



ACWW 31st Triennial
World Conference

CONFERENCE INFORMATION No.7

Associated Country Women of the World
31st Triennial World Conference
Ottawa, Canada

26 April - 1 May 2026

Conference Information No.7

Biographies of the Nominees for election to the Board of Trustees

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All information published on the
31st Triennial World Conference can be found online at
www.acww.org.uk/2026-world-conference

WHO IS THIS INFORMATION FOR?

Any ACWW Voting Member Society (Categories 1, 2, or 3), all other ACWW members for information.

WHEN WAS THIS DOCUMENT FIRST SENT TO MEMBERS?

17 September 2025

DO I NEED TO REPLY?

No response is necessary, as this document provides information to members about those nominees standing for election to the Board of Trustees at the 31st Triennial World Conference.

Guidance for readers

Each nominee was invited to share up to 300 words about themselves and why they wish to stand for election to ACWW's Board of Trustees. Minor typographical mistakes have been corrected, but for the most part these texts are as submitted by the Nominees.

Nominee for World President



Marie Kenny - Canada

**Member of Federated Women's Institute (FWI) of Prince Edward Island, FWI of Canada
Nominated by Federated Women's Institute of Canada**

My name is Marie Kenny. I am a wife, mother, grandmother, author, artist, pastor and lifelong volunteer – titles that reflect my passion for service and belief in collective action. As a lifelong member of the Women's Institute and a dedicated ACWW member for over 50 years, I have embraced every opportunity to advocate, lead, and support grassroots initiatives. My commitment to humanitarian work and community capacity building has shaped my local and global efforts. I have witnessed first-hand the challenges women face and the resilience they demonstrate.

As women, we have so much to offer – and our voice deserves to be heard. I have held leadership roles within the Women's Institute at the local, provincial and national levels as President, and internationally as UN Chair and Canada Area President for ACWW. These experiences have deepened my understanding of the struggles faced by women, particularly those in marginalized communities. I have worked to amplify their voices, ensuring they are heard, supported, and empowered to drive change.

Throughout my professional and volunteer work, I have been a tireless advocate for the most vulnerable, striving to break down barriers, address injustices, and foster inclusive communities. I believe in the power of collaboration – bringing together governments, legislators, and grassroots members to create lasting change. True progress happens when individuals unite, share knowledge and take collective action.

Nominees for Deputy World President



Judith Awuor Juma - Kenya

Member of East Africa Women's League

Nominated by East Africa Women's League

Judith Juma is a human rights lawyer from Kenya with experience in governance and policy formulation. She has previously worked with the Kenya Law Reform Commission, Kenya's Judiciary and Tribunals, and the International Development Law Organization on access to justice programs. She has also led election observation missions during Kenya's elections and has assisted in policy and legislative proposal development for Kenya's Parliament.

In 2022, Judith co-founded a community-based non-governmental organization called the Social Justice League, which supports women in political and appointive leadership through training, advocacy against electoral-related gender-based violence and provides free legal support to rural communities in Kenya. She is passionate about empowering women and youth, and has worked extensively with rural communities as well as Kenya's indigenous and pastoralist Samburu community.

Judith first interacted with ACWW when attending her first East, West and Central Africa Area Conference after being introduced to the East Africa Women's League (EAWL) (ACWW Member Society) by her mother. Judith saw a direct connection between EAWL, ACWW and her work with rural communities in Kenya. She later attended ACWW Triennial Conference in Malaysia, which gave her insight into the history, activities and passion of ACWW and Member Societies.

In August 2024, Judith was appointed to serve as Deputy World President and Board Lead on Membership. She embraced this role with enthusiasm and a desire to connect with ACWW membership around the world. In the coming years, Judith would like to continue serving in the role of Deputy World President because she is committed to increasing ACWW's membership, engagement, and continuity to strengthen the organization's impact globally. In this role, she would like to interact more with members, understand their unique experiences and find ways to amplify local projects to ensure they have a broader reach and impact.



Afrodita Roman - Romania

Member of Asociatia Femeia Mileniului III / The Woman of the Third Millennium

Nominated by Asociatia Femeia Mileniului III / The Woman of the Third Millennium

Professional experience: retired engineer I worked in the educational system as teacher for 13 years (1987-2000), deputy headmaster for 8 years (1990 -1998), Customer Care Specialist (2000-2020).

Founder of Asociatia Femeia Mileniului III, in Romania – an ACWW member society since 2004.

2013-2019 I served as a member of the TCC committee and in 2019 I have been elected Area President Europe at the Triennial World Conference in Melbourne, Australia. I also served in the ACWW Ad Hoc Committee since 2020. Re-elected Area President Europe TWC Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 2023.

