The Grail…..CSW 57 REPORT

Karla, Angelica, Anelisa(behind), Julia, Anita, Diane(behind) Thais, Fuva, Kathryn, Ussula, Mbelu

WE JOIN OUR VOICES, WE JOIN OUR VOICES, WE JOIN OUR VOICES,
FOR THE WORLD. In a circle of friends, in a circle of sound.
All our voices will blend when we touch common ground. (Paul Winters)

1. Message from GLUNN Team

The Grail Link to the United Nations Network is a network with several circles. The inner circle is: Cindy Cheyne, Joy Garland, Mpanda Kalala, Lucy Jones, Sharon Joslyn, Mary Kay Louchart, Simonetta Romano. We all live in New York and have year-round UN passes meaning we can attend any event or meeting at the UN that is open to NGOS. (Sr. Alice Marie Giordano from the Academy of Mt. St. Ursula also has a Grail UN pass and works closely with us.) We meet monthly. Crucial to our teamwork is Abida Jamal (Mozambique) and Mary Gindhart (USA/California). Whenever we send out a communication among ourselves, they too receive it. Even though not present at our meetings, they offer input for discussion, etc. The next circle is one to three Grail members in most Grail countries that are our contacts. Finally a circle of past CSW participants with whom we try to keep in touch. That is GLUNN!

Our message today: We agree that the UN is not an answer to all of our ills. But through the UN we are made aware of global issues, we meet inspirational women and girls and network with other NGOs, and it is a place where girls can have their voices heard. So, we continue to urge Grail members and girls to attend CSW. (There will be information about CSW-58 at the end of this report.) We also have also been blessed the last two years with interns to help prepare for and participate in CSW. With the interns and the participants, we see this as 'a' way to experience international Grail formation. We look forward to interns for CSW-58.

2. Preparation process for CSW 57

2.1. Materials <u>CSW Winter Camp</u>

A four session guideline divided into topics related to the priority theme was prepared by the Grail in Portugal (the Girl Effect group). In October 2013, the materials were distributed to the contact persons in all Grail countries. It was hoped that those coming to CSW-57 as well as other Grail members would discuss and analyze the themes in order to help all prepare for the CSW.

The topics discussed were:

- Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls;
- Survey of the current situation in each country that developed this activity;
- Local Good Practices in each country that developed this activity;
- New Strategies and Practices that the group can develop;

The feedback from Mozambique, Portugal and a group in the USA showed that the materials were very useful and helpful.

Preparation Material…CSW Winter Camp

2.2. Interns

In September 2012, the GLUNN team announced the availability of an internship with the GLUNN-CSW team for young women between 21 and 30 years old that are Grail members or exploring the Grail in their countries.

The requirements were as follows:

- Can speak, understand and read English—enough to be able to take leadership;
- Has good communication skills; Has planning/facilitating skills;
- Has computer skills—knowledge of Microsoft word, excel, PowerPoint, publisher;
- Has experience working with youth;
- Is knowledgeable about the GRAIL/part of some Grail effort in her own country;
- Has knowledge at least from her own country about the CSW 57 theme;
- Has a sense of team work, but able to function on her own; Can take responsibility;
- Is flexible.

And while in New York, she will have the opportunity to actively participate in the Working Group on Girls(WGG) and its various task forces especially the Girls Participation Task Force; work with the two Bronx Grail girls groups; attend UN sessions even if not directly CSW-related in order to 'learn' the UN.

Three applications accompanied by motivation letters were submitted. The ILT had already given the 'OK' to accept two rather than one when a third application arrived from Italy. The two who served as interns were: Anelisa Shamase from South Africa and Diane Mali from Papua New Guinea.

3. Grail at CSW 57

This year, the Grail brought more than 20 participants from various countries such as Brazil, Canada, Germany, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, South Africa, The Netherlands and USA.

3.1. Grail participation

For two weeks the Grail participated in various events in different ways such as:

- being speakers or facilitators/moderators on panels;
- contributing on the writing of the girls and young women's statements;
- sharing experiences and giving testimony about their lives and work;
- organizing their own parallel events;
- following the work of the outcome documents;
- lobbying some mission delegations and
- engaging with some communities.

Together with other NGOs, the Grail co-sponsored some events.

As always, attending this kind of event makes us breathe in the breadth and depth of issues explored and in the commitment, passion, and talent of all together. We consider CSW the lead champion of the global campaign for women and girl's equality and empowerment; a place of reporting progress on women and girl's advancement in their own countries and an opportunity for NGOs sharing their challenges and lessons learned. For the Grail participants taking part in this event it felt like another IGA or IC meeting but with more young people full of new energy and warmth and ready to implement back home what they learned during those two weeks. Some inspirations, opportunities and even challenges were noted down every day after attending events that were packed to share with our community.

1.1. Grail side events

The Grail organized two of its own side events relevant to their activities in each country and experience in their lives. One side event was presented only by girls (between 16 and 18 years old) entitled: Challenges and Responses...Making Their Voices Heard. The girls from Brazil, El Salvador, Mozambique and USA spoke and shared their struggles and stories—demonstrating that whatever the statistics, some of their daily experience cause devastating consequences. Their presentations showed that violence against girls cuts across ethnic, racial, class, religious, educational and international borders.

