



### YWLTP – support and promote young women’s leadership

The Young Women’s Leadership Training Program (YWLTP) is still happening BUT is now a one- year program!

It will have a new virtual format and will start the end of September. We have a community of 40 young women from Angola, Brasil, Ecuador, Kenya, Mexico, Moçambique, The Philippines, PNG, Portugal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and USA.

We are so excited to have these young women joining us in this challenge. Now, these young women have names and faces and we are looking forward to journeying with them on this adventure of making change in this world!

*We will work together, being sure to leave nobody behind and ‘keeping the light on’.*

### IDG 2020 – International Day of the Girl

The **International Day of the Girl Child** is celebrated annually on **11th October**. The main aim of the day is to promote girls’ empowerment and fulfilment of their human rights while also highlighting the challenges that are faced by girls all over the world. The 2020 **theme** is: “**Be Bold. Moving from Equality to Equity for Girls**”.

Due to unprecedented changes in our global ecosystem and COVID-19, a new approach is needed for building community. As widespread gender, economic, and racial inequalities increase, we, as a global community, must come together to demand a more just and equitable world for girls--one that rejects the practice of demeaning, dehumanizing, and denying girls from marginalized groups their human dignity and rights, and one which takes steps to repair and redress the injustices which disproportionately impact minority peoples the world over.



The Grail community has been celebrating the International Day of the Girl (IDG) since the UN proclaimed the observance of this important day for girls. We have gathered hundreds of girls from our different communities around the world that advance the movement for girls’ rights and contributed with poems, videos, etc. to the IDG Summit at UN Headquarters.

This year, we will be celebrating entirely online through digital town halls, video submissions, social media chats and more. For that, there is need for us to plan how we can guarantee the global participation of the girls from our Grail communities on this important moment that celebrates and fights for girls to move beyond equality to equity.

Collectively, we leverage our resources to build a dynamic virtual platform that advances the movement for girls’ human rights. *Let’s get creative about how we use this new digital space*

The activities will include: **11 Days of Action Campaign** (October 1st – October 11th) - social media-driven campaign designed to elevate girl activist voices and critical issues of concern for girls’ rights such as: early and forced child marriage, menstrual inequity, sexual violence, trafficking, and poverty; **Girls’ Rights Townhall** - with Regional Meetings in the days leading up to 9 October, girl activists and girl-centered organizations will participate in regional virtual meetings designed to deliver unscripted and authentic dialogue between policy makers and girls leaders involved in addressing injustice in their communities; **Girls Speak Out** - virtual production of content solicited, developed and performed by girls around the world that speak to key issues and concerns, as well as opportunities to shift from narratives of equality to equity for girls.

Emphasize that the celebration as a whole will be focused on 4 of the Action Coalition Themes for the Global Gender Equality Forum and Generation Equality Movement including: *Gender-Based Violence, Economic Justice and Rights, Feminist Action for Climate Justice, and, Feminist Movements and Leadership.*

Also Call for Submission for girls **Speak Out 2020**. We want hear from girls. We are looking for stories, poetry, creative writing, videos, skits, art, songs created by girls to be featured in this year’s Speak Out at the United Nations. **Girls Speak Out** – Call for Submission. For more details see [here](#) or go to IDGSummit [website](#).

**Deadline – September 18<sup>th</sup> 23.59 EST.**

We look forward to hearing from you! Help us showcase to leaders at the UN and around the world how these issues affect girls.

**Together we can do anything if we are bold enough, and girls’ voices can help change the world!** With that, we take this opportunity to reach out to our Grail network to continue to put our effort to advance the status of girls everywhere!



## Beijing+25 and Generation Equality Update

### Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA)

In 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) was adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing and put forward a visionary blueprint for women's and girls' rights, identifying 12 critical areas of concern: poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, economy, power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms, human rights, media, environment, and the girl child. This built on the stepping-stones laid out by the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and is the backbone for emerging international frameworks including the UN 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (SDGs). Nearly 25 years later, the Platform for Action remains a powerful foundation for assessing progress of gender equality. It calls for a world where every girl and woman can realize all her rights, living free from violence, to attending and completing school, to choosing when and whom she marries, and to earning equal pay for equal work.

Looking back on the progress made to date, it is important to highlight areas where there is still unfinished business in the BPfA's implementation: women in decision-making; institutional mechanisms and gender mainstreaming; eliminating male violence against women and girls; and a feminist economy. Also look ahead at ongoing and emerging challenges beyond 2020: shrinking political space and funding for women's civil society; the impact of digitalisation and climate change; and the challenges faced by migrant women and girls.

