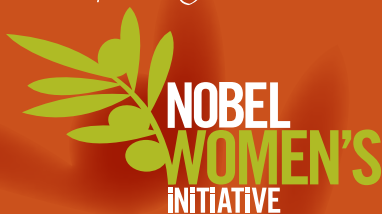


# Annual Report

09



*Advocates for peace, justice & equality*



# Acknowledgements

The Nobel Women's Initiative would like to thank the following supporters, whose generous contributions in 2009 allowed Nobel Women's Initiative to be a voice for women, peace and security around the world.

Nancy and Emily Word  
Kathleen McIntire  
The Arsenault Family Foundation

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Humanity United

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All of the Nobel Peace Prize Laureates of the Nobel Women's Initiative:

Shirin Ebadi  
Mairead Maguire  
Wangari Maathai (and Greenbelt Movement)  
Rigoberta Menchú Tum  
(and Rigoberta Menchú Tum Foundation)  
Betty Williams  
Jody Williams



“ We need radical thinking, creative ideas, and imagination. ”

- Mairead Maguire



## Message *from the* Nobel Women

At the close of a fourth year of collaboration, the conviction to make our shared vision of a world united by peace, justice and equality a reality is stronger than ever. While there are challenges ahead, the successes of the past year make us optimistic that such change is within reach.

From Guatemala to Copenhagen, we listened, shared and connected with remarkable women. What we learned from these women we communicated to the world, bringing their demands for inclusion in democracy, for protection from violence and for the right to speak out freely against injustice to politicians, policy makers, and the United Nations.

In April, we brought together over 300 women leaders to Guatemala to take part in our second annual conference - *Women Redefining Democracy for Peace, Justice and Equality*. Speaking in solidarity with women leaders from around the world we called upon government and multilateral institutions to recognize that true democracy can only be achieved through the full inclusion of women in all aspects of social, political and economic life.

We also found signs of hope in India where we travelled at the invitation of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the Tibetan people in exile. While there we launched the *Thank You Tibet!* campaign, showing our appreciation to the Tibetan people for their culture of wisdom and compassion, and for sharing with us their commitment to nonviolence as the path to *peace*.

Nor we will forget the courage of the women in Iran who continued their fight for human rights and *equality* in the face of escalating violence and the ongoing denial of civil liberties that followed the national elections. We support the women leading the democracy movement because we believe they will be the ones to ultimately bring real change to Iran.

We were deeply disappointed by the decision of the Israeli government to intercept Mairead Maguire and the delegation aboard Spirit of Humanity on its quest to Gaza in 2009. But despite being intercepted the activists refused to be deterred and we find hope in their unwavering commitment to end the suffering in Gaza.

We were heartened by the solidarity shown by women around the world who joined us in condemning the wrongful arrest and detention of sister laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. Together with fellow *peace* laureates we led the call for her immediate release and drew attention to the plight of more than 2000 political prisoners currently held in Burma.

In Copenhagen Wangari Maathai spearheaded the call for climate *justice*, urging world leaders to recognize the disproportionate impacts of global warming on women and the vital importance of including women in solutions to climate change.

As we reflect back on the year that has past, we continue to draw inspiration from the remarkable women we have met around the globe – by the strength of the women of Atenco who continue to demand an end to police impunity, the courage of our Iranian sisters who refuse to be silenced by intimidation and imprisonment, and by the commitment of the women of Los Alamos who are working to make a nuclear free world a reality for all.

As Nobel Peace Laureates, we share a common vision of a world transformed – a world of security and *equality* for all. In the year ahead we will continue to build upon this vision by promoting, spotlighting, and amplifying the work of remarkable women in Burma, Sudan, Iran and beyond. It was with this aim in our hearts that we first came together, and four years later this remains our promise.

Betty Williams



Mairead Maguire



Wangari






## Message *from the* Executive Director

The Nobel Women's Initiative has a short, but impressive history of working to advance the causes of peace, justice and equality through effective international advocacy.

True *justice* and *peace* requires women's inclusion in peace making, accountability for crimes against women, and women's *equality*.

The inspiring group of Nobel Women Peace Laureates is our heart and soul. They embody the passion for idealism paired with action that informs our organization and everything we do.

Despite the obvious challenges to the causes of *peace, justice* and *equality*, there were many times throughout 2009 when our optimism and sense of purpose soared. We were most inspired when we met with human rights activists changing our world, from Dharamsala, India to Washington, DC, from the Palestinian village of Bi'l'in to Copenhagen.

By challenging the very systems and powers that have failed them, women activists are making change happen. With pragmatism and resolve, they are determined to achieve *justice, peace* and *equality* in their lifetimes.

Their shining examples make believers of us all.

In this annual report, you will read stories of some of the activists we have known in our work. To learn more, I urge you to go to our blog, 16 Days of Activism, a campaign we supported to honour women activists from around the world. The women we spotlighted on our web site are working bravely to secure democratic rights, eliminate gender violence, create a healthier environment, establish *peace*, and achieve *justice* – for Iran, Sudan, Israel/Palestine, Burma, Kenya, Guatemala, and Mexico, and across the globe.

Looking back over the year, I reflect on the various ways that the Nobel Women's Initiative contributed to this important work to create positive change in the world.

