

# **Associated Country Women of the World**



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The Associated Country Women of the World was founded in Vienna, Austria in 1930, and circles the world with more than 300 societies in 70 different countries. ACWW is the largest international organization of rural women, boasting more than eight million members.

## Aims:

- **To promote international goodwill and to help raise the standard of living and education of rural women and their families through training programs and community development projects.**
- **Supporting educational opportunities for women and girls and the elimination of gender-based discrimination.**
- **Giving rural women a voice at the international level through links with United Nations agencies.**
- **Promotion of Fair Trade practices: Fair Trade practices involve ensuring that goods are produced under humane conditions, and that the grower of the goods receives a fair price for the product.**

The Associated Country Women of the World was established in the interest of no one particular social, political, racial, or religious group. It is open to all organized bodies of countrywomen and homemakers, or associations of women which include a substantial number of country members, having power to elect their own officers and lay down their own policy, and whose objects and policy are in harmony with those of ACWW. Societies are autonomous in their own work, but linked together (whether Constituent, Associate or Corresponding societies) to form this Women's International Non-Governmental Organization. The flowering tree of friendship has been the symbol of ACWW since 1977.

## How Does ACWW Work?

- A World Conference every three years decides policies, discusses matters of mutual concern, elects officers and votes on resolutions of importance to all.
- An annual Council Meeting, a General Purpose Committee and other special committees meet regularly in the interim period.
- Representation at meetings of United Nations specialized agencies and UNICEF ensures that members' views are heard.
- A President and other Officers undertake tours to ensure they know the needs and problems of member societies around the world.
- *The Countrywoman*, a quarterly magazine, brings news and information to societies and individual members. Special posters and leaflets are also issued.

# ACWW Projects

- **Our water projects include:**  
water tanks for a Kenyan village; bore wells in India; protected springs in Uganda; solar pumps in Sudan; sanitation facilities for an Indonesian school; a water storage tank in Western Somoa and a safe water supply for a village in Peru.  
Water and sanitation are a high priority for ACWW - we are working to provide rural communities with clean drinking water and basic facilities.
- **Women Feed the World:**  
Rural women are the principal labor force in food production in many countries. Working with self-reliant women's groups, ACWW's food producing and processing projects range from dairy production, bee-keeping, grinding mills and market gardens to traditional food crop production.
- **Health/ Family Care:**  
Health education and family health programs are priorities in rural communities.
- **Leadership and Skill Training in:**  
South Africa; Korea; India; East, West, and Central Africa.
- **Sustainable Food Farming and Nutrition in:**  
Uruguay; Caribbean and South America; India; Central and South Asia; Kenya; East, West, and Central Africa

# How ACWW Cares and Helps

By helping women to help themselves - through person to person practical assistance - to a better standard of living for themselves and their families. ACWW works closely with the United Nations, has Consultative Status with its specialized agencies and speaks at the world level on behalf of its members.

## **Priorities:**

- **STATUS OF WOMEN: including women's rights**
- **STATUS OF THE GIRL CHILD: including Children, Family, Work/ Labour, Refugees/ Migration**
- **HEALTH: including HIV/ AIDS, Land Mines, Ageing**
- **EDUCATION**
- **COMMUNICATION**

## **ACWW helps women:**

- to build on the traditional values of family life
- to develop community projects
- to express their views to decision-makers locally, nationally, and internationally
- to gain access to education and training
- to self-sufficiency
- to work with women worldwide
- to share friendship and understanding at every level

## **63 Different Projects in 28 Countries!**

One of the most important parts of our work has continued to be the approving, funding and supporting of scores of sustainable, self-help projects designed to improve the quality of life for thousands of women and their families worldwide. The members of the Project Committee therefore, have the most difficult task of either approving or rejecting all of the deserving cases submitted to them from members and non-member societies in every part of the globe.

