



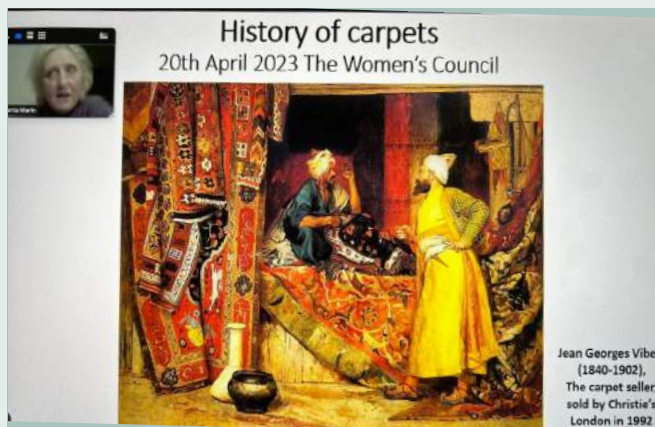
Bahrain • Bangladesh • Bhutan • Brunei • Cambodia • China • India • Indonesia • Iraq  
Japan • Jordan • Korea • Kuwait • Lebanon • Libya • Malaysia • Mongolia • Myanmar  
Morocco • Nepal • Pakistan • Palestine • Papua New Guinea • Philippines • Singapore  
Sri Lanka • Syria • Tajikistan • Thailand • Tibetan Region • Tonga • Turkey • Vietnam  
Kenya • Kyrgyzstan

## Lunar New Year Lunch - Year of the Rabbit

Our Lunar New Year Lunch, celebrating the Year of the Rabbit at Mandarin Kitchen, was a joyous occasion with guests enjoying delectable dishes. We were honoured by the presence of Her Excellency the High Commissioner from Sri Lanka, Patrons for Nepal and Indonesia, Representatives from China and Malaysia, and the Counsellor of Culture (China), who shared a message from the Embassy about the significance of the Year of the Rabbit. A special thanks to Lamees Ibrahim.



## History of Carpets – by Roberta Marin



During her captivating presentation, expert Roberta delved into the rich tapestry of the history surrounding Arabic carpets, weaving a narrative that transported us through centuries of cultural evolution and artistic brilliance. With an expert blend of historical insight and passion for her subject, Roberta illuminated the intricate designs and symbolic motifs that adorn these carpets, each telling a story of its own.

## AGM 2023



The Annual General Meeting held in 2023 served as a significant milestone in our organisation's journey, marking our 50th anniversary with a sense of pride and accomplishment. Notably, the AGM provided a platform for reflecting on past successes and charting a course for the future with our esteemed Patrons, Trustees, Committee, dedicated Members, and guests. The occasion was celebrated with a Coronation Lunch, and quiz, adding a light-hearted touch to the proceedings. Appreciation was extended to our partners from ADAPT, Founder & Chairperson Dr. Mithu Alur, President Dr. Samiran Nundy, and Trustees Malini Chib, and Mr Sathi Alur, whose presence and contributions enriched the event.

## Coffee Morning at Fatimah's

A relaxing afternoon unfolded in Fatimah Gammage's beautiful garden. The stunning blooms of her majestic Wisteria provided a picturesque backdrop to our gathering in the basking sun. Heartfelt thanks to Fatimah for her warm hospitality, and to Savitrie for the relaxing hand massages that added an extra touch of bliss to our fundraising afternoon.



## Annual JCO Event at the Queen's Gallery

During our visit to the Queen's Gallery, we were captivated by an array of remarkable treasures and artworks. The gallery offered a glimpse into the rich cultural heritage and artistic excellence of our nation. Moreover, the opportunity to engage with members of the 6 collaborative charities of the Joint Commonwealth organisations added an enriching dimension to our experience, fostering meaningful connections

and a shared appreciation for the arts. This was followed by a delightful lunch.



