

CWC News Sheet

Country Women's Council USA

www.cwcusa.org

Associated Country Women of the World

www.acww.org.uk



View 2010 Triennial Photos - <http://acwwusa2010.shutterfly.com/>

Volume 25, Issue 2
Winter 2012

CWC Chairman — Marilyn Poppen

LOOK!

ATTENTION ACWW INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

This is the last issue of CWC News Sheet to be mailed **free** to you.

News Sheet continues to be the largest budget expense to CWC. A solution had to be found, and thus the board made the decision.

Beginning with the 2012 Summer issue of this newsletter, ACWW Life members and the ACWW USA CWC societies' state boards will continue to receive complimentary issues.

ACWW Individual members can still receive copies by subscription at \$18.00 for three years. A subscription form is found inside ... plus you can print one from the CWC web site. Click on "News Sheet" to find it.

News Sheet has been available to read **online** since 2005. If you prefer a **hard copy**, we hope you will be able to subscribe.

I enjoyed the beautiful Fall weather (not a drop of rain) – this is the nicest Fall I can remember. I was very pleased with the attendance at the CWC Meeting in Columbus, Ohio. We had an informative meeting and interesting tours. We thank Dolores Dove, Elaine Drane and all members of Ohio Home and Community Education for their hard work to make it a successful event.

It is now time for students to get the Ruth Sayre Scholarship applications filled out and sent to the president of the state CWC organizations for a signature. The list of member organizations can be found on the internet by going to cwcusa.org and clicking on Membership in the list of options underneath. Applications can be submitted if there is an active CWC organization in their state. Winners will be posted on the CWC website after June 1. Letters by mail will only be sent to winners, not everyone who applied, as was done in the past. This is a cost-saving measure, because postage is becoming more expensive all the time, and we usually have over 100 applications. Since several organizations dropped CWC membership for 2011, and dues income has diminished, we have fewer funds available.

It has been the tradition to send free issues of the CWC News Sheet to all ACWW members, even though we get no funds from ACWW dues to help pay for them. After much discussion, the board recommended we no longer send free News Sheets to ACWW individual members. Life members will continue to receive their free CWC News Sheet, and anyone can subscribe to the newsletter by sending \$18 to the CWC editor for a 3-year subscription. If you are a retiring officer of your organization, as I am, you will not be receiving News Sheet after this issue (unless you are a life member), and will most likely want to subscribe to it so you can continue to read about CWC activities.

On January 1, several changes will take place on the CWC Board. I will be retiring, and Marian Brown will assume the duties of CWC Chairman. We all thank her for 15 years of being CWC Editor. She has done an extraordinary job of it. Stepping into the position of Editor will be our USA Area President, Beverly Earnhart. She has had much experience publishing newsletters for two different organizations, and is willing to do double duty by being both Editor of CWC and the ACWW/USA Area President. She will be a busy lady! Vivian Dion will be retiring from her job as treasurer, and Javonna Earsom from Oklahoma will be assuming those duties. Vivian has held this position for the last 4 years, and has experienced a great deal of extra work due to hosting the ACWW Triennial in 2010. We are thankful that she is so knowledgeable about income tax forms and other government requirements. She filed everything herself and saved us hundreds of dollars in lawyer and/or CPA fees. Vivian has been such a blessing to us and we thank her for her dedicated work.



Continued page 2.

Beverly Earnhart ~ ACWW-USA AREA PRESIDENT 2010-2013



Holiday Greetings !!! We had our first snow of the year, yesterday. It was so pretty coming down. The best part is it didn't stick to the roads, just the grass and rooftops. Now if the whole winter could be that way..... It was a jump starter for me to get into the holiday mood.

Thank you to our hosts and all who attended the ACWW/CWC area meeting in Columbus, Ohio in September. We were disappointed that World President May Kidd couldn't join us, but she did send a letter of greetings and regret that was read. Jo Almond represented ACWW as the Secretary to update us on what was happening within ACWW. She also reported on the triennials past and future.