# How is ACWW Financed?

- By membership dues from societies and Life and Contributing members.
- By sales of publications and other items.
- By the voluntary donations from members all over the world to a **PENNIES FOR FRIENDSHIP FUND**. This forms 75% of income, and gives ACWW the freedom to speak and work for all its members.
- Trust Funds ( from other generous donations given by members) enable Grant Aid under:
  - **LADY ABERDEEN SCHOLARSHIP FUND:**
    - scholarships
    - courses in home economics
    - courses in welfare and citizenship for leaders working in rural communities
  - **ELSIE ZIMMERMAN MEMORIAL FUND:**
    - advanced training in organization and leadership
  - **NUTRITION EDUCATION FUND:**
    - supports a variety of projects and encourages:
      - good nutrition
      - improved hygiene
      - food production
  - **GENERAL PROJECTS FUND:**
    - supports a variety of projects:
      - family planning initiatives
      - HIV/ AIDS awareness
      - small business initiatives
      - skill training

## Associated Country Women of the World Quiz:

1. Where was the ACWW founded?

- a, Paris, France, 1930
- b, Vienna, Austria, 1930
- c, Cinque Terre, Italy, 1930
- d, Ontario, Canada, 1930



2. What is the particular political and religious view of the ACWW?

- a, Liberal and Christian
- b, Conservative and Christian
- c, NDP and no religion
- d, established with no particular social, political, racial or religious group

3. Which is accurate activities of the ACWW?

- a, world conferences every 3 years to decide policies and matters of concern
- b, council meetings and general purpose committee meetings
- c, presidents and officers taking tours to ensure they know the needs and problems of societies around the world
- d, all of the above

4. Which is not a project of the ACWW?

- a, water tanks for Kenya
- b, spreading fashion knowledge world wide
- c, leadership and skill training in South Africa, Korea, India, East, West, and Central Africa
- d, food producing and processing projects

5. Which of the following is not a priority of the ACWW?

- a, status of women
- b, refugees/ migration
- c, health
- d, religion

6. Where does 75% of ACWW's financial help come from?

- a, pennies for friendship
- b, sales and publications
- c, trust funds
- d, the lottery



Associated Country Women of the World Quiz Answers:

1. B

2. D

3. D

4. B

5. D

6. A

# PENNIES FOR FRIENDSHIP



## THE IDEA

From almost the very beginning, Pennies for Friendship have been part of the Associated Country Women of the World. It was the idea of Mrs Godfrey Drage, a founder member from Wales and Chairman of the Finance Committee.

Many international organisations form from a central point which spreads world-wide. ACWW is different. It was a coming together of countrywomen's organisations, keeping their national characteristics, independently pursuing their own activities, but believing that by associating internationally they could share more with each other than by being centrally directed.

Such an unusual set-up was linked to the principle that no eligible society should be prevented from joining because of cost – a belief ACWW still upholds. Dues were set at a low level from the very first. So other means had to be found to carry out the work ACWW members wanted to do.

Mrs Drage's plan, launched in 1939, was that if every member in every ACWW society gave the smallest coin of her country once a year, ACWW would solve its financial problems. She called it the 'Million Member Fund', but soon it became 'Pennies for Friendship' and the idea was greeted enthusiastically.

From small beginnings during the war years, it grew to become the main source of income today.



## THE FLOW STARTS

When she first heard Mrs Drage's idea, our founding President, Mrs Watt, said: 'Yes, it looks harmless.' Today that harmless idea contributes between 60 and 70 per cent of ACWW's annual income – income which is used to cover the running costs of the organisation, magazine, United Nations and Membership work including Officers' travels, and projects administration.

Pennies for Friendship are essential in allowing ACWW to be the voice of women who are working to improve the quality of family life through community development projects, education and training. Vital to help women speak to the decision-makers at all levels of society.

## PENNIES FOR FRIENDSHIP are . . .

Donations of money. Voluntary gifts by women to help other women through ACWW. Any gift, large or small, is an expression of friendship and caring between our members.

## TODAY . . .

Nothing functions in ACWW without Pennies for Friendship. Each year gifts come from members all around the world. In today's world the value of those original coins has eroded. To make the same commitment, some of our members look to the equivalent of the cost of a loaf of bread.



Pennies for Friendship continue to be a gift in friendship from women for other women and for our common future. The original target of a coin from every member still remains to be achieved with members now at the multi-million level. But ACWW is grateful for every contribution and totally dependent on members' support.

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## WHY PENNIES?

Why not dollars, francs, pounds or some more realistic currency unit for today?

The idea was that it should be the smallest coin in each country. In countries where income levels are very low, that small coin may have great value. It may truly be all that some of our members can afford. A contribution they can make with pride and enable them to share in the message sent by one of our African member societies: 'Without this donation we don't feel part of the family of ACWW.'

Every country can use its own name for the 'penny'. The name does not matter, it is the idea that counts.

## BE PART OF THE ACWW FAMILY

Why not copy this article and circulate it to other members to spread the message more widely?

