**MINUTES OF THE FEDERATION PROGRAMME ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING**

**CROWNE PLAZA HOTEL, GLASGOW**

**THURSDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2015**

**PRESENT:**

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<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Barbara Dixon</td>
<td>Federation Programme Director</td>
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<td>Jenny Vince</td>
<td>Federation President</td>
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<td>Margaret Emsley</td>
<td>Federation President Elect</td>
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<td>Nisha Ghosh</td>
<td>Federation Friendship Link Coordinator</td>
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<td>Rayner Rees</td>
<td>Federation APD Economic Empowerment</td>
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<td>Pat Black</td>
<td>Federation APD ECOSOC</td>
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<td>Laura Redhead</td>
<td>Federation APD Environmental Sustainability</td>
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<td>Barbara Dixon</td>
<td>Federation APD Food Security and Health</td>
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<td>Janet Hodgson</td>
<td>Federation APD Learning Opportunities</td>
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<td>Jan Hemlin</td>
<td>Federation APD Violence and Conflict Resolution</td>
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<td>Najima Hasin</td>
<td>Federation APD Friendship Link Coordinator</td>
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<td>Danielle Maycock</td>
<td>FPAC Barbados</td>
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<td>Margaret Molyneux</td>
<td>FPAC England</td>
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<td>Vanessa Clement</td>
<td>FPAC Gambia (Proxy)</td>
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<td>Anu Wakhu</td>
<td>FPAC India</td>
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<td>Jeanne Foster-Robinson</td>
<td>FPAC Jamaica</td>
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<td>Sina Bugeja</td>
<td>FPAC Malta (Proxy)</td>
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<td>Swarnalata Ramdenee</td>
<td>FPAC Mauritius</td>
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<td>Rachana Upadhyaya</td>
<td>FPAC Nepal (Proxy)</td>
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<td>Annette Oke</td>
<td>FPAC Nigeria</td>
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<td>Paddy Kerr</td>
<td>FPAC Northern Ireland</td>
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<td>Mary Hession</td>
<td>FPAC Republic of Ireland</td>
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<td>Margaret Mowat</td>
<td>FPAC Scotland</td>
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<td>Zakia Vidot</td>
<td>FPAC Seychelles (Proxy)</td>
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<td>Doreen Deigh</td>
<td>FPAC Sierra Leone (Proxy)</td>
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<td>Laurel Becker</td>
<td>FPAC South Africa</td>
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<td>Tara Ramanayake</td>
<td>FPAC Sri Lanka</td>
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<td>Ikarmola La Borde</td>
<td>FPAC St Vincent and the Grenadines</td>
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<td>Stacyann Charles</td>
<td>FPAC Trinidad and Tobago</td>
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<td>Kay Richmond</td>
<td>FPAC UK and Wales</td>
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**IN ATTENDANCE:**

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<td>Gina Coad</td>
<td>Federation Executive Officer</td>
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**APOLOGIES:**
1. **WELCOME**
Barbara Dixon, Federation Programme Director, welcomed all attendees to the FPAC meeting. Johanna Raffan, Conference Chairman, welcomed all to the 81st Federation Conference at Glasgow and gave some important notices about various events over the next few days.

2. **ROLL CALL**
A Roll Call was taken of those present. There were no apologies.

3. **MINUTES OF THE FEDERATION PROGRAMME ACTION MEETING, 8 November 2014 (Circulated)**
There were two amendments made to the Minutes of the Federation Programme Action Committee Meeting held on 8 November 2014. On page 4, under Janet Hodgson’s Learning Opportunities section, SI Barbados should replace SI Jamaica, and the project is called Honey Jam, not Honey and Jam. With these amendments, the Minutes were signed as a true record.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**
There were no matters arising.

5. **FEDERATION PRESIDENT JENNY VINCE**
President Jenny said that she hoped that the meeting would inspire those present when they returned to their country/National Association/Network. Programme Action is the core of the Organisation and how we can demonstrate to external organisations and governments the value of our service. FPAC Report on project work in their country form the basis of the validation of our ECOSOC status at the United Nations, and the recognition of our voices whether it is raising awareness of a topic, lobbying regarding injustice or practically providing clothes, food or medicines where needed, or fundraising so that such projects can continue, all these elements play their part in Programme Action.

When we are able to showcase projects at the side events of the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations this means that not only is the profile of our Organisation raised but also that the subjects covered are discussed more widely. For the first time, in 2015, not only were there representatives from the countries of Great Britain, but also the Caribbean, Africa, Pakistan and India, who were able to lobby their own governments and actively work in each country caucus.