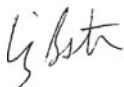
We continued to support activists working for *peace, justice*, security and basic human rights for the women of Burma, Sudan, Iran and Israel/Palestine. We continue to work on disarmament, calling for nuclear abolition. We strengthened our capacity to promote climate *justice*. We positioned a staff member in Nairobi to be closer to events unfolding in Sudan and the region. And we turned our attention to the Americas, especially Mexico, where we supported popular campaigns by women to achieve *justice*.

Our second international conference, Women Redefining Democracy for Peace, Justice and Equality, in Guatemala, was a high point of the year. The meetings led to practical recommendations for involving women in the democratic process. Laureate Rigoberta Menchú Tum, host of the conference, welcomed the women activists. “We ask you to give us advice,” she said, “because you are women of struggle, women of courage.”

A noteworthy achievement in the past year was how we grew our circle of partners and associates. We strengthened links with women activists in academia, government, non-governmental organizations, and the corporate world. We connected to the “virtual” world of supporters and activists through more social networking tools on our website.

We continued outreach to traditional news media and were pleased with the results. Our advocacy messages got good coverage in print, on radio and television, in media around the world. There were news stories in newspapers, extensive radio and television interviews with Laureates and opinion editorials authored by the Laureates in newspapers and online journals around the world.

I extend my gratitude also to the staff and interns of the Nobel Women's Initiative, who believe deeply in this effort. Finally, I thank our partners and fellow activists and supporters, whose contributions and collaboration make this work possible.



**Liz Bernstein**





## Highlights *of the* Year



We are committed to helping to create a world where women's rights, human rights, truly matter. We seek a world where justice, equality and peace are predicated on the full participation of women.



Drawing on the vast experience and accomplishments of the Nobel Women Peace Laureates, the Initiative focused advocacy efforts on the issues where we have the most experience and expertise. These include women's participation in disarmament, climate justice and human rights, peace and security in conflict areas such as Burma, Iran, Sudan, Israel/Palestine, Guatemala, and Mexico.

## 09 *at a Glance*

### January

- Peace Laureates issue a statement, urging United Nations to take action and condemn Israeli attacks on Gaza.
- Solutions and Soundbytes event brings together 30 peace and security experts (academics, human rights advocates, journalists) to develop strategies for putting

women's rights on the international security agenda.

- Laureates call on UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to protect women of eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, who are victims of abuse and rape during conflict.

### March 5–8

- International Women's Week, women and men unite to end violence against women and girls. In Ottawa, Nobel Women's Initiative marked the occasion with partners. We hosted a debate, film screening, and the first Femmy Awards.

“Democracy does not stop with the vote ... Governments must be held accountable for protecting the rights of women everywhere – in both public and private spheres. Democracy must respect human rights – civil, political, social and economic rights – not just majority rule.”

**NOBEL PEACE LAUREATE RIGOBERTA MENCHÚ TUM,**  
host of Women Redefining Democracy for Peace, Justice and Equality,  
Antigua, Guatemala, May 10-12, 2009

## Conference, Women Redefining Democracy for Peace, Justice and Equality

Laureate Rigoberta Menchú Tum, along with sister Laureates Mairead Maguire, Shirin Ebadi, and Jody Williams, hosted the Initiative's international conference in Antigua, Guatemala. The event attracted more than 100 women activists and leaders from 70 countries.

The conference goal was ambitious: to develop ideas and

strategies to improve the practice of democracy to include women's full participation. Women shared personal experiences and best practices and considered definitions, theories and strategies. They discussed policy and developed concrete actions to help reach the goal of guaranteeing and protecting women's rights in genuine democracy.

There was a harsh reminder of the obstacles that prevent women from full participation in civic life at the conference. Several

## 09 at a Glance

### April 14

■ Crisis in Darfur: Panel Discussion, Laureates Wangari Maathai and Jody Williams host a round-table event in Washington, DC. Leading experts on Sudan discuss the faltering peace process, the implications for women and introduce new data on sexual violence in the refugee camps in Chad.

### May 10-12

■ International Conference, Women Redefining Democracy, in Antigua, Guatemala, attracted more than 100 activists from 70 countries, resulting in a new definition of democracy that guarantees human rights, safety and security for women.

### June

■ June 19 Aung San Suu Kyi celebrates her 64<sup>th</sup> birthday in prison, in Burma. The Nobel Women's Initiative calls for her release and release of 2000 other political prisoners.

■ Laureates support Iranian women during post election violence.

women, who had been invited and planned to attend, were denied the visas necessary for travel through transit countries and to enter Guatemala. Two Iranian participants were prevented from leaving Iran.

The conference concluded with a powerful new definition of democracy and statements on issues of concern, including a Statement Objecting to Travel Bans, a call on the military regime of Burma to Free Burma's Political Prisoners Now!, and a Declaration in Support of Guatemalan Women, who continue their struggle for full democratic rights in the threat of violence and insecurity.

(To read the full conference report, go to the Nobel Women's Initiative's website.)

## Nobel Peace Delegation *for* Tibet

In October, Laureates Mairead Maguire, Jody Williams, and Shirin Ebadi traveled to Dharamsala, India, to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the exile of the Tibetan people. They were there at the invitation of fellow Nobel Peace Laureate, His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The women used the occasion to launch the *Thank You Tibet!* campaign of public thanks and support for Tibetans. Maguire and the other Laureates paid tribute to Tibetans' nonviolent path of protest and celebrated the contributions of Tibetans to social *justice* around the world.

