

United Nations Women's Guild - Geneva

Newsletter



November-December 2020

Issue 4



Message of the President

Niloufar Rafi-Kian Bouabid
(Elected on 2 October 2020)

Dear Members, dear
Friends,

Solidarity, inclusivity and
open mindedness, shall be
our guiding principles.

These principals are vital to
a changing world. Change
has been imposed upon us.
We have had to live our
lives differently, consume
differently, plan differently.

Our capacity to adapt to
changing times is an
essential element for the
survival of any organization.
The newly elected EC is an
image of these changing
times.

We adapt, fully conscious of
our history, our past and
footprints of previous strong
women who have led this
organization. We thank all
for their efforts and
generosity.

After all the UNWG has been
here well before us and will
continue to be here after us.
In fact, this year marks the
50th anniversary of the
UNWG. A proud number for
a proud organization that has
strived to better the lives of
women and children all
throughout the world. We
hope to be able to celebrate
this anniversary soon.

Some articles inside this issue:

- Our projects throughout the world
- Information on languages and activities classes
- New members of the Executive Committee of the UNWG



In the meanwhile, my colleagues and I will be promoting an environment of participation and inclusion during these difficult times for all. This may require a larger use of social media platforms; an increased participation through social media tools and perhaps even a larger use of social media for purposes of fund raising in a near future.

Immediately after the recent 2020 UNWG election, our EC team began brainstorming on how to create, expand and adapt to these methods. I extend my congratulations to Imane, Mateja and Juliana for their hard work on these issues. It is still a work in progress but we will be sure to keep you updated with new and exciting channels of participation.

As you are aware, we are now in the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic. Current national and cantonal regulations forbid us to effectively get together in person.

However, by no means are we halting our activities. We will work through every small and big technology tool available to us in order to keep in touch with you and create an atmosphere of friendship and solidarity. Our activities team, Imane, Helgard and activity leaders, have already done so much to jumpstart the activities section. Some restarted at the Villa (early October) and some have continued online. Their efforts will continue in order to bring you these activities, as much as possible, during this second wave of the pandemic.

Generally, we encourage you to communicate, exchange and keep in touch with us and with your friends at the UNWG.

I truly hope that you will all continue to be in good health and that we will soon be able to resume our normal activities as we have for so many years. In the meanwhile, I share with you this Persian adage:
This too shall pass!

Niloufar

Condolences

Thelma Haberstock



Thelma Haberstock née Lobo was born in Bombay in 1937, into an Indian Christian family. She had a beautiful voice and was an accomplished pianist and soprano, and performed in many concerts in Bombay.

The mother of 3 children, Thelma was widowed when the children were young. She met and remarried a French banker, Paul Haberstock who was posted in India. Paul's family lived in Gaillard, France and they chose to make it their home. Thelma was offered a job with the IOM in 1983. She worked in an administrative capacity at IOM from 1983 and retired after 16 years of dedicated service to the organisation.

Thelma will be remembered for her "joie de vivre" and for her talents as a cook. She was always the life and soul of a party and a good friend.

Above all, Thelma was a devoted mother and grandmother to her 3 children and 4 grandchildren.

In her last years Thelma was afflicted by dementia; she died peacefully on 22 September 2020, surrounded by her family. She will be fondly remembered by all who knew her.

Patricia Bell
Newsletter Editor French

Dear Thelma,

Thank you for having entered our hearts and having shared many moments of learning, joy, enthusiasm and discussion within an atmosphere of respect and affection. You were a great student. I always admired you for your enthusiasm, interest and ability to improve your understanding of Spanish as your fourth language every day.

Thank you for showing us your great qualities as a pianist and occasionally offering us your delicious culinary dishes typical of your native land, India.

All of us who knew you and shared with you, we give you infinite thanks for your love and friendship. You were a wonderful mix of laughter, stories and love.

Your memory will always live in our hearts. Thank you for allowing us to meet and be part of your extraordinary family.

To all of them we express our condolences and feelings of sadness.

Doris Murillo
Spanish teacher

Our Projects Throughout the World

Improving the conditions of disadvantaged women and children in Sri Lanka

Report by Raji Sundaram, Ex Vice-President Projects

The Crest Lanka Foundation assists those who are repressed because they are very poor, illiterate, minorities or those discriminated against because of their race or religion. In Kotahena, a children's home, around 30 children either orphaned or coming from families with social difficulties, have attended English classes with some practical sessions with role play games to learn soft skills and grow their self-esteem, to help them overcome their past traumas. The funds were also used for classes for girls from under-privileged backgrounds. Parents, usually working as tuk-tuk drivers or garbage collectors and mothers as domestic employees, are very grateful to have this place where their daughters can learn and enjoy conditions that their own homes cannot offer.



