



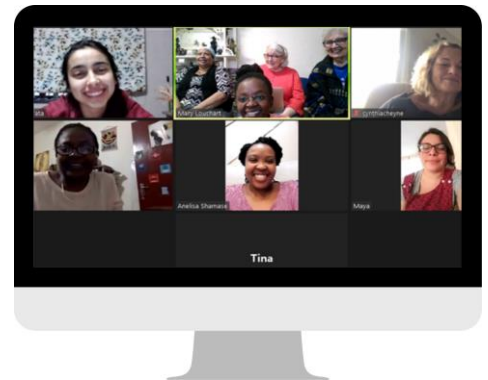
The GLUNN coordination team wishes all of our readers a very blessed Christmas. What a time we're living through. When we pray during Advent for light to come into the world, it takes on a new meaning this year. May light fill your hearts and your lives as we celebrate Christmas.

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



NETWORK UPDATES:

GLUNN meets monthly (most months!) to review what we've done and what we need to do! In November, several members had other commitments and some left before we took this screen shot! If you are interested in being part of this network, please contact Mary Kay at marykaylouchart@gmail.com.



Some 'flashes' from the last GLUNN meeting:

- The Grail continues with spiritual search, ethical values, and commitment to transform the world. Transformation will not come from the air. It's young people's responsibility to work hard for it. **
- The impact UN platforms such as IDG magnifies the worldview of girls and young women.
- Participating in the launching of the Grail centenary event was an opportunity for intergenerational interaction: seeing the visibility of Grail work but also uncovering the technology challenge.
- ** (editor note: I'm reminded of the song Marie Therese McDermit taught us: *freedom doesn't come like a bird on the wing...doesn't come down like the summer's rain. Freedom. Freedom is a hard-won thing. You've got to work for it, fight for it, day and night for it. And every generation has to win it again!*)



YWLTP – support and promote young women's leadership

Imagine... a person in 2021 after the Program -- Noella Nakabuye

A lot has changed to a virtual world due to Covid-19, and, that is the new normal. Believe it and adjust or you are going to be left behind. The YWLTP was initially a two-week program in Mexico. As we all know, many events with family, even nationally and internationally, have been cancelled. I tell you what, The YWLTP Team did not cancel the program, and rather they challenged themselves to go virtually, not because they were good or knew a lot about the virtual world but it was a risk too not to try. The commitment and teamwork expressed has enabled the team to guide 38 participants from 10 countries on a transformative leadership journey. We have created and built a community based on four principles (Co-existing, Interaction, Cooperation, Common-Unity). We have shared about human rights and how they influence the work in our communities.

We are ending stage one of the program by exploring who a leader is and exploring different styles of leadership by looking at the lives of some Grail women who led or are still leading transformative actions. All these topics had the aim of enabling participants to discover the kind of leader they want to be and also challenge them on a virtual world. For example, during the Nov 22nd meeting, participants were asked to use a Jamboard to share who they imagined they'd be in 2021 after the program in Mexico. **Jamboard** is a creative, collaborative and a real-time application that enables a team/group of people to share ideas at the same time on the same board in a creative way of inserting images, drawing pictures, using stickers etc. This gave us a picture of what those young women want to be in 2021.





We ended stage one of the program with a zoom meeting on Dec 13th where participants evaluated stage one and were oriented for stage two. **Stage two has started**, which purpose is meeting Grail women in their communities. Let us **welcome the participants** in our groups and projects. They want to get more involved.

And now for your viewing pleasure, please watch this video of the YWLTP process.

English: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ALiLaUD0sg&t=1s>

Spanish: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spbPrWrrKuM>

Portuguese: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KReZuIe-68o>

Internet challenges

Is internet access a privilege?...Challenging times call for innovation: How we are moving forward during the pandemic... by Abida Jamal, Khensani Nhanombe and Tina Kalala

In the last International Grail Assembly, the Young Women Leadership Training Program was approved as part of the Grail's commitment to supporting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and particularly the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of young women. The program was designed to take place in a biennial timeframe, in different Grail countries with different young women. After a successful cohort in 2018 in Mozambique, where 20 participants from 11 countries came together to build an international community and dream together of a better world for all, it was time for Mexico in 2020! We planned and organized everything and suddenly boom: a global pandemic that was restricting travelling and forcing countries to close their borders indefinitely. At first, we believed things would get better soon enough for us to move on as planned. We held on to that last strand of hope until the very last second when we had to make the hard call: our program in Mexico was cancelled until further notice.