## Tour of RHS Wisley

Under the warm summer sun, we embarked on a delightful excursion to RHS Wisley, immersing us in the tranquil beauty of one of Britain's most celebrated gardens. Led by the knowledgeable Gerda Pope, our tour took us on a fascinating journey through the garden's rich history and diverse flora. Gerda regaled us with captivating anecdotes and insights, unveiling the secrets of the meticulously curated landscape. The day concluded with a sense of rejuvenation and inspiration, leaving us with memories of a truly enchanting botanical experience.



## Afternoon Tea and Culinary Quiz

We were joined by Patrons, members and guests for a delightful afternoon tea at the Army & Navy. Whilst enjoying tea and cakes, we tested our culinary knowledge. Thank you to quizmaster Jenny Habib for an engaging quiz.



## 50th Anniversary Celebration - Embassy of Nepal

In celebration of TWC's 50th Anniversary as a registered charity, a momentous event unfolded within the distinguished halls of the Embassy of Nepal. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to His Excellency and TWC's esteemed Patron, Madam Sunita Acharya, for their gracious hospitality. Our thanks also go to Madam Roshan (Deputy Chief of Mission) and the embassy team for their invaluable support. One highlight was the inspiring presence of our guest, Hari Budha Magar, the first double amputee to summit Mt Everest in May 2023. Hari shared his remarkable journey, detailing the challenges he faced and the unwavering determination that propelled him to the pinnacle of the world. Additionally,



we welcomed Mira Rai, a renowned Nepalese trail and sky runner. Amidst a backdrop of cultural dance performances and delectable Nepalese cuisine, we had the honour of auctioning an exquisite oil painting titled "The Enchanted Garden," painted by our talented Patron herself.



## Christmas Lunch

The festive spirit came alive at The Army & Navy Club as we gathered for a joyous celebration filled with laughter and camaraderie. Setting the perfect backdrop for the season, the Wellington College Jazz Band, under the expert direction of Mr. Heeley and Dr Heathcote, delivered an unforgettable performance that had guests tapping their toes and dancing to traditional Christmas melodies. We were honoured to extend a warm welcome to our esteemed new Patron for the House of Lords, Baroness Angela Browning, and Patrons for Nepal, China, and Indonesia, whose support and presence added to our celebration. Laughter filled the air amidst the backdrop of festive decorations and the company of cherished friends and guests.

## Message from the President, Doris, The Lady Butterworth of Warwick



As we embark on the beginning of our second half-century journey, it fills me with great pride to reflect on the foundation we have built together. Our Christmas lunch, a cherished tradition, stands as a testament to the camaraderie that defines The Women's Council.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Rajni, Caroline, and the entire TWC Committee for their unwavering dedication and tireless efforts in ensuring the success of our endeavours. Your steadfast support continues to be the cornerstone of our organisation. The warmth and friendliness that pervade within The Women's Council are truly unparalleled.

As we look ahead to the promising future, let us carry forward this spirit of unity and collaboration. Together, we will continue to make strides towards our shared goals in the field of disability and inclusion.

Thank you for being an integral part of The Women's Council.

## OBITUARIES



**The Right Honourable The Baroness Shreela Flather, DL**  
Patron of The Women's Council and Honorary Vice President  
13 February 1934 - 6 February 2024 (aged 89)

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the death of Baroness Shreela Flather DL. Her active support for The Women's Council and its aims were steadfast and she was a generous sponsor for us with events at the House of Lords for more than 20 years. It was also her inspiration for the setting up of the Joint Commonwealth Organisation. May her memory live on in the hearts and minds of her friends, colleagues and admirers.



## Our New Patron

During the year, we were privileged to welcome Baroness Angela Browning as our new Patron for the House of Lords, whose leadership will inspire us in the years to come. Angela was a teacher, auxiliary nurse, and management consultant before entering Parliament. She was made a life peer in 2010, and currently sits on the Lord Speaker's Committee on the size of the House, and the Food, Diet and Obesity Committee.

# News of Courses supported by TWC

## Update on Training at ADAPT, Mumbai

In 2023 the Annual 14 week Community in Initiatives Course (CII) resumed in person. The course was attended by 14 participants from 7 countries. The participants enjoyed being back in Mumbai for hands-on training after two years of online courses due to Covid restrictions.

