we continue the important work of ACWW. Together, we can build on our proud history while creating an even brighter future for generations to come.

In a world that is desperately searching for hope, I believe ACWW offers that renewed sense of hope.

Thank you once again for the trust you have placed in me. I promise to serve with dedication, humility, and enthusiasm. It is an honour to begin this journey with all of you, and I look forward to what we will accomplish together. Thank you.

Marie

Marie Kenny - World President

Meet your new Board for 2026-2029



Marie Kenny
World President
Canada



Judith Awuor Juma
Deputy World President
Kenya



Angela Cassels
Trustee and Honorary Treasurer
Scotland



Vanda Gagiano
Trustee and Honorary Secretary
South Africa



Christine Reghenzani OAM
Trustee and Board Lead on
Community Transformation and Projects
Australia



Bonnie Teeples
Trustee and Board Lead
on Advocacy
United States of America



Donna Jebb
Trustee and Board Lead
on Partnership
Canada



Anne Innes
Trustee and Area President
for Canada
Canada



Alexandria Best
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



Anne Kerr
Trustee and Area President
for Europe
Scotland



Tugrug Uugan-Erdene
Trustee and Area President for
East and South East Asia
Mongolia



Leanda Le Cornu
Trustee and Area President for
Southern Africa
South Africa



Mary Pocock
Trustee and Area President for
the Pacific
Australia



Jane Chapman
Trustee and Area President for the
United States of America
United States of America

ACWW's Board of Trustees is elected at the Triennial World Conference and takes office during the Closing Ceremony, remaining in office until they hand over to their successors at the close of the following Conference.

At the 31st Triennial World Conference, held this year in Ottawa, Canada, the membership of ACWW voted to change the name of two of ACWW's geographic areas to better reflect modern reality and the wishes of the members in those Areas. Accordingly, we welcome Area Presidents for **The Pacific** and for **East and South East Asia** for the first time.

During the Conference, following a Board resolution on removal of Trustees

passed in accordance with its governance responsibilities and procedures, three Trustees did not take up positions on the incoming Board

Under Clause 17.2 of the Constitution 2023, amended in 2026, the Board of Trustees must make appointments to fill these vacancies. The Board has appointed Donna Jebb of Canada to the position of Board Lead on Partnerships. A process to fill the vacant positions of Area President for East, West, and Central Africa and Board Lead on Knowledge Sharing and Local Activities is in progress, with appointments expected by the end of the year.

And finally...

We wish all of our Trustees the very best for a successful and productive Triennium. We would like to congratulate them on their election and thank their predecessors for their hard work and efforts over the past three years (and, in many cases, much longer) on the Board.

We would also like to extend our thanks and appreciation to all those who put themselves forward to stand as nominees for election. The dedication, commitment, time and energy needed to serve are significant, and we are grateful to everyone who was willing to put themselves forward.

Introducing Joanna Groves: ACWW's new Executive Director

In June 2026 we welcomed Joanna, (known as Jo) Groves, who joined ACWW as Executive Director, succeeding Tish Collins who retired after 13 years at ACWW. Jo has quickly settled into her role leading ACWW's Central Office and global operations, supporting the Board and World President in ensuring ACWW is doing what it should be doing! We thought you'd all like to get to know her a bit, so sat down with Jo for an introductory interview exclusive to *The Countrywoman*.

Nick: Welcome to your first issue of the magazine! You join ACWW with experience from several other roles in the NGO and charity sector; what first drew you to this kind of work, and what has kept you passionate about it throughout your career?

Jo: My early academic background was in mathematics and sciences but I then realised that decisions made in laboratories and committee rooms affect people's lives. That led me to focus on policy-making and the processes behind it.

I am driven by the belief that people and communities must have a say in the decisions that affect them. A strong civil society can bridge local, lived experiences with high-level global decision-making for the benefit of everyone. What keeps me passionate is the power of collective action. While we face an increasingly tough global funding environment across the non-profit sector and local contexts vary, working together provides for essential knowledge exchange, solidarity, and a far stronger platform for our shared advocacy. Fundamentally, it's people who keep me inspired; this sector brings together some of the most committed, expert and passionate individuals, and I learn from them every day.

Nick: Would you like to share anything about past roles/organisations?

Jo: For the last 20 years, I've led global membership organisations across health and international development.

At both the International Alliance of Patients' Organizations and International League of Dermatological Societies, we achieved global impact securing UN status, working directly with the World Health Organization and ECOSOC, and successfully advocating for critical health policy changes, from patient and community engagement in policy-making to the inclusion of important medicines on the WHO Essential Medicines List. These roles demanded constant adaptability and hands-on multi-tasking, but above all, they've taught me that an organisation's strength is its people. Impact happens when members, the Board, and the staff team operate towards a shared purpose, and value each other's knowledge and contributions. I'm excited to get to know ACWW's incredible global membership, hear your stories, and work together on the journey ahead!

Nick: What lesson would you say has had the greatest impact on how you approach your job today?

Jo: Listen first, act with empathy and respect, and never underestimate the power of humanity. Across global networks, every person and culture brings a unique context and every person brings their own lived experiences. None of us has all the answers and all of us make mistakes. I approach my job with an open mind with the aim of bringing people together in an inclusive, supportive environment where everyone feels heard and valued. Patience and a sense of humour (in the right context) are also critical!

Nick: When you saw the advert for the role at ACWW, what made the biggest impact or first drew your attention?

Jo: ACWW's mission to amplify the voices of rural women globally resonates deeply with my core values. What immediately caught my eye is how ACWW's policy and grassroots capacity building work are substantive and impactful and, after 97 years, as relevant and urgently needed as ever. ACWW sits right at the intersection of community-led development,



empowerment, and global policy advocacy. Having spent years championing under-represented groups and building member capacity in under-served regions, I felt an immediate connection to ACWW's work and the opportunity to bring my experience in global non-profit leadership to contribute to ACWW's next chapter – and with its centenary in 2029 – its next century!

Nick: ACWW's membership is global, and much of that member experience is grounded in knowledge sharing, friendship, and community. If our members could know one thing about you beyond your CV and professional achievements, what would you like it to be?

Jo: My interest in people and global community runs through every part of my life. Coming from a long line of adventurers and explorers, for me, the most interesting parts of any journey are the places in between the main destinations - the spots where you meet others and understand the local culture. Wherever I go, I love immersing myself in live local music and also stand-up comedy – both are fantastic ways to connect with and understand a community's spirit. And if I can have a bit of an adventure along the way, whether camping under the stars in the Kalahari, canoeing down the Zambezi, or skydiving over the Florida Keys, all the better! I bring that same curiosity to my work, and I cannot wait to meet, listen to, and share stories with ACWW members around the world.

Nick: Thanks so much for sitting down with me for this interview, and I know that members will be looking forward to hearing more from you in the future.

ACWW's Central Office Staff



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 18th 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.



Jenny Sellers - Projects Manager

As Projects Manager at ACWW, I lead our grant-making programme, overseeing funding rounds, reviewing applications, and managing our active grants and projects. I also support ACWW's fundraising efforts and the development of new income opportunities. As Safeguarding Lead, I develop training materials, policies, and processes to help ensure the safety and well-being of everyone involved in our work. The highlight of my role is seeing the organisations we support flourish and grow during their partnership with ACWW. I am passionate about the role women working in agriculture play in creating more sustainable and resilient communities. My particular interest lies at the intersection of women's empowerment, climate change, and agriculture, and the potential for positive, lasting change that this creates.



Casey Daudelin - Engagement Officer

I am originally from New Jersey, USA, and have been living in the UK for the past 5 years. I spent a year in Edinburgh completing my MSc in International Development before moving to London in 2022, when I started with ACWW. I have the pleasure of staying connected with our members around the world - leading the ACWW Coordinators network, managing society membership applications, and focusing on developing grassroots engagement and knowledge sharing. I love working directly with members and seeing how ideas and experiences can be shared across our global network while remaining grounded in the realities of local communities. Outside of work, I am a former competitive swimmer and still love being active. You will usually find me at the gym or swimming laps. I am also a huge bookworm and am rarely without a book — especially if it is a good historical or literary read!



Rebecca Ramsey - Finance Officer

I am ACWW's 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 13 year old!



Nicoletta Idili - Communications Officer

I'm ACWW's Communications Officer, and I joined the team in June 2025 after a two-year career break that took me through across Africa and Europe, an experience that made me fall in love with communication and storytelling. I arrived at ACWW with renewed energy and a real desire to put that passion to work amplifying the stories of rural women to reach the world, inspire action, and raise vital funds. My role is a dynamic mix of the creative and the strategic: developing engaging content to inform our members and attract new people to the organisation, while also understanding trends and analytics to make sure our tools, strategy and language are effective and appropriate to our target audience.

Central Office

As you may have read in this magazine, ACWW Central Office recently moved... but our address is the same! We've actually just moved to the other end of a corridor at The Foundry, to a smaller, more cost-effective office which better supports our working methods and staff size. The address is: ACWW, The Foundry, 17 Oval Way, London SE11 5RR, UK.

Treasurer's Update

Those of you who were able to attend the ACWW Triennial World Conference in Ottawa, Canada in late April 2026, will recall my Treasurer's Report to the Conference which gave ACWW members considerable detail on the financial affairs of our organisation for the past three years, with emphasis on the financial out-turn for the year 2025.

On the 11 August 2026, the financial audit for 2025 was completed and signed off by our auditor, SCC Chartered Accountants Ltd, following the approval of the Trustees' Report and the Financial Statements by the Board of ACWW. These accounts are now available on our web site at www.acww.org.uk/governance.

While the financial statements and the attached notes give members and the public the opportunity to examine the financial out-turn for 2025 in the format required by the Charity Commissioner for England and Wales, the very extensive Trustees' Report tells members about the work that ACWW has carried out during 2025. This Report is nine pages of interesting and useful information for members and can be used when speaking about ACWW to local societies, community members and politicians about ACWW.

2025 was the final full year of the last Triennium 2023-26. It was not an easy period as ACWW and its membership set about their recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic and which produced many and continuing financial challenges. As we move through 2026, and as we look to our Centenary in 2029, the ACWW Board is now engaged in a comprehensive strategic and financial planning process with a new Board of Trustees elected by members at the Triennial Conference. Along with the other Board Members, I am pleased to be working with our new Executive Director, Joanna Groves, as we review ACWW's activities, mission, vision and priorities to ensure that precious resources are directed where they can deliver the greatest impact and best support our members and global impact.

Part of this process involves a member survey, which will be sent out very soon. We are actively seeking members' views as these are an important part of the review process, and will help us to shape ACWW's future direction. Please look

out for the online survey which will be sent to member societies and individual members via email. Take part in the survey as individuals or by getting together with your friends and colleagues. Our future will be significantly stronger with your participation.

In early September, I chaired the regular meeting of the Budget and Finance Working Group, whose remit is the financial oversight of ACWW. Together with three other Board Members and supported by our Executive Director, we review and monitor all aspects of ACWW's financial management, including policies, procedures, compliance and long-term sustainability. We are also working closely with the Partnerships Working Group and others to explore further resource opportunities and support the development of future fundraising and income-generation plans.

This aspect of our work is not easy in our challenging world; an aspect of the reality we are living in, which I acknowledged in my Conference Treasurer's Report. Charities and non-profit organisations in general across all our countries are feeling the pressures of climate change and environmental challenges. The need for individuals and societies to work with less resources and higher costs are the pressures that most of us are experiencing.

Our new strategy will highlight some of the ways ACWW is adapting and seeking to work more efficiently, including increasing the use of webinars and digital technology to engage members, reviewing once more the costs across the organisation, and taking practical steps to ensure resources are used effectively, such as the recent move to a smaller office. However, I ask you always to be "good neighbours" and support those you know who are not yet part of the digital society and need help to access the information we send out by "twinning" with members who do have digital technology.

I want to reassure every member of ACWW that the ACWW Board and staff are being realistic in their approach and acknowledge the challenges facing both ACWW and many of our members.

As I said in my Conference Report, all your contributions to ACWW are important



and valuable, whether financial donations, responding to requests for photographs or stories to highlight the challenges our members are experiencing and which can be used for our advocacy work or to illustrate our communications, or by engaging with our staff when they ask for applicants for our project support funds. But it goes beyond this – please nominate a Coordinator for your society, take your knowledge of ACWW to your own members and share our communications, individual members look out for a new opportunity to get involved, and everyone take part in "Women Walk the World". This is not an exhaustive list and our website and social media channels provide many more ideas about how you can support ACWW and help us reach others.

Together we are stronger and together our voices can be heard more loudly across the world.

Angela

Angela Cassels
Honorary Treasurer

It is easy to make donations on our website: www.acww.org.uk or at www.acww.org.uk/donate

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

Coordinators Turning Resolutions into Action

What are the most pressing concerns facing rural women and communities in your region?

How can our local experiences contribute to global conversations about agriculture, food systems, climate resilience and women's empowerment?

These are some of the questions at the heart of ACWW's new Triennial theme and they are exactly the kinds of questions ACWW Coordinators can help us answer. The new Triennial theme, "Grounded Locally, Leading Globally", recognises one of ACWW's greatest strengths: our global network is rooted in the knowledge, experiences and action of rural women and communities at the local level.

Around the world, our members are already responding to the challenges facing their communities. They are advocating for women's rights, supporting farmers, strengthening food security, developing new skills, building climate resilience, and creating opportunities for women to lead.

Our challenge (and opportunity) is to connect these local experiences so they can inform and strengthen our global work.

From Resolutions to Action

ACWW resolutions identify the issues that matter most to our membership and give shared direction to our advocacy and programme work. But a resolution is only the starting point. The next step is to ask: how do we move from intent to action?

This Triennium, we want to strengthen the link between what ACWW agrees globally and what members are doing locally. That means understanding the realities behind resolutions, supporting members to act in their own communities, and bringing those experiences back into global conversations.