As the entire world reckoned with the pandemic, we did an introspection of our own. We reflected on how we could use this time to still fulfill our mission and bring together young women in a meaningful way. As the world embraced the digital world, we took a brave step in the same direction. We stepped out of our comfort zone and set out to create a virtual program for the training. Where to begin? Our biggest concern at all times was how to not leave anyone behind. We wanted to make sure every Grail country had the opportunity to participate in the program despite the growing digital gap that is increasing the levels of inequalities in our world. Aware of the specific limitations in terms of structural barriers and access to technology that different countries are faced with, as a first step we decided to conduct a survey with the participants to help us map key factors to help us determine which platforms were best suited for our program. Some of the points our survey covered included the type of devices participants owned or had available to them (smartphones, computers, laptop, etc), the options participants had to access such devices (public library, school, internet café, etc), the conditions of use (whether they share such devices or not, whether they can access them at any date and time, etc), storage limitations, operating system options, and internet related issues such as the type of internet access available to them, the speed of the internet and its cost. At first, we believed these questions were indeed very thorough and covered every possible aspect. Only after getting the responses from the participants, we realized that not leaving anyone behind meant going the extra mile. It meant doing the hard work, the work that can be easily shrugged off as "none of our business". In their responses to our survey, the participants mentioned issues ranging from poor electricity to having to travel long distances to get to an Internet access point.

Participants have welcomed the challenge of working in the different platforms like zoom, google classroom, google docs, etc. The virtual world is costly in terms of time and money since we are operating internationally in different time zones and different technological capabilities and challenges. Some participants had to drop out of the program and others sometimes fail to attend the scheduled zoom meetings or turn-in their assignments on time. But the team doesn't leave anyone behind as the saying goes, "We are in this together". So, the struggle continues.

A lesson learnedInternet access, Not a gift, Not a privilege, but a right...

It's important to remember that this technology challenge has been staring us in the face for decades. It is not just a COVID-19 issue—it is a civil rights issue of the utmost importance. Smartphones can provide Internet access to families that can't afford or access broadband—often at the additional cost of a data plan or mobile hotspot—but half of the global doesn't have smartphone or access to Internet. Clearly, connectivity is an issue of infrastructure and affordability. Over and over, the digital world isn't an isolated problem. It's not only a rural problem or a pandemic problem. It's a hardware problem. An equity problem. A social problem. An economic problem. And an even bigger education problem than ever before. Local skill development, community leadership, support for local innovation are critical parts of the next wave of the Internet access. People have the energy to realize aspirations and build digital capacity--provided we remove the barriers!

**COMMISSION FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (CSocD) – by Abida Jamal**

The 59th session of the Commission for Social Development (CSocD59) will take place from 8 to 17 February 2021 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The Commission is the advisory body responsible for the social development pillar of global development. CSocD59 is expected to focus on the priority theme, “Socially just transition towards sustainable development: the role of digital technologies on social development and well-being of all.”. The Grail will be attending some of the sessions and side events that will be held virtually. A link for the events will be provided from the CSocD59 website: <http://bit.ly/un-csod59> **WATCH FOR IT!**

COMMISSION on the STATUS OF WOMEN: CSW 65, 15-26 March 2021 – by Abida Jamal

As the principal global intergovernmental body exclusively dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women, 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.



Due to the current pandemic, CSW-65 will mostly happen online. The cancellation of all events during CSW-64 in 2020 meant the absence of a fundamental space for women’s rights’ organisations to review and celebrate 25 years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action – we hope CSW-65 will serve to remedy to this. With that...

