



# GNWS Foundation

## Annual report 2021

### General information

The Global Network of Women's Shelters (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, which was founded in 2009 in Ottawa, Canada, and its regional networks.

Board members in 2020 were:

Aleid van den Brink (the Netherlands, chair)

Riekje Kok (the Netherlands, treasurer/secretary)

Chi Hui Jung (Taiwan, member)

Pat Vargas (Canada, member)

Marion Suijker (the Netherlands, member)

Board members do this work voluntarily, they do not receive a reimbursement.

#### About the Global Network of Women's Shelters [www.gnws.org](http://www.gnws.org)

Networking is a key aspect of the work of GNWS to unite women and the women's shelter movement globally to end violence against women and their children. Through GNWS board meetings, our World Conference of Women's Shelters, our international policy campaigns, and our other advocacy work, the Global Network of Women's Shelters is committed to broadening the scope and reach of networking activities for women's shelters and centers, transitional houses, refuges, and other feminist organizations working to end violence against women and their children. The heart of the GNWS are its networks: continental/regional networks and a network of First nations Women's Shelters. We have networks in Africa, America (North, Central and South America), Asia, Europe, Middle East & North Africa, and Oceania.

### Activities and results 2021

In 2021, the international board of GNWS Foundation met every 4 to 6 weeks online. General topics were: the lila.help Women's Helplines Project, fundraising, developments in the Global Network of Women's Shelters, and the preparation of general GNWS board meetings.



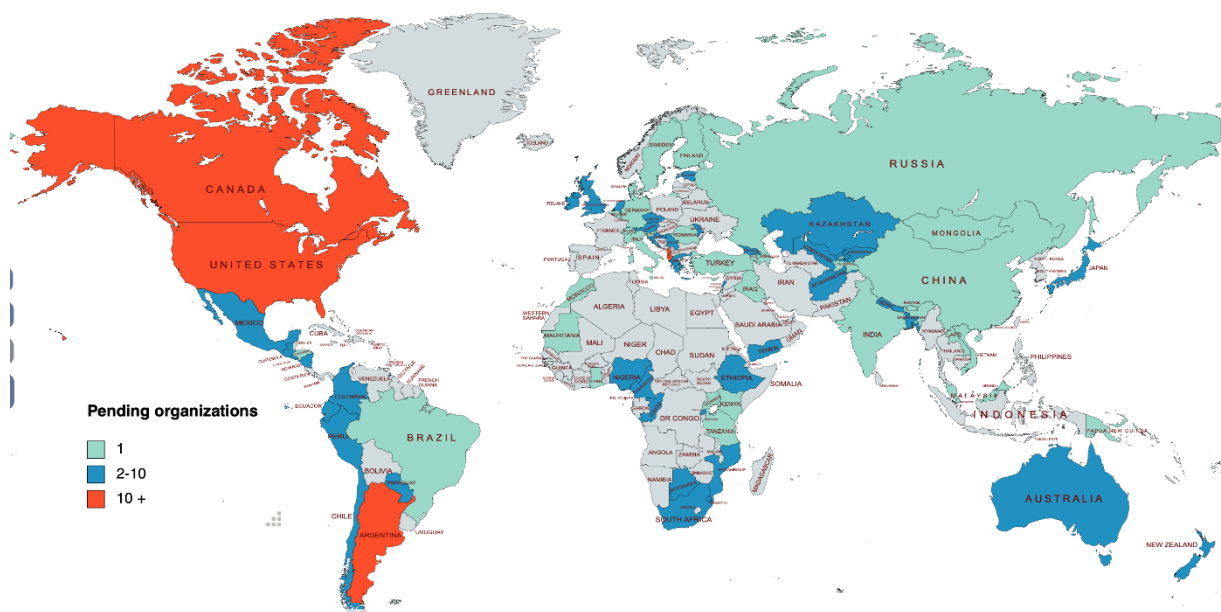
#### Lila.help: the GNWS Worldwide Women's Helplines Project