Coordinators play a vital role in making this connection. As a link between ACWW and Member Societies, they help information, opportunities, and priorities flow in both directions: from ACWW to communities, and from communities back to ACWW.

Following the 31st Triennial World Conference, Coordinators have begun using a simple three-step framework to guide this work:

Understand. Act. Advocate.

Understand

Understanding begins with listening. Coordinators help explore what is happening in their communities, the challenges facing women farmers and rural women, the opportunities emerging locally, and the knowledge members hold that others need to hear.

Act

Once the issues are understood, the next question is what can be done. Action may include organising a local awareness campaign, supporting rural women and families, engaging with decision makers, sharing knowledge, fundraising, or participating in an ACWW campaign. There is no single definition of action. What matters is turning knowledge and priorities into something practical, realistic, and tangible.

Advocate

Advocacy asks how local learning and experience can influence wider conversations. Member Societies have an important contribution to make to global discussions on agriculture, food systems, climate resilience, and women's empowerment. By sharing local evidence, experiences, and solutions, Coordinators and Member Societies can help ensure global conversations reflect the realities of rural women around the world.

A Growing Coordinators Network

During the previous Triennium, the network grew from fewer than 50 Coordinators to 64 across ACWW. This growth has given us a valuable opportunity to further support shared learning and highlight the work taking place across the membership. From advocacy and fundraising to campaigns and grassroots initiatives, Coordinators are fostering meaningful discussions around local activities.

When one Member Society shares an idea, it can inspire another. When one community shares its experience, it can deepen our understanding of a global issue. And when local action is connected across the network, it strengthens ACWW's collective voice.



Above: Members of the Country Women's Association of Western Australia gather as they celebrate ACWW.

Below: The East African Women's League members of the headquarters branch in Nairobi regularly come together - here including their past Area President Clare Jethwa.



Why become a Coordinator?

We are encouraging Member Societies to consider nominating a Coordinator and becoming part of this growing network. Being a Coordinator is an opportunity to:

- Connect with ACWW members around the world
- Learn from innovative approaches and grassroots experiences across our network
- Share your Society's work and ensure local voices contribute to ACWW's global conversations
- Build relationships with members beyond your own country
- Support action on issues affecting rural women and communities
- Strengthen advocacy by connecting local experiences with ACWW's international priorities
- Help shape our collective work throughout the new Triennium

If you'd like more information or want to become a Coordinator, contact Casey Daudelin, Engagement Officer.
casey@acww.org.uk



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE WOMAN FARMER 2026

Reflections on our Woman Farmer Mental Health Webinar

As a part of the International Year of the Woman Farmer, ACWW hosted a webinar on mental health in July 2026 that provided a powerful opportunity to reflect on the realities faced by women living and working in rural and agricultural communities around the world. Hosted by Central Office Engagement Officer Casey Daudelin, the webinar brought together a panel of women farmers, community leaders, and mental health advocates from across ACWW's global network and beyond to discuss the often-overlooked issue of mental health and the impact of isolation among farming communities. The discussion highlighted both the challenges women face and the strength, resilience, and solidarity that exist within rural communities.

Acknowledging our panellists

We are grateful to the panellists who shared their time, knowledge, and lived experience so generously. Their contributions brought depth and perspective to the discussion, helping to highlight the many ways mental health, isolation, agriculture, and community life intersect for women in rural areas. Each speaker offered a distinct perspective on the challenges facing farming communities and the importance of connection, support, and recognition.

Recognising Women Farmers' Experiences

One of the key themes that emerged from the webinar was the complex and demanding nature of women's roles in agriculture. Women farmers are not only involved in agricultural production but are often responsible for care-giving, household management, community leadership, and supporting family well-being. These multiple responsibilities can create significant pressures and contribute to stress, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion. Hearing the experiences of women from different countries demonstrated that, despite differences in culture and geography, many women share similar challenges. Their stories reinforced the reality that women's contributions to farming often extend far beyond what is visible or formally recognised.

Another important issue discussed was the impact of isolation on mental health. Rural life can bring many rewards, including a strong connection to the land and community, but it can also involve geographical remoteness, limited access to services, and reduced opportunities for social interaction. The webinar explored how these conditions can intensify feelings of



Tshegofatso Mputle

Founder and Managing Director of agri-business TshegoM Creations (Pty) Ltd and Member of Bafokeng Women's Club, South Africa



Cara Ausmus

Farmer, Member of Illinois Association of Home and Community Education, President and International Chair of Mercer County Illinois Association of Home and Community Education USA.



Moranda van Gieest

Farmer and Member of New Brunswick Women's Institute, President of Petiscodiac Women's Institute Founder of Elgin Eco Association, ACWW Coordinator, Canada.



Louise Taylor

Member and Chair of the Community and International Support Committee at Country Women's Association of Victoria, Inc., ACWW Coordinator. Australia.



Dr Vinayak Hegana

Founder and Director of Center for Farmer's Mental Health and SHIVAR Helpline, India.

loneliness and make it more difficult for women to seek support when they are struggling.

The discussion also emphasised that the experiences of women farmers are often overlooked in conversations about agricultural mental health.

Mental health initiatives within farming communities have traditionally focused on male farmers, yet women face unique pressures and challenges. The webinar demonstrated the need for a more inclusive approach that recognises the specific experiences of women farmers, women in farming households, and rural women leaders.

The Power of Connection and Community

Perhaps the most inspiring aspect of the webinar was the emphasis on connection and community as sources of resilience. Throughout the discussion, speakers highlighted the role of women's organisations, community groups, peer networks, and support services in helping women feel valued and connected. Community-based organisations and efforts demonstrate how networks can reduce isolation and provide practical as well as emotional support. The webinar reinforced the idea that meaningful connections play a vital role in protecting mental well-being.

Overall, this webinar demonstrated that while the challenges are significant, there is tremendous strength within rural communities. The message that stood out most clearly was that connection matters. By listening to women's voices, strengthening community networks, and ensuring access to appropriate support, we can help create healthier, more resilient rural communities. The webinar was a valuable reminder that supporting the well-being of women farmers is essential to the future of agriculture and rural life worldwide.

If you'd like more information about the International Year of the Woman Farmer, visit our website at www.acww.org.uk or contact Casey Daudelin, Engagement Officer. casey@acww.org.uk

Shop online with ACWW!



We have a wide range of merchandise, gifts, and memorabilia for sale on our web shop; whether its celebrating Women Walk the World in a shiny new pair of comfy socks, or showing your support for ACWW whilst doing your weekly shop.

You can also contact us for group and bulk discounts, and a magazine special offer not available on the website by emailing nicoletta@acww.org.uk

www.acww.org.uk/shop

Looking Back: A Review of the 2023-2026 Triennium

Following an inspiring Conference in beautiful Kuala Lumpur, the incoming Board of Trustees settled down to three days of planning and training for the Triennium ahead. Being elected to the Board of Trustees for a UK registered charity involves certain legal duties and responsibilities, and some Central Office staff were on hand to assist the incoming Board taking on their new roles.

Members

There are active memberships in 53 countries. As of March 2026, there were 226 active Member Societies of which 42 were new society members. There were 503 Individual Members, of which 45 were new Individual Members.

42 new
Member Societies
in 2026!

Establishment of Working Groups

A resolution from the outgoing Board recommended that the Board of Trustees elected in 2023 should establish what they believe to be the best Board titles and responsibilities for ACWW's immediate future, enacting these changes through the Standing Orders as allowed for in the 2017 Constitution.

Inspired by the successful introduction of ACWW Coordinators and conscious of the inadequacies of the old Specified Committee structure, eight Working Groups, each led by a Board Member, and comprising of Board Members and relevant staff, were established to focus on the

following priorities: Advocacy, Budget & Finance, Community Transformation & Projects, Knowledge Sharing & Local Activities, Membership, Partnerships, Safeguarding & Data Protection, and Triennial World Conference. These Working Groups align with our 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, with the aim of achieving a more collaborative style of work. Working Groups generally meet a minimum of three times a year and report back to the Board.

Board Meetings & Operation

The Board met in person three times, including immediately after the Triennial World Conference. However, it was decided not to have in-person meetings in 2024 to save on costs. There were 14 online meetings of the Board, the Executive Committee, comprising the Officers and Board Leads, met online 13 times, and the Area Presidents alone met 3 times over the Triennium.

The World President and Executive Director are in frequent and regular contact. The Executive Director and Central Office staff in London carry on the day-to-day administration of the organisation, ensuring compliance with statutory and charity requirements, financial and membership record keeping, projects administration, advocacy, writing and design of publications and the website, drafting statements and policy documents, research and information to support the charitable objectives and work of the Working Groups and Board.

Change of Board Titles

All Board Members are Trustees. The four members elected to positions previously known as Chair of a Specified Committee became 'Board Leads' as follows:

- Board Lead for Advocacy replaced the United Nations Committee Chair.
- Board Lead for Community Transformation & Projects replaced the Projects Committee Chair.

- Board Lead for Knowledge Sharing & Local Activities replaced the Agriculture Committee Chair.
- Board Lead for Partnerships replaced the Communications and Marketing Chair.

The Treasurer, previously Finance Committee Chair, became Board Lead for Budget & Finance; the Secretary, previously the Triennial World Conference Committee Chair was retitled Board Lead for the Triennial World Conference Working Group and the Deputy World President took responsibility for the Memberships Working Group.

New Working Methods

2023 was the first full year of operation under the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan, 'Rural Women in Action'. The strategy was endorsed by the Triennial World Conference along with the necessary constitutional amendments.

The Board recognises that adopting new ways of working requires adjustment and can take time to be understood and accepted. It is important to remember that ACWW has never stood still, and its longevity is rooted in its ability to move with the times. Whether this was the "Million Member Fund" becoming "Pennies for Friendship" which became the "Rural Women in Action Fund"; or starting to fund projects in 1977 which were then reformed and re-framed severally over the years to the current Projects programme; there has always been forward progress, and we were excited to continue this in 2023 and beyond. The constant that has remained is the commitment to sharing knowledge to empower rural women worldwide.

We believe that to address systemic issues, we must see systematic change. Development projects which empower women in their local communities can only succeed when local, national, and international processes recognise the human rights and needs of rural women.

Our objectives continue to be the relief of poverty, the relief of sickness and protection and preservation of health, and the advancement of education. ACWW continues to strengthen our network of women's organisations globally by building capacity, facilitating cooperation, and working with like-minded external partners to achieve our objectives. We continue to use our Consultative and Associate Statuses with the United Nations and its Agencies to amplify the voices of rural women and highlight the issues they raise at the international level.

2022-2026 Strategic Plan: Rural Women in Action

ACWW has continued to operate, with many of the changes trialled in the previous 18 months settling in to becoming a 'new normal'. Closer cooperation between Board Members, and the development of Working Groups ensure clearer progress and better monitoring of ACWW's action towards its objectives. Respect for ACWW's long history, combined with a forward-looking vision for the success of the organisation provide us with a stable basis for progress as we approach our Centenary.

Community Transformation & Grassroots Projects

Strategic Plan 2023-2026 Objectives:

1. Grounding our development projects in 50 years of experience, combined with recognised good practice, we will continue to prioritise the issues highlighted by rural women in their communities.
2. In line with experience and global priority, we will focus on Climate-Smart Agriculture, Rural Women's Health, and Education & Community Development for our Core Projects.
3. Alongside Core Projects which respond to local priorities, we will work to add Capacity Building modules to each project, strengthening impact and building sustainability.

Related Achievements

- 8 projects funded under the previous WE Fund system were successfully completed in this Triennium.
- 6 new projects were funded by the Rural Women In Action Fund: Climate-Smart Agriculture x 2 Rural Women's Health x 2 Education & Community Development x 2
- Capacity Building funding was provided for four of the local societies delivering Rural Women in Action Fund (RWIAF) projects, strengthening long term impact and the future of the partner organisation.
- The pilot Women's Empowerment Summit was held Mongolia in 2023, following the successful completion of a project which received ACWW funding to address gender-based violence. More information is detailed throughout this report.
- The pilot and the RWIAF projects were funded in the following countries: Ghana = 1; India = 2; Mongolia = 1; Romania = 1; Tanzania = 2.
- In 2026, the International Year of the Woman Farmer, ACWW is partnering with the FAO and local delivery partners in Papua New Guinea and Uganda – more details are featured in the Advocacy Impacts section of this report.

Sharing of Knowledge & Local Activities

Strategic Plan 2023-2026 Objectives:

1. To strengthen the sharing of knowledge between Member Societies, all Societies were invited to nominate ACWW Coordinators; They will receive training, support, and have regular online meetings with staff, their Area President, and the World President. This means global representation, and greater communication.

2. Area Conferences will continue to benefit from the support processes established in 2020 in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, and this will be strengthened with Capacity Building workshops and training sessions.

60+ ACWW
Coordinators this
Triennium!

Related Achievements

- More than 60 Member Societies have active ACWW Coordinators supporting the role of Area Presidents and our wider advocacy work.
- Representation comes from more than 20 countries.
- Coordinators meet monthly, sharing knowledge and learning from each other, hearing the latest from ACWW, engaging in training, raising questions and comments. They have access to many online resources provided by Central Office. Board Members attend meetings and engage regularly.
- There is increased consistency in ACWW's messaging globally. Feedback is leading to innovation in measures to generate grassroots engagement with ACWW's work.
- Area Conference Guidelines were reviewed and updated. Support included assistance with programming, designing materials and logos, online registration, and provision of speakers.
- Capacity building and training sessions as well as Question and Answer sessions have been facilitated at Area Conferences and, in some cases, in-person technical support.



Partnerships

Strategic Plan 2023-2026 Objectives:

1. ACWW's global network of women's organisations is unique, and important to protect. By focusing our efforts on building capacity within our network, we will strengthen both our Members and our Membership.
2. For many years we have worked with partner organisations who are aligned in policy and intent; we will continue to build these relationships and work in like-minded coalitions where appropriate to achieve our aims
3. We will establish strategic partnerships to help deliver Projects, fund our core work, and advance our advocacy work. Partnerships will be considered at global, national, and local levels.
4. All partnerships will be built in line with ACWW's established policies and the Statement of Ethics adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2021.
5. Our Members will continue to be our priority, as we work to achieve the agenda they have set for ACWW.