Media in India covered the visit of the Laureates to India extensively. For example, the Laureates were quoted in one Indian paper saying: "As the issue of Tibet

## September

- Nobel Women's Initiative hires an Africa Advocacy Officer to support advocacy efforts in Sudan, and work with Laureate Wangari Maathai, in Nairobi, Kenya.

## October

- Laureates Mairead Maguire, Jody Williams, and Shirin Ebadi travel to Dharamsala, India, for anniversary of the Tibetan community's 50 years in exile. In a special ceremony, they speak on behalf of other Laureates to offer support and to
- His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Tibetan people.
- International Peace Jam brings together Laureates and youth at Tibetan Children's Village in Dharamsala.

remains tragically unresolved and Tibetans continue to endure repressive conditions in Tibet, we wish to express our concern and support the Dalai Lama for his non-violent efforts to achieve autonomy for the Tibetan people... (The Chinese government should) take immediate and constructive steps to resolve the status of Tibet and end oppressive policies that continue to marginalise and impoverish Tibetans in their own land”.

The **Peace Jam Foundation** is an organization that gives youth an opportunity to learn the effective activism from Nobel Peace Laureates. This year a Peace Jam youth event coincided with the Peace Delegation to Dharamsala. The Laureates planted trees and participated in a local clean-up effort with hundreds of children

living in the children's village run by Tibetans in Dharamsala. They were inspired by the children's dedication to service and their gracious compassion for others living in difficult circumstances around the world.

So far, more than 600,000 youth from around the world have participated in Peace Jam and they have completed more than a million service projects. Projects include efforts to achieve social and human rights in Burma, end poverty in East Timor and help women and children develop leadership skills in Tanzania.

## Sudan

Laureate Wangari Maathai this year assumed leadership for advocacy and communications to advance *peace* in Sudan. The Initiative hired a Nairobi-based

## 09 at a Glance

### November

- 10<sup>th</sup> World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates meets in Berlin. Laureate Mairead Maguire takes part.
- The Nobel Women's Initiative celebrates 16 Days of Activism against gender violence, with special blog on website and profiles women activists from around the world.

### December

- Laureate Wangari Maathai represents Green Belt Movement and Nobel Women's Initiative at climate talks in Copenhagen and does extensive media outreach on climate justice.

Africa Advocacy Coordinator to support this program. A staff presence in the region helps strengthen our connections with women activists of Sudan, and ensures that Wangari's leadership amplifies the voices of our many partners in Sudan—women's groups working for *peace*. This year the Nobel Women's Initiative engaged in discussions with members of the African Union about women's rights in the region, armed violence, and *peace* prospects with women's participation.

The Initiative issued a statement on the situation in Sudan, in which it expressed support for the efforts of International Criminal Court to bring *peace* and *justice* to Darfur. African leaders including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, sister Laureate Wangari Maathai and writer Wole Soyinka were among the notable people who signed the statement.

The Nobel Women's Initiative published an opinion editorial, in French and English, signed by the three Nobel Laureates, above, in anticipation of the African Union summit. They urged support for the Court's role in achieving *justice* in Sudan. The piece was published in the magazine, *Jeune Afrique*, in June.

An open statement on the situation in Sudan and the role of the Court, signed by Wangari, Tutu, and Soyinka and 30 other African men and women of influence, was addressed to the African Union. This statement—aimed at promoting accountability and ending impunity—received wide media coverage throughout Africa and in Europe.

In April, Jody Williams and Wangari Maathai hosted a briefing and panel discussion about the crisis in Darfur at the National Press Club in Washington DC. The aim was to explore issues such as the faltering *peace* process and the implications of the International Criminal Court's arrest warrant for Sudan President al-Bashir for the region. The panel also explored ideas about the possible role of Arab League countries to advance *peace* in the region. Williams called on US Senator John Kerry to push for the restoration of humanitarian services in the area around Darfur. Physicians for Human Rights released new information about sexual assault and violence against women in refugee camps. Other groups who supported the event were Institute for Inclusive Security and Sudan Diaspora. The event received coverage in Arab press, an important step towards advancing meaningful participation of local actors in the region.

## Iran

The year has been a difficult one for human rights and women's activists, indeed for all people, in Iran. With the sister Laureates and people around the world we watched television coverage of brutality inflicted against citizens peacefully protesting against government action—the terrible violence on the streets, arrests and harassment.

In solidarity, we continued our support for initiatives such as the **One Million Signatures Campaign**. The campaign works to end the discriminatory laws in Iran against women and is one of the most prominent tools of the women's rights movement in Iran.

However, the crackdown on activists, especially after the June national elections, gave us reason to reevaluate other advocacy plans to be certain not to endanger activists.

The situation continues to be grave. Human rights activists and women in particular have been subject to ongoing harassment and detention. Our sister Laureate Shirin Ebadi had her office shut down, computers seized and assets frozen. Authorities went so far as to seize a safety deposit box that contained her Nobel Peace Prize. Ebadi's own sister, a medical doctor, was detained—as well as Ebadi's husband.

Our aim has been to keep international attention focused on human rights abuses in Iran and the remarkable work of Iranian women in leading the democracy movement. We called for the unconditional release of more than 16 women who were arrested without cause, and advocated for the government to stop its harassment of women human rights defenders.

