

THE COUNTRYWOMAN

INTERNATIONAL MAGAZINE OF THE ASSOCIATED COUNTRY WOMEN OF THE WORLD

ISSUE 3 - 2021

A Defining Moment

Projects and Advocacy

A Look into the Past...

Area Conferences Updates



Charity No. 1174793

© ACWW 2021 | A1922-101
A04 Parkhall 40 Martell Road
London SE21 8EN



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

Registered Charity No. 1174798

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

The Countrywoman Issue 3 - 2021

© ACWW 2021 A1922-101

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

ACWW CENTRAL OFFICE CONTACTS

Chief Executive Officer

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

Policy & Communications Manager

Nick Newland - nick@acww.org.uk

Agriculture and Engagement Administrator

Editor of *The Countrywoman* Magazine

Sydney Salter - media@acww.org.uk

Projects Administrator

Jenny Sellers - projects@acww.org.uk

Office Administrator

Rowan McKinnon - info@acww.org.uk

Finance Manager

Sue Williams - finance@acww.org.uk

Finance Assistant

Becky Ramsey - finance@acww.org.uk

Please note that we welcome submissions for *The Countrywoman*, particularly from first time contributors or those in areas not recently featured.

Due to ACWW's strategic advocacy policy, articles may be printed in the most appropriate issue, not necessarily the most immediate. We welcome contributions throughout the year.

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

THE COUNTRYWOMAN

3 MY DEAR FRIENDS...

A message from the World President, Magdie de Kock

4 CENTRAL OFFICE NEWS

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

5 TRIENNIAL WORLD CONFERENCE

Closer than you think...

7 EDITOR'S NOTE

Editor Sydney Salter

7 DOROTHY'S INHERITANCE

UNESCO and our own Dorothy Drage

8 A DEFINING MOMENT

From the Board of ACWW

9 GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Embodying ACWW's 1953 Resolution

10 PROJECT FINAL REPORT

Project 1061

11 PROJECT FINAL REPORT

Project 1062

12 PROJECT FINAL REPORT

Project 1063

13 SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS

How can we ensure our projects are sustainable?

14 AREA CONFERENCE

Updates

15 SECURE ACWW FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

We still need your help

16 JOURNEY TO THE PAST

A look into the archives

COVER IMAGE

ACWW project participants learn more about business finance and management.

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

By this time last year, the scope of the global pandemic was becoming clear; ACWW meetings, events and Area Conferences were postponed, cancelled or moved online as we tried to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on our work.

Thanks to a loyal and devoted membership, supportive Board, dedicated CEO and her competent Staff, ACWW's work and influence continued to amplify the voices and needs of our members during these unprecedented times. As the challenging and difficult circumstances continued, Tish Collins and her team offered and rendered their continuous support to the Board and Specified Committees as well as the Membership. I applaud Central Office Staff for the way in which they diligently proceed with their tasks and responsibilities regardless of demanding and challenging circumstances.

In June I had the privilege of attending the Conference of the Southern Africa Area in person. I refer to it as being a privilege as it might well be the only Area Conference I will be able to attend in person during my term in office! (Though I am looking forward to attending other Area Conferences postponed to hopefully take place face-to-face in 2022). In my address to the attendees at the SA Area Conference, I shared my views on the ACWW theme and referred to the quote from Maya Angelou when she described diversity as "being a tapestry with all the strands being of equal value irrespective of the different sizes, colours and lengths".

In her summation of the event, former President of FWI KwaZulu-Natal, Bernadine Hay, expressed her experience of the conference as follows:

"During this conference a tapestry was woven. The delegates represented the canvas for the size and shape of the wall-hanging. The colourful and intricate designs were provided by the opening address of the World President and reports from the different affiliated organisations. Following the International Anthem of ACWW, a candle was lit in memory of members who passed away during the duration of the triennium and the Area President paid tribute to three former Area Presidents that passed away during the past year: Dr Semane Molotlegi, Mesdames Mabel Moyo and Anna Boshoff. The impact of the disruptive COVID-19 pandemic creates dark shadows in this tapestry. We can include colour with a positive attitude by including practical and effective strategies to deal with unexpected challenges".

Snoekie Erasmus, Projects Committee

member and Vanda Gagiano, member of the TWC Committee, assisted me when I presented information on the work of ACWW. ACWW Action Packs were distributed, explained and discussed; reports of work of the affiliated societies and the Area President, Marina Muller's report were submitted and accepted by the members.

Following the excellent example set by the South Pacific Area's virtual Conference in March this year, a second Area Conference was equally successfully conducted on a virtual platform when member societies of the Canada Area gathered for their Conference in July. Technically supported and assisted by the CEO and the Policy and Communications Manager, members appreciated an interesting programme conducted by Area President, Linda Hoy. I received a friendly welcome and was given the opportunity to officially open the event as well as to share my insights on our ACWW theme as the keynote speaker. Reports from the three Canadian Chairs of Specific Committees, the CEO as well as the report from the Area President were well received. An informative contribution on the role of pollinators was appreciated by the attendees and everyone was encouraged to be more protective towards pollinators in our environment and their invaluable service to nature, in line with the policy resolution passed in Melbourne in 2019.

Earlier in July, I was invited to deliver ACWW's message of goodwill and friendship at the virtual 22nd National Convention of WI Canada. I am pleased to say I was very well received and I am looking forward to ACWW continuing the good relationship with this affiliated member society and its devoted members.

If everything goes according to plan, I will soon be attending and addressing the virtual Area Conference of the USA with Bonnie Teeple at the helm of affairs and technically supported by Nick Newland.

