



## **TRIENNIAL REPORT OF THE IFUW BOARD OF OFFICERS**

The 2004-2007 triennium has been a period of intense activity. IFUW has faced critical issues requiring changes in leadership roles and ways of work, as well as far-reaching financial decisions. All of these involved frequent interaction both within the Board and with the national federations and associations (NFAs), and have meant a great deal of work for our office staff.

### **Response to a financial crisis and restructuring**

The immediate challenge facing the IFUW Board after the Perth Conference in 2004 was to deal with a financial crisis caused by the American Association of University Women (AAUW) announcement at the Conference that they would not pay their per capita dues beginning in 2005. Subsequent IFUW Board discussions with the AAUW Board did not resolve the situation. In the spring of 2006, the AAUW Board proposed that they be allowed to pay dues based on an undefined sum equal to whatever amount they were able to raise through voluntary contributions. This proposition by AAUW was rejected by most NFAs in a special consultation.

In the meantime, IFUW had to cope with an abrupt 40% reduction in its budget. The 87<sup>th</sup> IFUW Council in Perth called for a Task Force to be set up to study the situation and make recommendations on the future of IFUW. The Board selected members for the Task Force from among those nominated by NFAs. An outside expert was asked to do a survey of the structure and workings of the office in Geneva, which was completed in October. The Task Force then met for discussions in Geneva in December. This meeting was possible due to a most generous donation from an individual member of AAUW. The outcome of the Task Force discussions was a comprehensive report with recommendations. These were forwarded to all NFAs for their comments, after which a written vote of Council was taken to approve implementation of the recommendations.

The Board has implemented as many as possible of these recommendations over the last two years. Plans for the reorganisation of the office and a search for cheaper premises occupied much of 2005. The move to new premises with a reduced staff was completed by January 2006. We are very grateful to the staff for all their work in this chaotic and uncertain period. The reorganisation has been successful and the new office is very suitable for our needs.

The Board has worked closely with the staff to ensure a smooth transition. The Board member assigned as staff liaison worked with the Secretary-General, Murielle Joye, to help set up key result areas as a performance assessment tool. Following the retirement of Murielle Joye in June 2006, the Board staff liaison continued to encourage staff and provide changeover support to the new Secretary General, Leigh Bradford Ratteree, including implementation of new performance appraisal procedures and review. The President and Treasurer also visited the office in Geneva on several occasions other than Board meetings.

One of the consequences of a reduced staff has been the need to shift tasks previously done by staff members to Board Members and other volunteers. For instance, the Board Member from the United States took over liaison with the Manchester Local Arrangements Committee (LAC), helping with the logistical and scheduling issues for the 29<sup>th</sup> IFUW Conference. Two ad hoc groups were appointed during the triennium, an Editorial Group and one that is just starting to function called the Marketing, Public Relations and Fundraising Group. Both branch and international members were selected to serve on these because of their particular expertise to assist in roles previously done by the staff, and to develop new ideas as related to promotion and income generation for IFUW.

As part of streamlining efforts, the terms of reference for the Board were rewritten, job descriptions for Board members and Conveners of Standing Committees were approved and key documents for the new online election process were reviewed.

A thorough review of the IFUW Constitution and Bylaws was undertaken with the assistance of five appointed constitutional advisors to clarify ambiguities and to bring the statutes into compliance with Swiss law and legal practice. The proposed changes were circulated to NFAs, asking for comment before the formal submission of the amendments. NFAs were also given an opportunity to submit amendments to the final wording of the proposals in advance of the Conference.

The resolutions process was similarly streamlined, with NFAs being asked to submit friendly amendments electronically in advance of the Conference. Instituting amendments online is meant to encourage wider consideration of the resolutions and to make the process more timely and efficient.

### **Financial measures**

The Board, in cooperation with the Secretary General and the Finance Officer, has worked to implement measures to improve IFUW's financial outlook for the near future. Apart from the already mentioned large savings from staff reduction and the lower monthly rent for the office, we have continued to monitor expenditure carefully. Staff time analysis has given us greater insight into how resources are being utilized. In 2006, we introduced a functional budget, which was further refined in 2007. Based on what we have learned from these, we have been able to present a more realistic functional budget for 2008-2010, which you will find in the conference documentation.

The Board has also been able to implement the Task Force recommendation to review and propose a simplified dues structure. After considerable discussion and consultation with both the Finance Committee and the Membership Committee, the Board is proposing a new method of calculating per capita dues based on a formula developed by a member of the Taskforce. The proposal being proposed to the Conference includes adjustments reflecting feedback from an initial consultation of NFAs in 2006.

