

THE COUNTRYWOMAN

INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATED COUNTRY WOMEN OF THE WORLD

ISSUE 3 - 2020



Remembering Maybel

Help us design a Tea Towel!

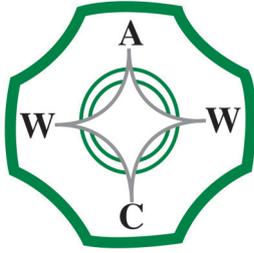
Projects in a Pandemic

Looking Forward to Malaysia



Charity No. 1174798

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The Countrywoman Issue 3 - 2020

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

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

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

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COVER IMAGE

Maybel Moyo dances with friends at the recent 29th Triennial World Conference in Melbourne Australia.

MEMBERSHIP

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

MAKING YOUR MAGAZINE SUSTAINABLE

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



MY DEAR FRIENDS...

A message from World President Magdie de Kock



A legend in Greek mythology tells about a labyrinth that was inescapable. Within the maze meandered the Minotaur, a fearsome creature. It was the hero Theseus who used a ball of thread given to him by the Princess Ariadne, tying one end to the entrance, which helped him to find his way back to his beloved Ariadne after slaying the dangerous Minotaur.

Whenever I have the opportunity to walk a labyrinth, I do so. People do this for different reasons and have their own unique experiences. I find walking the spiral passages clears my mind and find it a pleasant way to spend time in nature – no thinking or problem solving is required.

After all these months in lockdown, I sometimes feel life is like a labyrinth created by the worldwide impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Even though we can't see the end of the spiral right now, we know it is there and we should use the ball of thread to find our way out of this current uncertainty we couldn't see coming.

Members of ACWW have the support of more than just a mere ball of string – we have a very strong rope woven over decades to connect, to encourage, and to inspire us to overcome challenges. During this time there must have been many unfamiliar passages in the ACWW labyrinth our founders and predecessors walked. However, in almost a century they have explored and found ways to secure ACWW as the leading rural women's organisation of our time. We cannot disappoint them or let down our heritage.

I have unexpectedly experienced major disappointments over the last three months with regard to not being able to travel internationally to fulfil my responsibilities and duties. My official visits to other parts of the world to represent ACWW on various global platforms were cancelled or postponed. Opportunities to meet and connect with members of various Member societies at Area Conferences in foreign countries were taken away from us. I was not given the opportunity to be introduced to our members' cultures and to learn of their needs regarding ACWW and to receive their invaluable input.

However, I discovered alternative ways to keep in touch with the membership. Area Presidents have been encouraged to stay in contact with their member societies and the Chairmen of the Specified Committees worked diligently following their strategic plans to proceed with ACWW's work. Our meetings are taking place electronically and we are using innovative ways to continue the services rendered by ACWW. New dates have been scheduled for Area Conferences. With the assistance of the CEO and Staff, the Board is successfully navigating and mitigating the onslaught of the Pandemic on our beloved organisation.

Recently I compiled a comprehensive questionnaire which was completed by the Board covering all aspects of their work. The information received enabled me to learn of their needs, to monitor the way in which the strategic plan is being rolled out and to address various other matters.

In April, I requested that Central Office create and launch a survey on the impact of Covid-19 on our Membership. The report of the results of three ACWW Covid-19 Impact Surveys was recently released. It is interesting to note that the number of members directly affected by sickness relating to Covid-19 is relatively low, particularly given the age of respondents placing the majority of them in the vulnerable category. The long term impact on our membership will be difficult to assess, but we will continue to work to refine surveys to gather information. ACWW's Covid-19 Impact Surveys have been logged with UNESCO as a collaborative effort to inform international policy in response to Covid-19.

The Pandemic, however, is not the only challenge ACWW has faced – within one week the Board lost three valuable members! At short notice the Board adjusted the structure to ensure that the work of the organisation continued.

In June, Ruth Cargill sent me her resignation from the Board, on personal grounds. This came as a total surprise as she had been a valued member of the Board and Executive Committee since her election as Honorary Treasurer at the 29th Triennial World Conference in April 2019. It was with regret that the Board accepted her resignation and wished her well in her many roles at home in Australia.

During that time it was also discovered that unfortunately ACWW had suffered an illegal data breach which had affected members in several countries. This was duly investigated and reported to the Information Commissioner's Office in the UK in line with legal obligations and ACWW's data protection policies. Persons concerned have also been notified of the breach and the actions taken. Sadly, because of the serious nature of this breach it brought ACWW into disrepute and had to be taken seriously under the Constitution. It is therefore with regret that I must confirm that the Area President for Central and South Asia, Sister Arul Lucas Seeli was removed from the Board of Trustees by an Extraordinary Meeting of



the Board on 2 July 2020. It was of course a very difficult and emotional proceeding. Sister Seeli was in full cooperation and agreement with the process throughout. We would like to thank Sister Seeli for her dedication to ACWW and her understanding that this was a necessary procedure to protect our organisation legally, and not in any way personal or reflective of our feelings toward, and respect for her.

Within the same week, on 3 July the Board suffered yet another devastating setback when Mabel Moyo, Chairman of the Projects Committee, passed away. Her unexpected and sudden death came as a shock to all. I served with Mabel for six years on the previous Board and then continued our relationship as we both were elected for another term. I had the privilege to call her my colleague and also my friend. Her death will be sadly mourned and I honour her ACWW legacy. (Please see the obituaries later in the magazine).

When you think about what it takes for a Board to ensure the success of an organisation, you might think a need for intelligence, determination, strategic

thinking and the ability to communicate ideas effectively will do the trick. While all these and other character traits will facilitate the ability to create good results, there is another characteristic which is seldom mentioned. Resilience: the “bounce-back” ability. Whilst the worldwide pandemic is experienced as a setback in many ways, it is our ability to bounce back that will keep us successful and fulfilled. What matters is not how many times you find yourself face down, but how many times you are willing to get up and dust yourself off.

Although the Board made detailed strategic plans, promoted activities to move ACWW forward, put structures in place to support us in creating what we need, unexpected changes and unanticipated events are trying to clutter the passages of the ACWW labyrinth. Betty Tallmadge, is the one who first said: “Life is what happens to you when you’re making other plans”. We cannot control life, and disappointment and frustration will be created when we try.

Polly Campbell, a renowned author of books on self motivation says: “Instead of asking yourself questions that further

burden you like 'How could this happen to me?' or 'What did I do to deserve this?' ask yourself powerful questions that help build resilience. Find ways to uplift yourself, shift your view of the situation by asking questions such as 'How can I turn things around?' and 'How can I support myself during this challenging time?'”

My message of encouragement I would like to offer you in these unprecedented times is: Even though you don’t get an answer right away, keep asking yourself these powerful questions until the guidance that will best serve you appears and you find your way out of the labyrinth.

Being Rural Women in Action, we should do everything to be safe and healthy and ready to take action when opportunities present again – and trust me, they will!

Kindest regards



Magdie de Kock
ACWW World President

A message from the past...

“When I sent a message to the Conference in Vienna in 1930, I tried to emphasize the effect of the solidarity of the world, and that each day the changes were making this more evident.

Little did I dream that within the next twelve months a world-wide depression would bring us such vivid and tragic illustration of that interdependence – that the prosperity or the reverse of any one nation is intimately related to that of all the others. We shall, indeed, be wise if from this sad experience we can learn that no one country can live unto itself alone, any more than can an individual, and that we must have a better understanding and relationship between the nations, and also between city and country within our separate borders.