I hope you are busy working on your walks for "ACWW Women Walk the World" on or about April 29th, 2012. We learned more about the walk recently at board meeting. A sponsorship application attachment is available for the societies to use. It was decided not to put on the website to discourage misuse. The form is available from the Area Presidents or the ACWW Office upon request as an attachment. It can be snail mail or e-mailed to you to copy as needed for sponsorships. It was stressed that this activity should be planned and carried out at the local level. Everybody around the world is invited to take part: family, friends, children, babies, women, men, ACWW members, non-members. It is hoped to attract media interest in ACWW. There are flyers and small sponsorship cards available from Central Office. The new logo design can be used on items with the permission from the London Office.

There have been some changes in the Central Office staff in the past few months. Ian has retired, and Chloe will be retiring after 25 years on January 31st, 2012. Terry Soares, will be leaving December 2nd after 23 years of service. New staff has been hired and are doing an excellent job of continuing on with the workings of the ACWW. Jennifer is giving a new look to the January 2012 Country Woman. She will be editing the Country Woman as well as working on the website in house. Roxana will be doing the membership. Other personnel include Amit, Juliet, Sharon, Christine and Zoran.

The Agriculture committee is recommending the planting of vegetable gardens around the world. Poor health of many can be attributed to the lack of vegetables in the diet. They recommend we support the recommendations and resolutions as presented at Hot Springs.

You should be receiving soon or have received your membership renewal notices from the London office. It would be very helpful if the dues could be paid by credit card. The banks charge so much for the transactions from US to £ that a significant amount is lost to these charges. Our help is needed to offset this charge. It is suggested that you call your credit card company ahead of time to be sure the monies go through in a timely fashion. They also are asking for e-mail addresses whenever possible to be more efficient in sending and receiving of information to you.

The Finance Committee reminds us that we need to continually promote becoming an ACWW individual member. The cost is \$42.00 per year or \$105.00 for three years. They are looking for ways to cut costs but need our help to keep ACWW growing.

I look forward to another year of visits to your conferences and the promotion of ACWW projects and activities.

Wishing you a healthy and prosperous Holiday Season and Happy New Year.

Beverly Earnhart

(Chairman's article continued from page 1)

As I hand the chairman's duties to Marian, I wish her the best in this position. There is no one more knowledgeable about how CWC "works", so this should be an easy transition for her. I know everyone will give her their full cooperation, as they did for me. I want to thank everyone on the board for responding to my frequent e-mails in a timely manner. I also want to thank everyone who helped in any way to make things run smoothly for CWC, especially when we hosted the ACWW Triennial. I am amazed that a group of volunteers, led by the core committee, was able to do everything that needed to be done without the use of a professional meeting planner. Other countries have used professional help when they hosted the Triennial. This is an extraordinary organization with many willing volunteers who are very good at what they do. I encourage everyone to take part in the April 29, 2012 "Women Walk the World" event to raise funds for Pennies for Friendship.

It has been a privilege to work with each one of you, and I look forward to seeing you at the next CWC meeting in New Hampshire in 2012!

ACWW WORLD PRESIDENT'S GREETINGS
COLUMBUS, OHIO SEPTEMBER 2011



Dear Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to send greetings on behalf of ACWW members worldwide, to the 2011 US Area Conference in Columbus, Ohio. I wish to thank your ACWW Area President, Beverly Earnhart, for inviting me to be with you. Sadly this proved impossible, due to family illness. I am so disappointed at missing out on meeting with you – but hope to join you next year.

The main reason I wanted so much to be with you today is to thank you for hosting that amazing ACWW Triennial Conference in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in April last year. The attention to every tiny detail, the hospitality and kind consideration shown to each and every delegate, great speakers, exceptional events, the smiles and warmth of that American welcome.....what more could anyone ask! I, for one, shall never forget Hot Springs – and of course finding myself elected World President right there means that America and you wonderful American people will forever occupy a special place in my heart. Just keep on teaching the world to sing, won't you!

Your members have served loyally on ACWW Boards and committees over the years, and continue to do so. I thank them all for their dedicated service to ACWW. Any who are among you today, please take a bow. You deserve it!! I am truly delighted that your own Jo Ellen Almond now serves as ACWW's Honorary Secretary. She is a great asset to the organisation - and to me! Jo Ellen is in charge of the ACWW side of organising the 2013 Triennial Conference in Chennai, India. It could not be in better hands! I am sure Jo will be only too happy to talk with you about 2013. It is my hope as well as hers, that lots and lots of you will come in India in two years' time. Start planning now – see you there!

