

IAWN news



Photo: WACC, Chetan Soni

Issue 6 June 2012

UN Commission on the Status of Women 2012.....	1
Anglican Women at UNCSW	2
No Agreed Conclusions! So what's the point?	4
Next year's UNCSW	5
Celebrating International Women's Day	6
News from the Regions.....	9
You are IAWN	10
Resources	11
IAWN and ACC-15.....	11
A step forward in Papua New Guinea	12

Transforming Lives!

In faith, Anglican women remember Mary who, when told by Gabriel that she would bear a son, responds, 'How can this be?'

Gabriel says that God's action will accomplish it, so Mary agrees to do her part (Luke 1.34-35).

The seemingly impossible became possible: she gave birth to Jesus who set the agenda for all women and men.

We are to create the reign of God on earth: a society of equality, peace and justice. The task is huge. But our faith teaches that the seemingly impossible is possible: each woman is called to use what influence she has to create a new world.

This issue of the International Anglican Women's Network Newsletter is concerned with changing the seemingly impossible - transforming lives. In the same way our lives

continue to be transformed in Jesus Christ, so we are called to bring forth God's transformation to the lives of others.

Anglican women across the Communion have been partners in this transformation work of Christ at this year's United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, during celebrations of the 2012 International Women's Day, and in all the regions of our Church.

Ann Skamp, Editor

We are agents of reconciliation in a world desperately in need of God's salvation, grace and love, which we have experienced ourselves.

Robin Denney (USA)

Faith matters at UNCSW 56

Anglican women came together to become a dynamic Anglican presence at this year's 56th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW 56) held in New York, 27 February to 9 March.

They formed a significant group among the 2,500 women who gathered for UNCSW 56 - participating in parallel and side events, the UN deliberations, and sharing best practices, concrete ideas and solutions to alleviate poverty and empower women particularly in the rural sector.

Anglican Communion delegation

Invited through the Anglican Communion Office at the UN, the Anglican Communion delegation was made up of 20 women from 17

Continued on page 2

Anglican women at UNCSW



Women from around the Communion in New York for UNCSW

Photo: Alice Medcof

provinces of the Communion - farmers and women who live in rural areas, women in organisations working to eradicate inequities, and women with ministries in the Church.

These delegates were nominated by their respective provinces in line with this year's UNCSW Priority Theme:

The empowerment of rural women and their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges.

This year, the Anglican Communion delegation continued to work closely with the Ecumenical Women coalition, made up of 16 church denominations with a total worldwide membership of 200 million.

The influence of this coalition increases with each UNCSW as members put aside differences of tradition and doctrine and come together to advocate passionately and effectively for the Gospel principles of empowerment and equality for women around the world.

Rural women

Their role in poverty and hunger eradication, development and current challenges

Across the world,

- women produce half the world's food
- women work two-thirds of the world's working hours yet earn only 10 per cent of the world's income and own less than 1 per cent of the world's property
- rural women make up one quarter of the global population
- half a billion women are small-holder farmers, yet receive only 5 per cent of agricultural services
- in Africa alone, 40 billion hours are spent annually by women and girls fetching water.

Support of women in agriculture is key to reducing hunger and poverty across the world.

In her opening address Michelle Bachelet, Executive Director of UN

Women, said that supporting rural women is '...fundamental to ending poverty and hunger and achieving peace and development that is sustainable ... We need urgently and systematically to open up participation, opportunity and choices ... particularly for rural women and girls who face such high disparities in access to education and other services and cannot reach their potential.'

Women and Climate Change

Although women and girls are most likely to be vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change they have largely been excluded from any policies and financial assistance programmes to address the issues. Women and girls must not only be included in the formation of such policies and recipients of economic aid programmes but also be recognised as effective agents of change who will be essential to the success of climate change interventions.

The International Anglican Women's Network recognises the links between environmental degradation, poverty, lack of opportunities for full participation by all citizens, the dissolution of community and family life, and the disempowerment of women.

