

# I. International Networks conducting GWIA



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**mine.** represents the international mother centers movement. Mother Centers are one of the most amazing grassroots women's movements spear headed by women at the community level. Originating in Germany they have spread over the past decade across the world and are found in 15 countries: Holland, Austria, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Italy, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Bosnia as well as in the USA, Canada, Kenya, Rwanda and the Philippines, currently representing a network of 750 centers world-wide.

- In Western Europe the mother centers challenge the marginalisation of motherhood by adapting the "it takes a village to raise a child" concept to industrialised societies.
- In post socialist societies the mother centers are focal points for the development of democracy and a civil society from the bottom up.
- In post conflict areas like Bosnia the mother centers have created opportunities to reweave the war torn social fabric. They offer families from different ethnic backgrounds a place to regroup and support each other in dealing with the everyday issues of reconstruction and reconciliation.
- Among the First Nation population in Canada the mother centers help to build a safe environment for socially excluded children and families.
- In the USA, mother centers in Afro American communities offer single mothers on welfare a place to go to learn survival skills and reorientate their lives towards financial empowerment and self sufficiency.
- In the slums of Mathare, Nairobi, mother centers offer mothers and (street) children a safe place, warm meals and medical services.
- In the Philippines the mother centers provide a "home away from home" for female migrant workers coming from rural areas to find jobs in the industrial zones.

**mine** conducts Grassroots Women's International Academies (GWIA), peer learning exchanges, capacity building trainings, partner dialogues and networking and advocacy activities for mother center initiatives around the globe. This involves step by step consultation on starting up mother centers , fostering a "buddy system" between mother centers in the region and between continents, fund-raising activities and the production of training materials.

Contact: [www.mine.cc](http://www.mine.cc)

**GROOTS**

[www.groots.org](http://www.groots.org)

**(Grassroots Organisations Organising Together in Sisterhood)**

Grassroots women's groups are often not adequately represented in public policy making. In 1985 grassroots women from the Cameroon, India, Kenya, the Philippines and the United States, aware of this exclusion envisioned a global network where grassroots women's organisations would form partnerships across national and regional boundaries, sharing resources, information and experience to forward a grassroots women's perspective at national and international venues. That vision became GROOTS.

GROOTS international vision is to develop a movement giving voice and power for policy change and the development of partnerships to grassroots women's initiatives. Since its founding GROOTS has had a significant impact on national and international policymakers and has become a vital resource for low income grassroots women who were either unorganised or not connected to influential networks. Grassroots women's issues and experiences, formerly marginalised, now have a stage and a platform from which to speak out.

GROOTS International operates in over 40 countries in nine regions: Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, Eastern and Western Europe, North America, Southeast Asia and the South Pacific. Over 80 autonomous organisations are linked with GROOTS.

GROOTS focuses on the needs and problems facing grassroots women globally by encouraging partnering and networking.

GROOTS carries out exchange programs on grassroots women's issues and encourages a higher participation of women in local leadership and decision making.

GROOTS opens the way for grassroots women's organisations to participate in major global conferences and to include grassroots perspectives on agenda items.

**Contact:**

[www.groots.org](http://www.groots.org)

The lack of a gender perspective in settlement issues inspired the creation of the Huairou Commission. It is an advocacy partnership group formed by a network of grassroots women's international organisations to forge strategic partnerships to advance the capacity of grassroots women worldwide to strengthen and create sustainable communities.

The Huairou Commission promotes the work of women in developing strategies to sustain and create communities within the principles adopted by the UN Habitat Agenda for low income women in housing: sustainability, equity, human dignity, and social justice.

Grassroots women create homes and communities. They do so intimately, through all the familiar, endless tasks – cooking, cleaning, building, repairing, planting, buying, selling, caring for the sick, the old and the young. Their work gives them an incomparable perspective on how their community works and what it needs.

The Huairou Commission is about:

- ✓ Building on, broadening, strengthening and sharing grassroots knowledge.
- ✓ Strengthening grassroots leadership to influence the decision making processes which shape their communities
- ✓ Transforming policies and institutions y working with partners on engendering community development

Networks that make up the core of the Huairou Commission include: Asian Women and Shelter Network (AWAS), GROOTS, Habitat International Coalition, International Council of Women, WEDO, Women & Cities Network, Women and Peace Network..

Partners that work together with and have supported the Huairou Commission include UNCHS, UNIFEM, UNDP-MDGD, WACLAC, IULA, CERFE as well as faith based organisations like the Methodist Church.

The Huairou Commission seeks to empower grassroots women, reeducate policy makers, channel resources to the level of the community and change the culture of public policy making and public events to be more inclusive of grassroots groups and perspectives. Creating partnerships and a new way of partnering is essential to the Huairou Commission's strategy for change.

**Contact:** [www.huairou.org](http://www.huairou.org)