Skills: Knowledge of PC operation: Management, Public relations/communications, Microsoft Office (Word, Power Point, Excel, Access, Outlook), Internet applications. Native Language Romanian

Foreign Languages: English: very good - written, spoken, reading; German, Russian: beginner level Hungarian language: conversation level

Social skills and competences: good communication and emotional skills; responsibility, fairness, trustworthiness, respectfulness, caring and citizenship.

Extra-professional concerns: Extra-professional passions: volunteering activities within the association, cooking, reading, sports/athletics/swimming/tennis, travel, music.

Nominee for Honorary Treasurer and Board Lead on Budget and Finance



Angela Cassels - Scotland
Member of Scottish Women's Institutes
Nominated by Scottish Women's Institutes

Bede Girls Grammar School, Sunderland 1959-1966. University of East Anglia: Honours Degree 2.1 Economics and Economic History 1969. University of Stirling: Post-graduate Diploma in Professional Accountancy 1989.

Professional Accountancy Qualification: Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) 1992.

From 1973 to date: volunteer in range of charitable organisations, being on local and national committees, responsible for finance and being involved with training.

1984 – 1988 Employed in the Partnership in Education Project in Glasgow, funded by Glasgow Council and Bernard Van Leer Foundation.

1989 – 2006 Employed by Audit Scotland, the auditing body for the public sector in Scotland. I had roles at all levels of Audit Scotland, culminating in the posts of chief auditor and assistant director. In these two roles, I certified the accounts of health bodies, local authorities and other public bodies. My role also involved strategic planning, human resources planning, managing a staff team of 40 and being involved in staff training.

2022 to date Trustee with ACWW, appointed as Honorary Treasurer and chair of Budget and Finance Working Group and Fundraising Working Group, member of Partnerships Working Group and Triennial World Conference Working Group. I have fulfilled all of the treasurers' roles, duties and responsibilities.

Nominee for Honorary Secretary and Board Lead on Triennial World Conference



Vanda Gagiano - South Africa
Member of Free State Women's Agricultural Union
Nominated by Free State Women's Agricultural Union

Presently ACWW Honorary Secretary & Board Lead on the Triennial World Conference for the term 2023 - 2026. As Committee Member of the TWC 2019-2023, I gained immeasurable experience and responsibility in organizing the 30th Triennial World Conference. Joined ACWW in 1989 and member of The Free State Women's Agricultural Union. Attended 4 ACWW Triennial Conferences and 4 Southern Africa Area Conferences in 4 Areas.

As an invited guest and speaker I have represented FSWAU at 5 International Events in 2016 -2019, and participated in 9 international on-line discussions in 2020-2022, gaining countless knowledge and experience to methodize and systemize International Events and Forums. Received the prestigious "Public Recognition Award" at The Third Eurasian Women's Forum in 2021 while participating as a guest speaker at this event.

Currently Honorary President of the FSWAU, after serving the organization in various positions since 1989 at branch level, as an Executive Member, 1st Vice President and later as President for the term 2011 - 2017. Executive Member of the SAWAU for 6 years and nominated for position of President in 2015.

Actively involved in the Goldfields Business Community serving as Chairlady of Goldsec 100, an organization for Secretaries and Business Women, organizing and hosting numerous events, teas, themed functions, gala events, fundraisers and charity events. Finalist in the Free State Business Women Competition. Thriving in a team environment, I am an excellent team-player who can also work independently and take responsibility. I am happy, positive and enthusiastic about life and its challenges, enjoying reading, travelling, cooking and regularly hosting cooking demonstrations. My motto: "Doing what I love and loving what I am doing" - keeps me inspired and fuels my passion.

Nominees for Board Lead on Advocacy



Dr Elizabeth Ann Kelly - England
Member of Federated Women's Institutes of Canada
Nominated by Federated Women's Institutes of Canada

Education:

University of Albany, School of Education, Albany, NY. Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Psychology and Methodology 2022.

University of Albany, College of Applied Science and Engineering NY, Master of Science in Information Science 2016.

Hampshire College, School of Natural Science, Amhurst, MA Bachelor of Arts in Natural Science 2015.

Professional Experience:

Academic Liaison Library Lead, Buckinghamshire New University, High Wycombe, UK June 2023-Present.

Girls Education Programming and Policy Coordinator, Society of the Sacred Heart, United Nations Office, NY, NY, September 2017-March 2023.

Instructor of Record, School of Education, Division of Educational Psychology, University at Albany, Albany, NY, January 2020 – December 2020.