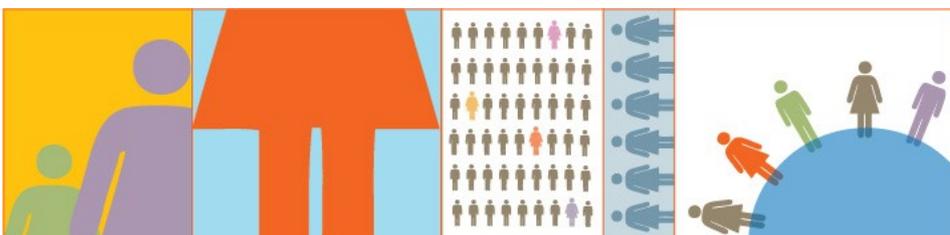
Anglican women's Statement

At the conclusion of UNCSW 56 the Anglican delegates issued a Statement In order for rural women to lead dignified lives, they called for the most fundamental issues to be addressed:

- Access and availability to clean water and sanitation.
- Food security.
- Access to health facilities and affordable healthcare.
- Access to all levels of formal and informal education.
- Entitlement to land ownership and inheritance rights.
- Access to resources, including financing, markets for their products and transportation.

The Anglican women noted that these issues also affect the rural poor and indigenous women and girls in developed countries.

See <http://tinyurl.com/6sqqbtg> for the full Statement.



Stories that inspired, stories that humbled

JoAnn Todd of the Anglican Church of Canada spoke of the stories she heard of rural women's struggles and successes: 'risking personal safety each day just to get water and wood to cook with; ... not having enough food to eat and feed their families; fighting for basic rights, like having a bank account, to own land, to be educated, to basic healthcare, to say "no" to forced marriage at 13 or 14 years of age. And stories of successes, personal, political, and community level successes, of overcoming cultural and gender biases.'

Alice Garrick of the Church of Pakistan said, 'In Pakistan the situation of rural women is quite pitiable regarding marriage, poverty, illiteracy, lack of health care facilities and employment opportunities. The Women Development & Service Society (WDSS) of the Diocese of Raiwind has been combating such difficult problems and tackling hindrances to positive change.' Alice came away from UNCSW 56 reinforced in her confidence that 'through empowerment of rural women, their poverty and hunger can be eradicated ... [through] education, entitlement to land ownership and inheritance rights.'



Alice Garrick (centre) in her home diocese

Photo: WDSS

France Vixamar from the Diocese of Haiti, The Episcopal Church, found that attendance at UNCSW 56 helped her and other Haitian women identify the significant role played by rural women in their own economy and society. 'Despite their important contribution to the economy, rural women in Haiti are still vulnerable and marginalised in society ... They have to walk long hours on very rough tracks, or use deficient, accident-risk public transport to go to markets where basic commodities are often sold at prohibitive prices by city merchants.'

'The struggle for the emergence of a more just, egalitarian society is inconceivable without the effective and efficient participation of Haitian women who must throw their weight into the scales for full participation in national development.'

Mieko Nishimaki and **Emi Tanaka** from the Nippon Sei Ko Kai (Anglican Church in Japan) brought to UNCSW 56 their experience of last year's earthquake and resulting tragedies and their commitment to telling the world about the dangers of nuclear power.

They arranged visits to government delegations at the UN of countries which might consider purchasing nuclear reactors from Japan in order to speak of their own and their communities' first-hand experience. Quietly, but firmly, they handed over letters making their point. See more of their story below.

Kathy Barrett-Lennard of the Anglican Church of Australia reflected that 'Many small changes can add up to making a significant difference to the systems that discriminate against our sisters throughout the world.'

'Jesus wept, yes, but he went further and confronted the domination systems of his day, and kept making a difference in the lives of the marginalised and invisible.'



No Agreed Conclusions... so what was the point?

Conversation Circle – Trafficking of Women and Girls

Conversation Circles were a new means of interaction at UNCSW 56.

Elaine Cameron of the Scottish Episcopal Church was among the 80 women who took part in the Conversation Circle on Trafficking of Women and Girls.

Women from 'countries of origin' for trafficked women and girls as well as those from 'receiving' countries shared stories and highlighted best preventative practice.

Discussion centred on both the prosecution of traffickers and the protection of victims, including the provision of healthcare services.

Elaine writes, 'The extent of the victimisation is harrowing: kidnapping young girls into prostitution; tourism packages which promote trafficking; perpetrators blaming the victims; corrupt government structures; even women's involvement in the perpetration of trafficking.'

'I've heard that it's easier to traffic women than drugs or weapons,...'