On July 7th, I was invited to represent ACWW as a Panellist in an event of the UN High Level Political Forum. I concluded ACWW's contribution with the following statement which the moderator used in her closing remarks to wrap up the event and to emphasize the importance of advocacy:

"When we speak at HLPF, we often think in terms of governments and civil society, or even governments versus civil society. This is not my intention. Our calls to action are not combative; they are based in the same



commitment to the 2030 Agenda that the States of the United Nations have made. Today I recommit ACWW to amplifying the voices of rural women, of older women, of indigenous women, of young women, and of all those women in non-urban communities who cannot be heard above the din of chaos or the silence of global inaction."

Beloved Members, no one can forecast the outcome or the duration of this horrific pandemic and contradictory opinions are widely discussed. Let the uncertainty of the current circumstances not deprive us of our dreams and hopes for ACWW. As these hopes and dreams are firmly anchored in the legacy of our predecessors and the achievements of our beloved organisation, we cannot give way to a feeling of despair and hopelessness.

I leave you with a quote from Barack Obama, former President of the USA. I hope you will find it as encouraging as I did when I read it:

"Hope is that thing inside us that insists, despite all the evidence to the contrary, that something better awaits us if we have the courage to reach for it and to work for it and to wait for it"

Please continue to enthusiastically support ACWW and let us be appreciative of the hopes and dreams ACWW brings to so many people across the world.

Your World President and Friend

Magdie

Magdie de Kock
ACWW World President

CENTRAL OFFICE NEWS

Tish Collins, Chief Executive Officer

2021 has continued to be a year of 'videoconferencing', zooming about and using other digital products to keep Central Office in touch with members and you with us. We have had more meetings than usual and small group discussions seem to work particularly well. It is admirable how so many have been able to adapt whilst many others are also struggling with internet access - we know this to be a common feature of living in a rural area regardless of country or geographic region. For the second year, our annual financial audit has been conducted remotely and the necessity to scan and keep electronic records is also helping reduce the amount of paper we print and use in the office.

I was pleased to be a part of the Canada Area Conference at the beginning of July which was followed four weeks later by the United States of America Area Conference. Both conferences were well attended and were great showcases of the Area, including reports given by member societies. Through the 'chat' and Q&A functions all members were given the opportunity to ask questions of the panel which were answered on the day. Elsewhere in this magazine there are dates for forthcoming Area Conferences.

It felt like a rare treat when last week I was able to leave the office to attend a garden party attended by over 500 women, organised by Buckinghamshire Federation of the WI, England. They provided me with a gazebo in the grounds of a stately home to do an information stand for ACWW. This gave me the opportunity to talk about our Rural Women in Action Packs and how you can make a difference. The packs were designed originally with individuals in mind but some of the institutes will be filling in the booklet collectively and adding to our effective advocacy work. I was heartened by the enthusiasm with which the packs were received. A couple of the ladies asked if they could use them for church or other groups to which they belonged and one lady will be taking it into the school where she teaches Personal, Social, Health and Economic education to teenagers. All marvellous ideas. If you don't have a pack yet you can contact the office and we will send it or you can download all the elements from our website.

Living through the last year or so has reinforced to me that we need to be



adaptable and look at some changes as an opportunity, rather than something to be avoided. I am not referring to illness and some of the horrible consequences with which we are all well aware. I am thinking of situations where we haven't been able to meet in person, and we had a choice: cancel the meeting or explore the possibility of doing things online? ACWW's advocacy work – representing our members at events such as CSW has been made more accessible to members. The World President has spoken alongside subsistence farmers and leaders, Ambassadors and Nobel Laureates without leaving her home in South Africa. Once we can get back to meeting in person, this work will be reinforced and developed further.

While the opportunity for digital meetings has been a privilege, I believe that they are no replacement for face-to-face; often it is the chats in the queue for coffee that lead to great connections for ACWW. It's about getting to know and trust who you are talking to and be trusted by them. Networking is that which enables ACWW to influence negotiations, challenge policy, and amplify the voices of our members. As for our projects, we are looking forward to being able to resume project evaluation as a vital part of safeguarding your donations and encouraging long-term thinking among our project partners. At this stage, there is no digital replacement for 'feet on the ground' when it comes to project evaluation.

Over the summer months, I've enjoyed maintaining a garden on my little plot in London. I'm growing all sorts of vegetables, but the produce that had the most potential has, alas, not yielded much

fruit – or indeed, cabbage. I was tempted to be upset by this, but I was reminded as I looked out over the garden with its bees and butterflies, a little ecosystem all on its own, that while I may only have 4 cabbages out of 30, all the little creatures in my garden have had their fill. I've got an oasis, a place of rest for the hardworking pollinators and bugs, and they've, in turn, given me the joy of working alongside them. After all, we've all got to do the best we can with what we've got, so I'm going to put a tick next to number 5 in section 7 of our little booklet '100 Ways You Can Make a Difference' in the Rural Women in Action pack. I'd encourage you to start working your way through the booklet, as it gives us all the opportunity to do something that will help bring about change. Together, we are Rural Women in Action.

Tish

Tish Collins
ACWW Chief Executive Officer



Captain Flint, try as he might to be a good guard-cat, could not save the cabbages



ACWW's 30th Triennial World Conference

As you will know, ACWW's membership voted at the Special World Conference in April 2020 to delay the 30th Triennial World Conference by 1 year, moving it to May 2023. Whilst COVID-19 is still affecting Malaysia, the Hostess Society, Triennial World Conference Committee and Central Office Staff are confident that we can host a successful, safe, and superb event in 2023.