It often seems as if the influence of any one of us is so slight that it does not count, and yet the one added to one is the only way public opinion can be created in any country. If each of us in our small local groups holds fast to this faith and lives it, the Federation will become an ever-increasing influence in the world.

May I again stress the wish of last year that we may “dedicate ourselves to help meet the international problems ahead with vision, with courage and with good will.”

CENTRAL OFFICE NEWS

Tish Collins, Chief Executive Officer

As I write this at the beginning of July, the 'new normal' for ACWW staff is working from home. Collaborative working has taken place electronically and whilst this may have resulted in some delays initially, everyone is working hard to keep members informed and ACWW up and running. I am driving to the office twice a week to collect mail, Jess is replying to donors and membership renewals and we are now all caught up after an initial backlog. Most staff holidays have been cancelled and will be re-scheduled for later this year and into 2021.

Nick negotiated with our landlords for a 50% reduction in our rent for three months, the March and June Executive and other Committee meetings were held via video-conferencing and two issues of a digital-only *Countrywoman* have together made substantial savings. Recognising that income from donations is likely to be down in 2020 because of the global pandemic, such savings are to be welcomed.

On 8 May members were sent an update from ACWW Central Office. This included a link to the digital issue 2/2020 of *The Countrywoman* magazine; a public statement from World President Magdie de Kock for the International Day of Families and ACWW's second Covid-19 impact survey. A summary report of the Covid survey and why it is important follows in this magazine. We received a number of emails welcoming the magazine in this digital format and many positive comments about the notable feature of the Beijing +25 banner.

In recognition of the breaches of human rights happening all over the world, and the historical and continuing oppression faced by black and minority ethnic groups, ACWW posted an image on Facebook that highlighted the opening articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. White text on a black background made our solidarity with the social media 'blackout' obvious, and reached more than 17,600 individuals. Some members have been sharing such posts and saying how proud they are to be members of ACWW.

Since the last magazine ACWW has also issued a series of advocacy and policy position statements. The full texts can be read in the statements page of the Member Resources area of the website. You do not need a password to access this, or any other part of the new website, and



we encourage you to use these resources within your own societies and communities.

- World Environment Day (5 June 2020)
- International Day of Families (15 May 2020)
- Joint Statement to Commission on Population and Development (April 2020) – the first time ACWW has submitted input to this Commission (co-signed by Soroptimist International and Zonta International)
- Co-signed the 'Covid-19 Recovery: Building Back Better' letter from the President of the Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN (CoNGO), sent to the UN Secretary General

Progress continues with preparations for the 30th Triennial World Conference being held in Kuala Lumpur in May 2022. The first Conference Circular calling for Resolutions was distributed in May, so societies have a year to prepare and put a motion forward for discussion at the Conference. A complete list of all resolutions and recommendations that have been successful since 1947 and thus form ACWW policy are on the website in the Member Resources area. Guidelines for resolutions are included in the circular which was sent to all member societies and individuals who have given their consent and is also on the website in the Conferences – Malaysia 2022 area. I look forward to writing my next report from the office and bringing you updates.

Tish

Tish Collins
ACWW Chief Executive Officer

EDITOR'S NOTE - SYDNEY SALTER

Issue 3 of *The Countrywoman* is fairly consistent year to year. When I sat down at the beginning of the year, knowing that I would soon be the editor, to begin to sketch out a rough plan for each issue, I knew that issue 3 would have a report from the Commission on the Status of Women, pictures from Women Walk the World events, an explanation of the High Level Political Forum that happens in July, and the Annual Report for 2019. If you've already read the contents page, you won't see any of those. The Covid-19 Pandemic has thrown everything up in the air, and its all come back down dishevelled and a bit confused. So, as I sat down - again - to sketch out a plan for this issue, I was at a loss. The world just seems to be barely ticking over, and no one knows how our lives, or the organisations we work for and support, will look when the Pandemic is over.

One thing I do know - the Pandemic will end. The Associated Country Women of the World have, collectively and individually, made it through a World War, a Cold War, and hundreds of local natural disasters. We will move through this Pandemic, and we will come out a stronger, more relevant ACWW. So, I dedicate this issue to looking forward together. You'll find stories of project partners pausing their project activities to support their communities and ACWW members telling how their societies are coming together to support each other. We announced in the last issue that Women Walk the World is being postponed to October - in this issue, you'll find more information about the event and an invitation to make it the biggest WWTW yet. There is also an exciting opportunity for members to help design our next tea towel! Have a look on page 21 for details.



media@acww.org.uk

Board News

As you will have read in the World President's article recent events have meant that there were three Board positions left vacant. The Board of Trustees considered the best way to continue the work of ACWW in each circumstance and here set out their decisions for each, and reasoning, which were unanimous.

Introduction

The Constitution states as follows:

17.1 In the case of a vacancy occurring in the Presidency between Triennial General Meetings, the Deputy World President shall become World President for the remainder of the Triennium and then retire in line with clause 15.6.2.

17.2 In the case of vacancies among other Trustees of ACWW between Triennial General Meetings, the Trustees shall appoint a Trustee to serve until the next Triennial General Meeting, when such appointed Trustees shall retire as 15.6.2.

15.6.1 Trustees shall usually be elected by the members at Triennial General Meetings but where necessary under clause 15.7.5 or clause 17 may be appointed by the Trustees.

15.4.2 Two or more trustee positions may not be held by the same person.

Clause 15.4.2 has always been interpreted as no one may stand for election to two Trustee positions. But 17.2 has been interpreted that the Trustees may appoint a Trustee – that is, an existing Trustee, to cover the responsibilities of the post. For example, in the last Triennium the Board approved World President Ruth

Shanks to take on the responsibilities of the European Area President and the responsibilities of the UN Chairman when those members died and resigned respectively.

Decision 1: The post of Area President for Central and South Asia

Be it resolved that the World President Magdie de Kock cover the responsibilities of the Area President for Central and South Asia for the remainder of the 2019-2022 Triennium.

Rationale: Regarding Central and South Asia, there is a public relations job to be done in soothing any upset caused by the data breach and working with the CWAI to organise the re-scheduled Area Conference. In this Area there is an informal tradition of rotating the Area Presidency through the different countries and this would need to be clarified at the Area Conference. Therefore, there was no obvious person, other than the World President, with sufficient authority to take on the responsibilities from Sr Seeli. Because the World President is already a Board Member and, as explained above, the Constitution is subject to interpretation on the matter of filling vacancies; the decision was to cover the responsibilities of the post, but not to be appointed as the Area President.

Decision 2: The post of Chairman of the Projects Committee

Be it resolved that the Vice Chairman of the Projects Committee, Mrs Edwina Marr (Northern Ireland), be appointed Chairman of the Projects Committee for

the remainder of the Triennium and be co-opted to the Board of Trustees.

Rationale: Edwina Marr was appointed as the Vice Chairman of the Projects Committee at the meeting in October 2019 and this is her second term as a member of the Projects Committee. Edwina Marr had co-chaired the last meeting in October, when Maybel was not well enough to travel and only had intermittent access to the internet. Edwina was therefore the obvious choice and willing to serve.

Decision 3: The post of Treasurer and Chairman of the Finance and Membership Committee

Be it resolved that Deputy World President Alison Burnett cover the responsibilities of the Treasurer and Chairman of the Finance and Membership Committee for the remainder of the 2019-2022 Triennium.

