



National Executive News

May 2010

P O Box 6566, Dunedin, New Zealand

www.nzfgw.org.nz

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EDITORIAL

Dot Page, National President



The Same Old Juggling Act – how many balls can you keep in the air?

First it was access to careers, then it was equal pay and equal employment opportunity, and now the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow is work/life balance. It reminds us of that hoary old question, beloved of nineteenth century patriarchs 'What do women want?'

Of course work/life balance is not just a women's issue, as a quick flick across international websites on the topic makes clear. We all understand what it means - no-one should let their job take over their life - and we all acknowledge its benefits. The Ministry of Women's Affairs explains, in carefully chosen words, that an acceptable work/life balance will 'have economic and social benefits for men, women, families/whanau and communities which will improve New Zealand's economic prospects and social environment.' It's as universal as that.

Nevertheless the concept has special meaning for women, especially if they are holding down a job as well as holding together a family. Women in unskilled, low-paid jobs (sometimes two jobs) are worst off because their bargaining power is less, but the problem is not unique to them. A recent Australian study referred to the exhaustion of women who combined working long hours with the responsibilities of motherhood and running a home as a factor in family disintegration: a 'hidden tragedy', a 'time bomb.' As graduate women we are fortunate in that this is not, in general, our situation but we owe it to ourselves to support any initiatives to make the workplace a more user-friendly place for mothers and the combination of employment and family life easier.

There is some pressure on government to act. Since 2003 the CEDAW monitoring committee has prodded New Zealand to improve work/life balance for women and the Ministry of Women's Affairs has had the responsibility of providing gender-based advice to an interdepartmental Work/Life Balance Steering Group. They urge extending paid parental leave and widening access to it (by including the self-employed and seasonal workers, for example), improving access to quality, affordable child care and after school care and encouraging employers to permit flexible working hours. For educated young women in highly competitive fields there is another issue, not so commonly mentioned in the discussions: when or whether to have children. That the productive years for early career advancement in the professions or academia are also the optimum reproductive years presents a unique dilemma for achieving women.

Looking back at my own experience of balancing academic and family life, I think we have come quite a long way towards accommodating women in the professional workplace. I married young and did a four year stint as an assistant lecturer in the Otago History Department before starting a family. When our two daughters were small, I worked part-time as a research assistant and tutor. When I was offered a lectureship in 1970 (without a formal application or an interview) my Head of Department told me one of the appointment committee had asked if I intended having any more children. At that moment I decided on a third. This was before the time of parental leave but – to the amusement of my colleagues – all my babies arrived in the long vacation.

Readily available childcare was in the future too, but I was fortunate in having a supportive three-generation family. My husband's widowed mother lived with us for well over twenty years, a wonderful boon for the children. Leave was a special hurdle, but on three occasions I spent

some months in London, taking one of the (then teenage) children with me each time, while the rest of the family cheerfully carried on at home. I worked long hours, including doing my Ph D while lecturing full time, but the flexibility of the University system meant that I could work from home when necessary. I was privileged in being able to negotiate a work/life balance that suited me.

To an extent every woman must find her own work/life balance but we can all work towards an environment that enables us to enrich our lives by combining employment with family and leisure activities, sport, arts or hobbies. The Ministry of Women's Affairs' focus on parental leave, quality childcare and flexible working hours in a user-friendly workplace is right on target.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Claire Matthewson, CIR, National Executive

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United Nations - gender matters

Further to last month's highlighting of 19 MEN + 0 WOMEN=GENDER EQUALITY? NZFGW has written to the New Zealand Ministers for the Environment and Climate Change and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Women's Affairs as follows:

Membership of the United Nations Climate Change Financing Group

I am writing to you on behalf of the New Zealand Federation of Graduate Women (NZFGW), a national affiliate (NFA) of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW).

Founded in 1919, with headquarters in Geneva, IFUW has NGO consultative status with the United Nations and comprises 67 nationally affiliated federations. The New Zealand Federation, NZFGW – formerly NZFUW – is the fourth largest and second oldest

affiliate (founded in 1921). The two main purposes of IFUW are to:

- promote lifelong education for women and girls
- promote international cooperation, friendship, peace and respect for human rights for all, irrespective of their gender, age, race, nationality, religion, political opinion, gender and sexual orientation or other status.