Related Achievements

- ACWW continued to use its official partnership status with United Nations organizations such as the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) to amplify the voices of its Members.
- In 2024 some Board Members participated in online webinars hosted by FAO addressing the living conditions of rural women in Europe and Central Asia.
- The Board Working Group on Partnerships recommended to the Board that ACWW establish a knowledge partnership with the Alliance for Financial Inclusion

(AFI) with a goal of highlighting the needs of rural women in the fields of financial inclusion and access to services.

- The Working Group also recommended ACWW seek Consultative Status with the Commonwealth.



Advocacy

Strategic Plan 2023-2026 Objectives:

1. ACWW will continue to use its Consultative Status with the United Nations and its Agencies to amplify the voices of Rural Women, highlighting issues they raise at the international level.
- Amongst other policies, we will prioritise the following:
2. With the FAO, we will advocate for the importance of family farming, women's land rights, Indigenous seed protection, food security and food sovereignty.
 3. At UNESCO we will advocate for equitable access to quality education at all levels for women in all their diversity, the importance of traditional and inherited knowledge, Indigenous languages, and global citizenship.
 4. We will use our access at the Human Rights Council to promote understanding and implementation of CEDAW for women everywhere.
 5. We will raise awareness of critical UN Declarations and Conventions that are specifically relevant to our membership.

Related Achievements

- ACWW has deepened its relationship with the FAO, engaging in meetings to ensure ACWW members are featured as speakers, bringing their voices to the fore. This partnership has also led to funding for activities led by ACWW and delivered by Member Societies.

- Continuing to work with UNESCO, ACWW has secured funding for projects and programmes, as well as placing rural women at the centre of the civil society agenda at UNESCO, and in the activities of the Secretariat through contributions to policy documents, conferences, and research - with particular emphasis on land rights and Indigenous languages and access.
- ACWW is engaging in the International Year of the Woman Farmer in 2026, prioritising advocacy activities which highlight the experiences of our members and build capacity for their engagement with international partners.
- Research among our members has been highlighted at the Human Rights Council and the new Working Group on the Rights of Peasants.

Central Office

ACWW Central Office relocated to leased offices at The Foundry, 17 Oval Way, London SE11 5RR in June 2023. This followed months of occupying temporary space as the premises at Ao4 Parkhall had become unfit for use due to flood damage. The Foundry is a serviced workspace, owned by the Ethical Property Company and managed by the Social Justice and Human Rights Centre. At The Foundry, we are among other human rights NGOs and like-minded organisations, and there are opportunities for learning and collaborating.

30th Triennial World Conference

This was a vibrant event superbly hosted by the Women's Institute Pahang, in Kuala Lumpur, capital of Malaysia. The 453 in-person participants were treated to many examples of Malaysian culture, cuisine and hospitality. A further 70 attended online. We were very honoured that the conference was opened by HM King Abdullah, with attendant protocols and musical accompaniment, a new experience for ACWW. Past Area President HM Queen Azizah delivered a warm, heartfelt welcome speech and the Prince Regent

presented a keynote address on the topic of the environment. The Hostess Society were gracious and thoughtful throughout and had catered for all needs, despite the change of date and venue due to the global Covid pandemic. The successful collaboration with the Multi-Media University enabled broadcasting of the business sessions as well as the social events, and there was a daily bulletin online and on Malaysian national television.

The 30th Triennial World Conference passed several policy resolutions:

Establishment of Rural Women's Employment Action Plans: *That ACWW urges all governments to address the particular needs of rural women by working with women's representative groups to establish, implement and regularly monitor a Women's Employment Action Plan which ensures access to training and education; fair, equitable and safe employment practices; working conditions and remuneration; access to resources such as finance, materials, technology, and land/property and; including but not limited to, advice on career, business and entrepreneurship.*

Addressing Food Waste: *Be it resolved that ACWW facilitates both action and advocacy on the issue of food waste, recognising that food waste occurs throughout the global food supply chain, and that coordinated action is required to mitigate food loss and wastage at every stage.*

Rural Gender Impact Analysis: *That the Associated Country Women of the World urge Governments to apply both a Rural impact Analysis and Gender Impact Analysis when considering plans, policies and programmes to ensure the intersectionality of being women and living rurally are taken into account in order to reduce the adverse impact of proposed plans, policies and programmes on rural communities.* There were many resolutions on constitutional matters to update the governing document in line with the 2022-26 Strategic Plan. These are reproduced in the ACWW Constitution 2023 available on the website.



Delegates at the Opening Ceremony of the 30th Triennial World Conference, held at the Putrajaya Marriott, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in May 2023.

Constitution:

Some of the resolutions corrected typos, inconsistencies or changes in title and others concerned the ending of Specified Committees and the introduction of ACWW Coordinators to enable greater involvement from the membership.

Changes to the Membership Rates were also approved: To update membership fees for all members in the 2023-2026 Triennium to the following rates: for memberships relating to the year 2024 onwards. Category 1: £130, Category 2: £76, Category 3: £61, Category 4: £41 and Category 5: £30.

In Conclusion

The Triennium saw significant changes to the way we work, aiming for greater sustainability for Member Societies and the organisation as a whole. The global economic climate presents major challenges, reinforcing the need for a worldwide network of rural women supporting and learning from each other. Central Office plays a key role in all of ACWW activities.

In the Triennium following the global pandemic, the stresses of international conflict, climate change, and resultant

disruption to global trade and food production are growing, as is the impact on rural women's societies. Equally, we have to acknowledge the resultant decline in donations and membership numbers for ACWW. The Board and staff have responded to the best of their abilities to address this.

Despite the difficulties, there are signs of upturn in membership numbers in East, West and Central Africa. We also recognise scope for growth in Areas which have not formerly been major financial contributors to ACWW, their needs being often the greatest. ACWW's increasing recognition on the world stage, detailed in the Advocacy Impact Report, has opened the way for greater support for rural women and hope for the future of ACWW and our membership.





Member Engagement 2023-2026

Casey Davelin - Engagement Officer

During the Triennium, my work has focused on strengthening participation, building capacity, and ensuring that members' voices and lived experiences remain central to ACWW's work. Through a combination of research, resource development and facilitation of collaborative spaces, Engagement initiatives have helped strengthen connections across the global membership while supporting meaningful participation.

A key achievement during the Triennium has been the growth of the Coordinators Programme, for which I serve as the Staff Lead. The number of Coordinators increased from fewer than 50 at the start of the Triennium, to 64, representing nearly 20 new members. While this growth demonstrates the value and demand for the programme, it remains a small proportion of the over 200 Member Societies. The long-term goal is to establish a Coordinator for each Member Society at local, regional, and national levels to ensure broad and diverse representation. Coordinators are now present in all Areas except East & South East Asia, making expansion into this Area a key priority to strengthen member engagement and participation in the next Triennium.

The Coordinators' monthly meetings alternate between global sessions and Area-specific meetings, allowing Coordinators to connect internationally while also addressing regional priorities. Global sessions provide space for networking and sharing experiences across diverse contexts, while Area-focused meetings allow for more detailed conversations on regional issues and opportunities. This approach has strengthened relationships between Coordinators and Area Presidents, improved communication, and supported more effective collaboration and coordination across ACWW.

Another central aspect of Engagement has been ensuring that member voices inform ACWW's priorities and advocacy efforts. To support this, engagement mechanisms were developed to capture members' insights so they can inform policy positions, strategic priorities, and messaging. A key initiative was the development of the Community Challenges and Empowerment Advocacy Questionnaire, designed to better understand the needs and priorities of rural women and identify gaps in available resources and services. The questionnaire was piloted at several Area Conferences to assess its usability and accessibility, while also gathering member feedback on the scope and relevance of the questions, with the aim to distribute it to the entire membership this upcoming Triennium. These efforts help strengthen ACWW's ability to represent authentic member perspectives in regional and international advocacy.

To support members' engagement and advocacy, evidence-based resources were created - grounded in research and members' lived experiences, ensuring they are practical and relevant. These efforts strengthened members' capacity to participate in advocacy and local initiatives. A few examples of resources that were produced include a presentation on ACWW's work supporting Indigenous communities, accessible materials on addressing food loss and food waste in home and local contexts, Women Walk the World leaflets, and awareness resources on gender-based violence, including materials supporting the 16 Days of Activism campaign.

Capacity building has also been a key focus throughout the Triennium. We developed a workshop to strengthen members' skills in advocacy, engagement, and reporting, ensuring sessions were accessible to a global

membership and sensitive to diverse cultural and geographic contexts. With the help of my colleagues Jenny Sellers and Nicoletta Idili, we implemented women's empowerment sessions at the European Area Conference, where sessions were held on addressing challenges faced by rural women in Europe, effective engagement, and producing high-quality reports and campaigns. This provided practical learning opportunities and encouraged peer exchange, helping members build confidence in sharing their skills and knowledge. Building on this experience, a key goal for the next Triennium is to expand these capacity-building sessions to other meetings and Area Conferences to further strengthen members' skills and engagement across the network.

Another key pillar of the Engagement strategy has been translating research and lived experience into actionable advocacy and communications. This has included developing digital knowledge-sharing materials that highlight members' experiences and creating inclusive spaces for knowledge exchange across the global membership. The International Year of the Woman Farmer has provided a valuable opportunity to amplify these voices through the development of a Story Bank; a growing collection of written, visual, and video stories from across the ACWW membership. These stories showcase the diverse experiences of women farmers and raise awareness of their vital role in farming, food systems, and rural economies, while helping to inform and strengthen advocacy efforts. Through these initiatives, my role has helped strengthen engagement structures, increase participation, and support a more inclusive and evidence-informed approach to engagement and advocacy. I look forward to continuing to expand and strengthen this work in the next Triennium to further amplify member voices globally!



Communications

Nicoletta Idili – Communications Officer

Over the past three years, ACWW's Communications function has grown significantly in both scope and impact, strengthening our digital presence across multiple platforms, amplifying the voices of rural women worldwide, and providing essential support to our Board and membership.

Social Media & Digital Content

Our social media presence has expanded and matured considerably over this Triennium, spanning Facebook as our primary platform, a stable LinkedIn presence, and the reintroduction of Instagram from August 2025. Together, these channels have allowed ACWW to reach a broader and more diverse global audience than ever before.

Facebook remains our most established platform, and the data reflects sustained and impressive growth over the period. Follower numbers grew steadily from 5,475 in August 2024 to 5,763 by March 2026. Monthly reach, which stood at around 6,300–8,800 in the second half of 2024, climbed dramatically through 2025, peaking at 35,946 in September 2025, with views of 35,793 and interactions of 1,113 in the same period. Even in quieter months, performance remained solid, demonstrating the cumulative effect of consistent, quality content. Link clicks also showed strong growth, rising from single digits in late 2024 to 148 in April 2025 and 1,076 by June 2025, a clear sign that our audience is not only seeing our content, but actively engaging with it.

Instagram was relaunched in August 2025 as part of a strategic effort to reach younger audiences and expand ACWW's visual storytelling. In just a few months, the channel has established a consistent presence, with encouraging early results.

Between September 2025 and March 2026, monthly views ranged from 301 to 1,200, with reach peaking at 337 in November 2025 and interactions reaching 55 in October 2025. While still in its early stages, Instagram represents a promising new avenue

for ACWW's communications, and growth is expected to accelerate as the channel develops.

Podcasts & Multimedia

A significant highlight of this triennium has been the development of ACWW's Leadership for Equality podcast, which has provided a powerful platform to spotlight women's leadership, rural development, and gender equality, themes at the very core of ACWW's mission. The podcast has helped ACWW reach audiences beyond our traditional channels and opened new conversations with partners, advocates, and supporters globally.

Board Support & Newsletters

Behind the scenes, the communications function has provided consistent and reliable support to ACWW's Board and leadership, ensuring that additional support is provided during Area conferences and information flows clearly across our global structure.

ACWW's newsletters have been distributed regularly throughout the triennium via Mailchimp, serving as a key touchpoint for keeping our community informed about organisational news, campaigns, events, and member stories. With over 100 editions sent between 2023 and 2026, the newsletter has maintained a consistent channel of communication across our network.

Rural Women in Action Pack

The standout product of the triennium is the Rural Women in Action Pack, a flagship advocacy resource designed to equip members and supporters globally. The pack represents not only a creative achievement but a tangible tool for grassroots advocacy.

These three years have been a period of real growth and creativity for ACWW's communications, and we look forward to building on these foundations, and improvements already in progress, in the triennium ahead.

Facebook

35,946	35,793	1,113
Peak monthly reach	Peak monthly views	Peak monthly interactions

Instagram

1,200	337	55
Peak monthly views	Peak monthly reach	Peak monthly interactions

Newsletters

100+	~60%	88.6%
Newsletters 2023-2026	Average Open rate	Peak Open rate

Click the logos to find ACWW on social media



Facebook



Instagram



LinkedIn



Podcast



X / Twitter



YouTube



Rural Women in Action Fund Projects 2023-2026

Jenny Sellers – Projects Manager

Across diverse contexts, from rural farming communities to areas affected by conflict and displacement, ACWW-funded projects are supporting women and girls in overcoming barriers and creating lasting change in their lives. Grounded in local knowledge and led by community-based organisations, these initiatives focus on practical solutions that strengthen access to education, healthcare, and sustainable livelihoods, while placing women's voices and leadership at the centre. This is the work of Rural Women in Action.

Rural Women in Action Pilot Project: Rural Women's Empowerment Summit with Sain Tus Development Bridge NGO, Mongolia, August 2023

The Women's Empowerment Summit brought together over 300 survivors of domestic and gender-based violence from rural communities and herdswomen in the Khovd Province of Mongolia. The event built on an economic empowerment projects which were funded by ACWW and implemented by our local partner Sain Tus Development Bridge NGO.