Rationale: The Finance & Membership Committee had not appointed a Vice Chairman. Alison Burnett had previously served on the Board as Treasurer and Chairman of the Finance Committee for the two Triennia 2010-2013 and 2013-2016. As she had attended all meetings of the Committee and had been in close communication with Ruth Cargill in this Triennium, she was the most appropriate choice to fulfil the role when Ruth suddenly resigned. The three members on the Committee are all in their first term on the Committee. The decision was that Alison Burnett cover the responsibilities of the post, without being appointed to that post.

Finance Update

Alison Burnett is covering the responsibilities of Treasurer and here reviews 2019 income and expenditure ahead of the final audit. The next issue of The Countrywoman will share highlights from the 2019 report of work and the audited accounts.

The draft accounts indicate that the Women Empowered Fund shows a welcome increase over 2018 but expenditure is lower because there was only one Projects Committee meeting allocating funds in 2019. Therefore, some donations restricted to Projects expenditure were held over to 2020. Although expenditure was remarkably

consistent between 2018 and 2019, income to Pennies for Friendship showed a marked decrease. Pennies for Friendship (PFF) funds everything except projects – all our advocacy work, the Board and Committees and their extension work, The Countrywoman and the bare minimum staff and office space needed to keep ACWW running. Please give this thought – and your donations - in 2020.

When I was Treasurer between 2013 and 2016, we achieved an annual target of £200,000 for PFF, but this slipped to under £130,000 in 2019. Because of the global Pandemic there will be savings in 2020 but we need to make up the difference

in the budget for 2019 if we are to be responsible and keep ACWW on a sound footing. It has been proven that regular small amounts from many people can make all the difference. With as little as £5 or \$5 a month from our representative membership of 9 million women, we can continue the work of ACWW well into the future. Advocacy has achieved the vote for women, advocacy has enabled girls to be educated, advocacy has secured both maternity healthcare and leave in many countries. There is still much to be done and ACWW has the historic role of advocating for the empowerment of women.

Committee Focus

C&M Committee Member Interview

Dear ACWW members,

In the past few issues of this magazine our Communications and Marketing Committee has introduced you to some enthusiastic ACWW members that encourage all they meet to learn more about ACWW and its work, including advocacy and small-scale, women-led project funding through the Women Empowered Fund.

In this issue, you will meet Jill Daines, England, interviewed by Moira Hammond. Previous interviewees were Cecilia Maines, Canada; Georgeta Havrilet, Romania; and Marie Appleton, New Zealand. If you missed their stories, you can now easily check them out in the digital magazine archive found on the ACWW website.

I have admiration for May Kidd, Past World President, who has been mentioned as an inspiration in several of the interviews.

If you would like to add your name to this list and receive a phone call or an email and be interviewed about your experience as an ACWW member and how you support and encourage others to be involved in this incredible organisation, please contact Central Office or myself, Sheila Needham, at cmchair@acww.org.uk

This issue also contains exciting news about a Tea Towel design contest (see page 21) We look forward to seeing how you interpret the brief, and bring *Rural Women in Action* to life.

C&M committee Member Moira Hammod tells us a bit about her experience with ACWW: In ancient Greek, my name means 'the Fates' and it was certainly fate that introduced me to ACWW. My husband and I had moved to Scotland just before Christmas, 2002 and our first visitor was a near neighbour (albeit a mile or so away), May Kidd who was then European Area President. (She went on to become World President from 2010 – 13.) May was so enthusiastic about this charity that I wanted to find out more and soon became an individual member.

My first conference was the European Area one in Iceland in 2005 and here I met women from Belarus, Croatia, Hungary,

Romania, and Russia who were to become lifelong friends. It was an experience that I will never forget and I can honestly say that it was a life-changer.

May kindly invited me to accompany her in 2006, evaluating projects in Hungary and Romania. Later that year, I was pleased to find that ACWW had begun funding projects in post-conflict Sierra Leone where my husband happened also to be working. The country remains dear to my heart and it is great to know that one of the ACWW projects, an agricultural pilot scheme, is still thriving well.

Since then I have attended no fewer than eight more conferences and given numerous talks about ACWW as well as organising regular fund-raising events. I am delighted to be serving on the C&M Committee for the fourth year: indeed, my whole experience of ACWW gives me so much pleasure.

My aim is to inspire others to become involved, just as May did me and, now as ACWW rep for Suffolk East Federation of WIs, I can see it beginning. I sat down with ACWW member Jill Daines to talk to her about her time with ACWW:

How did you hear of ACWW?

Through the WI. Although I had been a member of Women's Institutes for almost twenty years, I knew nothing of ACWW until about ten years ago when information began to filter through.

Why did you decide to be part of ACWW?

I loved the idea that ACWW links women in sister associations all over the world in order to help less fortunate women in developing countries.

How has your membership helped to do this?

In 2017 I attended an Indian Day near Ipswich organised by Moira Hammond and enjoyed it so much that I was inspired to do something similar in my area of Suffolk. I called it a Bollywood Evening and we had curries, Indian dancing and a Bollywood film. The proceeds of more than a thousand pounds were for ACWW. On a more regular basis, my WI collects



Pennies for Friendship and has recently supported water projects.

Why do you think it important to be an individual member of ACWW?

By being an individual member, I can keep up-to-date with news of ACWW activities and projects via e-mails and their magazine, *The Countrywoman*. In addition it allows me to attend their conferences all over the world.

Personally, it proves to everyone how strongly I feel about supporting ACWW. I have also become a member of the newly-formed SEFWI (Suffolk East Federation of Women's Institutes) ACWW Supporters' Group.

What would be your message to anyone considering joining ACWW?

I would tell them how it has become a really rewarding part of my life, knowing that I am making a difference to other women's lives. I would reassure them that money donated to projects is specifically used for funding projects. The organisation has relatively few overheads and only seven paid members of staff. Even a little of our money goes such a long way in developing countries too.

Finally, what is your best memory of being a member of ACWW?

Naturally, I loved experiencing the success of my Bollywood evening, but my stand-out memory is of hearing previous ACWW World President, May Kidd speak at Moira's Indian Day. She was inspirational and I since then I have never looked back.

Area Conferences

Updates about rescheduled Area Meetings

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic, many of the Area Conferences have had to be rescheduled. We are doing our best to keep you up to date, and you can always visit our website for the latest information.

Because of ever-developing laws around the handling of personal information, we are having to evaluate the registration process for Area Conferences. Your Area President will update you with how your registration will be handled, or how it will be carried over if you've already registered. Again, the best place for the most up to date information is our website.

Area Conferences are a great way to meet with your ACWW sisters in your area, share best practice, learn from each other, and develop lifelong friendships. Area Conferences can also deliberate on and present resolutions for the Triennial World Conference, and so are directly involved in the policy and direction of ACWW. Contact your area President to learn more!

East, West, and Central Africa

Europe

South East Asia and the Far East

Central and South Asia

Caribbean, Central and South America

USA

Southern Africa

Canada

South Pacific

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usa@acww.org.uk

safrika@acww.org.uk

canada@acww.org.uk

southpac@acww.org.uk

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

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

**Canada Area Conference
POSTPONED – New dates: 19-21 June 2021**

**Southern Africa Area Conference
POSTPONED - New dates: 3-4 February 2021**

**Europe Area Conference
POSTPONED - New dates: 10-14 May 2021**

visit https://www.acww.org.uk/area_conferences.html
for the latest information, updates, and registration

Looking forward to Malaysia!