In my role as NZFGW's Convenor of International Relations (CIR), I am writing to express the organisation's strong displeasure at the membership of the United Nations Climate Change Financing Group recently announced by Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

In appointing an international expert group comprising **19 men and zero (0) women**, the United Nations leadership has, in our view, both contravened and undermined its own global husbandry of anti-discrimination policy. In a period when, world-wide, governments and NGOs in particular are expending limited resources and much effort to report responsibly to the United Nations on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Secretary-General's announcement in our view displays an untimely arrogance.

Two factors are overtly relevant:

- by simple virtue of population, culture and economic demographics, the majority of victims of climate change globally will be women and girls;
- women with internationally eminent academic, scientific and financial expertise in the field of climate change financing abound for selection for the Climate Change Financing Group.

With these two quantifiable factors pertaining, the United Nations' non-selection of even one woman (let alone an equitable number) is clearly a matter of choice and gender-based discrimination.

Through its national representatives, NZFGW has already registered this view

with the United Nations Association of New Zealand (UNANZ) and with UNIFEM (New Zealand). It has also posted an international blog in support of the protest action taken by IFUW (and many other NGOs) in signing the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO)'s letter.

We now are urging the New Zealand Ministries for the Environment, Climate Change, Women's Affairs and Foreign Affairs to convey their own and our concern to the UN Secretary-General and New Zealand's representatives to the United Nations.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Claire Matthewson
Convenor of International Relations
New Zealand Federation of Graduate Women

cc:

Opposition spokespersons for the Environment
Opposition spokespersons for Climate Change
National Council of Women NZ
IFUW, Status of Women Committee
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Labour and Green Spokespeople for these four portfolios
UNDP
National Council of Women NZ
IFUW, Status of Women Committee

Further to this, and responding to a Call to NFAs from our International President, Louise Croot, NZFGW has co-signed a letter from IFUW to the United Nations advocating gender equality in all UN appointed committees.

A Decade On, No Seats for Women at the Peace Table

Beverley Turner, Member emeritus

UNITED NATIONS, Apr 23, 2010 (IPS) - It was a historic moment for the United

Nations when, 10 years ago, the Security Council unanimously recognised "the intrinsic role of women in global peace and security" through Resolution 1325, said Ambassador Anwarul Chowdhury of Bangladesh at a panel at the UN Thursday on the continuing obstacles to its implementation.

"The resolution was primarily based on a simple thesis that the equal access and full participation of women in all layers of power structures, as well as their full participation in prevention and resolution of conflicts were essential elements for making and sustaining peace," explained the moderator of the UN panel, cosponsored by Bangladesh, Canada and Sweden. But efforts to implement 1325 have been largely stymied for the past decade. Chowdhury, also a former UN under-secretary-general, cited the fact that only 19 out of 192 member states have developed national action plans to implement 1325, as one reason for the stalled progress. He also expressed deep regret about the number of reports of sexual abuse by UN," he said, criticising the lack of accountability in bringing those accused of sexual abuse to justice, particularly those deployed by the UN. "During the last three years from 2007 to 2009, 450 cases of abuse [by peacekeepers] have been reported, and ... only 29 have been acted on"

Mexico Conference, 5 – 9 August 2010

THE NZ CONTINGENT now looks likely to be 15-strong: Louise Croot, Martine Cashell-Smith, Rae Duff, Margaret Ellett, Joy Dunsheath, Lyn Foote, Shirley Gillett, Sian Halcrow, Lorraine Isaacs, Claire Matthewson, Dorothy Meyer, Dorothy Page, Beverley Turner, Sheila Williams and possibly Angela Clark.

IFUW PROGRAMMES: Martine Cashell-Smith will be participating in the Young Leaders workshop and both Martine and Sian Halcrow will participate in the Sustainability Training Programme. Claire

has agreed to represent NZFGW on a panel for a (recently scheduled) workshop on Higher Education in Women's Leadership Development.

BRANCH VIEWS OR GUIDANCE: still very welcome. The nine Policy Resolutions to be considered at the Triennial Conference are available for perusal on the ifuw.org website. (Click on "2010 IFUW Conference" and then on "Documents".) The areas of vital concern are: Worklife balance, Numeracy and women, Financial literacy, Abuse of female migrants, Human Trafficking, Bioethics and women, Greenhouse gas emissions, Cluster munitions and Peacekeeping. Any comments, guidance or further information from Branches or individual members would be very welcome. Please email Claire.

Unifem Australia – Pacific Fund to End Violence against Women

On behalf of NZFGW, President Dorothy Page has written to Australia's National Committee for UNIFEM with our congratulations on securing Australian government funding for the above initiative.