### **Programme**

The Programme for Action, *Women: Agents for Change*, continued to be a key focus of activities during the triennium. Many NFAs adapted and modified sections of programme theme within their national and local work. Interactive forums on the IFUW website were used for the first time to discuss topics related to the Programme for Action. These forums offer an important programme tool with tremendous potential for facilitating linkages between members, direct comment on UN issues, and coordination and participation in resolutions and policy matters online. Participation by NFAs and individual members in this new venture will grow as members become familiar with this new technology.

The Board took steps during the triennium to integrate more closely the three main aspects of IFUW's programme – policy, programme for action and international advocacy. First, the Chair of the Resolutions Committee was asked to serve as an ad hoc member of the Status of Women Committee, strengthening the link between policy and programme. The Board also assigned a member of the Status of Women Committee to link with our permanent UN representatives, increasing dialogue between the Committee and the teams in the four UN centres. Their reporting to the Committee enabled the two groups to re-enforce each other in their respective roles. As a result, IFUW has been able to network more quickly on international issues and translate its policy into action.

The Board also considered ways of encouraging NFAs to become more involved with the Programme for Action. As one strategy, steps have been taken to launch the next triennium Programme for Action early in the Manchester Conference so members can have more dialogue on possible partnerships and twinning ideas for action. Accessible background material for the 2007-2010 programme will be available on the IFUW website as soon as the new theme is launched in Manchester.

### **International Advocacy:**

IFUW continues to have official consultative status at UN meetings and conferences where governments draft and agree international conventions and agreements. This provides opportunities for us to contribute to the debate through oral and written statements, and through contact with individual government delegates, usually through their Missions to the UN. Members of the Board, our dedicated representatives in the various centres and members interested in particular issues have participated in many official UN meetings, NGO Conferences and regional meetings over the last three years. Among these were: the regular sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Commission on Social Development, the Committee on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Human Rights Council and other regular meetings in New York, Geneva and Vienna. Since one of our representatives to UNESCO in Paris, Francoise Sauvage, was elected president of the UNESCO NGO Conference, IFUW's profile in Paris has been high. The IFUW President attended several UNESCO and UN meetings including CSW, and three Vice-Presidents and the Treasurer were also present at CSW meetings. As we continue to take part in world conferences, we see a need to continue providing opportunities for leadership training and coalition building between women's NGOs for improved effectiveness.

Participation in other forums addressing issues such as the Millennium Goals, has also taken place. IFUW was represented at an invitation-only "summit" sponsored by Brigham Young University's Women's Research Institute (Utah, USA) where our Board member from the USA discussed women as "agents for change" with 15 researchers, sharing practical knowledge about advocacy work at the UN, and providing them with links to IFUW members conducting similar research. The Board member from Canada led a group of 30 members of CFUW/IFUW to the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Urban Forum in Vancouver Canada in June of 2006, on the theme *Sustainable Cities*. There members participated in the round tables, networking and plenary sessions and took part in the public noon hour sessions organized by UNESCO leaders from Paris. CFUW/IFUW members assisted at the UNESCO booth in delivering information about UNESCO to forum participants

### **Communications**

One of the major changes during the triennium has been a greater reliance on electronic communications. Nearly all work of the International Federation, from the work of the Task Force, to communication with NFAs, advocacy and other programme work, has been simplified and is now carried out exclusively through electronic means. As mentioned earlier, the new forums give members a chance for dialogue on subjects of importance to IFUW. Email networks linking members have also been expanded.

### **Board visits**

Personal contacts are as important as ever. Board members have travelled widely, mostly at their own expense, visiting many members in their home countries. There was Board representation at UWE meetings in Cork, Ireland in 2005 and at the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of UWE in The Hague, The

Netherlands in 2006. The IFUW President attended the AAUW biennial meeting in Washington, DC, in June 2005 and followed up with a further visit in November for discussions with AAUW. She also attended the Canadian AGM in Oakville in August, the meeting of the Luxembourg Association in October, and the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations of Project Five-O in Copenhagen in September. In April 2006 she went to Sydney, Australia for their triennial meeting, also visiting New Zealand and Delhi, India, and in October again to New Zealand, Wellington, for their triennial meeting where the IFUW Vice-President who is from New Zealand also presented a paper, and to Santiago, Chile and to Rosario and Buenos Aires in Argentina, followed by a rest in New Mexico with AAUW friends where she met local members. There was also the highly successful friendship visit to Turkey in May, which was also enjoyed by the Treasurer. In 2007 the President went to Northern Cyprus, visiting the very modern Universities there. A trip to Israel is planned for May 2007. She also attended many UN meetings where she met our IFUW UN representatives. Other Board members also attended UN meetings, AAUW State Conventions, the Annual meetings of the British and German Federations, the friendship visit in Egypt, and visited NFAs in Australia, Singapore, Japan, Hong Kong, Germany and Norway.

