



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

Fauna Quiz by Jenny Habib



TWC started off 2024 with a popular zoom quiz on animals. Our Quizmaster extraordinaire, Jenny, tested our knowledge on animals from around the world. Everyone shared their fascinating wildlife adventures. We were also delighted to be joined by guests from the Victoria League.

Leap Year Lunch



TWC members and guests celebrated Leap Year with a delightful lunch at The Mandarin Kitchen, renowned for its "seriously good" cuisine. The highlight was the restaurant's signature lobster noodles, enjoyed alongside insights into Leap Year traditions and the Chinese Year of the Dragon. Guests also took part in a lively raffle and reconnected with friends, old and new. The event was filled with great food, fun, and camaraderie. Special thanks were given to Lamees for organising this memorable gathering.

House of Lords Visit



In March, TWC Patrons, Committee and guests enjoyed a special gathering at The River Room, House of Lords, hosted by Patron Baroness Angela Browning. Over lunch, they exchanged ideas and watched an update on TWC-supported courses. The stunning venue, reserved for charitable events, made the occasion even more memorable. It was a regal afternoon filled with meaningful conversations and wonderful company.



Coffee Morning at Doria Adam's



Doria Adam kindly hosted a coffee afternoon for TWC. It was a lovely afternoon with warm hospitality, delicious food, a relaxed atmosphere and lovely views of the River Thames. Thankfully it was held on one of the few days the sun was shining! We were delighted to be joined by Dr Alur and Atu (CII past participant) from ADAPT, Mumbai

Coffee and Cake at Fatimah's

Fatimah hosted a delightful coffee and cake morning in May to fundraise for The Women's Council. Her beautiful garden, featuring a stunning Wisteria, provided a perfect setting. Guests enjoyed homemade cakes and relaxing massages by Savitrie, raising £300 for the cause.



AGM and Summer Lunch



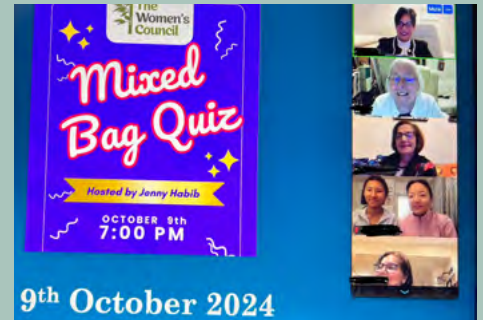
The Women's Council held its 2024 AGM at The Army and Navy Club in June, marking another year of progress. The event, set against the Club's beautiful library and sunshine-filled windows, welcomed esteemed guests, including Dr. Alur, Sathi Alur, Malini Chib, and international representatives.

Gratitude was extended to Deepti Yadav and Dr. Frances Moore for their dedicated service, while Asha Patel was elected as the new Honorary Secretary. Trustees Dr. Moore, Mrs. Al-Jumaili, and Dr. Akrawi were also recognised for their continued contributions. The Chairman's report included a trip down memory lane with a historic illustration of TWC from 1931.



The AGM concluded with a lively summer lunch at Pall Mall, adorned with sunflowers, fostering a warm and celebratory atmosphere. Thanks were shared with all TWC friends and supporters who make its work possible.

Mixed Bag Quiz by Jenny Habib



In October, grand quizmaster Jenny Habib, hosted a lively quiz evening for TWC, bringing together members, friends, and guests from Corona Worldwide. The Mixed Bag Quiz blended knowledge, nostalgia, and laughter, with engaging questions like, "Which US state is known as the Lone Star State?" TWC values these events for fostering connection, and Jenny's quizzes are a cherished part of the calendar.



JCO Annual Event – Boat Trip

The Joint Commonwealth Organisation (JCO), a collaboration of six charities, fosters friendship through events and charitable work. This year's Spring Event featured a lively boat trip from Westminster Pier to Kew, followed by a delightful lunch at The Greyhound Pub. Despite the gloomy weather, the atmosphere was cheerful, with guests enjoying great food and warm company.