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 violence, 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 were able to signpost many of the participants to vital social support and health services. During the summit, twelve victims of domestic violence approached Sain Tus, four of them were serious cases. Sain Tus was able to help and provide mediation services, victim protection services, and social welfare services for these twelve women survivors.

The summit also presented an opportunity to promote traditional cultural expression by the inclusion of a Harvest Festival with 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.

This pilot project provided lots of useful data and positive practices which have been implemented in projects and programmes since then, including co-funding from UNESCO and alignment with ACWW's Strategic Plan in bringing additional project delivery partners such as Police Scotland into the team.



Delegates at the first Women's Empowerment Summit, held in Khovd Province, Mongolia with partners Sain Tus Development Bridge NGO and UNESCO, August 2023

'Planting the Seeds of Peace' with the Geopolitical Alliance of Women - Romania

Since the escalation of conflict between Russia and Ukraine in 2021, Romania has hosted over 140,000 refugees from Ukraine, many of them children. Ensuring these children can continue their education has been vital. Many children were enrolled in Romanian schools, which caused challenges due to the language barrier. Parents worried that this would cause young children to fall behind, or lose their sense of national identity, faced deepening concerns.

In response, the goal of this project was to support Ukrainian children in Bucharest, Romania by providing horticultural education. The aim was not only educational, but also to help reduce the stress and trauma caused by conflict and displacement. For children forced to flee their homes, the loss of safety, routine, and community can be profound. They lose their homes and their loved ones, their sense of safety, and routine. Without education, the impact and trauma of displacement will more deeply 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.

Rather than focus on their experience of conflict, the young participants instead had the opportunity to focus on growth, both in nature and in themselves. Gardening activities encouraged them to engage with the natural world, while supporting their emotional well-being. The project was designed to support a conscious approach to horticulture and life on earth among the young participants built on the research that gardening can reduce stress, anxiety and depression and improves psychological well-being.

The project involved 200 children aged 4 to 17 years old, most of whom were between 7 and 12 years old. They attended the Ukrainian educational space at Școala Gimnazial "Uruguay",

part of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network.

Over 12 months the children learned practical skills such as growing seeds, caring for plants, soil restoration and understanding climate change. The project also strengthened children's connection to their environment and to healthy lifestyles. Many showed a growing interest in caring for green spaces, reducing litter, and eating nutritious food, particularly produce they had grown themselves. These changes reflect not only increased knowledge but also shifts in attitudes and behaviour.



About our Partner

The project was implemented by 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 assisted in the implementation of the training programme.

All project objectives were achieved in full. By combining education with psychosocial support, the project helped children rebuild a sense of normality, develop practical life skills, and look to the future with greater confidence.



Planting the Seeds of Peace: A young Ukrainian plants her first seedling outside the school; ACWW's then European Area President Afrodita Roman visits the project and meets participants; and artwork created by the students as part of the programme, with creative pathways inspired by life.



'Towards Health Equity: Empower Women through Access to Sexual Reproductive Health Services' with Empowerment of Marginalized Communities, Tanzania.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) has been illegal in Tanzania since 1998. However, the practice continues in some communities, particularly in rural areas where it remains part of long-standing traditional social norms. In the Manyara region, including among some Maasai communities, rates of FGM remain among the highest in the country.

Women and girls in these settings may have limited influence over decisions about their own bodies and health. Social expectations, gender inequality, and restricted access to information and services can make it difficult for them to make informed choices about their sexual and reproductive health, or to seek appropriate care. Change is often complex and requires working with communities in ways that are respectful, inclusive, and supportive.

Through a behaviour change approach, Empowerment of Marginalized Communities (E-MAC) works alongside women, girls, and community members to support informed decision-making and promote gender equality. The project aimed to prevent gender-based violence, including FGM, by building awareness, strengthening confidence, and fostering supportive environments where women and girls can exercise their rights.

To support lasting change, E-MAC implemented a comprehensive cross-generational approach that engaged a wide range of community members, including traditional and religious leaders and elders, midwives, healthcare workers, Traditional Birth Attendants, and school-based peer educators. By working with these groups, the project reinforced consistent messaging through multiple trusted channels, helping to shift attitudes in a way that is community-led, and sustainable.

The project contributed to improved access to maternal and reproductive



Traditional Birth Attendants and expecting mothers gather outside E-mac Tanzania during the programme working Towards Health Equity.

health information and services. In collaboration with the District Medical Office, 20 participants, including Traditional Birth Attendants, Traditional Practitioners, and expectant and breastfeeding mothers received training on safe maternal health practices. This helped strengthen policy around requiring expectant mothers to deliver in hospitals or health centres.

Community Health Workers played a key role in extending this support. A total of 636 women received counselling on sexual and reproductive health, while strengthened referral systems made it easier for community members to access care. As a result, 787 people, including 636 women and 151 men, accessed health services and information.

Engagement with community leaders was also central to the project's impact. Twenty religious and traditional leaders took part in training on the health and social impacts of FGM and the importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights. They went on to share this knowledge within their communities, reaching more than 500 people and helping to build wider awareness in ways that were locally relevant and trusted.

The project also prioritised support for women affected by FGM. Two psychosocial support groups were established within healthcare centres, creating safe and confidential spaces for women to share their experiences. Through these groups, 28 survivors accessed counselling and emotional support, helping them to cope with the physical and psychological impacts of FGM and begin to rebuild well-being.

About our Partner

E-MAC envisions an empowered community focusing on supporting rural poor women socially and economically, able to attain respect and participate in decision making at different levels. E-MAC fights for rights of girls and women in rural areas denied by multiple forms of Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and stigma, including access to sexual reproductive health rights. E-MAC has been working with police and traditional leaders to address Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), forced marriage, early pregnancy and improving access to sexual reproductive health in Simanjiro District since 2013.

'Sustainable Cultivation of Vegetable & Greens by Dalit Women Farmers' with Women's Organisation for Rural Development, India.

Women's Organisation for Rural Development (WORD) focuses on supporting farming communities to strengthen their livelihoods while caring for the environment and soil health. This project worked with 50 Dalit women farmers across five villages in Namakkal District, Tamil Nadu, building practical skills in climate-resilient and locally-rooted agriculture.

Over 12 months, participants took part in hands-on training in horticulture using indigenous crops. Learning was delivered through farmer field schools, group sessions, and practical demonstrations, enabling women to apply new techniques directly on their own land. Each participant received a selection of locally adapted seeds, including okra, aubergine, chillies, gourds, and leafy greens, alongside natural farming inputs such as herbal pest control and organic fertilisers.

All participants had access to small plots of land, typically around a quarter of an acre. Through the project, women were supported to make fuller use of this land for growing diverse and nutritious crops. This has helped to strengthen both household food security and opportunities to generate income from surplus produce.

The project also supported women to build knowledge of soil care and sustainable farming practices, contributing to healthier land and reduced reliance on external inputs. By working with indigenous seeds and natural methods, participants are better equipped to continue farming in ways that are affordable, environmentally sustainable, and resilient to changing conditions.

To ensure longer-term impact, the project established a community seed bank. Women are now able to save and contribute seeds from their harvests, creating a shared resource that can be used and replenished over time. This approach reduces costs and strengthens collaboration and knowledge-sharing among farmers.

One participant, Mrs K. Mala, described how the project has strengthened her ability to sustain her farming in the future. With access to the community seed bank, alongside the knowledge and experience gained through the training, she feels confident continuing to cultivate crops in the coming seasons.

For Mrs T. Mahalakshmi, the project helped strengthen her financial stability. Previously, she relied on working for other landowners to supplement the limited income from her own land. She has now improved cultivation on her plot and achieved a more productive harvest. As a result, her family is now less dependent on external sources of income and better able to generate earnings from their own land, contributing to greater independence and resilience.

"My family members helped me to cultivate the crops, and my children are happy to support me in caring for them. They enjoy helping and are happy to eat the fresh vegetables we grow."

It has reduced my family's daily expenditure on vegetables and increased our income, as I have sold produce to traders in our village and nearby town."

Project Participant Mrs K. Mala



Women farmers attend trainings at field farmers schools carried out by Women's Organisation for Rural Development

About our Partner

The Women's Organisation for Rural Development (WORD) was founded in 1991 by a group of social workers inspired by the principles of Mahatma Gandhi and Vinoba Bhave, key figures in the Bhoodan Movement, which promoted the voluntary redistribution of land to landless communities.

Since its founding, WORD has worked to advance gender equality and support women to strengthen their social and economic independence. The organisation focuses particularly on small and marginalised women farmers, providing practical support to improve livelihoods through sustainable and environmentally responsible agricultural practices. A core principle of their work is promoting the use of indigenous seeds and encouraging farmers to save, preserve and share seeds within their community. Across its work, WORD promotes dignity, inclusion, and the rights of women and children, supporting communities to address harmful practices in ways that are locally led.

'Promote Girls' Education Inclusion in Alignment with the Tanzania 2022 School Dropout Re-entry Guideline Initiative' with Reaching the Unreached Tanzania

The Dodoma region in Tanzania faces high rates of school dropout for girls, often linked to early pregnancy and economic hardship. While national guidelines introduced in 2022 now allow girls to return to school after leaving, many still face social and financial barriers to re-enrolment. In response, Reaching the Unreached Tanzania (RUT) implemented a project in Kondo District to support girls in returning to education, or to access alternative pathways such as vocational training. Working closely with schools, families, and community members, the project helped turn national policy into practical support for those most affected.

A community-led taskforce was established to identify girls who had left school and connect them with the support they needed. This improved coordination at the local level and enabled quicker referral. Through this approach, 223 out-of-school girls were identified across four wards. Of these, 112 were supported to re-engage with education, exceeding the project target. Most returned to formal schooling, while others enrolled in vocational training, including courses such as tailoring.

The project also addressed the financial pressures that often prevent girls from staying in school. A total of 326 teenage mothers and their families received financial literacy training, alongside support to start or strengthen small income-generating activities. This enabled families to better meet the costs of education and childcare.

Supported by their families and local communities, girls who returned to school were more likely to remain in education. By combining educational access with economic support, the project helped create more stable and supportive environments for girls to continue their learning.

Case Study: Eunice

Eunice left school after becoming pregnant and faced significant challenges, including financial hardship, social stigma, and the responsibility of caring for her young child. With limited support, her goal of continuing her education felt unachievable.

Through community engagement, Reaching the Unreached Tanzania (RUT) identified Eunice and supported her to enrol in vocational training in tailoring, in line with the Tanzania School Dropout Re-entry Guidelines.

Recognising that childcare was a key barrier, the project worked closely with her family to find a practical solution. Through dialogue and counselling, her mother agreed to provide childcare, enabling Eunice to attend training consistently.

With this support in place, Eunice is now fully engaged in her training and building skills to support herself and her child. She has regained confidence and a sense of direction for her future.

Her experience shows that, with the right support, young mothers can continue learning, build livelihoods, and shape their own futures.



"When I became pregnant, I thought my life was finished... now I am learning tailoring, and I believe I can take care of my child and support my family."



About our Partner

Reaching the Unreached Tanzania is dedicated to addressing public health issues, particularly sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) issues, and promoting access to justice in Tanzania. The organisation was established in 2014 by a group of passionate public health specialists to make a tangible impact on the lives of at-risk populations particularly adolescent girls and young women. They aim to create lasting change by translating their public health knowledge into practical solutions.

"This project has helped us understand that our daughters still have a future. The support and economic training have given us confidence to care for the child and allow the girls to continue with their studies."

Community engagement and outreach is crucial for effective, long-term returns to education and RUT has heavily focused on building local support for this initiative.



'Empowering Rural Women Farmers through Climate Smart Agriculture' with Education Communication & Development Trust, India

Climate change is making rainfall less predictable, creating challenges for small-scale farmers who rely on rain to grow food. In many parts of India, women farmers are at the forefront of this challenge, working with limited resources while also managing their household food needs.

In response, the Education, Communication and Development Trust (EDUCATR) launched a project in September 2025 to support 60 women farmers across five villages in Tamil Nadu. The project focuses on building practical skills in climate-smart agriculture, helping women to protect their crops, conserve water, and care for the soil their livelihoods depend on.

Participants are taking part in hands-on training in areas such as soil care, water management, and sustainable crop production. As part of these efforts, five community ponds are being restored to improve access to water for irrigation. Women are also working together in small groups to develop shared initiatives, including seed banks, organic fertiliser production, and nurseries for climate-resilient crops. These activities are designed to be low-cost, locally-led, and sustainable over the long term.

A central aim of the project is to strengthen women's leadership. Women farmers are often excluded from decision-making, despite their key role in agriculture. Participants are forming a Smart Agriculture Women Forum, bringing together group leaders to guide activities, share knowledge, and expand support to other women in their communities.

Halfway through the implementation of the activities, the project has enhanced the participation and confidence of women farmers in community activities. Through training, group discussions, and project activities, the women farmers have developed leadership skills and are actively involved in promoting sustainable agricultural practices in their communities.

Through the project, Mrs. Lakshmi was given the opportunity to participate in a series of training programmes on soil management, integrated pest management, organic manure preparation, nutrients, water conservation techniques, and climate adaptation strategies.

"The training and support I received have helped me understand how to farm in a better and more sustainable way. I now feel confident that my farming can continue despite climate challenges, and I am happy to share what I have learned with other women in my village."

Project participant Mrs Lakshmi

About our Partner

The Education, Communication and Development Trust (EDUCATR) has been working since 1997 to support communities in rural and tribal areas of Tamil Nadu. The organisation focuses on improving education, health, and livelihoods through training, research, and community-led development initiatives, with a long-term commitment to sustainable and inclusive change.



Enjoying the fruits (and vegetables and other sustainably-grown produce) of their labour: Project participants inspect their fields and yields.



'Training of Community Health Nurses in Emergency and Obstetric Care' with MamaCare, Ghana

Ghana has made important progress in improving maternal and child health in recent years, including expanding access to care through national policies. However, many women and families still face barriers to accessing safe and timely healthcare, particularly in under-served rural communities.

