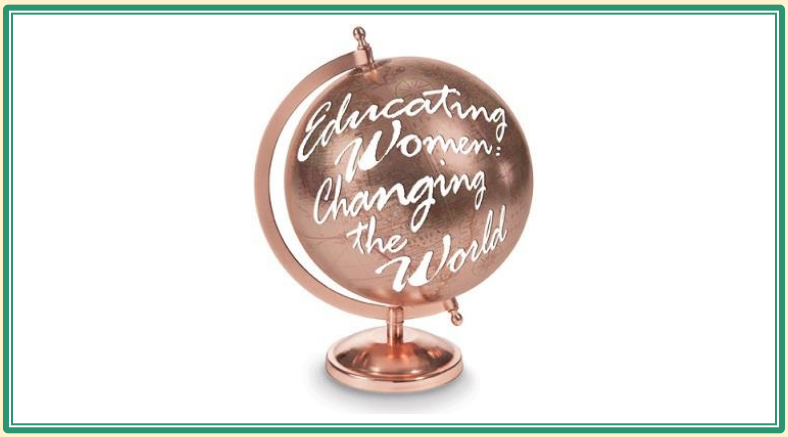
The Genesis of the Education Initiative

by
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WCI President 2016-2019



In July 2016, following the 14th International Conference in Prague, the Czech Republic, some members of the Executive Committee started evaluating the need for WCI to actively engage in global interests. The Executive Committee believed that the world was undergoing major changes as a consequence of globalization, gender and generational shifts, migration, technological advancements, among other things. These transformations required WCI to evaluate how it wanted to move forward in this rapidly changing world.

As an international organization, WCI needed to keep up with the times in order to offer today's women a valid purpose to be part of a meaningful organization. WCI decided to positively contribute to the ever-changing global community through education.

The Education Initiative is an invitation to be lifelong learners and, whenever possible, to share this ability with others in the various communities throughout the world. One of the key concepts in the Education Initiative is compassion. No matter the method a Sister Club wishes to implement to carry out the Education Initiative, the genesis of the EI was to share with others the possibility to access education, the ability to grow in multicultural competencies, friendship and understanding, in a spirit of generosity.

For WCI, compassion meant and still means doing good deeds for others and sharing kindly and openheartedly. WCI always strives to make a difference in people's lives. Sister Clubs are encouraged to exercise compassion in whichever way they deem appropriate and in accordance with their own bylaws.

The Education Initiative strengthened WCI's desire to apply to have consultative status in the United Nations Economic and Social Council. The efforts to fulfill the requirements in the application for consultative status further reinforced WCI's Education Initiative, as it provided a framework through which the Initiative could be realized.

WCI needed to grow; at the same time, it had to be true to its Founder's dream and to its core values. WCI's Executive Committee wanted to respect their organization's Bylaws.

As stated in the Bylaws,
The purpose of Welcome Clubs International (WCI) is to unite independent International Women's Clubs around the world who share a common goal of cross-global cultural education and friendship.

To WCI's slogan,
Friendship through Understanding, and Understanding through Friendship,

The Executive Committee suggested adding "Education,"
Friendship through Understanding and Understanding through ***Education*** *and Friendship.*

When the Education Initiative was presented to the Board of Directors at the Meeting in Cyprus in May of 2017, WCI's leadership welcomed this new proposal. Moreover, Presidents and Liaisons were eager to share the wonderful work carried out in the different Sister Clubs in the field of education, more specifically, as related to the education of women. Each one of our Sister Clubs puts into practice the Education Initiative in unique ways respecting the characteristics of their community.

The Education Initiative, already in existence in many of our Sister Clubs, was given a formal structure within WCI. Skype Conferences with Club Presidents and Club Liaisons were organized to further discuss the Education Initiative and to address concerns WCI's leadership had regarding this project.

Now that the Education Initiative has been discussed and approved by WCI's leadership, and Sister Clubs have been invited to formally engage in the Education Initiative, the Executive Committee would like to lead the way by putting into practice the tenets of this initiative. To this end, whenever the Executive Committee meets, they will make an effort to, for example, visit a school, a home centre for the elderly, a school for children with special needs, or a women's centre to share the mission and vision of WCI. The idea is for the Executive Committee to lead by example and to create a model that others may use at their own club.

WCI is a unique organization. Marian Adair, the Founder, had a vision to unite the world in friendship and understanding. It is now incumbent on all of us to carry forth the torch of friendship and understanding, and *education*, so we can effectively and positively contribute to today's global societies.

The Power of Friendship
WCI
Welcome Clubs International



International Council of Women and Welcome to Korea International Club President, Dr. Jungsook Kim (right) with WCI President Maria Fernanda Arduino (2016-2019) and other event speakers.

The 62nd SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN
March 12-23th, 2018

Education and Empowerment of Rural Women: Strategies to Eliminating Poverty



WCI Founder's Representative Eshrat Demougeot (left), ICW Vice-President Linda Liu, and WCI President Maria Fernanda Arduino visiting the General Assembly Hall at the United Nations.