

IFUW Board and Committee Update



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Message from the IFUW President: Start with a Conversation...

At a meeting in Geneva a few years ago, I shared ideas with Sun Young Kim, of Korea. That conversation led to my four-day visit this past June to learn more about Korea and the Korean Association of University Women (KAUW). This was the first of a series of visits resulting from that small beginning.



Korean First Lady Welcomes IFUW President ©KAUW

During my stay in Korea, I was busy from morning till night. I found it fascinating to learn about KAUW's activities. They have strong links with government, including their First Lady and the Minister of Gender Equality. I was privileged to be able to meet both these women. It was a mark of respect to IFUW that I appreciated on behalf of us all.

KAUW members run three projects with government funding, managing resource development centres for women with children and older women. Really innovative and sustainable small business ideas are being created. I was able to attend one of the job fairs, hear about KAUW's participation in Girls' Day (see page 2), as well as tour the beautiful campus of Ewha University where 25,000 women students study. Meeting the President of the University, discussing world trends and seeing their historical archives in a traditional Korean house was a special time. Students took us through the archives and were very proud of their history.

My journey took me next to Germany, where I visited family and met with Kiel members of the Deutsche Akademikerinnenbund E.V. (DAB). We talked about IFUW priorities and the opportunities the Internet offers for members to interact virtually. They also shared information about an upcoming friendship visit they were hosting for European members.

Then I was off to Paris for two days of meetings with our team of representatives and staff members of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). Higher Education, especially access for women and girls and promotion of women in institutions of higher education, was emphasized. I was also

First Girls' Day in Seoul

Together with Project Five-O partners and the Girl Scouts, KAUW organized Girls' Day in Seoul for the first time in April. Twenty associations organized booths. The KAUW stand "Mentoring for Girls" was very popular. KAUW members answered questions and gave suggestions on how to prepare and select study areas at the university. Plans are underway to make this an annual event.

*Sun Young Kim
KAUW President*

briefed on Education for All action and learned that lifelong learning is increasingly a key policy platform for countries and their UNESCO National Commissions. Members of the Association Française des Femmes Diplômées des Universités (AFFDU) hosted a reception, which gave an opportunity for dialogue and discussion.

My next stop was Madrid for the Women's Worlds '08 Congress. A full report will follow in a few weeks. I was very proud of our members who were able to participate and I hope our booth and IFUW-run sessions will bring us new members. My appreciation and thanks to our two Bilbao members who managed the booth.

From Madrid I traveled to Telford, England for the 101st Annual Meeting of the British Federation of Women Graduates. BFWG members had put a lot of effort before the meeting into a renewal and change process, reviewing finances and modernizing. At the meeting the future was looked at realistically, with forward thinking. The members acknowledged the valuable work of volunteers. Meeting members in the sessions and informally was special for me.

My last stop was in the USA, where I participated in a teleconference with the executive board of the Women Graduates USA, the new group that has applied to join IFUW. (The written vote of the IFUW Council on their admission as a full affiliate is underway). It was a pleasure to share in their planning and website developments. The conversation with members in many different parts of the USA was aided by modern technology, part of the future we all share.

The value of common bonds, the value of reputation created by members before us, and the value of friendship and common purpose locally, nationally and internationally needs to be treasured by us all. It cannot be bought. It is priceless. I say that purposely as a reflection on my recent IFUW travel experiences. Do talk with each other. Make contacts. Share the information about what you are doing. Starting a conversation is the first step to a whole new horizon.

*Louise Croot
IFUW President*



Korean Association "Mentoring For Girls' Booth at Girls' Day 2008 ©KAUW

Status of Women Committee: Quality Education Discussion Results

“Quality education is founded on the rights of the whole child and of all children, enabling them to survive and be protected and providing for their development and participation. The challenge is to create the situation in which each of these can be achieved for all children regardless of where they live.”

