40 YEARS OF WOMAN-TO-WOMAN FUNDING BY ACWW

Projects Administrators Juliet Childs & Sarah Kenningham look back

The Early Days

ACWW’s Projects Committee was initiated in 1977 after a very successful dialogue at the 15th Triennial Conference in Nairobi. The sheer extent of the needs of rural women and communities was explored, and it was felt necessary for ACWW to have one committee to try to address this. Project funding from the Nutrition Education Fund, Save the Sight, and other trust funds had already been carried out for some years. The hope was that, with the new Committee, ACWW would be able to ‘do more to help women in developing countries’ (Valerie Fisher, Projects Committee Chairman, 1989).

Project No.1 was approved (Home Economics Training in Belize), to provide women in remote rural settlements with the materials and skills to produce handicrafts and make nutritious meals for their families. Other early projects included: a child welfare centre in Gauhati, India; ‘Operation Fishpond’ in Tonga; training workshops in Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa covering hygiene, growing and preserving vegetables, cookery and needlework; and literacy for girls in Pakistan. The International Chairman of the All Pakistan Women’s Association commented that the ACWW project grant ‘...reaped a fine harvest and has contributed to the library of an APWA-run school’.

In a 1979 edition of this magazine, ACWW members were invited to donate to projects such as Spinning Wheels for Lesotho and Carpentry Tools for Mexico.

Our work continues...

In 2011 the Committee approved its 900th project – ‘Support and Committed Action for Remote, Isolated and Stigmatised Families in Areas of Ududumbara & Moneragela’, carried out by member society Nest, Sri Lanka.

In 2015 the 1000th project was approved; with Country Women's Association of India training 15 underprivileged female students and five children in computer skills, in order to improve their employment prospects and their status.

Since the Projects Committee started its work, well in excess of £2,500,000 of funding has been sent to some 80 countries in all corners of the globe. ACWW's generous members continue to come up with ingenious ways to raise money – from auctions to sky-diving to wine tasting, and many more besides!

Woman-to-Woman Projects

Thanks to the generosity of ACWW members the Projects Committee has been able, in recent years, to fund a large number of projects using its own Projects Funds. Project No.600 was funded in 2002; Drinking Water for Polio-affected Children, in partnership with the Society of Daughters of Mary Immaculate & Collaborators (DMI), India.

ACWW does not normally fund disaster relief, preferring to leave this work to larger agencies with significant resources ‘on the ground’. An exception was made, however, in the aftermath of the 2004/5 Tsunami, when coastal areas of countries such as India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia were devastated. Donations poured in from ACWW members, and funding was granted for member societies in the affected areas to re-build their communities, restoring schools, providing fishing nets and start income-generating schemes. ‘Tsunami Projects’ were monitored by Ursula Goh, World President.

Highlights from the last 40 years of ACWW’s Projects Committee

1977

Projects Committee founded after 15th Triennial Conference in Nairobi

Project No.1 approved; Home Economics Training in Belize, providing women in rural settlements with materials and skills to produce handicrafts and nutritious meals for their families.

ACWW members invited to donate to projects e.g. Spinning Wheels for Lesotho and carpentry tools for Mexico

1984-1991

ACWW/UNESCO Co-Action

Water for All project funding (UCA 71), to mark the ‘Water Decade’. Projects were funded in partnership with member societies in Burundi, Kenya, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Kiribati, Korea, Mali, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Sudan, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu.
ACWW/UNESCO CO-ACTION

Women Feed the World project funding (UCA 1180) implemented, in Burkina Faso, India, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Mali, Philippines, Tanzania and Uganda

Projects were funded by ACWW members and UNESCO groups in Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, UK, USA

CASE STUDY - Project 1015
Art Therapy in Romania: Women’s Association from Sibiu

ACWW is currently funding an ‘Art Therapy’ project at the shelter run by Women’s Association from Sibiu in Romania. The shelter has been providing refuge and legal advice for women and children fleeing situations of domestic violence since it opened in 2007 and is the only one of its kind in the region.