A message from the Hostess Society for the 30th Triennial World Conference

The unprecedented Covid-19 Pandemic Crisis saw Malaysia getting into a lockdown on 18 March 2020, barely a week before our Committee Meeting in London. The fast and positive response of the Central Office meant that we were able to have a Zoom meeting on 30 March 2020 and although it would have been marvellous to meet in person, the new experience of digital meetings meant that we were still able to connect with friends all over the world.



WI Pahang volunteers sewing P.P.E suits for Covid-19 Medical Frontline staff



of food production and supply during the Lockdown, we will try to showcase family farming and local food production.

Working from home with ample time to browse on details like cuisine, culture and places of interest, we will try our utmost to ensure all Conference participants experience Malaysia to the fullest. We are excited preparing the Conference Bags and deciding on Bazaar Sale items of Malaysian textiles, crafts and handmade products from our own The Tunku Azizah Handmade Market.

It is now less than two years to The Conference and we truly look forward to having all members from around the world as our guests to experience eight days of the best of Malaysian hospitality and to celebrate our togetherness, especially after the trials and challenges of losing so many things in life we have taken for granted all these years.

WI Pahang can't wait to say...

Welcome to Malaysia!



WI Pahang members wasted no time in helping out under the strict Standard Operating Procedures of the Government. Her Majesty, The Queen led the way in preparing food daily from her kitchen for the various Medical Personnel directly involved in the handling of Covid-19.

We sewed Personal Protective Equipment Suits and face masks, provided home cooked food to the frontline medical staff, held online classes on sewing masks and making Face Shields and even worked on designing and making Shield Ups and Foot Operated Sanitizer and Soap Dispensers. Coordination was all digital and even group prayers during the Holy Month of Ramadan were done online.

We are now in the Recovery Control Movement Order until 31 August 2020. The curve has flattened with less than a thousand in hospitals nationwide and though we have not won the war, we are optimistic of better times ahead.

We have been fine tuning the planning aspects of the Conference details like the Day Trip. Having learnt the importance

WI Pahang members cooked for Medical Frontlines of Tengku Ampuan Afzan General Hospital, Kuantan



Members of Kotasas branch of WI Pahang lovingly prepared packed food daily for the Covid-19 frontline medical staff of Tengku Ampuan Afzan, General Hospital, Kuantan.



SEPTEMBER

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

As we focus on health in rural communities and the impact of Rabies, why not visit our website to take part in training that will help fight the spread of this terrible disease? We are working in partnership with the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARCC) to ensure that ACWW members are empowered to recognise and combat rabies in rural communities.



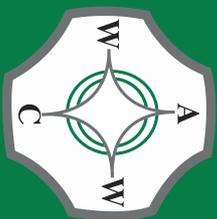
OCTOBER

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 International Day of the Girl Child
12	13	14	15 	16 	17 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

The International Day of Rural Women was first known as World Rural Women's Day. It was conceptualised by ACWW and 2 other women's organisations at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Since then, it has been taken up by the UN and is observed by organisations all over the world. ACWW, though we no longer facilitate the day, still seeks to highlight the unique role of Rural Women in food production and food systems especially in light of the UN Decade for Family Farming. This year, the postponed Women Walk the World will take place on 15 October, and it is a great opportunity for you to help your community learn about ACWW and the unique role played by Rural Women in food systems.



NOVEMBER



Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19 World Toilet Day 	20 World Children's Day 	21	22
23	24	16 Days of Activism to End Violence against Women and Girls		27	28	29
30						

Be sure to let us know in advance if you're planning to mark the 16 Days of Activism, and if you need any support, media, or ideas, please don't hesitate to contact us.

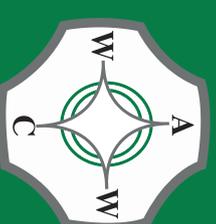
*Change
the
World*

DECEMBER

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
	16 Days of Activism to End Violence against Women and Girls					
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
			Central Office Closed			
28	29	30	31			
Central Office Closed						

Don't forget to send us a report of your activities for the 16 Days of Activism - Who was involved, what did you do, what was the purpose, and what long-term impacts do you hope to see from your event? Also please send pictures with photo releases! These will be included in the next Countrywoman Magazine.

media@acww.org.uk



#WillWalkforFood

Rural Women's Role in Eradicating Hunger

As many parts of world begin to slowly open up with signs that the Covid-19 Pandemic has begun to slow, it looks like the postponed Women Walk the World event is going ahead! We hope that you will take the opportunity to get together with your society on 15 October, and walk in solidarity and hope with your sisters all over the world.

Participation in Women Walk the World (WWTW) has been waning over the last few years, but with effort from us all, we can make 2020 - with all of its unexpected events and global changes - the best year yet.

After feedback from some of our members, it was decided that there should be a theme and resources specifically for Women Walk the World, and a reminder as to the purpose of the event. We've started that here, on this page, and continue it on the brand new WWTW page on the website.

Why Women Walk the World

WWTW was conceived of in 2012 as an awareness- and fund-raising initiative. The idea was that women from all communities where ACWW has members walk at different times on 29 April, so that on that day, ACWW will have, collectively, walked the world. They can raise sponsorship or collect donations from participants for the Pennies for Friendship (enabling) fund of ACWW. Over time, this has shifted so that people do their walking events on or around 29th April, and societies will specify donations to either Pennies for Friendship or Projects.

How is 2020 Different?

This year, ACWW and it's members have been affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic. Because member societies are rightly following WHO and government guidelines and not having meetings, we have seen a decrease in donations to the enabling fund of ACWW: Pennies for Friendship. You will know that our projects donations (The Women Empowered Fund) are restricted to only funding projects and their direct associated costs, so all the other work of ACWW is reliant on Pennies for Friendship. This includes UN representation and participation, promotional and educational materials like the magazine and leaflets, the website, research, Board members' outreach, board and committee meetings, and staffing. While ACWW has some financial security because of our reserves, we need our members to help ensure that ACWW is able to continue all of it's vital work, this year and beyond.

What does this mean for Women Walk the World?

This year, we want to help you raise awareness of the vital work of ACWW in your communities. As ACWW embarks on the Decade of Family Farming in support of the FAO, it is vital that people understand where their food comes from, and the crucial role played by women in food systems. The next page is the first of 5 posters that will be available to download and print to advertise your event and try to build community support.

Your Women Walk the World event is the perfect time to educate your community about the importance of the roles played by women in food systems, and why ACWW is vital for the empowerment of rural women. This is also a key fundraising opportunity, and explaining ACWW's Pennies for Friendship model can show supporters that little donations spread over our vast network can ensure that ACWW continues its vital work.

Pennies for Friendship
Woman to Woman
Community to Community
Making a difference together



What resources
will you have for
your event?

5 posters to raise awareness and
community support

Powerpoint presentation on the role of
Rural Women in Food Systems

A5 leaflet on ACWW finances, to help you and your
friends know how your donations are used

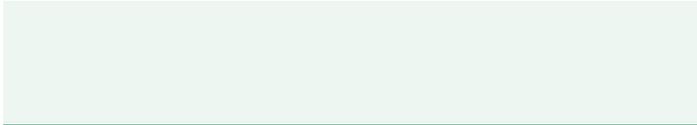
Personalised fundraising webpages, hosted
on the ACWW website.



Walk with us!

Rural Women are responsible for feeding the world. Help ACWW in our work to ensure that they are heard, respected, and cared for.

For more info:



2 ZERO HUNGER



The success of Sustainable Development Goal 2 relies on the participation of rural women and girls. Rural Women make up just over 40% of the agricultural sector, but face restrictions in their access to resources, inheritance, education, and government support.