Challenges such as limited healthcare infrastructure, shortages of trained staff, and restricted access to essential medicines continue to affect outcomes. In some areas, social norms and community beliefs can also influence when and how women seek care, highlighting the need for approaches that are both culturally respectful and responsive to women's needs.

This project, funded in December 2025, focuses on improving the quality and accessibility of maternal and child healthcare at the community level in Biakoye District, in Ghana's Oti Region. It places particular emphasis on strengthening the role of community health nurses, who are often the first and most trusted point of care for women and families in rural areas.

To support this, 22 community health nurses will receive practical training in maternal care, recognising complications, making timely referrals, preventing mother-to-child transmission of HIV, family planning, and infant nutrition. By strengthening their skills and confidence, the project aims to ensure that women receive safer, more consistent care throughout pregnancy, childbirth, and early childhood.

The project responds to ongoing challenges faced by women in rural communities, including limited access to healthcare services and information. By improving both the quality of care and community awareness, it seeks to support women to make informed decisions about their health and that of their children.

As a result, more women are expected to access prenatal, antenatal, and postnatal care, contributing to safer pregnancies and births. Strengthened local healthcare capacity will also help reduce preventable maternal and infant deaths, while building a more responsive and resilient community health system.

About our Partner

MamaCare Ghana was founded in 1997 to expand access to maternal and reproductive healthcare for women in rural communities. In areas where access to skilled birth attendants remains limited, women have long relied on community knowledge and support during pregnancy and childbirth. Building on this foundation, MamaCare Ghana trains Traditional Birth Attendants to work alongside professional healthcare providers, helping to ensure that more women can access safe, informed, and supportive care close to home.



Conclusion

Looking back over the work funded in the past Triennium, these projects demonstrate the strength of community-led approaches in advancing rural women's empowerment. By investing in women's knowledge, skills, and leadership, ACWW funding is helping to create meaningful and lasting change, from improved health and education outcomes to more secure and sustainable livelihoods. While each project responds to its own context, all reflect a shared commitment to ensuring that women are not only supported, but are active agents in shaping their futures and strengthening their communities.

Jenny Sellers, Projects Manager



Rural Women in Action Fund Grants: Capacity Building

Jenny Sellers – Projects Manager

Investing Beyond the Project: How ACWW's Capacity Building Funding Strengthens Organisations for the Future

Since 2024, ACWW has included supplementary capacity-building funding as part of our grant funding. This additional funding, worth up to £5,000 alongside a project grant, has strengthened the organisations delivering our projects and supported their long-term sustainability.

At ACWW, we believe that successful grant-making is about more than funding a project for a fixed period. While project activities may come to an end, the organisations implementing them continue to serve their communities for years to come. Our aim is therefore not only to support important community initiatives, but also to ensure that the organisations carrying them out are stronger, more resilient, and better equipped for the future.

This approach reflects a key principle of ACWW's grant-making: we want organisations to be in a better position after receiving an ACWW grant than they were before. By investing in organisational development alongside project delivery, we help strengthen the foundations that enable our member organisations to continue creating positive change in their communities.

Capacity-building funding can support a wide range of organisational improvements. These may include strengthening financial management systems, improving fundraising skills, developing communication and marketing strategies, enhancing digital capabilities, or building staff knowledge and leadership. Such investments may not always be immediately visible, but they often have a lasting impact on an organisation's effectiveness and sustainability.



For many organisations, project grants are tied closely to specific activities and outcomes. While this funding is essential, it often leaves limited resources available for broader organisational development. Yet strong systems, skilled staff, clear communications, and effective fundraising are all critical to delivering successful projects in the long term.

Across the charity and development sector, there is growing recognition that investing in organisational capacity leads to greater impact and sustainability. By supporting these areas, funders help organisations become more resilient, better able to attract future funding, and more capable of responding to the changing needs of their communities.

For ACWW, this approach also helps ensure the longevity and effectiveness of our own grant-making programme. When member organisations become stronger, they are better positioned to manage larger projects, secure additional funding from other donors, and sustain the benefits of ACWW-supported initiatives long after individual grants have ended. Capacity-building funding creates value not only for the grantee organisation but also for the communities they serve and for ACWW's wider network.

Learning from Reaching the Unreached Tanzania:

One organisation that has benefited from this funding is Reaching the Unreached Tanzania (RUT). Through ACWW's capacity-building support, RUT invested in training and organisational development in areas including financial management, fundraising, communications, marketing, and digital development.

The experience highlighted several important lessons about organisational growth.

First, staff learned that understanding the purpose behind a task significantly improves commitment and results. For example, photography during project activities had previously been viewed largely as an administrative requirement. Through training, staff gained a deeper understanding of how photographs help document change, tell community stories, demonstrate accountability, and engage supporters. Photography became more than simply taking pictures; it became a way of capturing meaningful moments and communicating impact.

Second, practical, hands-on learning proved invaluable. Staff reported increased confidence when they

could directly apply new skills and tools in their day-to-day work. This practical approach encouraged greater ownership and improved the likelihood that new systems and processes would be adopted successfully.

Third, RUT found that capacity building should be viewed as an ongoing journey rather than a one-time activity. Skills in communications, fundraising, and organisational development require continued learning, practice, and refinement over time.

Finally, the organisation recognised the importance of allowing sufficient time for change. Introducing new systems and ways of working requires staff adaptation, phased implementation, and ongoing support. Sustainable organisational development rarely happens overnight, but gradual improvements can lead to significant long-term benefits.

Left, right, below: Community outreach sessions are crucial part of sensitisation to the goals and implementation of projects such as this one in Tanzania. Capacity building impacts the whole community, and ensures longer-term and more sustainable, positive results from projects. These sessions can vary in scale and stakeholders, and methods of presentation. Often it is crucial to sensitise other members of the community, including men, to make sure that the project, its outcomes, and the participants are fully accepted and celebrated locally.

Building Stronger Organisations for Stronger Communities:

The impact of capacity-building funding extends far beyond the immediate grant period. Strong organisations are better able to raise funds independently, communicate their achievements effectively, attract new partners, manage resources responsibly, and continue delivering services to their communities.

For ACWW members, this means greater opportunities to grow and thrive. Improved organisational capacity can help member organisations access larger funding opportunities, build stronger public profiles, and increase their overall impact.

As ACWW continues to invest in capacity building alongside project funding, we are reaffirming our commitment to sustainable development and effective grant-making. By strengthening organisations as well as projects, we are helping ensure that the benefits of our funding continue long after individual grants have ended.

Ultimately, investing in organisational capacity is an investment in people, communities, and the future. It is about building the skills, systems, and confidence that enable organisations to continue making a difference for years to come.



Leave a Legacy and Transform the Future

By leaving a gift in your Will to support ACWW, you are transforming the lives of rural women and their communities. We all want to live in an equal world, yet rural women's voices are often excluded from decision making and they remain unprotected, unheard, and under-supported. A gift in your Will to ACWW can bring together rural women from all over the world, and help address the challenges they face as a result of isolation in their communities, discrimination, and lack of access to political processes. Even 1% of your estate can create lasting change, offering support and dignity to those who need it most. Your Legacy can help create a more equal world and transform the future for rural women.

Why your Will matters

Leaving a legacy in your Will to ACWW is a powerful way to support ACWW after you are gone. Your legacy could support:

- Empowering rural women by supporting grassroots projects on climate-smart agriculture, health, and education, directly addressing the priorities of rural women and their communities.
- Strengthening the sharing of knowledge between Member Societies, supporting local Coordinators, training, and conferences that bring together rural women worldwide.
- Advocating for rural women's voices at the UN and other international platforms, influencing policies on land rights, education, food security, and gender equality.

Types of gifts you can leave

Leaving a gift in your Will is simple, and there are a few types of gifts you can leave:

- A share of your estate: a percentage of what's left after loved ones are provided for.
- A fixed sum of money: a specific amount you choose.
- A specific item: this might be property, shares or a personal possession.

Your legacy can transform the lives of people like Amina.

At 17, Amina became pregnant. Her parents, already struggling financially, feared the worst. "We didn't know how we would afford her school and a baby" her father said. "Some relatives said marrying her off would solve two problems."

Amina stayed at home for nearly a year, raising her child while her education slipped away, until Reaching the Unreached Tanzania (RUT) stepped in with their programme supported by ACWW.

Through community outreach, RUT promotes girls' right to return to school and challenge early marriage as a rights violation. RUT's outreach team visited Amina's family several times, engaging her parents in respectful but persistent dialogue. "At first, they were unsure," a community volunteer said. "...but once they saw that other parents were supporting their daughters to return, their mindset slowly shifted."

In April 2025, Amina returned to school. "I didn't know I could go back," she said. "Now I'm back, and I will never stop."

If you don't have a Will, a solicitor can write one for you. If you already have a Will, simply contact your solicitor to add a gift to the Associated Country Women of the World - they may ask for details and other information we can happily help with if you get in touch.

If you've left a legacy or have any questions, we would be happy to hear from you. There's no pressure, and your privacy is always respected. Please contact Jo Groves at jo@acww.org.uk to learn more.





ACWW Advocacy 2023-2026

Nick Newland-Ešner – Advocacy Director

When the Associated Country Women of the World was founded in 1929, addressing the challenges facing women in rural, agricultural, and isolated communities was the driving force behind all we do. 97 years later, this remains the case, and in this Triennium we have worked even harder to ensure that every action and activity, has connected our membership, their priorities, and their views with those who need to hear them, and have the power to influence outcomes.

Highlighting the work done by our member societies and individual members, sharing their good practices, amplifying their voices, and helping them build capacity for action has been central to our work plans. This has been reflected in local activities through the ACWW Coordinators, supported and led by Casey Daudelin at Central Office; through initiatives from the Knowledge Sharing & Local Activities or Membership Working Groups; at the national and regional level through initiatives led or implemented by Area Presidents, or through activities and training at Area Conferences supported by ACWW Staff or Board Members. The restoration of a fully-staffed communications team at ACWW Central Office has been a huge help to these efforts, with Nicoletta Idili, and formerly Zarah Vawda playing a great role.

By using our status with the various United Nations Agencies, partnerships with other organisations, and promoting the participation of ACWW members in meetings and conferences normally beyond their reach, we elevate these voices to new audiences.

This report is a thematic look at activities and impact over the three years of this Triennium, with case studies and assessments.

Surveys and Data-driven Action

As ACWW has been highlighting since 2017, published information on the reality of situations in rural areas is often far harder to find, fund, or carry out than in urban scenarios. Previous efforts like ACWW's Global Survey of the Living Conditions of Rural Women, and activities carried out in this Triennium have sought to ensure that our advocacy activities are fully grounded in our members' priorities.

Case Study: Trends and Challenges in Rural Areas

In February and March 2025, ACWW organised a survey of members to respond to a call for data from the Human Rights Council's Working Group on Peasants. We received 315 responses, which not only highlighted trends and challenges, but also provided us with some significant insights.

Respondents

We are very grateful to those members who responded to this survey, and we very pleased to get the breadth of response we did. The breakdown of responses by country is as follows:

Australia = 59	New Zealand = 6
Bangladesh = 1	Norway = 1
Benin = 2	Pakistan = 2
Bulgaria = 1	Papua New Guinea = 5
Cameroon = 6	Romania = 6
Canada = 52	South Africa = 26
Estonia = 1	Sri Lanka = 2
Germany = 1	Tanzania = 3
Iceland = 2	Tonga = 1
India = 16	Trinidad and Tobago = 1
Ireland = 3	Tuvalu = 1
Italy = 1	Uganda = 7
Kenya = 2	United Kingdom = 40
Liberia = 1	of which specified:
Malawi = 1	England = 20
Namibia = 3	Northern Ireland = 2
Netherlands = 1	Scotland = 1

Of particular interest to ACWW, both in terms of reflection of the reality of rural communities, and specifically our membership, is the age of respondents. Though fully anonymous, each respondent was asked to select which age group they were currently in:

Under 30 = 7	30-50 years = 27
51-65 years = 59	65+ years = 222

This information is specifically crucial, as age or isolation are considered to be the aggravating or exacerbating factors relating to so many of the specific challenges highlighted in the summaries on the following page.

Global Trends & Structural Challenges:

Limited Access to Essential Services

Across nearly all countries, rural populations face reduced access to healthcare, education, childcare, and financial services. Long travel distances, workforce shortages, and centralisation of services in urban areas create systemic exclusion. Digital connectivity gaps further compound this, limiting access to telehealth, education, and economic participation.

Economic Insecurity & Inequality

Rural economies are characterised by lower wages, informal work, and limited job opportunities, particularly for women. Agricultural livelihoods remain dominant but increasingly precarious due to rising input costs, market volatility, and climate impacts. Women's labour is consistently undervalued or unpaid, with gender wage gaps and restricted access to financial resources.

Gender Inequality & Social Norms

Deep-rooted gender inequalities are universal. Limited decision-making power, restricted land ownership, and systemic discrimination, are often reinforced by cultural norms. Gender-based violence is widely reported, exacerbated by isolation and weak support systems.

Climate Change & Water Stress

Climate remains a major global driver of vulnerability. Droughts, floods, and unpredictable weather patterns threaten agricultural productivity, food security, and livelihoods. Women are disproportionately affected due to reliance on natural resources and care-giving roles.

Social Isolation & Demographics

Migration of young people to urban areas is a common trend, leaving ageing populations and weakening rural social structures. Women experience heightened social isolation, with limited support and community infrastructure.

Regional Patterns:

While global trends are consistent, regional variations reflect differing levels of development and governance capacity:

Low- and Middle-Income Countries (Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Pacific): Challenges are more acute and often linked to basic survival needs:

- Severe poverty and limited income-generating opportunities
- Lack of clean water, sanitation, and healthcare infrastructure
- Limited education and high illiteracy rates among women
- Restricted land rights and access to credit
- High exposure to climate shocks and food insecurity

In countries such as Uganda, Malawi, and Bangladesh, women are central to agricultural production but lack ownership of land and resources, limiting economic empowerment. In fragile contexts like Papua New Guinea, insecurity and violence further undermine livelihoods and policy implementation.

