



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FAMILIES 2017

A public statement from the Associated Country Women of the World

As the world marks the International Day of Families on 15 May 2017, we bear witness to a world in turmoil. Never before have families played a more crucial role in our societies, and never before has the need for strong family bonds and inter-generational cooperation been so necessary. The United Nations has declared a theme of 'Families, education and well-being' for 2017's International Day, and this speaks directly to the focal points of so much of the work done by the Associated Country Women of the World and other NGOs.

We see every day the need for stronger communities, and the open, honest, and brave discussion between those who may disagree, and families play a crucial role in this. Children raised in fear bring fear to others. Peace, unity and friendship comes from those who are nurtured and supported by their family - be it the parents, or carers, grandparents, siblings and others who can guide and encourage our young people to walk a path through life with open eyes and hearts. Never before has the connection between children and grandparents been so strong. In many regions of the world we see grandparents stepping in to care for younger generations when parents are forced to work long hours, or cannot afford child care; in other countries there are whole communities who have been decimated by illness such as HIV/AIDS and other communicable diseases, leaving grandparents to raise their children's children.

We must support all families - from demanding universal access to good quality education for children, to sensible childcare options and sustainable support for parents, to life-long learning, and ensuring quality of living for grandparents and older generations. Work-family balance must be encouraged and supported, assisting parents in their educational and caregiving roles - the private sector must play a part in this, and responsible employment practice will benefit all stakeholders.

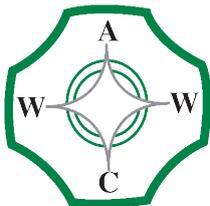
ACWW connects and supports women and communities worldwide, and our project funding has had significant impacts on communities around the world. Our 1000th project was funded in 2015, providing IT skills to young and older women in India; this enables and empowers both ends of the age spectrum in their daily living, and is a significant step towards sustainability of education and training in the local area. The latest round of completed projects funded by ACWW included 5 Health Education projects, 4 focused on education and capacity building, 2 agricultural training and development projects and 1 nutrition and home economics project. These projects, along with 7 water and sanitation projects and 4 income generation schemes, benefited 142,375 people, of whom 91,187 were women and 15,295 were children. ACWW is committed to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and recognises that families have a specific role in ensuring the achievement of SDG4, which secures inclusive and equitable quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all.

With many countries suffering from internal conflict, and much of the world becoming more divided, nationalistic and isolationist, the role of the family in encouraging cultural and cross-community engagement and collaboration is crucial. We call on all governments and global bodies to work towards securing safe, fair and reasonable living conditions for families - particularly urgent for those living in refugee and internally-displaced person camps. War has a huge and unmitigated impact on families in so many ways, and we further call on those governments around the world leading wars of aggression to consider the realities they impose not only on the families of those they target, but also those in their own countries. Peace, communication, and a collective move towards global sustainability can only be achieved with the support of the family, but are also necessary for the existence of the family and thus all of our futures.

Ruth Shanks AM
ACWW World President

References

- 1 UN Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform *“Sustainable Development Goal 4”*
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg4>
“Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”
- 2 United Nations 2017 International Day of Families *“Families, education & well-being”*
<https://www.un.org/development/desa/family/international-day-of-families/idf2017.html>
- 3 ACWW Projects
<https://www.acww.org.uk/projects.html>



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For Immediate Release 10.05.17
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