Honorary Training Advisor, Rachel Tainsh delivered online sessions on parenting and child health. Furthermore, TWC's Chairman, Rajni conducted a new module related to Oral Health care for people living with learning disabilities via Zoom. ADAPT presented positive findings from an extensive evaluation on the "Impact of CII on 100 Master Trainers from 21 countries in 10 years in the Asia Pacific Region," supported by TWC. They have also been actively involved with on-going development of 6 satellite hubs to maintain training at the local level. ADAPT paid a fitting tribute to Dr Frances Moore who attended her last formal evaluation of the CII course. Dr Moore has been instrumental in developing the course with Dr Alur at ADAPT for 22 years, and has been guiding and evaluating the participants. TWC are truly grateful for all the dedication and support Dr Moore provides, and are delighted that she continues her role as a much respected Trustee and advisor to both the CII and Pan Arab courses.



## Meet the CII 2023 Participants

The participants attending the 14 week course at ADAPT were from various professional backgrounds, including special educators, regular school teachers, social workers, volunteers, researchers and parents. On completion of the hands-on component in Mumbai, they all returned home to implement their action plan in their own communities.

*The training in the field of disability and inclusion has been developed by ADAPT in partnership with the Centre for International Health & Development at UCL, UK.*

**Bangladesh:** Shaneara; **Bhutan:** Tara; **India, Mumbai:** Joyce, Mahuli, Reena; **India, Nagaland:** Talenjungla, Mhasivino, Sungjemnungla; **India, West Bengal:** Divyani; **Mongolia:** Khulan, Otgontuya; **Nepal:** Resha; **Tajikistan:** Asliya, Zainilmo; **Tibet:** Tenzin.

*"Participating in the CII course has been one of the best decisions for me. I not only got to learn about disability and inclusion, but also the variety of cultures of the other participants. The course content was absolutely excellent and covered all the important topics. I would like to thank ADAPT and the Women's Council."*

*"It was an unforgettable experience for me to be part of the CII 2023. This course has also helped me to gain a better understanding of inclusive education and disability. I gained a lot of practical hands-on experience."*



## Update on the Middle East Training

After a 4 year gap we were delighted with the return of the Pan Arab Community-Based Inclusive Development training course in Amman, Jordan last August. Our partners SETI and Dr Alaa Sebeh at UN ESCWA conducted a successful 6 day course for managers and planners. TWC would like to congratulate the eleven women who received scholarships to attend this training. Due to the continued unrest in the Middle East, it was not possible to hold the planned second course in Beirut in November. Currently online courses are being developed to provide training in disability and inclusion.



TWC would like to extend grateful thanks to everyone who gave support during 2023. Without it, the Council would not be able to continue its support of the vital work which is benefitting thousands of children with disabilities in Asia, Asia Pacific and The Middle East. Editor: Rajni Rijal

## An Inspiring Pan Arab SETI Course Participant (2023)

Dr Manar Al Bakour is a certified instructor and psychological counsellor training specialist and supervising the inclusive education plan in the southern region of Jordan. She has a PhD in psychological & educational counselling and volunteers at the Higher Council for Persons with Disabilities. She monitors integrated education and community development in disability and inclusion. Despite her own visual impairment, Dr Manar works tirelessly to help improve services.



She attended the Pan Arab training course with a scholarship provide by TWC. The course was organized by SETI (Support, Education, Training for Inclusion) Center Cairo, with technical support from the United Nations

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) under the guidance of Dr Alaa Sebeh.



