



AWCCS Newsletter

American Women's Club of Central Scotland



Hi!

Welcome to our bi monthly electronic newsletter. **You will receive it through your email as a pdf file you may wish to save it and the calendar on your desktop to view.** *There are now some live links to information, other websites, and to club forms and payments.* If you would like to submit an article or info for our newsletter, please send it to newsletter@awccs.org by the 20th of the preceding month..

Thank you! - Susannah Stout, Newsletter Editor

Table of Contents

Board Officers and Special Interest Group Coordinators	2
Letter from the President	3
September Family Fun Day, trip to Abbotsford House	4
October Event - trip to Glamis Castle	6
American Citizens Abroad - Voting Info	7
Message from Eve and Josy	8
Autumn Walks	9
FAWCO news	10
Annual Membership Renewal	11
Edinburgh Morning Book Group September and October	13
Birthday Bash, Birthdays, September and October	14
Coffee Plus	15
Upcoming Events in November	16
When The Path to A Good Education Is Too Rugged; It Needs to Be Paved	17
Fausa	21
Calendar, separate pdf email attachment	
Advertisements (throughout publication)	

Submissions are welcome and should be sent to newsletter@awccs.org by the 20th of October. Please accompany submissions with images if you have any! Contact the Editor by phone or email for details. Late submissions may not be included. Although material may be edited for clarity or space, contributions should be submitted ready for print. Next issue shall be published for November/December 2016. AWCCS reserves the right to refuse any ad and cannot be held responsible for loss or damages incurred as a result of transactions stemming from any advert.

Newsletter Editor Susannah Stout

AWCCS BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2015-16

Honary President	Suzi Wilson	Principal Officer US Consulate General Edinburgh
President	Nancy Lynner	president@awccs.org
Vice President	Open	vicepres@awccs.org rsvp@awccs.org
Secretary	Kathy McGlew	secretary@awccs.org
Treasurer	Amanda Kirkpatrick	treasurer2015@awccs.org
Prospective Membership	Ann Bartlett Stewart	getinfo@awccs.org
Current Membership	Tess McNatt	membership@awccs.org
Advertising/PR	open	advertising@awccs.org
Newsletter Editor	Susannah Stout	newsletter@awccs.org
Website Manager	Joyce Halsan	websitemanager@awccs.org
FAWCO Representative	Amanda Drollinger	fawcorep@awccs.org
Glasgow Rep	Susan St.Denis	glasrep@awccs.org
Social Chair	Open	social@awccs.org
Charity Chairperson		charity2015@awccs.org

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP COORDINATORS

Edinburgh

Morning Book Group	Dale Finlayson	ebookam@awccs.org
Coffee Plus Edinburgh	Dale Finlayson	ebookam@awccs.org
Voting Coordinator	Dale Finlayson	vote@awccs.org

Glasgow

Books Beverages and Banter	Susan St.Denis	gbook@awccs.org
-----------------------------------	----------------	-----------------

Fife

Fife Dinner Club	Pat Peters	fifedinner@awccs.org
-------------------------	------------	----------------------

*Remember to check the website for the latest updates: www.awccs.org
You will need to register in order to log in to the Members Only Section.*

*If you've got a favourite activity and would like others to join, please let
Nancy Lynner know at president@awccs.org and we will start
a Special Interest Group for you.*

2016 September - October President's Letter

Hello, Members!

Summer wanes, and let's get together! Look for articles within this issue for details on all events:

September 11th - a group family train & bus trip to Tweedbank and ABBOTSFORD

Birthday Bash September 22nd at the Callie's "Peacock Lounge"

Coffee Plus! This is always on a Wednesday morning near the end of the month—a great time for a new member to meet others.

October 1st - group bus trip to GLAMIS CASTLE - Bus seats 30 so bring friends and family

October 13th - Birthday bash at the Sheraton Hotel's "One Square Bar"

October 16th - Alvin Ailey Dance concert at Festival Theatre

November 5th - Harry Benson photography exhibit at Scottish Parliament

November 27th - THANKSGIVING! Our flagship annual event

GLASGOW Books and Banter—Every month, meet for drinks, food, and catch-up chat! Not firm, but in the planning are:

November : Another US TAX seminar

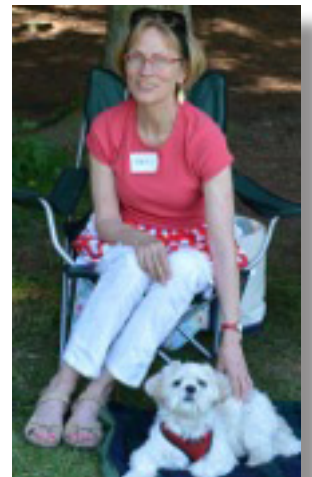
December—I am tentatively booking a group of seats for Scottish Ballet's HANSEL AND GRETEL on Friday 16th December, 7:30—There are no discounts on any weekend performances. Stay tuned for more details on this—we have not had a group attend the ballet in years. It looks enchanting. Welcome, new members, and good bye to a few who have moved to other parts of the UK, or back to the US. Please introduce yourselves to us.

It's time to pay annual dues—we have the lowest dues in the Britain's American Women's Clubs—so check out the article within the newsletter about Membership dues.

All the work of this vibrant, social enterprise called the American Women's Club of Central Scotland is done by the members, and especially the board. You can be on the board if you wish. Please don't be shy—come to an event. Maybe you can help us plan an event that fits well into your own life style—that is how the Birthday Bash came about—a member wanted to meet for drinks.