Another side event organized by The Grail was: Changing Systems that Hurt...the Role of Girls and Young Women. The presenters (girls and young women between 16 and 24 years old from Brazil, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea, South Africa and USA) are involved in their communities in advocacy and awareness campaigns regarding the empowerment of girls and young women to take responsibility for all matters affecting their lives.

1.1.1. Girls and young women presentation

The Grail youth gave powerful presentations and told moving stories from their own experiences and as advocates. Following are their biographies.

USSULA , Mozambique…Ussula Uqueio, 18 years old, is an accounting student who grew up being bullied everywhere--at school , home, neighbourhood—because of her body shape, weight and height. She is a girl who grew up witnessed everyday domestic violence at home.

Ussula joined The Grail Youth Group in Mozambique where she found healing and gained self-esteem through different activities in which she was involved. She has been an activist who advocates for girls' right in her community and together with her peers has created a good environment for girls to stand up and speak up about the injustice they suffer.

Ussula was part of the group of girls who advocated for the celebration of International Day for Girl in Mozambique. Ussula is currently involved in elaboration of a strategic plan regarding the prevention of violence against girls in partnership with the government and civil society.

KATHRYN, USA…Kathryn Janae Palmer was born in Flint, Michigan on April 12, 1996 and lives with her mother, father, younger brother, grandmother, and dog. She attends Flint Southwestern Academy were she is a junior. She is a volunteer of many organizations. The one that she is really a part of the most is an afterschool program called Big Brothers-Big Sisters where she mentors boys and girls and helps them with their homework. The kids which she helps are in 1st – 6th grades and sometimes 7th and 8th graders. Kathryn comes from a long line of volunteers, entrepreneurs, activists, and leaders. Though her late great grandmother she has taken the effort to help change her community and the world. Kathryn loves to try new things and believes that you only live once. Kathryn wants to be a mechanical engineer one day and a master of art. Kathryn loves the UN and would like to be more a part of it so she can also speak against violence against girls.

FUVA, Mozambique…Fuva da Conceição Raul Muiamb is 21 years old and was born in Maputo City, Mozambique. She is studying International Relations and Diplomacy at the Superior Institute of International Relations, now in her 4th year. And she is professional dancer.

She is one of the members of The Grail Youth Group since 2008. There she works around issues related to the girls and young. With in college there, she has been part of the dvocacy and awareness campaign, defending girls' rights, equal opportunities, and the right to education. She supports equal rights and opportunities for girls and boys.

THAIS, Brazil…Thais Dias is 18 years old, and resident of Brazil. She studies veterinary science at the School Agricultural Family Bontempo. Thais has a path walking in union with rural workers in her community. She is involved in the work of the Network of Women in the region.

Thais Dias is involved in running workshops regarding "Violence against women and girls" and "women's health." She helps in making the mapping weaving nets to combat violence against women in her State region.

Thais' philosophy is: "If, in fact, I'm not in the world just to get used to it, but to transform it; if you cannot change it without a certain project or dream for the world, use every opportunity you have to not just talk about my utopia, but participate in practices consistent with it. " Paulo Freire.

ANELISA, South Africa…Anelisa Shamase is a 21-year-old student currently studying Geography and Environmental Management at the University of Kwa Zulu Natal in South Africa. In 2007 She joined a group of young women and girls called Women's Leadership and Training Programme as a participant and became an intern at WLTP in 2010. Since then she has been working with girls and young women in her community doing various activities, such as community gardens, campaigns on climate change, tree planting and facilitating workshops that help develop the leadership skills of girls and young women. She is working as an intern for The Grail here in New York, in the Bronx until June 2013.

DIANE , Papua New Guinea…Diane Mali is 23 years of age and comes from Papua New Guinea. She was born in the coldest province of Papua New Guinea called GOROKA. She completed a Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality and is yet to get a job!

She is an active member of the Archdiocese youth group in her country and also one of the young Grail members of her country.

She believes, as a young woman, she will use the activities that have been taught by The Grail to the religious youth groups back in her country, as well as sharing the experiences she gained in New York as a CSW participant. She will advocate for changing The Traditional Systems that Hurt The Role of Girls and Women in her country.

1.1.2. Grail Networking participation/presentation

1.1.2.1. Teen Orientation

The Teen Orientation is a session in preparation for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). Organized by the Working Group On Girls (WGG) (The Grail and UFER are members), that promotes young girls' power to speak on their own behalf at events like the CSW. Youth members representing NGOs from all over the world get together to prepare to be effective advocates at the UN CSW. It is an opportunity to share their passions and learn about gender issues with girl delegates from other countries. The Orientation also provides delegates the opportunity to learn the history, background and purpose of the United Nations and to understand better the scope of the violence directed at women and girls.