'Even worse followed - the torture and trafficking of infants. I thought of my own children when toddlers, and wept.'

Issues identified as being in urgent need of attention included these:

- Education about the issue is critical for prevention.
- The vulnerability factors that lead women and girls into prostitution.
- Laws which criminalise victims must be changed.
- The normalisation of prostitution through viewing trafficking as 'sex work' must be challenged.

The aftermath of trafficking

The Conversation Circle agreed that it will be in working together and advocating for the implementation of laws and policies in line with the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) that trafficking will eventually be overcome.

The 'Agreed Conclusions' on the CSW themes are the principal output of CSW and are submitted to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). They contain an assessment of progress and highlight gaps and challenges. They include a set of concrete recommendations for action by Governments, intergovernmental bodies and other institutions, civil society actors and other relevant stakeholders, to be implemented at the international, national, regional and local level.

Deep regret was expressed by many of the government and non-government delegations at the failure of this year's UNCSW to reach consensus and finalise the 'Agreed Conclusions'.

Government delegations were unable to agree to language in key areas such as supporting access to sexual and reproductive health services for rural women and participation in decision-making on sustainable resource management. For many, including the Anglican delegation, this disappointing outcome signalled a greater concern.

For Jill Hopkinson of the Church of England this was an opportunity missed, as meaningful discussions to provide safe drinking water, proper sanitation, healthcare, education, food and nutrition security for millions of people were put aside.

'the canary in the coal mine of women's rights...'

Robin Denney of The Episcopal Church saw this turn of events as 'the canary in the coal mine of the women's rights



UN Building New York

Photo: ACO

movements internationally'. She reports: 'This is a blow to rural women on whose behalf the conclusions were drafted and for all those working for the rights of women. This sets a very dangerous precedent, which will likely carry into next year's UNCSW and other important worldwide women's gatherings.'

Much of the debate this year centred around the standard term 'gender' which has been an agreed neutral term for more than 30 years in UN documentation, including the Beijing Platform for Action and the Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

The striking of 'gender' and 'gender equality' is seen to be part of emerging and disappointing agenda against the work of UNCSW, allowing particular cultural norms to override equality for women.

'We as the Anglican Communion have a unique perspective and experience to change the course of dissent, and encourage consensus. We are made up of conservative and liberal, we live in the pain of deep divides, and yet we continue to be part of a worldwide communion.'

'As Anglican women we come together united each year at UNCSW, to advocate for all our global sisters who suffer violence, poverty, and death merely because of their gender. We bring our experience, our expertise, our passion, and our commitment to follow Jesus.'

Robin Denney, TEC

Thank you Rachel!

IAWN thanks the Anglican Office at the UN for arranging the attendance of Anglican women at UNCSW 56.



With deep gratitude we send good wishes to Rachel Chardon, Special Assistant at the Anglican Communion Office at the United Nations, who eased the way for these amazing Anglican women to attend as effective delegates and so return to their communities to make possible the seemingly impossible through our Lord, Jesus Christ.

AWE gathering

A further 70 Anglican women were brought to New York by Anglican Women's Empowerment (AWE) of The Episcopal Church and IAWN-Canada to engage with the events, activities, learnings and advocacy surrounding this year's session of UNCSW.



Photo: AWE

AWE Executive Director Kim Robey writes,

'The AWE Programme had rural women joining us from different parts of the USA and Africa to explore the nature of partnership between African and American women.

'We had 40 guests along with a hosting team of 16 regional New York members - representing 12 dioceses of The Episcopal Church, and Anglican dioceses in Ghana, Malawi, Rwanda and Sudan.

'The Programme was designed to educate and inspire participants for action in their local contexts. It prioritises mutually beneficial work that will enhance the empowerment of women and solve real problems facing our world at a local, regional and international level.'

See Kim's full report for AWE at:

<http://anglicanwomensempowerment.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/AWE-Journal-April-20121.pdf>

Next Year's UNCSW

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women 2013 - UNCSW 57

During the ten years that Anglican women from across the Communion have gathered for UNCSW, they have come to realise the importance and impact of UNCSW for themselves, their Church, and their communities. It is a life-changing experience as women are inspired and resourced to take up their advocacy role at the UN, at home, in church and society.

