

SLIDE 1: History

The Associated Country Women of the World was founded in 1929 to bring rural women and their organisations all over the world together, and in so doing address the challenges they faced because of the isolation of their communities, discrimination against women, and their lack of standing in political processes.

ACWW's membership spans 82 countries, and since 1947 we have passed more than 180 policy resolutions by popular vote among member societies. The key concept behind each of these is the empowerment of rural women in all their diversity, and this continues to be our driving priority.

SLIDE 2: ACWW's work - AMPLIFY

ACWW exists to amplify the voices of rural women, collecting factual data on their living conditions. ACWW then uses that information to do a few different things:

1. Hold governments to account for areas where they've agreed to support Rural Women and have not yet done so
2. Contribute to agreements and statements that suggest national law and policy changes to benefit rural communities
3. Draw attention to the unique role of Rural Women in global food systems.

The photo seen on this slide is of a former member named Mrs Roberts, at the then recently opened United Nations Headquarters in New York, speaking with delegates from Iraq and India in 1953.

SLIDE 3: ACWW'S work - CONNECT

ACWW exists to connect rural women, knowing that our voice is so much stronger when we speak together. Through Triennial and Area Conferences, as well as opportunities to connect through social media and via the network maintained at Central Office, ACWW can highlight the way that similar issues face rural communities globally. Friendships are built, and women all over the world can learn from each other.

These photos are from Committee Meetings and World Conferences, as well as photos from project partners including Give Them Hope Liberia and Ntengwe for Community Development in Zimbabwe.

SLIDE 4: ACWW'S work - MOBILISE

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

raising campaigns on a whole host of issues from domestic violence in rural communities to reducing food waste.

These photos include an Agri Terra workshop on organisational management and leadership development at the East, West, Central Africa Area Conference in Nairobi in 2000; delegates voting during the Triennial World Conference in Melbourne, in 2019, as well as ACWW Representatives at an NGO Conference in Geneva in 1950.

SLIDE 5: ACWW'S work - EMPOWER

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

These photos are from Project 1103 Seed grants for Sustainable Farming with a training on organic farming in India in 2021 seen on the top left; Project 788 in 2009 the APWA held training sessions for teachers and set up 10 primary schools in rural and semi-rural areas of Pakistan; a beneficiary from smiling proudly from Project 1132 Ensuring Seed Security through Community Seed Banks in Zimbabwe in 2022; and finally Europe Area President Afrodita Roman at the Europe Area Conference in Glasgow in 2022.

SLIDE 6: Rural Community Development 3 focus areas

Now to discuss the importance of Rural Community Development in ACWW's work.

ACWW's work can be divided into three areas of focus: Climate-smart Agriculture, Rural Women's Health, and Education and Community Development. We fund development projects in these areas, which not only improves rural communities all over the world, but also contributes to effective and informed lobbying and advocacy.

SLIDE 7: Rural Community Development capacity building

Alongside Core Projects which respond to local priorities, we work with strategic partners to add Capacity Building modules to each project, strengthening impact and sustainability. The funding of grassroots development projects has been one of ACWW's priorities since the late 1970s, and it has gone through many changes as expertise in international development has expanded, and more culturally and locally sensitive methods have become the norm. Capacity building modules create opportunities that cater to the needs of the community we are working with, developing skills training and workshops that are relevant them.

This photo is an example of a Capacity Building module as a part of Project 1131: Entrepreneurship Training Programme for Unemployed Rural Women with the

Organisation: Heritage Charity Foundation armers during a training session. Participants received training on organic farming and climate mitigation to promote a reliable income.

SLIDE 8: Recent Project

This is one of ACWW's recent projects that we are very proud of. This project brought together 300 survivors of domestic and gender-based violence from rural communities and herdswomen in the Khovd Province of Mongolia. This built on an economic empowerment project which will be implemented by Associated Country Women of the World's local partner Sain Tus Development Bridge NGO.

The Summit was jointly funded by ACWW and UNESCO under the 2022-2023 UNESCO Participation Programme.

Domestic violence is currently being reported as affecting a minimum of 50% of rural women in Mongolia, so strengthening the independence and empowerment of Indigenous and rural women in this region is critical. The initial project gives participants agricultural and life skills to establish financial independence from their husbands and traditional family structures and secure their status in their own communities.