Pennies for Friendship may be individual donations, collections at members' meetings, the result of money-raising efforts – sales, collecting tins, competitions, sponsorship etc. Many member societies arrange a central collection each year and pass on the total to ACWW.

ACWW also welcomes donations direct from individuals or smaller groups.

Send your Pennies for Friendship collection each year (in any currency) to:

ACWW  
Vincent House  
Vincent Square  
London SW1P 2NB  
England

Written by Mary Howse, former  
Honorary Treasurer



# MEMBER SOCIETIES – YOUR ACWW RESPONSIBILITY

BY NOW you will have heard, or read in reports of the last Triennial Conference, that a vital commitment was made by societies to ensure the survival of ACWW.

It is sincerely hoped that you will accept the need for the increases from very modest contributions to something more realistic to the costs involved in ACWW's activities.

Members not present may be uncertain of what was decided, why and what they must now do about it. We give the details below:

**The new scale of Annual Dues commenced on January 1st 1990.**

Constituent Societies £50  
Associate Societies £30  
Corresponding Societies £15  
Individual/Contributing £10

(All the above include entitlement to this magazine.)

By now, you should have paid for 1990. **Have you? Please check.**

These new rates on their own are insufficient to ensure enough income to continue for the next triennium. Dues will bring in only £60,000 of the £341,000 needed this year to cover the running costs of our organisation. We rely on Pennies for Friendship (P for F) and other general income to make up the balance, but at the present rate these sources of income will not be sufficient.

Members, of course, also make substantial gifts to our projects, but a donation for a well, say, in India, cannot reach its destination without some administrative cost in London. It is not our policy to divert any part of projects' donations to running costs without your specific instructions. So, to ensure the continuance of these vital projects, a regular source of increased general income is urgently needed.

Conference delegates, knowing that if nothing was done a deficit of up to £150,000 over the next triennium would result, had to act. After rejecting various proposals, they passed this resolution:

**That, in order to balance the 1990/92 Estimates and not leave ACWW in debt, all societies make a written commitment to give an annual contribution to the administrative costs of ACWW over and above the membership dues and voluntary donations. This commitment to be given without delay and not later than December 31st 1989.**

Each society left the Conference in no doubt that the future of ACWW was in their hands. All societies had to make a decision quickly about how much they would be contributing to ACWW in each of the next three years, in what way it would be collected, and then report the decisions to our Central Office. Even if you were not at the Conference, your society must do this. December 31st 1989 has proved an impossible deadline and

we ask that societies who have not yet acted do so as soon as possible.

But, we are asked, why does ACWW not just set a target for P for F rather than this new resolution which may confuse members?

The written commitment is not another fund, or another way of giving, unless *you* want it to be. Only 50 per cent of the countries where we have members contribute P for F. It would be unfair to expect this group to bear the burden of funding the whole organisation. Some societies have difficulty with the concept of voluntary donations, and would prefer a system of levy or to set aside an amount from their own members' annual subscriptions.

But a major increase in ACWW's Society Dues at a flat rate to suit these societies would mean still others being unable to afford membership – perhaps those who need ACWW the most. So it seemed that no one way would raise the extra we need. The written commitment will give you the flexibility Conference thinks to choose your way and the responsibility to ensure the amount you raise is enough to help ACWW.

Please remember that the written commitment is a formal resolution. That means it is binding on *all* societies. As part of your membership, you must put your society's intentions in writing to ACWW *now*. Make sure your society's executive committee or ruling body sees this article and has acted.

Each society is expected to honour this commitment as best it can. For the short term, we have assumed that you each will be paying your dues at the new rate and will be sending in at least as much in P for F as you did in 1989. But we do need you to give that written commitment for an extra amount in each of the next three years, whether it be £10 from a Corresponding Society that has not contributed more than its dues before, or hundreds from our larger societies.

## The facts are:

- ACWW needs at least £341,000 general income in each of the next three years (from dues, P for F, sales etc).
- Of this, £114,000 will come from dues and non-direct membership sources.
- Leaving £227,000 to be found each year by members through P for F and other ways.
- In 1989, Pennies for Friendship amounted to £180,000, leaving an additional annual requirement of £47,000.

As a suggestion, Conference made the recommendation that 'Societies pledge to increase the giving of Pennies for Friendship by 30 per cent.' But how you go about raising the money to honour your commitment is your decision.

For many of you, it will be through an increased promotion of P for F. On the opposite page we remind you why Pennies for Friendship is such a special part of ACWW.