Our Projects Throughout the World

Helping young girls and women in Argentina

Report by Raji Sundaram, Ex Vice-President Projects

Asociacion Cultural Bonaerense is an NGO that promotes educational, cultural and social activities for women and young girls. The funds were used for educating young mothers through participation in workshops for early childhood education, cooking and nutrition classes and home management; educating for young girls through art workshops, cooking classes and a reading club. Through this project under-privileged girls have received a comprehensive education to strengthen their capabilities and to improve their living conditions.



Vice-President Activities:

Imane Tazi-El Hachimi

Dear All,

A return to school under the sign of change! A new elected committee is facing new constraints and new challenges. The constraints imposed by the current health situation force us to review our way of doing things, to reinvent ourselves to adapt to it and that will be our challenge.

The various workshops and activities of the Guild are above all an opportunity for all our members to meet up with friends. Unfortunately, these encounters are not currently allowed, or at least not as we usually do. Presence limitations and the temporary closure of the Villa lead us to temporarily interrupt large gatherings as well as Coffee Mornings.

However, and thanks to the mobilization of all the teachers as well as my colleague Helgard, responsible for Activities, we are trying to find a way to maintain the workshops which can be given remotely. For the others, they will restart as soon as possible.

Thank you all for your mobilization and your support!

Imane

Vice-President Projects:

Mateja Prosek Grima

Dear Ladies,

The support of vulnerable children and women throughout the world is a central commitment of the UNWG. It does this by financing microprojects and by offering multi-year scholarships. This year the Coronavirus pandemic is causing unparalleled disruption to our ongoing efforts to raise funds for children and women in need. However, charities like ours, have proved time and again their resilience, adapting and innovating in every possible way. Zoom, Teams, Skype, limitless WhatsApp groups and other digital platforms have become the primary means to continue our work, to keep fit, for education and entertainment. Therefore, UNWG needs to adjust its strategies and develop solutions to be able to honor our ongoing commitments to UNWG's scholarships and projects. We need to continue giving support to disadvantaged children and women around the world. They need us now more than ever before.

In this respect, the integration of digital tools into different fundraising activities has been a long-term strategy of our organization which UNWG planned to implement gradually. The Coronavirus has turned this strategy into an urgent necessity. Therefore, UNWG needs to explore different options to transform our website into a modern, informative, inclusive and dynamic platform which would bring together its members and provide a tool for fundraising activities.

The current situation is challenging for everyone but the UNWG is determined to rise to the challenge, to adapt to the new realities and to come out stronger and even better equipped than before. Only in this way, can we hope to continue to be of service to those who need us most.

Mateja

Public Relations:
Juliana Barrios

Dear Friends,

It is a fact that we live in a different world. A world that 12 months ago we couldn't have even imagined. Everything changed so quickly that we had to rapidly adapt to new ways of interacting with people in order to maintain our different relationships afloat. During this process, we came to further appreciate the power of technology as a tool to accomplish such goal while protecting our health.

With this in mind, the UNWG is launching its new social media accounts. Our purpose is to create an even stronger network among all of us to share pictures, news and thoughts of encouragement, and to give us the opportunity to connect with each other across distances. For the moment, we are using two very friendly-user platforms: Facebook and Instagram.

When engaging in our social media sites, let us be reminded of the importance of following the core values of our organization, such as tolerance and solidarity, so we can treat each other with kindness and respect.

Instagram: @UNWGgva
Facebook: UNWG Geneva

Follow us now!

Juliana

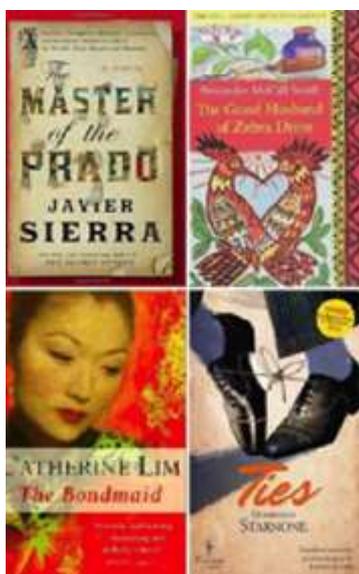
Languages and Activities classes

Dear Members,

In a time where we can't meet in person, our course organizers are busy to find new, creative ways for us to connect. It is their goal to continue to offer opportunities for companionship and support as well as for spending extra time constructively.

The Guild has 'officially' restarted offering activities. At the moment, groups are being re-formed and schedules are 'under construction', all in an online format.

You are warmly invited to join the UNWG Course Activities!



Here are 4 messages for you from some of our course teachers:

Dear Ladies,

The UNWG Book Club will now take place over Skype. You are very welcome to join us in our meetings.

Here the order of books we will be discussing (English and French titles).