Cheers to you,
and I'll see you at an event soon!

Nancy Lynner,
President AWCCS



AWCCS Event: Family Fun Day - Sunday, Sept. 11



Grab your bunnet and sense of adventure and join us for a journey to visit **the former home of one of Scotland's greatest** novelist, playwright and poet and whose towering memorial you see on the eastern end of Princes:

Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832), the Gothic Abbotsford House

We will all meet at Edinburgh Waverley Station on Sunday, Sept. 11 @ 8:50 a.m

WHEN: Sunday, Sept 11

WHERE: EDINBURGH WAVERLEY Station, **gather in front of WH Smith**

Book train to TWEEDBANK (57 minute journey)

Train Departure from Edinburgh: **9:11 a.m. arrive Tweedbank 10:08 a.m.**

Train Return from Tweedbank: **3:45 pm arrive Edinburgh 4:40 p.m.**

There are **excellent family fares** which include two children for every adult ticket purchase of £11.20.

Call ScotRail for best fares for your family - 0344 811 0141

Bus transfers to/ from Abbotsford House from Tweedbank station are:

£5.00 for adults and £3.00 for children

Tickets for Abbotsford House can be booked online or on the day on location. Ticket options include home and gardens or the gardens only.

<http://www.scottsabbotsford.co.uk/>

Pack a picnic lunch to eat on the grounds ..the Scottish weather!) or enjoy some local eats.

Book your ticket as soon as possible to get best possible seats and fares on SCOTRAIL <http://www.scotrail.co.uk/>

Hope to see you there!

organized by Annie Stewart, Membership Chairperson



Californian Chef Patron & AWCCS Member,
Annette Sprague, invites you to come in out of the
gray for a wee bit of California sunshine at Redwood
Bistro, a family friendly restaurant in Corstorphine.

Open for coffee & cakes, lunch & dinner.



For more details visit:

www.redwoodbistro.com / info@redwoodbistro.com

0131.281.2576

[1 Meadow Place Rd, Drumbrae Roundabout, EH12 7TZ](#)

A Day at Glamis Castle

We have a great Day Out planned for the AWCCS club in October and we need to get our reservations in soon in order to get the good "group" prices.

Date: 1st Oct 2016

Time: We will be meeting outside the Haggis and Highland Explorer Tours office, which is at the corner of Blackfriar Street and the Royal Mile at 9:00 AM. We will return no later than 5:00 PM. This will give us a few hours to tour the childhood home of the queen mother, walk through the garden, have lunch, and maybe pick up a gift or two at the lovely gift shop.

Transportation: £15 per person by hired coach

Admission into the Castle:

Adults: £9.00 per person

Children: £6.50 per person

Lunch: soup and sandwich with tea/ coffee £11 per person



Pay by Credit Card at PayPal:

Transportation and Admission: Adult £24.00	Transport and Admission Adult £24.00 GBP ▼ Buy Now
Transportation and Admission: Child £21.50	Buy Now
Transportation Only £15.00	Buy Now
*Lunch £11.00	Buy Now

RSVP:

1. If you choose to use PayPal, your reservation will be confirmed automatically and you need to do nothing else.
2. If you don't wish to pay by credit card using PayPal, then [please fill out this form](#) and send it along with your payment by cheque to our Treasurer: Make payable to AWCCS. (If you wish to use cash, please get in touch with one of the Board Members and arrange to get the cash along with this form to her.) Your reservation will be made upon receipt of payment.

Questions?: [email Tara Scott](#)

*We need 30 rsvp for lunch in order to sit together.

American Citizens Abroad - submitted by Dale Finlayson

Have you registered to vote?

U.S. citizens living overseas have the right to vote in all U.S. federal elections, but you must re-register for every election. Some, but not all, Voting Registration Officers will contact you if you were registered for the last election – but don't count on it. With the November presidential election fast approaching, make sure you're registered to vote. There are several good sites to choose from, where you can fill out the Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) to register to vote. The government's Federal Voting Assistance Program's site, www.fvap.gov, has an excellent FAQ section: <https://www.fvap.gov/vao/vag/appendix/faq>.

Alternatively, you can request an absentee ballot from the Overseas Vote Foundation (www.overseasvotefoundation.org) and at the same time create a persistent personal profile that will facilitate voting in future years.

Another good site has been created by Democrats Abroad: www.votefromabroad.org.

If your state voting laws require proof of citizenship or photo ID, a copy of the passport placed in the mailing envelope (but separate from the security envelope containing your ballot) is the most commonly adopted solution for overseas voters. Overseas voters who vote by absentee ballot under the federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizen Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA) are exempt from ALL voter ID requirements, save the passport copy.

The Overseas Vote Foundation's online voter registration tool allows you to complete the FPCA in just 10 minutes. You can type directly on the FPCA, but you must then print the completed form, sign and mail it to the County Clerk. The OVF tool is non-partisan and your data will not be saved. As you fill it in, make sure you look at the overseas voting rules for your state, which are available on the site. If you have requested an absentee ballot but don't receive it time to send it in by November 8, 2016, there is a fallback method for obtaining your ballot: the "Federal write-in absentee ballot" (FWAB). This document enables voting and, in some states, voter registration as well. Visit www.overseasvotefoundation.org/vote/FwabStart.htm to start this process.

