



GNWS Foundation

Annual Report 2020

General information

The GNWS Foundation was founded in 2014 in The Hague, The Netherlands. The goal of the GNWS Foundation is to support the Global Network of Women's Shelters (GNWS), which was founded in 2009 in Ottawa, Canada, and its regional networks.

Board members in 2020 were:

- Chi Hui Jung (Taiwan, chair)
- Riekje Kok (the Netherlands, treasurer/secretary)
- Pat Vargas (Canada, member)
- Marion Suijker (the Netherlands, member)
- Aleid van den Brink (the Netherlands, member)

Board members do this work voluntarily; they do not receive a reimbursement or stipend.

Activities and results 2020

In 2020, the international board of the GNWS Foundation met every 4 to 6 weeks online. General topics of discussion included the Women's Helplines Project (Lila.Help), fundraising, developments in the GNWS, and the preparation of general GNWS meetings.

GNWS Worldwide Women's Helplines Project – Lila.Help

The main focus in 2020 has been the development and support of the worldwide Women's Helplines Project. In 2019, Uber sponsored a temporary project leader to prepare and start this project. The board of the GNWS Foundation assigned the project leader and advised her during the work on the project. The first goal was to create a respected global website that lists accurate, vetted, safe resources for victims of domestic and sexual violence in every country across the world. The 4th World Conference of Women's Shelters in Taiwan (November 2019) gave us an opportunity to discuss the goals of the project with the international members of the GNWS Board and to start the collection of trusted, established helplines.

During 2020, the following activities were carried out:

- A project plan was written, including action plan and budget.
- An international executive committee was formed, meeting every two weeks, beginning June 2020.
- Collection of the first data from national helplines, with the help of UN Women and WAVE Europe, consisting of up to 115 countries.
- The development of a directory, with automatic information updating facilities, constructed and designed by a team of Facebook volunteers (we are very grateful for their work!)
- The design and construction of the website lila.help, in 6 languages (more to come).

- Search for financial support and various fundraising activities: which resulted in a grant from Steunfonds Blijf Groep supporting the project coordination and the development costs of the website lila.help and UN Women supporting a global project leader and regional costs from the regional networks from November 2020 till July 2021. The GNWS Women's Helplines Project was also one of the beneficiaries of the Dutch Orange the World Campaign (UN Women the Netherlands/Soroptimists/Zonta).
A grant application at the Dutch Dioraphte Fund for our African Network was unfortunately rejected; requests to the Dutch Government were also not successful. A request to the Canadian government was made in December 2020 and is still pending.
- A connection with Child Helplines International (CHI) has been established and maintained. CHI is years ahead in developing their directory and very willing to share their experiences with GNWS. Jeroo Billimoria, founder of CHI, supported the board of the GNWS Foundation with a one-day session on strategy.
- The appointment of a new project leader, based in The Netherlands, for the next phase (November 2020). After launching lila.help, her main concern will be to fund the next phases of the project. These are especially focused on supporting regional networks and international advocacy for creating and improving helplines in weak countries.

Secretariat of the Global Network of Women's Shelters

As a network, the GNWS has a board with participants from (almost) every regional network. Members of the board started meeting monthly and decided to create a formalized Executive Committee to address ongoing needs and building the helplines project? Since June 2020, the executive committee has been meeting every two weeks. Members of this committee contribute by providing the secretariat of the board and executive committee. In 2020 staff members of Garden of Hope (Taiwan) and NNEDV (USA) ran the secretariat in close cooperation with board members of the GNWS Foundation. NNEDV offered GNWS a zoom subscription for free to organize worldwide online GNWS meetings.

Annual GNWS meeting in New York

Members of the Global Network of Women's Shelters typically meet annually in New York in March before the start of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). In 2020, CSW64 was cancelled because of the intensifying COVID-19 pandemic. The cancellation was announced in the first days of March 2020, less than a week before CSW would have taken place. A group of 10 GNWS members were not able to cancel their journey to the USA, so we decided to hold our annual meeting in New York with a joint live and Zoom format for other members who stayed at home. The COVID-proof meeting took place on March 8 in the office of one of the companies that sponsors NNEDV¹. Every regional network of GNWS was represented during these meeting.

Topics of the meeting:

- Regional reports from the different continents.
- Evaluation of 4WCWS in Taiwan.
- Proposed location for the 5th World Conference of Women's Shelters: Australia was chosen, with applications from several other countries.
- Women's Helplines Project: status and next steps - project plan and regional fundraising possibilities.
- GNWS website and board structure.

¹ National Network to End Domestic Violence in the USA

Due to the cancellation of CSW64, we managed to meet with policy specialists on gender based violence of UN Women and UNFPA. We discussed the Women's Helplines Project and they offered their networks and support. Regional workers of both organizations have collected national helpline information of some missing countries in our database. At the end of the year, GNWS received grant funding from UN Women for the Women's Helplines Project, formally named [lila.help](#).

Webinars on COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we immediately realized that victims of domestic violence would suffer during 'lockdown' at home with abusive partners. Countries around the globe reported escalation of domestic violence and increased Google searches on help for domestic violence; abusive individuals are using the COVID-19 pandemic as another means to control and abuse. Even if a victim is unable to leave their home at this time, domestic violence and sexual violence services can provide essential support to victims in many ways.

Members of the regional networks of GNWS decided to share their knowledge and experiences of assisting victims during this COVID-19 crisis. In 2020, GNWS organized, supported, and hosted, with support from member organizations NNEDV and Garden of Hope, 13 online webinars about (amongst others) shelter management, serving survivors from a distance, using technology to support victims, the impact of reopening communities, fundraising, and updates from around the globe. Hundreds of participants joined these webinars, coming from all over the world, from all kind of organizations. The webinars are still available on our website: [GNWS webinars for Coronavirus - GNWS](#)

New website

The website of the Global Network of Women's Shelters was renewed in 2017/2018. The Joomla language of the website was too complicated and not many were familiar with this coding language. The board therefore decided to develop a new website in word-press. This was completed in July 2020. See the new website at www.gnws.org.

Second GNWS meeting: December 2020

A second GNWS meeting was held on December 15/16. This meeting was online and held twice because of the time zones from Australia/Asia to North/South America. Topics of this meeting were:

- Status and next steps of the Women's Helplines Project, including directory, training, and fundraising.
- Next phase of GNWS: NGO-CSW65, GNWS Secretariat, World Conference, GNWS Website.
- Regional reports from the different continents.

Every regional network of GNWS was represented during these meetings.

Social media

Board members of the GNWS Foundation and volunteers of the Global Network of Women's Shelters use the website, Facebook, and Twitter to share information from GNWS and its member-organizations.

<https://www.gnws.org>

Twitter: [@WomensShelters](#)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/GlobalNetworkofWomensShelters>

Website for the 4th World Conference: [The 4th World Conference of Women's Shelters | \(worldshelterconference.org\)](#)