Photo © Thomas Perkins |
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IFUW members recently took part in an on-line discussion on Quality Education led by Alice Kagoda (Uganda) of the Status of Women Committee. The objectives of the four-week exchange were to look at definitions, indicators, policies, state obligations, barriers and ways to promote quality of education around the world. Members from Australia, Cameroon, Canada, El Salvador, Finland, France, Great Britain, India, Japan, Kenya, Malawi, New Zealand, Pakistan, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Turkey, the Netherlands, Uganda and the USA took part.

Whether from a developing or developed country, a war or famine ravaged country, all respondents aspired to see an education system in place that would give each child a better quality of life; access to opportunities leading to a productive life; knowledge and respect for history, culture and his or her environment; as well as a healthy lifestyle, quality in relationships and knowledge of financial management for life after school. Quality education was also seen as a key to peace.

The realities of education and the barriers to achieving these ideals varied, especially in developing countries. Contributors expressed concern over the lack of political will and recognition of the critical role of education in national development. Among the factors cited for the decline in quality education were: a decline in the perceived value of teaching as a profession; inadequately trained and financially rewarded teachers, inadequate provision of suitable learning environments; costs of infrastructure – buildings and facilities, teaching and learning resources, and school uniforms; poor literacy and numeracy; inadequate curricula for a globalized world; and the lack of clear pathways to enable lifelong learning.



Respondents called for more dialogue on quality education and engaging institutions, government, employers and the community to assess the needs of society and the part that quality education contributes to meeting those needs. Among the strategies cited were increasing advocacy for more government schools, better teacher training and access for teachers to the internet through multimedia centres, more effective management of schools and proper information flow systems between government, schools and community, and fundraising for scholarships for children from poor backgrounds and orphans of HIV/AIDS.



"When I was looking for a female network of entrepreneurs, I surfed on the web and saw VVAO – IFUW's affiliate in the the Netherlands. They encouraged me to take the initiative to start a local group with female entrepreneurs. Within VVAO there was not enough interest, so I wrote a press release to the paper of the chamber of commerce. I got responses from 20 women. This group now has 14 new VVAO members, all quite active and young."

*Response from
Hilde Spille
VVAO Member*

Photo © Shirley Hu |
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The provision of quality education was seen as the responsibility of the state, professionals, parents, students and the community working together. IFUW national federations and associations (NFAs) can play a role by raising awareness about the need for free lunches, scholarships, better salaries and in-service training for teachers, as well as the removal of taxes on books, uniforms, television and food. As a Rwanda contributor put it, "NFAs should work with education ministries, administrators, teachers and teachers unions to transform education."

For the full report, see <http://www.ifuw.org/docs/qualityved-disc-summary.pdf>.

*Dorothy Meyer
Convener, Status of Women Committee*

Membership Committee: Survey Results

The Membership Committee continues to look at ways in which to assist national federations and associations (NFAs) with membership growth. Earlier this year the committee circulated a **Best Practices Survey** to ask national and branch leaders about their strategies. This proved to be a very useful talking point. We thank all the individuals and NFAs who contributed to the discussion.

Some new ideas were shared by a number of the participants, others were the tried and tested methods used over the years. What has added a new element is the new technology now at our disposal and in which young members are especially well versed. One point that needs to be kept in mind is that membership growth requires constant attention with follow-through. Among the suggestions that seemed to us to be of greatest interest were:

Recruitment

- Remember members are the best source of new members
- Encourage student membership
- Recruit young members at a reduced fee for one year
- Promote achievements
- Build up strong networks with prominent and relevant women
- Make personal telephone calls/write personalized letters
- Ensure that members properly understand the vision and aims of the organization so that these can be adequately disseminated

Retention

- Allow members and branches to work towards their goals and achievements in their own way
- Assign an official to make new members welcome
- Give new members responsibilities
- Make personal contact – it is most effective
- Offer value for money
- Ensure all publicity documents are current and professional looking and then "saturate" all relevant sites



Participants in the survey stressed the importance of having a good website, but some said their association did not have resources to develop one.

IFUW designs and hosts websites for national affiliates who are unable to develop one themselves.

If your association is interested in having IFUW create a website, please contact ifuw@ifuw.org.