5 GENDER EQUALITY



Engaging women at every level of food production and distribution means that the unique perspective and concerns of women - and crucially, the households and communities they support - are taken into account in policy-making and practice.

ACWW is committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Visit www.acww.org.uk/sustainable_development_goals.html to learn more

Projects in a Pandemic

Projects Administrator Jenny Sellers spoke with some Projects Coordinators about the impact of Covid-19 on their organisations and communities

In the last edition of *The Countrywoman*, we shared how the Covid-19 Pandemic has impacted project funding and the resulting delay in announcing the new projects. Plans are still in place to assess the delayed applications in October at the next Projects Committee Meeting. This means that, like last year, we'll have a bumper crop of new projects in October that will be shared here in *The Countrywoman* and on our website. As lockdown begins to lift here in the UK, the long-term impacts of the Pandemic and the lockdown measures are beginning to show a very different Britain to the one we left behind in March. This is not only true here in the UK, but across the world the impact of Covid-19 Pandemic has been monumental, an unprecedented strain on the fragile systems that are in place to protect the most vulnerable. At the beginning of June, I got in touch with the Project Coordinators of the most recent batch of projects to find out how Covid-19 Pandemic has impacted their work and communities so far.

In October 2019, we funded 18 projects from across the world, and almost all project activities were either halted or significantly impacted. Strict lockdowns or curfews have been common across the board, with the exception of Tanzania which, unlike its neighbours in East Africa, has not implemented lockdown measures to control the virus, and Mongolia where the proximity to China meant that border closures were swift and thorough back in January. The Sain Tus Center (Project 1055) has thus been able to continue project activities throughout this Pandemic.

To give you a true representation of the impact of Covid-19 on the communities where ACWW is working, this report is divided into three sections. First, we will be exploring the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic and lockdown measures on the organisations that we are currently working with. Then we will look into the impact on their communities and finally, I have asked the Project Coordinators what the future looks like now, in the aftermath of the Pandemic or in some cases, as the virus continues to spread.

The main adjustment that all our current projects have had to make has been to halt their planned activities. In areas



ACWW Project Partner IRDRP in India helps children learn to wash their hands

that have seen lower rates of infection, some projects have been able to begin conducting activities once again. One such project is Project 1054 in Tamil Nadu, India who are now able to start conducting project activities, albeit with significant changes to their operation. Project staff at WORD, the implementing organisation for Project 1054 are once again meeting with the beneficiaries of the project, though in much smaller groups than before, and practicing safe hygiene thorough hand-washing and mask-wearing.

Many organisations have had to change the direction of their focus over the past few months from conducting the activities of their planned projects to more short-term relief, addressing the needs in their communities. One such organisation is The Organisation for Community Development (Project 1053) who have been providing food supplies and hygiene materials to the families of their project beneficiaries. (Please note that funds provided by ACWW are only used for the initial intended aims of the approved application.)

With lockdowns restricting freedom of movement in many areas, organisations working on agricultural projects have been struggling to tend to their crops. The beneficiaries of ACDIPE in Uganda (Project 1065) experienced the double tragedy of a difficult rainy season without the ability to

visit and attend to the crops.

The strict lockdown measures in many countries have disproportionately affected the most vulnerable members of communities. Employment in rural areas is often very precarious compared to urban areas. Many members of rural communities work as agricultural labourers or daily wagers with uncertain incomes. With opportunities for work cut during lockdown, many people are facing shortages of food and other essentials. The effect of lockdown on national and local economies will have a disastrous impact on already vulnerable people.

One devastating impact of lockdown measures mentioned by almost all our partner organisations is an increase in instances and risk of sexual assault and domestic violence. Strict lockdown measures and curfews, alongside lost livelihoods and an uncertain future has increased tensions in many rural communities, leading to aggression from police forces and family members. As we know, instances of violence against women are exacerbated by poverty and challenging circumstances. VECH in Uganda (Project 1067) has also found that more women are resorting to sex work in order to earn income to provide for their children. The availability of contraception during this crisis is a further cause for concern among our project partners in

Uganda, risking the safety of community members and the success of HIV/AIDS projects that have been generating so much positive change in these communities

In rural areas where literacy rates are low and many members of the community do not have access to radios or TV, rural people are left with little understanding about the virus and the risk of how it spreads. For many of our partner organisations currently unable to conduct the project activities they had planned, sensitisation around the topic of Covid-19 and good hygiene practices are currently top priority.

What does the future look like now? As is the case in our own lives and across the world, grassroots organisations will have to adapt to this new post-Covid world. Daka, the Coordinator for Project 1056 in Togo says that from now on all community projects will have to incorporate health and hygiene education into their activities alongside the project's literacy education aims. While this results in a more holistic approach to carrying out activities which can be seen as a benefit, it will also further stretch the limited funds and resources of small grassroots organisations like SADA.

When asked how the future looks for them, many of our project partner organisations were worried about the impact of Covid-19 on education and the opportunities for young people, the Organisation for Community Development in India (Project 1053) believes that the impact of Covid-19 will increase the rate of school drop outs, furthering the gap between girls and boys in terms of education outcomes and employment opportunities.

Common across the Project Coordinators that I spoke to is a great need for funds



to start to rebuild their communities and organisations. I hope this report into the devastating impact of Covid-19 on rural communities and rural women's livelihoods will encourage you to keep supporting the work that ACWW does with our partner organisations for rural women across the world.

While donating to projects that help empower women across the world is vital, we must also work to amplify their voices at the international policy-making level. Exposing the hardships faced by rural women is the first step in ensuring that their governments are held to account. Part of ACWW's advocacy work is pressuring governments to invest in social systems that protect their most vulnerable. At the Commission on the Status of Women in 2019 ACWW, along with hundreds of other women's organisations around the world, told the Commission and its 193 member states that the social protection systems in place for women are woefully lacking. While the Covid-19 pandemic is a global disaster, a strong civil society that advocates for the most vulnerable members of communities can help to mitigate the impact of these disasters by holding governments to account and seeking a better future. As ever, ACWW is committed to amplifying the voices of Rural Women to achieve this goal.

So, whether you donate to the WE Fund or Pennies for Friendship, know that your donation is going to help Rural Women, either by empowering them directly through small-scale projects, or by working to hold governments to account so that women for generations to come are less vulnerable in every way.



Visit our website to donate to the Women Empowered Fund or Pennies for Friendship, and know that your donation will only ever be used for the empowerment of Rural Women.

www.acww.org.uk

Rest well, Maybel

We mark the passing of ACWW Board Member Mrs Maybel Moyo

On 6 July 2020, ACWW Central Office received the very sad news that Mrs Maybel Moyo, our Projects Chairman elected at the 29th Triennial World Conference, had passed away on 3 July.

Many of you around the world will have met Maybel at some time or other, and we know of her many strong friendships built with ACWW members over her long service. Prior to being elected as Projects Chairman in 2019, Maybel served two terms on ACWW's Board as Area President for Southern Africa.

World President Magdie de Kock made a public statement on 6 July, when she received the news, which we published on ACWW's Facebook page.

It is with genuine grief and heartfelt sadness that we today mark the passing of Mrs Maybel Moyo, ACWW's Projects Chairman and former Area President for Southern Africa. A dedicated and passionate advocate for women's education, empowerment, and independence, Maybel was committed to improving the lives of women in her own community, in Zimbabwe, in Southern Africa, and globally. Her health had suffered in recent years, and she passed peacefully on Friday 3 July 2020.