Art therapy activities teach the women and children how to create beautiful pieces using various materials and techniques, including quilling and embossing. They provide an opportunity for the discovery of creativity in a peaceful and relaxing environment that allows the participants to detach from their personal problems for a time. This is of particular importance as the women and children have come from highly stressful situations.

Handmade products such as greetings cards, photo frames and magnets are then sold online and at local events and bazaars to provide a source of revenue for the shelter. Once the women move out having mastered the techniques, they can also go on to produce their own handicrafts for sale.

Women have remarked how learning these new skills, together with counselling and support received at the shelter, has given them a confidence boost and encouragement to start new and independent lives.

Illustrative project costs:
£3 buys a pack of quilling paper or card
£10 buys an assortment of wooden decorations
£15 buys a set of ten wooden frames to decorate
£30 buys a silicon glue gun
£50 buys a quilling set

1989-1997

1991 Funding received from Norwegian ‘Telethon’, enabling workshops in health, communication skills, income-generation, leadership and business skills including cooperatives, to be funded in Colombia, Fiji, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, India, Sri Lanka and Malaysia

2016

17 new projects funded by the Committee

23 Final Reports from completed projects received in 2016

More than £2.5m awarded in project funding across the globe

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COMMITTEE FOCUS
Projects Committee member Edwina Marr reports

The Federation of Women’s Institutes in Northern Ireland has supported many ACWW Projects over the last 40 years, and has been one of the strongest financial and material supporters. This has including providing books for children in Chennai, clothing for projects in Ghana and Sierra Leone, as well as building and equipping a medical centre in Estonia. Funding has focused on basic education, health and nutrition, water and sanitation, small scale agricultural projects, food processing, micro credit schemes, and leadership training amongst other elements of societal support. We also adopted the project run by Safeplan Uganda, who have since joined ACWW as a new member society.

One of the most recent projects to have been adopted is the Art Therapy project run by the Women’s Association from Sibiu, Romania. The aim of this project is to help victims of domestic violence to regain confidence and self-esteem and look forward to an independent life. By learning how to create beautiful things and by developing their physical, social and intellectual skills, it is hoped that the beneficiaries will have a more positive outlook than before, and feel better able to live independently. Items made during the project are advertised and sold at bazaars, local events and the Association’s website. Money raised helps to fund the operating cost of the shelter. As the next European Area Conference will be held in Sibiu in September 2017, it seemed appropriate to help make an on-going positive impact on this community.

As the Projects Committee has developed new initiatives, the Federation has been for All’, ‘Nutrition Education Fund’ and the general Projects Fund. Our Federation has maintained a special interest in projects in Eastern Europe, and we have provided scholarships to ladies from this area, having initially established links during the European Area Conference in Belfast, 1996. Northern Ireland has always been supportive of World and Area Conferences, attending in large numbers.

Anne Marit Hovstad, the current Chairman of the Projects Committee attended this Area Conference in Belfast, and will once again travel to Northern Ireland in October as guest speaker at our next Autumn Council meeting.

ACWW is promoted at the Branch level, and each Institute is encouraged to have their own International Officer; there is also an International Sub-Committee at the Executive level. Hilda Stewart, a member of Randalstown WI, was deputy World President from 1995 to 1998 and World President from 1998 to 2004. Many ladies from Northern Ireland have held posts with ACWW, serving as Officers and on Committees. Mary Boyd, Eileen Glover and Jean Blair are all former Committee Chairmen; Doreen Dawson a former Vice President; Betty Little, Angela Martin and Margery Thompson have also served, whilst Margaret McMillan is currently the European Area President.

Over the past 12 years, the Federation of WI’s in Northern Ireland has contributed more than £97,000 towards Pennies for Friendship, and more than £130,000 for Projects. The money raised by this year’s ‘Women Walk the World’ is being given towards Projects, helping to celebrate the 40th Anniversary.