Democrats Abroad Scotland are looking for volunteers: If you would like to help them get out the vote of the many thousands of U.S. citizens resident in Scotland in the run-up to the November election, to provide the information needed to register for and submit absentee ballots, or to help their teams plan and organize events, please contact either Penny Ciancanelli (pciascuno@gmail.com) or Beth Monahan (bethlmonahan@gmail.com).

To the ladies of AWCCS,

We would like to say Thank You for welcoming us into the group.

For over 15 years we've taken part in 4th July, Thanksgiving, Birthday Bash and other events. It's wonderful being included and involved.

We've seen the group grow and change, but one thing always stays the same. Unity and care.

Members come and go, and though we leave, we're proud to call Scotland our home and AWCCS our family.

- Eve Perelman and Josy Perelman



LUPE PINTO'S

CHILE AND SPICE SHOP

GLASGOW
313 GREAT WESTERN ROAD
T: 0141 334 5444



OPEN
MON, TUES, WED, SAT 10-6PM
THURS, FRI 10-7PM
SUN 12.30 - 5.30PM

WWW.LUPEPINTOS.COM

EDINBURGH
24 LEVEN STREET
0131 228 6241

AUTUMN WALKS

by Annie Stewart

Many of our members have expressed an interest organized walks!

Does anyone want to organize a walk for Sept or October before the dark days of winter descend upon us?

Some suggestions:

- 1. Walk a portion of the Fife Coastal Path**
- 2. Train to Dunfermline, walk the birthplace of Andrew Carnegie; picnic in Pittencrief Park - created by land donated by Andrew Carnegie; visit Dunfermline Abbey or The Birthplace Museum of Andrew Carnegie, industrialist who left an incredible legacy in both the UK and USA.**
- 3. Cramond Island and enjoy a cuppa at the new Boardwalk Beach Cafe overlooking the beautiful harbour**

I am sure there is someone out there that would love to organize a lovely group walk!

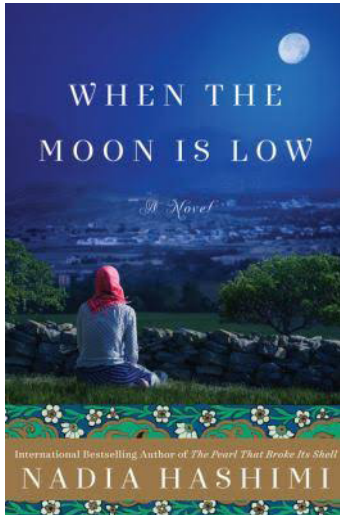
Recommended by FAWCO

When the Moon is Low,
by Nadia Hashimi



FAWCO

Inspiring Women Worldwide



Every day we see news about the refugee crisis. With this in mind, FAWCO would like to recommend this very moving novel by Nadia Hashimi called ***When the Moon is Low***, about a family from Afghanistan forced to make agonizing decisions in order to escape the violence in their country.

Why don't we all read this book, so that whenever we gather this autumn/winter, we can chat about it, as well as catch up on each other's families?



Delivering your favourite American and Canadian groceries to your door

**Over 500 famous brand named products
available from stock at competitive prices**

For further information and orders
please visit:

www.skyco.uk.com

Or

Tel: 01483 776444

e-mail: info@skyco.uk.com



Unit F10/F11 The Mayford Centre Woking
Surrey GU22 0PP

ANNUAL AWCCS MEMBERSHIP DUES 2016-17

It's been another fun-filled year of fun and friendship - and it's time to renew your annual AWCCS membership!

Please submit your **dues and updated membership form**
to **membership@awccs.org**

Deadline: Oct. 31, 2016

Ways to Pay: Paypal button on our website (quick and painless!)

OR

mail your cheque to:

Mailboxes Etc

Box 231

44-46 Morningside Rd, Edinburgh EH10 4BF

Spread the word!

If you hear an American accent in your travels in Scotland, give them the link to our website.

Some members just want to celebrate Thanksgiving and Fourth of July with other Americans, or develop friendships with fellow Americans living overseas, perhaps network for jobs, or get questions answered about taxation, voting or immigration issues, get involved in a new club to meet friends!

The reasons people join our lovely club are numerous - and who knows, you may find yourself a fabulous new friend by reaching out to others!

The bottom line is - we are here to share our experiences and help others enjoy and explore their new home! Our dues are the lowest of any American Expat club in the UK.

Thank you for your continued support of the AWCCS!



MAIL BOXES ETC.®

SHIPPING TO THE USA

FedEx overnight* documents to U.S.A - £38

Weight (Kg)	UPS	Parcelforce
10 (22 lbs)	£120 (£12/kg)	£85
20 (44 lbs)	£147 (7.35/kg)	£110
30 (66 lbs)	£175 (£5.83/kg)	£140
50 (110 lbs)	£227.36 (£4.54/kg)	£234
100 (220 lbs)	£355 (3.55/kg)	£404

* overnight in most cases.
Parts of New York and New Jersey may be cheaper than the UPS price quoted.
Prices correct at time of print.



44-46 Morningside Road, Morningside, EH10 4BF
tel: 0131 446 9777 info@mbeMorningside.co.uk

12 South Bridge, Edinburgh, EH1 1DD
tel: 0131 652 3672 info@mbeSouthBridge.co.uk

196 Rose Street, West End, EH2 4AD
tel: 0131 220 1999 info@mbeEdinburghWestEnd.co.uk



www.MbeEdinburgh.com

Edinburgh Morning Book Group



The morning book group meets monthly, in members' homes, always on a Friday, usually (but not always) the third one in the month. Our meetings start at 10:15 and finish around noon. At the moment we are not accepting new members as some of our homes will not accommodate more, but the books we have chosen are listed for recommendation to other readers.