## **Membership**

The International Federation continued to attract women graduates from different parts of the world. During the triennium the Board had the pleasure of admitting new groups to membership from Georgia, Kazakhstan and Kenya. We welcome them. A new group in Rwanda has applied for admission in Manchester. Contacts are also underway with groups in countries such as Brunei Darussalam, Liberia and the United Arab Emirates. Two groups made the transition from associate status to associations with full voting rights, the Fiji Association of Women Graduates (FAWG) and the Northern Cyprus Association of University Women. The application of the latter was approved under a special clause that allows IFUW to admit such groups if a special situation is recognized by Council.

One of the joint tasks of the Board, Membership Committee and Finance Committee was to review the impact of the Pilot Programme for International Individual Membership, first called for by the 26<sup>th</sup> IFUW Conference in Graz, and renewed subsequently by the 27<sup>th</sup> IFUW Conference in Ottawa and the 28<sup>th</sup> IFUW Conference in Perth. Based on the final assessment prepared by staff (see the Annex to the Board Report), it was agreed to propose a constitutional amendment that would give the Conference in Manchester an opportunity to decide whether or not to make this a permanent option.

## **Projects and BRPID**

The Special Committee for Project Development reviewed and updated the requirements for participation in the Bina Roy Partners in Development Programme (BRPID), as well as its own terms of reference. Each committee member was assigned a geographic region and worked to assist the corresponding NFAs with project applications and monitoring. Between 23 and 30 NFAs have applied for BRPID project funding each year. As the level of donation has not kept pace with demand, the Board has begun possibilities of eliminating the links with dues and to explore alternatives. We need to find ways to ensure that project support and advice is available to all NFAs not just those currently involved with Bina Roy projects.

## **International Fellowships**

For the first time, IFUW conducted one of its triennial fellowships competitions electronically. The Committee for the Award of International Fellowships did not meet in person, but instead undertook

the screening and consultations via email. The Board and Committee were proud to offer fellowships and grants to twenty women to complete exciting research exploring new frontiers in medicine, analyzing the impact of global trends on women and children and assessing conservation efforts. Many are working in areas directly related to IFUW priority issues. Their studies will have far-reaching benefits, not just for their own careers, but for the communities and countries from which they come.

### **Project Five-O**

IFUW continued to be part of Project Five-O, an initiative supporting vocational training projects for women and girls in developing countries and countries in transition. It is funded by donations and subscriptions from a coalition of five international women's organisations: the Business and Professional Women International (BPWI), International Council of Women (ICW), IFUW, Soroptimist International (SI) and Zonta International (ZI). IFUW chaired Project Five-O for the period 2003-2005, with Griselda Kenyon taking over from IFUW's Past President Reiko Aoki in 2004. Project Five-O has been working to develop a cooperative international advocacy role by submitting joint written statements and presenting oral statements at the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York. Efforts to expand these joint advocacy efforts to other UN centres and other UN meetings have progressed very slowly due to lack of co-operation between the member organisations. There are about twenty projects currently operating, but funding from the member organisations is shrinking and some of the members are not positively encouraging donations from their national associations. The presidents meet once a year in New York. Several Board members have also attended. The History of Project Five-O has now been published and copies will be available at Manchester

### **The Archives**

In December 2005, all of IFUW's historical archives up to 1998 were moved to Amsterdam, the Netherlands and are now housed permanently at the International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement (IIAV). We are grateful to the Netherlands members who provided the transport with a van!

### **Manchester Conference**

Last, but not least, we are pleased to have the Conference take place in Manchester, in the year of the hundredth anniversary of the British Federation of Women Graduates (BFWG). In view of our new arrangements in Geneva, much of the logistical planning and organising has been done in the host country. We are grateful for all the work done by BFWG volunteers.

***The IFUW Board of Officers 2004-2007***  
Griselda Kenyon (*Great Britain*), President  
Louise Croot (*New Zealand*), Vice-President  
Birten Gökyay (*Turkey*), Vice-President  
Kathleen Laurila (*USA*), Vice-President  
Phyllis Scott (*Canada*), Vice-President  
Terry Oudraad (*The Netherlands*), Treasurer  
May 2007