Graduate Equity and Inclusion Chair, University at Albany, Albany, NY June 2019-September 2020

Research Assistant, School of Education, Division of Educational Psychology, Albany, NY August 2017 – May 2020

Immigration and Asylum Paralegal, United States Committee on Refugees and Immigrants, Albany, NY January 2017 – August 2017

Historical Records Librarian, Union College Special Collections, Schenectady, NY September – December 2016.

Paralegal, Law Offices of JP Kingsley, Catskill, NY. June 2016 – August 2016.

Service:

Advocacy Lead, Board of Trustees, Associated Country Women of the World May 2023 – Present.

Working Group on Girls, United Nations July 2019 – March 2023

President's Council on Diversity, University of Albany June 2019 – September 2020.

Invited Talks and Workshops:

United Nations, Commission on Status of Women March 2023 – Moderator.

'Understanding Barriers to Access: Language, Culture, and Reality'

United Nations, Commission on Status of Women March 2022 – Co-ordinator 'My Voice, Our Equal Future: Girls Speak to Climate Change'

Society of the Sacred Heart Mission to the United Nations January 2022, 'Education as an Act of Justice'

United Nations, High Level Political Forum July 2019 'SDG 4: How we can educate our way to a sustainable world'.

Nominees for Board Lead on Community Transformation & Projects



Margaretha Erasmus (Snoekie) - South Africa
Member of Die Dameskring
Nominated by Die Dameskring

Snoekie is passionate and committed to community development, education and agricultural development worldwide. She applies valuable experience from projects she runs in the Vaalharts district. Elected in 2017 to 2024 Snoekie served on the MANCO and EXCO boards of the Vaalharts Water Users Association, one of the largest government owned irrigation schemes in the Southern Hemisphere. As chairman of the local Social Responsibility Committee, Snoekie has headed many successful and sustainable projects including Emerging Farmer Capacity Building workshops, Water Safety Campaigns, identifying and working with stakeholders as well as organised awareness events for the Sustainable Development Goals in rural communities for women and children.

Snoekie is a dedicated member of the Cape Woman's Agricultural Association and she holds the position of Area President of the Kimberley and District Circle of this ACWW Affiliated society. She worked in collaboration with the North West University, sharing information for a water-food-energy nexus. She is well renowned for her voluntary work within her association as well as the communities in the farming district of Vaalharts. She and her husband share a passion for farming. They are joint owners of 325 ha of pecan farms and also own Pekanhoek, a pecan processing facility which process and export in excess of 5,000 tons of pecans per season, giving employment to 84 people annually.



Dr Christine Reghenzani OAM - Australia
Member of the Queensland Country Women's Association
Nominated by The Queensland Country Women's Association

I am a retired naval commander and an advocate for women's equality. I have been a member of the Queensland Country Women's Association (QCWA) for 15 years. Through QCWA, I was introduced to ACWW and became an individual member to demonstrate my support for the valuable work of the organisation. During my Royal Australian Navy career and community work, I have led and participated in many projects. I would be honoured to share my skills and experience with ACWW. On exchange with the New Zealand Navy, I developed an automated statistical reporting system for the NZ Defence Communications Network. This project and another for the Australian Navy Fleet Communications Centre, which delivered cost savings and increased efficiency, contributed to me being awarded an Order of Australia in the 1990s Queen's Birthday Honours List.

My other projects include overseeing a \$40m retention bonus for engineering sailors, and a \$75m Navy base redevelopment. In a voluntary capacity, I led the reinvigoration of the Cairns Navy Cadet Unit, a youth skills and confidence development program. I have an Arts Degree with majors in Politics, International and Asian Studies. I have travelled widely, finding the knowledge gained from my fields of study useful in understanding different cultures. I am proficient in management and hold master's degrees in business administration and professional accounting, plus a PhD in the disciplines of women's studies and history. In my doctoral research I documented Australian Navy women's journey towards equality identifying policy pathways to achieve complete equality. In 2016, I entered the 100 Australian Women of Influence Alumni as finalist in the diversity category. Recently, I served as a Vice President on the Board of the QCWA. I am passionate about women's empowerment and education. My philosophy is: to see change, we have to be agents of change.

Nominees for Board Lead on Knowledge Sharing & Local Activities



Donna Jebb - Canada

Member of Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario

Nominated by Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario

Member of Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario and Canada 40 plus years. President of both my branch and Area W.I. Member of ACWW Agriculture Committee 6 years and UN Committee 6 years participating at two CSW's and presenting at one Side Event. Currently Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) advocacy convenor, Past FWIO board member.

