AIWEFA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2020-2022

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ALL INDIA WOMEN'S EDUCATION FUND ASSOCIATION

• NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations
• Observer Status with the UNFCCC
91 years ago, a group of visionary women realised that the only route to Indian women’s emancipation was through education. These visionaries were Lady Dorothy Irwin, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, Sarojini Naidu, Aruna Asaf Ali and others. They could comprehend the vast difference and disparity between their lives and that of millions of Indian women who led subjugated lives. Education and employment were recognised as catalysts for empowerment and hence the ALL INDIA WOMEN’S EDUCATION FUND ASSOCIATION (AIWEFA) was established in 1929, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi. In 1932 AIWEFA established the Lady Irwin College, New Delhi, with an objective to inculcate a scientific temper in women’s education.

AIWEFA has continued its advocacy of gender parity by presenting policy recommendations at the National and State levels. In recent years AIWEFA has encouraged information sharing among NGOs and has implemented projects at the grassroots level.

**AIWEFA - NINA SIBAL MEMORIAL AWARD**

AIWEFA - Nina Sibal Award for the differently abled is given by AIWEFA every year, since 2003 to an organisation doing outstanding work for people with special needs.

The award was instituted in the name of (late) Shrimati Nina Sibal, Indian Foreign Service, wife of Shri Kapil Sibal, Senior Advocate & M.P. Rajya Sabha. The Award includes a prize of Rs. 8 lakhs, a trophy and a citation.
AIWEFA and United Nations

In May 1999, AIWEFA was granted ECOSOC status – NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. This has provided AIWEFA with an opportunity to generate and sustain international and national concerns through consultation, cooperation and coalition in the larger international arena of the United Nations. The last few years have witnessed a visible AIWEFA presence at international fora.

United Nations NGO IRENE

In September 2003 AIWEFA accepted the role of Regional Coordinator for the United Nations NGO Informal Regional Network (UN NGO IRENE) for India offered by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs Section of the United Nations. This consists of a network for communication and information exchange between national and regional NGOs in consultative status and the NGO Section/UNDESA.

UNFCCC

In 2017 AIWEFA was granted Observer Status with the UNFCCC and membership of the Women and Gender Constituency that provides organisations working on women’s rights and gender justice, environmental protection, or both, to influence the annual conferences and shape the UNFCCC outcomes.

AIWEFA Highlights

- AIWEFA hosts and organises seminars and workshops for networking at the International, National and Regional levels to draw attention to, and work out strategies for sustainable development and empowerment of women.
- AIWEFA provides a platform for an exchange of information and consultation between NGOs, civil society, the Government and the U.N. AIWEFA has been regularly represented by its executive committee members at the annual Commission on Status of Women consultations at the United Nations.
- The HRD Standing Committee, at the instance of AIWEFA, initiated consultations with NGOs on gender analysis of the Budget. Since then annual meetings are held to present the women's perspective on the budget.
- The Parliamentary Standing Committees have invited AIWEFA to make presentations on Micro-credit facilities to women’s Self Help Groups and on the Child Marriage Bill.
- AIWEFA strengthened networking with the Global South Nations to document replicable and scaleable Sustainable Development Goals implementation practices and forming links with affirmative national policies.
- AIWEFA holds awareness workshops and seminars to strengthen the bonding between the old & young.

Online CSW65 side event “A World We Women Want: Gender-Just and Violence-Free” in March 2021
ACTIVITIES

Turning the pages of history, the activities etched as milestones include:

1929: All India Women’s Education Fund Association was set up to advance the education of women by visionary women of that period and stalwarts of the freedom struggle.

1932: The Home Science College for Women, Lady Irwin College was established to inculcate a scientific temper and remodel women’s education.

1952: Through the college, AIWEFA sought to guide and implement national policy decisions for sustainable education. In response to the Government’s Community & National Extension programmes for all round rural development, AIWEFA has spread the message of education, health and sanitation in the villages around Delhi.

1995: From its preoccupation with the management and expansion of Lady Irwin College, AIWEFA shifted focus to gender issues and urgent social action required for mainstreaming women in the development process. Members attended the fourth World Conference on Women at Beijing.

1996: AIWEFA extended its geographic base to include the North Indian states by establishing partnership with women Panchayat leaders.

