

Report to PGWNet Council Meeting, September 2008

From NZFGW – Changes Challenges and Achievements

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In February 2008 NZFGW held a mid-term Council, which focused on the challenges our organisation faces and the changes that would need to be made if those challenges are to be overcome. The theme was *Our Sustainable Future*, which was developed from the IFUW Programme for Action.

NZFGW's greatest challenge is how to recruit new members to increase our declining and ageing membership. We discussed a number of possible projects that Branches could undertake to raise the visibility and effectiveness of our organisation and that would possibly interest and attract new members. A strategic planning model was used to identify projects and priorities for action. Then challenges and strategies for each topic were discussed. This was a 'starter' for participants to take home to their Branches to further develop projects relevant to their local areas.

We also had discussions on how to attract younger members through use of the internet – not only by e-mail, but also through discussion groups such as u-tube and Facebook. Our challenge is to communicate and link not only with our present members but also with potential members. The ways in which we conduct meetings, and the sorts of programmes each Branch has, also came under discussion.

Most of our Branches raise money by hiring our academic regalia to students for their graduation ceremonies. The money gained through this work enables us to award scholarships to students so that they can further their studies. There is an increasing focus on funding 'second start education' – that is, education for those women who have not had the opportunity of tertiary education until their middle years. The money from Gowning also enables Branches to support IFUW projects such as Project 5-0 and Bina Roy.

As to our achievements:

- We have on-going activity in following up on the CEDAW recommendations with our Government for the next NGO Report in 2010.
- Our website is an effective communication site, continually updated with local, national and international news.
- Our **Graduate Women** Magazine, produced annually, is a 'high-class glossy'.
- Branches are running seminars and forums to inform and entertain their communities.
- Our members are very active in their local communities, often taking on leadership roles.
- We continue to work with NCWNZ to produce submissions to Parliament, mostly on education.

Finally, we wish to acknowledge the work of our members, IFUW President **Louise Croot**, Status of Women Committee Convener, **Dorothy Meyer**, and IFUW Membership Adviser for the Pacific Region, **Beverley Turner**.