It has been important to provide Laureate Shirin Ebadi, who is now in exile outside Iran, with the support she needs to speak out and meet with leaders and media in North America and elsewhere. Ebadi was interviewed this year by many media outlets, resulting in print, radio and television stories on National Public Radio (NPR), the Washington Post and the Canadian Globe and Mail.

Along with Shirin Ebadi, the Nobel Women's Initiative expressed support for the **Mourning Mothers of Iran**, a group of women who demonstrate their grief in a public fashion. They march on behalf of their children, who were killed or imprisoned because of their political activism. Each Saturday, since June, the Mourning Mothers march in a candlelit procession in Laleh Park in Tehran. They dress in black and carry photos of their children. Laureate Shirin Ebadi encourages activists to support the Mourning Mothers, "I urge all women

around the world to show their solidarity with the Committee of Iranian Mothers in Mourning by assembling in parks, in their respective countries, every Saturday between the hours of 7 to 8 p.m., wearing black.”

## Israel/Palestine

For a second year, the Nobel Women’s Initiative took part in the annual Bi’lin Peace Conference in a Palestinian village in the occupied West Bank. Laureate Mairead Maguire and our manager of media and communications represented the Initiative.

The conference provided opportunities to meet with many *peace* and women’s rights activists from both the Israeli and Palestinian communities and strengthen our ties in the region.

This year we also held planning sessions with partners to prepare for our coming 2010 *peace* delegation to Israel and Palestine. Next year’s delegation will bring a prominent group of women leaders from around the world to Israel and Palestine in support of women activists on the ground and to open more space for public discussion of the situation in Gaza.

## Burma

We kept a watchful eye on events in Burma as the military regime continued its harassment, deprivation of human rights and imprisonment of sister Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and other democracy and human rights activists. We consider it essential to support the activists on the ground who are bringing attention to human rights abuses, and working to bring change to Burma.

We issued statements calling for Aung San Suu Kyi’s release and the release of more than 2000 other political prisoners in Burma. With fellow Nobel Peace Laureates, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and President Jose Ramos Horta of East Timor we also issued an open letter to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon calling for Aung San Suu Kyi’s release.

On June 19, we observed Aung San Suu Kyi’s 64<sup>th</sup> birthday with renewed calls to action against human rights abuses in Burma and the deplorable treatment of political prisoners. Media around the globe covered these, and other, efforts.



We are resolute in our determination to see *justice* for Aung San Suu Kyi and all the peoples of Burma. To this end, throughout 2009 we organized the International Tribunal on Crimes Against Women of Burma that will take place in New York in March, 2010. The Tribunal will provide a powerful spotlight on the oppression of women of Burma. Judges will hear testimony from twelve women of Burma who will share their personal stories of surviving human rights violations and crimes under military rule. Their voices, and the findings and recommendations of the judges, will be directed to the Burmese regime and the international community.

## Climate Justice

In December, the Laureates issued a press release in anticipation of the Copenhagen conference on climate change.

They called on world leaders to consider the situation of ordinary people, who have to deal with drought, wildfires, rising seas and an increase in the frequency of extreme weather events. These are the ill effects of climate change already threatening the lives and livelihoods of communities around the world.

The Laureates urged governments to arrive at a fair deal, with substantial, science-based reductions in emissions. They

### WANGARI MAATHAI ON THE FAILURE OF COPENHAGEN ON CLIMATE CHANGE:

"We have a responsibility to protect the rights of generations, of all species, that cannot speak for themselves today. The global challenge of climate change requires that we ask no less of our leaders, or ourselves."

"Millions of people were disappointed ... Climate change is also a security issue because it will cause large migrations of environmental refugees that will escape rising seas, loss of land to the desertification process and lack of water... developing countries need to do much for themselves because they are especially vulnerable. A lot can be achieved without financial resources from Copenhagen. Here in Kenya, the government is protecting forests so that the country can continue to receive environmental services, conserve biodiversity and get hydro- and thermo-power. It is also investing in wind and solar power. Kenya is also intensifying its tree planting campaign..."

**LAUREATE WANGARI MAATHAI,**  
quotations from Greenbelt Movement website and article  
in East African Standard, December 28, 2009



asked them to recognize the important of reforestation and to act to reverse deforestation and degradation of forests. Governments must embrace green technology and make it affordable, especially in Africa and the global South, they said.

In Copenhagen at the United Nations Climate Change Conference, December 7–18, Laureate Wangari Maathai represented the Nobel Women’s Initiative and the Green Belt Movement. She took the message of the Laureates to the press, including an interview by Christiane Amanpour of CNN. At the end of the conference she expressed profound disappointment that leaders failed to accomplish an ambitious, just and legally binding agreement.

## Disarmament

Efforts to achieve lasting *peace* and security, through disarmament and weapons reductions, were important issues during the year.

In an opinion piece in the Boston Globe in April, Jody Williams praised US President Obama for his accomplishments but urged him to go further to show his commitment to multilateral arms control and disarmament.

Williams pointed out that 2009 was the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the international treaty banning

antipersonnel land mines. While 156 nations (80% of governments in the world) have signed the treaty, the United States has not. Another important treaty, banning cluster munitions, was negotiated in Dublin, in May 2008. The US also refused to sign that treaty. She urged Obama to sign on to both treaties.