Friday, 16 September

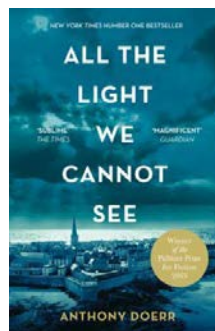
Home of Susan Elliott

0131-552-5832

susan1929@btinternet.com

All the Light We Cannot See

by Anthony Doerr



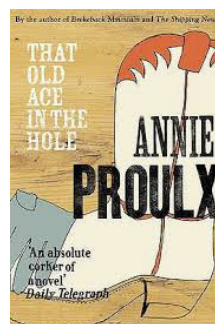
Friday, 21 October

Home of Joanne MacNiven

0131-337-6812

That Old Ace in the Hole,

by Annie Proulx



Birthday Bash for SEPTEMBER 2016

WHEN: Thursday 22nd SEPTEMBER
WHERE: PEACOCK LOUNGE, at Waldorf Astoria Caledonian Hotel
TIME: 6:00 – 8:00
RSVP President@awccs.org

Birthday Bash for OCTOBER 2016

WHEN: Thursday 13th October
WHERE: Sheraton Hotel "One Square Bar" within the Sheraton.
There is parking at the hotel—it's about 4.00 per hour
TIME: 6:00 – 8:00
RSVP President@awccs.org

Birthdays:

September

Josy Perelman	13th
Tracey Rosenberg	15th
Donna Brannigan	18th
Kimberly Kochanny	20th
Janice Simpson	25th
Olivia McClaren	25th
Anna Tapay	27th



October

Kathy Krotzer	8th
Cindy Cook	15th
Katharyn Cross	20th
Tahitia McCabe	27th
Caroline Deutermann	29th
Neeraja Rasmussen	29th

Have a fantastic Birthday, gals!

AWCCS Coffee Plus
28 September, 10 am Scottish National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh

Coffee Plus is an opportunity for members to chat over morning coffee in a central location, followed by a visit to an exhibit in a museum or gallery. It is usually arranged for the last Wednesday of the month, meeting at 10am and finishing (following the exhibition visit) around 12:30. All are welcome – including friends and family members. While booking in advance is not necessary, it is helpful to know if you are coming.

On 28 September we will meet at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery in Queen Street at 10am (opening time) and repair to the café. Several interesting exhibits are on currently, but I suggest we view the Taylor Wessing Photographic Portrait Prize, the leading competition to celebrate and promote the very best in contemporary portrait photography from around the world.

Scottish
National
PORTRAIT
Gallery



15 TAYLOR WESSING
PHOTOGRAPHIC
PORTRAIT
PRIZE

The selected images explore both traditional and contemporary approaches to the photographic portrait whilst capturing a range of characters, moods and locations. Alongside informal images of friends and family, this year's exhibition also features revealing portraits of famous faces, including actor Benedict Cumberbatch and President Barack Obama with First Lady Michelle Obama.

Also included as part of the new In Focus display within the exhibition is recent work by the award-winning South African photographer Pieter Hugo. The In Focus feature is an annual showcase for new work by an internationally renowned photographer, which is exhibited alongside the photographs selected for the competition.

[The October gathering will be on the 26th](#) – details of the location and exhibit chosen will be sent out in the monthly email, or check the AWCCS website.

Dale Finlayson

dale.fnlayson@which.net

0131-667-9369 (leave a message)

07962-010-944 (mobile)

UPCOMING NOVEMBER EVENTS - Mark your diaries!

Saturday, November 5th, 11 a.m.

**Harry Benson: Fifty Years of American History at
the Scottish Parliament, FREE ENTRY**



Tax Seminar by Clear Taxation - date to be determined

Sunday, November 27th

AWCCS Thanksgiving - , Waldorf Astoria

the NOMADS tent  a warehouse of tribal art

**RUGS, FURNITURE, TEXTILES,
JEWELLERY, ARTEFACTS**

21 st leonard's lane, edinburgh, eh8 9sh,
0131 662 1612 www.nomadstent.co.uk
info@nomadstent.co.uk mon- sat 10-5 sun 12-4

Article written by our AWCCS member, Tara Scott, who is on the FAWCO Education Committee and has travelled to South Korea for a UN Conference on Education representing FAWCO and AWCCS.

When The Path to A Good Education Is Too Rugged; It Needs to Be Paved.

INTRO

We hear about the education gap and frequently think of how difficult it is for some to attain a tertiary education. However, the education gap begins sometimes as soon as a child is born. We are not living in an equitable world where everyone has the same opportunities. For many in the world, as Langston Hughes would describe it in his poem 'Mother to Son', life is not a crystal stair, but one with splinters, tacks and dark corners. But a helping hand can be extended to those in circumstances where a good education is more difficult to attain.

Educational inequity exists in some form all over the world. It is more noticeable in developing countries where the barriers are many, but the education opportunities are not always of the same standard in developed nations as well. Education strengthens a nation's human capital. The stronger a nation's human capital the more stable the country will be.

Education needs to be seen as a package in which formal schooling is only a part of, the home learning environment is another powerful component to it. It needs to be addressed as well when discussing ways to improve a child's chance to an education. Then there is the attitude of one size fits all that needs to be adjusted, so the needs of various groups of people can be met in their aspiration to develop their mind and open up more opportunities for themselves.