Registration for the 30th Triennial World Conference will now open on Wednesday 5 January 2022. With the unpredictable nature of the world at the moment, there is no increase for booking later in the year. Final registration will close on 31 December 2022, so this is the very last date for you to have registered by.

The Registration Fee will be an all-inclusive package. The details of this are shown later in this article, but it means that once you have landed at the airport in Malaysia, you don't have to spend a penny, cent, or Ringgit until you get on the plane to head home! The Hostess Society and Triennial World Conference Committee are very aware of the cost of international travel and the challenges members face, particularly at this time, and have done everything possible to keep the cost of the conference to a minimum.

The all-inclusive package means that accommodation will be on site at the Putrajaya Marriott. There are different rates depending on whether you want a single occupancy room (just you), a twin room (two separate beds), or a triple room (three separate beds). This is a great way of saving money, but also means that as part of the registration process you will need to specify who you want to share with - so plan ahead!

It is very important to highlight that we recommend all attendees have comprehensive travel insurance, as ACWW cannot be held accountable for any costs incurred if you are unable to travel.

We will take all sensible precautions to best ensure that the 30th Triennial World Conference is as safe as possible for all attendees. This may include the imposition of social distancing and masking precautions, following the advice of the World Health Organisation and local health authorities at the time.

Critically, we encourage all attendees (and indeed all members of ACWW!) to receive COVID-19 vaccinations at the earliest opportunity. We are well aware of the geographic imbalance in vaccine distribution, and have lobbied the UK government to accelerate its contribution to the international COVAX initiative to ensure that everyone in developing countries is able to receive the vaccine at the earliest opportunity. If you are able, please do get vaccinated as soon as possible. As well as protecting you, it protects everyone else in your community and indeed everyone attending events like the Triennial World Conference.

Meet your Hosts

The Hostess Society is the Women's Institute of Pahang. Many of you will know these ladies, as they are long-term members and supporters of ACWW and have been familiar company at the Triennial World Conference for many years.

The Hostess Committee is headed by Her Majesty Queen Azizah, and there are two representatives who sit on the Triennial World Conference Committee, Dato' Hamimah Abdul Karim and Datin Ong Cheng Imm. These ladies have already done a huge amount of work and are looking forward to welcoming members from all over the world to their country.



What is included in the package?

- Transfer to and from Kuala Lumpur International Airport to hotel
- Conference Registration on 18 May 2023
- Your Conference Bag and Documents
- All the costs of attending the actual Conference
- All Buffet Breakfasts
- Morning Tea each day
- All Conference Lunches
- Afternoon Tea each day
- Mid-Conference Day Trip with lunch
- All Dinners, each with a different theme
- Royal Gala Dinner at the Royal Palace, including transport
- All Tourist and associated Taxes
- Your choice of Single, Twin, or Triple room accommodation

What is NOT included in the package?

Travel insurance - all attendees are advised to book comprehensive travel insurance

Flights - once you're there, everything is sorted, but you'll have to organise your own flights!

Cancellation - the Triennial World Conference is being planned with Covid-19 in mind, and we are doing all that is possible to prepare for necessary adjustments in line with WHO advice. However, and as normal, ACWW will not be able to provide refunds if you are unable, or choose not to, attend. Again, it is recommended that you book travel insurance and investigate your airline's policies before booking flights.

Souvenirs - you'll have to buy your own!

Registration Package Fees

Each of the prices below includes the full package above, and is shown per person:

Triple Sharing = £855

Twin Sharing = £910

Single = £1075



ACWW is...
FRIENDSHIP

#WeAreACWW



ACWW is...
**90 YEARS
YOUNG!**

#WeAreACWW



ACWW is...
ADVOCACY

#WeAreACWW



ACWW is...
SOLIDARITY

#WeAreACWW



ACWW is...
PARTNERSHIP

#WeAreACWW



ACWW is...
ACTION

#WeAreACWW



ACWW is...
INTERNATIONAL

#WeAreACWW



ACWW is...
**COMMITTED
TO CHANGE**

#WeAreACWW



ACWW is...
**SHARING
KNOWLEDGE**

#WeAreACWW



ACWW is...
**FOR RURAL
WOMEN**

#WeAreACWW





EDITOR'S NOTE - SYDNEY SALTER

The Countrywoman
This issue of is coming
to you in full digital format. We got some

really positive responses from members about the shorter email newsletters that comprised Issue 2, but I must admit to looking forward to being able to craft a printed issue for you again for Issue 4 this year.

If you haven't already told us your thoughts on the future of *The Countrywoman Magazine*, please send me an email at media@acww.org.uk. The Communications and Marketing committee will be discussing your responses at the next meeting in late October.

One thing that the last year has made very clear is that we must do our best to avoid trade-offs in communications. While there is an urgent need to improve and expand our digital communications, there is also

an equally important need to continue to reach those without digital access or ability. This challenge requires much research and thought, and I really appreciate those who have come back with your thoughts and feelings. The members and supporters of ACWW are the top priority in all these considerations.

On a more personal note, I want to thank everyone who has been patient with me as we adjust to coming back to the Office after such a long lockdown in London. I'm working my way through my emails, and look forward to hearing from you all with stories, reports, and activities for the next *Countrywoman*!

Dorothy's Inheritance

ACWW Member and Representative to Ceredigion (Wales) Federation of Women's Institutes Bethan Williams drew our attention to a very interesting fact involving one of ACWW's original members and the treasurer who came up with the Pennies for Friendship Idea.

Some background: the UN Economic and Social Council designates certain areas of note all over the world as World Heritage Sites. World Heritage Sites are locations that have cultural, historical, scientific, or other form of significance. One location that recently been given World Heritage Status is the North Wales Slate Quarries.