During Teen Orientation we had several Grail members or Grail-connected members facilitating (Tina Kalala, Carrie Bowling, Ana Melchy Solano, Gina Ribustello, Anelisa Shamase, Diane Mali, Abida Jamal, Fuva Muiambo) with Sharon Joslyn as part of the coordinating group—so the Grail was very present. In one small group, a girl heard that there was a Grail member present from PNG. They pointed her (Diane) out to the girl. The girl came to Diane and said: I want to join the Grail!

1.1.2.2. Girls Tribunal

The Feminist Task Force, in collaboration with Working Group on Girls (WGG--The Grail is part of WGG--organized the first ever girls' tribunal. Ten girls gave testimony on their own experiences in the areas of violence in the media, in schools and in the community. These girls were from various countries and are members of varied girls' action groups worldwide. Four jurists commented after each section and were very impressed with the insight, maturity and determination of these girls. There was some concern that few countries are specifically mentioning girls. These girls were well spoken and, with continued perseverance, will have positive impact.

The Grail participated with two girls, Ussula from Mozambique and Thais from Brazil that gave testimony about violence in their communities and how they have taken steps to move forward and work towards preventing violence. Fuva from Mozambique was one of the case presenters. (If you would like a copy of the Grail report about the Tribunal, write to Mary Kay at grail-IPT@juno.com

1.1.2.3. Human Traficking/ UFER

Ton Brouwer and Elly Koenig work in collaboration with the Dutch Foundation of Religions Against Trafficking of Women (SRTV) bringing with them a network of 18 Grail countries. Since the IGA in 2006 there has been at least one contact person in each Grail country who was asked to find out if trafficking of women and girls is taking place in her country, that is, if her country is one where victims come from, a country of destination and/or transit like in the Netherlands. Many of them have been active since then by sending their findings to Ton who published it in the monthly GJOP Bulletin (Global Justice Overcoming Poverty) and in Crossroads to inform the whole Grail.

There is a growing awareness that trafficking of women and girls is taking place all over the world. Prevention is very important. This year at CSW 57, The Grail partnered with UFER in hosting an event which addressed human trafficking issues around the globe and measures being taken to help the victims. Ivonne van de Karr spoke about how the Dutch Foundation of Religions and The Grail in The Netherlands reach out to migrants and other women at risk of being trafficked, providing information, shelters and routes for safe migration.

2. Other activities

2.1. Knowing The Grail

During the two weeks we're girls, young and older, some members of the Grail, some not, enjoying exploring a better understanding of the Grail through discussions, video lectures and articles on the history of the Grail. These moments are experienced with great curiosity and attention from the younger ones. Like other years, we again had several moments of learning what exactly is the Grail?

2.2. Cornwall

It is tradition every year during CSW to visit the Grail in Cornwall. The CORNWALL GRAIL CENTER welcomed the participants of CSW to share with the Grail community there and to share the experience of the CSW. This time the visit coincides also when Grail Cornwall was celebrating the 50th anniversary of its existence and everybody was happy to be part of that historical moment.

This year The Grail young group met six girls from the Cornwall community and shared with them experiences at the CSW, such as what the theme at the CSW was, the different forms of violence and the situation in each countries and the work that each of them do with the Grail in their countries.

The process of planting different seeds has become a tradition as a symbol of hope; sign of life and continuity of the Grail. We walked through the labyrinth, built a snow person and threw snowballs and fell a couple times but no one stayed behind.

2.3. The Grail Bronx Open House

The Grail organized an Open House at St Luke's Church. The purpose of the Open House was to inform the community and local Grail members of the CSW about what we as the Grail have been doing for the last two weeks, and about the difficulties girls in different countries face on a daily basis and the different ways they are involved in the communities to empower girls and help eradicate all forms of violence faced by girls and young women.

3. Learning/Experience at CSW 57

Global forums such as the CSW offer the Grail participants the opportunity to continue advocating for the rights of girls and young women. We ensure that young women are seen, heard and have an impact in these global decision-making forums. They are also important spaces for young women to build their own confidence and skills as leaders, advocates and agents of change.

Some remarks from the young Grail participants:

"I knew that taking part in this CSW was something important but I didn't know that it would be something great and even more than important. When I started to get into the work and understand the mechanism, I have to be honest, I was afraid. My fears were if I would be able to meet the expectations. The first day I only received and I had the sense of being useless at the CSW. But thanks to my Grail sisters, I started to feel more confident and so I started to give my contribution. Through all these things, my will to keep fighting has become more passionate and I see advocacy for me is a method and an inspiration of how to work on these topics and try (at least) to give my personal contribution to this fight." **Ussula, 18 years old, Mozambique**

"*The CSW 57 was an eye-opener to many different forms of violence that I was not aware of. Because of my experience at the CSW; I have learned that one cannot be ignorant about issues like GBV because it has many negative implications for girls, young women, communities and the world as a whole. Girls in our different communities face challenges no girl should face. These systems hurt us, our families and communities. We let people at the CSW know that as girls and young women, through the Grail, we are playing our part in eradicating violence but we cannot do it alone--everyone needs to play their part. Many a time people are more empowered by hearing stories rather than facts and figures. Stories really get people thinking and sometimes it helps other people voice their own stories therefore helping them heal. By speaking out, you do not only speak for yourself but for many other girls who are silenced by circumstances and cannot speak for themselves. The Grail really made an impact on people who attended the event.*" **Anelisa, 21 years old, South Africa**

