

IFUW Board and Committee Reports



April 2008

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Message from the President

Greetings and best wishes to you all. To be the leading graduate women's organization empowering women and girls, we need women graduates to be actively involved locally, nationally and internationally. It is very important to share our work with current, new and potential members

Since change is always with us, we need to find the most effective ways to use our resources and to encourage our members to share their knowledge and skills. The IFUW Board, Committees and UN Representatives are hard at work reviewing actions and planning for this and future triennia.

The new Working Group on the Girl Child is underway. In June, the first issue of a quarterly newsletter will highlight the work of the UN Representatives. In September, we will open a poster competition calling for art work for a series of postcards to be used for fundraising (see below). Preparations for a survey on women in higher education have begun.

We will report to you at regular intervals so you can follow our progress and make suggestions. This month, the Status of Women, Membership and Finance Committees report on outcomes of their annual meetings in February. Take time to reflect on these reports. If you have any questions or comments, do share these.

Louise Croot
IFUW President



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Eyes on the Future - Poster Contest Call for Judges and Technical Experts Deadline - 31 May 2008

Three member artists are needed for a panel to judge entries in an IFUW poster contest that will open in September 2008. Also needed are one or more graphics experts to help prepare competition guidelines. Interested members should send full contact details and a CV to ifuw@ifuw.org by 31 May 2008

Status of Women Committee Report

The focus of the Status of Women (SWC) meeting in February was to further develop the 'Building Sustainable Futures', the Programme for Action (PfA) introduced in Manchester, to bring it into harmony with the new priorities for IFUW's advocacy and programme.

Additional priorities for action are being added under each of the 'pillars' of the PfA that focus on Lifelong Learning for the Empowerment of Girls and Women through promoting:

- Access to free, quality education for all at all levels
- Access to, and advancement in higher education
- Continuing/adult education
- Human rights education
- Literacy in all its forms including economic, business and legal literacy
- Education for leadership and decision-making.

Some of these issues will be examined in time-limited email discussions to which members will be able to subscribe. The first discussion will be held starting May when 'What constitutes quality education' will be the topic. The second will be July when 'Adult/Continuing education' will be the topic, and in September/October 'The Feminization of poverty in relation to women's employment' will be discussed. We hope that national federations and associations (NFAs) will advertise these discussions and encourage their members to participate.

The committee sent a message to all national leaders asking them to report on 1) whether and how they participated in International Women's Day 2008; and 2) any advocacy actions they had carried out locally, nationally or internationally. If your NFA has not yet responded, there is still time. Please send descriptions and photos of your activities to ifuw@ifuw.org. These reports will be made available on the IFUW website so that NFAs can share experiences. At a later time we will be calling for reports about national and local programmes or projects based on the Programme for Action and the priorities. These too will be shared on the IFUW website.

Later in the year information about the Interdisciplinary (ID) Seminars for the next Conference will be made available. There will be only one call for papers. The theme is yet to be decided, but it will reflect IFUW's focus on education for lifelong learning, leadership and decision-making for women and girls in a sustainable future.

Dorothy Meyer
SWC Convener

What Constitutes Quality of Education?

Join the IFUW
email discussion
19 May – 14 June
2008

To subscribe send
a message to
ed-subs@ifuw.org

Membership Committee Report

The Membership Committee is concentrating on building membership and assistance to NFAs. We began by creating a list of services offered to members by IFUW and then developed a "profile" of three different member categories - young graduates (not necessarily members yet), members of NFAs and independent members. We looked at the services offered in light of the special interests and needs of each group and highlighted areas where improvement was needed. Suggestions, including changes in the website and general communication, have been given to the Board.

We discussed how best to assist NFAs struggling to remain viable. We looked at possible mentoring solutions, from having advisers assigned to work with NFAs requesting help to the twinning of NFAs. We want to develop mechanisms to create closer mentoring and networking links between regions and between NFAs and independent members. We are also looking for ways to share best practices in membership recruitment and retention. A survey has already been sent to members to collect strategies. In addition, we are currently assessing IFUW's material for new groups to see how we can make it more user-friendly and comprehensive.

The Committee wishes to encourage NFAs (and independent members) to develop and promote programme activities around the empowerment of women and girls. These activities and their results should be reported and well publicized on the IFUW website as evidence of the success of our organization and members.

The Committee is happy to work with the broader membership in any way possible to design ways to bring in members and then to retain them, as well as to enhance our identity as a women's organization of stature.

Hazel Bowen
Membership Convener

Has your NFA or local group tried a new approach for attracting members? We encourage all members to share ideas and strategies by sending them to ifuw@ifuw.org

Membership Committee in Geneva, February 2008
Left to right:
Vivian Ike (Young Members Coordinator), Regina Oltersdorf-Paul (Germany) seated, Zehra Canfesci Özpagda (Turkey), Arielle Wagenknecht (Switzerland), Hazel Bowen (Convener, South Africa), Shirley Randell (IFUW Vice-President), Susan Njoku (Nigeria) © IFUW



Finance Committee Report

The downsizing of IFUW to meet the income constraints, in terms of office space and staff, is complete. However, at a time when we have reduced our working capacity it is vital that we grow the organisation. Without growth in our membership, we cannot hope to survive. To this end we have to look at ways of meeting the requirements of a new century with a new approach.

The need for Bina Roy donations is more vital now than ever, if NFAs in poorer countries are to survive and implement projects. We urge NFAs, local groups and individual members to contribute to the Bina Roy programme

If we are to measure the effectiveness of our programmes and determine the areas of greatest impact, we need to be able to measure our programmes financially, so that the cost/benefit can be determined. The 2004 Task Force Report recommended the introduction of "a functional and programmatic budget system". This was started by the previous Finance Committee. During this triennium we aim to implement this type of accounting fully, and to make the resultant reports part of the audited annual financial statements.

Functional accounting could also be called programmatic or departmental accounting. The idea is to see how much each "programme" within IFUW costs. This will be done in part by measuring the time spent on each activity in the office and equating it to a cost. The aim is not to determine how expensive an activity is, but to determine the cost/benefit ratio of each programme and thereby measure its effectiveness and IFUW's need for it.

One of the most important programmes in IFUW has been the Bina Roy Partners in Development programme (BRPID), which has enabled wealthier NFAs (or branches within NFAs) to assist poorer NFAs financially. Wealthier NFAs have donated money to be used to fund projects for NFAs in poorer countries. NFAs given a BRPID grant have had this amount credited against their dues and have been expected to spend the grant amount on a project in their own country. Bina Roy has thus been a form of dues assistance.

Since 2004, the requests for BRPID assistance have increased more than 50%, while the donations have decreased by more than 25%. In 2007 the requests for BRPID assistance amounted to three times the donations received. IFUW has covered the difference by taking money out of the reserves. However, this practice cannot continue if we are to remain financially viable. The direct link with dues must be phased out.

In 2009, when the new dues structure comes into effect, there will no longer be a link between the Bina Roy programme and dues. Bina Roy grants will still be given for projects, but will not be offset against the amount owing for dues. Any donations received will be given to NFAs for projects.

Catherine Bell, IFUW Treasurer

Hillevi Perraudin, Convener