The main focus in 2021 had been the further development of [lila.help](http://lila.help), the worldwide Women's Helplines Project. GNWS wants the world to know that everyone can find trustworthy women's helplines and NGO information just a few clicks away. This applies to victims of violence against women as well as family, friends, and counsellors/professionals. 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 is 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. During the 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference of Women’s Shelters in Taiwan (November 2019) the international board members of the Global Network of Women’s Shelters agreed to start this project as a worldwide shared initiative. 2020 was used to write a project plan and a strategy, to set up a project structure, to start data collection, and to raise funds. In 2021, UN Women supported the project with a grant in two phases of in total \$ 110,000 for the period from November 2020 till May 2022 (18 months). We were very grateful because these grants were essential to continue the project, the assignment of a project leader in The Netherlands, and to finance technical and regional work on the directory. Also, we were very happy to receive a donation of \$18,250 from UN Women the Netherlands and Soroptimists the Netherlands as a result of fundraising during the Orange the World campaign in The Netherlands.

In 2021, we made considerable progress to develop lila.help as the number one resource for people seeking help after facing violence against women/gender-based violence. The online directory must include both vetted national helplines and accurate information about reputable local NGO that helps domestic and sexual survivors in every community across the world. For the first period we focused on gathering the national helpline information. We have mainly focused on getting organizations to fill in their data. We made an informative animation and flyer to support organizations in doing so. Our regional networks were asked to organize this work in their own region and received financial support from the UN Women budget. This went well and we have over 200 organizations awaiting verification (see map below from January 2022).

At this point we were confronted with (unexpected) technical issues on the database system that needed to be resolved. Verifiers that verify for multiple countries could not easily access the database for the countries that they need to verify. GNWS Foundation hired a technical developer to solve this problem. The launching of lila.help took place on the 6<sup>th</sup> of April, 2022 after CSW 66.



## **Fundraising**

Fundraising for the lila.help project appears to be challenging. International funds and donors are mostly focused on specified areas or specific goals, not applicable for a worldwide network supported by a voluntary board. GNWS Foundation is therefore very thankful for the support of UN Women. In December 2021 UN Women has granted a second tranche of \$55,000 to support lila.help till May 2022. GNWS Foundation and UN Women are investigating how to enhance their future partnership. Fundraising for the next phase of the project – regional expansion by adding more NGOs and countries to the database of lila.help -- will be the main focus in 2022.

Valente, the Dutch umbrella organization of women's shelters, is willing to support GNWS Foundation in the basic organizational costs of € 5,000 (website maintenance, financial administration) from 2022 on.

## **GNWS board and executive committee meetings**

As a global network, GNWS has an executive committee, specifically aimed at the realization of the helplines project, and an international board with participants of (almost) every regional network. In 2021, 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 board meetings.

The GNWS board met three times via Zoom in February, June, and September 2021. Each meeting was repeated after a 12-hour interval to accommodate board members in different time zones and the minutes from both events were combined to keep everyone informed. The main topics of discussion were updates on Lila.Help, the next phase of development for GNWS, fundraising efforts, and preparations for the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW). The meetings also included reports from the regional networks in North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australia/Oceania.

The GNWS executive committee met via Zoom every two weeks between the board meetings and other events. The main topics of discussion included detailed progress reports on Lila.Help, fundraising plans, preparations for the next World Conference of Women's Shelters (WCWS), agenda setting for the NGO CSW65 parallel event, social media management, and other administrative affairs. In October, the executive committee also organized a consultation with past and future hosts of the World Conferences of Women's Shelters to share experiences and pass on lessons learned.

## **NGO CSW65**

Members of the Global Network of Women's Shelters meet annually at CSW in March. The GNWS held a parallel event at NGO CSW65 on March 15, 2021 about the Lila.Help women's helpline project (288 advocates registered, 70 attendees participated online). The webinar included a presentation on the website and database. Regional representatives presented what the project means in their contexts <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ilj3prPI39M>. There was also a presentation on GNWS's 2020 webinars during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. [GNWS webinars for Coronavirus - GNWS](#)

## **Social media**

Board members of 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>

T @WomensShelters

F @GlobalNetworkofWomensShelters