Tomorrow afternoon we will vote for a new Federation Project. I hope that each of you has had a chance to discuss in your Club/Region/National Association/Network, which of these Projects you would vote for, because the successful Project will be our focus for the next four years.

6. **FEDERATION PRESIDENT ELECT, MARGARET EMSLEY**
President Elect Margaret says that SIGBI would be working towards a new strategic plan taking us forward to 2021. The significance of that year is that it will be exactly 100 years since the first Soroptimist Club was Chartered, and in the six years until 2021 we want to be a vibrant, dynamic Organisation and much better known than we currently are. How Programme Work is carried out will be a very important part of that strategic plan, but will also remain within the SI Quadrennial Framework.

Margaret picked out two items from the FPAC reports that she had read. The first was from Nepal, and the fantastic work that they had been doing, helping people to recover physically from the earthquakes, as well as providing trauma counselling. The second item was from the FPAC Wales report, which started by defining what was meant by Educate, Empower, Enable. It is easy to use those words without
thinking about what they mean, but the report defined them as Educate = to teach someone something; Empower = giving someone the ability to do something they have been unable to do before; Enable = to help someone to do something they couldn’t do without your help (eg provide finance).

7. ASSISTANT PROGRAMME DIRECTORS REVIEW OF REPORTS 2014-2015

Janet Hodgson, APD Learning Opportunities

Janet Hodgson reported that she had learned over the last four years that Clubs are brilliant at Programme Action. Reports under Learning Opportunities are many and varied, but reporting projects on the database remains an issue. However, projects are reported on Club Websites and Janet has got some of the information for her report from websites rather than the database. Janet encouraged the FPACs to use the Calendar on the SIGBI Website more often to advertise the big events that they do that involve the general public (rather than business meetings).

Janet said that great work was being done by all Clubs, even those with only a few Members, but our work is still not getting known outside the Organisation. Janet has been involved with Women’s Equality over the past 12 months, and during her 30 years as a Soroptimist has manned stalls at lots of events, and people are amazed at the Projects that Soroptimists do. Clubs need to ensure that governments are aware of the work that they are doing. Janet stated that SIGBI does not need six APDS and the money would be better spent on Marketing. The Organisation needs to be brought up to date with the use of Social Media and other electronic tools.

Janet concluded by saying how much she had enjoyed her time as APD Learning Opportunities, and welcomed her successor, Pam Allison, by saying she was sure she would also get a lot out of the post.

Jan Hemlin, APD Violence and Conflict Resolution

Jan reported that 408 Programme Focus Report Forms had been raised in the past 12 months on Violence and Conflict Resolution. 32,604 women and girls have benefited and £129,604 has been raised in this programme area. The range of projects has included domestic abuse, human trafficking, child marriage and female genital mutilation (FGM).

119 of the projects concerned domestic abuse, and these range from local refuges being supported by supplying toiletries, toys and clothing on a regular basis. This makes a huge difference to the lives of women and girls. Members have lobbied their governments, made use of social media and signed online petitions. Jan encouraged the delegates present to visit the Petitions Page on the SIGBI Website.

142 reports were on human trafficking and an increase was shown in the amount of publicity of human trafficking. There is a significant rise in the number of trafficking instances during times of natural disasters, which needs to be addressed, so it is important that we keep this topic high on the agenda of SIGBI Clubs. A number of UK Clubs hired the UN Gift Box from Stop The Traffick, and this does help to draw attention to this issue. Clubs have also supported Purple Teardrop, and they produce a regular newsletter which will keep Members updated if they subscribe to it. Jan and other Soroptimists have attended Anti-Slavery events and forums over the past year.

There were 55 reports on FGM, and this issue has had an increase in media coverage over the past 12 months. Laws are being changed in several countries, and pressure needs to continue to be applied in countries where this practice exists. 55 reports were also input on forced marriage/child marriage, and again awareness raising is very important. 28 Gender Equality reports were raised and Clubs have supported the White Ribbon Campaign, raising 128 reports on this
Jan concluded by reminding FPACs of the many calls to action on Gender Equality that were impressed upon delegates at the Soroptimist International Convention in Istanbul.

**Laura Redhead, APD Environmental Sustainability**
There have been fewer reports on the database (63) under Environmental Sustainability this year, but the reports have been input from more countries of the Federation, which is excellent.

There have been a number of natural disasters Clubs in SIGBI have been supporting over the past year, namely the Nepal earthquake and the Somerset flooding. Support has come in both practical and financial assistance to help rebuild the lives of people affected by the calamitous events. It is also good to see Clubs undertaking projects to help people develop risk management strategies in being prepared for bad weather and natural disasters in future.