In May, our organization focused attention on nuclear disarmament. The women Laureates joined a group of Nobel Peace Prize winners who issued a joint declaration against nuclear arms. They called on world leaders to eliminate nuclear weapons, which they called “indiscriminate, immoral and illegal.” They urged citizens to convince politicians and leaders to “grasp the period of inaction and summon the will to advance toward nuclear disarmament and abolition.”

In August, Mairead Maguire and Jody Williams traveled to Los Alamos, New Mexico, the birthplace of the atomic bomb. To mark the anniversary of the bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the Laureates supported the *peace* activists gathered to protest nuclear weapons. The Laureates called for the abolition of nuclear weapons and challenged individuals to take action as part of a global effort for

“ We really are at the crossroads and [disarmament] will happen if people of goodwill all over the world raise their voices and take action to let the governments of the world know that's what they want. ”

*Jody Williams*

disarmament. They also met with women working to protect their peoples and lands from the nuclear weapons industry.

Jody Williams delivered a keynote address to the UN Department of Public Information 62nd Annual Conference for Non-Governmental Organizations on the theme “For Peace and Development: Disarm

Now!” in September. Williams called upon civil society to look beyond their differences and “work together” to bring about the abolition of nuclear weapons and testified as to how collaboration worked to great success in the campaign to ban landmines. Her speech was received with a standing ovation.

#### A NEW DEFINITION OF DEMOCRACY

We call upon all states and multilateral institutions to recognize that the democratization process is incomplete, and does not end with elections. No country or society can claim to be democratic when the women who form half its citizens are denied their right to life, to their human rights and entitlements, and to safety and security.

Despite this, we women have made extraordinary efforts to democratize the institutions of society that frame our lives and the well-being of all humanity – the family, the community; the clan, tribe, ethnic or religious group; political, legal, economic, social and cultural structures; and the media and communications systems.

Written by participants at the conference, *Women Redefining Democracy*, held in Antigua, Guatemala, May, 2009

## Women we work with: Growing *our* Community

The list of partners, colleagues, individuals, groups, activists and advocates who we've had the privilege of working with over the past year is long and growing longer. That is because this kind of reaching out and working together is central to our work.

### Women *in the* corporate sector

A major gathering of more than 1,000 political leaders and businesswomen from around the world was held in Santiago, Chile in May. Laureate Jody Williams addressed a session of the Global Summit of Women. Her topic was the meaning of violence against women.

Williams explained to the audience, which included some of the world's leading women CEOs and corporate women, her view that violence includes sins of omission as well as sins of commission. She urged the audience to expand their understanding of violence to include actions and policies that *fail* to consider the effect on women as well as policies that deliberately exclude women.

Williams called on the group of powerful women to use their influence to work for a fairer world for women. Examples of how they could do so included joining a

campaign to free Aung San Suu Kyi and Burma's 2000 political prisoners, applying Corporate Responsibility policies in their companies, and asking for full stakeholder impact studies before entering new markets or new countries.

The gathering gave Jody Williams a standing ovation. The audience was clearly receptive to her message. The Initiative will continue to build on these important relationships with corporate women and leaders and to seek opportunities *find new areas* for collaboration.

### Supporting the work *of others*

The Nobel Women's Initiative is part of an international community of women and men who are motivated by shared values and the hope that through activism we can help create a more peaceful, just and democratic world.

While we are eager to advance the work of our main partners in our ongoing programs—for example, the Women's League of Burma—we also support other women's rights campaigns at key moments when they feel they need us. These interventions sometimes involve making public statements,

or sending letters to public leaders. At other times, our Laureates visit conflict sites to lobby more directly for change—always at the request of women's groups on the ground.

In Central America, we capitalized on the success of our Guatemala conference. Laureates expressed their solidarity with the women of Honduras, caught in the conflict caused by the coup, and urged a return to the rule of law and democracy.

We also demonstrated our solidarity with women and political prisoners in Atenco, Mexico. Jody Williams represented the Nobel Women at a rally of more than 300 activists. (Just Associates organized the event.) The conflict

in Atenco reached a head in 2006, when police ordered flower vendors to vacate a market place. The women stood their ground, were attacked, sexually abused, and thrown in jail.

In November, our sister Laureate Rigoberta Menchú Tum launched the United Nations Regional Campaign to End Violence against Women. The campaign is part of the Secretary-General's effort to end violence against women and supported by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Together with her sister Nobel Peace Laureates, Rigoberta called on governments in the region to support women in their struggle to end violence.

## HISTORY OF THE NOBEL WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

### *Nobel Peace Prizes:*

**Betty Williams** - Ireland 1976

**Rigoberta Menchu Tum** - Guatemala 1992

**Shirin Ebadi** - Iran 2003

**Mairead Maguire** - Ireland 1976

**Jody Williams** - USA 1997

**Wangari Maathai** - Kenya 2004

'06 Founding of Nobel Women's Initiative

'07 First International Conference, Ireland, Women Redefining Peace in the Middle East and Beyond

'08 Delegation for Women's Rights to Thai-Burma and Chad-Sudan

'09 Second International Conference, Guatemala, Women Redefining Democracy For Peace, Justice and Equality

'10 International Tribunal of Crimes against Women of Burma, Delegation to the Review Conference of the International Criminal Court, Delegation to Israel and Palestine

## Connected *and* plugged in: media, resources, *and* mentoring

### Our blogs

**Women Taking Action Against Gender Violence.** The Nobel Women's Initiative joined 1,000s of other organizations in marking **16 Days of Activism**. The annual event, which started in 1991, celebrates women activists who are making a difference in the world. The event **16 Days of Activism** coincides with important dates in the advocacy movement for women's rights. It begins on November 25, which is International Day Against Violence Against Women, and concludes on December 10, International Human Rights Day.

