

SIGBI Programme Director's Blog September 2017



Once again we have seen natural disasters affect the countries of our Federation. Our thoughts and prayers are sent to Sierra Leone and Nepal after the devastating effects of rain have caused mud slides and flooding. It seems so unjust that these two countries are once again hit by disasters having suffered so much with Ebola or Earthquakes. However as soon as the current disasters hit the headlines the process of sending money from the SIGBI Emergency Fund was set in motion.

It is essential that the money goes to reputable NGO's working on the ground in the affected areas and a quick return ballot of the FMB ensures that there is little delay in getting that money to where it is most needed.

As we all know there is always an initial influx of assistance once a major disaster occurs, all monies have to be carefully deployed, some are ring fenced, as was the case after the tsunami, when thousands of pounds could not be used immediately, so the short delay in our Emergency Fund Donations does not significantly affect the process of repair.

On a brighter note all is well in hand for Cardiff Conference- it should be exciting, refreshing and enjoyable.



Don't forget to wear your white ribbons for Michael Kaufman's presentation. There are excellent keynote speakers covering Violence against Women, Trafficking and 100 million girls- just one of Plan International's projects.

Several clubs will be presenting their work in these fields and I look forward to hearing how innovative clubs can be in promoting our ideals in Programme Goals.

There is also the update on Meru to look forward to, this is now half way through its time as our Federation Project and the first study tour is planned for next April to coincide with the graduation of the first tranche of women educated.

The FPAC day has been planned in details and hopefully will deliver all you asked for as well as giving you the opportunity for further suggestions on how to make the session good value for money and worthwhile.

In addition the old "making a difference" booklet has been revamped and should be available for members to collect and we hope you will like the changes that have been made.

The problems of the world, although constantly changing will, sadly, always need to be addressed and we need to constantly change in our ways of tackling them.

We cannot change everything and sometimes we try too hard and do too much, should we be narrowing our focus so that our impact is greater? Several years ago we agreed to work on "Educate to Lead" at SI level- implementing this as Educate, Empower and Enable in our own Federation and whilst there are many projects which involve these topics there are also many that don't- how do we strike the balance?

As we are all encouraged to ***Grow our Brand*** one of the best ways is to be known for our Programme Work – we need to promote ourselves more efficiently and we need to grow in numbers.

I have said it before, many times, *Soroptimism is Programme*, but without members our Programme work is diminishing and hence so is our profile.

As many clubs start again after a summer break may I wish you all renewed vigour in your work and I look forward to seeing many of you in Cardiff.

Yours in friendship

Barbara Dixon
Programme Director