There are two other upcoming ACWW events about which I am sure you will hear more.

First: Each year, the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is held at the United Nations in New York. Each year there is a different theme. The 2012 theme is Rural Women – it could be tailor-made for ACWW! It is our aim to have ACWW members there in New York in force – around end February, start of March 2012, actual dates to be confirmed. Of course it is necessary to register first, and ACWW will help you with that. If YOU would like the thrill of being part of a huge UN event, please let Beverly know.

Second: Women Walk the World. On ACWW Day, 29th April 2012, we invite members, families and friends to 'walk the world' for ACWW. Your walk can be anywhere, long or short, fast or slow, along the beach, in the park, round the village. Anywhere! The choice is yours. If we all start our walk at 10 am in our time zone, then within 24 hours we shall have walked the world. This event has two aims: to gain publicity and also funds for ACWW. And don't forget a third aim - to make us all extremely fit and healthy! So, start making your plans now, tell the press, find sponsors - and get walking! It is going to be FUN.

Finally, I wish you a productive conference, with lots of healthy debate, plus lots of smiles, laughter – and songs!
ENJOY!

May Kidd, ACWW World President



Women Walk the World On or about April 29, 2012. Detailed planning to be done at local level, Area Presidents were asked to encourage member societies and individual members to start making their plans. **Three promotional items have been produced:**

Small flyer with space to write details of local walk, e.g. date, location, start, distance.

Small sponsorship card for giving to local businesses, etc.

Sponsorship form for individual walkers to get sponsors to commit to support. This will be available as an email attachment.

These are available from ACWW office by mail or at acww.org.uk

Start now to make your plans to walk the world with other ACWW members. Suggested start time is 10 a.m. in your respective time zone. Within 24 hours members will have Walked the World for promoting fitness and ACWW. This project also supports Resolution 109 - Obesity Awareness - "That ACWW member societies urge their governments to raise the awareness of obesity and the ensuing harm to physical health." Passed in 2007 at Triennial Conference.

CWC CHAIRMAN 2012-2014
Marian Brown



CWC TREASURER 2012-2014
Javonna Earsom



CWC VICE CHAIRMAN ~ Marilyn Spence

The 2012 Ruth B. Sayre Scholarship guidelines and application form is available to print from the CWC web site www.cwcusa.org. It also is available from CWC society presidents. Please fill out application completely and comply with the rules listed, especially having your application signed by a society president/chairman from your state. The winners will be listed on the web site after June 1st.

On behalf of the Ruth B. Sayre Scholarship Committee, I would like to thank all who sent money in "honor of" and "in memory of", or just sent donations to the scholarship fund. As a result of your donations in Columbus, OH we raised \$503.00. Please continue to remember the scholarship in the coming year. Honor your friends and family by giving to the scholarship fund. Thank you, Marilyn

NOTES OF THANKS FROM 2011 SAYRE RECIPIENTS

Thank you for selecting me for the Ruth B. Sayre Scholarship. I greatly appreciate it and it will help me further my education at South Dakota State. Sincerely, Kelsey Sears

Thank you for offering the Ruth B. Sayre Scholarship and blessing me as a recipient for the 2011-2012 year. As a single mother, often continuing my education has been a struggle and I would like to thank you for assisting me with my college expenses. I have a huge weight that has been lifted, knowing that the extra help is there. Patti Hoag

I would like to make a donation to the Ruth B. Sayre Scholarship Fund. Enclosed is my check made out to Ruth B. Sayre Scholarship Fund, c/o Javonna Earsom, CWC Treasurer, 1126 W Broadway, Sulphur OK 73086.

In Memory of: _____ Next of kin: _____

Address: _____

In Honor of: _____

Address: _____

Donated By: (name) _____

**KNOWN DONATIONS TO ACWW & CWC
NOT PREVIOUSLY REPORTED IN NEWS SHEET**

Pennies for Friendship

Oklahoma Home & Community Education	\$1654.55
CWC Meeting-Columbus OH-Silent Auction	882.00
Pennies collection-CWC Meeting	263.00
Alabama Homemakers & Community Leaders	611.71
Nat'l Master Farm Homemakers Guild	284.10
Maryland Family & Community Education	719.53
Margaret Kinne	50.00