"*During these two weeks of CSW 57 I gained a broad knowledge of issues that are everywhere in the world. Many stories, experimenting with a single cause made me feel that I am not alone in this journey to empower girls and women. CSW is a platform where I had an opportunity to present the work I do in my community along with the Grail Movement in Brazil. The aims are: overcoming poverty, combat violence, prostitution, and paedophilia. Participating in CSW 57 was an experience that made me grow, filled me with courage, strength, empowered me to continue the struggle for a future where girls can have their rights respected.*" **Thais, 18 years old, Brazil**

"*I learned that everyone is special in their own ways. We all can shine with different lights with the same purpose and we all can be heard. I learned in the CSW 57, that we girls and young women can raise our voices, and make the difference for a better world. I am happy to have been among those privileged Grail members who attended the 57th CSW which to me has been yet another opportunity to think, reflect and gain new insights to even do better in the work that I am doing in my community.*" **Fuva, 21 years old, Mozambique**

"*The two weeks of CSW was an outrageous experience for me because, in my country I had no idea about the UN and what it's like to take part in an event such as the CSW. There's a quote that says "to advocate is to socialize and get to know the world practically". This was what I did during those 2 weeks. Sharing my experience was a remarkable moment when my fellow Grail sisters talked about the violence and how they help and involve men and boys in their community and country and, when I started my story I didn't know what to do to be strong but to cry, because I'm speaking for a change to myself as a young woman. After sharing my story I felt like I just dropped a heavy rock that I have carried around and locked in my mind and heart for years. In my life I've never shared my story of how violent my father was to my mother and us but thanks to THE GRAIL I finally let go of the pain and heavy burden that was within me, that was my speech of that day I chose to tell my Story. My message to you all beautiful women and girls around the world is to remember that: FROM MORNING'S FIRST LIGHT, TO EVENING'S LAST STARS, ALWAYS REMEMBER HOW SPECIAL EACH OF YOU ARE AS WOMEN AND GIRLS OF THIS WORLD.*" **Diane Mali, 23 years old, Papua New Guinea**

The Grail participation was a resounding success, with the young women running side events on non-formal education and ending violence against girls and young women, addressing global leaders in the UN side events, as well as generally raising the profile of the Grail throughout the event.

4. Back Home Project

After those two weeks the question that come out was *what happens next?*

Kathryn Palmer, USA---She will get together with a group of friends – boys and girls – to discuss different issues that she learned on International Women's Day and they all wore eye-catching t-shirts with the slogan: 'This is what a feminist looks like!' to promote the message that feminists are 'men and women with important goals'. She has also hosted a film screening and discussion during International Women's Week, and led an on-campus campaign for the continuation of a local Status of Women Committee.

Ussula---She will continue working on early marriage in her community together with her peers (The Grail Youth Group). The project will focus on raising awareness through media and workshops, and create a support group for girls in the communities; speak at schools or community meetings to educate people about the issue. She will organize meetings with local government officials to discuss the concerns about the issue.

Thais---She will give sessions about "Ovulation Method-NFP (Natural Family Planning, a method already used by millions of women. It's an all natural method that does not involve the use of drugs or contraceptives, but a fully natural way, used to anticipate or prolong a pregnancy. This method is basically the fertile and infertile phases that occur naturally in the female reproductive cycle.

She chose this theme to work on because the subject line that worked - Reproductive Rights, and because they are rural women who very often are private and do not have access to contraceptives thus generating unwanted pregnancies. This project will be presented by women as part of regional meetings of women's groups in low-and middle Jequitinhonha, Brazil and in associations with two rural communities in the city point of Jequitinhonha.

Fuva---She has been working with her Grail Youth Group in a campaign on ending violence against girls and young women. She is also currently working on the Human Trafficking Campaign setting up anti-violence clubs in the border community between Mozambique and South Africa. The CSW gave her inspiration and ideas for ways to grow her project back home.

> Anelisa and Diane were interns. Many have written about the CSW, so we are sharing here their thoughts about being an intern.

Anelisa...I don't even know where to start. This for me has been an experience and a half, it has been amazing. The same person who arrived in New York is not the same person who will go back to South Africa. This experience has made me a different person. The things I have learned during my time as an intern have changed the way I view the world. Living with Grail women and learning about so many issues that affect women and girls has helped me look at the world through the eyes of a young woman who can help other young women and girls, play her part in making a difference. Living in the international community here at the Grail centre has helped me grow personally.

Being an intern for the CSW for me was about learning different skills such as the importance of communication, building relationships with people from different parts of the world. The CSW for me was like an international intergenerational formation, where the 'seasoned' meet the youth. Where the seasoned share their knowledge, experiences and wisdom about the Grail and us youth keeping the seasoned up-to-date with the ever growing world of technology which I myself can hardly keep up with now, but I learn along the way.