- The Master of The Prado (Javier Sierra)
Le Maître du Prado
- The Good Husband of Zebra Drive (Alexander McCall Smith)
Les Larmes de la Girafe
- The Bondmaid (Catherine Lim)
La Maîtresse de Jade
- Ties (Domenico Starnone)
Les Liens.

For further information, you can email me at chouhrettecherif@gmail.com. Additionally, you can read past and current book reviews at www.1stbookreview.com

Warmly,
Chouhrette Bunzi

Dear Ladies,

We have been holding 'Arts and Creations' workshops at the Guild since May 2018.

We explore all sorts of creative and artistic work, including making cards and bags as well as painting and drawing painting on many different themes.



Here is a collage of some recent work from the group this summer.

We use a variety of materials, not only paint, for example - pastels, crayons, felt tips, pencils and a variety of papers and cards etc. and we use many tools to apply paint including brushes, sponges, spatulas and even forks!

Looking forward to meeting you at our next workshop online with Zoom! The workshops take place on Friday's at 15:00. Please contact me for more information.

Caroline Scudamore
Carolineeliza1@gmail.com

Dear Friends,

There are 3 spots left in my Beginner's French Class on Zoom. This class is meant for students who have never studied French before.

First come, first serve! Day and time to be decided.

I am looking forward to 'see' you.

Diana De Peic
+41 79 302 1706

Dear Ladies,

The handicrafts group has lots of Christmas cards and decorations in stock. Although we do not have any activities in-person, we would like to inform you that you can still purchase gifts for your families and friends from our stock. Please contact us on +41 79 275 17 85 to see what is in stock and if you would like us to send it to you by post.

Manila Paktian



One more thing...

Since we cannot at the time post a complete course offer with a fixed schedule, we are asking for your understanding and patience.

If you are a member previously enrolled in our courses and would like to continue, please contact your group organizer unless she has already been in touch with you.

- If you are not sure who to get in touch with
- If you need more information
- if you consider offering a course yourself

Please send me a **text** at **+41 76 604 8583** or write to me at education@unwg.ch.

My very best greetings to you all,
Helgard Adams, Education Coordinator

**Members of the UNWG Executive Committee
Elected on 2 October 2020**

President
Niloufar Rafi-Kian Bouabid



I have been a member of the UNWG, Geneva family for over a decade. I have held several posts within the UNWG's Executive Committee: Public Relations Officer, Vice-President Activities and currently, President of the UNWG, Geneva. I have also participated in the UNWG International Bazaar of 2018 and 2019 where I served as the Co-Chairwoman of the Lottery Team. I was previously a member of the Association of African Ambassadors' Spouses in Geneva, where I served twice as Vice-President.

I am an attorney at law, admitted to the New York State Bar, New York, USA with several years of professional experience at the national and international levels.

After my early schooling in Switzerland, I obtained a Baccalauréat from Lycée Janson de Sailly, Paris, France. I attended the Université Panthéon, Assas, Paris II, and obtained a Licence de droit. Furthermore, I hold a Master at Law (LL.M.) from the Washington College of Law, Washington, D.C., USA.

I am fluent in French, English, and Persian.

Vice-President Activities:
Imane Tazi-El Hachimi



I have been a member of the UNWG since 2005 and of the Executive Committee between 2018 and 2019 as French Recording Secretary, and from 2019 to 2020 as Public Relations Officer.

In close collaboration with the Executive Committee and particularly with the President and Vice-President of the Guild, I have worked, during their two mandates, for the promotion and representation of the Guild at many internal and external events such as: the Children's Walk, the UN Bazaar, the annual lunch and coffee mornings.

As a member of the Bazaar Committee, I participated in the organization of the lottery, the design of the Bazaar brochure and was also in charge of the technical coordination with the various services of the United Nations Office.

I was born in Morocco and graduated in information science and communication, I spent almost 10 years in high-level positions within the Moroccan Ministry of Economy and Finance.

Since arriving in Geneva in 2004, I have worked as a communication consultant for various International Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations. I have also been an active member in several associations including "Genève Accueil".

Vice-President Projects:
Mateja Prosek Grima



For over fifteen years it has been a privilege for me to have been associated with the United Nations Women's Guild, working in different capacities towards its overall objective of offering vulnerable children around the world the prospect of a better future. In the three UN capitals – Vienna, New York and now Geneva - I have participated with Malta's stands, raising money for children in need.

Moreover, during my time in New York it was an honour to have been part of a small team chosen by Ms. Ban, spouse of the former United Nations Secretary-General, to oversee the organization of the annual UNWG International Bazaar at UN Headquarters. Children are our future.

Together with other members of the Executive Committee and UNWG mem I am looking forward to again play an active part as UNWG Vice-President - Projects by raising funds to give vulnerable children around the world the possibility of a healthy and hopeful future.