Ruth B. Sayre Scholarship Fund

John R. Sayre in Memory of his mother	250.00
Iowa Master Farm Homemakers Guild	140.00
Kansas Master Farm Homemakers Guild	10.00
Illinois Okawville Nite Homemakers Ext. Unit	20.00
Indiana Ext. Homemakers Assn. (for 2010)	100.00
Indiana Ext. Homemakers Assn. (for 2011)	100.00
Warren Co. Farm Bureau, Indianola, Iowa	100.00
Wisconsin Assn. For Home & Community Ed.	35.00
Nat'l Master Farm Homemakers Guild	109.42

Sayre Fund- donations at CWC Meeting

Jo Ellen Almond in honor of Joe & June Mason	20.00
Pam Carlin	20.00
Marilyn Daughhetee-memory of Cindy Daughhetee	20.00
Diane Cathey in memory of Kathy Bodley	20.00
Beverly Earnhart in memory of her parents	25.00
Javonna Earsom in memory of Jeanette Worden	20.00
Linda Gause in memory of Linda Bassett	25.00
Sue Gilliam in memory of Jeanette Worden	20.00
Ellie Maroon in memory of Bob Peverly	10.00
Joan McEachern in memory of Bob Peverly	10.00
Mr. & Mrs. Omer Ouellette-memory of grandson	20.00
Judy Perreault-memory of parents & in-laws	25.00
Marilyn Poppen in memory of Mabel Moore	10.00
Marilynn Spence in honor of Kathryn Floyd	20.00
Mary Lu Strack in memory of Bob Peverly	10.00
Sondra Ann Straight in memory of Mabel Moore	25.00
Pam Vaughan in memory of Jeanette Worden	20.00
Loy Walker in memory of friend Erma Langlas	10.00

Sayre Collection at CWC Meeting 173.50

Total Sayre Scholarship Fund monies

Collected at CWC Meeting: \$503.50

Handbook Sales at CWC Meeting 120.00

Women's Walk for the World

Collection at CWC Meeting in honor of Marilyn Poppen 37.00

Water for All

Oklahoma Home & Community Education	994.32
Alabama Homemakers & Community Leaders	85.00
Nat'l Master Farm Homemakers Guild	112.17

Sight and Nutrition

Nat'l Master Farm Homemakers Guild 112.17

Feed the World

Nat'l Master Farm Homemakers Guild 112.17

ACWW MEMBERSHIP NEWS

New or Renewing

(known as of November 1, 2011)

WELCOME!

Linda Daniels—Geraldine, Alabama
 Kay Brinkley—Paris, Illinois
 Marilyn DeVries—Freeport, Illinois
 Rosemary Gibbons—Edgewood, Illinois
 Joan Haren—Cullom, Illinois
 Marjorie Houghland—Paris, Illinois
 Winona Huckshold—Nashville, Illinois
 Cynthia Kelley—McLean, Illinois
 Mary Lambert—Warrenville, Illinois
 Jeanne Lee—Sagamon, Illinois
 Irene McNamara—Elgin, Illinois
 Lila McNees—Clinton, Illinois
 Catherine Pokropinski—Mount Carroll, Illinois
 Beverly Stoner—Carroll, Illinois
 Donna Wellman—Lee Center, Illinois
 Sheila Wells—Bloomington, Illinois
 Shirley Trabert—Minneola, Kansas
 Ann Britton—Troy, Michigan
 Marie Haas—Lapeer, Michigan
 Alvenia Nimmo—Clinton, Oklahoma
 Doris Curd—Mountain City, Tennessee
 Freda Rajbansee—Appalacia, Virginia
 Betty Hill—Ripon, Wisconsin
 Emma Peterson—Sharon, Wisconsin

**ACWW LIFE MEMBERS
MISSING OR DECEASED?**

Phyllis Worden—Cottonwood, Arizona
 Mrs. H. James Renaud—East Lansing, Michigan
 Julie Chamberlain—Lansing, Michigan
 Mrs. Wesley Nunemaker—Sapulpa, Oklahoma

Let Us Know

**FAREWELL MESSAGE FROM VIV DION,
CWC TREASURER 2008-2011**

It is through the wisdom and guidance of past officers who help new board members do their job accurately. We learn from our mentors, and I wish to thank past Treasurers, Rita Ann Venner and Judy Bender for their support and help along the way. As Henry Ford said "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. And working together is success."