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- Have fewer but really worthwhile projects/programmes in which many members can be involved
- Offer a variety of activities for differing age groups and interests - but with focus
- Share transport and offer other ways to make members feel welcome
- Develop twinning opportunities with other NFAs
- Acknowledge your members and their achievements

New Ways of Interacting with Members

- Explore new technologies
- Use the IFUW website and develop an NFA website
- Organize a broad range of activities where family and friends can be included
- Rotate host branch or club to encourage participation
- Maintain contact and build connections to ensure student members remain as full members after graduation

Publicity Tools

- Keep website up-to-date with all relevant information and ensure it is interactive
- Develop flyers, pamphlets, posters and distribute them widely
- Promote networking
- Use all relevant means to disseminate information to members

Please do take the time to look at the very comprehensive report on the website:

<http://www.ifuw.org/docs/2008-memcom-bestprac-survey.pdf>.

Naturally, this survey forms part of an on-going dialogue. The Membership Committee would be very happy to hear your comments and further ideas. Please send them to memcom@ifuw.org.

Hazel Bowen
Convener, Membership Committee

Working Group on the Girl Child Underway

Justine Rukeba Mbabazi (Rwanda) and Monica Cullum (Canada) have been appointed as co-conveners of IFUW's new Working Group on the Girl Child. Also serving in the working group are Eseta Faafeu-Hope (Samoa), Susana Dehler (Switzerland), Rosa Maria Martin Barba (Mexico) and Yukako Yanagimoto (Japan). Hillevi Perraudi, IFUW UN Representative in Geneva, Catherine Moore, IFUW UN Representative in New York, Marianne Bernheim, IFUW Representative in Paris, Clara Osinulu, Member of the Status of Women Committee and two IFUW Vice-Presidents, Sushil Bhardwaj and Shirley Randell, will work with the group as liaisons.

The working group is preparing an inventory of NFA practices that empower girls and lead them to higher education and looking at strategies to encourage and assist NFAs in promoting the ratification and implementation of UN conventions and optional protocols dealing with the Girl Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Strategies for Reaching Younger Members

IFUW's Young Members Network links young members throughout the world. They have their own email listserv and organize special activities at the IFUW Conference. Vivian Ike (Nigeria) is the Young Members' International Coordinator. To learn more about the network contact ifuw@ifuw.org.

IFUW affiliates in Switzerland and Fiji are connecting with younger members in exciting new ways.

The **Association Genevoise des Femmes Diplômées des Universités (AGFDU)** is strengthening ties with graduate students at the University of Geneva. AGFDU has organized a Young Members' network that meets on the campus. Special lunches allow doctoral students to present their research in preparation for defending their theses. A special "Prix d'Excellence" provides financial support to one doctoral student each year. Members of AGFDU serve as mentors and offer assistance in finding accommodation. AGFDU has

also intervened with the university on behalf of doctoral students in cases of harassment and a discriminatory age limit on appointments to teaching posts. AGFDU's posters on campus are effective in attracting young members. While many complete their studies and move on, others are taking their place and some are choosing to remain part of AGFDU.

The **Fiji Association of Women Graduates (FAWG)** has an active group of younger members, who are encouraged to propose and implement new ideas. The first young member proposal this year led to an International Women's Day celebration "Woman – in celebration of you: a night of art, dance, poetry and song", to raise money for FAWG's scholarship programme. The young members followed this with a "quiz night", again to raise funds for FAWG scholarships. Most recently, the young members initiated a free film night to motivate members of the community by showing inspiring films. The FAWG Council is sponsoring one young leader to attend the regional meeting of the Pacific Graduate Women's Network (PGWNet) later this month. FAWG is also encouraging young members to use their skills to give the association's communications material a more modern look. Young members have proposed a new logo, created a new website (www.fawg.org.fj) and designed posters to advertise FAWG events. FAWG leaders are proud of the "FAWGsters" achievements. As FAWG President Winifereti Nainoca said in a message from the FAWG Council thanking the young members for their work and commitment, "Your enthusiasm is contagious and inspiring".



Top: AGFDU Young Members ©AGFDU 2008

Middle: FAWG young members ©Fiji Association of Women Graduates 2008

Bottom graphic: New FAWG logo