Clubs throughout the Federation have supported the previous International President’s Appeal See Solar, Cook Solar, through fundraising events. Some Clubs have worked on similar projects of their own to provide solar filtration systems, solar cookers and solar lamps.

There is still a great need for clean water in a lot of areas for drinking, washing and cooking. SIGBI Clubs are continuing to push forward to eradicate this plight by getting bore holes drilled, providing plumbing services to homes and getting toilets built.

Climate change continues to be the focus of lobbying and education by Clubs. However, this year we have seen rallies on environmental awareness, garbage segregation and recycling and the banning of plastic bags. The education of the plight of the honey bee continues to be a focus, particularly for UK Clubs and schools, the effect of which will have great consequences for all. Clubs have undertaken projects to clean beaches, create flower beds, farm vegetable gardens and plant trees, all of which contributes to the improvement of the environment and providing women and girls with a future of possibilities.

In addition to working with friendship links, Clubs have supported WaterAid, TreeAid and Handicap International over the last year, and it is through partnerships like these that we can make a difference to the lives of women and girls.

From the FPAC Reports it is clear that work is being done under this objective that is not reported on the Programme Database, which is a great shame, as it is through the database that projects are found to share with SI and considered for best practice awards. There were a number of FPAC reports that did not include any work under Environmental Sustainability, which is a real shame because it is difficult to believe that this is the case. It may be that these projects are being reported under other areas, as they very often do fit into those areas as well.

Laura concluded by asking FPACs to carefully consider how their reports can be reported and classified under more than one area.

**Rayner Rees, APD Economic Empowerment**
Rayner reiterated that lots of reports are input under different headings, but 91 reports were put in under Economic Empowerment. Nearly £170,000 was raised, 9,500 women and girls directly benefitted.
Everything the other APDs have spoken about previously also covers Economic Empowerment and there are so many overlaps that a lot of projects will cover most of the programme areas. Projects range from making bags, training children to deal with money, donating second hand bras to raise money, scholarship funds, self-help groups, women’s day centres, microcredit, writing CVs and public speaking. Such projects give women the confidence to say “I can do it”. Many Clubs have projects around sanitary towels, which even in the UK are considered “luxury items”! Such projects have the dual function of enabling girls to continue their education when they are menstruating, and allowing women to earn an income from producing these items.

All these projects are fantastic, but Rayner asked Clubs to consider the impact that their projects have and whether they leave a lasting legacy. Are they sustainable and can they be carried on when the funding stops? The success of a project could be measured in whether it can carry on having an impact when the Soroptimist support stops.

Clubs throughout the Federation are involved in advocacy. In Wales, Clubs have involved their MPs and recently SI Wales South held an Anti-Slavery event to which all the MPs from the Welsh Government were invited, and they all attended. Rayner conceded that perhaps it was easier in Wales than some other countries, but it was important to involve MPs so that they know of the work that Soroptimists are doing and can then be lobbied for change.

Rayner then took a moment to express her good wishes for her predecessor Talat, who had inspired her to take the role of APD Economic Empowerment, but who was currently unwell and unable to attend Conference.

Rayner has been attending Fairtrade meetings this year and getting a lot out of them. Through Fairtrade, women and girls can be empowered. Fairtrade Fortnight will be 7-12 March 2016, which will promote farming across the world. Rayner will be holding a Fairtrade breakfast and asked FPACs what they would be doing for Fairtrade Fortnight. Rayner specifically mentioned sugar, as it is being used less but it is important to support sugar producers, as it is their only source of income.

Rayner concluded by asking FPACs (and Clubs) to think of new innovative ways that they can help to empower women and girls and reiterated that projects should leave a lasting legacy and be sustainable, and urged Clubs to put their reports on the database.

Barbara Dixon, APD Food Security and Health
There has been a 50% increase in the number of forms submitted in this programme area, which could be due to people realizing that not all projects need to be categorized under Education, and that some projects do go under Food Security and Health. There is an estimated 500,000 women and girls that have benefitted from Food Security and Health projects, and it is well-known that helping women and girls in fact helps their entire family, particularly in this area.

16 countries in the Federation have not reported in this area, and there may be various reasons for this, but one reason may be that some countries find it difficult to maintain an internet link long enough to complete the form. Barbara suggested that countries where this is an issue could have a “buddy” system with Clubs elsewhere to help them get their reports on the database.