"The Slate Landscape of Northwest Wales, which runs through Gwynedd, became the world leader for the production and export of slate in the 1800s. Slate has been quarried in the area for over 1,800 years and had been used to build parts of the Roman fort in Segontium in Caernarfon and Edward I's castle in Conwy, however it wasn't until the industrial revolution that demand surged as cities across the world expanded with slate from the mines at Gwynedd being widely used to roof workers' homes, public buildings, places of worship and factories.

By the 1890s the Welsh slate industry employed approximately 17,000 workers and produced almost 500,000 tonnes of slate a year, around a third of all roofing slate used in the world in the late 19th century. The industry had a huge impact on global architecture with Welsh slate used on a number of buildings, terraces and palaces across the globe including

Westminster Hall in London's Houses of Parliament, the Royal Exhibition Building, Melbourne, Australia and Copenhagen City Hall, Denmark. In 1830, half the buildings in New York had roofs made of Welsh slate"¹

One of these mines was Llechwedd Slate Mine, opened in 1846 by John Whitehead Greaves, who was, in fact, the grandfather of our Dorothy Drage. When John Ernest Greaves, Dorothy's father, took over the mine, the child took a keen interest in the slate quarries and the running of the business. It was an interest she carried

with her for life. According to her account in the book *Pennies for Friendship*, Dorothy met Madge Watt in 1915 on a visit to Anglesey.

As Bethan reminded us, "She played a significant part in the development of the WI, both locally and contributed much to national WI committees. She was then instrumental in forming ACWW and its success owes much to her efforts. She travelled the world promoting ACWW with several chapters of the book recording her travels and connections with ACWW."

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/welsh-slate-landscape-uks-newest-unesco-world-heritage-site>



A DEFINING MOMENT

From the Board of ACWW

Since our current Board of Trustees was elected in April 2019, we have witnessed a series of local, national, international and indeed global crises which have affected us all. No single member of our Board, nor one single Member of ACWW can have been left unaffected by the various challenges presented to humanity in the last 27 months. ACWW has endured, and we have worked hard to ensure that our membership has not been left alone to face these challenges. However, in every country, in every region, women have had to face unprecedented levels of natural disaster, climate change, physical and psychological violence, prejudice, abuse, and harassment.

Speaking at the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2021, ACWW's World President Magdie de Kock concluded her remarks with the following:

“The Generation Equality Forum in Paris sought to build on the legacy of Beijing as we move into the 26th year since the Platform for Action was agreed. Too many, far too many, of those commitments remain unfulfilled. Today, I recommit ACWW to amplifying the voices of rural women, of older women, of indigenous women, of young women, and of all those women in non-urban communities who cannot be heard above the din of chaos or the silence of global inaction.”

In August 2021 we, as the Board of ACWW, have adopted the following as a statement of our beliefs and ethics, embodying the spirit of our Association as established by generations of our mothers and sisters before us. We stand at a defining moment for humanity, and we commit ourselves to action:

“ 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. 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.

Rural women are the backbone of families, of communities, of nations, of global food systems. They bear the burden of conflict, they go unheard in legislation, and remain largely unprotected and unsupported. ACWW exists to change that, and challenge international processes and policies that perpetuate these inequalities.

Reaffirming the earliest statements leading to the formation of our organisation and the words of our founders, ACWW calls for co-operation among women's organisations to ensure action to secure meaningful, quality education for all young people. The advancement of education is a pathway to the relief of poverty and the relief of sickness and preservation of health.

Our work is rooted in the fundamental principles of human rights, and we work on behalf of those left furthest behind. ACWW stands against discrimination in all its forms, and works towards gender equality, accessibility, global citizenship, solidarity with those facing discrimination, and sustainable development.

We will work with peers to redress racial inequalities and leverage our partnerships to ensure positive joint working, promoting, sharing, and learning from best practice wherever possible to encourage greater accountability and advocate for meaningful change. ACWW commits to being an anti-racist organisation, and aims to equip all members to address racism within their own communities and collaborate to ensure that the voices of women of colour and indigenous communities are heard.

Remembering the resolution passed by our Membership in 1947 and the more than 20 resolutions and recommendations that have followed, ACWW reaffirms its support for the principles underlying the establishment of the United Nations, and to supporting the UN and its Member States in strengthening global governance and representation. This includes realising the success of the 2030 Agenda, amplifying the voices of rural women through UN processes and with UN agencies, and calling for reform to address the inadequacies of existing mechanisms.

ACWW's development programme for improved quality of life and the empowerment of rural women relies on funding local women-led delivery partners. This ensures that local voices are reflected in project design, implementation, and outcome assessment. We will continue this work, doing everything we can to ensure we are supporting the growth of relevant local capacity with a sustained and positive impact.

We are incredibly proud of our diverse network of women's organisations globally, and the women-led development projects we have supported over the past 50 years. We recognise that there is always more to be done to strengthen, empower, and build capacity within our network, lessons we can learn, and new voices to bring forward. ACWW's Board is elected by our membership, and geographic representation remains critical to bringing forward the priorities of rural women.

In 2019, the Board adopted 'Our Diversity is our Strength' as the Triennial theme, and today we reiterate this commitment, as we move towards marking the centenary of our Association.

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Embodying the intention of ACWW's 1953 Resolution

In 1953, ACWW's membership passed a resolution titled 'Citizenship- Women's Responsibilities'. It called for ACWW and its member societies to work to help women understand their rights and responsibilities when it comes to major legislation which affects them, to encourage them to seek election to local, state, and national offices, and to vote in elections wherever that is an option. It also encouraged the training of all women in citizenship.