The CSW gives an opportunity to girls and young women from different countries especially developing countries to make their voices heard on an international platform at the UNITED NATIONS. I observed during my time as an intern and during the CSW that the majority of the youth present is youth from first world countries. For example when the girls' statement was being written there was no representation from Africa, Asia, Pacific islands and Latin America which bothered me, but because of the GLUNN CSW team two girls from the Grail were able to participate and contribute very valuable information to the girls' statement.

Diane... For me, it was hard at first to catch up with things because I totally did not know what I was supposed to do as an intern for the CSW. I struggled a bit with coping with things but like I said, I've learned a lot and I believe in myself that I've changed a lot too. It was wonderful to meet my Grail sisters from different countries and we helped each other to know the Grail members in our own countries.

Helga Sourek…Germany—a friend of Marita Estor's. This is her second time at CSW. She wrote a report about CSW itself but we share here her personal impressions of her stay at the Grail Center. In one of the public parallel events in the UN Church Center but especially in an afternoon session at the Grail Center, some of the girls told their personal story and I was deeply shocked in learning that in all the cases without exception, domestic violence and sexual abuse was a matter of fact, or moreover a taboo theme inside families never spoken of. You can imagine what a relief it was for the young girls to be able to open their mouths in a secure environment in order to tell the audience how great has been and still is their suffering. Tears were flowing but prevalent too was the conviction that common resistance support, as from the Grail women, was a very helpful instrument to overcome the traumatic experience of the past and to struggle alongside with others for a change. (Helga also wrote about her appreciation for the Grail Center being a welcoming space for all and gave a huge thanks to everyone.)

Ivonne van de Karr--Dutch Foundation of Religious Against Trafficking of Women (SRTV) I was asked by the Dutch Grail to represent them at the CSW meeting in New York and to work together with UFER to present a panel on Human Trafficking there. It was a wonderful experience for me to meet the Grail outside of the Netherlands. The women AND the girls were inspiring to me. We worked together very well. I never knew much about the Grail outside of the Netherlands.

Raymonde Martineau---Secretary General of UFER---When I think back on my two weeks at CSW, two things come to my mind: First, I thought I knew a lot about violence against women, but after having heard so many testimonies shared during these two weeks, especially during the NGO side events, I realized, unfortunately, how much worse the situation of women in this regard was. We have to continue our struggle for women's rights. *La lucha continua!* UFER will continue to do whatever it can in this respect. We hope that our collaboration with women in Nepal and other countries will contribute to prevent women and girls to fall prey to traffickers and assist the victims/survivors of trafficking in their reintegration into society. Second, I knew about the wonderful work done by the Grail in the Bronx and the area with young women and girls during CSW. But having seen it with my own eyes has convinced me even more of the importance of that work. I am sure that this experience has and will continue to change the lives of those who have the opportunity to take part in this programme. I hope that it will continue for many more years. Thanks Mary Kay and Sharon and all those who assist you.

Sharon Joslyn---Every year I am impressed by the way that we are growing as a network around the work of women and girls. There are different tasks that each of us take. It all comes together for the 2 weeks in March during the CSW sessions. But the most important work is done in our own countries before and after each CSW. It is like a spiral action that begins small and grows wider and wider over time.

In New York, work begins right away with the final session of CSW and the reception of the Outcome Document with its agreed conclusions. The end of March into April are times of receiving reports from participants along with their evaluations. Evaluations are also done in meetings on the CSW proceedings and our participation as Working Group on Girls.

In the countries our Grail teams are receiving the girls and women home, giving them time to debrief and resettle. The girls are all prepared to do a "back home project' which can include formal reports to Grail groups or school groups, advocacy with government officials or initiating a work in their own communities. A good example of this is the youth group begun following CSW '51 by Denise in Moçambique from which we have girls participate in CSW every year.

United Nations meetings to prepare for future sessions begin in July. Monthly NGO and task force meetings start in September and plans are begun for the upcoming CSW based on our evaluations of the previous year.

By November invitation to Grail women and girls are sent out along with preparation materials for the next session. There is always something to do and there is lot of room for further engagement of Grail women and girls in this global endeavor.

The Grail's presentation by girls: GIRLS SPEAK—Challenges and Responses. At the table are Angelica (El Salvador), Julia (WGG Advocate from the Bronx), Ussula (Moçambique), Anita (WGG Advocate from the Bronx/Grail contact at AMSU), Thais (Brasil), Kathryn (USA). At the right are Anita, Thais and Julia as they gave their presentations. (Angelica wasn't a Grail representative but lived at the Grail Center during CSW.) Mbelu Kalala was the moderator.

Winnie Nyonyozi…Uganda In the small space but warm dining room at the Bronx, every evening between 6:00 and 7:00 pm, adult women and girls would came together to give a helping hand to our dear Grail members who were preparing dinner for us but mostly to chat as they waited for the delicious dinner to be served. A stranger would imagine that this is another arranged side event of CSW. To a Grail member attending CSW for the first time, it was like being at an IGA or even IC meeting but this time with more young people, full of new energy and warmth.

I am happy to have been among those privileged Grail members who attended the 57th CSW which to me has been yet another opportunity to think, reflect and gain new insights to even do better in the work on women's emancipation and advancement in Uganda.