Councillor and Deputy Mayor Town of Tecumseth 15 years and Simcoe County Councillor 2 years. Past Chair and member of following town committees: Accessibility, Heritage, Environmental, Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority. Past Member of the following committees: Ontario Good Roads Association, Stevenson Memorial Hospital Foundation, past co-chair South Simcoe Wheel Chair Relay Race for Canadian Paraplegic Association. Retired after 27 successful years with the Royal Bank of Canada and recognised for my outstanding customer service. Currently board member of Victim Services Simcoe County. Vice President Simcoe County Federation of Agriculture, President of St Paul's apostle Catholic Women's League Alliston Ontario, committee member Alliston and Area Doctor Recruitment and Retention committee. Chair of Agriculture Advisory Committee for Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority.

Dedicated and Community focussed leader with over 15 years of municipal government experience, lifelong advocate for rural and agricultural interests, accessibility, women's rights, healthcare and youth leadership. Proven ability to lead diverse committees and initiatives with integrity and compassion. Recently recipient of King Charles III Coronation Medal for outstanding volunteerism and advocacy. Past recipient of Alliston Rotary Citizen of the Year and South Simcoe Hall of Fame for community service. Married to Barry since 1978, two adult children and four grandchildren. After selling our chicken broiler quota we continue to grain crop.



Dr Maria Anna Elizabeth Muller (Marina) - Namibia

Member of Namibia Women's Society

Nominated by South African Women's Agricultural Union

Born in Bloemfontein, RSA, Namibian. Married with two children, aged 48 and 51. Farm in Okahandja. Qualifications: Ph.D. University of Pretoria, RSA. 2006 (Applied Statistics); H.E.D. (post graduate) with distinction - UNISA.

Employment: Statistics lecturer at UNAM 1987 -2017 with several publications.

Computer competencies: Microsoft Word & Excel & Outlook, SPSS and Mat lab.

Member/Leadership: Past-President of the Namibia Women's Society (NWS) 1996 -2001 and re-elected President of the NWS 2013-2019

Past-president the South African Women's Agricultural Union (SAWAU) (2000-2003)

Served on the Namibia Qualifications Authority Council (1999--2007).

Served as a trustee member of Agri Securitas in South Africa (2010-2019).

Board and Trustee member of ACWW as the Area President for Southern Africa, appointed by the Board (October 2019 -- May 2023).

Deputy Chair of the Namibia Agricultural Board (NAB) and Chair of the Financial Management Advisory Committee (FMAC) of the NAB (2017 - 2024).

A committee member of the Namibia Statistics Agency Board (2020 -2024).

Currently: Board and Trustee member of the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) as the Area President for Southern Africa (elected May 2023 - 2026).

Deputy Chair of the Namibia Agricultural Board (NAB) (2024 - 2026) and Deputy Chair of the Audit, Investment and Risk Committee (AIRCAC) of the NAB. (2024 - 2026).

Attended several seminars and workshops on Finance and Corporate Governance. Interviewed several candidates for positions at the NAB. Informally taught patchwork, papercraft and machine sewing for groups during the past thirty years. It gives me joy to assist women, young and old, by teaching them hobbies to earn an income. I am kind, organized, thoughtful, driven, energetic and work well under pressure. To share knowledge about and to promote ACWW will be my passion.

Nominees for Board Lead on Knowledge Sharing & Local Activities



Jo Ellen Almond - United States of America
Member of Indiana Extension Homemakers Association
Nominated by Indiana Extension Homemakers Association

Jo Ellen Almond brings decades of dedicated leadership, program innovation, and global collaboration to her work with ACWW and women's organizations at all levels. As former Honorary Secretary of ACWW, she helped shape governance and policy, supported by two terms on the Projects Committee and her role as Chair of the 2010 Triennial World Conference. These roles deepened her expertise in international coordination and project assessment, as well as her commitment to empowering rural women worldwide.

At the national level, Jo Ellen serves as Treasurer of the Country Women's Council and previously led international projects as Vice President of the National Volunteer Outreach Network. Her work has included managing project portfolios, building strategic partnerships, and advancing goals across organizations and regions. In Indiana, she served as State President of the Indiana Extension Homemakers Association, where she launched "First Books for Kids", promoting early childhood literacy and school readiness. She also created an international educational partnership program that strengthened cross-cultural understanding and engagement.

Jo Ellen's leadership style is rooted in service, collaboration, and impact. She brings extensive experience in strategic planning, fundraising, and volunteer coordination. Her involvement across multiple boards and developmental organizations reflects a lifelong dedication to community advancement and education. She is known for her practical insight, inclusive facilitation, and strong communication skills. With a proven ability to lead locally, nationally, and internationally, she is deeply committed to ACWW's mission of connecting and supporting rural women through knowledge sharing and purposeful action.

