



CSW64 / Beijing+25 (2020)

This year's CSW was to have been a momentous event to mark the 25th anniversary of the 4th World Conference on Women and the adoption of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action in 1995. Following the outbreak of coronavirus COVID-19, the CSW, upon recommendation of the UN Secretary-General's Antonio Guterres, decided that CSW-64 be convened for one day only. But in essence, CSW-64 **WAS CANCELLED**: no general debate, no side events, no parallel events organized by NGOs. What a shock and disappointment.

The cancellation of CSW-64 left us with a challenge which inspired us to make efforts to use technology to connect virtually at this time when we cannot meet face to face. Women from various organizations organized phone and Skype calls, webinars, Zoom and other digital activations to seize the spotlight on Generation Equality. The Grail were engaged in all these platforms and gave its contribution: exchanged experience, showcased projects and programs, and learned from others. Read our report to see the full week we had anyway! We did attend the Salvation Army presentation: **UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF JUSTICE**.



Pictured here are the participants: Marlene (Mz), Noela (Ug), Mpanda (Bronx), Liria (Mz) Carolina (Mx), Veronica (Ecuador/USA), Abida (Mz). In Back: Mary Kay and Sharon.

Update

The **GENERATION EQUALITY FORUM** which was to take place in Mexico in May and France in July has been **POSTPONED** until 2021.



Update YWLTP in Mexico, 2020

The Young Women's Leadership Training Program (YWLTP) in Mexico has been postponed as part of The Grail coronavirus response. Due to the current concern regarding the coronavirus disease, we cannot put people at risk. With this disease there are so many uncertainties.

The program originally scheduled for October 4 to 17, 2020, in Cuernavaca, Mexico will be rescheduled some time in 2121 and a new date will be announced once it has been determined. Apart from that, with no intention of extinguishing the flame that several young women leaders have ignited, safe virtual spaces will be created for reflection, debate and discussion of the issues faced by the young women. We want to give space to sharing an understanding of how their work in their local community might affect the global situation and strengthen a sense of their connection to larger world issues. For that, we will be having a webinar. Check out the dates for registration to the webinar.

The two-week virtual program will be attended by 20 to 25 participants. We hope it will be a process through which participants will discover or re-discover their inner, most profound motivation for transformative actions, and, nurture it. Through sharing our lives, developing ceremonies together and relating the deep essence of each person, we will grow as 'yeast in bread'. We will 'mark' our place in the cosmos. Together we will sustain and fuel the inner fire to inspire and support transformative work around the world. The GLUNN is dedicated to promoting leadership among young women globally.



Update

UNITED NATION PERMANENT FORUM ON INDIGENOUS ISSUES 19th SESSION

was scheduled for 13 to 24 April with the following theme: "Peace, justice and strong institutions: the role of indigenous peoples in implementing SDG 16". It has been **POSTPONED**...a later date to be determined.



March 8th

Celebrated on March 8th every year, International Women's Day is a day dedicated to honoring the achievements of women throughout history and all across the globe. It is typically a day for women from all different backgrounds and cultures to band together to fight for gender parity and women's rights.



This year's theme was "I am Generation Equality: Realizing Women's Rights". The Generation Equality campaign is bringing together people of every gender, age, ethnicity, race, religion and country, to drive actions that will end gender-based violence and create a gender-equal world we all deserve.

The Grail in many countries joined with other women that came together to claim their rights. Below is a contribution from the young members of the Grail group in Morelos, Mexico, who are part of the El Nido Collective. **Ante las diferencias, un grito de unidad (Faced with differences, a cry for unity).**

Maya

On March 8th we joined and marched with thousands of women in the streets, parks and squares of Ciudad de Mexico, saying "no more" while singing, dancing, shouting and even painting monuments and wreaking havoc on the streets... and 24 hours later, with a collective union, we went on strike.

Being a woman in Mexico is hard as it is in mostly every place of this world. From the beginning we live – and survive – between different ideas, gender roles, cultural and religious beliefs, social and economic violence. We must follow specific rules to please a society that systematically exercises its hatred and violence against us. Every day here we found women's bodies...from baby girls til old women... murdered by fathers, brothers, boyfriends, husbands, neighbors, teachers, ex-boyfriends and ex-husbands, sons, police, etc According to official figures every day 10 women are murdered (femicide) in México. Most of these murders are carried out in the most savage manner and with a hatred that terrifies us every day. But story after story, we got tired of being afraid and hiding... we did join our voices, our hearts and our work to help each other and to say NO MORE.

Elizabeth

In Mexico, violent events against women resonate in all the headlines of all media and in the conversations of many who still do not understand the reality that is affecting our country. To be part of a global movement is not just to go and walk... it is many things, many feelings and thoughts. You could feel the streets rumble with all the women walking towards the same place. Getting on the subway, trying to open spaces to walk through the streets, being part of them gave me emotions that I haven't experienced in my life. When we started to walk them, the streets were full of all possible shades of purple and green, the shouts, the intense heat on our foreheads and mainly the same shared feeling. I will never be able to say with precision the security and the courage that other women can 'inject' you without having met us. We were all there shouting for the women that are gone and for us who continue fighting in a thousand ways. Mexico is waking up.