Priority theme: Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls

Rebuilding and reconciling the world is central to our faith. In the light of the Primates' Letter to the Churches about the essential role of the Anglican churches in eliminating violence against women and children, the Priority Theme for next year's UNCSW 57 will be particularly relevant: 'The elimination of violence against women and girls'.

IAWN looks forward to collaborating with the 'We Will Speak Out' Coalition to have a significant presence there.

The Primates' Letter to the Churches

The Primates' Letter to the Churches regarding Gender Based Violence which was sent out following their meeting together in Dublin, January 2011 is on-line:

English: http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/resources/docs/gbv_primates_english.pdf

French: http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/resources/docs/gbv_primates_french.pdf

Spanish: http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/resources/docs/gbv_primates_spanish.pdf

The coalition 'We Will Speak Out: Working Together Against Sexual Violence' has a website at www.wewillspeakout.org.

Why not visit the website to read how Anglican church leaders in Burundi, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo are contributing to this urgent work.



Celebrating International Women's Day 2012

Anglican women and men all over the Communion marked International Women's Day with worship and activities.

In Zambia

In his International Women's Day message, Bishop William Mchombo of the Diocese of Eastern Zambia in the Church of the Province of Central Africa, spoke of the link between abuses against women and their lack of economic independence. He encouraged the Zambian Government and other agencies to support programmes which help women to become economically independent.

Bishop Mchombo noted that International Women's Day was being celebrated against a backdrop of 'despicable' acts ranging from spouse battering to defilement and rape, mostly perpetrated by men against women. He said 'All forms of abuse eat at the core of our humanity and good neighbourliness ... Such betrayals of trust happened in the home, the classroom, the neighbourhood, the workplace and even sacred places like churches.'

He added that strategies need to be developed to combat the causes of abuse including legislative measures and support for women to report incidents of abuse.

See www.postzambia.com/post-read_article.php?articleId=27140 for the full story.

In England

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams preached at a eucharist organised by the Anglican Alliance for Development, Relief and Advocacy and the Mothers' Union in Camberwell, an area of south London. The Archbishop preached on Mark 5.24b-34, the account of the woman who touched Jesus' cloak and was told 'Go in peace and be healed'.

Archbishop Rowan drew attention to the woman's unexpected action, her 'stepping out when she sees a possibility of healing, and not letting go until the difference begins to be made.'



Diocese of Jerusalem & the Middle East Conference, Amman

Photo: Leila Diab

He praised the work of the Mothers' Union in 'giving women the courage to do what's not expected, and to go where they're not expected, and to touch those who don't expect to be touched and embraced.'

'...stepping out when she sees a possibility of healing, and not letting go until the difference begins to be made.'

The Archbishop spoke of the gospel testimony of the Mothers' Union in Congo as they go to those who have been abducted and taken by the militias, and then abused and made into abusers.

For the full text of Archbishop Rowan's sermon and report of the event, go to:

www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/articles.php/2414/justice-for-women-service-with-anglican-alliance-and-mothers-union.

In Jerusalem & the Middle East

IAWN Provincial Link Leila Diab reported on the Episcopal Women's Conference held on International Women's Day in Amman, Jordan. Bishop Suhail Dawani opened the conference of 50 attendees. Topics included the history of International Women's Day, empowerment of women, family violence, female

illiteracy and women's rights of expression and freedom of speech.

A session on the role of women in musical composition and instruments led into a musical meditation and highlighted the role of music in the life of the church.

Leila writes that the conference 'gave our women a strong support and impetus to continue their work and move forward with vision and more understanding'.

In North India

The Women's Fellowship of Christian Service (WFCS) in the Diocese of Durgapur held a seminar to mark International Women's Day, with the theme 'Justice for Women'.

Activities on the day combined an understanding of the role of women in the biblical context and an awareness of social, economic and legal justice today.

Traditional leadership has been seen as not recognising women with complete respect and dignity but the situation is now changing through new legal protection. Unity among women could bring the strength to produce change and empowerment in local situations in communities and churches. This International Women's Day emerged as a benchmark day of women's empowerment in the Bankura Pastorate.

Women's stories: biblical and contemporary

In the Philippines

The Ecumenical Women's Forum gathered in Quezon City to celebrate International Women's Day with theological reflections and contemporary stories on the struggles of women. The women issued a statement which included the following:

'In the biblical spirit of sisterhood of Naomi and Ruth, we join the global women's movement in celebrating the victories and gains of grassroots women's movement in their long and arduous fight for women's liberation as well as social and national emancipation.

