



## GRAIL LINK TO THE UNITED NATIONS NETWORK

### COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN (CSW-62) 2018

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. A functional commission of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), it was established in June 1946.

The CSW is instrumental in promoting women's rights, documenting the reality of women's lives throughout the world, and shaping global standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Each year the Commission meets for two weeks in March, examining various themes.

- **2018:** Priority theme: Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls. Review theme: Participation in and access of women to the media, and information and communications technologies and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women.
- **2019:** Priority theme: Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Review theme: Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development.

In addition to the CSW report here, we will produce a report with input from GLUNN, the interns and the participants. If you would like a copy of the report, please contact Mary Kay at [Grail-IPT@juno.com](mailto:Grail-IPT@juno.com).

And...following is an excerpt from the International Newsletter: This year, our Grail participants from Mexico (Xeni & Carolina), Italy (Eda & Myriam), Portugal (Sofia & Célia), The Netherlands (Talita, Rachelle, & Mary O), South Africa (Puleng), Uganda (Vanessa), did an outstanding job during the two weeks in CSW! If you did not see a copy of this newsletter, write to Mary Omedo at [iltsecr@thegrail.org](mailto:iltsecr@thegrail.org)

If you are interested in attending CSW in 2019, please contact Mary Kay as soon as possible. It is so disappointing when we think a girl or Grail member will come from a certain place and then: boom! She can't get a visa!!! Also, each year we have two interns. If you know of anyone who might be interested, please let us know. In June a letter will be distributed through the IC and Communications representatives in each country inviting young women interested in the internship to apply.

### INTERNS

Last issue we promised to share more about our interns over the years. Typically, an intern is with us January through March. This year's interns were Montse Fregoso from Mexico and Khensani Nhambongo from Mozambique. Both were on-line students as well as fulltime interns! And both did well in their studies!



The two produced some excellent CSW preparatory materials. If you are meeting with girls and especially if you are considering having them participate in CSW-63, ask Mary Kay for the materials. We also have excellent materials prepared in past years by a team in Portugal. You are welcome to all resources that we have. In addition, google csw-63

This year we asked all past interns three questions. Following will be some of their responses.

1. What was your experience of the internship...good/not so good/learning
2. what are you doing now and what from the internship helped with that in any way
3. how are you connected with/involved with the Grail now?

### **Internship Learnings**

- I've learned a lot of things that I need to know as a girl child, teenager, young adult and a woman. After the internship, I was a changed person.
- I learned about the UN, its networks, procedures and the works of the Grail at the UN. It was a multicultural experience.
- It was a wondrous lifetime experience. I experienced cultural diversity, leadership teamwork, tenacity, solidarity, enthusiasm, love, sharing and joy. These experiences helped me improve my self-esteem, make me grow as a person and a woman!
- The community-building process helped me to live with my own family. Being so close to the UN system helped me choose clearly what I could do in my professional life.
- The experience was overwhelming and challenging. I learned patience, importance of solitude and self-analysis. It was life-giving in many ways
- To this day, it is still one of the best experiences of my life. I am so grateful. I loved morning chats over the breakfast table and evenings when we would sit together upstairs. It helped me realise what my skills could be in writing and communicating.
- My experience was one of the best opportunities in my life to learn about being, acting and living in the world community. I learned to love and accept that people and things don't always go 'my' way. Being together for prayers, meals, blessings, laughter, crying and being happy—all so important.
- The Grail CSW internship was a great learning experience for me. The internship gave the opportunity to learn a lot about the United Nations and its vast system and more importantly, about the Grail lifestyle in a different country.
- I learned so much about teamwork & the importance of clear-straight forward communication. The experience as a whole has been great, especially because you get to know more about yourself, get to know your skills, your areas of opportunity, and get to learn who you really are.