Now the baton is passed to the new CWC Treasurer, Javonna Earsom of Oklahoma HCE. I will be there to help in the transition, just as Rita Ann and Judy were for me.

Thank you ladies and the CWC members who enriched my life, and helped empower a woman from New Hampshire to learn, grow, and discover the beauty of CWC friendships from across this great nation.

National Master Farm Homemakers Guild

Loy Walker, past president, will be hard to follow. She took her President position serious and did an excellent job. She also traveled a lot attending the different meetings.

As you all know, I'm the new kid on the block, only being National President since January 1st of this year. I've enjoyed my position so far, even though I was slow to accept at first, making Loy a little nervous. Everyone had encouraged me to take the position including my Kansas guild members and said they would help me in any way. Just ask. I have had a very warm welcome from all the states' members and I thank you for that.

Please continue to donate to Pennies for Friendship, as this money is for the operational costs and organization of ACWW and any extra money not used, is given to other projects.

I was pleased the special project "Farm Rescue" was accepted and that we sent a donation of \$1000.00 to this nonprofit organization.

The first meeting I went to as National President was in Kansas at their annual meeting in March. I did attend the Triennial along with Ron, my husband, for 3 days. All I can say, is AWESOME. This was my first Triennial and was very impressed with the ladies from different countries, their attire and friendliness. The morning and afternoon tea was very nice, and the Gala was wonderful. The arrangement of food was pretty and tasty, the flowers and entertainment was superb. The Princess from Malaysia was very interesting to visit with and we took pictures with her which she seemed pleased we asked. Finding out she had to wear white for 100 days in mourning for her father was very interesting.

The weeks have gone by so quickly since our National Convention March 29 - 31 in Myrtle Beach, S.C. A big "Thank You" to Cheryl Ettinger and Marilyn Easter and all the ladies from S.C. for the wonderful convention. A lot of planning went into this convention and the tours, meals, shopping, Carolina Opry, Brookgreen Gardens, Banquet and especially the Southern Hospitality was superb. There was a nice attendance from Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky and South Carolina.

Congratulations to the new Vice President, Loretta Lyons, Kentucky and new Secretary, Clara Riley, South Carolina. They will take office starting January 1, 2012 thru 2014. I also appointed Anita Davis, Kansas as the International Chairlady for the years of 2011 - 2013.

Be planning now for the next National Convention to be held August 25 - 28, 2012 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Six (6) cute ears of Iowa corn extended the invitation. Our National website is

www.nationalmasterfarmhomemakersguild.org. Loy Walker is our webmaster, but would like to step down if someone else would take over for her.

National Master Farm Homemaker Guild needs to come up with someone to take over as Secretary of CWC starting January 1, 2013.

I will do my best the next three (3) years informing you of upcoming events and activities. Thank you for your cooperation. Each and every one of you are special to me.

Cheryl Denk, National President MFHG

Old friends are gold! New friends are diamonds! If you get a Diamond, don't forget the Gold! Because to hold a diamond, you will always need a base of gold!!

National Volunteer Outreach Network

July of this year found the members of the National Volunteer Outreach Network attending the annual conference in Green Bay, WI. A big thanks to the members of Wisconsin Association for Home and Community Education for a terrific conference. As I sat and listened to the 8 state reports everything I have known about our 58,115 members were reaffirmed again and again. Priorities continue to be education, leadership development, volunteer community support along with international program support.

Education not only for our membership but education support for our children. The NVON Program Library continues where listed programs are available from the NVON Vice President for a nominal charge. Reading to Head Start students and others where a book is read to a classroom and each child receives a copy of that book to take home. In Wisconsin 45 counties participate with over 5,000 children involved in the Wisconsin Bookworms. Indiana's First Books for Kids just celebrated 10 years in existence with 3,000 volunteers who read to children and over one million books being distributed.

NVON's Project in Common "Let's Take Off" has prompted state programs such as On the Move and IN the Grove, A Matter of Balance, Power Up the Day and Health Motivators along with others to help members get moving with regular physical exercise and more informed about diet changes, annual physicals and health screenings.