'In the face of intensified militarization in conflict areas, women and children are also first to be displaced from their homes and left to run from one place to another.



Drama for International Women's Day in the Philippines

Photo: EWF

'The volatile situation in these states and nations has impeded the economic, social, and cultural development of women and children as they are unable to engage in economic activities, study in schools, practice their customs and are barely given social protection.... We are inspired by the women's unremitting struggle to break free from a patriarchal society. Women's unity against sexual objectification, human trafficking and violence against women, remains strong and campaigns to end these abuses on women are louder than ever... Indeed, the history of oppression and exploitation of women is proof that justice, liberation and peace do not come free but are instead fought for...

'On the occasion of the International Women's Day, the Ecumenical Women's Forum continues to commit itself to struggle for women's liberation, by journeying together with women and men from various sectors of society to attain God's reign on Earth, where Equality, Justice and Peace abound.'

Wales Conference on Domestic Violence

The Church in Wales marked International Women's Day with a conference entitled 'Freedom from Fear' with the aim of raising awareness of domestic abuse and how churches can respond to it.

During the conference, a young woman who was abused by her husband for four years described how she escaped an abusive marriage after her husband violently assaulted her, causing her second child to be born three months premature. She grew up in the church and remains committed to this day but feels that churches are not generally equipped to respond to domestic abuse.

Natalie Collins said, 'I am from a Christian family and although my faith is one of the reasons I am a healed and whole person, it was also one of the reasons I felt unable to leave my abusive ex-husband. I believed I needed to forgive him and that if I just prayed hard enough, he would stop hurting me.

'It was only after I escaped the abuse that I learned God did not require me to continue being abused. I learned that Jesus stood up for women who were outcasts; they were abused and broken and yet he restored them and transformed their lives.

'This needs to be talked about and what forgiveness means needs to be explained because people don't realise that it is not being a doormat. Sometimes the only answer churches give women is an offer to pray for them or counsel the abusive partner, an action which could create even more problems.'

Natalie is now a development officer for Restored, an international Christian alliance working to end violence against women, and specialising in working with churches.

The conference was organised by the Church in Wales in partnership with other organisations, including Welsh Women's Aid, Mothers' Union Cymru and St Michael's College Llandaff and was supported by Welsh Government funding for International Women's Day events.

The Revd Carol Wardman, Bishops' Adviser for Church and Society, said, 'Women from all walks of life can suffer terrible abuse at home, behind closed doors.

'Often they come to church looking for help or just to escape and we need to be properly equipped to respond to them.

Continued overleaf

'We want churches to send out the message that women can come forward and will be taken seriously and given the support they need. Violence, aggression and bullying, especially in relationships that should be characterised by love and care, are particularly horrible violations of the Christian principles of love and freedom from fear, and undermine personal and spiritual wholeness as well as personal safety, respect and self-esteem.'

Training packs from the Christian alliance 'Restored', (see the Resources section on page 11) and other materials have been sent out to diocesan Social Responsibility Officers and Rural Officers in the Church in Wales.



Natalie Collins speaking at the Church in Wales 'Freedom from Fear' conference

Photo: Church in Wales

Dear God

...through your Eternal Word all of creation came into existence, and is held in being by your Holy Spirit.

We pray for

- your wisdom, to safeguard the earth, its soil and all that grows in it.
- your understanding, to cleanse the air and all that breathes.
- your knowledge, to find ways to preserve our waters and all that lives in them.
- your guidance, to protect all living beings with whom we share our planet.
- your insight, to use the resources entrusted to us wisely and well, justly and safely.
- your compassion, to reach out to all those affected by extremes of weather, changes in climate, and the degradation of the environment.
- your perseverance, to ensure that all humanity may have adequate food and water, shelter and sanitation, peace and well-being, and so can live in dignity, without fear. Creator and Redeemer, hear our prayer.
- your courage, to do all that is necessary to restore the beauty of your handiwork wherever we have damaged or harmed it.

Creator and Redeemer, hear our prayer.