The Board and Central Office staff of ACWW are united in sadness today, as we mourn the loss of one of our own. Never seen without a smile, and never without a kind word, Maybel was an inspiration and the best example of humanity. She will be dearly missed by all who knew her, and all our lives are poorer without her.

We are without the proper words to describe just how special Maybel was, and how much we will miss her.

*Rest well, Maybel
1947-2020*

Wherever she went, Maybel engaged people with her smile, her honesty, and a disarming wink. Whether sitting in a Board meeting, undertaking her own work in Zimbabwe, or monitoring an ACWW project in the field, she was willing to go the extra (often literal) mile to get the job done.

Depending on where you see her name, Mrs Moyo might be called 'Maybel' or 'Mabel'... she herself explained this to CEO Tish Collins when she started at ACWW 6 years ago. It came from her mother, who named her 'Maybel', but she always felt more comfortable with the simpler 'Mabel'. We have traditionally used the first spelling, as formal documents required it and wanted to provide consistency. However she was known to you, we know you will miss her.

The following is an excerpt from a tribute written by Everjoice Win, an activist in Zimbabwe. She writes about Maybel and the women she worked with paving the way for the modern feminist movement in Zimbabwe. The full article can be found online here:

www.justassociates.org/en/blog/obituary-mabel-moyo-retelling-stories-organising-zimbabwe

"Mabel Moyo, Bertha Jambaya, Betty Mtero, Lydia Chikwavaire, Agnes Kanogoiwa, Constance Mabusela, Emma Mahlunge and my late mother, Ediel Mawarire belong to that generation of activists who would be lost in today's development-speak. Raise your left hand if you had never heard these



names till today. Raise both if you had come across them and dismissed them as 'those knitting and baking traditional women!' It is ok. Let us help you. The most important thing for you to know, if you are a young feminist in Zimbabwe or any other country for that matter, today, you are walking along paths that were cleared for you by these women and the movements they built over decades. Thank them for where you and I are today, the freedoms we take for granted and the ease with which we claim our rights. Change does not magically happen. There are people, women, who fought hard and gave their whole lives to ensure that you and me, would not experience the hardships they faced.

I woke up to see a post on my Twitter feed that Mabel Moyo is gone. My Aunty Mabel. Our elder 'sister', Mrs Moyo, is gone. That smile. That energy. The elegance. That grace. That passion and commitment to

Maybel Moyo (centre), with Irene Chinje (Area President for East, West, and Central Africa), Sheila Needham (Communications and Marketing Committee Chairman) and Linda Hoy (Area President for Canada), taking a moment to enjoy the 29th Triennial World Conference in Melbourne, Australia in April 2019. Photo by Viktoriya Dimitrova, former ACWW Projects Administrator.



supporting other women, is gone. Mabel was, until her death, the Deputy Director for Jekesa Pfungwa/Vulingqondo, (JP/V for short). Together with Bertha Jambaya, (the Director), these two women traversed the length and breadth of Zimbabwe building what still remains as one of the largest women's movements in the country. Again, you are forgiven if you had never heard of them till now. JP/V was originally the black women's wing of the white-led Women's Institute of Rhodesia, (WI).

Many of course are familiar with the UK-based WI, out of which the Rhodesian branch grew. Founded on notions of good housewifery, domestic skill building, and how to be an all-round 'good woman', the WI taught women skills such as knitting, sewing, baking, home-economics, and later on soap-making, garment making, small business management, marketing, how to form self-help groups etc. At the dawn of Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, the black women leaders in WI broke off to set up their own organisation. Initially, the focus was more or less on the same sets of skills, albeit in a new context. The liberation movement government was very strong on women's empowerment, involvement in decision-making, as well as community healthcare. Bertha and Mabel wasted no time in adapting their organisation to the times. The 1980s also saw the passing of new legislation and policies designed to increase women's economic, social, and political empowerment. JP/V grew to a close 100,000-member strong movement. But this did not come overnight.

My mother, was a member of WI, and after independence moved with her friends Bertha and Mabel into JP/V. Interestingly, my mother was also a member of the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA-Zimbabwe), a competitor to JP/V, if you come from the scarcity school of thought. But she and many of her generation saw no problem. The two organisations helped meet different needs in their lives. Between 1980 and I would say 1995, it was Bertha, Mabel, and dozens of women whose names I can not even recount here, built their movement, village by village, township by township. A typical JP/V organising trip, which I had the pleasure of witnessing went something like this: travel from Harare to Chimanimani at the crack of dawn. Arrive at the home of one strong village health worker/community organiser/mothers' union leader, whose name we would have been given by someone who knew her. The host would share whatever food, lodgings she had. Very often the one mismatched set of china plates, or the least chipped Kango (colourful tin painted plates), would come out. The one set of bedsheets, nice blanket, one pillow and not tattered sleeping mat would be rolled out. Next morning, we are introduced to the local power structures; chief, headman, ZANUPF (Zimbabwe National Unity Patriotic Front) chairman, ZANUPF women's league chairwoman, etc. Everywhere, getting

their 'blessing', to do 'development work', with the women. Without this, you could not even gather the women. But that is a story for another blog. From there, your local host would then gather the small group of women in her community, and over a two- or three-day period, you would have a conversation with the women about the problems they had as women. The things that made them happy. How they are organised. What their needs were. Who else was supporting them in the community? Government? Another NGO? A religious group? You had to come back to the same group of women for three, sometimes five times in one year. Each time, building a group, some projects, some awareness about rights, new practical skills.

I have often heard the work that Mabel Moyo and the women's movements of the 1980s-90s' dismissed. Indeed, these women did not base their work on any cleverly thought out theories, or what we now call a theory of change. And yet, when we look back, we can see the real impacts the work had.

Another less known story, is about the work JP/V and other so-called grassroots women's movements did, was around the constitutional change process in the late 1990s. This part deserves to be retold, and the role that Mabel Moyo and women like her played. Before the formation of the National Constitutional Assembly, (the social justice movement, not Lovemore Madhuku's current political party, please note), most women's organisations in Zimbabwe focused on educating women about their newly found legal rights. Newer (decidedly self-named feminist organisations), such as Women's Action Group, (my alma mater), Musasa, and Women and Law in Southern Africa were born out of the need to ensure that women enjoyed the rights that new laws passed in the 80's and 90s truly benefited them. An example of this was the Legal Age of Majority Act, which, in summary, conferred majority status on black Zimbabwean women for the first time ever. No sooner had the law been passed than a strong backlash was mounted by some traditionalists and conservative elements, including amongst some of the very legislators who had passed it! The big excuse was that this new law made children, (and women by extension/same difference to some people), wayward. They argued that children and women no longer listened to men. They drank and smoked. Went out too late at night, and they were now breeding all sorts of ills like baby dumping.

Similarly, the new Maintenance Act came under attack, with most mass media hysterically running long pieces, talk shows, etc. about how women were abusing the law by collecting maintenance from several men for one child. Dramatic stories of these wayward 'prostitutes,' (a word often thrown at any woman who crosses the invisible patriarchal line), who collected thousands of dollars and used the money to drink with yet more lovers and produce yet more babies,

were created, retold, and passed on as fact.