### UNGA High-level Meeting to Celebrate 25th Anniversary of Beijing Women's Conference

This high-level meeting of the General Assembly, 1 October, 2020, will focus on 'Accelerating the realization of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. In the 1995 report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, governments adopted a 38-paragraph declaration and the 129-page Beijing Platform for Action. The UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) has conducted periodic reviews of the Platform's implementation, in 2000, 2005 and 2010. Its 25-year review and appraisal in March 2020 was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.



### Generation Equality

The Generation Equality Forum, a civil society global event to further gender equality, convened by UN Women and co-chaired by France and Mexico should have been held in July, 2020. It will now take place in early 2021.

A quarter of a century after the Fourth UN World Conference on Women and the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which forms the most comprehensive framework for achieving women's empowerment and gender equality, this Forum will take stock of the progress made. Tangible measures to achieve gender equality by 2030 will also be drawn up within the campaign "Generation Equality: Realizing women's rights for an equal future".

The Forum will be a global discussion in which civil society, public authorities, local government, the private sector and the media will take part. The aim is to produce effective intergeneration and multi-stakeholder partnerships and ownership to bring swift action on a greater scale to advance gender equality.

### Generation Equality Forum action coalitions

Multi-stakeholder Action Coalitions will be launched at the Generation Equality Forum in Paris during the first half of 2021. These coalitions will, as during the French G7 Presidency, involve governments, civil society and the private sector to achieve tangible, measurable results within five years on the **following six themes**:

1. *Gender-based violence;*
2. *Economic justice and rights;*
3. *Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights*
4. *Feminist action for climate justice;*
5. *Technology and innovation for Gender Equality;*
6. *Feminist movements and leadership.*

These themes were identified by UN Women in close collaboration with civil society, Mexico and France. Girls and young women will be central to the work of each Action Coalition.

The 65 first "Global Leaders" of the Action Coalitions were announced on 1 July, 2020. They are States, feminist organizations, youth organizations, philanthropic foundations, UN agencies and other international organizations, representing a great diversity of women's voices world-wide. The Generation Equality Forum will also launch a Compact for Women, Peace and Security and Humanitarian Action, two decades after the historic adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security and the advent of the Agenda of the same name.



## High Level Political Forum - UPDATE



## HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The world was off track in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030, even before the COVID-19 crisis erupted, but can get back by increasing investment in public services, showing solidarity and “reshaping” how people work, learn, live and consume.

After eight days (8-16 July 2020) of discussions, the message is clear: a need for solidarity and foresight on financing, and greater investments in social protections, health systems, education, water, sanitation, and digital connectivity.

### *New approaches*

Staying true to the 2030 Agenda also means reimagining the way people work, learn, live, and consume, and listening to young people who are demanding justice and equality. It means investing in an inclusive, networked multilateralism, with the UN at the center. All efforts must be made to step-up implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

### *Action accelerating*

Leading up to 2020 High-level Political Forum, SDG Acceleration Action has seen a 35% increase in submissions and a 21% increase in published actions, just within the last two months, featuring a total of 182 bold commitments in concrete terms to advance the goals that have been made by national Governments and other stakeholders.

The Forum heard 47 countries present their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs), and 150 speakers in the thematic sessions, including one Prime Minister and 31 ministerial officials, contributing online, representing all regions.

### *COVID-19 crisis could be used to ‘shape a new normal’*

“The 2030 Agenda remains our shared roadmap to achieve the future we want”, said Mona Juul, President of the Economic and Social Council.

Stressing that COVID-19 should not change the commitment to “realizing the future we want”, she outlined areas for accelerated progress – first and foremost to advance human wellbeing. Discussions centred on greater educational access for girls, which in turn, will reduce infant and maternal mortality.

She highlighted the importance of creating integrated food systems to drive inclusive growth, agriculture, sustainability, and achieve zero hunger.

Recovering better also means protecting the planet, she said, by addressing climate change and the “alarming” rate of biodiversity loss, land and forest degradation.

### *‘New world of opportunities’*

Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy will be crucial to offering a “new world of opportunities” for billions of people, she said.

In the area of urban development, it is the essential role of local governments in transforming global intentions into community action. In all discussions have underlined that the recovery from COVID-19 represents a rare opportunity to shape a new normal.

## A reflection about COVID-19 and SDGs...

The past few months have been challenging. In different ways, everyone was affected by this pandemic, which brought us a new meaning to the words: distance, time, future and safety.

### **ACTIVISM ON SDG**



**A reflection from Elsa Nogueira, Portugal:** The High-level Political Forum, the main United Nations platform on sustainable development, that has a central role in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, happened in July. This year’s main question was: “Where do we stand on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, taking into account the impact of COVID-19 on the SDGs?”. 47 countries conducted national reviews, 26 of them for the 1st time.