Secret of Japanese Scent by Kuniko & friends

In October, TWC members and guests enjoyed a special Scent of Japan (Kōdō) event hosted by Kuniko and friends, some travelling from Japan and the U.S. Held at the Army and Navy Club, the interactive session explored the history and etiquette of Japanese scents, followed by a matcha tea service with traditional sweets. TWC extends gratitude to Kuniko for her efforts and to friends from KCWC, Corona, FIWAL, and AWBS for joining the afternoon.





Christmas Luncheon

On December 10, 2024, The Women's Council hosted its annual Christmas Lunch at the Army & Navy Club in London, bringing together nearly 80 members and guests in a warm, festive celebration.

The beautifully decorated venue set the stage for an afternoon of camaraderie, with classical guitarist Hope Cramsie providing enchanting music. Guests enjoyed a delicious meal, inspiring speeches from Lady Butterworth and Baroness Browning, and a successful raffle raising £750.

Doris, The Lady Butterworth of Warwick: President's Message

"The old order changeth" — the words, penned by English poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson in 1885, remain as relevant today as they were in the 19th century. We find ourselves navigating an increasingly uncertain future, and in such times, the value of friendship and mutual support cannot be overstated. These enduring principles lie at the very heart of TWC.

I am delighted that our Chair, Rajni, was able to visit our partners at ADAPT in Mumbai, accompanied by our Training Advisor, Rachel. We look forward to hearing their reflections and insights at the upcoming AGM. I only regret that I was unable to join them on what was clearly an important and meaningful visit.



Rajni, Caroline, and the entire committee continue to serve TWC with dedication, care, and thoughtful leadership. Their commitment and attention to detail are deeply appreciated, and we are all the beneficiaries of their tireless efforts and planning.

Finally, I extend my heartfelt thanks to our members and their guests for their continued support and for upholding the values that guide us — the care and well-being of children and their families.

OBITUARIES

We are deeply saddened by the passing of Gillian Mellor, TWC's past Assistant Secretary, whose dedication and support were invaluable to the Committee. Gillian was the daughter-in-law of our Committee member Pat Mellor. We also mourn the loss of Maha Shakarchi, a longstanding Member whose commitment to TWC spanned many years. Their contributions and presence will be greatly missed. Our heartfelt condolences go out to their families and loved ones.



Gillian Ann Mellor



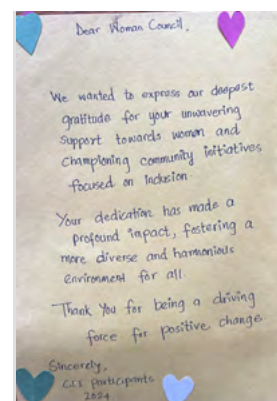
Maha Shakarchi

News of Courses supported by TWC

Update on Training at ADAPT, Mumbai

The Community Initiatives in Inclusion (CII) six-month course for Master Trainers saw participation from 21 individuals (20 women and 1 man) representing ten countries. To date, more than 400 participants from 20 countries have completed the course and returned to their home countries, where they continue to advocate for the philosophy and practices of inclusion. During the course, participants explored the transdisciplinary approach to disability and inclusion through interactive sessions at the three ADAPT centres. They were also introduced to basic management principles and inclusive education practices. In addition, the course provided training in English language skills and coaching in presentation techniques.

Honorary Training Advisor, Rachel Tainsh, visited ADAPT and conducted engaging sessions on early childhood care and development, mindfulness, and neurorehabilitation. Furthermore, Dr. Rajni Rijal, Chairman of TWC, presented an online module on Oral Health Care for individuals living with special needs. ADAPT continues to be actively involved in the development of satellite hubs to ensure ongoing training at the local level, while also working to expand and enrich the CII program.