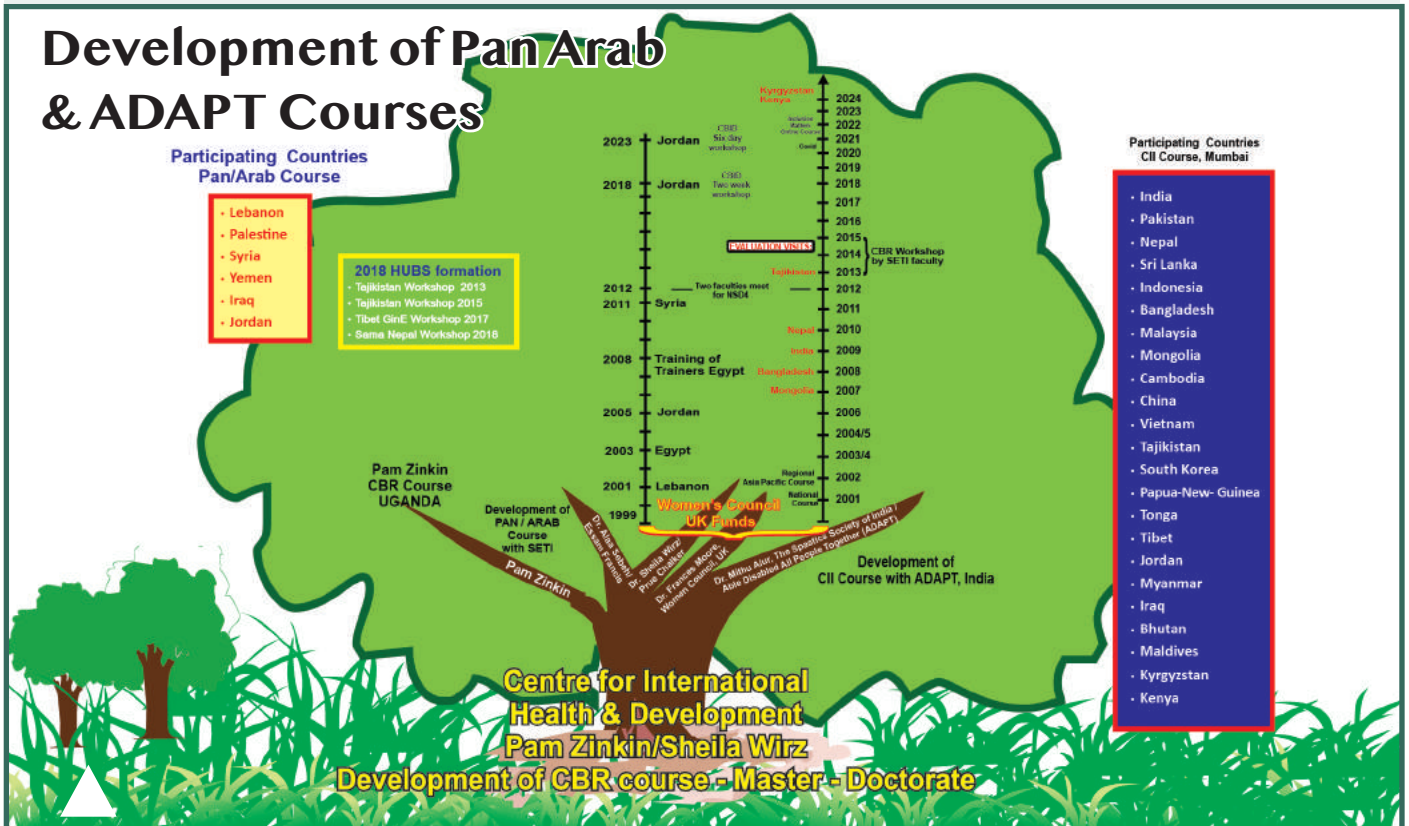
In partnership with the Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Jordan and support of TWC, the aim of this course was to promote inclusive development.

TWC continues to maintain contact with Dr Manar through WhatsApp voice messages.

*“My experience with the Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) course last year was wonderful. After the course I used the skills for my own work. With my manager, I utilized the new skills for strategical planning. I also used the ideas for proposals for our future work. Thank you to TWC for giving me this opportunity.”*

(Dr Manar)

*Thank you to Thana Chawishly for facilitating communication with the participants.*



### DATES FOR DIARY

Tuesday, 25<sup>th</sup> June: AGM followed by a Summer Lunch | Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> October: Secret Scent of Japan  
 December: Christmas Lunch Date tbc  
 Please check the website at [www.womenscouncil.org.uk](http://www.womenscouncil.org.uk) for latest events