Today, Global Citizenship remains a major focus of ACWW's work, and is the mechanism by which we forget our national borders and remember that all women, and indeed all humanity stands together in facing challenges on a daily basis, and must tackle them together. COVID-19 has been a primary example of this global challenge, and our responses have shown just how critical collective action is.

The World President's words

Each year ACWW participates in the UN High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, and uses this opportunity to address governments and amplify the voices of our members around the world. In 2020 and 2021, this process has been digital rather than in-person, and this has offered challenges and opportunities for all the civil society organisations participating.

This year, World President Magdie de Kock spoke at HLPF during a Parallel Event titled "*Dignity at the Heart of the SDGs in a Post-COVID Era: Listening to Youth, Older Persons, Refugees, and Indigenous Peoples*". She joined speakers from Spain, Japan, Colombia, Mexico and Canada, and spoke to an audience of more than 300 attendees from around the world. Below are some extracts from the speech she delivered:

"The reality of our global commitment to human rights and dignity can be appraised far more honestly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. In early 2020, many countries took the sensible step of closing their borders to travellers, but in doing so, too many closed the doors on equality, on the dignity of the individual, and on collective commitment to humanity's right to equitable life.

No one would challenge a government for wanting to protect its citizens, but we must also recognise that our commitment to international mechanisms and global

citizenship cannot fade when the going gets tough. Indeed, the stronger the global community, and the further from poverty, poor health, and economic injustice we are, the easier it is for the world to weather the storm as a whole.

In the first six months of 2020, it became clear that older people and people of colour were suffering the worst from COVID-19's physical impacts. This should not have been a shock. In developed countries, the socio-economic reality is that people of colour suffer worse because they disproportionately live in poorer communities with less access to quality healthcare. When vaccine programmes exist, minority communities face significant gaps in uptake caused by distrust of a system which does not value their lives equally, and worsened by unequal access to the internet for booking appointments and accessing educational resources. The cause of these inequalities is systemic injustice and must be addressed at every level of our societies before genuine change and improvement can be secured.

Women in communities that struggled financially before COVID, and which had faced the worst impacts of austerity in terms of reduction and withdrawal of social protection systems are now facing even greater challenges. Women in unpaid or low-paid care work, in various forms of insecure employment, and in agriculture are currently, and will continue to suffer from, greater financial insecurity.

Older people are not only at a higher risk for severe illness and fatality from COVID-19 but are also more vulnerable to the challenges posed by the pandemic impacting their mental wellbeing and social security. With healthcare systems in crisis in mid-2020, hospital overcrowding led to triage protocols and doctors having to decide which persons would receive life-saving treatment while others were left to succumb to the disease. In general, as older people were seen to have a lower chance of survival, or to have 'lived their lives', they were not prioritised for care. This is not to blame the medical professionals who have, globally, worked themselves into their own mental and physical health crisis trying to save people during this pandemic. Chronic underfunding of healthcare, and the constant social injustices that leave older people, women, and people of colour or indigenous heritage as at-risk groups is to blame.

Among ACWW's members, many of whom are older women in rural communities across 82 countries, the reality is that isolation has become an even greater issue than ever before. We acknowledge that many families have invested time and effort in ensuring they can stay in touch with older or isolated family members during the COVID pandemic, but the lack of digital confidence and literacy means that those users are more likely to be affected by online issues such as malware and viruses, and indeed fraudulent scams. The generational divide is narrowing, though older women continue to lag behind men when numbers are compared. Older women in rural communities face the same issues that their urban counterparts do, but with significantly greater challenges in addressing them.

Our governments must strive for success beyond national borders, because no one can claim a moral victory over COVID-19. While some affluent countries are already discussing the roll-out of booster shots to their populations, the vast majority of people in developing countries - even front-line health workers - have still not received their first shot. The worst served are low-income nations which have received less than one percent of vaccines administered so far.

When we speak at HLPF, we often think in terms of governments and civil society, or even governments versus civil society. This is not my intention today. Our calls to action are not combative, they are based in the same commitment to the 2030 Agenda that the States of the United Nations have made.

ACWW, and indeed all the organisations speaking today, and at so many of these events across what is normally two busy weeks in New York, is calling for genuine action to secure the promise of a generation.

Last week, the Generation Equality Forum in Paris sought to build on the legacy of Beijing as we move into the 26th year since the Platform for Action was agreed. Too many, far too many of those commitments remain unfulfilled. Today, I recommit ACWW to amplifying the voices of rural women, of older women, of indigenous women, of young women, and of all those women in non-urban communities who cannot be heard above the din of chaos or the silence of global inaction."



RURAL WOMEN IN ACTION

Final Report

Project 1061 - Economic Opportunities for Women Living with HIV/AIDS

Youth for Positive Change (YOPOC), Malawi

Youth for Positive Change (YOPOC) is a grassroots organisation created by a group of secondary school girls in Zomba District, Malawi in 2008. YOPOC was created to promote and advocate for the social and emotional wellbeing of vulnerable and marginalized young people and influence positive change in the areas of HIV prevention and AIDS awareness, economic empowerment, gender, human rights, and education. Despite progress in recent years, Malawi has one of the highest prevalence of HIV in the world with over 1 million people living with HIV/AIDS .

This project aims to empower women living with HIV/AIDS to become financially independent, enabling them to support the nutritional needs of their children and themselves and promote a healthy lifestyle. In order to achieve the project's aims, 30 adolescent mothers and 20 sex workers living with HIV/AIDS were provided with access to seed capital through a revolving loan fund established by the project. These project participants were also provided with business management training to increase the skill base of the participants. Focus group discussions have been conducted to support the participants to strengthen their businesses. Refresher courses were arranged for those whose businesses were not improving.