Niger

Early Years: Birth through Pre-School

Having it difficult from the start is something children in many African nations are all too familiar with these days. Just having basic needs met such as food is a challenge that must be faced so education can even be a possibility. Then ways to improve the scholastic nurturing children receive within their home environments need to be addressed. Finally, the quality of the education the child does receive at a school needs to be monitored.

Preschool

Numerous children born into impoverished conditions are frequently malnourished, and facing this at such a young age has negative effects upon language development, memory and motor skills. (Watkins 2013) According to a 2010 report by the Guttmacher Institute for the World Food Program, Niger, having suffered from the onslaught of severe draught, was in great need of emergency food aid, which was to provide some relief for five million people, most of them infants. The report stated that in Niger that year, 49% of the children were suffering from chronic malnutrition while 10% of the children were suffering from acute malnutrition.

In the Analysis for Universal Education, which Kevin Watkins research contributed to, it was stated that parental illiteracy is another obstacle to a child's preschool learning. "The vast majority of the 48 million children Africa's schools over the past decade come from illiterate homes environments. Lacking the early reading, language and numeracy skills that can provide a platform for learning, they struggle to make the transition to school and their parents struggle to provide support with learning." (Watkins 2013)

Primary / Secondary School

As children enter primary school and secondary school in Africa, they become faced with additional challenges. Low attendance definitely impedes an education as Africa has the world's lowest secondary enrolment rate, but the quality of the education being given at the school is a major issue as well. Having to drop out of school to help around the house is another, especially for girls. Then there are those who live in an area of conflict, and the need to just survive must take precedence over an education.

An Oxfam report from 2002, stated that at that 1.3 million Nigerien children out of a population of 11 million did not go to school. Only 24% of the children in Niger at this time, completed primary school. However, many of those who did attend school were not receiving a quality education. One of the issues was the facility where they were taught. Some of the schools were built out of straw, so they did not last long as they were too susceptible to the ravages of rain and fire. Classrooms had a tendency to be overcrowded with some having 50 plus students of mixed ages in one room. The supply of materials and books at the core of any educational program were meagre, and the teachers were not provided with the training they needed to become strong teachers. The curriculum did not reflect the needs of the community's culture as some of the schools in Niger had been using a formal French curriculum. The situation was and continues to be worse in rural areas, because children have longer distances to get to school, and it can be difficult to get teachers to relocate to rural areas.

Some children have to drop out of school to help their families. It may be in the form of basic low wage jobs such as selling vegetable for 45 cents a day. Sometimes, with girls especially, there is the expectation for them to help with cleaning around the home, pounding millet, cooking, fetching water, and caring for younger siblings. One girl who was interviewed, said she wished she could go to school but she was needed at home to pound the millet while one of her brothers was at school. She said her life would be easier if her village only had a mill, because then she could probably go to school. To make matters worse for girls, some of them are not able to complete primary school due to marriage, because Niger has not ratified the Maputo Protocol which outlaws early marriages. Niger has the highest rate of child marriage in the world. (BBC News 2016) One girl in Niger who had always dreamt of being a doctor, was told she was to marry her cousin when she was twelve. At the age of sixteen the wedding was becoming eminent. She told her mother she wanted to study and not marry, while her mother understood she could do nothing being a woman. The girl told her principal, who referred her to an NGO, the Centre for Judicial Assistance and Civic Action, which supported her in court. She gained her freedom, and hopes that other girls will be brave and try to follow suit. The educational support for girls in Niger needs vast improvement. In a report by the Guttmacher Institute, the percentage of women receiving a good education in 2007 was appalling. The percentage of women who had some primary school education was 15% and the percentage for those who had completed their schooling was 1%.

While Niger has not been in conflict since its return to democracy in 1999, children of other nations within Africa do have their educational aspirations diminished due to political unrest. Somalia and the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo are living in a war zone.

Over five million people have been killed in the war in the Democratic Republic of Congo, schools went into ruin, people died of starvation and diseases, and some children were forcibly recruited as soldiers. (BBC 2013)

[Assistance for Nigerien Schools](#)

The new millennium brought about new hope, good intentions and proposed changes for education around the world. The Nigerien government has been open and even supportive of these implementations, but several barriers such as high population rate, low enrolment rates, high dropout rates, reaching children in rural settings and droughts have caused progress to be weighted down. Some of the campaigns involved in charting a new direction for education in Niger include: The Global Partnership for Education, The United Nations' Millennium Development of Universal Primary Education by 2015 and USAID's Niger Education and Community Strengthening, Education First

[The Global Partnership for Education \(GPE\)](#)

The World Bank Implementation Completion Report of January 2013 stated that over \$100,000,000 was allocated for educational improvements which are outlined in the Global Partnership for Education's Education and Sector Plan. The priorities for Niger's education system are being focused upon within four phases. The current phase has allocated funds to alleviate issues related to educational access, high cost of school attendance, girls' education and the quality of education being given. During this phase the enrolment rate has been improved from 62% to 70%, the completion rate from 46% to 50%, the construction of 294 classrooms, the distribution of over 400,000 textbooks, and the training of 3,000 plus teachers. (globalpartnership.org)

[Updated Global Goals at the United Nations](#)

At the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, 17 goals were set for the global development agenda for 2016-2030. The fourth goal is on education and making it more accessible and equitable so the door to greater opportunities will be opened for more people.