So, what does a virtual CSW mean? For us: ensure a global inclusive and accessible forum. Making sure that no one is left behind.

We hope this year’s theme - Women’s full and effective participation and decision-making in public life, as well as the elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls - will allow the space to explore issues that were put aside due to last year’s cancellation, and to also raise the major impact of the current pandemic on women’s rights in all areas.

For that, the Grail is...

- Engaging GLUNN/YWLTP teams to take the lead in preparations: no interns this time;
- In January we’ll send out applications for those wanting to be on a parallel event panel
- Working with girls and young women in Grail countries to ensure global participation
- Ensuring 2 virtual parallel events: For Girls (14-18 years old) *Empowered-girls Eliminating Gender-based Violence* and For young Women (19 – 30 years old) *Sacred Activism: Sustaining Progress through Spirituality in Unprecedented Times*. (Week 2) Panelists will be selected from applications.
- Getting involved in other events: WGG Girls statement writing, Conversation circles, etc.
- Ensuring Grail participation in other virtual parallel events and networking with other organizations.

We call on Grail countries to start seeking potential participants to be part of the panels. In January we will send out detailed information. We will miss having the girls and young women in New York, but their voices still need to be heard so help us find the possible panelists. Others will be able to zoom in on our and any of the CSW panels. We will share all of that information. This is an opportunity for our panelists to play a vital role in responding to the pandemic in providing the grounds for the future of the world that is more inclusive of girls and young women’s needs and vision, and therefore more equal and sustainable for all.

More details in the **next GLUNN Newsletter** edition (January/February 2021). **WATCH FOR IT!**

IDG***More about the celebration of International Day of the Girl in Mexico... from Ushuaia Camarena***

El Grial de México Norte - Sur comparte con nosotras el maravilloso trabajo que en colaboración con otras compañeras realizaron en el marco del Día Internacional de la Niña.

De la voz de Ushuaia Camarena, nuestra hermana del Grial, podemos leer sobre las actividades del Día Internacional de la Niña que se realizaron en las comunidades de Cherán (Michoacán) y Santa María Cortijo (Oaxaca), donde gracias al trabajo en red y solidario de otras mujeres, niñas y niños de las comunidades aprendieron sobre la importancia del Día Internacional de la Niña al mismo tiempo que alzaron su voz para hacerse escuchar.

Es importante recalcar el compromiso de las mujeres del Grial y de las comunidades, así como de las niñas y niños quienes tomaron todas las medidas necesarias para reunirse de manera segura y evitar los riesgos cotidianos a los que nos enfrentamos a causa del COVID-19.

¡Maravilloso trabajo!



The North-South Grail group in Mexico shared the wonderful work they did for International Girl's Day.

Ushuaia Camarena, our Grail sister, wrote about the IDG activities that took place in the communities of Cherán (Michoacán) and Santa María Cortijo (Oaxaca). Thanks to networking and solidarity work with other women, girls and children of the communities learned about the importance of IDG while raising their voices to make them heard. It is important to emphasize the commitment of Grail women and the communities, as well as girls and boys who took all necessary steps to meet safely and avoid the daily risks, we face because of COVID-19.

Wonderful job!

Children and adolescents were invited. The mothers also participated—some from interest, others curiosity---as they never had such an intergenerational meeting before. This turned out to be quite fruitful for mothers and children. The first activity was sharing about the rights of girls. This was very new to the group. After lunch they played a few games. The second activity involved creating a drawing, which they shared and could take home with them. The event was co-sponsored by the Grail and the Afro-American Women's Center.

Michoacán: Their introductions were fun: say your name, where you live and make the sound of your favorite animal! Then there was a dynamic presentation about IDG, why it was started, etc. The girls and boys shared about their human rights as children. They also spoke about their responsibilities. They spoke about covid-19—their fears and sadness. After lunch and games, they continued talking very seriously about home life, the violence often experienced there, alcoholism of the adults, etc. They drew pictures expressing their feelings. At the end they said they wanted to continue this meeting at least once more.