What is our Way Forward after CSW?
I have some of the inspirations, opportunities and even challenges that I was noting down every day as **my take home package** to share with my community and thus will share with you some of them.

- Work more on prevention strategy rather than focussing on responding to problems women and girls face and not stretching beyond that.
- Engage the youth, both girls and boys. This is a very good strategy as already proved by the WGG. Abida from Mozambique has done tremendous work with the girls in trying to prevent all forms of violence against women and girls.
- Go beyond the already converted. Reach out more to men, religious leaders, and police, soldiers. They need to be trained and informed.
- Start teaching boys before puberty that rape is **EVIL.** That they should not rape their sisters. We need the co-operation of parents and maybe it will be better to start with our immediate families.
- Document our work. Grail has done a lot of good work but what is missing out is documentation. We thank those inspiring Grail women who have written some thing. You make visible.
- Have and record evidence of victims of violence for example can use cell phones. Also ask them to give testimonies if they can as this will help out especially in recovery.
- Mobilize resources locally and internationally to empower women and girls especially through education.
- Use the media, get friends and even have some people to work with the media. Ask for/buy air-time on radio/TV talk shows and promote our work.

Recommendations to the Grail International
National leadership teams through IC members of all countries where Grail operates should use this opportunity of the Grail Link to the UN and Working Groups on Girls to involve young girls. This would also be another form of attracting young professional girls and women to the movement. Those of us who have attended the CSW Sessions should engage all Grail members in UN work. The National Leadership Teams should see to it that they receive a report from their country representatives of CSW. Grail members do all it takes to access the internet as this is the only possible way to keep us connected and a great opportunity for us to share what we are doing.

Grail open house held on 9th march 2013.
This was yet another good opportunity to interact with the community of St Luke's church where Mary Kay and Sharon have served for good years. We shared a meal together, prepared by the Grail team at the Bronx. I joined the girls, representing Florence who was denied a visa, to share what the Grail has done in Uganda in trying to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls.

I thank my sisters in the USA, Mary Kay, Sharon and all the Grail members for the warm welcome, provision of warm clothes, excellent meals and always being there for us in whatever we needed. May God reward you abundantly. Last but not least, to all my dear sisters under and over "15".For your wonderful participation, love and warmth, I say **thank you, obrigada, gracias, kanimambo, ngiyabongo, Asante and mwebale munonga.**

Mary Kay Louchart---We had been working on the theme (Violence Against Women and Girls) in many ways the past few months. So I didn't learn more data and statistics during CSW57. But when those statistics became the live stories of girls and young women whom we know and love, it was quite another thing. No application or biography on paper can take the place of hearing each other speak our stories or those of others close to us. Some of what was shared was very difficult to verbalize. Some of it could only be spoken about at CSW as trust began to grow in our Grail-CSW community. In our community, girls and women alike knew that they were appreciated and supported. It takes a lot of joint effort to make this community but it is so worth it. We watched girls blossom before our eyes. And what is additionally beautiful is that some of the girls in local schools and our Grail youth also felt part of this community and were encouraged by it.

I did not so much acquire new 'learnings' as I received an affirmation of the role CSW plays in the Grail and in the lives of girls. We were a group of people (teens through 70s) that became a community during those two weeks. And it was not just a cozy group having meals and good times together. We became a community challenged by the stories women and girls shared about the violence they have suffered. We became more aware that we have a responsibility as global citizens to be sure every voice is heard.

I'll end with a quote from Michelle Bachelet: women and girls all over the globe **must make sure that laws, indeed good laws, do not only remain on papers but must be implemented by our governments.**

Ábida Jamal---This is my 6th time that I attended a CSW session, and I should say OK I know everything about Violence against Women and Girls but I can't. Each session, each side event came out with new data, a new challenge that became a different institutional education setting to be exposed to real world issues that I will not be exposed to in a classroom setting or home.

The Grail – CSW community attended different workshops. We always came back inspired from many amazing speakers from around the world, mainly the young people. However, that is what events like these can do to young people. They challenge you to bring out the best of you that you may not have thought you had, they give you a reason to shine a light for those who are in darkness and they give you a reason to be that hand that can lift others when they fall.

I realize that attending CSW is essential for us because it updates us to current and old issues that women are dealing with in different parts of the world. As a youth coordinator in The Grail Mozambique who is looking for ways to be innovative and getting ready to empower girls and young women, it helps me make contacts with other organizations and see how they do things. Events like these empower young people through giving them a chance to think big. It gives them a voice and a career direction.

Other than meeting new people and making connections, we got to meet and talk with people who are passionate about women's development and wellbeing. We were exposed to what is happening in other parts of the world and what measures are being taken to ensure that positive change can be attained by both women and men. Coming to CSW empowers us and especially the young women. It makes them feel like they can be part of change; change that is needed by so many women, men and children around the globe.

At the end of the CSW, I feel educated and empowered and I would not trade this experience for anything else in the world. Attending the CSW gives me a reason to believe that I can be part of change; change that I want to see and be part of in the world.