We spotlighted 16 women and groups who work for human rights in Burma, Iran, Israel/Palestine, Sudan, Mexico, Guatemala, and the southwest United States. We created a blog and each day posted a story about a different activist, along with photos and some videos.

In this report we include stories of several activists.



*Lway Aye Nang:*  
**Help raise awareness  
about our suffering**

Just out of high school in Burma, Lway Aye Nang was forced to flee her country for the safety of exile in Thailand. That was 1999. Since then she has dedicated herself to the task of bringing democracy and human rights to Burma.

One of Aye Nang's greatest concerns is violence against women. In the eastern part of Burma, where fighting is ongoing, soldiers rape women with impunity, she says. She believes it is imperative to help young women develop their abilities so that they can become active and engaged citizens.

Aye Nang is secretary general for the Women's League of Burma. She belongs to the ethnic Palaung minority.

"The military regime (of Burma) retains power because of the support of other countries who do business with it," she says. "Help us raise awareness about our suffering. That will be the only way we can solve this problem."



*Jila Baniyaghoob:*  
**Let us turn our  
sorrow into strength**

Jila Baniyaghoob has known disappointment and sorrow, but that has never stopped the Iranian journalist from acting on her principles.

Editor-in-chief of a news website about women's rights, Jila is also a member of the One Million Signatures Campaign against discriminatory laws in Iran. In her travels through the Middle East, she has been unafraid to cover subjects that rankle the powers at home: government and social oppression, the lives of refugees and the lives of women. She has also reported on the conflicts in Lebanon, Iraq and Afghanistan.

For her refusal to be silenced, Jila has been fired from several jobs. She has also been imprisoned. In 2009 she was arrested for reporting on the peaceful uprisings following the elections in Iran. Her husband was also arrested.

After her release, Jila wrote a letter to her husband who was still in prison:

“Do you remember that you always used to remind me of the Asian motto, ‘Let us turn our sorrow into strength’? I promise you to turn all the sorrows that I face into strength. I hope you yourself have not forgotten the motto and will turn the pain and sorrows of prison into strength. I am sure you can.”



*Lubna Masarwa:*  
**Leadership skills for young Palestinian women is key**

Activism is a way of life for Lubna Masarwa. Her main focus is on youth. She wants them to have the benefits of education and opportunity.

A community organizer for Al Quds University, Lubna works on behalf of thousands of Palestinian children who have no schools in the Occupied West Bank. She also directs a “Girls for Leadership” program in Jerusalem, to help young Palestinian women develop skills and confidence to become involved

in their communities. On the board of directors of the Free Gaza Movement, she has sailed to Gaza three times in the effort to break the siege of Gaza.



*Zaynab El Sawi:*  
**Women together can achieve so many things**

As a woman in Sudan, Zaynab El Sawi knows too well the terrible toll that war has taken on women. That is why she became determined to make the voices of women heard. Her organization, Sudanese Women Empowerment for Peace (SuWEP), is the only group that includes women from both North and South Sudan.

Zaynab credits women with getting the peace process started. Now she is interested in post-conflict work to create a sustainable peace. Last November, Zaynab, in her capacity as coordinator of SuWEP, attended the peace conference in South Africa. She observed how women from the North and South have come to view each other as respected partners for peace. She felt emotionally moved by gestures of mutual respect.

“Women, if they come together, can do a lot. They can achieve so many things that men have failed to do.” Zaynab is hopeful for the future of her country.



## Plugged *in*: Media, Resources, Mentoring

Our organization's website is at the heart of our efforts to connect with our community. The tagline of our organization, *United for Peace with Justice and Equality*, is the central idea that both drives and describes the way the Laureates work together – and the way they engage with the world.

The website is a hub where we can keep in touch with supporters, fellow activists, policy-makers and the media to inform them of our activities and provide news about the issues that matter to us. It allows us to link people with concrete actions that they can take to make a difference in the world. It serves as an advocacy tool and a meeting place.

We made even greater use of the website this year to connect, to inform and to shape the conversation. We expanded our offerings to provide some information in two other languages: Spanish and Farsi.

We also began blogging in earnest in 2009, inspired by the success of our 2008 Delegation for Women's Rights blog. Through the year we created special blogs for our *Women Redefining Democracy* conference in Guatemala, our delegation to India to honour His Holiness the Dalai Lama and *16 Days of Activism*.

Over the year, staff and Laureates honed their social networking skills. We became more active and adept on social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Delicious. We wrote blog posts, tweets and Facebook updates.

Using these tools has helped our networks and our reach grow by leaps and bounds. It has also allowed us to have more and better ways to truly connect and interact with our community – people who care about the same things that we do.