Public Relations:
Juliana Barrios



My name is Juliana Barrios and I am thrilled to be the new Chairwoman of Public Relations. Since my arrival in Geneva from Colombia, the UNWG has been a second home for me and it is where I have met incredible women and started new friendships.

My desire to join the Executive Committee is based on my willingness to support this group in all that it encompasses. It is my time to give back to the UNWG. We shall keep seeking both, a better life and opportunities for disadvantaged children and women around the world, and a strong, kind and warm community of empowered women in Geneva.

Education:
Helgard Adams



I joined the Guild in 2011 upon arrival in Geneva. Through my involvement with the Bazaar and Lottery, I experienced again and again the energy we can contribute, our diverse skills and our valuable ideas.

I applied for the post of 'Education' because I believe that it is in this sector we find the greatest potential and the biggest challenge for our organization.

A community is strong when all members are involved actively in meaningful work, respond to each other respectfully and kindly, and experience joy while acquiring new skills together.

It is my wish to see as many members participating in our activities as possible (for the moment mostly virtually), especially now that a pandemic might leave us feeling lonely and disconnected. Our teachers and course leaders are exceptionally generous offering their time, expertise and community throughout the year.

Let's match their commitment by supporting the Guild to the best of our abilities, making 'Our Guild' a thriving and happy place for all!

Newsletter Editor English:
Caroline Scudamore



I have been a member of the UNWG for the past five years and I have been the English editor of the Newsletter since September 2019. I have also been active within the Guild with my Arts and Creations class which I started in May 2018.

The mandate and activities of the Guild are the things that drew me to join and especially our work of the projects that go to improving the lives of some children and women who are living in very difficult circumstances around the world.

To be part of the Executive Committee is also another way to be proactive in the Guild and to contribute in a positive way.

Newsletter Editor French:
Patricia Bell



I was invited to join the UNWG by Bilqueece and Souad, both old friends, because I am a de facto "go to" person for parents of kids with "special needs", in particular newly arrived families who may not speak French.

Over the years I have learned to navigate the system in Geneva (not always obvious) thanks to my personal experience.

I was surprised to learn that there was a need for someone to translate the newsletter into French and was happy to undertake this task. I am also a qualified EFL teacher and, being bilingual, can teach both English and French.

I have many friends among the members of the UNWG. The Coffee Mornings and the Bazaar are great opportunities to meet old friends, make new friends, and learn about other cultures.

Recording Secretary English:
Ingy Amin



I am Ingy Amin, from Egypt. I moved to Geneva in September last year as my husband was assigned to a post at the Egyptian mission. A few weeks after my settlement in Geneva I helped the Egyptian stand during the Bazaar that was held on November 2019. I was so impressed by the the diversity of nationalities and the nice atmosphere that the UNWG worked in.

In addition to its primary goals for helping needy children all over the world, I was motivated to provide my time and efforts volunteering for this women's association aiming to be an added value in the future.

Welcoming:

Thusitha Makawitage Perera



I became interested in the UNWG because I wanted to volunteer my time in the service of others. My friend Chryshanthi who was a regular member for a number of years told me that I could join as an Associate member.

As I have experience of working in finance and IT I thought it was a good opportunity to offer my services to the Guild.

I joined the UNWG in May 2018.

I offered to help with the Bazaar of 2018 at the reception and bank team. At the end of 2018 I helped in the membership area because they needed help as the regular members were travelling or were on vacation.

By the beginning of 2019 I was heavily involved in almost everything eg., Children's walk, the Bazaar lottery team, Kiosk and Bric-a-Brac etc.

I am a mother of two young men and have been living in Geneva for more than 32 years.

I love to be with friends and help with their needs.

Membership information



To be eligible to apply for membership to the UNWG, please note the following:

1. Membership is open to any woman officially connected by work or relationship with the United Nations, the specialised agencies, the Permanent Missions to the UN and intergovernmental organisations with headquarters in Geneva.
2. Women whose association with the UN community has ceased may become members and/or retain their membership.
3. Women who are not connected to the UN but whose contribution to the purpose of the UNWG would be considered valuable may become Associate Members on recommendation of two UNWG members and with the approval of the Executive Committee.

The annual subscription fee is **(CHF 85.00)** payable by e-banking or directly at the UBS Bank to the following bank account: **UNWG, IBAN: (CH 87 0027 9279 HU11 9293 0)**. No payment at the Post Office will be accepted.

Email: membership@unwg.ch

Newsletter

The deadline to receive information for the next Newsletter is:
15 December 2020. Please ensure that all information is sent to the Newsletter: email: **newsletter@unwg.ch**.

The Executive Committee Team, hopes to see you soon and wishes you an excellent winter!

UNITED NATIONS WOMEN'S GUILD

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