High-Income Countries (UK, Canada, Australia, Europe & USA):

While basic infrastructure is generally stronger, rural disadvantage persists in different forms:

- Declining public services (transport, healthcare, banks, schools)
- Rising cost of living and housing shortages
- Labour shortages and limited local employment opportunities
- Persistent gender inequality in agriculture and rural industries
- Digital exclusion in remote areas

In these contexts, challenges are often linked to policy gaps, urban bias, and economic restructuring, rather than absolute poverty.

Local & Community-Level Challenges

At the local level, challenges are experienced as interconnected, daily constraints:

- **Transport and mobility** are critical barriers, limiting access to services, work, and social participation.
- **Childcare shortages** significantly restrict women's economic participation.
- **Housing shortages and poor living conditions** affect stability and well-being.
- **Weak local governance and infrastructure** reduce community resilience.
- **Cultural norms and patriarchy** limit women's agency, particularly in decision-making and leadership.

Certain groups face heightened vulnerability, including:

- Women experiencing domestic violence
- Migrant and informal workers
- Indigenous and marginalised ethnic groups
- Elderly women and women with disabilities
- Young women at risk of early marriage or school dropout

Policy & Implementation Gaps

While many countries report existing policies and legal frameworks, a consistent theme is the gap between policy and practice. Weak implementation, lack of awareness, corruption, and insufficient rural targeting limit effectiveness. In many contexts, community-based organisations and grassroots networks play a critical role in filling these gaps.

Summary Conclusions:

Overall, rural women globally continue to face **multi-dimensional and intersecting inequalities**, shaped by structural economic exclusion, gender discrimination, and geographic isolation. While the intensity of challenges varies by region, **the core issues are remarkably consistent**. Addressing these requires **integrated, gender-sensitive rural development strategies**, stronger policy implementation, and greater inclusion of rural women's voices in decision-making processes.

Gender-Based Violence

A clear priority in many elements of ACWW's work, we have continued to highlight and promote the 16 Days of Global Activism Against Gender-Based Violence campaign. This has included member societies organising local events, Area Presidents holding meetings in their Areas, and Central Office providing resource kits for individuals and member societies to use in their activities.



Workshops on addressing GBV and supporting community action were held at Area Conferences in Europe and East, West, and Central Africa, and were a central theme of the Women's Empowerment Summit held in Khovd, Mongolia in August 2023. This Women's Empowerment Summit was a great example bringing together ACWW members with policy-makers like local politicians, policy-implementers and law enforcement. We are very grateful for the support of UNESCO in funding this Summit, and our partners at Police Scotland who created a suite of capacity-building resources they contributed to this event, after a request for input from members in Mongolia.

Continuing this theme, ACWW organised its first ever African Summit on Gender-Based Violence in direct response to points raised by members at the East, West, and Central Africa Area Conference in September 2025.

Case Study: Africa Summit on Gender-Based Violence

During the East, West, and Central Africa Area Conference in September 2025, attending members heard from keynote speaker Zipporah Kamau, founder of We Believe Community-Based Organisation in Kenya, alongside a presentation from UNESCO's Regional Office for East Africa on GBV. Raising concerns about a lack of information and institutional responses, these members asked for a follow-up to the Area Conference. Accordingly, ACWW organised the first African Summit on Gender-Based Violence on 10 December 2025, marking Human Rights Day.

Speakers

Reflecting ACWW's membership across its two African Areas (East, West, & Central Africa and Southern Africa), speakers joined the event from Bafokeng, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Uganda. This included: **Dr Naazia Ibrahim**, Acting Secretary-General of the Ghana National Commission for UNESCO; **Zipporah Kamau**, founder of We Believe; **Erica Emdon**, attorney and founder of The Public Interest Practice; **Mpho Letima**, founder and Executive Director of GEM Institute Lesotho; and **Sonia Morele** of the Bafokeng Women's Club. The Summit was chaired by ACWW Deputy World President **Judith Juma**, with then Area President **Clare Jethwa**, and then World President **Magdie de Kock**.

Participation

More than 200 women from across the continent joined the Summit online, with active discussion in the chat. Crucially, the use of French and KiSwahili language interpretation meant that the reach of the event was far wider than if it had just been held in English. This was again in response to the needs of members expressed at the Area Conference.

Reflections

This event was successful in connecting our members with the work of the speakers, illustrating effective actions being taken in communities across Africa, and creating a space of exchange of ideas and issues. Feedback received from participating members encouraged annual follow-up and continuing this style of engagement and advocacy event.

Food Waste & Food Security

In line with the resolution passed at the 30th Triennial World Conference on Addressing Food Waste, several Area Presidents prioritised this issue for their actions in this Triennium. Initiatives led by Bonnie Teeple in the United States of America, and Marie Kenny in Canada were widespread and impactful, motivating members to take action within their societies and within their homes, supported by resources produced by Casey Daudelin at Central Office and the ACWW communications team.

A Word on Peasants

Many members have raised concern or query about the use of the word 'Peasants', feeling that it does not accurately reflect how they see themselves or their communities. ACWW is an active supporter of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas; this document outlines a huge number of specific rights for people in rural communities, and as it was originally drafted in French and Spanish, the term 'Peasant' can mean 'artisan', 'farmer', or similar words.

Case Study: Food and Agriculture Organization

ACWW has held Consultative Status with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (better known as the FAO) since 1947, and for the past six years we have been working to strengthen the relationship for the benefit of our members. The impact of this can be seen in the timeline of this Triennium.

October 2024 - Central Asian Women's Forum on Science and Agricultural Production Integration

ACWW's Area President for South East Asia and the Far East, Tugrug Uugan-Erdene, was invited by FAO to participate in this important event considering farming and agricultural approaches from across the region.

October 2024 - Beijing +30 Regional Review Meeting Side Event

The FAO regional office for Europe and Central Asia invited ACWW to provide keynote speakers for their event considering the needs of rural women in the context of the 30th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. ACWW's Advocacy Director Nick Newland-Ešner presented inputs from our membership gathered by a survey.

April 2025 - UNECE Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

As part of the global assessment of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, ACWW co-hosted a webinar with the FAO and UN Population Fund (UNFPA) to consider the impact of Gender-Based Violence on the SDGs. ACWW Member Society MARTA Centre in Latvia founder Ilute Lāce was invited to speak about their experience assisting rural communities and working across borders, and Anna Sushko from Ukraine gave an overview of ACWW's project 'Planting the Seeds of Peace' which was carried out in Romania. The event was chaired by Nick Newland-Ešner, also included officials from the FAO and UNFPA, and government ministers from Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Estonia.

September 2025 - ACWW European Area Conference

FAO Gender Specialist Anna Jenderedjian was invited to participate as a speaker at the European Area Conference, where she discussed opportunities for ACWW Member Societies to engage with FAO programmes and initiatives, and answered questions on priorities for action.

December 2025 - Letter of Agreement

At the end of 2025, ACWW signed a Letter of Agreement with the FAO to implement activities across 2026 in support of the International Year of the Woman Farmer. This included full funding of the programme by FAO.

March-October 2026 - Programme Implementation in Papua New Guinea

FAO is funding a programme of capacity building and advocacy training activities in the Eastern Highlands province of Papua New Guinea, designed by ACWW and implemented by long-term member society Voice for Change, led by Lilly BeSoer. Centred on the International Year of the Woman Farmer, engaging 30 women farmers and 5 male gender champions. This will culminate in a local Empowerment Summit for rural women farmers on 15 October, the International Day of Rural Women.

We look forward to reporting on this programme as we progress through 2026 and at the International year of the Woman Farmer!

Financial Inclusion

The need for increased capacity in financial literacy has been repeatedly identified within ACWW projects, and this is a regular component of Rural Women in Action projects. The other side of this challenge is of course inclusion in financial systems and services for rural women.

In March 2025, whilst at the UN Commission on the Status of Women, ACWW's delegation (including the Area Presidents from Mongolia and Tuvalu, the Advocacy Director, and Board Lead for Advocacy) met with long-term partner the Alliance for Financial Inclusion (AFI), credit card company Mastercard, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), and UN Women to discuss how to increase inclusion of rural women in financial systems.

Follow-up initiatives are being considered, including engagement in the forthcoming programme of advocacy training and capacity building in Papua New Guinea working with FAO.

Rural Women's Health

Responding to requests from members in the United States of America for awareness-raising activities relating to cardiac health and mental well-being, ACWW organised a webinar on 15 October 2025 for the International Day of Rural Women. We are hugely grateful to our two medical professionals, Dr Louise Newlands and Clara O'Reilly who contributed their time free-of-charge to offer interactive guidance and interventions. More than 150 women from around the world joined this event live, and more than 50 have watched on YouTube since the event.

This was a great opportunity to address issues raised by our members, and to offer practical steps people can use in their everyday life. Resources from both experts are available on our website, with follow-up guidance and advice for all. During the event, we also signposted localised and regional resources for members.

Case Study: UNESCO and ACWW in Partnership

In the aftermath of the Second World War, the governments from around the world identified in the Constitution of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the need to “build peace in the minds of men and women”. Soon after the organisation’s founding, ACWW was granted Consultative Status, offering us the opportunity to elevate the voices of rural women in global discourse. In 2024, we secured an upgrade to Associate Status, reflecting the strong relationship, and “major contributions” to the programme of UNESCO. This case study looks at ACWW’s partnership across the Triennium, and how our members have been represented:

December 2022-December 2024

ACWW’s Advocacy Director, Nick Newland-Ešner is elected President of the International Conference of NGOs in Official Partnership with UNESCO, prioritising gender equality and African representation for his 2 year mandate.

August 2023 - Women’s Empowerment Summit

ACWW’s first Summit is held in Khovd, Mongolia with 300 survivors of domestic violence. This is organised with support funding from UNESCO, and patronage of the United Kingdom National Commission for UNESCO.

November 2023

ACWW’s Women’s Empowerment Summit wins the “Incredible Impacts” award at the ICCA and BestCities Global Alliance Conference, along with \$20,000 to continue this successful work.

January 2024 - 15th International Forum of NGOs

ACWW World President, Board Lead for Advocacy, and Executive Director played an active role in this conference on the theme of “Transforming Mentalities”, including Magdie de Kock chairing a panel of major international women’s organisations.



Deputy World President Judith Juma, Area President Clare Jethwa, and Advocacy Director Nick Newland-Ešner in Nairobi.

March 2024 - Leadership for Equality Podcast

ACWW and UNESCO launch the joint podcast on women’s leadership.

May 2024 - UN Civil Society Conference & Summit for the Future

ACWW was invited to represent UNESCO Civil Society partners at this high-level conference held in Nairobi, Kenya. Clare Jethwa, Area President for East, West, and Central Africa and Deputy World President Judith Juma attended with Nick Newland-Ešner.

June 2024

ACWW granted funding from UNESCO’s Participation Programme to support the ‘Planting the Seeds of Peace’ project for Ukrainian refugee women teachers and children in Bucharest, Romania.

October 2024

ACWW upgraded to Associate Status by unanimous vote of Member State governments at UNESCO, recognising continued partnership and activities addressing the priorities of rural women. This new status is granted for a period of 8 years before it will be reviewed for renewal.

December 2024 - NGO Forum on African Leadership, Experience, and Expertise in the International Decade of Sciences

Deputy World President Judith Juma chaired a panel on youth access to science education, alongside

participation of nine ACWW member societies, taking the floor to highlight their priorities.

December 2024

Advocacy Director Nick Newland-Ešner ended his mandate as President of the International Conference of NGOs. ACWW re-elected to the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee with the highest number of votes of any NGO.

Mid-2025

ACWW Member Society Sain Tus Development Bridge provides crucial input into UNESCO’s response to climate-related disaster in Mongolia.



ACWW Intern Mathilde Guaresj, Executive Director Tish Collins, H.E. Anna Nsugbuga, UK Ambassador to UNESCO, Nick Newland-Ešner and UK Deputy Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, Maxim Polya-Vitry upon ACWW’s confirmation of Associate Status in 2024.

September 2025

UNESCO’s Regional Office for East Africa attends the ACWW East, West, and Central Africa Area Conference to discuss priorities including gender-based violence.



ACWW member Zipporah Kamau outlines the crucial work of her society on gender-based violence during the EWC Africa Area Conference in Nairobi.

ACWW continues to work with UNESCO’s Regional Offices, National Commissions, and Secretariat to ensure our members’ voices are heard and priorities recognised.

Case Study: International Year of the Woman Farmer

The United Nations has declared 2026 the International Year of the Woman Farmer, and ACWW is placing this at the centre of the year's advocacy agenda. Here, we share five stories from members around the world that reflect on their experiences...



Joyce Chapman
Women in Business and Agriculture,
Australia

I spent my life on farms until retiring in 2012. I have been an individual member of ACWW for many years and currently serve as a Coordinator representing Women in Agriculture & Business. I have also attended four world conferences.

I was born into a farming family in Ireland, where we grew apples and vegetables and raised poultry. At 17, my family immigrated to Australia, where I later married a farmer. Farming there was vastly different—our Irish farm was 100 acres, while in Kimba, South Australia, ours expanded to 3,500 acres in a very dry region. We grew wheat, barley, canola, and lupins, and initially ran merino sheep before shifting to continuous cropping due to injury and low wool prices.

Drought was a constant challenge, as we lived north of the Goyder Line, along with frost, fluctuating commodity prices, and non-wetting sandy soils. Over time, improved grain varieties and soil management techniques, such as clay spreading, helped increase productivity.

My role evolved from supporting farm operations to managing our home and raising three daughters, including one with significant additional needs. I also worked off-farm when possible. Despite the challenges, I deeply valued life as a woman in agriculture.



S. Muthammal
Women's Organisation for Rural
Development (WORD) - India

Coming from an agricultural family, I naturally became a farmer as both the daughter, and wife of farmers.