1998: AIWEFA debuted in the regional fora with the SAARC nations conference “Women on the March” on women’s participation in the political process. AIWEFA held legal literacy programmes in Delhi schools.

1999: AIWEFA was granted Special Consultative Status by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the United Nations.

1999-2001: Legal Awareness programmes were conducted for women in 18 villages of Haryana with support from Ford Foundation.

2002-2003: Conferences and seminars were held with stakeholders, Government, private sector, NGOs and civil society on the role of Information Technology in achieving the UN’s Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

2006: Food & Agriculture Organisation (FAO) assisted ‘vegetable nursery-raising’ project in two Haryana villages to improve women’s standard of living, health & nutrition; introduce quality seeds; improved sowing practices, net houses, water and soil conservation, vermin compost and biogas.

2007-2010: Establishment and management of a Gender Resource Centre (GRC) in Geeta Colony with support from the Social Welfare Board of Delhi Government for overall improvement and development of urban slums. Subsequently named the Samajik Suvidha Kendra (SSK) with convergence of various services of Delhi Government for the BPL families.

2008: UNIFEM supported workshops on “Violence Against Women & HIV/AIDS”.

2008-2011: "Agricultural Resource Centre" set up with support from Department of Science & Technology (DST), Government of India, to upgrade and marry traditional knowledge with scientific technological innovations to reduce drudgery and empower 300 Haryana farm women in improved agricultural practices.

2009-2010: Representation at conference of UN-NGO-IRENE, Asia Pacific at Beijing, China; ECOSOC High Level Segment meeting at Geneva; UNFCCC Conferences at Paris, Bangkok and Copenhagen; Convention on Sustainable Development (CSD) at New York.

2012-2013: Supported by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE) nine Solar Fairs cum Training Workshops were held in Haryana villages. Two National Seminars on ‘Solar & Green Energy’ were held in New Delhi.

2013-2014: AIWEFA organised six workshops on “Cyber Security” for Delhi Colleges and NGOs; Parenting workshop in Resident Welfare Association; Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) workshop for research students.

2014-2015: 85th foundation year celebrations included programmes in women’s skill development, safety, sanitation and cyber security.

New employment avenues for 400 underprivileged women in safe car driver training at Maruti Suzuki India Limited (MSIL); women cab drivers mobilised for OLA; financial consultants for Tata AIA; Delhi Police trained 150 women in Self Defence; UNESCO supported conference “Transition of Women from Education to Full Employment”; presentation of the XIII AIWEFA - Nina Sibal Award; new technology access for 5000 Delhi college students in Google and FES supported cyber security workshops; healthy and sanitary surroundings advocacy by AIWEFA was led by Ms. Meenakshi Lekhi, M.P.

2015-2016: “A World We Women Want (Aw4)” campaign was launched nationally and internationally at the 60th Session of the Commission on Status of Women” (CSW60) at UN headquarters, New York, to map rich implementation strategies from Africa and SAARC countries to achieve the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

2017-2018: CSW61 event at UN, New York, included the priority theme Compendium “Women’s economic empowerment in the changing world of work” and virtual launch of “A World We Women Want” website. School and college workshops on “Promoting Intergenerational Bonding” and “Awareness & Prevention of Drug Addiction”. Grassroots programme “Promotion & Development of Handicrafts from locally available resources” with the Government of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Khadi & Village Industries Board.

2018-2019: To celebrate Mahatma Gandhi’s 150th anniversary and AIWEFA’s 90th Foundation year, National Conference “Ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellness in old age”, in November 2018, was supported by NITI Aayog, National Institute of Social Defence and HelpAge. “Khadi Goes Global” to promote sustainable livelihoods was held in Delhi on 21 February with FICCI FLO and at the UN, New York from 11-15 March, with MSME, KVIC, India’s Permanent Mission and FDCI. Two day North East Expo and Conference in November 2019, with support from the North East Council, showcased the culture and spirit of the 8 states through panel discussions, meetings, art, culture with food, handlooms and handicrafts stalls.

2020-2021: COVID 19 response included videos on the pandemic; webinar series “Sustainable Solutions for Persons with Disabilities”; webinars on Elder well-being; virtual XVIII Nina Sibal Award ceremony; CSW65 online event on violence against women with film supported by UNICEF; international webinar series is planned to build back better towards SDG acceleration.