Nominee for Board Lead on Partnerships



Claire Mahon - New Zealand
Member of Rural Women New Zealand
Nominated by Rural Women New Zealand

I am an international human rights lawyer and global expert on socio-economic development. I work as a consultant on issues related to women and gender equality, the right to food and food security, agricultural production systems, the environment, access to education, global health and housing. I have worked as a Special Advisor to world leaders including the former President of Ireland Mrs Mary Robinson, and the first UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food. I've run a global consulting practice for over 20 years, offering advocacy, policy, legal and communications advice to businesses, governments, civil society, non-governmental organisations, advocacy movements, and international experts. I've worked in the non-profit sector for organisations such as Amnesty International, and in academia as a law professor at some of the world's top academic institutions. I've also worked as the Senior Advisor on Human Rights and Inclusive Development for the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

I am passionate about women's empowerment, the role of women in agriculture and the environment, rural women's health and education, and communicating about these issues. I have written and edited books on the right to food, the right to health, women and the environment, and housing rights and homelessness. I have written speeches, designed and managed websites, written social media content, drafted grant proposals, and authored advocacy guides and legal correspondence. I have been board member/trustee of organisations in New Zealand, Australia and Switzerland.

I am from Rotorua, New Zealand, where my family have farmed (dry stock – sheep, deer, bull beef – and dairy) for four generations. These days, I am mostly based in Geneva, living just over the border in a rural French village, and I try to return as often as possible to New Zealand and Australia, where my family live.

Nominee for Area President: Canada



Anne Innes - Canada

Member of Federated Women's Institute of Ontario

Nominated by Federated Women's Institute of Ontario

I am a proud Canadian and would be honored to serve as the next Canada Area President. I have travelled across Canada and have deep appreciation for its diverse communities. Growing up on a farm in Ontario, marrying a farmer, raising three sons on a farm, and now watching my grandchildren pursue careers in agriculture have instilled in me a strong pride in being a rural woman. As a Board Trustee and the Board Lead for Knowledge Sharing and Local Activities working group, I have learned the importance of having a robust leadership team at ACWW that amplifies the voices of rural women worldwide. It is essential that rural women feel safe, have access to healthcare, and achieve financial security.

In my professional career, I managed support programs for mothers and young children in rural areas, many of whom were new to Canada and deeply appreciated the assistance they received. Isolation and lack of transportation are significant challenges faced by rural women everywhere. I have volunteered with organisations such as 4-H, schools, churches, and especially the Women's Institute. I have consistently taken on leadership roles when possible and have served on numerous committees to support the Children's Hospital and various local initiatives. Additionally, I am a past president of my local ACWW society, Southern Ontario Support. Although we are a small group, we have successfully supported ACWW through our fundraising efforts. My four years on the UN Committee and my participation in the Commission on the Status of Women have reinforced my commitment to holding governments accountable through advocacy. I have attended several past Triennial conferences and Canada Area conferences, where I connected with many like-minded women who share my passion for ACWW. In my spare time, I enjoy gardening and watching things grow, while remaining mindful that not every woman in the world has the same opportunities.

Nominees for Area President: Caribbean, Central and South America



Gia Gaspard Taylor - Trinidad and Tobago

Member of Network of Rural Women Producers Trinidad and Tobago

Nominated by Network of Rural Women Producers Trinidad and Tobago

A national of Trinidad and Tobago, who continues to devote herself tirelessly to national service particularly working with young people, women and the disadvantaged. Holds a BSc in Social Work from the School of Continuing Studies University of the West Indies; and has had many years of experience working in both the public and private sector in Trinidad and Tobago, regionally, and internationally. Gia's wealth of experience in the areas of education, entrepreneurship, the advancement of women, opportunities for youth development and climate change, bring to bear fruitfully on the numerous committees and associations on which she serves. The Network of Rural Women Producers, Trinidad and Tobago holds Special Consultative Status on the United Nations Social and Economic Council since 2016. Gia served for 17 years as Mayoress (wife of the Mayor) of Port of Spain and played a major role supporting her husband, she also followed the UN Call for more women in politics by joining the Training Team to prepare women to enter into politics.

Currently: - National Representative: UN-UNESCO WSIS World Summit Award, recently appointed member of the National Team with the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Arts in the preparation of the UN UNESCO Quadrennial Report.

Served three years' on the UN Women Caribbean Multi-Office Advisory Council in Barbados, currently serving second term on the UN Women Advisory Council for Latin America and the Caribbean: Member of UN Women Advisory Council for Caribbean Region for the Generation Equality Forum working with the Governments of Mexico and France.