The Millennium Development Goal of Universal Primary Education

The Millennium Development Goal of Universal Primary Education by 2015 did improve primary enrolment by a large margin, however, its goals have not been fully realized yet as the literacy rate for students with at least six years of school is still low for many students and girls are still dropping out of school.

United States Agency for International Development (USAID)– Niger Education and Community Strengthening Project

The United States Agency for International Development Project's Niger Education and Community Strengthening Project (NECS) is working with Niger's Ministry of Education. Its aim is to get communities actively involved in improving education, and to do this, communities needed to be informed and empowered. The project wanted to create a culture of reading within Nigerien's communities. The project has shown success in implementing literacy training in communities as over 2,200 previously illiterate community members can now read. Having adults within a community able to read means that there will be more support and modelling of reading for the children. This project has also had success making the members of communities more aware of the benefits of education, because the school attendance rate had increased from 62 % to 93% in project areas. This project provided gender equity training for teachers and parents which helped to pave the way to the institutionalisation of gender sensitive best practices within schools being supported by the NECS in 2014. Educating adults about gender equity should lead to more rights and opportunities for girls. (Reliefweb 2015)

Oxfam's £300,000, 3 Year Project on Improving Education

Oxfam is involving community members in its three-year plan to bring improvement to education in Niger on a £300,000 budget. It is working with animatrices (female community facilitators) to go to the homes of children and speak to their parents about the importance of enrolling their children in school. Oxfam is funding the training needed to teach community members to lobby for better education for children. Community members are being reached through gatherings such as weddings and by the radio. Oxfam's three-year plan will include building model classrooms in different schools in the Tillabery area. These classrooms will be empowered through the necessary training to teach children well. Materials such as textbooks will be supplied. Toilets will be built in the schools and hygiene kits will be provided. Adult literacy centres are also to be established with the necessary learning materials for 450 people. (Oxfam 2002)

How Educational Reform Can Turn Niger Around

When the knowledge base of a population is strengthened society as a whole can function better. Education can help minimize the many challenges Nigeriens face on a daily basis. The Guttmacher Institute report describes how farming land is being poorly managed, but through education farmers can learn how to prevent overgrazing and topsoil erosion. Farmers with even just four years of primary education have the capability to raise crops that have a 7% increase in productivity. (Oxfam Briefing Paper)

Education can help the Nigerien people to be more cognizant of the implications a very high fertility rate has on its infrastructures. As of 2011, it was estimated that the population of Niger was 15.9 million with a fertility rate of 7.4 births per woman. As of 2009, only 11% of women (15-49) were practicing contraception, and out of this percentage only half of these women were using a modern form of contraception such as the pill. This high fertility rate makes it more difficult to provide everyone with: an education, food, and medical attention. (Potts, 2011)

The Guttmacher report mentioned that the German Credit Bank wanted to provide funds to help keep girls in school, but even with their funding it would be difficult to manage enrolment due to the rapid population growth.

Medical facilities are having a hard time keeping up with the population growth as well. Malcolm Potts, who wrote the report on Sexual and Reproductive Health for the Guttmacher Institute, said that in the year 2000, there were only 226 doctors for a population of 10.7 million in Niger. So, not only is the high fertility rate an issue which needs attention but more people to be educated, so they can become doctors.

Education improves hygiene which leads to better health. As children are educated about hygiene and sanitation at school, they can then pass this information on to members of their community. The sanitation improvements would then help community members live healthier lives.

'Through education there can be unity' statement made by Farekaina, a Nigerien village head. Education has a very powerful role in establishing and maintaining a democracy. Niger has had some turbulent moments in its political history, but it is now working upon strengthening democracy within its nation. In 2003, Niger had a president and a prime minister working together who had come from two groups, the Hausa and Djerma, which had once battled each other for control of the nation. "At the community level, educated people can understand the working of democracy, they can read newspapers, they are aware of their rights, and they are able to demand that those rights be upheld." (Oliver Buston, 2003) The USAID's Niger Education and Community Strengthening project sees education as a means for communities to rally around voices of moderation and not those of violent extremism. Moderate views enable a democracy to exist and for people to have basic rights.

Education has an enormous impact upon a country's finances. Spending some money to educate people to reach their full potential and aspirations will greatly strengthen a country's economic stability. While writing a report for UNESCO Press, Paul Higham states that for every \$1 spent a person's education, there will be a return of \$10 to \$15 in economic growth over that person's working lifetime. These financial gains would enable a government to improve its infrastructures and the overall quality of life for people within its borders.

In the article, 'Higher Education and Economic Development in Africa', the importance of tertiary education is stressed. People throughout Africa need assistance in overcoming the barriers to completing secondary education, so tertiary education can become a possibility. It is through post secondary education that Africa has its greatest chance to reach new heights in economic growth, because then the spreading of technology could be facilitated which would play an important role in decreasing knowledge gaps.

"The continued effects of restricted access to education and low learning achievement should be a sounding alarm bells across Africa. Economic growth over the past decade has been built in large measure on a boom in exports of unprocessed commodities. Sustaining that growth will require entry into higher value-added areas of production and international trade – and quality education is the entry ticket. Stated bluntly, Africa cannot build economic success on failing education systems. And it will not generate the 45 million additional jobs needed for young people running the labour force over the next decade, if these systems are not fixed." (Watkins 2013)

Nicaragua

Even though recent Nicaraguan government has implemented policies to help lift its citizens out of poverty and improve their quality of life, it still seems to be trying to emerge from a hole created by past conflict and mismanagement of the economy, and today it is weighted down by the enormous loan it must pay back to groups such as the International Monetary Fund. Nicaragua has a population around six million and half of its school aged children feel the weight of poverty upon their shoulders. Unicef has stated that about 500,000 of these school aged children are not in school. Other than being poor, many of these children have additional challenges such as living in a rural environment where it may be more difficult to get to school, have disabilities, or are indigenous and the educational system is not taking their culture into account.