IFUW Discussion – Women and Health

This current topic is generating very interesting and informative exchanges. Moderated by IFUW Vice-President Marianne Haslegrave, Week 1, focused on the health of girls. Week 2, focused on the health concerns of adult women – in particular, on their reproductive health and infectious and non-communicable diseases. Week 3 lies ahead. Just a reminder that any Federation member may join the Discussion Network. To subscribe, please complete the form on www.ifuw.org/networks/subscribe.shtml. To contribute to discussion thereafter, just email your message to discussions@ifuw.org. This message will be sent to everyone who has subscribed

to the discussion. It is helpful to include your name and NFA at the beginning of your message.

If you are replying to a message and want all the discussion participants to see your reply, **be sure to use the "Reply All" function** in your email programme. If you use the "Reply" function, your message will go only to the sender of the original message.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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National Project

The NZFGW national project for 2010 will focus on the loss of funding for the **Adult Community Education** (ACE) scheme. Grant funding for the ACE Networks has been restricted from the beginning of 2010. This has resulted in numerous night classes being cancelled throughout New Zealand although some schools have retained classes but with different funding arrangements. As stated on the Tertiary education Website: "ACE provides community-based educational opportunities for adults. These informal, non-assessed learning opportunities are characterised by programme diversity, flexibility and responsiveness to identified community learning needs and individual learners. A wide-range of organisations provide community education, from schools to universities. Like most tertiary education, community education courses are subsidised by the government although learners typically pay fees. The government's priorities for the courses it subsidises are consistent with five national ACE priorities and identified community learning needs:

- Targeting learners whose initial learning was not successful
- Raising foundation skills
- Encouraging lifelong learning

- Strengthening communities by meeting identified community learning needs
- Strengthening social cohesion."

<http://www.tec.govt.nz/Learners-Organisations/Learners/Learn-about/Community-education>

The TEC has announced that funding arrangements that support the above range of learning needs have been limited with support restricted to 50 schools across New Zealand for the provision of classes on topics such as 'Maths for Household Budgeting', 'Helping Your Child to Read', 'Sign Language' and 'Te Reo'. A major message is that numeracy and literacy must be imbedded in the ACE courses. This is a major change in direction for Adult Community Education and will have an impact on schools, communities and individuals. (see the latest ACE newsletter:

<http://www.aceaotearoa.org.nz/users/Image/Adult%20Learners%20Week/Documents/ACENewsletterSpring2009.pdf>)

The intention of the **NZFGW project** is to provide a snapshot of the impact of the loss of funding to ACE in the 6 months immediately following this decision. We hope to involve members in interviewing people in different locations in NZ to develop a series of case studies that will illustrate the impact of these funding cuts. Once collated this will be published as a report by NZFGW and may be sent to the Minister of Education.

It is hoped that all branches will get involved in collecting stories in their local communities. The ACE project guidelines have been sent to all Branch Presidents & PAC representatives. They can also be found on the NZFGW Web site under the PAC tab.

Whānau Ora

Whānau Ora is an initiative that aims to ensure that families and whanau will be supported to take responsibility for their own economic, social and cultural

development. It takes a whole-of-family approach to improving health and wellbeing and aims to reconnect and strengthen people and their whanau. 12 regional hui will be held around the country between 10- 31 May 2010 to provide a chance for community groups working with families to ask questions about the planning that is underway for Whānau Ora. The Honourable Tariana Turia, Minister responsible for Whanau Ora, will be presenting an update at these. A joint presentation from the three Government agencies involved in the first stage of its implementation: Te Puni Kokiri, Ministry of Social Development and the Ministry of Health will also be given. Hopefully many of you will take the opportunity to attend one of these sessions. Be good to get your feedback.

NZ Super not enough to live on

New Zealand Superannuation – A Measure of its Adequacy, a two-part study by Katikati volunteer John Logan, has been released jointly by Age Concern New Zealand and Grey Power. Even the most minimal living costs add up to more than the current Super. Couples are the worst off, with the study reporting shortfalls of \$30-plus each per week.

The two organisations are calling on the Prime Minister to:

- Raise Super to the maximum allowed in legislation,
- Direct officials to check the adequacy of the Super level, and
- Adjust Super twice a year, using price increases of relevant goods and services rather than the more general inflation measure.