Food security is a big issue, affecting people throughout the world. Natural disasters can affect production of and access to safe food, as can climate change and war. Food is one of the basic
requirements of life, and whereas previously UK Clubs have supported projects overseas in this respect, there has been a massive shift to Clubs supporting UK Food Banks. It is of great concern that Food Banks have become necessary in a country where there are benefits and which is a developed country, and yet at the same time thousands of tonnes of food is being thrown away by supermarkets who have not sold it by the end of the day. Many farmers have contracts with large companies and if they produce more than they are contracted to do, the excess is wasted, and this has got to stop. Just before Conference, Barbara heard the news that Morrisons had agreed to pass on their unsold food to charities, so this is a great step forward. If this can be solved in the UK, then Clubs can once again concentrate on those countries where the help in this area is really needed. Rather than providing food for food banks, Clubs should lobby governments and supermarkets to follow Morrison’s example and remove the need for food banks.

Many Clubs in Africa and Asia work to improve education about farming techniques, providing tools and seeds. Women are disadvantaged – they produce the large percent of crop abroad but they do not have land rights in many areas. They don’t have the input to education and they don’t get the tools. These women need to be given support to help them to provide for themselves and their families.

Several Clubs work with friendship links to provide food through Mary’s Meals, who source food locally which also supports the local economy as well as ensuring that children are fed at school.

Health projects are many and varied. Some Clubs have Members who are on Health Boards, SI Scotland South has continued their work with the Fistula Foundation, SI Pune Metro East has done tremendous work on menstrual hygiene, many Clubs provide wells and toilet facilities and many Clubs work with friendship links to carry out these projects. Many Clubs throughout the Federation have been supporting Breast Cancer Month which is in October each year, or have held Health Awareness Days, and mental health is also an issue tackled by Clubs. This is not as obvious a topic as other health issues, but although 1 in 4 people suffer with some form of mental health, there is still a stigma attached to it. With the pressures of today’s society these figures are likely to increase.

Barbara concluded by talking about the amazing work done by SI Kathmandu, Nepal. They have been there on the ground following the earthquakes, helping people to recover physically and psychologically from the disasters, delivering food parcels, tents, and assisted in every way they could. Barbara was delighted to invite the representative from Nepal to join her and receive a Special Recognition Award from SIGBI for the excellent work that they have done.

Pat Black, APD ECOSOC

This post is a relatively new one, created when SIGBI gained Special Consultative Status at the United Nations. ECOSOC (Economic and Social Development Council) is responsible for nine Commissions and has many other Committees. These include the Commission on the Status of Women and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women. ECOSOC is also responsible for Sustainable Development and Science and Technology for Development. It has a number of UN Agencies, including UN Women, and works through a number of funds and projects all related to Economic and Social Development. The United Nations and ECOSOC have both just celebrated 70 years since their Charter.

At CSW in March 2015, the Beijing Platform was reviewed as it was 20 years since its declaration. That was followed by an event in Addis Adaba in July where Governments talked about the resourcing of future development for the global nations and committed themselves to providing whatever resourcing
was required for the Sustainable Development Goals. The Sustainable Development Goals were agreed by every Member State at the General Assembly in New York in September 2015. Soroptimists have been involved in the last 2-3 years in helping to reach those agreements. In 2016 the World Humanitarian Summit will take place in May, but leading up to that there are other events throughout the World where decisions will be taken on how to put the Sustainable Development Goals into place. There were handouts available for FPACs containing a list of websites where details of individual events could be found.

There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals, and they have 169 targets/indicators for their achievement. They should be achieved by 2030, and they apply to every single country in the world. All the SI and SIGBI Programme Focus Goals and Objectives already contribute to each of the Sustainable Development Goals, so Soroptimists are already working to achieve these.

In order to retain our Consultative Status at ECOSOC, we have to comply with the principles that govern that status and contribute to the work of the Council and every four years we need to submit a report on our activities. Therefore it is important that Clubs submit their Programme Report Forms because it is from there that we will get the information to allow us to report back to ECOSOC in 2017.

Clubs should look at the Sustainable Development Goals to ensure that their projects relate to them, and Pat concluded by urging all FPACs to check how the targets relate to their particular country and what their government has committed themselves to, and lobby their Governments if they have not signed up to any of the targets listed. They should gather evidence in their country of the actions that are needed (eg on forced/child marriages). Approach other NGOs to gain their support as well. Over the next 15 years (until 2030) Soroptimists can make a huge contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals.

8. **FRIENDSHIP LINK COORDINATOR, NISHA GHOSH**

There has been an increased activity between friendship link club during the past 12 months. 36 New Links were established, some of which were formed specifically to support a particular project. 17 of the Projects entered to be selected for the SIGBI Project 2016-2019 were joint projects with Clubs in different countries, and two of the three finalists are also joint projects.