Extracts from a litany in anticipation of the Rio+20 Conference on Sustainable Development by Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, Anglican Church of Southern Africa, Chair of the Anglican Communion Environmental Network

Women's Lives in the Pacific hit hard by Climate Change

Australians who want to support justice for women on International Women's Day should be extremely concerned about the impact of climate change on the Pacific's most vulnerable women. This was the observation of Misha Coleman, Chief Executive Officer of Anglicord – Anglican Overseas Aid, Anglican Church of Australia.

'We know that the poorest communities are most vulnerable to climate change; we know poverty in the Pacific is bad and getting worse; and we know that women and girls account for 70 per cent of people living in poverty. Australians have been hearing all week about Pacific communities that are sinking under sea level rises. Women are bearing the brunt of climate change in the Pacific, and they are bearing it right now.'

Women are responsible for growing crops for food and income in places like Solomon Islands, which has one of the highest rates of sea level rises in the world, putting pressure on crops through land loss and salinity. Communities are reporting food shortages.

'Women and families are under terrible pressure right across the Pacific and we can't just shrug our shoulders while their burden gets heavier and heavier.'

Misha urged Australians to lobby their political leaders to embrace Australia's role of tackling climate change in the region and to acknowledge its impact on women's lives and well-being.

'If women's livelihoods are threatened by climate change, they are in an even worse position to be involved in making decisions about their communities.'

Misha observed that Australia's former Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd had acknowledged a few months earlier that the Asia Pacific region loses around \$16-\$30 billion per year because of gender gaps in education, and the region loses in excess of \$40 billion a year because of restrictions on women's access to employment.

'I can't imagine a bigger obstacle to education and employment than the sheer exhaustion of having to eke out a living on land poisoned by the sea,' she said.

Misha is also asking Australians to support programmes that help women in the region become economically independent. 'When women have access to employment and education, they increase their ability to adapt to environmental change through exploring alternative ways of earning income other than growing crops, or encouraging solar power to avoid the cost of kerosene, on which many Pacific communities rely for lighting and cooking.' See www.anglicord.org.au for more information.

News from the Regions

Japan Remembers

Anglican women around the Communion joined their Japanese sisters and Nippon Sei Ko Kai (the Anglican Church in Japan) on 11 March 2012 to mark the anniversary of the devastating earthquake and tsunami on the Pacific coastal area of Fukushima in north-eastern Japan. 19,000 people are dead or still missing with 350,000 people displaced from their homes and work. Contamination from the nearby nuclear power plant has spread to the sea and soils and has brought continuing anxiety for people in the area.

Mieko Nishimaki from the Women's Desk of Nippon Sei Ko Kai lives in Fukushima City. A retired teacher, Mieko, has chosen to continue to live there despite the unknown dangers. She writes:

'In this serious condition, some people are trying to stand up and live strongly. Others are at a loss, having lost their houses, families, and jobs. We have too many difficulties that surpass our capacity to overcome...

'It is so sad that the name *Fukushima* became globally known through this nuclear disaster. But at the same time we are grateful to know that the people around the world are sharing our pains and suffering.

'We will make every effort to overcome these difficulties and regain the original, natural beauty of our rivers, ocean and green fields as quickly as possible. I would like to believe that the darkness will not continue forever and the light of hope will come along before too long.'

Read the full text of Mieko's story at:

<http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org/news/index.cfm>.

Let Us Walk Together

Nippon Sei Ko Kai has set up a relief project called *Let Us Walk Together*. See www.nskk.org/walk/?page_id=52 and www.aco.org/acns/news.cfm/2012/3/12/ACNS5063.

Ending Sexual Violence in the Great Lakes Region

Anglican women have welcomed the continuing stand by their Churches' leadership in the Great Lakes Region of Africa in the elimination of sexual violence. In August last year and March this year, the Archbishops of Burundi, Congo and Rwanda have hosted meetings with other church and faith leaders, government and military representatives, Tearfund, UN and other agencies in order to plan concrete steps towards preventing sexual abuse and caring for its victims. See www.wewillsspeakout.org.

National leaders from 11 countries in the Great Lakes Region also met – in Uganda in December 2011 – in a summit organised under the theme 'United to prevent, end impunity and provide support to the victims of Sexual and Gender based violence in the Great Lakes Region'. The use by all militia groups of sex as a weapon of war was condemned including by national armies, peace-keeping forces and civilians. Rape, defilement, sexual threats, exploitation, humiliation, assault, molestation, incest and female genital mutilation were all named as acts of gender-based



Tsunami devastation, March 2011



11 March 2012 memorial worship in a tent, St John's Church, Isoyama, Japan Photo: NSKK



Volunteers give foot baths known as 'ashi-yu' Photo: NSKK

violence to be addressed and eliminated. See www.newvision.co.ug/news/314907-leaders-to-sign-pact-on-sexual-violence.html.