Another central activity is our media outreach. Over the year we worked with traditional print and electronic media and provided them with news releases, helped them arrange interviews and directed them to people and resources that could provide them women's perspectives on a range of issues.

A crucial component of every program was our effort to do media outreach and to strengthen relationships with media outlets. We introduced ourselves to more reporters, news services and other media. We worked to develop productive relationships with media in new regions, especially the Middle East and Arab-speaking communities.

Thanks to these coordinated efforts at media relations and outreach, the Initiative received extensive coverage of key events and activities and we look forward to good coverage in the future.

A sampling of stories of note includes:

- **Le Monde** - Op Ed, *L'Iran Détient la clé de son proper réveil*, Shirin Ebadi, 17 January 2009. Younger generations, especially Iranian feminists, are determined to make progress towards personal liberty in Iran.
- **Boston Globe** – Op Ed, *Land mines and cluster bombs*, Jody Williams, 13 April 2009. Williams calls for US President Obama to show leadership by joining the landmines and the cluster bombs treaties.
- **El Universal** – Article, *Rigoberta Menchú Tum lamenta feminicidios en Guatemala*, 11 May 2009. One of numerous Spanish and English language stories about the Guatemala conference, *Redefining Democracy*.
- **Washington Post** – Editorial, *Iran's Human Rights Test*, Shirin Ebadi, 11 June 2009. Iranians deserve elections and a judicial system that honor due process.



- **New York Times** – Article, *Activists Held by Israel for Trying to Break Gaza Blockade*, 2 July 2009. Broad coverage when Mairead Maguire and other human rights activists were detained, June 29, while on the Free Gaza Movement mission to deliver humanitarian aid to Gaza. “Our mission is a gesture to the people of Gaza that we stand by them and that they are not alone,” she said.
- **Jeune Afrique** – Op Ed, *Laissez la CPI travailler!* Wangari Maathai, Wole Soyinka, Desmond Tutu, 7 June 2009. The three Nobel Laureates call on African leaders to allow the International Criminal Court to do its work in the indictment of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir.
- **La Jornada** – article, *Se suma premio Nobel a lucha por la liberación de presos de Atenco*, 9 September 2009. The article details Jody Williams’ trip to Mexico to call for the freedom of the 12 political prisoners of Atenco, Mexico.
- **Calgary Herald** – Op Ed, *Poorest pay highest price for global warming*, Wangari Maathai, 18 September 2009. Maathai calls on wealthy nations to help mitigate the impact of climate change on developing nations.
- **Vancouver Sun** – article, *Nobel laureates’ talk turns personal*, 28 September 2009. The article, written about the participation of Laureates Betty Williams, Mairead Maguire, and Jody Williams in the Dalai Lama Peace Summit in Vancouver, Canada, features a personal story told by Betty Williams about her early learnings of non-violence.
- **Tibet Sun** – article, *Nobel Peace Laureates to celebrate ‘Thank you Tibet,’* 28 October 2009. Article discussing the visit of Laureates Mairead Maguire, Shirin Ebadi, and Jody Williams to Dharamsala, India in support of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan people on the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the exile of the Dalai Lama.
- **LA Times** – Op Ed, *United States’ shameful landmines policy*, Jody Williams, 1 December 2009. Williams expresses her dismay at the United States’ refusal to join the Mine Ban Treaty.

## Human Resources: Small Staff, Big Results

Our organization has a small permanent staff, with headquarters in Ottawa. An even smaller office is based at the University of Houston.

The University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work (GCSW) has partnered with the Nobel Women's Initiative to create remarkable internship opportunities for students, especially young women, to learn how to make a difference in our complex, global world. This unique educational project offers aspiring social workers the experience of working with Nobel Laureates to address issues of women's rights, human rights, security and *justice*.

The staff is a strong team with broad skills and experience in women's rights and advocacy work. They have extensive international experience and are fluent in several languages. This skilled and dedicated group makes for a flexible and effective work force.

In an important move, last year the Initiative set up an office in Africa. In September we hired the first Africa Advocacy Coordinator, based in Nairobi. Her job is to

do media outreach and other activities in support of the work in Sudan and support Laureate Wangari Maathai.

### Internships: Mentoring a New Generation

We are dedicated to helping prepare the next generation of activists to join in advocacy for human and women's rights. One of the ways we do this is through our internship programme.

It's a relationship that benefits both the interns and our organization. Student interns get the chance to acquire practical experience, learning the ropes of effective advocacy. The Nobel Women's Initiative gets help from young, energetic activists who provide invaluable assistance keeping us informed about a new generation's concerns and values. In 2009, three students took part in the Ottawa programme. Three masters' level students worked as interns in Houston. An additional four students helped prepare for the Guatemala conference. These students earned academic credit for independent study projects.



“ We are dedicated to helping prepare the next generation of activists to join in advocacy for human and women’s rights. ”



## Financial Summary

Logan Katz LLP completed the 2009 Nobel Women's Initiative independent audit. The following excerpts are taken from their report. A complete copy of the audited financial statements is available from the office upon request.