Projects Committee member Edwina Marr reports

I met my fellow Projects Committee members for the first time in October 2016 when I attended the first meeting of the Triennium at ACWW’s Central Office at Mary Sumner House, and we convened again in early March 2017. I was truly amazed at the work that goes on just to get the projects approved, and then the process of getting them adopted by WI’s and similar organisations all over the world. The projects then have to be monitored, and the administrative process of dealing with progress and final reports is no mean feat. I can only praise and support those who travel to each country to get everything in place, and monitor the completion of Projects.

Northern Ireland will continue to support Projects and credit is given to those WI’s who tirelessly work to raise funds for this whether through coffee mornings, bring and buy sales, walks, concerts, or individual donations. I feel privileged to be part of the Projects Committee for this Triennium and have total respect for the work that goes on and money raised “by women for women”. We must continue to help with fundraising “to bring an improved quality of life to women and communities worldwide”.

1997
ACWW awarded UK National Lottery Funding for ‘Mali Project’ in partnership with Action Couverture et Developpement, Mali. Hilda Stewart, World President, acted as Project Coordinator and visited the project in 1997, 1998 and 2000. Implemented over four years, the project reached communities in 8 villages and provided wells, market gardens, a maternity unit with trained midwives, and a literacy centre.

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600th project approved!
Society of Daughters of Mary Immaculate & Collaborators, India providing drinking water for Polio-affected Children

2005
Tsunami Disaster Fund
Established following requests from ACWW members; 15 projects to rebuild Tsunami-affected communities. Funded in India, Indonesia and Sri Lanka with ACWW member societies (separate from Projects Committee work). Monitored by Dato Ursula Goh, World President

2011
the year in which funding was approved for Project No. 900

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17 new projects were approved for funding by the Projects Committee in 2016, and final reports were received from 23 organisations containing valuable information about the impact that ACWW project funding has had in the past year. They are, by type:

- **Water & Sanitation** (7 projects)
- **Income Generation** (4 projects)
- **Health Education** (5 projects)
- **Agricultural Training & Development** (2 projects)
- **Education & Capacity Building** (4 projects)
- **Nutrition & Home Economics** (1 project)

**Final Project Reports by Area:**

- **East, West & Central Africa:**
  - Cameroon (3), Uganda (2), Ghana (1), Kenya (1), Togo (1)

- **Central & South Asia:**
  - India (10), Sri Lanka (2), Pakistan (1)

- **Southern Africa:**
  - South Africa (1)

- **South Pacific:**
  - Papua New Guinea (1)

- **Total beneficiaries reached by projects completed in 2016:**
  - 142,375
  - 91,187 women
  - 15,295 children

- **Projects Anniversary Appeal launched!**
  - June 2017

- **1,029 projects received funding confirmation in March 2017**

- **1,000th project approved!**
  - Country Women’s Association of India; training of 15 underprivileged female students and five children in computer skills, in order to improve their employment prospects and their status.

- **In this year, funding approved in every ACWW area**

- **Since the Projects Committee started its work, well in excess of £2,500,000 of funding has been sent to some 80 countries in all corners of the globe.**
2016 PROJECT IMPACTS

ACWW Projects are a part of the organisation’s commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, and our reporting conditions are aligned with these goals and their criteria.

**Water & Sanitation**
- 7 Projects in 6 Countries
- 16,553 Beneficiaries
- Ensuring access to water and sanitation for all

**Health Education**
- 4 Projects in 2 Countries
- 342 Beneficiaries
- No Poverty

**Income Generation**
- 5 Projects in 2 Countries
- 111,870 Beneficiaries
- Ensuring healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

**Education & Capacity Building**
- 4 Projects in 4 Countries
- 13,204 Beneficiaries
- Ensuring inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning

**Agricultural Training & Development / Nutrition & Home Economics**
- 3 Projects in 3 Countries
- 406 Beneficiaries
- End hunger, achieve food security & improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

June 2015 - ACWW signs the Zero Hunger Challenge

795 million people in the world (1 in 9) are undernourished

ACWW Project funding plays a significant part in our commitment to reducing global hunger. As part of our reporting procedures, data is gathered and fed back through the Zero Hunger Challenge and other mechanisms to the United Nations, Food & Agriculture Organisation and other international bodies.