International projects include the sewing of dresses and shorts for African girls and boys. Providing children in Ghana with a dining room complete with table and chairs. Donations to a learning center of sewing machines, fabric and notions. Financing an ACWW Water Project in Cameroon, donations to Hayes Pure Water Foundation to purchase water purification units along with NVON endowment seed monies that snow-

balled from \$358.59 to \$2,400 to purchase water filters and buckets for Bo, Sierra Leone. Several state programs of financial donations to help build new houses following disasters.

Volunteer community support projects from our member states such as Socks for Soldiers where items that start with the letter "S" were collected and shipped to US Soldiers. Sewing of puppy pillows, blankets, pinafores and book bags that were donated to a state children's hospital. School supplies for needy children and food items to local food pantries. Those are just a few individual projects along with thousands of dollars in higher education scholarships were awarded along with many, many 4-H scholarships.

A big note of importance --- 3 of our member states will celebrate 100 year anniversaries in the next 2 years. Arkansas in 2012, North Carolina and Indiana in 2013 and there will be more in the next few years. One hundred years is a long time for an organization to be in existence and we really need to be proud.

As we all know our organizations have experienced some kind of financial cutback or reorganization. And each and every time that happens our members step forward and do whatever is needed. As Alice Brown, President of Kentucky Extension Homemakers Association reflected in her report she had this to say "I am reminded of what can be accomplished when our members are called upon to make things happen. Our members will always be prepared to give more than 100% of what is asked of them."

Linda Gause, President

Jo Almond, ACWW 2013 Triennial Conference Coordinator, Visits Site at Chennai, India



Photo: Left to right, Hon. Sec. ACWW Jo Almond, World President May Kidd, Area President Sister Viji, DMI: Team Mr. Michael, Sister Rita, Fr. Arul Raj

The World conference will soon be a reality. It is less than 18 months away. I have just returned home from a site visit of the Venue and prospective hotel possibilities. This was a very exciting adventure for me as it was my first visit to India. I found that India hospitality is wonderful and the culture is so worth educating yourself on. Our India society sisters are very enthusiastic and eager to host this world conference.

Upon arriving at the Chennai airport, the host society, DMI **(The Society of Daughters of Mary Immaculate)** met me with open arms and flowers. Even as late as it was (11:45pm) when I arrived, the airport was alive with activity. I was then whisked away to my room at the DMI, Hilltop, for a nights rest before meeting with the DMI team on Monday morning.

responsibilities of the host society. I found that the DMI team was well on its way of having the arrangements for the conference set.

The team and I traveled to the conference Venue, Chennai Trade Center, (Convention Center). We had a walkthrough of the facility to make sure enough space was available for all facets of the triennial conference. The venue is extremely adequate for all plenaries, workshops, displays and area meeting.

The entrance of the Convention Center is very impressive with the water fountain to greet you as you enter and the very spacious lobby entrance.

The hotels I visited were very impressive. The cost and photos of suggested hotels will be posted in the Country Woman later in the year.

The sites and food of Chennai are fascinating; you will enjoy every minute you are there. Do some research and think about hosting a dinner or India night. Dress in India attire (Sari) makes it fun and educational all at once.

Don't forget to mark your calendars - Sept. 26 – October 2, 2013. Chennai, India.

For further information view the website: www.acwwindia2013.com.

**RETIRING CWC CHAIRMAN AND TREASURER
Marilyn Poppen and Vivian Dion**



Left to right: Marilyn and Vivian

2012 CWC BOARD



Back row, left to right: Linda Gause, Javonna Ear-
som, Pam Hanfland, Marilyn Spence.
Front row, left to right: Nancy Remmers, Marian
Brown, Cheryl Denk, Beverly Earnhart.

NEW OR RENEW — CWC News Sheet
Subscription Form ~ 3 years for \$18.00

CWC News Sheet subscription service is for members of Master Farm Homemakers Guild, National Volunteer Outreach Network, ACWW-CWC Affiliated Societies, and/or anyone wanting to receive a mailed copy who ARE NOT already receiving News Sheet through their ACWW membership status or national/state officer position.