Birth to Pre-school

One of the reasons why poor children have a more difficult time getting off on the right foot down the path of education is health. Their parents have a harder time acquiring access to immunizations for them, prenatal birth care as well as proper sanitation. All of this will then have the potential to negatively hamper the mental and physical development of these children. (Bankrupt Future, 2000)

Primary School /Secondary Education

Recent data has revealed that only 72% of the children complete primary school in Nicaragua, and the majority of the children who do not complete primary schools are within the lowest socio-economic band. Some of the reasons for not completing primary school include late entrance, high repetition, and a lacklustre education being provided. (Poverty in Nicaragua, 2015)

Another reason children drop out of school is to help their impoverished families. Quite a few of them go and work in the sugar cane fields. The La Isla Foundation interviewed some of these children and discovered that half were not in school, about one sixth of them could not read or write, and many had suffered injuries and illnesses due to the working conditions. Prior to 2015, Nicaragua had agreed to the International Labour Organisation's declaration on ending the worst forms of child labour by 2016 and all of it by 2020. The national

child labour survey of 2005 pointed out that there are 240,000 child workers between that ages of 5 and 17.

Some children drop out of school because of the costs involved in getting an education. It is difficult for some families to cover the expenses for school materials such as books, notebooks, transportation, uniforms and even shoes. One mother of three who worked everyday by selling her tortillas by the roadside was only earning \$8 a day, which was just enough to feed her family and buy ingredients to make more tortillas. She said that sending her children to school was so expensive due to the cost of books and transportation that she had her children take turns going to school, and if there was less money than normal then they did not go to school at all. The Nicaraguan government only allocates 11% of its budget on education while 25% of it goes to loans amassing to 6.4 billion dollars to the IMF or the World Bank which are near impossible to pay back. This is greatly hurting the education of Nicaragua's citizens as illiteracy seems to have increased since so little is being spent on education. "The World Bank claims adult illiteracy has risen to 34% from 18% in 1990. In rural areas illiteracy is up to 46%" (Bankrupt Future: The Human Cost)

Currently the government of Nicaragua only mandates six years of free compulsory education. The Education for All Global Monitoring report believes that there should be nine years of compulsory education. However, there are some people who feel that money for education would be better spent on primary school than on secondary school. This is because many students only complete primary school, and it is believed by some that money spent to support secondary schools would most likely benefit the elite. (The Guardian) According to the Youth Education and Development Issues in Nicaragua article, 'Only 45% of students who enter primary school can go on to high school- making Nicaragua's secondary enrolment among the lowest in the world.'

With it being difficult to cover the cost involved in the basic core classes, the students do not get any formal exposure to the fine arts within school. Band, orchestra, art classes, drama education which really enhances the well being of those in developed countries is not available to those in developing countries.

Post Secondary

Those who persevere and graduate from a secondary school face new challenges at the university level.

The low calibre primary and secondary education many students receive in Nicaragua makes them ill prepared for university entrance examinations. Out of all of the students who took the entrance exam at the National Engineering University, only 7% passed. This puts universities in a bit of a dilemma, because to have a university you need students. After this university accepted the 7% which passed, it filled the rest of its spaces based upon gender, which part of Nicaragua they came from and socio-economic status. Those who did not pass were given a prep year by the university. Another university simply lowered the passing score of tis examination.

Imagine what it is like for these students, many would lack the base knowledge needed to build a university education upon. Study skills were most likely not emphasised the way they should have been. On top of these issues, some there can be culture shock. Students coming from a rural community can find it difficult adjusting to the urban setting of a university, and some students belonging to one of Nicaragua's seven indigenous groups or one of its two ethnic communities have to adjust to cultural differences. Some of the indigenous students feel culturally disconnected. This causes some of them to drop out of the university.

Facilitating Post Secondary Life

Many students need extra support, or education, or understanding to conquer post secondary education. The important thing is to find a way to support these students, so they do not give up on their aspirations. As long as they do not give up hope on their aspirations, there is more hope for the well being of Nicaragua.

As mentioned earlier the engineering university offers students who are not accepted due to entrance exam year of remediation to pick up on some of the skills that were not attained during the primary and secondary school years. Intermediary professional degrees are being seen as a way to allow students to earn skills and become more accustomed to post secondary education.

Universities are working upon being more sensitive to the needs to students of diverse backgrounds, such as the indigenous students. Some of the universities have established programs where the curriculum is more aligned to their background and needs. One university teaches traditional medicine to nurses and doctors in conjunction with Western medicine.

The Foundation for Sustainable Development teaches poor, uneducated women the skills and knowledge they need for a job. The women may either learn vocational skills or skills needed to open their own business.

Communities are looking at establishing educational institutions where students may earn professional technical degrees. This would give them more preparation for entering a university as well as enable them to apply the technical courses towards a related degree. (Nicaragua Poverty Assessment Report, 2010)

Benefits of Education in Nicaragua

Education enables individuals to shape their community/ country for the better. It could provide Nicaragua with needed properly trained teachers who are capable of giving their students the education needed to successfully step up on the next phase of life, whether it is from primary to secondary school or from university to being an engineer. It can provide medical professionals, improved sanitation, current agricultural knowledge, greater exportation of goods, and well informed citizens who engage in politics.