The newly set up feminist organisations were very good at policy analysis, legal drafting and doing policy advocacy at national level. Most of us had neither the skills, nor the power of numbers to shift the public conversation. It was to the JP/Vs, the YWCAs, and AWCs (Association for Women's Clubs) that we looked to talk to women directly, raise their consciousness using the most accurate information, and mobilise them to defend the gains we had on paper. This part of the story, I can tell more eloquently because I was there. Women's Action Group (WAG), a fairly younger, and smaller, Harare based group was formed to educate women about their legal, sexual, and reproductive health. We produced a popular magazine, *Speak Out/Taurai/Khulumani*, (in those 3 languages). But we had no direct constituency. Enter Mabel, Bertha and Betty Mtero. We formed a partnership. WAG would produce the magazine as well as other popular education material. The big movements would collect these materials, and we would train community based popular educators, who would take the message to the dozens of clubs, groups who met faithfully each week. Amidst the sewing, knitting, or jam-making, women would be taught about the new laws, how to make use of them and where to go for help. We also dispelled some of the myths brought out by the backlash. One literate woman would read an article, a pamphlet for the others. Later, we partnered with the Federation of African Media Women Zimbabwe, (FAMWZ), to produce what we nowadays call, 'podcasts', but in those days it was messages taped onto good old TEDELEX cassettes, and then played over one community radio. The women could write letters in response, or with their own specific problems, and solutions would be provided the following week. Overnight, we had constituencies running into hundreds of thousands of women, who met each week, somewhere under a tree, or in a classroom, and in their own way, made change happen."

This is a fitting tribute to one of ACWW's most accomplished members, and we are pleased to share a portion of it here.

One of the stand-out memories of Maybel's presence came at the 28th Triennial World Conference in Warwick, England in 2016. Called to the stage to deliver the Area Report for Southern Africa, Maybel was escorted by the entire Southern Africa delegation to the stage singing the traditional anthem *Shosholoz*, a song reflecting the hard work of mining, and which has become famous around the world for its connections with the struggle for equality. Maybel was a champion in this struggle, and we will all remember her with love.

From ACWW members worldwide, the Board, and Central Office Staff, we say goodbye with a tear, and a commitment to continue the work you strived for always.

Honouring Our Past

Professor Mamtaz Begum, former Area President for Central and South Asia



Professor Mamtaz Begum, member of ACWW, Area President for Central and South Asia (2013-2016) passed away at her Dhanmondi residence in Dhaka city at the age of 74 on 17 May 2020.

Among her many accomplishments, she was the founder of Bangladesh Mahila Samity, an ACWW member society since 1987. Professor Begum was also the chairperson of the Jatiyo Mohila Sangstha, and former Member of Bangladesh National Assembly. She was a Member of Parliament in 1973 and Chairman of the National Women's Organization between 2009 and 2020.

As well as serving as an Area President for ACWW, Professor Begum attended 5 Triennial Conferences (the 23rd in Canada, through to the 28th in Warwick, England), and worked diligently to improve the quality of living for women and girls in her own country and across the region.

She brought forward her expertise in childhood and development in the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs in Bangladesh both to her own society and ACWW.

She was buried with state honour at Mirpur Martyred Intellectuals' Graveyard. She left behind her husband Syed Rezaur Rahman, daughter Farhana, a son, and a host of relatives and well-wishers.

All at ACWW send their condolences to Professor Begum's family and friends, and she will be remembered as a dedicated member of ACWW.

Heather McGrigor, ACWW General Secretary from 1972 to 1986

Heather McGrigor, former ACWW UN Secretary and General Secretary died peacefully on 29 April 2020 at 94. She is survived by a large and loving family, and of course, her ACWW family as well.

Heather joined ACWW as UN Committee Secretary in April 1960, where she worked alongside her mother who was Honorary Treasurer until her promotion to General Secretary in 1972. From 1972 to 1986, Heather helped organise 5 Triennial World Conferences, as well as keep up with all of the many duties required by her position.

In 1974, ACWW was granted \$50,000 to run leadership courses during the International Women's Year, which were held in Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Trinidad and Tobago. There is no doubt that Heather's meticulous administrative skills were key to ensuring that these grants, and the programmes they funded, impacted the lives of hundreds of women, and the generations that have followed.

In the 26 years that Heather worked with ACWW, she helped to facilitate a closer relationship with UN Agencies, secured vital UNESCO funding, and no doubt played a key role in shaping the advocacy work of ACWW that we know and love today.

Past World President Dr Ellen McLean had this to say: "I am sure that engraved on Heather McGrigor's heart were the letters ACWW. She was just a little girl when she was first introduced to those letters when her mother became ACWW's Honorary Treasurer. How do I remember Miss McGrigor? My first recollection is seeing a dark haired young woman



briskly walking up and down the aisle during Sessions at the Dublin Conference in 1965. I didn't meet her then, but saw her at future Conferences and finally met her and worked with her from 1977 until her retirement in 1986, and really got to know her during my first term as World President. Or did I really get to know her? She was somewhat shy, a very private person. She was very professional and businesslike, with a strong sense of the relationship between being staff and working with the Board. It took months of coaxing before she accepted the invitation to join some of us for dinner at a restaurant close to Victoria Station. Getting to spend many hours with her during my presidency, I saw the kind, caring person she was, with a deep love for her family. There are so many adjectives

to describe her: honesty, integrity, loyalty, hard working, thrifty and more. She knew what was meant by confidentiality. She was a fountain of knowledge about ACWW, and I often wished I could read the pages of the black book she kept in her desk drawer and referred to from time to time. Heather McGrigor was not a person of flowery praise, so when you heard the words "well done" or "That went well" you knew you had passed the test! One of my very special memories was being a guest in her home in Frinton. The warmth of her welcome, her gracious hospitality were very special; she had thought of everything to make the weekend so memorable. Being Heather, it was only after her retirement that she called me Ellen. I am saddened at the true friend I have lost, but my memories of her are a treasure."

Time for a Competition

Dust off your crafting tools!

It has been a long time since ACWW has produced and sold a Tea Towel that is not associated with a Triennial World Conference. The Communications and Marketing Committee want to change that, and they want your help! Following the success of the recent banner for the anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the C&M Committee want to harness the exceptional creativity of ACWW members to design a tea towel.

The theme for your design should be *Rural Women in Action*. This tagline is meant to communicate that ACWW is made up of women who are learning, growing, teaching, and sharing. ACWW is rural women in action, determined to change the world through collective, strategic action and advocacy. You can interpret this theme as literally or abstractly as you want, but please include your thoughts when you submit your design.

Once the winning design is decided, the tea towel will be produced with the winner's name included and sold with the proceeds going to Pennies for Friendship, the enabling fund of ACWW. This fund is what enables ACWW to continue its work, and include participation in UN meetings, advocacy with national and international policymakers and legislators, educational and awareness-raising materials like *The Countrywoman* magazine, and extension work and meetings for Board members.

Your design can be in any medium, but must strictly adhere to the size requirements. You can use as many colours as you want. Please send us the original artwork and do not scan/email us with a copy. We will only accept email entries if they are digital artwork.

If you have a good idea but don't have confidence in your ability to create a design, feel free to partner with someone else to produce your entry, but remember that this competition is intended to be a showcase of our members' talents, not the professional skills of a paid designer.

If you need us to send any digital design elements from Central Office, like the ACWW logo or examples of typefaces, please email media@acww.org.uk

Terms and Conditions

1. The winner of the competition will be decided by the Communications and Marketing Committee according to the published Judging Criteria. There will only be one winning design
2. ACWW reserves the right to sharpen and otherwise edit the winning design to aid in the reproduction process
3. Upon submission, you grant ACWW full intellectual property rights to your design and agree that ACWW may use it with or without your name and for any lawful purpose including, for example, publicity, illustration, advertising, and web content.
4. ACWW may use designs that do not win this competition for other purposes, including publicity, web content, illustration, and advertising.