Projects in train include UN Women HeForShe, using Barbershop workshops to share information on Domestic Violence and Gender Based Violence, with the local Defence Force, the Fire Services, the 7 Municipalities and Regional Corporations. Recently completed one week training with the Police Officers who lead the Police Youth Clubs, the Community Police and the Victims and Witness Unit.



Alexandria Best - Trinidad and Tobago

Member of Trinidad and Tobago Federation of Women's Institutes

Nominated by Trinidad and Tobago Federation of Women's Institutes

Alexandria Best is an accomplished professional with a strong background in education, cultural studies, and project management. Based in Tobago, she holds a Master of Arts in Cultural Studies and a Bachelor of Education in Social Sciences. Her dynamic career spans various sectors with a consistent focus on strategic planning, resource management and stakeholder engagement.

Currently, Alexandria serves as a Secondary School Teacher, Secretary of the Trinidad and Tobago Federation of Women's Institute - Tobago District and Assistant Secretary of the Trinidad and Tobago Federation of Women's Institute Inc. at a national level. These roles reflect her commitment to education, community empowerment and women's leadership.

In the classroom, she is known for her holistic pedagogical strengths which creates an inclusive and stimulating learning environment. With a strong command of her subject area she simplifies concepts to meet diverse learning needs. A confident communicator and team player, she maintains positive relationships while upholding high standards of professionalism and integrity.

As a past Project Administrator at a state enterprise, she played a key role in managing high-profile capital development projects across the public sector. Her expertise includes training, administrative coordination and community engagement. A passionate advocate for culture and youth, she previously served as a Regional Coordinator at National Carnival Commission, where she led educational workshops promoting traditional carnival characters. She also serves as a Career Enhancement/Life Skills Tutor equipping young people with the skills to succeed in the workforce.

Her commitment to service is further demonstrated through past roles as Vice President of Trinidad Youth Foundation and Trustee of the Tobago Youth Council where she championed civic responsibility and youth leadership. Driven by purpose and service, Alexandria continues to use her skills and experience to lead initiatives that enrich communities and preserve cultural legacies across Trinidad and Tobago.

Nominee for Area President: Central and South Asia



Arumapperuma Arachchige Tharindra Ruwanmali (Tharindra Arumapperuma) - Sri Lanka
Member of Lanka Mahila Samiti, Sri Lanka
Nominated by Lanka Mahila Samiti, Sri Lanka

I am Tharindra Arumapperuma, a passionate advocate for non-formal education, women's empowerment, and youth leadership, with over seven years of experience working with diverse communities at grassroots, national and international levels. I've held governance roles such as Emerging Leader for the Asia-Pacific Region on The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Council and National Board Member for the Award in Sri Lanka. I also served as a Youth Board Member for Global Youth Mobilization (GYM) and Co-Chaired its Advocacy Working Group. Currently I am a Trustee and Area President for Central and South Asia with the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW).

As a Bronze, Silver and Gold Award Achiever of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, I've experienced the transformative power of non-formal education, which drives my global development efforts. I hold a BA (Hons) in International Business Management and am pursuing a Master's in International Relations.

My grassroots work includes mentoring rural women and youth in entrepreneurship, leadership, and resilience-building. I've collaborated with UNDP, ICTA and ILO to support women-led businesses and social enterprises, strengthening my belief in the innovation and resilience of Sri Lankan women. Currently as Youth-Led Advocacy and Partnerships Coordinator for GYM 2.0, I lead advocacy strategies, build partnerships, and co-design programs to amplify youth and women's voices.

The change a single empowered woman can inspire is remarkable. I've seen it, lived it, and I'm here to create even more.

Nominee for Area President: Europe



Anne Kerr - Scotland
Member of Scottish Women's Institutes
Nominated by Scottish Women's Institutes

Having been born and educated in Ayrshire, Scotland, I worked as a Civil Servant. After getting married and then starting a family, my time was then taken up with work on my husband's family's farm. Since his untimely death in 2001, my son and I work in partnership on the now dairy farm.

I have been a member of playgroup and school parent's councils. I was Secretary of our local agricultural show for 8 years during which time the show expanded significantly. I am a Trustee, Secretary and also a volunteer with a local Charity which provides nutritious frozen home cooked meals to local foodbanks and distributes near "use by" dated food from supermarkets to the foodbanks. I also assist in the Charity office and farm shop. I have been a member of Inner Wheel for 24 years and am currently Club President. I am an Elder in my Church.

I have been a member of the Scottish Women's Institutes for 39 years and have held office at local, county and national level. I was national President from 2020-2023 and helped organise and host the ACWW European area conference in Glasgow in 2022.