Donations to the Projects Anniversary Appeal or via project adoption will ensure that ACWW is able to continue with this essential woman-to-woman funding in the years ahead.
CASE STUDY: SAFEPLAN UGANDA

From Project funding applicant to ACWW Member: Annet Birungi charts their journey

Safeplan Uganda is a community based organisation that has been operating in Masindi, mid-west Uganda, since 2011. We have been working with women and young people; empowering them to increase productivity and reduce poverty through improved livelihoods and sustainable development. With support from local partners and donors such as ACWW, we have formed groups of rural women and young people to start simple and inclusive income-generating projects, which are accessible to people with disabilities or living with HIV. All the group activities are accompanied by business skills training to enhance project management skills and sexual and reproductive health education services for the young people to make informed decisions.

Safeplan Uganda first discovered ACWW through an update from fundsforngos.org and applied for a grant as a non-member organisation in 2015. We were delighted to be awarded £2,549 towards the Masindi Young Women Empowerment Enterprise project.

Since this time, we have greatly benefited from the ACWW partnership, which has strengthened our capacity to engage with more groups of young women and girls in rural communities. The beneficiaries also wish to extend their appreciation to ACWW for supporting them to have decent and healthy lives. In 2016, we applied to become an ACWW member organisation because we want to be recognised as part of the network that is creating change among women in under-served communities of the world. We hope to hear about the success stories of other member organisations, find out what they do in their communities and learn more innovative ideas for action to create change.

Annet Birungi
Executive Secretary, Safeplan Uganda

Monitoring Visits: Projects Committee Chairman Anne Marit Hovstad explains

I went to visit Safeplan Uganda last year to monitor how they had used the ACWW project grant awarded to them in 2015 for the Masindi Young Women Empowerment Enterprise. They work out of a small rented office in Masindi and I was shown around by the Executive Director Annet Birungi and her colleague Dilis Akot. In addition to the ACWW funded project, I was taken to visit their woman’s beekeeping enterprise and saw that the organisation’s activities are widespread and having a real impact in the area.

ACWW Project 998 had different elements, one of which was to create an enabling environment for young women and support girls in school with reusable sanitary pads. I was advised that two training sessions had been conducted on sexual health and 100 reusable pads distributed, alongside a drama show and the creation of two teen clubs. I felt, however, that perhaps more time could have been spent with the young girls and that more leaflets were required to provide all the information needed. Two of the 13 year olds girls I spoke to felt that they were much more comfortable and happy at school but both suggested that it would be better if there were at least four pads for each girl. The parents, school teachers and local authority representatives that I met were also pleased with the activities being run with the funding.

Another project aim was to build the capacity of 20 women to initiate and manage vegetable growing and selling businesses. A demonstration site had been established and three days training on seed bed preparation, integrated pest management and business skills had been held. It was explained to me that because of a spell of dry weather, the vegetables that season had been consumed by family members but in the future, they would also be sold in the groceries and hotels near Masindi.

I found Safeplan Uganda to be such an interesting organisation that I encouraged them to both join ACWW and apply for further funding. I was really impressed with the wide range of activities they could offer to women in the community with the help of small grants. They are already working in the spirit of ACWW by networking with many different women’s groups in Uganda and I hope that as members, they will also be able to share their knowledge and experience with us.

Anne Marit Hovstad
Projects Committee Chairman

The project won a UN SEED Award in 2014 www.seed.uno/awards/all/2014/1356-budongo-women-bee-enterprise.html#tabs1-details
Since 1977, ACWW has funded more than 1000 community based, women-led projects. As we mark the 40th Anniversary of the Projects Committee, we launch the Anniversary Appeal to raise £150,000 to guarantee support for the next generation of empowering projects.

Small streams united make a big river. Together, we can reach our goal of raising the standard of living for rural women and their families.

Education, training and community development programmes are funded in every region of the world and we need your help to ensure that this continues.

ADOPT
DONATE
EMPOWER
#WEAREACWW