We cultivate about $\frac{3}{4}$ of an acre of land, growing coconuts, bananas, and castor seeds. When seasonal rains are sufficient, we also grow groundnuts.

However, our farm depends heavily on rainfall, and as our area receives below-average rains each year, this presents ongoing challenges. To support our work, we rely on loans from the village cooperative.

Our farming is primarily rain-fed, and we use compost manure and locally made fertilizers and pesticides. My role is hands-on and varied, including sowing, weeding, pruning, harvesting, and selling surplus produce.

One of our greatest challenges has been inconsistent rainfall. In years of poor rain, we suffered crop losses and financial hardship. To overcome this, we invested in a borewell, which now provides water for irrigation and has improved the reliability of our farming. We follow sustainable practices, using goat farm waste and other organic materials as manure. By cultivating coconuts, groundnuts, castor seeds, and bananas, we contribute to our local community by supplying essential products such as cooking oils and nutritious food. Our work supports both livelihoods and local food needs.

Marcelline Protheroe
Wisconsin Association of Family
and Community Education, USA

I live on a small farm near the village of Wild Rose in central Wisconsin, USA, where I was born and raised. Growing up on the family farm, I was involved in daily chores from an early age helping in the barn, working in the fields, and tending a large garden that fed both our family and neighbours.

My husband and I, both from farming backgrounds, bought our own small farm after marrying and worked as equal partners while also holding off-farm jobs. We raised corn, oats, and hay to support our beef cattle and pigs. My responsibilities included bookkeeping, household management, caring for our family, hauling and drying corn, baling hay, and daily farm chores. We later built a large egg operation housing 20,000 hens, where I packed eggs three times daily. When that market declined, we transitioned to raising pigs, sheep, and beef—my favourite task being bottle-feeding lambs.

Farming in Wisconsin brings challenges such as unpredictable weather and high input costs. We supplemented our income with a portable sawmill and seasonal tree planting.

Although my husband passed away, I still manage the farm – renting the crop land and taking care of the forest. A farmer's wife involves not only taking care of the house and family, but working alongside your partner to keep the farm running. I have always been proud to be a farmer!

Moranda van Gieest

New Brunswick Women's Institute,
Canada

For as long as I can remember, every day has felt like a celebration of the woman farmer. Working alongside your husband makes you just as much a farmer, but it also brings unique challenges — you live and breathe the farm 24/7. Even taking a vacation is difficult, as finding someone to care for the animals and manage the workload is never easy.

Raising children on a farm adds another layer of complexity, especially

in rural areas without access to affordable childcare. Instead, children grow up in the barn — one running around, another in a playpen near the cows, and a baby in a stroller while chores like milking are done. Day after day, they learn by being part of farm life. Along the way come unforgettable moments — like a child putting a feed pellet in their ear and ending up in the emergency room or climbing high beams in the hayloft pretending to fly.

Those children grow into capable, resilient individuals. My daughter, now a farmer herself with three children,

faces similar experiences — from finding her child perched atop stacked pallets pretending to be a bird, to discovering pots filled with mud, frogs, or caterpillars. Even during COVID, farm work never stopped; children rode along in tractors through long days.

This is the reality of being a woman farmer — demanding, unpredictable, and deeply formative. It's a life filled with challenges, but also pride, strength, and stories worth sharing.

Beauty Ndlovu

Ntengwe for Community
Development, Zimbabwe

My farming journey began in childhood, working alongside my mother in our family garden. At that time, we depended on hybrid seeds and chemical inputs, unaware of their long-term impact on our health, soil, and independence. Six years ago, everything changed when we were introduced to organic and sustainable farming. We learned to make natural fertilizers that restore soil health rather than deplete it.

Today, I work on our family farm in Kasibi Village, where our garden also serves as a learning space for women farmers. We focus on organic methods, seed saving, and climate-resilient practices using traditional crops and indigenous vegetables that thrive in dry conditions and provide better nutrition.

As a mother of six, I balance roles as a farmer, parent, and community leader. I manage a demonstration plot where women learn composting, natural pest control, and organic fertilization.



The community of women farmers with Beauty Ndlovu at Ntengwe for Community Development in Zimbabwe.

As a lead farmer, I also train women in nearby villages. Many now grow surplus produce for sale, and together we supply organic vegetables to lodges and hotels in Victoria Falls.

This work is both urgent and meaningful, as many indigenous seeds

have been lost. One of the most powerful moments in my journey was rediscovering these traditional seeds - once used by my grandmother - and helping preserve them for future generations while strengthening our community's resilience and livelihoods.



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE
WOMAN FARMER
2026

Want to know more?

Read all about ACWW's activities in support of the International Year of the Woman Farmer on our website at www.acww.org.uk

Case Study: UN Commission on the Status of Women

Every March, women's organisations from around the world come together in New York at the Headquarters of the United Nations for the Commission on the Status of Women - better known as CSW. During two weeks of debate and negotiations, Member States - the government delegations - work to establish 'Agreed Conclusions' on the actions needed to improve the living conditions of women globally. In parallel, around ten thousand representatives of civil society engage in advocacy, awareness-raising, and events aimed at influencing the course of the negotiations.

Since 2017, ACWW has worked to advise the UK government on its negotiating position for CSW. We have also worked to highlight the needs of rural women with other delegations, and in this Triennium this has included hosting events and panel discussions with representatives from the governments of Canada, South Africa, Tuvalu, and the United Kingdom.

One of the most exciting opportunities provided by ACWW's status with the UN is that we can provide access passes to events such as CSW; in 2023-2026 this included passes for members from Benin, Kenya, Mongolia, Trinidad and Tobago and Ukraine.

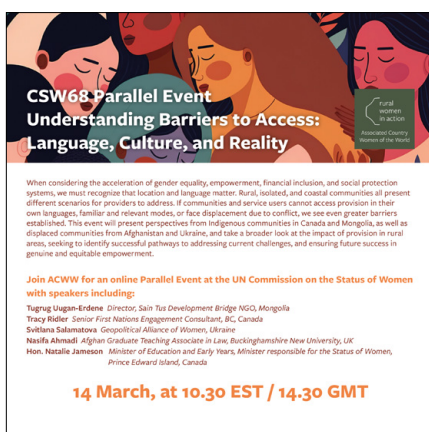
In 2024, ACWW hosted a panel event titled 'Understanding Barriers to Access: Language, Culture, and Reality', addressing the importance of financial inclusion, social protection systems, local and Indigenous languages, and the challenges of rural isolation. Our delegation also spoke at events hosted by ACWW members in the Independent Delegation of Ukrainian Women led by Svitlana Salamatova and Anna Sushko (the teacher who led the 'Planting the Seeds of Peace' project) and Advocacy Director Nick Newland-Ešner chaired the UK Government event on technology-facilitated gender-based violence.



ACWW Members from Ukraine at the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in March 2024, with UK Member of Parliament Jess Phillips.



ACWW Members at CSW in 2025: Sarah Barnbrook from Australia with Area President for the South Pacific Lilian Falealuga Tine, and Lilian with Advocacy Director Nick Newland-Ešner, Board Lead for Advocacy Dr Elizabeth Ann Kelly, and two ACWW members from Benin.



At CSW in 2025, ACWW's delegation included the Area Presidents for South East Asia and the Far East and the South Pacific, who along with the Board and Staff leads on Advocacy, met with the Alliance for Financial Inclusion, Swedish International



Board Lead for Advocacy Dr Elizabeth Ann Kelly with Member Gia Gaspard Taylor from Trinidad & Tobago at CSW in 2025.

Development Agency (SIDA) Women, Mastercard, and UN Women to discuss pathways to funding improved access to financial services for rural women. This is just one example of the more than 40 events attended by ACWW members at CSW in 2025.



Case Study: Leadership for Equality Podcast

Launched on International Women's Day 2024, the Leadership for Equality Podcast has been mentioned earlier in this report, but gave ACWW a unique opportunity to connect our members, and their voices, with a global audience in partnership with UNESCO. Sadly, funding restrictions at UNESCO mean the podcast is no longer in regular production, but the following episodes were published, hosted by Garance Sarlat (UNESCO) and Nick Newland-Ešner (ACWW):

Episode 1 – Launch

Gabriela Ramos - Assistant Director-General for Social & Human Sciences, UNESCO

Magdie de Kock - ACWW World President

Rosie Agoi - Secretary-General, Uganda National Commission for UNESCO

Episode 2 – Pathways to Leadership

H.E. Blanca Jiménez Cisneros - Ambassador of Mexico to France

Tugrug Uugan-Erdene - ACWW Area President for South East Asia and the Far East

Judith Awuor Juma - ACWW Deputy World President

Episode 3 – Women Thought Leaders

Nastassja Pugliese - Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro

Kathryn Sophia Belle - Founder of the Collegium of Black Women Philosophers

Divya Dwivedi - Associate Professor at The Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi

Episode 4 – Women for Social Change

Desirée Cormier Smith - US Special Representative for Racial Equity and Justice

Bushra Ahmed - Board member of the Lloyds Bank Foundation and CSW68 Delegate

Agnes Siteya - Director at Beats for Beads and Massai Community leader

Episode 5 – Women in Sport

Benny Bonsu - Director of Daily Content at Olympics.com & Olympic Channel

Félicité Rwemarika - International Olympic Committee Member, Founder of the Association of Kigali Women in Sports

Emma Oudiou - Former member of the French National Athletics Team, Gender Equality Advocate

Jessica Hayon - American Parathlete, Apparel Industry Professional

Episode 6 – Diplomacy & Politics

H.E. Christina Kokkinakis - Permanent Representative of the European Union to the OECD and UNESCO

Hon. Nancy Shukri - Minister of Women, Family and Community Development of Malaysia

H.E. Unnur Orradóttir-Ramette - Ambassador of Iceland to France, Permanent Delegate of Iceland to the OECD and UNESCO

Episode 7 – Rural Women

Nakirya Brenda Doreen - Managing director and Co-founder of Community Concerns Uganda

Afrodita Roman - ACWW Area President for Europe

Lilian Falealuga Tine - ACWW Area President for the South Pacific

Keithlin Caroo-Afrifa - Founder and Executive Director at Helen's Daughters

Episode 8 – Special Edition for International Women's Day 2026 (with guest co-host Nicoletta Idili)

Anne Kerr - Former National President, and current Board Member, Scottish Women's Institutes

Casey Daudelin - ACWW Engagement Officer

Winnie Tushabe - Co-Founder, Youth Initiative for Community Empowerment, Uganda

More than 4,500 people globally enjoyed listening to the podcast between 2024 and 2026. It is published, and still available on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, Amazon Music, Deezer, YouTube, and both ACWW and UNESCO's websites.

ACWW bids farewell to former Executive Director Tish Collins

During the Triennial World Conference, Tish Collins announced to the membership that she would be retiring from her role as Executive Director at ACWW shortly after the Conference. Having started in May 2014, this marked 12 years of service leading ACWW's Central Office team.

Reflecting on her experience, Tish said:

"It has been my privilege to work for the organisation and to contribute to its journey empowering rural women around the globe.

In my time we have changed from an unincorporated charity to a CIO, put the funding of projects on a firmer footing based in reality not dreams, and strengthened the links between advocacy and projects.

Re-establishing our links with the FAO and upgrading ACWW's status with UNESCO are major achievements in getting rural women's voices heard. These are the things that make ACWW unique, and why it should go forward to its next century convinced of its role."

The period of Tish's leadership has seen significant changes including a shift from hugely expensive and time-consuming paper-first processes to a stronger digital infrastructure, major shifts in the constitutional structure of the organisation, and challenges for the membership such as the Covid-19 pandemic, legal changes, and shifts in the Board makeup.

Across Tish's time at ACWW, there have been a number of staff who have come and gone, but the current



Central Office staff - Jenny, Casey, Nick, Rebecca, Jo, and Nicoletta - would like to thank Tish for her hard work, commitment, and service to the organisation we all cherish. We know you, our Membership, join us in wishing Tish all the very best in her retirement and future life, and thank her for 14 years of dedication!

Call for Proposals for Rural Women's Health Projects

The Rural Women's Health funding stream supports initiatives increasing rural women's access to comprehensive, gender sensitive, and accessible healthcare. This includes nutrition, mental health, sexual and reproductive health and rights, access to healthcare and provision for women as they age.

Members must register first to check eligibility for application, and to receive an application pack. **Please click here to register:**

[Register for Application](#)

Deadline:
1st November 2026



Reflecting on the 31st Triennial World Conference, 2026

In late April 2026, hundreds of women from around the world came together in Ottawa, the capital city of Canada, to celebrate, deliberate, and decide ACWW's priorities for the next three years. It was fitting that we should be here - not only was ACWW's founding imagined by a Canadian, but Ottawa is a capital region with more than 70% rural communities. Over the next few pages we take a look at some of the highlights of the Conference, and hear from some attendees about their experiences.

"It was amazing to be here with ACWW in Ottawa; its my first time at a Triennial World Conference and I'll come again and again, an amazing experience and everyone was so welcome."

Mallika Saikia Country Women's Association of India



Members were greeted at registration by the smiling faces of our Central Office staff, with Casey, Nicoletta, Nick, Uju, and Tish all helping attendees get sorted after their travels. Board Members were on hand to answer questions, with Area Presidents greeting their delegations as they adjusted to the new timezone.

In the Conference Bags, members received all the normal paperwork and required information, but also gifts from Canadian members and their societies who wanted to ensure attendees started their Conference with an appropriately warm Canadian welcome.



We opened the Conference on 27 April with the traditional flag procession, the colours of our member nations filling the hall and carried with pride by members from around the world. In fine voice, we stood and joined hands to sing ACWW's Anthem, the Song of Peace.



The Opening Ceremony was hosted in the presence of Mark Sutcliffe, Mayor of Ottawa and Professor Claudette Commanda, Elder of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation and Chancellor of the University of Ottawa. Claudette welcomed us to the traditional lands of her community, and helped us learn and understand the importance of sharing our open feelings with each other as we meet and exchange our cultural experiences.