Meet the CII 2024 Participants

The participants attending the course at ADAPT were from various professional backgrounds, including special educators and disability programme coordinators, regular school teachers, medical professionals, social workers and a CEO of a therapy centre. Some had a disability of their own or cared for a member of their family. 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.



Bhutan: Pem; **Cambodia:** Chea; **India, Mumbai:** Priyanka, Sharmila & Sheela; **India, Nagaland:** Thejaseno & Phomtai; **Kenya:** Duncan; **Kyrgyzstan:** Duishonbieva, Suiunbai & Teleusheva; **Malaysia:** Nirmala; **Mongolia:** Bolortuya, Munguntsetseg, Dambadorj & Altantsetseg; **Nepal:** Pinky, Teksara & Manju; **Tajikistan:** Malikabonu; **Tibetan Plateau:** Tseyang.

“ After completing the course I want to go back to my country and share my experience from ADAPT with the community. I would like to express my gratitude to TWC and ADAPT.”

“ The infrastructure, commitment of teachers and facilities are mind-blowing at Chembur. Mrs Rachel and Dr Rajni’s lectures further enriched our knowledge.”

Update on the Middle East Training Programme: SETI/UN ESWCA

Due to the ongoing unrest in the Middle East, Dr. Alaa Sebeh was unable to conduct the Community-Based Inclusive Development (CBID) courses in Jordan or Beirut. There is hope that the landscape in the Middle East will stabilise, allowing for the resumption of in-person training in 2025.

In the meantime, 2023 CBID alumni, Dr. Manar, remains committed to supporting individuals in Jordan. She is actively involved in promoting inclusion and collaborating with local organisations, with a special focus on mental health training. Dr Manar’s journey highlights the profound impact that targeted training can have on individuals, families and entire communities.



Alumna Report: Dr Priyadarshani

Empowering Inclusion, Inspired by CII 2013

Dr Priyadarshani credits her CII training at ADAPT, supported by TWC, as her first formal experience in disability and inclusion, apart from her higher education in Sociology. Prior to this, she worked as an assistant lecturer at the Department of Sociology, University of Peradeniya, and later as an Instructor in Social Work at the Department of Paediatrics, University of Colombo. Recommended by Professor Samanmali Sumanasena, her CII training significantly shaped her advocacy work in disability inclusion.

Post-training, Dr Pri focused on promoting inclusive education for children with disabilities, leading workshops for parents, teachers, and officials. She addressed infrastructure and technology barriers in schools and encouraged undergraduates to contribute to local publications on inclusion. Dr Pri also played a pivotal role in establishing an early intervention clinic at Lady Ridgeway Hospital together with Prof Samanmali Sumanasena, supporting parents through early intervention and creating a peer counselling network for mothers. She later transitioned to the University of Peradeniya as a



Sociology lecturer, where she supported students with disabilities through various initiatives, including a reading club, audiobooks, career guidance, and Braille support.



Currently in France for postdoctoral research, Dr Pri plans to return to Sri Lanka. She has supervised an undergraduate research study on the impact of an inclusive academic environment on the life satisfaction of students with disabilities in higher education, with special reference to the University of Peradeniya, where she is teaching and researching.

This year, she reconnected with the CII-2025 program and introduced two of her students with a social work background to pursue CII training at ADAPT with financial support from the Women's Council UK. Her interest in disability and inclusion led her to collaborate with the Ayati National Centre for Children with Disabilities to promote student self-advocacy and policy improvements. She is also a member of the Sri Lanka Association for Child Development and has authored an educational booklet titled *The Way Forward with Down Syndrome: An Information Booklet for Families of Persons with Disabilities*, co-authored with Prof Samanmali Sumanasena.

TWC would like to extend grateful thanks to everyone who gave support during 2024. 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

DATES FOR DIARY

Wednesday, 4th June 2025: AGM

Chocolate Tasting Event: details tbc

December: Christmas Lunch Date tbc

Thursday, 22nd January 2026: Burns Lunch in Memory of Lena Freeman

Please check the website at www.womenscouncil.org.uk for latest events