



Executive Summary - Proposal 1

Taking IFUW into the 21st century with full ownership

IFUW is nearing its 100th anniversary and is at a crucial time in its existence, where it must decide to rebuild its future or die. The reasons for this are manifold and find their origins some years back. The world has changed around IFUW since its creation and the organisation has not kept up with the change. Several iterations of strategic planning have all reached the same conclusion: change or close.

This means that the organisation must make far-reaching decisions which cannot under any circumstances be half measures. Strong and decisive action is needed. At the request of the Board, the Executive Director assessed the options for IFUW and its sustainability and growth in the short and medium term. Proposal 1 is the result of this analysis.

IFUW can reaffirm its vision to provide women all over the world with access to secondary, higher and continuing education. The turnaround strategy would aim to:

- a) Confirm the need for an organisation like IFUW to exist, be active and visible
- b) Help NFAs grow their membership
- c) Determine strategically important activities that must have priority based on the 2012 strategic review and action points
- d) Explore future funding sources.

Conditions for success

A number of steps must be accomplished for the action plan to succeed:

- a) Put together achievable programmes with key performance indicators.
- b) Ensure feedback processes to and with NFAs and other organisations relevant to their daily work.
- c) Make information more accessible and understandable to the members, the general public and potential partners and sponsors.
- d) Accept external funding sources from diverse sectors (business, government, aid agencies, etc.).
- e) Lighten the overall governance structure, including the number and size of committees, to shorten tenure and decision times, and define roles and responsibilities more clearly.
- f) Put into place robust leadership within the Board with performance indicators and person specification (job description, competencies, profile, expected results).
- g) Reinforce accountability of committees and volunteers, and set specific outcomes.



Programme highlights

The tables below provide some highlights only. For the full programme and recommendations, please see the complete *work in progress action plan* on the website.

FOUR MAIN IDEAS	
<p>a. Strengthen and build membership</p> <p>IFUW must strengthen its own member NFAs to perform better and grow, and seek new membership models. To strengthen member NFAs, standardised toolkits on advocacy, membership benefits, press releases and the like will be developed.</p> <p>New forms of membership that will attract funding will be sought, such as a non-voting corporate membership and an advisory board, which may include companies, institutions of higher learning etc.</p>	
<p>b. Strengthen advocacy, visibility and maintain ECOSOC status</p> <p>IFUW's four main pillars for the Power of Education in Effecting Change must be the focus of ongoing advocacy at CSW, ECOSOC, CEDAW and others:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) education of women and girls for empowerment and leadership 2) freedom from violence 3) financial independence 4) entrepreneurship and sustainable futures. <p>As a well-respected and international NGO, IFUW should have media activity and be visible in the press. In order to do this, a media relations and social media programme will help raise IFUW's profile.</p>	
<p>c. Raise funds</p> <p>IFUW needs to raise funds to become less reliant on membership dues, and to be able to develop and run programmes and projects that extend its reach globally and locally. A number of initiatives will be considered, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Opening the conference to the wider public (with a tiered fee structure for members), to emulate Health Forum Gastein, World Economic Forum, the Deauville Women's Forum and other high level conferences, with IFUW branding around its mission i.e. education and women. The stated strategic aim would be that the IFUW Conference is recognised among leading conferences on women and education, differentiated from other conferences. Furthermore, such a conference provides a source of unrestricted funding. 2) IFUW needs to draw on its huge fund of knowledge and ability in the field of education within IFUW, to create paid training courses to further its goal. These would be aimed at other ngos, businesses and governments. 3) IFUW should become the reference point for finding speakers on the four main themes on which IFUW focuses. Speakers Bureaus charge anywhere between USD 5'000 – 25'000 depending on level of speaker and fame index, and inside IFUW there are some amazing women who would certainly qualify. 	