I have attended the ACWW Triennial World Conferences in Warwick and Kuala Lumpur as well as the European Area Conference at Glasgow and I have registered for Bucharest. I feel that it is important for everyone to understand the problems of women throughout the world and that we all work together to address them.

Nominee for Area President: East, West, and Central Africa



Clare Jethwa - Kenya

Member of East Africa Women's League

Nominated by East Africa Women's League

Born in Manchester, UK in 1947, Clare lived with her family in Uganda from 1955 to 1971. She was educated at convent schools in Kenya and England, and studied at the Universities of London, and Nice - France. Prior to her marriage in 1974, when she returned to live permanently in Kenya, she worked in the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex as a Course & Conference Administrator. In 2000 she joined the East Africa Women's League and soon became deeply involved, first at Branch level where she served as both Councillor and Chairman, and then at national level where she was successively Balloting Officer, Secretary to the Executive, National Vice-Chairman, National Chairman, Editor of the Journal, Chairman of the Executive and Senior Councillor. She presided over the League's Centenary celebrations in 2017-18, and was largely responsible for the compilation of its "Centenary Book".

During the 32 years of her marriage Clare helped her husband to run the family business, and continued to do so with her sons for 8 years after his death. She has 4 sons and 10 grandchildren, the latter being "the light of my life". She plays Bridge and Lawn Bowls (is currently Captain of her Bowls Club), loves knitting, needlework, reading, and watching TV (especially any form of cricket). She is a practising Catholic, sang for many years in the church choir and recently joined the Parents' Choir at her grandchildren's school. She loves to sing, any time, anywhere!

She is fluent in English and French, KiSwahili and Gujarati. Her enthusiasm for the ACWW and its work was sparked initially by the late Mrs. Irene Chinje, who visited Kenya during Clare's Chairmanship of the EAWL, and further inspired by the leadership of Mrs. Magdie de Kock, current World President.

Nominee for Area President: Southern Africa



Leanda Le Cornu - Republic of South Africa

Member of Namibia Women's Society

Nominated by Namibian Women's Society

Leanda Le Cornu was born in Limpopo Province South Africa. Married with one child, age 30. Education National Certificate Secretarial. 10 years as a Legal Secretary. 30 years as HR for Mount Fuji Brandstof. 21 years as owner of 24/7 shop at Mount Fuji Brandstof. Computer competences Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook and Sage Account and Payroll. Member of WAU North and South African National Consumer Union. Leadership: Branch chairperson several terms. Regional chairperson Koraal (6 years), President WAU North (7 years).

Presently serve as an Executive Member on the South African National Consumer Union board.

The empowerment and development of women is close to my heart, when a woman is empowered, a whole family is empowered.

Nominee for Area President: South East Asia and the Far East



Uugan-Erdene Tugrug - Mongolia
Member of Sain Tus Development Bridge NGO
Nominated by Sain Tus Development Bridge NGO

Project Coordinator - German Development Service and German International Cooperation (2002 - 2005). Program Coordinator - World Vision Mongolia. Khovd Area Development Program (2006 - 2010) NGO Director and Project Manager at Sain Tus Development Bridge NGO (2010 - 2025)

- 1) United States Government, State Department of United States of America (2015)
“International Visitor Leadership Program “ (IVLP) (State Alumni) (In Washington D.C, Boston - Massachusetts, Atlanta - Georgia, Louisville - Kentucky, Chicago - Illinois, Seattle - Washington, San Francisco - California for 1 month)
- 2) I participated in the United Nation’s 67th Commission on the Status of Women from 6 to 17 March 2023 in New York, USA in United Nations Headquarters Office.
- 3) I participated in the United Nation’s 68th Commission on the Status of Women from 11 to 22 March 2024 in New York, USA in United Nations Headquarters Office.
- 4) I participated in the AWID 15th International Forum 2-5, December 2024 Thailand, Bangkok
- 5) I participated in the United Nation’s 69th Commission on the Status of Women from 10 to 21 March 2025 in New York, USA in United Nations Headquarters Office.

Women’s World Summit Foundation (WWSF) awards the Prize to between 5-10 creative rural women and women’s groups around the world in a year. I was selected for the 2017 WWSF Prize for Women’s creativity in Rural Life and awarded WWSF Prize for Women’s Creativity in Rural Life 2017.

Nominees for Area President: South Pacific



Lilian Falealuga Tine - Tuvalu

Member of Tuvalu National Council of Women

Nominated by Tuvalu National Council of Women

Advisory & Governance Roles:

Trustee & Area President – South Pacific, ACWW, 2025 – 2026.

Tuvalu Post Limited (Public Corporation) – Board Director (2019 to 2025).