### **What I'm Doing Now?**

- I have a permanent job with an organization that has almost 90% women, most young mothers facing a lot of problems that need an ear to hear them. They talk, I listen. I use my internship experiences to help women in need without any program from Grail or any organization.
- I am a student. My internship was fundamental for what I am doing now.
- I teach history and art history to students ages 18---30. The internship enriched me personally and professionally. It gave me very important interpersonal relationship tools which today helps me in my work dealing with young people. I feel I'm a more self-aware, critical citizen.
- I work as program officer for sexual and reproductive rights. And I do consulting services to organize international events. The internship was the light for this success because during my time there I tried to get as much experience as I could in order to be more aware on the international level.
- I am a community development coordinator. I have a one-year contract with the NGO and can become a 3-year possibility. The organization is very impressed with my international experience, especially the internship and they believe I am of value to their organization. +So my internship has opened many doors for me and the networks I made also led me to greater heights.
- The internship inspired me to want to work more deeply on the issue of gender equality. For the past few years I've been working with a Gender Equality NGO. My role there is to communicate the research findings about gender equality.
- I am a Human relationships manager in a large factory. Every day I hear and face things that I didn't even know that is possible to happen. But because of the formation that I got in the CSW about how to communicate with people, I'm finding a way to deal with the situations. Another thing learned during the internship: always believe in yourself and your capacity and never go back even when the things are looking impossible...our dreams and faiths can never stop while we are still alive.
- The internship helped me to develop collaborative working skills. During the internship I worked in many teams with different people. First, I wasn't an intern alone; there were two interns and because of that I learned how to effectively work with other people, how to deal with differences and most importantly, how to accept and use other people's ideas, opinions and suggestions. I believe these skills will help me a lot with the work I do in my country because I will no longer want to do things on my own or my way only, I know how to listen to others and let go of my own preferences to try things in a different way.

- I will start an internship with Timbuktu Labs, the creators of Good Night Stories for Rebel Girls, and I feel full of skills learnt in these past months that will enable me to work in a remote team. The Grail internship helped me develop interpersonal skills which include listening, giving feedback, active participation, time management, conflict resolution, and fast problem solving.

### Grail Involvement

- I don't attend meetings nor remember ever being invited to one, nor have I heard about their programs.
- I participate in meetings in the local Grail group.
- I continue to follow the Grail work in my community.
- Each year I help with whatever area the group needs. I assist whenever I'm needed.
- I want to work more closely with GLUNN but my job takes more time than anticipated. I still participate in CSW-related activities when I can.
- I am not involved with the Grail right now. But I am living far away from any other Grail members. Perhaps this can change if I change jobs in the future.
- Because of my job, I am not working much with the Grail. But whenever possible, I am involved in the activities of the local Grail. I hope to organize better my schedule so I can be more present and active.
- I am involved with the Grail at both national and international levels. Locally, I am involved with the youth group activities which include workshops at the Grail House and in other spaces like schools and communities and a Grail partnership project to mentor and empower girls in vulnerable situations (substance abuse, prostitution, homelessness, school dropout, early pregnancies). I am also involved in the regular annual Grail activities of formation. At the international level, I am working with the NLT of my country to prepare the Young Women Leadership Program that will take place this July. I am also working on the follow up process with the CSW 62 participants for back home projects.
- This year my goal is to be more connected to the Grail in my country. Due to the location of our groups, it has been difficult to participate with each other. In August/September, I am planning a visit where we will be able to share our experiences and build a stronger sense of community.

### INDIGENOUS FORUM

The 17th Session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) was held 16-27 April. The Theme: "Indigenous peoples' collective rights to lands, territories and resources". Grail members attended the session and will share about it in the next GLUNN newsletter. But to give a taste now.

Some highlights of the Opening Ceremony of the Seventeenth Session of the UNPFI where Sharon Joslyn and Abida Jamal attended. From the statement by Mr. Evo Morales, President of Bolivia:

- Indigenous people around the world are fighting for the recognition of rights of land and resources.
- The revindication of Indigenous People is to defend the motherland that is being hurt by capitalism and policies that bring genocide to mother earth, loss of indigenous rights.
- Our land and resources are our life and not a commodity.
- Indigenous people defend identity and dignity.
- It's important to look at the mentality of superiority of language and meaning of: Ethnic groups *versus* Nationals, Language *versus* Dialects.

