



WG-USA Triennial Report

2007 - 2010

The vision of the newly established **Women Graduates-USA (WG-USA)** is that the cornerstone for a peaceful world society will be women and girls empowered by universal education and economic security able to advocate for themselves and their communities.

We were incorporated as a new entity in the United States in 2008 with two parameters guiding our planning: we determined to be a national virtual organization and operate nearly entirely on the Internet; and determined that our only focus would be on global issues, not national or local ones unless there might be an international implication. Our rationale includes the idea that in the “information age” we should use today’s tools, also believing that doing so is more appealing to busy working women. With our intent to work in consort with IFUW, and because there already exist numerous national organizations focused on US gender issues, we believe our niche in the US is being devoted to global issues.

WG-USA spent 2007 – 2008 developing a structure for the new organization that provides our membership with educational information and resource materials, discussions through the Internet, and suggested actions on issues affecting women and girls worldwide. We do not intend to establish local branches, but individual members are free to develop local educational, service and/or advocacy projects that relate to the WG-USA program, working together with other interested community groups.

We have no paid staff, but are planning to do so when our membership currently at 220, reaches around 500. Our president is therefore also our Secretary-General, and the ten other Board members have various portfolios of work. With the exception of a face-to-face Annual General Meeting (AGM) once a year, our business, discussions and meetings take place through electronic means.

We established the following committees: Program, Membership, Governance, Communications, Development (fundraising), and Finance. We are also adding short-term appointments for specific tasks as they arise, often searching for new members with the intent of identifying skills that can be immediately utilized.

Electronic communication occurs on a regular and frequent basis, because the very nature of a virtual organization centers on the use of the Internet. Obviously, the development of our website has been one of our most critical tasks. Fortunately, one of the founding members has professional skills in this area so our site is already quite comprehensive. Go to <http://wg-usa.org>. Other communication means include a bi-weekly email “news flash” that emphasizes current postings on the website; a quarterly electronic newsletter; and an “issues we are following” site that averages 8 – 10 postings a month, including IFUW and ECOSOC messages.

The mission of Women Graduates-USA is to empower women world-wide to secure a better world through education, advocacy, friendship and mutual support.

During 2009 – 2010 we established three priority themes: Ratification of CEDAW by the United States Senate; improvement of access to and utilization of education for girls and women; and raising awareness of the extent and implications of trafficking of women and girls worldwide. We seek coalitions and other partnerships for conducting education and advocacy.

The program materials online have been written for an individual WG member who wants to “do something” about any or all of these priorities. To assist members, for each of the priority issues a template was developed with some concrete ideas about something that can be done right where they live. I can do right where I live, right now. Each template includes the policy statement, the rationale, objectives, strategies for action at the local and national levels, anticipated outcomes, and helpful resources.

2007

- Ten women met in New York City to set in motion the formation of a new organization with the objective of becoming the USA affiliate in IFUW.
- Used IFUW and Canadian Federation constitutions as guidelines for our own bylaws.

2008

- Use of consultant Marcia Penn in helping us with the development of our structure in retreat in New York
- Operational policies and job descriptions were developed
- Accepted into IFUW membership as USA affiliate
- First AGM held in Iowa with our northern neighbor, the Canadian CIR, in attendance; focus on first officer elections and approvals of WG-USA methods of work and programme priorities

2009

- 12 members attended CSW, many for the first time

- Second AGM held in Southern California with our southern neighbor, the Mexican CIR, making a presentation on art and peacemaking; focus on immigration and human trafficking issues.
- Voted to join the official list of more than 200 American NGOs that support US ratification of CEDAW that is attached to the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights. WG-USA is designated as an NGO that can provide grass roots pressure and support nationwide efforts to move CEDAW through the ratification process. This coalition has used and adapted fact sheets, petitions and lists of talking points on CEDAW from Amnesty International designed for that purpose.
- Some members are included in the national contact list of US Women Connect, which mobilizes grassroots action on issues that are important to women.

2010

- 6 members attended CSW
- Board retreat conducted in New York
- Preparation for participation in IFUW Triennial Conference where around 35 of our members will be in attendance. We will meet as a group while there as an alternative to a face-to-face AGM this year. We also will be intentionally making contacts with other NFA members in order to develop at least one ongoing relationship with the objective of sharing in a common project. We also have three nominees for IFUW positions; three members presenting papers Interdisciplinary Seminars; and presentation of four Workshops together with other NFA partners.