Through this project, ACWW collected disaggregated, anonymised data on climate change impact, as well as the living conditions of, and challenges faced by, rural women in Khovd Province; this will strengthen Associated Country Women of the World's ability to facilitate the women's participation in United Nations processes such as the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and CEDAW.

SLIDE 9: For more on Projects

To learn more about Projects at ACWW, please visit our website where you can find photos, Project Snapshots, Fact Files and more about current and past projects.

SLIDE 10: Advocacy

Now to segway into the importance of International Advocacy in the work of ACWW. It is important to understand that our projects, and the processes we use to amplify the voices of our members are completely and vitally linked. This means that the impacts of our projects are only sustainable when they exist in an enabling environment, with progressive legislation within local and national governing bodies.

ACWW approaches this process from two directions.

1. Empowering women to take their place in decision-making in their communities This can be achieved by promoting awareness of the rights of women, providing access to a network of supportive women, and sharing knowledge.
2. Engaging with UN processes that hold governments to account when they fail rural women This can be achieved through our consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council, where we have access to key deliberative opportunities. We use our network and contacts through multiple governments,

organisations, and mechanisms at the UN to lobby for the rights of rural women globally.

To highlight this phrase “Sustainability = systemic change.” Systemic change means ‘changes to systems.’ The systems we are referring to here are those that keep women from attaining full equality in all things. It is only by tackling these issues from both directions that we can bring about true sustainability.

These photos are from the UN CSC 2019 with former UN Committee Chair Marie Kenny, who is now the current Area President for Canada, and Bonnie Teeples Area President for the USA. The top photo is from the Third Eurasian Women’s Forum in St Petersburg Russia in 2021, where World President Magdie de Kock, Executive Director Tish Collins, and Advocacy Director Nick Newland (not pictured) represented ACWW. The final photo is of ACWW reps sitting among other women’s groups and organisations at the FAO 51st Session Council in 1968.

SLIDE 11: Advocacy Partners

ACWW work with The United Nations Economic and Social Council. With ECOSOC, we have access to critically important mechanisms such as the Commission on the Status of Women, the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the Human Rights Council, and other processes

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. With the FAO, we advocate for the importance of family farming, women’s land rights, Indigenous seed protection, food security and food sovereignty.

ACWW is also a member of the NGO Major Group, one of the Major Groups and Other Stakeholders at the UN established as part of the 2030 Agenda. We work with likeminded organisations from around the world to advance our goals and ensure our 14 members are heard.

ACWW is an elected member of the NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee for the 2020- 2022 mandate. We represent the more than 400 NGOs who hold Official Partnership status with UNESCO, and in 2021 ACWW chaired the 12th International Forum of NGOs in Official Partnership.

The UN Education and Scientific Council. At UNESCO we 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

SLIDE 12: How you can join us

By becoming an ACWW member, you join a network that supports rural women in connecting their voices, so that the issues they face and the solutions they raise are heard and acknowledged by national and international policymakers and legislators. ACWW exists for women who want to actively engage with international policy and the empowerment of rural women. You can join as an individual, or if you have a group that is interested in supporting the work of ACWW, you can join as a society. To join, you can visit our website or email Central Office.

SLIDE 13: How you can support our work

- To support our work, you can...
- Join as a member!
- Donate to the Rural Women in Action Fund – Donations to this fund will support all of ACWW's work, from projects to advocacy to education and awareness-raising, with the belief that supporters will come to understand how vital it is that all these elements are connected and cohesive.
- Participate in surveys and opportunities for advocacy as they arise. We encourage you to sign up for our newsletter, that can be done on our website, and you will get updates from our World President, Central Office, and the chance to participate in some of our advocacy endeavours.
- Engage with our work by acting on resolutions, sharing our social media posts, and spreading the word!

SLIDE 14: Contact us

We welcome you to check out our website at acww.org.uk where you can find a plethora of more information about all of the topics covered in this presentation.

Please get in touch with Central Office by email at office@acww.org.uk if you have any questions or queries.

Feel free to follow us on Facebook too! We can be found by searching "Associated Country Women of the World" or at this link.