



Activity report for the year 2023 and  
activity plan for 2024

## Introduction

Established in 2012, Women in Action Worldwide WaW is a non-profit organization which goal is to promote the socio-economic and political empowerment of women. WaW's main project is the development of a collection of travel books *The World of Women*. Their objective is to discover the world through the eyes and experiences of the women who live there. Thanks to the support of several donors and of volunteers, the association has published the first volume of the collection "*The World of Women Tanzania*" in French and in English in 2015. In 2016, WaW published the volume "The World of Women Myanmar" (in English), and the book "Le Monde des Femmes Suisse" (in French) was published in March 2017.

### Travel Book Project: Discovering the world through the eyes and experiences of women

Why a collection that focuses on women? Travel literature generally ignores the reality of women. This collection, which goes off the beaten track, is intended to be an essential complement to the usual guides and helps to broaden readers' vision to other realities. The collection also highlights the role that women play within their community and provide insights into their professional and social realities. The works offer a list of addresses to discover the world of women in each country. This concept has met with a very favorable response from a wide audience in Switzerland and abroad.

### Summary of activities from 2012 to 2020

2012 : After defining the concept of the collection, WaW raised enough funds to launch its first *Travelogue – The World of women Tanzania*.

2013 , Elisabeth Thorens (ET) and Carin Salerno (CS), co-directors of the travel book collection and authors of the *Travelogue - Tanzania*, went to Tanzania to collect all the material to write and illustrate the book.

2014 was devoted to writing and producing the travelogue, ongoing fundraising, layout of the book, organizing the book launch in Dar es Salaam, and redesigning the website.

2015, WaW co-published the Tanzania volume with En Bas editions. It was launched in Dar es Salaam in April 2015 and at the Geneva book fair in May 2015. Elisabeth and Carin were interviewed in Paris by TV5 Monde on the Journal Afrique. By early 2015, the concepts for the Myanmar and Switzerland books had been defined and production had started.

2016 , Myanmar book launch took place in November 2016 in Yangon in the presence of most of the women of the book and a large audience. Switzerland Book: production work was completed at the end of 2016.

2017 , the work "*The World of Women Switzerland* » (in French) was successfully launched on March 8, 2017, and several openings took place to promote it. The three books were presented at the Geneva Book Fair. The distribution of the Swiss book is handled by Heiddifusion. The Tanzania and Myanmar books continue to be promoted and sold.

2018 : the three books continued to be sold and distributed free of charge with the aim of promoting their reading among a large number of readers.

2019 : WaW's activities have been put on hold, except for the distribution and normal sale of books. The members of the Committee have been changed following the departure of two co-founders of the Association: Elisabeth Thorens and Antoinette Schwitzguébel.

2020: In the absence of new country related projects and the difficulties related to COVID, the idea to document the role and approaches of women to face climate change in Switzerland was discussed. However, this was not implemented. Brigitte Kaempfer replaced Helen Ita as treasurer. Due to the workload of all members of WaW (in their regular jobs), the activities were put on hold.

During the years 2021 and 2022, WaW was dormant with no activity. Expenses have been kept to a minimum: the website, the domain name and the mail hosting, all with Infomaniak, as well as the bank charges.

### Activities in 2023

The "World of Women" Collection is back: the design of a new volume in the collection started: "The World of Women Rural Tuscany."

After publishing three books on three countries on three different continents, the idea of producing a book giving voice to women in a region of Italy resurfaced, an idea that had been discussed several years ago. Tuscany is a region that attracts many tourists, both international and Italian, for its extraordinary cultural heritage, but also and above all for its magnificent landscapes, a countryside and coastline that have been preserved over centuries. We therefore chose to highlight this rural aspect and to tell the story of the role of women in the development and preservation of these landscapes, in the fields of agriculture in the broad sense, and their socio-economic, political and cultural activities within small urban communities in a rural context.

Carin Salerno thus began the production work of the book "Il mondo delle donne Toscana rurale" in September 2023, taking advantage of her new place of residence in Tuscany to develop a book concept and test it in a sub-region: Volterra Val di Cecina.

Between September and December, the activities were as follows:

- Online documentation
- Making numerous contacts to start activities and test the concept
- Met and interviewed the only 4 women alabaster artisans in Volterra, their stories were written and validated by them, their photos taken
- Three other women interviewed and their stories written: a wine producer and her mother chef, an archaeologist, two coup de coeur (the beer production of 4 women thanks to geothermal energy, the marketing of organic local products with a female entrepreneur).
- Search for contacts to find an editorial partnership and funds

### Finances and expenses

#### Expenses

- a) Institutional: hosting of the WaW site, the domain name and email messaging at Infomaniak, bank charges.