Maureen Laflin…USA: (Maureen…sat down at lunch and started talking with some girls from Virginia. When she responded THE GRAIL in answer to their question: which NGO are you, they said: Oh, we know the Grail—we saw it on video.)

ILT Analysis for CSW 57 (Following are excerpts from questions posed by the ILT.)
MG is Mary Gindhart, CB is Carrie Bowling, ML is Maureen Laflin—all from USA.

How did Grail women (and others in the group) participate?

MG: In consultation day, Mary E. Gindhart and Maureen Laflin of the Grail attended with Raymonde and Yvonne van der Kar of UFER. I also participated by:

- Attending caucuses of the European and North American Region which gave good information on the work on the attempts of the CSW to reach agreed conclusions.
- Attending briefings—I attended one briefing at the US Mission with Maureen Laflin
- Visiting missions—I went to the US Mission for a session about the work with men and boys to involve them in the elimination and prevention of violence against women. Copies of the program of the Secretary General were distributed which listed 16 ways to work against violence against women and girls.

CB: Grail women and others participated in several ways. One way they participated was by attending side events that discussed ways other non-profit organizations were working towards the goal of ending violence against women and girls. The Grail also created and presented their own side events centered around this issue, with particular focus on girls and The International Grail

ML: The Grail has a significant presence at the CSW both through its work with girls and its collaboration with other groups to present side events. The girls all lived at the Grail Center. Most of the others lived at the convent up the block. We shared meals together and debriefed the days' events.

Will participants be doing work around the issue when they return home?

MG: I will work with the Woman's Perspective group at Pilgrim Place, the retirement community where I live, to bring the work of the CSW and NGO/CSW into the programs and activities. I also plan to get more active with the UN Organization, a civil society group in southern California.

CB: Certainly these women will return home and use what they have learned. For the participants that are not currently doing a work related to this topic, I believe that even though they might not do work immediately on this issue, they have certainly been inspired enough to want to make change in the world and their communities.

ML: Each of the girls has a plan on how to use the information they learned when they return. Others can report more specifically on this.

Are there specific actions that we should be taking as Grail women?

MG: I would like to see the Grail groups in different countries link with the regional work of UN Women in their part of the world.

CB: I think that preparing the participants for the topic prior to the events starting will help the participants have the most rewarding experience. This will give them the knowledge base they need in order to fully participate in the events during the commission.

ML: The program is excellent for the girls, the other participants and the Grail as a whole. In many ways the girls' time in NY served as a formation program. They interacted with girls and women of all ages from a variety of countries. We ranged in age from teens to the 70s. An international communal living situation is invaluable for everyone. While we can talk about diversity, communal living brings the issues to life and makes everyone have to work together, confront issues head-on and put a face to countries and conflicts.

Participation in the CSW also gives the Grail visibility. Countless times I introduced myself to people at the CSW and said I was with the Grail. I was surprised how often people from all over knew the Grail, predominately from seeing testimonies from the girls.

[Anyone who would like the complete analysis of Maureen Laflin, Carrie Bowling and Mary Gindhart, the complete report of Winnie Nyonyozi or Helga Sourek, or the complete report and evaluation of Anelisa Shamase and Diane Mali, contact Mary Kay at Grail-IPT@juno.com.]

Kathryn Palmer I think it's worth it for a girl to take a week out of school to go to the CSW because you get to experience a once in a lifetime chance in one week. You meet people from different countries and possibly meet an ambassador! I have recommended it to girls in my school, especially the Model UN Team. I would like to go again next year so I can do more and experience more than I did last time. I want to know more and be a part of great things.

Nígemi Becheleni (Nigemi and Thais from Brasil brought each of us a bag to carry our myriads of papers. It also identifies us as Grail! The Grail is one of the sponsors of the women's group so the Grail logo is on the bag too.) I was aware of the abuses suffered by women and girls. But CSW57 brought new knowledge about the diverse types of violence those women and girls suffer in different parts of the world. Also I learned that there are women, very strong, working on combating these aggressions. Thanks.

Cynthia Cheyne-- This was my third year attending CSW and each year the Grail girls fill my heart. I was overwhelmed by such courage and strength to speak the truth about the violence that they encounter. Their presentations were very well prepared, well attended and made a strong impact. I am very grateful for the opportunity to have been part of CSW-57 and to have met these wonderful young women.

Following are some responses from three of the Catholic Girls' High Schools we work with.
Academy of Mt. St. Ursula in The Bronx (one of the schools with which we work closely):

Peace Aisogun--I feel as if these trips to the UN have caused me to become more socially aware and conscious of all that I have been blessed with. It has inspired me to start very own "Girl Rights and Human Rights" Facebook page. I hope to teach more people about what I have been privileged to learn thus far.

Anita Benn--I especially appreciated the Girl's Tribunal and the Girl Scout Presentation. I realized that violence happens to girls in many ways that I never realized. I also saw the many courageous ways girls have responded to the challenges they face. CSW taught me how to be a better advocate.