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

#### Assets

##### CURRENT ASSETS

Cash	\$247,947	\$9,124
Amounts Receivable	9,148	3,790
Contributions Receivable	0	48,619
Prepaid Expenses & Deposits	<u>12,628</u>	<u>29,411</u>
	<b><u>\$269,723</u></b>	<b><u>\$90,944</u></b>

#### Liabilities & Net Assets

##### CURRENT LIABILITIES

Accounts Payable & Accrued Liabilities	\$44,687	\$65,698
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<b>DEFERRED CONTRIBUTIONS</b>	192,687	0
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<b>UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS BEGINNING</b>	25,246	38,333
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Excess of Revenues over Expenditures	7,103	-13,086
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<b>UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS ENDING</b>	<u>32,349</u>	<u>25,247</u>
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	<b><u>\$269,723</u></b>	<b><u>\$90,945</u></b>
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### STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

#### REVENUE

Donations	\$294,671	\$207,831
Grants	976,743	643,151
University of Houston	149,760	123,544
Interest & Other Income	<u>3,706</u>	<u>1,041</u>

	<b><u>\$1,424,880</u></b>	<b><u>\$975,567</u></b>
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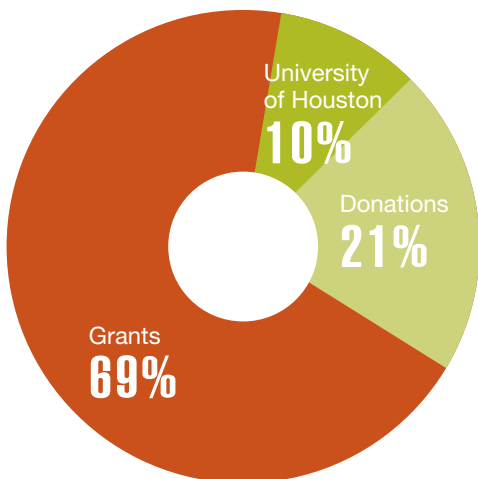
#### EXPENDITURES

Program Support	\$175,122	\$88,094
Communications	288,572	200,124
Program Development	442,797	150,093
Summits & Travel	511,286	550,342

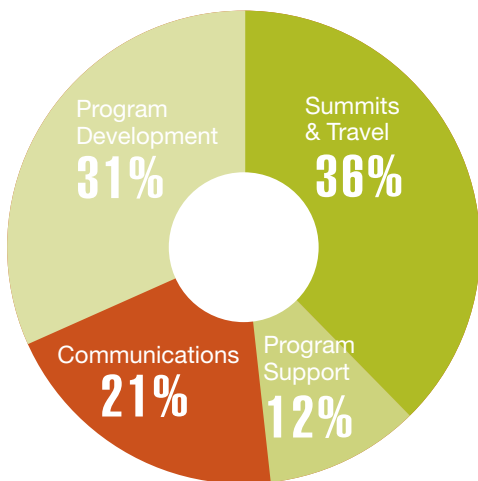
	<b><u>\$1,417,777</u></b>	<b><u>\$988,653</u></b>
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NET REVENUE (EXPENDITURES)	<b><u>\$7,103</u></b>	<b><u>-\$13,086</u></b>
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### 2009 REVENUES



### 2009 EXPENDITURES



## **BOARD MEMBERS**

Shirin Ebadi  
Mairead Maguire  
Wangari Maathai  
Rigoberta Menchú Tum  
Betty Williams  
Jody Williams, Chair

## **FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Joanna Kerr,  
Oxfam Canada  
Nancy Ingram,  
Mines Action Canada

## **WORKING GROUP**

Brené Brown  
University of Houston  
Graduate College of  
Social Work  
United States

Shahla Haeri  
Boston University,  
United States

Avon Mattison  
Pathways to Peace,  
United States

Nayereh Tohidi  
California State  
University Northridge,  
United States

Lisa Veneklasen  
Just Associates (JASS),  
United States

## **STAFF AND SUPPORT**

Liz Bernstein  
Executive Director  
Ottawa, Canada

Janhabi Nandy  
Manager, Policy  
and Advocacy  
Ottawa, Canada

Rachel Vincent  
Manager, Media  
and Communications  
Ottawa, Canada

Sonya Dias  
Manager, Events  
and Operations  
Houston, United States

Kimberley MacKenzie  
Program Associate,  
Advocacy and  
Communications  
Ottawa, Canada

Kelly Fish  
Africa Advocacy  
Co-ordinator  
Nairobi, Kenya

Ana Mac Naught  
Events Co-ordinator  
Houston, United States

Kathy Goodwin  
Graduate Assistant  
University of Houston,  
USA

Brianna Garrison  
Graduate Assistant  
University of Houston,  
USA

## **INTERNS – GRADUATE COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK, UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON**

Januari Leo  
Nadia Kalinchuk  
JuErin Allyson  
Sandra Ham

## **INTERNS – OTTAWA, CANADA**

Sarah-Jo Briand  
Sheiry Dhillon  
Shannon Sommerauer

The Nobel Women's Initiative would especially like to thank the dedicated individuals who enabled the organization to operate smoothly and creatively in 2009, including fundraiser and strategist Lynne Twist, accountant Roger Coady, designer Jeri McMaster, writer Martha Plaine, web site advisor Andrew Chisolm, network and server technologist Alastair Warwick, and web gurus Josh Bensimon and Taras Mankovski at Positive Sum.

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■ Visit our website at <http://nobelwomensinitiative.org/>

Nobel Women's Initiative is registered in Canada as a not-for-profit corporation.

*Advocates for peace, justice & equality*