Melanesian Ministries

Women in the Anglican Church of Melanesia continue to play an important part in the mission and life of the Church in the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The elimination of domestic violence is a priority for their work: the Mothers' Union has set up programmes of training and support for families; the Christian Care Centre provides refuge and care for abused women and girls; the Sisters of Melanesia have a visitation programme offering pastoral care and counselling; and the Sisters of the Church continue their mission visits and recently participated in the Regional Consultation of the Anglican Alliance for Development, Relief and Advocacy.

News from the Regions continued...

Women Peacemakers in Pakistan

A special 'Women Wing' of the Faith Friends (an inter faith initiative) has been launched in the Diocese of Peshawar. This was to acknowledge the contribution of women to the establishment of peace in society.

'Women are the best Peace makers, and are the best Peace keepers', said a civil society activist. For the Anglican women of the Diocese this was part of their understanding of themselves as women of faith who know Jesus Christ as the Prince of Peace.

Sound Journeys in South Africa

Isabel Sparrow tells of belonging to Djamba - a djembe drum circle - with three other women and bringing a special gift of 'sound journeys' to others.

'Various percussion instruments are used as well as singing bowls, didgeridoos, bird whistles, rain and wave makers and gongs and drums. They are played softly to weave a rich tapestry of healing music and sounds around people.

The sound goes straight to our feelings-centre allowing the vibration of the music and instruments to take us to a place of deep relaxation.' Healing benefits result when people are then able to draw closer to God and experience inspiration, joy, peace and wellness as well as increased concentration, creativity and awareness of our environment.

For Isabel and the other women, giving this gift has become a special ministry they offer their church family including at the Easter Vigil at All Saints Church in Durbanville.

Learning about Women and Girls in Peru

In March, the congregation at St Luke's Church in Maidenhead, England, looked at what life is like for women and girls in Peru. They asked a contact in the Diocese of Peru for some information and were thrilled to receive letters and photographs from young Anglican women in Peru, telling them about their daily lives and their journeys of faith.



England: Listening to stories from women in Peru

<http://iawn.anglicancommunion.org>

You are IAWN...



We love to hear from you

Please send your news to the IAWN Newsletter editor, Ann Skamp, email annskamp@aapt.net.au. Please remember that it's the little things as well as the big projects that inform, challenge and inspire.

Or send by post to the International Anglican Women's Network, c/o Anglican Communion Office, St Andrew's House, 16 Tavistock Crescent, Westbourne Park, London W11 1AP, UK

If you would like to join IAWN's e-mailing list and network with women around the Anglican Communion please send your email address to Terrie Robinson at terrie.robinson@anglicancommunion.org.

'Continue to pray that IAWN will remain an inspiration and tool for women of the Anglican Communion worldwide and indeed for the whole Communion.'

Philippa Amable, Ghana



Resources...

The Anglican Alliance for Development, Relief and Advocacy

The Anglican Alliance 'brings together those in the Anglican family of Churches and Agencies to work for a world free of poverty and injustice, to be a voice for the voiceless, to reconcile those in conflict, and safeguard the earth.' Keep up to date with development, relief and advocacy projects at www.anglicanalliance.org.

'Governing Climate Funds: What will work for women?'

A report by Gender Action examining how important lessons and best practices of global finance mechanisms can inform the development of gender-sensitive climate funds.

See www.genderaction.org/publications/11/climate-funds-for-women.pdf.

'Clapping with Both Hands' Gender Report 2012

A wonderful report and resource, with case studies, on gender equality from ACT Alliance – an alliance of 125 churches and related organisations working in humanitarian assistance, advocacy and development.

See www.actalliance.org/resources/publications/AC_Gender_Good-Practice_Report_2012_A3.pdf

'The Status of Women in the Church and Society'

See <http://houseofdeputies.org/the-status-of-women-in-the-church-and-society.html> for this report by Helena Mbele-Mbong to The Episcopal Church's Executive Council.