Board member, Tuvalu Coastal Adaptation Project (2022 to current).

Member of the Tuvalu National Advisory Committee Member on CEDAW (2022 to current).

Board Director, Development Bank of Tuvalu (Public Corporation) (2018 – 2020).

Board Member & Treasurer, Tuvalu Red Cross Society (2017 – 2021).

Member of the Compliance & Mediation Committee (CMC) of the International Federation of the Red Cross & Red Crescent Committee (IFRC) (2019).

Work Experience: Executive Director of the Tuvalu National Council of Women (2022-current).

First Secretary (2010 – 2017), Embassy of Tuvalu – Brussels, Belgium.

President (2014 – 2017) & Treasurer (2013 & 2014) for the African, Caribbean and Pacific Ambassadors' Spouses Association. Honorary Patron (2014 – 2016) for the British and Commonwealth Women's Club in Brussels.

General Secretary (2004 – 2006) - Tuvalu Red Cross Society.

Temporary Multilateral Affairs Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Labour, Tuvalu (2003).

Gender and Community Development Officer for Australian-funded projects in Papua New Guinea (1996 & 1998).

Rural Development Officer, Ministry of Home Affairs & Rural Development, Tuvalu (1987-1990).

Temporary Multilateral Affairs Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Labour, Tuvalu (2003).

Education & Training:

Holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Victoria University of Technology in Melbourne, Australia, and an Advanced Certificate in Teaching Agricultural Science from the University of the South Pacific. Undertook Basic Training with the Australian Red Cross, Pacific Health training in Auckland New Zealand and Fiji, gender mainstreaming training and project management.

Community & Personal Commitments:

Chairperson of the Nukufetau Island Trust Fund – Funafuti, Tuvalu (2023 – current)

Advocate for Pacific people/children on the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Auto Immune Disorder (Lupus).

Nominees for Area President: South Pacific



Mary Pocock - Australia

Member of Country Women's Association of the Northern Territory Incorporated
Nominated by Country Women's Association of the Northern Territory Incorporated

My grandparents were farmers and I have lived most of my life in regional, rural and remote areas of Tasmania, South Australia, Northern Territory and Papua New Guinea, giving me the understanding of what it means to live within smaller, diverse and geographically remote communities without all the facilities of a larger town.

My professional experience includes as a nurse/midwife, administration and as an entrepreneur in retail and artisanal food production. Involvement in community service commenced for me as a teenager and I have taken on leadership roles for much of this time. I joined Rotaract and later involved with Zonta International, these organisations fulfilled my interest in international work. Two volunteer placements as a nurse/midwife in PNG were valuable experiences that have been integral in shaping my life and principles.

I am an active member of the Country Women's Association of the Northern Territory which I joined after relocating to Darwin. As president of my branch, I served on the executive of the association and was elected as NT President in 2016, a position that I held for four years. As president of CWA of the NT I served as a director of the Country Women's Association of Australia.

My governance training with the Australian Institute of Company Directors expanded my understanding of the director and board responsibilities.

Attendance at the ACWW World Conference in Melbourne and South Pacific Area Conferences in New Plymouth NZ and Griffith NSW spurred my interest in the activity of ACWW and links with the United Nations. I am currently my association's International Officer and as the nominated ACWW Coordinator attend the monthly ACWW Coordinator meetings.

Good communication is important to me and I can bring this strength to the role of Area President in engaging with member societies.

Nominee for Area President: United States of America



Edith Jane Chapman (Jane) - United States of America

Member of National Volunteer Outreach Network (NVON) and Illinois Association for Home and Community Education (IAHCE)

I grew up in the country and love being out in nature! I was my father's top hired hand on the farm for most of my young life. I still love to garden and anything else outside. My occupation as assistant manager for a multi-million-dollar agriculture business gave me the opportunity to continue with my love of farming and helping people.

Over the years I have served on local school's boards, in 2007 became a University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener, oversee a cemetery where I sell and mark grave sites for burials, chair a committee that holds an annual picnic fund raiser for the cemetery where we feed anywhere from 800 to 900 people, organized and successfully started a Wreaths Across America drive that's purpose is to purchase and lay wreaths on Veterans' graves in our local cemetery over the Christmas holidays.

I still find the time for "family time". I am married, we have two daughters and seven grandchildren. When I have spare time, I enjoy playing pickleball, golf and reading. A Zig Ziglar quote that I really think describes me – "Life is about balance. Be kind, but don't let it abuse you. Trust, but don't be deceived. Be content, but never stop improving yourself," I think by applying for the position of Trustee and Area President for the United States of America is an attempt at improving myself. I would be honored to serve in that position.