[VISIT Age Concern website to download the study](#)

OUT AND ABOUT ON BEHALF OF NZFGW – CAPITAL COLLEAGUES

The NZFGW Executive regularly receives invitation to meetings of other organisations, either special one-off gatherings, which are often celebratory, such as the launch earlier in the year of the NCW's new website, or regular business sessions of bodies on which we have an appointed representative. Most of the meetings are in the capital and we are grateful to members of the Wellington and Hutt Valley Branches for generously taking time out of their busy lives to attend and report back.

Since the last NE News we have received two interesting reports.

UNESCO Joint Sub-Commissions Planning Day

IFUW has consultative status with UNESCO and on 20 April Rae Duff, from Wellington Branch, attended a Planning Day for UNESCO's New Zealand Sub-Commissions. There are five of these under the Government-funded National Commission, which has the task of promoting UNESCO's vision, goals and programmes in New Zealand and the Pacific. It aims to promote peace and social justice through education, the sciences, culture and the free exchange of ideas.

Rae's report summarised discussion of three elements:

* **The 'big picture'**, UNESCO's capacity to allow diverse groups to 'future think', and help develop international standards and conventions. UNESCO's work to identify and protect cultural and natural heritage sites is a successful example of this work.

* **National Commission Strategies.** A programme of quality education for all, sustainability and climate change, cultural and religious diversity and disaster

management was seen as most relevant to NZ and the Pacific and it was emphasised that NZ has expertise to pass on in these areas.

***Fresh ideas.** Largely aimed at increasing the visibility of the organisation in New Zealand, through a variety of communication strategies, but also considered such topics as intergenerational justice and the impact of the global recession.

Rae strongly recommended that NZFGW develop and maintain closer communication with the National Commission. Visit its website, <http://www.unesco.org.nz> and look for Rae's report on our own website.

Briefing by the Disarmament Unit, International Security and Disarmament Division

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, for Members of Non-Governmental Organisations.

This also took place on 20 April. Jennifer Coote and Juanita Saxby of the Hutt Valley Branch attended, Jennifer with the Oxfam group.

Before the meeting the Minister for Disarmament and Small Arms Control, Hon Georgina Te Heuheu, met representatives. She commended Jennifer's suggestion that NZFGW keep in touch with the Oxfam initiated network of NGOs concerned about Small Arms (and associated violence) in the Pacific.

A number of senior members of the Unit updated the twelve NGOs present on matters relating to both nuclear and conventional weapons, allowing generous discussion time.

Nuclear issues included: the US Posture Review, which represented a significant change of attitude with the Obama administration, and envisaged the eventual elimination of US nuclear weapons, linked to global disarmament; a

Nuclear Security Summit, (again an Obama initiative), a Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference, a Nuclear Suppliers Group Meeting and a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone meeting.

Issues relating to conventional weapons covered the Cluster Munitions Convention (ratified by the NZ Government last December), progress towards a Small Arms Treaty, the approaching Meeting of States Parties on the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and an overview of small arms issues in the Pacific region by Dr Capie, funded by NZ and due for publication shortly.

Hutt Valley has sent Branches a fuller account of the meeting.

Many thanks to these and our other representatives. You enable an involvement and outreach in the community we could not otherwise achieve .

HEGG HOFFET UPDATE

At Conference last year we enjoyed browsing round the well-stocked Hegg Hoffet table, to raise money for an IFUW fund to help graduate women displaced by war or disaster. Joy Dunsheath organised it and we were proud that an impressive \$3000 was raised by the effort.

At the time we all admired a superb tapa cloth, which had been donated but which was really beyond the purse, and probably the house space, of conference-goers. Since the conference Joy has spent five determined months working on its sale and her efforts have paid off splendidly. The cloth has been purchased for the Staff Common Room at Auckland University (who are delighted with it) and Joy has sent a cheque for \$1150 for the Hegg Hoffet Fund.

Great work - and it goes on. Joy is now floating the idea that every member going to the IFUW conference in August should take in her luggage two small items for a Hegg Hoffet table there. Let's do it!

WHAT'S NEW ON THE WEB

Recent updates on the NZFGW website – www.nzfgw.org.nz – include:

- Updated Christchurch Branch newsletter.
- PAC: Introduction and more information on NZFGW National Project; and Submission on underage cultural marriages in New Zealand.
- A pdf version of this newsletter, plus recent back copies.

IF YOU HAVE A VIEW...

Jean Fleming, National Executive
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One of my MSciComm (Master of Science Communication) students is surveying people about their attitudes to whaling. If you have an opinion on this subject, please visit the website below to complete the survey. Many thanks.

WHALING? GOT AN OPINION?
go to <http://www.sarneymonkey.com/s/5j1te5T>