Camila

Accompanied by my companions, I witnessed how the streets of the city became a path of struggle against impunity, driven by anger and pain. Streets full of pluralities, which at times generated conflict in the different contingents of women, however, ended up united facing the greatest coincidence that united us at that moment: "to be women and respect for our rights". I felt empathy with the positions of each of the demonstrators, a fact that led me to reflect on where I value my situation as a woman, and the importance of solidarity among women regardless of our differences.



Continuing the testimonies of Grail sisters who attended the Fourth World Conference on Women

Thanh Xuan Nguyen



I participated in this conference as a member of the delegation of the Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, an affiliate of the International Rescue Committee.

In Beijing, the diplomats, representing their countries negotiated on the wording of a document called the Platform for Action which was hoped to be agreed upon and signed by all at the end of the conference. In Huairou, grassroots women from NGOs organized workshops presenting their issues, networked and searched for allies. I was involved in several workshops on refugee women and their challenges.

In addition to the networking, the NGOs followed closely the negotiations in Beijing over the wording in the Platform for Action to ensure that their issues were present in the document or didn't get deleted by certain countries for political or cultural reasons. They commuted to Beijing to advocate with their own country representatives and other friendly countries to strengthen the voices needed during the negotiations.

Participating at the World Conference on Women taught me **two big lessons**:

- 1. The importance of Advocacy at the global level and**
- 2. The power of grassroots women when they are organized.**

After my return from this conference, within the following two years, I joined two groups of women to co-found two national organizations: The National Asian Pacific American Women (NAPAWF) and the Refugee Women's Network (RWN). The goals of these two organizations are to mobilize and give skills and tools to grassroots women from the Asian American and the refugee communities so they could advocate for themselves at the local, national and global levels. I am proud to say that both organizations are now celebrating their 20th anniversary and continue to organize the next generations of women activists.

Personally, I continue to train and organize women in different communities with the hope of connecting all of us together and build a force for change so half the world population could have a voice and an active role in the protection of future generations and the planet.

Marita Estor - part 2...continued from January/February Newsletter



It was in 1975 that the Women Issue became key on the highest political level of the UN. For the first time, the UN called a World Conference on Women in Mexico City, declared 1975 – 1985 as the Decade of Women and adopted in 1976 the Convention Against all Forms of Discrimination of Women--a legally binding instrument which most of the States ratified. The big goals of the World Conferences were on "Women were Equality, Development and Peace. The differences existing among the women became quite obvious at the Conference in Mexico: Equality was predominantly the goal of the Western Feminist Movements, Development was supposed to be the goal of the "underdeveloped" part of the world and Peace was the main purpose claimed by the Communist World.

Political issues played a major role, since most of the countries were represented by male diplomats from the Foreign Offices. NGOs hardly had a voice. (Mary Buckley from the Grail in the USA attended the Conference in Mexico City.)

The Feminist Movement, the Convention, the emancipation of former colonies all contributed to a gradual change of consciousness of women ready to claim their rights. The Second World Conference on Women took place in Copenhagen (Denmark) in 1980. Then about 7 000 participated in the NGO-Forum. Among them was the former US Secretary of Labour Bella Abzug, who invited the women in the Government Delegations to rebel and take up the feminist issues presented at the NGO-Forum on the government Agenda, which of course was not at all possible.



Grail member, Eileen Schaeffler, attended this Conference and lobbied at the NGO-Forum for the cause of the Palestinians. Every morning before the Briefing, we and a few other Christians, gathered in a circle in some quiet corner in a bigger hall – to pray together for peace and justice for women!

Since the Year of the Handicapped came up, I was given the task to draft a recommendation to bring forward the special concerns of handicapped girls and women. Together with the Representative of Libya, the lead country then for the Year of the Handicapped, I had access to the diplomatic circles and was proud, when this Recommendation finally was unanimously accepted by all countries.

[Part 3 in the May/June newsletter....](#)



Unless we are still plagued with the coronavirus, the meeting of the high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2020 will be held from Tuesday, 7 July, to Thursday, 16 July.

The theme will be "Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development ". In 2020, 51 countries (28 first time presenters, 22 second time presenters and 1 third time presenter) will present their national voluntary reviews to the HLPF. Grail countries presenting their VNRs are Ecuador, Kenya, Mozambique, Papua New Guinea and Uganda.

Special Thanks to Ana Barata

Ana participated in CSW in 2017 and was a GLUNN intern in 2019. She continues as an active, very important part of the GLUNN team. She helps produce the GLUNN newsletter, especially with the graphics and arrangements.