We propose that we all make a reflection about how the coronavirus epidemic impacts the achievement of the SDGs. Globally, this pandemic can be a setback on the progress of the past years, but it can also show us the importance of these goals on the common future.

#### 1. **This pandemic showed the relevance of the SDGs:**

**No. 3.** The current health systems are weak and there are clear disparities in the access to health care. Health and well-being must be for everyone, everywhere.

**No. 4.** It is through education, and, most importantly, quality education, that we can build knowledge to help communities to overcome social, economic and other obstacles. Students began online classes, that reinforced the necessity of having a safe and resourceful environment to study.





**No. 8.** Decent work is a right. People in precarious work situations are the ones most affected economically.

**No. 16.** Peace is not defined only by the absence of war, it's much more than that. Also, efficient institutions and strong fair justice are necessary for the establishment of a healthy, stable, lasting peace.

**No. 17.** Partnerships are fundamental for the fair achievement of the needs of society, namely the SDGs.

**2. This pandemic also intensified some of the problems related to the SDGs:**

**No. 10.** Inequalities among and within countries (regarding gender, health, financial power, opportunities, etc.);

**No. 5.** Inequalities between men and women, more specifically in what concerns violence dynamics (domestic violence, violence in teen relations, etc.) and work-family conciliation (since women are usually the ones that have more responsibility at home and at taking care of children or older people).

**No. 1 and No. 2.** poverty and hunger, in their different manifestations, that were catalyzed by the pandemic;

**3. On the good side, the pandemic apparently relieved the pressure in some subjects. This is not simple nor linear, but can motivate us to achieve the SDGs:**

**No. 13, No. 14 and No. 15.** It relieved the human impact on terrestrial and marine ecosystems and on climate change;

**No. 12.** Its relieved excessive consumerism, proving the possibility of living in a more sustainable, steady, environment-friendly way in case of necessity.

In a general line, this pandemic can be a lever on the assumption that communities are important. Each one of us is fundamental and valuable. We all must be responsible and supportive of every being on this planet. Joint work is essential for achieving the SDGs.

**A GRASSROOTS' ORGANIZATION RESPONSE**



**A reflection from Noluthando Nzimande, South Africa:** The ASAP Foundation Trust (African Solution to African Problems) works to uplift the most under-resourced, marginalized rural communities in the hardest-hit HIV area in the world. ASAP is based in Matatiele, on the border of the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal provinces in South Africa where food insecurity is the norm, running water is at best a shared village tap and high numbers of orphans and vulnerable children are raised by elderly grandmothers.

As an organization with 16 years' experience in pandemic response, ASAP was well-placed to

respond fast to COVID-19 in extremely vulnerable communities where healthcare exists only at the most basic level. With prevention as a priority, ASAP reorganized so it could focus on responding well ahead of government intervention and formulated action plans with CBOs (community-based organizations). All began home screening and food parcel distribution to ensure that the children who relied on these as their only regular sources of nutrition would not suffer and social distancing could protect the elderly and vulnerable.

By the time South Africa's lockdown was announced, ASAP had distributed sanitation products well ahead of the national shortage. ASAP's Community Development Coordinators, Mfundo Zeka and Noluthando Nzimande, spent days traveling from house to house delivering the items, training, materials for making face masks, etc. with help from ASAP's Youth Program participants. The dissemination of the correct, life-saving information was especially important due to lack of cellphone (mobile) network coverage and therefore lack of access to valid information sources. By redirecting existing resources, ASAP was able to reach double its usual number of beneficiaries in the initial prevention drive.

In the beginning of July, South Africa ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in the world for new COVID-19 cases and medical facilities collapsed despite one of the earliest lockdowns in the world. The economy was on its knees before Covid, with resources for non-profit work already scarce. Many organizations are folding due to lack of funding whilst at the same time hunger has doubled. Over three million jobs have been lost to date, and the outlook is bleak.





ASAP is fighting to remain a vital resource to marginalized communities in order to continue easing the intensity of SDG 1,2, and 3 during these extraordinary times. We are heartened by individuals and organizations coming together in so many different ways, to give our most vulnerable a fighting chance and future.

If you would like to get involved in any way, please follow this link: <https://www.africansolutions.org/> and get in touch.