FOUR MAIN IDEAS

d. Develop projects building on past successes

IFUW has projects and past successes that should be developed and grown to raise IFUW's profile, such as:

- 1) Olympes de la parole which is currently in its 11th year in the Mediterranean region, and could be spread to countries in other regions of the world.
- 2) Expand the Fellowships and Grants programme, and require membership before people become eligible. This will benefit membership and IFUW awareness.

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
Strengthen and build membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership programmes • Worldwide speakers bureau (also revenue stream) • Benchmarking and best practice tools 	<p>NFAs increase membership</p> <p>Increased IFUW and NFA profile</p> <p>New NFAs join</p> <p>Access to best practices</p>
<p>Strengthen advocacy, visibility and maintain ECOSOC status</p> <p>Strengthen grants and fellowships and increase visibility</p> <p>International academic women's prize</p> <p>Stronger media relations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make themes, tools, core packages and practices available to members e.g. Policy Update and more • Make advocacy relevant to NFAs, strengthen existing programmes • Ensure systematic targets and outputs for grants and fellowships • Develop an international prize for academic women • Communication with media on a regular basis 	<p>Increase visibility and attractiveness of IFUW to external partners</p> <p>Impact on national policy on education and human rights</p> <p>Track and report recipients' progress and publicise</p> <p>Gain media visibility over time and become a reference source on women and education</p>
<p>Raise funds</p> <p>Develop a professional Conference as a revenue-making operation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on four strands of IFUW mission • Open to external parties and offer reductions to IFUW members 	<p>Create real debate at an international level on education and human rights and become "the place to be"</p>
Raise funds by diversifying income sources	Put into place a legacy programme and other fundraising methods that can also be used by NFAs	Ensure systematic fundraising



Activities	Outputs	Outcomes
Raise funds by developing an Advisory Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify ten major companies willing to participate financially and provide expertise 	Funding and speaker opportunities, programme development, best practices
Develop projects building on past successes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand Olympe de la Parole to other continents and countries Focus and strengthen Fellowships and Grants programmes Build training programmes that are relevant to women today Create an internship model for young women within IFUW and NFAs 	<p>Country involvement, country visibility and potential sponsor interest</p> <p>Draw more members and develop image of IFUW</p> <p>IFUW and NFAs become a professional and educational vehicle in their own right</p>

In a strategic view of the future of IFUW, Proposal 1 argues for a Geneva-based office that is a strong service centre. There are intangible benefits of being in Geneva that cannot be measured in terms of CHF costs, such as political neutrality, a stable environment, flexible labour laws, proximity to UN and UN NGO networks. Switzerland has long been turned towards the rest of the world and has a strong reputation both for housing the UN agencies and for its development activities worldwide. IFUW benefits from this in terms of credibility and reach. Geneva hosts all the major missions of the world, and IFUW can certainly use this much more to its advantage in its advocacy.

Thus the recommendation is to stay in Geneva and strengthen activities rather than downsize and cut costs. In the UK, the Charities Commission recommends that a target for voluntary sector organisations should be that overheads represent no more than 60% of total budget; businesses aim for 25% maximum. IFUW should aim to reduce the proportion of its overheads by increasing its programme budgets.

The office becomes the centre of activity coordination and spearheads all fundraising, campaigning, events and public relations, with specialised staff devoted to:

Short term

- membership retention, membership acquisition and membership satisfaction
- communication in the form of website content and animation, media relations and social media
- statutory work that the governance of the organisation requires. This should drop over time and enable the person to assist in other areas

Medium term

- fundraising
- financial and programme officers to develop activities.



Different suggestions have been made concerning moving offices, reducing staff, changing domicile and the like. The membership should, however, be absolutely cognisant of the following in making their decision: these remain cosmetic changes and do not address the deeply-rooted problems and urgently needed changes that the organisation must tackle, first to survive, then to flourish and fulfil its mandate of helping women acquire secondary, higher and continuing education such as the original founders envisioned it, building on a strong past to move confidently into the future.