

International Inner Wheel is represented in the Vienna “NGO Committees on Ageing”, “- on the Family”, “- on the Status of Women” and “- on Drugs”.

As for myself, I am originally from the Netherlands and moved with my husband in 1988 to Vienna. I became an IW Member in 1993 and was Club President 1996/97, founding District President 2013/14 and again Club President 2016/18. I have been an IIW Representative since late 1998 and work in three NGO Committees:

“NGO Committee on Ageing”, which meets approximately every 6 weeks,

“NGO Committee on the Family” with two full committee meetings a year and all year round online information/communication and the

“NGO Committee on the Status of Women” which meets every 4 to 5 weeks.

In addition I am a board member of the Committee on the Family and also of the Committee on the Status of Women.

My colleague in the Committee on Drugs is Ulrike Nemling, she also lives in Vienna.

Meetings are attended by representatives from the different NGO’s registered as members of the respective Committee.

In the meeting several themes are discussed. This can either be something new coming up, a follow-up on earlier discussions or the preparation of a Statement . Especially the latter has to be seen as an “on-going matter” as it may take up to several months to prepare and finish statements.

Some of the meetings are to be seen as briefings (reports from organizations), others are real working-sessions. Some-times, however, there is a guest-speaker on an actual theme. This can be an ambassador, someone from the government or a specialist from a certain NGO.

Generally our work is connected with the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s)**.

What keeps us busy ?

The main part of the working program 2016/2017 of the "**NGO Committee on Ageing**" was the preparatory work for the UNECE (UN Economic Commission for Europe) Ministerial Conference on Ageing which was held in autumn 2017 in Lisbon.

This conference reviewed the connection between the Sustainable Development Goals and Ageing and also the refugees’ crisis was addressed.

The focus however, was on a sustainable society of all ages, on a life course approach, showing and recognizing that older persons still have contributions to make.

In the "**NGO Committee on the Family**" we look at trends in society and the implications for families in their present and future composition.

The following issues are just a few examples for the subjects which are discussed:

- Growing diversity and instability of work
- Social care
- More areas in social life are reliant on new information and communication technology
- Polarization between families with low- and high incomes
- Extreme vulnerability of particularly non-European migrant families
- Higher risk of exposure to poverty of some groups and types of household (e.g. single-parent household)

The most important activity of the Vienna "**NGO Committee on the Status of Women**" is to prepare written and oral statements on actual themes regarding women's rights. These statements are then presented at the Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women which takes place each year in March in New York. Eventually such a statement may even be incorporated in a resolution of the General Assembly of the UN.

Themes like "Violence against Women and Girls", "Unequal gender division of paid and unpaid work" (Women do most of the unpaid work in family and household and often work a part-time job), and "Unequal payment for equal jobs" (gender pay gap) are always part of the agenda.

All three Committees organize events to raise awareness on specific actual themes. The "International Day of older Persons" (1st October), "16 Days of Activism against gender based Violence" (25th November - 10th December).

This year's highlight is an event on the theme: "Girls not Brides". Our international President Dr. Kapila Gupta is one of the panelists.

UN Representatives send reports on their activities to the Incoming President of International Inner Wheel who then presents an overview at the executive board meetings. In her year she usually also visits an UN location and attends a committee meeting.

Over the years this work has not only changed my perspective on many aspects of these subjects it also has had a deep impact on me personally. I'm convinced that Innerwheel through its members can play an important role in changing society. We should not be complacent with what has been reached, but continue the struggle.