## The impact of COVID-19 on the SDGs

### 17. PARTNERSHIPS FOR GOALS

Aggravate backlash against globalization; but also highlight the importance of international cooperation on public health

### 1.NO POVERTY

Loss of income, leading vulnerable segments of society and families to fall below poverty line

### 16. PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

Conflicts prevent effective measures for fighting COVID-19; those in conflict areas are most at risk of suffering devastating loss from COVID-19

### 2. ZERO HUNGER

Food production and distribution could be disrupted

### 3. GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Devastating effect on health outcomes

### 13. CLIMATE ACTION

Reduced commitment to climate action; but less environmental footprints due to less production and transportation



### 6. CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

Supply disruptions and inadequate access to clean water hinder access to clean handwashing facilities, one of the most important COVID-19 prevention measures

### 11. SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Population living in slums face higher risk of exposure to COVID-19 due to high population density and poor sanitation conditions

### 7. AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

Supply and personnel shortages are learning to disrupted access to electricity, further weakening health system response and capacity

### 8. DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

Economics activities suspended; lower income, less work time, unemployment for certain occupations

### 4. QUALITY EDUCATION

School for many closed; remote learning less effective and not accessible for some

### 5. GENDER EQUALITY

Women's economic gains at risk and increased levels of violence against women. Women account for majority of health and social care workers who are more exposed to COVID-19



### Reflection questions:

- What do you think about this interpretation presented by UNDESA?
- Stop, observe, and reflect on the impacts of COVID-19 in your community and in the world...
- What can we make to reduce inequalities?

## Grail Women of vision - Dorothy Rasenberger and Peg Linnehan



**Dorothy** was an active part of GLUNN. In fact, the first paper GLUNN submitted to all CSW delegates was written by her. Related to our involvement at the UN, Dorothy was: Coordinator of the National Interfaith Network focusing on Women's Economic Rights, (1983-1990). She participated in the Grail Liberation Task Force, the Global Justice Network, the New York Politics and Spiritual Group. Dorothy brought clear thinking and amazing commitment to our work for justice whether for girls and women, migrants, refugees. Dorothy died of covid-19 on April 17, 2020.



**Peg Linnehan** died on May 28, 2020. Over the years she was on the staff of Grailville, Philadelphia and San Jose but her life and work at the Cornwall Center is most known. As part of the USA International Team, she was a driving force behind the Grail's involvement at the UN. Her strong understanding of and commitment to the Grail as an international Movement led her to work for South-South Exchange programs preparing the way for the Women of the Americas Network including being part of organizing 500 years of Columbus' arrival in the Americas. She was involved with the USA International Team which brought her to being a key part of the Grail's involvement at the UN. (read more in the June 2020 GUMBO).

## UFER – United For Equity and Ending Racism

UFER was founded in 1951 by the Catholic Union for Interracial Cooperation in order to join efforts and share experiences among various lay missionary movements, and, assure its representation with NGOs at the UN. Two groups were international: The Grail and AFI (Inter-Cultural Association) and 6+ of the groups were European national groups. Though several groups were founders, only The Grail and the International Catholic Auxiliaries are present now as members. When the International Grail Secretariate moved to Paris in 1962, the Grail actively got involved with UNESCO while AFI assumed activities with the UN-Council of Human Rights in Geneva. As the Portuguese Ambassador to UNESCO, Grail member Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo sat on the Government side. After her term as International Grail president, Eileen Schaeffler returned to New York (1971) she committed much of her time to the cause of the Palestinians at the UN. The Grail remains as an organization. API is present through individual members. UFER obtained consultative status with UNESCO in 1952, with ECOSOC in 1953 and with UNICEF in 1954. UFER has always worked for the promotion of women's rights and is a strong advocate of the rights of indigenous peoples. Grail members representing UFER at the UN since 1953: Marjorie Krijnen, Elizabeth Reid, Mary Brigid Niland, Eileen Schaffer, Ann Marie Czyzewski, Audrey Schomer, Joy Garland, Sharon Joslyn, Lillian Wall, Cindy Cheyne.

*Report from the Board Meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia January 12-18, 2020*

**Some highlights** of the meeting taken from the report. (Request the entire report from Sharon Joslyn [bronxgrail@juno.com](mailto:bronxgrail@juno.com) ).

A special convergence of factors made this meeting particularly wonderful:

- An extraordinary, generous hostess;
- A small dedicated group of attendees,
- A resolve by participants to overcome obstacles and move ahead,
- A balance of intense discussion with contemplative morning moments and
- A context of ancient history (the birthplace of "Lucy", the first known human being at 32million years of age).

**The next Board meeting and GA** will be a **70th year anniversary celebration of UFER** to be held in **Brussels** beginning **September 21, 2022** in order to coincide with the International Day of Peace.

## Change Makers



**By** now, this girl is recognized as a **worldwide activist for climate change**. Starting with protests at the Swedish parliament led to **starting a movement: Fridays for Future (School strike for climate)**. She has inspired many, especially youth. Greta Thunberg is an example but we'd like to know **Who** are the change makers in your community? **What** has been done for the climate crisis?

**Please share with us what young people in your community are doing to protect the environment.** Email Ana at [anabarata@hotmail.com](mailto:anabarata@hotmail.com)