The sustainable development goal for education adopted by the United Nations' general assembly in September 2015 for the years 2016 to 2030: "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all."

"If all students in low income countries left school with basic reading skills, 171 million people could be lifted out of poverty."

- "Bankrupt Future: The Human Cost." NP. ND < <http://www.witnessforpeace.org/downloads/Bankrupt%20Future.pdf>>
- "Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2012- Youth and Skills: Putting Education to Work." Reliefweb. UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 16 October 2012. Website
- "Education for all in Niger: Rich Countries Continue to Neglect Africa's Children." Oxfam International. 01 January 2003. Website < <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/education-for-all-in-niger-rich-countries-continue-to-neglect-africas-children-114477>>
- "Help Children from Poor Communities get a Better Education." The Circle Uniting Women, Changing Lives. Oxfam. ND. PDF
- "How a Lack of Education Adversely Affects Girls." International Development Centre. 1 August 2008. < empowermentinternational.org>
- "Impoverished Teachers, Poor Students." Nicaragua Dispatch. 20 March 2012. Website
- "Improving Avenues Towards Post Secondary and Higher Education for Indigenous People." Inter-American Development Bank. 12 April 2006. Website <http://www1.iadb.org/en/news/webstories/2006-04-12/improving-avenues-towards-post-secondary-and-higher-education-for-indigenous-people,2936.html>
- "Niger: Boosting Education." The World Bank Group. ND. Website <https://www.worldbank.org/progress/niger.html>
- Nicaragua-Poverty Assessment: Main Report. The World Bank. Vol.1. Report 39736. 30 May 2008
- Sustainable Development Goals. < <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>>
- "Youth Education and Development Issues in Nicaragua." The Foundation for Sustainable Development Issues in Nicaragua. Website < www.fsdinternational.org/country/nicaragua/yeissues.nd>
- < www.unesco.org/new/en/medi-services/single-view/news/>
- < <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/education-all-global-monitoring-report-2012-youth-and-skills-putting-education-work>> Original: < <http://en.unesco.org/gem-report/report/2015/education-all-2000-2015-achievements-and-challenges#sthash.jkAV9Ns.dpbs>>
- Bloom, David, David Canning, and Kevin Chan. "Higher Education and Economic Development In Africa." 2006. p30. Website
- Fact Sheet: Niger Education and Community Strengthening Project. Relief Web. US Agency for International Development. 8 September 2015. Website <http://reliefweb.int/report/niger/fact-sheet-niger-education-and-community-strengthening-project-last-updated-september>
- Higham, Paul. "Twenty Percent of Young People in Developing Countries Fail to Complete Primary School and Lack Skills for Work." Unesco Press. 16 October 2012. Website
- Hutt, David. "Is Nicaragua's Education System Failing?" The Tico Times. 31 January 2013. Website. < <http://www.ticotimes.net/2013/02/01/is-nicaragua-s-education-system-failing>>
- Lakhani, Nina. "Poverty in Nicaragua Drives Children Out of School and into the Workplace." The Guardian. 19 May 2015. Website
- Nicaragua at a Glance. Foundation for Sustainable Development. ND. Website < <http://www.fsdinternational.org/country/nicaragua>>
- Nicaragua-Poverty Assessment: Main Report. World Bank. Vol.1. Report 39736. 30 May, 2008. Website
- Niger. Global Partnership for Education. 18 December 2015. Website < <http://www.globalpartnership.org/country/niger>>
- Potts, Malcolm. "International Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health." Guttmacher Institute. Vol.37. June 2011. Website
- Pulugurtha, Shamala. "How a Lack of Education Adversely Affects Girls." Empowerment International. 1 August 2008. Website
- Rico. "Nicaragua: 93% of High School Grads Fail Entrance Exam." QCosta Rica. 19 January 2014. Website < <http://qcostarica.com/nicaragua-93-of-high-school-grads-fail-entrance-exam/>>
- Vigil, Josefina. "Our Education System is Increasing Poverty and Inequality." 32 Envio. Central American University. ND. < <http://www.envio.org.ni/articulo/3779>>
- Watkins, Kevin. "Too Little Access, Not Enough Learning : Africa's Twin Deficit in Education," Analysis by Brookings Center for Universal Education. 16 June 2013. Website www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2013/01/16-africa-learning-watkins

JOIN FAUSA

Are you returning to the US any time soon?

Whether you are being dragged back kicking and screaming or if you can hardly wait to return home, you will probably find that as a "repat" you and your family members are different sorts of Americans from those who stayed behind. This can be a jolt, but there is help out there for you.

Membership in the FAWCO Alumnae, USA, better known as FAUSA keeps you in touch with others who understand the life changing experience of living in other cultures. Besides the pure psychological support of being a part of this network, there are other benefits, too. The Quarterly magazine carries articles of interest to "repats," and you may apply for the FAUSA Education Award for yourself or a child. In addition, FAUSA members may attend the FAWCO conferences overseas and the FAUSA Annual Meeting, which is in a different part of the US every fall.

Learn all about FAUSA, contact someone in your region, and download an application at **www.fausa.org**. We would love to hear from you.



www.FAUSA.org

**Are you returning to the USA soon?
Maintain your international connections with other "repats" by joining FAUSA.**

For information, speak to your FAWCO Rep or visit www.FAUSA.org