Despite the inevitable challenges that Covid-19 will continue to bring, YOPOC is confident that this project will continue to improve the lives of the women involved. The establishment of a cooperative revolving fund should ensure that the project participants are able to access capital to boost the capacity of their businesses and grow their income. Each participant used their own skills to develop their business.

YOPOC's Project Coordinator Roseby Chiweza explains the huge impact that small scale loans can have on project participants.

Before the commencement of the project, 30 teen mothers and 20 sex workers living with HIV/AIDS were not doing any business. After the commencement of the project, 35 teen mothers and 15 sex workers living with HIV/AIDS have become economically independent because they are doing small scale businesses with funds from the established revolving fund established by HIV/AIDS Support Groups. The project participants have joined the cooperative revolving fund. All of them have bought shares by depositing their money with the cooperative revolving fund. The deposits are earning them an interest. They borrow money from the cooperative revolving fund based on the amount they have deposited plus the interest earned by the deposit. The loan is charged with an interest which is higher than the interest on the deposit. The profit from the loan is shared amongst the members

based on their shares. The cooperative revolving fund is a source of their social capital, which is enabling them to cooperate, collaborate and coordinate their activities for the benefit of their communities they live. The 35 teen mothers and 15 sex workers are able to raise revenue which they are using to support their nutritional needs as well as of their children for them to live healthful so that they can participate in developing their communities. This is as a result of the project which trained 35 teen mothers and 15 sex workers living with HIV/AIDS in business management skills. The knowledge enables them to manage their own enterprises."



Project Coordinator Roseby Chiweza with participants



One of the Economic groups smiling during their training session



**Donate to support
ACWW Projects**





RURAL WOMEN IN ACTION

Final Report

Project 1062 - Introducing an Alternative Rite of Passage to Combat FGM in Tanzania Empowerment of Marginalised Communities (EMAC), Tanzania

Empowerment of Marginalised Communities (EMAC) is an NGO working in the Manyara region of Tanzania since 2010. The organisation was initially set up as a forum for women to meet lawyers and discuss civic rights. They expanded their purpose in 2013 to support women in rural areas to access economic empowerment and a platform for making their voices heard.

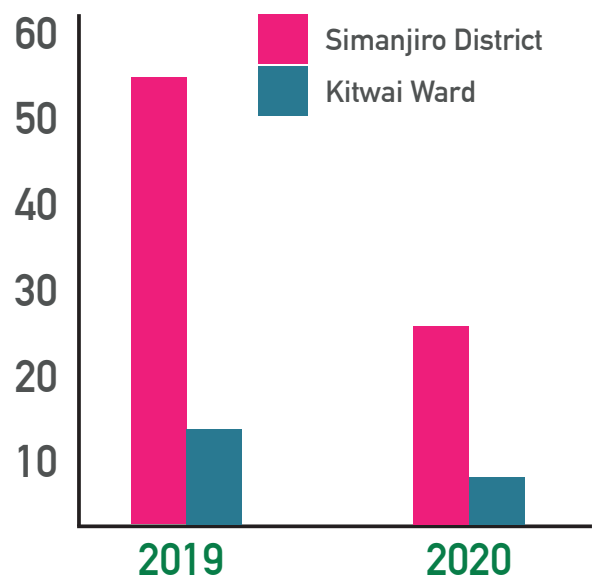
This project focuses on raising awareness around female genital mutilation. While female genital mutilation is present across Tanzania, its prevalence varies between rural and urban areas. This project set out to introduce an alternative rite of passage among nomadic communities to reduce the prevalence of female genital mutilation among young girls in the Simanjiro District. The project identified adolescent girls at risk of FGM alongside Traditional Birth Attendants, who are often enlisted to carry out the practice, and religious and community leaders; engaging members of the community at all levels is vital for creating sustainable changes in practice and attitudes. The project utilises the practice of alternative rite of passage to create and establish alternative coming of age practices that are accepted within and by the community. Discussion around alternative rite of passage occur at the community level to mark the important transition from childhood to womanhood. In the second stage of project implementation, EMAC has focused on male participation to create lasting behavioural change within the community. They particularly focus on including young Maasai men known as Morans in the project. Aged between 18 and 36 and considered custodians of Maasai tradition, their involvement in the project is vital to help destigmatise marrying women who have not undergone female genital mutilation.

After a successful start to the project implementation where 20 community and religious leaders were educated on the impact of FGM on women and girls and discussed the facilitation of new coming of age ceremonies known as Alternative Rite of Passage, EMAC has made incredible achievements in the second stage of project implementation.

Impact so far...

- Community-led Alternative Rites of Passage have begun to be accepted with the community and four ceremonies have taken place with multiple young girls in attendance.
- Anti-FGM promotion materials such as T-shirts and brochures have been produced and distributed among peer educations, young Maasai men and community members.
- 15 Traditional Birth Attendants have been trained on the effects of FGM and given training in entrepreneurship skills to enable alternative forms of income.
- Training sessions for Police Officers on all forms of Gender Based Violence (GBV) including FGM took place involving 10 GBV police desks. These Police Officers are working closely with community leaders to enable easy information sharing.