Emely Jimenez--I attended several events at the UN with my school and fellow students, but my favorite event was the one in which I was able to hear a group of survivors speak about their experiences and how they've managed to overcome. I especially liked how I was permitted to converse with the speakers at the end. I even got to meet a group of amazing girls from Brazil, South Africa, Mozambique and Papua New Guinea who were all involved with the events. It was a huge blessing to have been able to participate the way I did, and I hope with all my might to be able to do it again next year, and for many years to come.

> (Both Peace and Anita were part of the Grail's Parallel Event: Changing Systems that Hurt...the Role of Girls and Young Women. Peace is a performance poet.)

From a teacher at **Dominican Academy** in Manhattan (we've just started working with them: On behalf of myself and my students, I want to thank you (x one million+) for all the hard work and coordinating you did to make our participation in CSW 57 a reality. The girls and I truly learned so much and were both challenged and given hope by the amazing girls, women and men we encountered through CSW and the Youth Orientation. Thank you for inspiring all our sophomores with your visit. Please extend our thanks to Diane, Anelisa and Sharon for all their help as well Looking forward to continued work with you, the Grail and the WGG, Coleen Gowans

Igama lamakhosikazi, malibongwe. Igama lamakhosikazi, malibongwe.
Malibongwe, malibongwe. Malibongwe, malibongwe.

Mercy High School in Connecticut (the principal formerly worked at St. Catharine's in the Bronx and was committed to involving the girls there and now in her new school. The blizzards of 2013 kept them from participating in more than the Orientation). Following are some excerpts:

Mattie Carroll--The CSW was an absolutely amazing learning experience. My eyes were opened to all the many different forms of violence against women that I never realized before...I feel blessed to have met so many wonderful people with inspirational stories who taught me that I do have the power to make a difference and help women and girls in need…Probably the most important lesson I took out of the day was from the incredible Michelle Bachelet. That would be that all women deserve to be educated and it shouldn't be something they must fight for—education is the starting block for protection against violence throughout one's life. I hope my experience can be shared and applied to help the lives of many other girls and women.

Abigail Nolan--Going into this Orientation for the CSW I had no idea what to expect and by the end of the day, I couldn't wait to go back again. I didn't think that I would have much to offer because I live a good life. I go to a private school and have the opportunities to do so many things in life. I learned so much about how women are treated around the world and even areas close to home. I realized how lucky I am to have the opportunity to be educated and feel safe in my own community. The most important thing I learned was that I have the power to make a difference. Most of all, I learned to be an advocate and speak out against injustice.

Maura Eckels--I was able to broaden my horizon on the different types of violence that exist and I learned a lot. This conference furthered my drive to be an advocate to end violence against women. I was empowered by the female energy surrounding me on this day and inspiration flooded through me. I have always wanted to be a public speaker and seeing the other speakers at this conference strengthened that desire even more. I can see myself speaking at this conference ten years from now adding my faith into a talk.

5. Announcement of CSW 58

As we continue to lift up the priorities of the 57th CSW, we are also preparing for CSW-58.

The fifty-eighth session of the Commission on the Status of Women will take place at United Nations Headquarters in New York from 10 to 21 March 2014.

Priority theme: Challenges and achievements in the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals for women and girls
Review theme: Access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women's equal access to full employment and decent work (agreed conclusions from the fifty-fifth session) - See more at: http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw58-2014#sthash.gAHL76J3.dpuf

The next year theme is significant and The Grail needs a position on this given that the post-2015 development framework needs to address some of the shortcomings of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). We want to hear from Grail teams any thoughts, analysis, etc. they have on the MDGs.

If you are interested in attending CSW-58, start planning now. Registration is now open.

If you/your Grail team did not use the CSW-57 materials that were prepared last year by a team of Portuguese Grail members, use the four session materials this year—the information is still very relevant and helpful for focussing on the issues. If you need a copy of the materials in English or Portuguese, contact Grail-IPT@juno.com. The materials are also available as a powerpoint.

And if nothing else: read something related to the CSW-58 theme and share it with others.

SOME WEBSITES TO HELP YOU PREPARE

www.girlsrights.org – Official website of the Working Group on girls

www.un.org/womenwatch/csw - up to date on information about the CSW

www.girlsinict.org – UN website to help girls pursue careers in technology

www.planusa.org and www.planinternational.org – PLAN brings many girls to meetings at the UN and supports girls throughout the world

www.halfthesky.org – follows the inspiration of Nicholas Kristoff, especially about trafficking in girls

www.missrepresentation.org – critiques media's treatment of girls.

http://www.worldwewant2015.org.

http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals--theme for 2014.

http://www.cigionline.org/publications/2012/10/post-2015 Development Agenda: Goals, Targets and Indicators

www.whiteribboncampaign.org – spells out a great effort to help men and boys take their responsibility in the cause of gender equality.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIvmE4_KMNw The Girl Effect: a short YouTube video on how we can change the world by effecting change for young women throughout the globe.

Although we are scattered around the world, we remain connected by our prayers and actions to bring about a world in which women and men, girls and boys, can live into the full expression of God's creation.

Many voices can be 'heard' in this report. Abida and Mary Kay put the report together with GLUNN members giving it a final editing eye for spelling, etc. We hope you are as inspired by this report as we were when we were actually with the CSW-57 participants. We look forward to CSW-58!