We remember: UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples: Affirming that indigenous peoples are equal in dignity and rights to all other peoples, while recognizing the right of all peoples to be different, to consider themselves different, and to be respected as such. Affirming also that all peoples contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures, which constitute the common heritage of humankind. YET FIRST NATIONS CONTINUE TO BE IGNORED OR DISCOUNTED.

## **HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM**

The meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development will be held from Monday, 9 July, to Wednesday, 18 July 2018. Many side events will also be offered. The theme will be "Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies". The set of goals to be reviewed in depth will be the following: 6,7,11,12,15 including Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. Countries volunteer to conduct regular and inclusive review(VNR) of the progress at the national level of the 2030 Agenda. The aim of the HLPF and VNR is to facilitate the sharing of experience, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with view to accelerating the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This year there are 3 Grail countries among the countries volunteering: Australia, Canada and Mexico.

- The Division for Sustainable Development, UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) are organizing the SDGs Learning, Training & Practice - a series of capacity building and knowledge workshops, featuring speakers and experts from academia and other sectors on crucial topics related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They will offer 9 sessions, taking place between 9 - 13 July 2018. Each course will last three hours with morning sessions from 10am to 1pm and afternoon sessions from 3 pm to 6 pm. The courses will run in parallel to the HLPF formal meetings.

The SDGs Learning, Training & Practice workshops aim to advance: Knowledge and skills acquisition, Networking, Sharing experiences and peer to peer collaboration, Learning about practical actions and best practices, Capacity building, Practical policy integration and coherence.

## **YOUNG WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP PROGRAM IN MOZAMBIQUE, 18 July- 1 August, 2018**

This is a big work coordinated by Abida Jamal, Lucy Jones and Thanh Nguyen. 22 Young women from 11 countries will be attending the program where they will share their experience and learn about community life, integrating their spirituality into their activist work, how the United Nations works and the value of Non-Governmental Organizations work. They will engage with experts on a variety of topics such as girls' and women's rights, environmental concerns, socially transformative music and poetry, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and much more. More will be shared in future GLUNN and International Grail newsletters as well as CROSSROADS.

## **GLUNN & ILT MEETING.....April 2018**

Members of the GLUNN team were able to meet with Maria Carlos Ramos and Mary Heidkamp to share about GLUNN, CSW, etc. Through CSW participation is making The Grail present and visible at the United Nations. For GLUNN, an essential point for the Grail occurs through the internship, back home projects and networking. CSW within the Grail provides the space and an opportunity for girls everywhere to do something and have their voices heard.

The ILT agrees that we work even more with NLTs through communication and formation.

The ILT affirmed the purpose of the Grail at CSW agreed upon at those attending the post-CSW meeting.

*The Grail's involvement in CSW is an opportunity for girls and young women as well as Grail members to come together from all over the world to share life in a Grail community while at the same time being challenged by the efforts of many Nations and NGOs working for a better world.*

*The two-week experience offers the opportunity to*

- *Be a microcosm of the wider world*
- *Offer personal transformation*
- *Enter a path of global partnership with NGOs\* leading to the transformation of the world*

*Living, working, praying, learning together has the goal of preparing participants to return to their local communities empowered to bridge the powerful experiences at the UN with the Grail and their local involvements.*

*NB: Grail members have been participants in all of the World Conferences of Women: Mexico City in 1975, Copenhagen in 1980, Nairobi in 1985 and Beijing in 1995. Grail members had been attending the CSW for years but the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing marked a significant **turning point** for the global agenda for gender equality. The Grail became more and more visible at the UN and in 2007 we reached an **'elbow'** where we decided to bring girls to the CSW every year.*

*\*SDG 17: strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.*