- b) Production of the book “The World of women rural Tuscany”:travel and transcription costs (to be validated by the committee).

### **The committee**

The Committee members are divided into the following functions: Carin Salerno, President, Andréane Leclercq, Secretary, Brigitte Kaempfer, Treasurer. Helen Ita remains an ordinary member of WaW. The WaW statutes were revised, adapted and approved at the Extraordinary General Meeting in 2020, to reflect the changes in the committee members and the evolution of the projects.

### **Thanks**

We thank all those who continue to provide their voluntary and generous support, their time, their know-how and their enthusiasm in the service of WaW activities..

- Brigitte Kaempfer, who keeps the accounts and offers free advice on financial regulations.
- Helen Ita for hosting the WaW headquarters and monitoring the administrative affairs of the association.
- Andréane Leclercq and Carin Salerno for their voluntary contributions to WaW activities.

### **Conclusion and outlook for 2024**

After launching three books in 3 years (2015 Tanzania, 2016 Myanmar, 2017 Switzerland), WaW is proud of its results. The books are both sold and distributed free of charge to a large number of readers, so that they are invited to discover the world of women, and understand the realities of women from a new perspective.

The remaining books (Myanmar and Tanzania) are used to show women what the Tuscany book might look like, and distributed without financial compensation to potential partners.

After many years of being put on hold, WaW's activities are resuming, with the emergence of the editorial project "The World of Women Rural Tuscany", and other possible future book projects in Sicily, Albania.

St Prex, February 2024

Carin Salerno, President of Women in Action Worldwide

## 2024 Business Plan

### Editorial project of the World of Women Rural Tuscany

A few years ago, the possibility of a book on Tuscany had already been mentioned. The choice of rural Tuscany responds to several objectives: to prioritize its content, to highlight rural tourism, and to celebrate the role of women in the rural context, in the preservation of Tuscan landscapes, unique heritage of cultural and economic importance and sources of Tuscany's own identity. Women actively contribute to the sustainable and environmental development of this magnificent region. It is in this context that a concept was developed and the launch of the editorial project tested with a number of interviews and women's stories, but also discussed with interlocutors in the field of tourism, agriculture, local economy, art and culture. The feedback is positive.

**The editorial project:** The possibility of a book publication and an online application is to be considered. The tourism players in Tuscany at the provincial and regional level all have very attractive websites that present interesting tours and thematic reports. The possibility of inserting the world of women in rural Tuscany online is an option to be considered. The original version is in Italian. Translations into English, German and possibly French have been included in the budget. A partnership with a publishing house that already publishes in several languages is to be considered.

### Activities planned for 2024 "The World of Women Rural Tuscany"

- a) The search for an editorial partnership, a publishing house, with which to co-publish (like the book Tanzania with Éditions d'En Bas) the volume on rural Tuscany. This publishing house should ensure the tasks of editing (in Italian), layout (based on the existing graphic map of the collection), printing and distribution. Communication responsibilities may be joint. The editorial direction of the contents, the writing of the texts, the photographic support remain the responsibility of WaW.
- b) Development of a prototype (contents and layout) of a chapter (Volterra Val di Cecina) with the following contents:

#### Stories

- The 4 women artisans of alabaster (the four-leaf clover of alabaster): Silvia, Gloria, Grazia, Ilaria
- Elena, archaeologist, director of the excavations of the amphitheater of Volterra. Lighting: the Etruscan woman
- Ivana and Claudia: mother chef, and daughter wine producer
- The Inghirami sisters: noble women with their hands in the soil
- Stefania: a passion for medicinal herbs

### Coups de coeur

- “L’emporio del gusto”: the grocery store run by Susanna selling organic products from small local agricultural businesses
  - Beer: 4 women at the head of artisanal beer production using geothermal energy.
- c) With this prototype, proceed with the search for a publishing house and financing for the project.
- d) Continuing the search for women whose stories will be part of the book: interviews, writing their stories, photographs.
- e) Decide on the structure of the book: by theme or by geographical sub-region

### Planned activities for the institutional development of WaW

- a) Updating the website and activation/use
- b) Recruitment of new members for the board of directors, to have at least 5 members.

Done in Riparbella  
March 2024  
Carin Salerno