Member of: (check all that apply) _____ MFHG _____ NVON _____ Affiliated _____ other

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Make CHECK/MONEY ORDER PAYABLE to: Country Women's Council USA

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UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS NEWS, NEW YORK
Anushka Wirasinha, UN HQ Rep, ACWW ~ December 2011



At the 55th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW55) "Making our schools safer: working with girls and boys" event, Daniel Prins, UN Head of Disarmament spoke of gun violence in schools mentioning 5 risk factors, the first being "Limited Economic Opportunity." Second was "Large Young Population" which he said works together with "Limited Economic Opportunity" sometimes and if education is not satisfactory; if it is not at standards that young people feel they need for their future, resentment grows and the search for easy alternatives using guns occur. Thirdly he pointed out that "Women's Participation in Society" is vital. It is not only about how large an issue our youth population is that brings difficulty and challenges in the field of security but also how freely women can participate in societies and how much they contribute to the economic side of life in society. Fourth point he outlined was "Limited Rule of Law" and how poor police protection and justice systems that do not work create an easy alternative available to take justice into one's own hands. Last point he mentioned was the "Ready and easy availability of arms in a society." He said ready availability of guns may often work out in the wrong direction. He went on to also say that in the UN System there is traditionally a division made conceptually between conflict settings and peace. Where conflict is a matter looked into by the Security Council while peace is handled through a more development-oriented approach. However, he stressed that recently it has been found, seen, acknowledged and internalized that if you look at people dying from conflict from violence, from gun use and armed violence, most affected and killed by it are not in conflict settings where there is a war etc. We see that the traditional division where you have conflict and a set of tools does not work well anymore. For instance in West Africa where we see it through a lens of conflict such as in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Ivory Coast, although there is a conflict side to it, if we look at armed violence that goes on there and people who die from bullet wounds etc., there is a lot of endemic crime in that setting of conflict. When conflict and crime zones become similar then traditional divisions do not work that well and tools used must change. You cannot solve problems that you would traditionally solve in conflict areas with military in the same way. Therefore the response to most problems focus on a diversification of a mix of instruments that we can use. For example more police forces are sent to areas that were traditionally conflict areas. All female police units from Bangladesh have been very successful in venturing into new ground. He said we need more answers in the police field and in the rule of law than simply going in with the military to end conflict. He emphasized that small arms is a particularly difficult category to deal with as the big difference between other types of arms and small arms is that civilians in most countries can own small arms. Two thirds of the approximately 1 billion of small arms is in the hands of civilians. Therefore you need effective controls. There is a strong gender side to small arms where it is mostly men who use them and die from them but when they fall away from the family then women have to take different roles often having the duty of being head of household etc. He said that different countries have different small arms control and there are big differences between countries on regulations imposed on them.

Ravi Karkara, Child Participation Specialist, UNICEF shed some light about action young people take themselves through their active participation to end violence in school settings. He mentioned the UN study of Violence against Children where it was discovered that violence against girls and boys mainly occurred in family settings and also in schools by teachers, attendees and administrators. In Nepal school children were asked to map unsafe spaces. What they considered unsafe areas included the path that led to the school, the toilets and the classroom itself. Girls created a campaign called "What is violence against girls?" that resulted in the "First Girls Safety Net Project" where it spread to over 500 villages across rural Nepal. Many boys supported this effort by the "Boys for Change Project" where boys publicly spoke saying they do not want to be a part of gender based violence. In Ethiopia Africa boys from schools got together creating a campaign taking a vow not to use sexualized language against girls and indulge in any kind of gender based violence when it came to the school setting. They expanded this campaign by going into cross sections of the streets and talking about ending sexual violence especially by older men and other boys on the street, creating a safer space and more protective environment for girls. He said that in Romania a national campaign was launched to end physical and humiliating punishment in the school setting. The campaign "Violence free schools in Romania" started with four schools and led to a one year campaign where an advertising agency came in for free and worked with the students to create an ad that showed an angel with a black eye saying that "this is the angel we have in Romania" depicting the hitting of children in the school system. The campaign was a huge success and led to the first legislation in Romania to ban all forms of physical and psychological punishment.

Preparations are well underway for CSW56 that will take place at UN Headquarters from Monday, 27 February to Friday, 9 March 2012. The priority theme would be the "empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges."

The United Nation's is evolving into a greater force of strength for women through its newly established UN Women. Executive Director of UN Women, Michelle Bachelet outlined a comprehensive policy agenda to end Violence against Women globally at her first message on International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. She said "Although equality between women and men is guaranteed in the Constitutions of 139 countries and territories, all too often women are denied justice and protection from violence."

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