

PROGRAM ON A PAGE (or two)

VIRGINIA GILDERSLEEVE INTERNATIONAL FUND

1st Reader

Virginia Gildersleeve, an early leader in both AAUW and the IFUW was born in 1877 into a wealthy New York family that frowned upon education for women. She received a BA degree from Barnard College and, in 1903, received a Ph.D. from Columbia University. Two years later she became the Dean of Women at Barnard and later served as Dean of the College, from 1911-1947. During her tenure at Barnard she was instrumental in gaining admittance for women to the law, medical, journalism, and engineering schools at Columbia University.

2nd Reader

An early and prominent AAUW leader, she was instrumental in developing AAUW's International Relations Committee after World War I and was a Co-founder and two time President of the IFUW. She was widely known as an Internationalist and was the only woman appointed by President Franklin Roosevelt to the US delegation that established the United Nations, where she persuaded the delegates to adopt the goal of universal respect for human rights. She was the first woman in the United States to sign a United States treaty.

3rd Reader

Eleven members of the International Federation of University Women founded the Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund (VGIF) in 1969.

Initially, the Fund assisted women college graduates in low per capita income countries - to identify and implement solutions to a variety of problems confronting their nations.

4th Reader

Within a decade, the Fund broadened its original purpose, and thereafter began to provide small amounts of money, in the \$2000.00 to \$5000.00 range, to women's groups, in those same developing countries. These funds were used to aid in income generation and community development projects which enhance and utilize women's educational, vocational, and leadership skills. Project activities range from seminars, conferences, and training workshops to community-action projects.

5th Reader

Virginia Gildersleeve's vision as an internationalist and her lifelong advocacy for women's rights are captured in the VGIF mission statement.

"The Virginia Gildersleeve International Fund provides grants worldwide to improve the lives of women and children by funding projects for educational activities, leadership training, community development, and the advancement of understanding and cooperation among women."

6th Reader

VGIF achieved Non-Governmental Organizational status at the United Nations in 1977 and was recommended for consultative status with the ECONOMIC and SOCIAL COUNCIL of the UNITED NATIONS IN 2004.

With NGO Consultative status at the UN, VGIF has more than 1000 members world wide who generously support the funds mission with their annual donations and planned estate gifts, The 29 member board, broadly international in scope, serves at their own expense. Administrative expenses are covered by an endowment established by a very generous benefactor.

7th Reader

The Fund to date has awarded more than 250 grants for a total project aid disbursement of over \$1 million USD to women's groups in low per capita income countries. Priority is given to income generation and community development projects which enhance and utilize women's educational, vocational, and leadership skills. This work is carried out in Africa, and the Asia-Pacific area, as well in the Americas and Eastern Europe. Each application is subjected to a comprehensive needs screening analysis, and each project is under local supervision and receives a follow-up study.

1st Reader

As a result of a grant in Ghana, the MWA (Muslim Women's Action Against Traditional Practices) report indicated that more than 1400 Ghanaian women and men were reached through attendance at its public forums, which disseminated information about the health risk and human rights violations associated with Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). A later survey conducted by MWA indicated that more than 810,000 people had been reached with their message. Those contacted through this survey knew about MWA and believed FGM to be harmful.

2nd Reader

To combat poverty, inaccessible healthcare and malnutrition in Nigeria, organic farming methods were used as a sustainable solution to over cultivation and loss of soil fertility for growing cassava, maize, and pigeon peas. Micro-credit enterprise training in Nepal proved highly successful.

Warm clothing and blankets were supplied to keep children warm in a school in Tibet.

3rd Reader

In Uganda, despite disapproval of their husbands, 40 Ugandan women were successfully trained for employment by the EWA (Efforts of Women Association). Loans were provided for poultry raising and mushroom cultivation. Their businesses now provide food for hotels, restaurants, and supermarkets, as well as steady incomes for their families.

4th Reader

A seminar in the Philippines trained participants in effective ways to support victims of rape and domestic violence. Counseling services and psychological aid were offered for victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse in Peru. Furnishings for a safe shelter for abused families

were provided. In Cameroon over 151 prostitutes were trained on HIV prevention strategies, AIDS awareness, and alternative sources of income. These women shared their experiences and concerns.

5th Reader

Literacy and business skills training helped women in understand monetary transactions in a Haitian market, allowing them to support their families. In Tanzania 18 widows and 12 youths attended intensive training in tailoring and salesmanship strategy to obtain economic security.

6th Reader

A functional literacy training program related to environmental awareness and sanitation in their community is having a positive impact on learners in North West Cameroon. Warm clothing and blankets were supplied to keep children warm in a school in Tibet. Needlework training and materials provided income for Afghan widows in Pakistan

7th Reader

Why become a member? A \$25.00 annual contribution goes directly toward projects. With AAUW no longer a part of the IFUW, membership in VGIF still allows you the opportunity to become part of a unique, powerful organization, committed to improving the lives of women and children in a very personal way to make a difference in their lives and communities. There are 968 individual members in the USA, and 113 group members in the USA. The membership in the USA is predominately composed of AAUW members, branches and state divisions. AAUW of MI is a group member. VGIF needs your support.

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