The incredibly warm atmosphere was clear from the outset of the Conference; old friendships were renewed and new ones forged as members shared their thoughts and feelings of the past three years. The Hostess Society of the 2023 Triennial World Conference, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, arrived in their customary and colourful Women's Institute uniforms!



We are very grateful for the positive relationship that ACWW has built with Mayor Mark Sutcliffe in the five years running up to the Ottawa Conference. As well as joining us for the Opening, we were pleased to welcome the Mayor back for a special “Afternoon Tea with the World President”, a 90 minute chat with then World President Magdie de Kock about why ACWW’s work aligned so well with the city of Ottawa.

Guest speaker Julia Kamau from Kenya found time to catch up with ACWW Coordinator Beatrice Banda from Tanzania, whilst our Honorary Secretary and Deputy World President found a few moments to try Ottawa’s famous ‘Beavertails’!

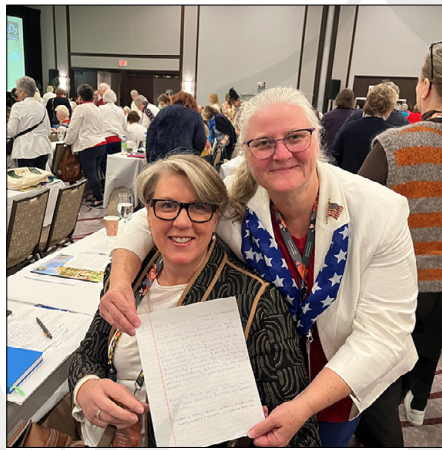
"While the basic format of every Triennial World Conference is the same, no two are ever alike.

It's always wonderful to reconnect with our friends from around the globe, many whom we have not seen since the previous Triennial.

The Tour Day always offers a fantastic insider's view of the Host Country. This year, I attended the Just Food Farm Forest to Table Experience. After about a 20-minute drive, we arrived at the Just Food Community Farm, a 150-acre farmstead that focuses on sustainable, small-scale, viable agriculture businesses and initiatives. After touring the farm, we gathered in The Red Barn for an interactive cooking demo with Chef Georges Lavier from the C'est Bon Cooking School.

Several of us were selected to cook lunch that featured local Canadian products and boreal forest ingredients gathered locally. It turned out to be a fantastic meal and unique educational experience. And we got to keep the aprons!"

Annette Lanham
Florida Association for Home and Community Education



One of the highlights of the Conference is always hearing our members' voices. Annette Lanham from Florida Association for Home and Community Education and Felicity Edwards, of the Country Women's Association of Western Australia submitted an Urgency Resolution to the Conference, which was passed unanimously to correct an error in the Constitution. We are so grateful for this collegiate and supportive approach to the collective success of ACWW.



As you would expect of a Conference hosted in Canada, there was a huge delegation in attendance this year. Amongst their numbers, lots of first-time delegates were learning more about ACWW and bringing their experience and voices to the discussions. It was wonderful to see delegations from all ACWW Areas sharing their views, their knowledge, and their hopes and dreams.





"Welcoming ACWW to Ottawa was a real privilege for our city. After seven years of working together to bring this conference to Canada's capital, it was incredibly rewarding to see women from around the world come together here to share their experiences, learn from one another and celebrate the important work they are doing in their communities. Ottawa has always been a place where people come together to make connections and exchange ideas, and we were proud to provide that home for ACWW's global community. We hope everyone who joined us left not only with new connections and memories, but with a lasting sense of the warmth and welcome of Ottawa."

Michael Crockatt President and CEO, Ottawa Tourism

"This was my first Triennial World Conference, and it has been amazing. The travel was a long way, and took a long time, but Ottawa is wonderful and I'm so glad I've been able to meet these women with very different stories to tell. Everything has been amazing! Through ACWW, with EMAC as a member, our women members are able to speak about their futures, and learn how to make their health better, and improve their safety."

Beatrice Banda
EMAC Tanzania, and ACWW Coordinator



One of the longest-lasting memories of any Triennial World Conference, and this one in particular, is the Gala Dinner. This year's was hosted at the Canadian Museum of History, across the river from Ottawa in the French-speaking province of Gatineau. This was an important part of ACWW's commitment to recognising the richly mixed culture of modern Canada; the museum's large hall celebrates the Indigenous peoples of Canada's First Nations, and sits in the French section of the National Capital Region.

We were delighted to welcome Awema Tendesi who introduced us to some of the dance and musical traditions of the local Anishinabe Algonquin people, with his colleagues showing us several dances and approaches to story telling. After this performance, Marie Parent, President of ACWW Member Society Les Cercles De Fermieres Du Quebec gave us an overview of her society's history and commitment to ACWW's mission and future.

Hosting the Gala Dinner in such an inspiring space, one that celebrates all the lessons we can learn from each other as we tell our stories, express our feelings, honour the leaders of the past, present, and future, gave us all a warm feeling as we stepped back into the cold and rainy evening for the journey back to the hotel in Ottawa.



For many years, the Triennial World Conference has been an opportunity for members to invest in the legacy of their attendance. Charitable collections and contributions to local causes is a crucial part of the experience, and this year members donated to Ottawa Food Bank and Women's Shelter. We are very grateful for the generosity of all who handed in items to help local women.

Towards the end of the Conference, we were able to welcome representatives from the two organisations to tell us about their work, and receive the donations.



Whilst the Triennial World Conference always launches a new and exciting period for ACWW, it also marks a handover and a chance to recognise the past. World President Magdie de Kock stepped down after an unusual 7 years in the role (thanks to an extended Covid-affected Triennium), and 13 years on ACWW's Board of Trustees. Board Members and Conference attendees came

together to extend their thanks and appreciation to Magdie for her service to the organisation. As the Conference came to an end and the Board Handover came as part of the final ceremony, Magdie delivered her final Presidential address, welcomed Marie Kenny of Canada to the position of World President, and formally closed to the 31st Triennial World Conference.

"Attending the Conference was a wonderful opportunity to deepen my understanding of ACWW. I gained a much better appreciation of how ACWW's advocacy and projects work together to build women's capacity—not simply to speak on behalf of women, but to support women to advocate for themselves—and how these areas of work connect with the key themes and priorities of ACWW's Strategic Plan.

Meeting and talking with women from across the world was a highlight, and perhaps most reassuring was discovering that many of the challenges I experience within my own organisation around connection, participation and finding ways to create meaningful impact are shared by women's organisations across the globe, and indeed by ACWW itself.

I came away with a strong sense that, like all long-standing organisations, ACWW has an opportunity to continue evolving and strengthening the way it works so that it remains relevant to the women and communities it represents and is well placed to continue its important work into the future."

Felicity Edwards State President
CWA of Western Australia



...and finally...

As the Closing Ceremony of the 31st Triennial World Conference came to an end, the new Board took office, and the parade of flags was led by the Irish tricolour as we started the journey to the next Conference in Killarney, Ireland. Following this was the flag of the host nation Canada, then the other flags of our membership.

If you were at the Conference and would like to share your memories, photos, or videos, please get in touch with Nicoletta Idili by email at nicoletta@acww.org.uk; we'd love to hear from you!

Resolutions passed by ACWW's Membership at the 31st Triennial World Conference

The following Resolutions and Recommendations were passed by vote of the attending Voting Member Societies at the Conference, and are non-Constitutional in their nature:

Policy Manifesto: Each Triennium, following the Triennial World Conference, ACWW's Board of Trustees will prepare, with support from Central Office, and the Board will approve, a Policy Manifesto for ACWW, reflecting and updating the position of the organisation on key policy issues, informed by Resolutions and Recommendations passed by the Membership and adopted at ACWW's Triennial World Conferences. This Policy Manifesto will be communicated to for their information

Establishment of a Funding Program for Youth-led Organisations: ACWW resolves to explore the possibility of establishing a funding programme within its strategic plan for youth-led organisations to strengthen meaningful youth participation within ACWW's membership and to support their locally driven initiatives”.

Childcare Deserts: ACWW and its Member Societies call on all governments at both local and national levels to take comprehensive action to eliminate childcare deserts, including for those living in rural, urban and marginalized areas. This includes addressing barriers to affordable and equitable childcare services influenced by a lack of licensed childcare service providers, lack of stabilized care and absence of high quality childcare options, which have a disproportionate impact on women, particularly rural women. We call on governments to provide reliable, affordable, and accessible childcare services, particularly for women living in rural and other under-served areas and communities. Governments are encouraged to consider solutions that include investment in childcare infrastructure, support for flexible and community-based care models, and targeted training programs for childcare service providers at the local and national levels

Collection of data on flood-prone river systems: ACWW and its Members call on all governments to ensure the collection, analysis, and public dissemination of real-time data on rainfall, river flow, and river heights, particularly in flood-prone regions. ACWW will work with interested member societies in promoting accessible community-level early warning systems and supporting local education efforts to improve flood preparedness.”

Iodine deficiency disorders in rural women: ACWW and its Member Societies call on all governments, the World Health Organisation, UNICEF, and other relevant United Nations bodies, to continue their efforts in relation to reaching optimal iodine nutrition in pregnant and lactating women and young children, particularly those living in rural areas, including:

- education and awareness-raising regarding Iodine Deficiency Disorders (IDDs) and the importance of iodine and thyroid function;
- appropriate healthcare programming to address IDDs and ensure optimal iodine nutrition, particularly for pregnant and lactating women and young children, with due attention given to increased challenges faced by rural women in this regard; and
- testing for iodine levels and thyroid function in standard blood tests, particularly during the first trimester of pregnancy, with appropriate arrangements for those living in rural and other under-served areas with limited access to medical facilities.

We urge governments, WHO and the UN to continue to invest in the sustainable elimination of iodine deficiency, and to ensure that cuts to international development funding do not jeopardise the full implementation of these measures for women and girls, particularly those living in rural and other under-served areas.

Equitable access to vaccines: ACWW and its Members call on all governments to fully fund and implement their commitments to providing equitable access to all vaccines, to adopt innovative programmes that are responsive to the needs of women in rural and remote communities, and to ensure that cuts to international development funding do not jeopardise the full implementation of these measures for women and girls, particularly those living in rural, remote and other under-served areas.”

Funding of sexual and reproductive health and rights: ACWW and its Members call on all governments to implement strategies to fully fund sexual and reproductive health and rights, including providing information, comprehensive sex education and facilities to all.”

Sustainable funding models to address violence against women: ACWW and its Members call on all governments to implement the following measures in addressing violence against women and girls:

- to prioritise the development and implementation of sustainable funding models for services addressing perpetrator risk factors known to contribute to violence against women and children;
- to prioritise funding models that support integrated, trauma-informed, and victim-centred responses across relevant sectors, ensuring affordable and equitable access to legal protections and essential support services for women and children at risk of or affected by violence.

Reducing digital harms via social media: ACWW and its Member Societies call on all governments at all levels to implement and enforce policies that reduce digital harms, particularly via social media, and promote adolescent mental well-being online. ACWW members commit to advocating for safe, inclusive, and equitable digital environments for young people—especially young rural women—through public education, community engagement, and support for youth-led digital literacy initiatives.

Disclosure requirements for commercial use of digital editing and artificial intelligence productions: ACWW and its Members call on all governments to develop and enforce legislation and regulations requiring clear and consistent disclosure of commercially distributed content that has been digitally edited or generated using artificial intelligence. ACWW members commit to raising awareness in their communities—particularly in rural areas—about the impacts of undisclosed synthetic media and to supporting digital literacy initiatives that empower women and girls to recognize and respond to manipulated content

Recommendation: Encouraging youth membership and engagement: The Board of Trustees encourages ACWW Member Societies to actively engage and integrate young members in their organizations.

Recommendation: New and updated ACWW policies: The ACWW Board of Trustees recommends to Members that they review the new and revised policies approved by the Board during the 2023-2026 Triennium, and take all necessary and recommended steps to ensure they and their Societies are in full compliance, including and in particular the: ACWW Safeguarding Policy; ACWW Privacy Policy; ACWW Data Protection Policy; ACWW Anti-Corruption and Bribery Policy; ACWW Anti-Money Laundering Policy; ACWW Counter-Terrorism Policy; ACWW Anti-Fraud Policy; ACWW Cookie Policy; and ACWW Risk Policy.

Constitutional Resolutions

The full list and text of Constitutional Resolutions considered and passed by the 31st Triennial World Conference has been circulated by email and is available on our [website here](#). However, there was an important Urgency Resolution which was proposed by Shelby Country Extension Homemakers and seconded by Florida Association for Home and Community Education; this was a Constitutional issue raised by these members and agreed by the Board following the approved procedures for debate at the Conference. It was approved unanimously and is reproduced here for clarity and information:

Urgency Resolution: Additional Housekeeping to the 2023 Constitution

“We would like to move an Urgency Resolution, as an issue that has come up since the final round of Resolutions and Recommendations, as amended, were circulated to the membership. Concerning the 2023 Constitution as it stood before the amendments and considerations of this Triennial World Conference – which we appreciate changes the number of the clauses and sub-clauses;

Under Clause 35, relating to Interpretation

Clause 35.1.1. (b) and (c) refer to persons relating to 31.1.1.(a); this should in fact refer to 35.1.1.(a).

We have raised this with the staff and Board, and believe that this falls into the same category of errata and tidying as Resolution 1: Omnibus Housekeeping Resolution; but appreciate that trying to amend this Resolution to incorporate this numbering error would cause undue confusion. We therefore move that when the Constitution is tidied after this Conference and appropriately re-numbered, this correction is made alongside the others.

Moved by Jo-Ellen Almond, Conference Number 016, Shelby Country Extension Homemakers

Seconded by Annette Lanham, Conference Number 015, Florida Association for Home and Community Education

Passed unanimously, with support from ACWW’s Board of Trustees.

For more information on Resolutions and Recommendations, or to download ACWW’s Constitution and other governance documents, please visit our website at www.acww.org.uk

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