Cases of Female Genital Mutilation



Donate to support ACWW Projects



Associated Country Women of the World
A04 Parkhall, 40 Martell Road
London, SE21 8EN
info@acww.org.uk | +44 207 799 3875

The Countrywoman 2021-1



RURAL WOMEN IN ACTION



Donate to support
ACWW Projects

Education
and Capacity
Building

Final Report

Project 1063 - Empowering Women with Business Training and Skill Building Tanzania People Development Organization (TADEPO), Tanzania

Tanzania People Development Organization (TADEPO) is a community development organisation based in the Mara region of Tanzania that aims to alleviate the high levels of poverty within the Bunda district.

Poverty levels within the community have been worsened by high rates of HIV and AIDS related deaths which led to many orphaned children within the community. Around the same time, the Bunda district was hit with frequent food shortages due to drought. Over the past decade and a half, TADEPO has worked to empower a community hugely impacted by HIV through awareness raising and dispelling common myths and misconceptions around HIV, education on treatment and palliative care, and psychosocial support and counselling.

This project has focused on improving the livelihood of rural women through craft and entrepreneurial skill development. 90 women participated in this project and gained skills in producing handicrafts. The women also formed saving groups including three Village Community Banks (VICOBA) which has enabled the participants to open bank accounts for each group. Between 2018, when TADEPO applied for funding for this project, and 2020 the number of women accessing financial services increased from 106 to 308. TADEPO was able to establish links between the VICOBA and local lending institutions to offer the members interest free loans to support the formation of women owned small businesses.

Through their self-evaluation assessment, TADEPO found that among the 46 beneficiaries interviewed, all had experienced a decrease in their level of household poverty through the project and were now self employed running small businesses. TADEPO found that the beneficiaries had experienced a 66% increase in income over the 12 months of the project cycle, average income had increased from 20,000 Tanzanian Shillings in 2018 to 30,000 TSH in 2020.



Project participants showing their business record books



A project participant in front of her retail stall



Project participants working on record keeping for their savings groups

Sustainable Projects

How can we ensure that our projects make lasting impact?

Sustainability. It's a 21st Century buzzword, all over development literature, fundraising initiatives, and UN publicity, not to mention the actual Sustainable Development Goals and their assessment processes.

It makes sense though - for many years, unfettered capitalism has ravaged the earth's natural resources, and our collective future became the bargaining chip for convenience. Enter: Sustainability, a call to work together to ensure that we can still live and thrive in harmony with our environments.

But how does sustainability relate to projects and project funding?

In late 2016, there was a strike, coordinated with peaceful protests by lawyers and teachers in Cameroon, who felt that they, as English speakers, were being marginalised by the majority Francophone government. The government reacted with violence, and when the Anglophone protesters refused to meet with the government unless all arrested protesters were released, they were declared a security threat. Internet blockades went up in Anglophone cities, and rates of arrest and violence increased. Since 2016, conflict has raged across Cameroon, creating 530,000 internally displaced people and 35,000 international refugees. In January 2019, UNICEF said that there were 1.3 million people in need of humanitarian aid.

Since 2002, ACWW has sent a total of £197,005 to Cameroon in small-scale grants for women-led initiatives. These projects ranged from maternal and reproductive health, to water, to agriculture, to income generation, and women all over Cameroon were empowered to take control of their lives and provide for their families. Member Societies in the region were making real progress in their

communities. It all changed with the war. Over 80% of schools have been closed, with teachers and staff being subject to intimidation and violence. The women's groups who have not been disbanded have had to refocus their efforts on caring for internally displaced people and victims of violence, abandoning their own businesses and education- including many of the projects and initiatives funded by ACWW over the years.

This is always a risk with development projects: The sustainability of the project is ultimately determined by those in power. This is why development projects should always go hand in hand with advocacy. Deborah Eade says in the Oxfam publication *Development and Advocacy*:

The realisation that development and humanitarian relief projects will never, in and of themselves, bring about lasting changes in the structures which create and perpetuate poverty and injustice is nothing new. Back in the 1960s and 1970s, debates raged about whether the satisfaction of 'basic needs' comes first, or whether 'social change' is the only way to address the underlying structures that prevent these needs from being met

Indeed, it's been suggested that ACWW was aware of this even as far back as the 1940s, which is why advocacy has been the foundation of our work since the organisation began.

Sometimes within ACWW, advocacy is vaguely referred to as "UN Work." It is important to note that though our primary mechanism for influencing policy is the United Nations and its various agencies, we do not work for or on behalf of the UN. You can think of it this way - the United Nations is a table, and we are privileged to have a seat at the table. It's not the only table though, and

when called upon to help influence policy in line with our aims, ACWW will respond nationally as well, calling for change with the strength of 9 million voices.

If we are to truly empower those who receive project funding from ACWW, we must also work to ensure that their rights and freedoms are secured at a national and international level. In Cameroon, Women's groups are calling for the inclusion of women in peace talks that have so far excluded them entirely, and we at ACWW had the opportunity to amplify that call at the High Level Political Forum.

Advocacy is not as tangible - it is a long, slow process and success is measured in turns of phrase, statements of support, debates, and changes in legislation. But, without advocacy, the sustainability of our projects will never be certain.



a water project in india shows a newly working pump

If you want to learn more about advocacy, how ACWW amplifies the voices of rural women, or international development, we will be happy to chat with you or your society, as well as provide further reading on these subjects.

Area Conferences

Past, Rescheduled, Coming up

South Pacific

held digitally 8
March 2021

Southern Africa

held in-person
7-9 June 2021

Canada

held digitally
6-7 July 2021

USA

held digitally
2 August 2021

Caribbean, Central & South Asia

to be held digitally
November 2021

Europe

to be held in person
(Glasgow)
9-23 September 2022

East, West and Central Africa

to be held in
person April
2022 (Nairobi)

South East Asia and the Far East

awaiting
information

Central & South Asia

awaiting
information

Secure ACWW for Future Generations

We are so grateful to those of you who have given to the appeal so far. Originally, the appeal was set to end on the 29th of April, however as donations have continued to roll in, it has been extended. So far, members and supporters have donated nearly £20,000.