Of the Anglican women attending UNCSW Helena writes, 'When we gather together ... we are furthering the network of God's people. In facing problems and recognising successes, sharing stories of joy and sorrow, we are challenged to deepen our own understanding of our faith and we all leave more empowered to carry on the work.'

Restored: Ending Violence against Women

This is a global Christian alliance to transform relationships and end violence against women. Its specific focus is the prevention of domestic violence and sexual violence against women and girls. For the Restored pack for churches 'Ending Domestic Abuse' see www.restoredrelationships.org/resources/info/51/.

For Restored's 'First Man Standing' initiative, see www.restoredrelationships.org/firstmanstanding.

IAWN and ACC-15

At the fifteenth meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC-15) which will be held in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand, in October-November this year, IAWN will take forward the issues raised by Anglican women across the world. What issues would you like raised?

Email Ann Skamp at annskamp@aapt.net.au

A step forward in Papua New Guinea

Although women cannot currently practise an ordained ministry in Papua New Guinea (PNG), the Anglican Church of PNG recognises the pivotal role of lay persons within the Church, and the gifts which women bring to lay ministry. Leaders of the Church, including the Primate, are providing support to enable women to carry out functions that have traditionally been undertaken by men, such as preaching.

The Gender Empowerment team reports, 'This support is especially helpful in overcoming the cultural and traditional barriers that make it difficult for gender work to be carried out.'

Newton Theological College in Popondetta, runs a Women's Programme to provide academic and skills-based training for the wives of its ordinands. Supported by funding from the Papua New Guinea Church Partnership (PNGCP) in the UK, the programme teaches a wide range of disciplines such as domestic science, literacy in Tok Pisin and English, and HIV & AIDS awareness. In addition, more structured teaching on Christian and religious education gives some of the women practical experience in schools within nearby communities.

'...a new development that has caused considerable excitement'

However, in a new development that has caused considerable excitement, the College has, for the first time in PNG, implemented a programme which has seen eight of the ordinands' wives studying mainline theological topics.

Angeline, married to an ordinand, comments, 'My husband and I have decided that I take some of the courses in theology. We have chosen those areas where my husband does not feel he has done well in the past few years, so that I can be of help to him when we embark on our ministry.'

The Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea was one of the first Anglican Provinces to adopt a specific Gender Policy in 2009 and since then the Gender Empowerment team has been working tirelessly to implement a strategic programme which works collaboratively with existing programmes such as the Women in Ministry arm of the Diocese of Popondota, as well as government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and directly with local communities.

It is this collaborative approach which has made it such a success in raising awareness of gender issues, HIV/AIDS, issues affecting young people, domestic abuse, and sexual violence.
Louise Ewington, PNGCP

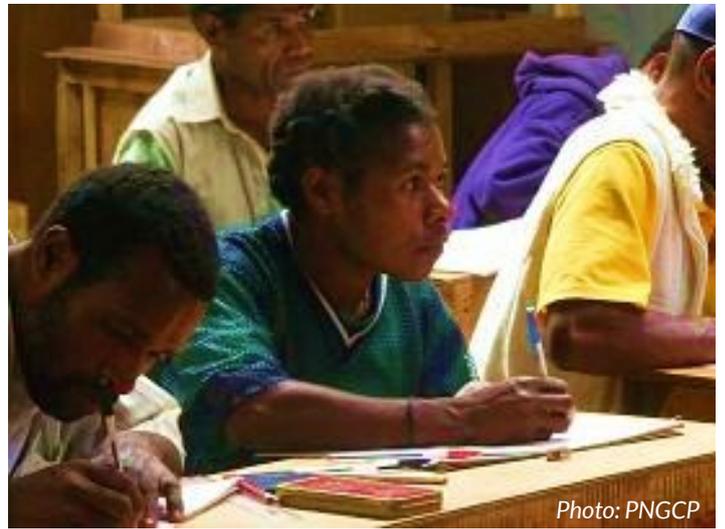


Photo: PNGCP

Tell us

- about resources: books; websites; courses, good practice; prayers, forthcoming events, etc, that we can include in future newsletters or on IAWN's website

Tell others

- Please pass on this Newsletter to others.

Pray

- for the people, ministries, aspirations, struggles and good news featured in this Newsletter.

International Anglican Women's Network

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