Theme: Rural Women in Action

Medium: Anything

Requirements:

Size: 620mm x 420mm

Must include the text
Rural Women in Action

Must include the ACWW Logo

Judging Criteria

1. Relevance to theme
2. Originality
3. Artistry
4. Ease of Reproduction

Guidelines

1. Keep in mind that your design will need to be scanned and replicated, so use bold lines and clear definition
2. Please remember that intricate details may not be able to be faithfully replicated
3. When you send your design by post, please either roll it or send it flat. It is imperative that your design is not creased.
4. If you are submitting Digital Artwork, please submit your design in a vector format and remember to use bold, clear lines. Please note that rich colours may not be able to be faithfully reproduced on cloth.

Advocacy through a Pandemic

How ACWW is amplifying your voice in 2020

The very fact that this is the second issue of *The Countrywoman* to be sent out in purely digital format is indicative of how much the world has had to adjust in light of the global Covid-19 Pandemic. All around the world, and especially at the United Nations, discussions are being held about how to recover from this devastating disease, and strengthen communities for the future. This is referred to as 'Building Back Better'.

One of the fundamental challenges is getting governments to listen to the voices of rural women, and to ensure that our members are represented at the international level. To achieve this, we need up-to-date information and feedback from you. We always gather this information (or 'data') in a way that protects your identity, so all input is anonymised. This means that you can always be honest about your experiences or feelings, without worrying that anyone will judge you or hold what you say against you.

An example of this work has been the Covid-19 Impact Surveys conducted since late April 2020. Thus far, three surveys have been carried out, with more than 1,718 individual responses. In some ways, this is great, but it is also only a fraction of ACWW's members taking part when you consider that across the three surveys, this is an average of 572 people replying to each one.

Why does this matter? ACWW's survey work has been recognised by UNESCO, the UN's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as a contribution to policy-building in the post-pandemic world. Why? Because it represents the voices of real people, and crucially women, but also because it reflects information collected not by a government but by an independent international organisation (which of course ACWW is!).

On 9 July 2020, ACWW was asked to make an intervention at the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. Presented on behalf of all Non-Governmental Organisations with status at the UN, we took the opportunity to deliver a statement on 'Building Back Better' to more than 300 ambassadors, government ministers, agency directors, and global leaders. With your help, we can make the most of these opportunities.

ACWW Covid-19 Impact Survey Result Summary

It is interesting to note that the number of people directly affected by sickness relating to Covid-19 is relatively low, particularly given the age of respondents places the majority of them in the more at-risk category. This may fall in line with the global trend of the virus affects men more severely. It is also interesting that we have had respondents from several countries where ACWW has no membership, and somewhat disappointing results from countries where we have strong membership.

Total Respondents

Survey 1 **Survey 2** **Survey 3**
535 497 686

Survey
in English
and French

Averaged Responses

Have you been tested?

Yes = 5.68%

Have you been diagnosed?

Yes = 0.44%

If you had symptoms, were you able to get a test?

Yes = 4.52%

Do you personally know someone diagnosed in your community?

Yes = 24.96%

Do you personally know someone who has died from Covid-19?

Yes = 9.95%

Has someone in your family been diagnosed with Covid-19?

Yes = 7.57%

Has someone in your family died from Covid-19?

Yes = 1.69%

Countries with responses = 43

Albania	Guyana	South Africa
Australia	India	Spain
Austria	Ireland	Sri Lanka
Azerbaijan	Jamaica	Sweden
Bangladesh	Kenya	Togo
Botswana	Liberia	Tonga
Brazil	Malaysia	Trinidad & Tobago
British Virgin Islands	Namibia	Turks and Caicos
Cameroon	Netherlands	Uganda
Canada	New Zealand	Ukraine
Czech Republic	Norway	United Kingdom
Finland	Papua New Guinea	Tanzania
France	Romania	USA
Germany	Russian Federation	
Ghana	Serbia	



RURAL WOMEN IN ACTION

PROTECT THE VULNERABLE

All Covid-19 response and mitigation panels should have abuse experts and representatives from national women's support services

All women, including migrant women, should have access to public funds

Women's shelters and domestic violence charities need additional funding so that they can help fill the gap left by closed doctors' offices, where cases of domestic violence are usually first detected

Communities should invest in ways to stay connected while still respecting physical distancing guidelines, so that victims of violence can reach out for help

Diversion of policing and healthcare resources must not lead to neglect of those vulnerable to domestic violence

Stop Violence against Women and Girls

ACWW urges all member societies to focus strongly on the situation of girls and women who are victims of different forms of violence.

Mental Health

Prioritising your mental wellbeing during global upheaval

Content Warning: This article discusses mental health in rural areas and during the Covid-19 pandemic. It includes references to depression and suicide.

Worldwide, suicide rates are higher in rural areas than in urban areas. While this can be attributed to a number of factors depending on country and context, the need for robust and culturally sensitive mental healthcare in rural areas cannot be ignored. Suicide is a leading cause of death among adolescent women, and women in rural areas are more likely to suffer depression than their urban counterparts.

While ACWW knows that rural healthcare, including mental healthcare, is an issue that needs to be addressed by national policymakers and legislators through funding and adequate provision, there are also steps that individuals can take to safeguard their own mental wellbeing, and encourage mental wellness in their communities.

The normal advice that someone might receive in an urban environment doesn't really apply to rural women. "Get outside, spend time in nature, eat healthy food," these are all resources readily available to rural women. How is it then that rural people suffer higher rates of depression than their urban counterparts? One cause is isolation, and it is this that ACWW's member societies have been trying to address for many years. More than women's groups or crafting clubs, organisations like the WI and CWA and others are lifelines for isolated rural communities.

The Covid-19 Pandemic has taken away these vital lifelines for a time. While effort has been made to mitigate isolation with digital meetings, we all know that there is no substitute for sitting across from a friend over homemade food and catching up on life, talking through problems, and seeking advice.

So, what can we do? While many parts of the world are beginning to lift lockdown measures, some places are facing a second wave of infection, while some have yet to face the worst. With a vaccine still likely more than a year away, isolation might be part of our new normal. So, what can we do to protect our mental health in the midst of measures created to protect our physical health?

Be honest with yourself

You don't always have to be the strong one, and acknowledging when you're feeling lonely and reaching out to your friends may keep your loneliness from developing into something more serious.

If the news is making you anxious, you don't have to watch it

Being informed is important, but not at the expense of your mental health. You can choose to get updates when you want to, and getting your news directly from the source, like the WHO, means that it will be presented in a way that is considerate of mental health, rather than sensationalised versions of news that are so common on national news networks.

Try to exercise daily, as regular exercise can contribute to overall health including mental health

Taking a walk, or even doing some simple stretches in your garden are great exercises. If you want to try a new kind of gentle exercise like yoga or pilates, there are lots of free classes on YouTube. (Just remember to be gentle with yourself, and never attempt something you might not be able to handle while alone!)

Resurrect the art form of letter writing!

Write to your family members and friends, even those who live near to you. Its a good way to pass the time, stay in touch, and make someone else's day since receiving a handwritten letter is such a rarity now.

Don't assume that no one cares, even if your friends aren't reaching out

This Pandemic is difficult for everyone, and we're all coping in our own ways. Your friends might need a friend as much as you do, and reaching out to them might help you both. Your friends might be sitting at home wondering why no one has made an effort to contact them!

Remember that this will pass

As our World President said in the last issue:

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





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