£20,000

toward securing
ACWW for future
generations

This amount represents an incredible effort and increased support. Many of you have also given donations along with your membership payments, which is not represented in this £20,000. However, we still need your support. You can donate to the appeal on an ongoing basis, and we'll continue to expand the list of supporters on the website.

It's been a tough year for everyone, but the ACWW model, as established by Dorothy Drage all those years ago with the Million Members Fund, is that little donations spread across a vast membership can sustain this organisation. Most of us cannot afford to give extraordinary donations, but when we work together every donation helps to accomplish the extraordinary work of amplifying the voices of rural women and empowering them to create sustainable lasting change in their communities. We've put together some ideas for fundraising, but each member knows what her community will respond to best. Always remember, Central Office stands ready to support you with fundraising pages and resources. If you have innovative or new fundraising ideas, please let us know and we'll do our best to support you.

EDUCATIONAL EVENT - LIKE A CULTURAL DAY, WHERE PEOPLE CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT THEIR ACWW SISTERS

PUT ON A COOKING CLASS

PHOTO COMPETITION

SPONSORED WALK

BAKE SALE

RECYCLING COMPETITION

CAR WASH

CAR BOOT / YARD SALE

SKILLS AUCTION

BIRTHDAY FUNDRAISER

COMMUNITY FILM NIGHT

FASHION SHOW - SHOWCASE SUSTAINABLE FASHION!

HOST AN EVENT AND GET A LOCAL BUSINESS TO MATCH DONATIONS

AUCTION OR RAFFLE
(MIND LOCAL LEGISLATION!)

HOST A GAMING STREAM
(OR ENLIST YOUR GRANDKIDS!)

PUT ON A WORKSHOP

SPONSORED CYCLE OR RUN

[MEDIA @ACWW.ORG.UK](mailto:media@acww.org.uk)

Journey to the Past



Homemakers have important parts to play in a democracy for democracy is not only a form of government; it is a way of life. Democracy's principles of respect for human dignity, its cultivation of individuality, and its organization for cooperative living, are all to be found in the kind of homes that are the goals of all good homemakers.

ASSOCIATED COUNTRY WOMEN OF THE WORLD

HISTORIC MEETING

Regional Conference - American and Canadian Women
Ottawa - September 3-10 - 1941



Farm Women's Part In Feeding the World

by
Press Associated Women's American Farm Bureau Federation.
Coordination



Harriet Elliott, Dep.

nal War Services, Canada.
mocracy

mith
n Rural Life

as
Culture

wing
aeil Women
eference

e Administration, U. S. A.

Democracy is ~~not~~ New





The
**ASSOCIATED COUNTRY
WOMEN OF THE WORLD**

in the
HALL OF ACHIEVEMENT
ENTRANCE, GRAND HALL, GALLERY

STAND No. 7
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15th, 1938
For details of programme see back page

AT
**WOMAN'S FAIR
AND EXHIBITION**

AT
OLYMPIA

FROM NOVEMBER 2ND TO 26TH 1938



Isabel Curry reading the Triennial report, Conference of the ACWW



But now we are not "one woman," now that we are organized. Even when we find ourselves in the minority let us remember that resolute minorities have changed the world. It was a minority whose advice was heeded when the Israelites decided to go forward to occupy the Promised Land. Belgium was a minority of one when King Albert said to the Kaiser in 1914: "Belgium is a country, not a road." When France surrendered, Britain was in a lonely minority that is gaining recruits daily. Joan of Arc, Savonarola, Lincoln, were once on the minority side. The British parliamentary government, that is the mother of all democratic parliaments, was created under the leadership of a minority.

Shall not we together here, with memberships in so many states, provincial, national and international organizations of women carry back to those with which we are affiliated a challenge that we ask our governments to urge all democratic governments to see that places are made at the peace table for women and for representatives of the young men who fight the wars and of young women who wait for their hoped-for return — waiting, too often, forever!

Too long, when plans for peace are made, women and young people on whom so much of the tragedy falls have had no voice. Women know the costs of one human life and that the bullet that pierces a young man's heart goes to the heart of all who love him. Now that women and young people are organized, they can speak with voices that can be heard around the world. They should participate at the peace conference in behalf of the conservation of the greatest of natural resources, the most important assets of every nation — namely, the people.

Journey to the Past

I've had the privilege of sifting through ACWW's archives at various points in my five years here. It is a treasure trove chronicling the role of Rural Women in the wider women's empowerment movement. I wanted to share some items I have found to be of particular interest, which is what you see on the previous page.

At the top, you see someone we only know as Mrs Rogers at the UN Economic and Social Council in 1953, talking to delegates from the Netherlands and India.

The large scan covering most of the first page is the theme and agenda for the 1941 conference in Ottawa - notice the theme "Farm Women's Part in Feeding the World." ACWW was well ahead of the FAO there!

At the bottom left, you'll see ACWW founder Madge Watt making an address to the Ottawa Meeting.

The text on the first page is from an address given to the 1936 Conference, as is the large block of text on the second page.

The photographs on the second page are all from the Amsterdam Conference in 1947.

The image in the middle top of the page is from the 1939 Conference in London.

The Medal in the middle of the page was awarded to ACWW World President at the time, Dame Raigh Roe, by the FAO.

The image below is from the June 1939 Issue of the Countrywoman Magazine, when the Conference was held in London.