Several SIGBI Clubs have revived their dormant links in the other Federations, and three Newsletters have been sent to Clubs showing the joint project work that is going on. Nisha expressed her thanks to all the Clubs who had sent in their friendship link joint project work to her to enable the newsletter to flourish.

The friendship link register forms are sent out every January to be returned by 31 March. There was a very low response this year, so Nisha sent a personal remind to each Club which prompted 164 Clubs to respond. Nisha urged the FPACs to take back to their Clubs the importance of completing this form each year.

Nisha detailed several projects that Clubs had undertaken with their friendship links both within and without SIGBI that supported each of the five Programme Objectives. She concluded that SI Winchester and District had suggested that there are two types of friendship links – Social links where emphasis is on visits and fun and Action links where Clubs conduct Programme Action. It is worth considering what type of friendship links you have.
NEW PROGRAMME FOCUS AND SI OBJECTIVES
The Programme Focus has not changed remarkably for the quadrennium 2015-2019. There are still the two main Goals, but the first Goal now relates purely to Advocacy and will be handled mainly by SI rather than the four Federations. SIGBI Clubs will still be encouraged to advocate as part of their Programme Activities, and a new SIGBI APD Advocacy will shortly be announced. This replaces the previous APD ECOSOC, as an application has been submitted for DPI (UN Department of Public Information) and Barbara is going to revisit SIGBI’s association with the World Health Organisation, so the role will not be limited to ECOSOC. The SIGBI APD Advocacy will complement the SI Director of Advocacy role and feed reports to SI.

Under Goal 2 of the new Programme Focus, there are 8 basic bullet points. These are not drastically different to the previous five objectives, but they are more succinct and do tie in nicely with the 17 Sustainable Development Goals. The 8 bullets are:

- Education
- Elimination of Violence
- Economic Empowerment
- Food Security
- Healthcare
- Environmental Sustainability/Water & Sanitation
- Conflict Resolution/Peace Promotion
- Disaster Mitigation and Relief

The last bullet, Disaster Mitigation and Relief, will be assigned to whichever APD the project relates to, as disasters can include War, Destruction of Crops, Flooding, Health and Earthquakes, and each of these comes under a different APD.

LISETTE GENSEBERGER, FPAC SOUTH AFRICA
Lisette explained that 1 in 10 girls in Africa do not go to school for approximately 60 days every year because they do not have access to sanitary wear. Many Clubs in South Africa have linked to a Project called “Dignity Dreams”, which was the brainchild of Sandra Miller who realized that young girls were using all kinds of substitutes for proper sanitary napkins. She discovered that making the product was not difficult, but the difficulty was in distribution and awareness. In celebration of Mandela Day 18 July 2015 Sandra’s dream was to provide 18,000 pads to schoolgirls in South Africa, which was achieved. The pads are reusable so washing facilities need to be available, which in some rural areas is an issue. The pads cost £7.00 per pack, but can be reused for five years. This is a project that all Clubs could do, wherever there is a need. Employment is also provided to the women who make the pads. A lively discussion followed, as many Clubs are doing similar projects.

PHILIPPINES COMMUNITY FUND
Sheila Elsie explained that the Philippines Community Fund has been working with children working on the dump sites of Manilla for 13 years. The children earned a living by working long 12 hour days using sacks and metal hooks to pick up pieces of recycled materials. They earned about 50p per day. Philippines Community Fund have built a school made out of 28 recycled shipping containers to get these children back into education, and they now have 800 children being taught at their school. The building is built on an earthquake volt line, a flood plain, and is also built on 100 ft of rubbish. They use pylons which go down through the rubbish and into the ground to keep the school stable. Other issues, because of the location, include health issues and trafficking, which is a huge problem, so the
Community Fund operates a child protection program as well as a child education program. Last year they successfully rescued five children who had gone into the trafficking system, and they have been running trauma counselling for the children. They have also extended to offer a “livelihood” program for the parents of the children, who collect ring pulls and bottle caps (for example) which can then be made into handbags and other items and for this they are paid more than the living wage so that they can support their children and allow them to go to school. They are looking to replicate the project in other countries.

10. **GROUP WORK TO DISCUSS CHANGES TO THE PROGRAMME FOCUS DATABASE**
Barbara gave the meeting 20 minutes to discuss the problems with inputting data onto the database with a view to improving the new database, and therefore encourage Clubs to input their reports, and also to discuss what you want to get out of the FPAC meeting and should it continue?

Feedback on the database included:
- Getting the project to fit
- Saving the work if it takes too long to complete
- Ongoing projects need all the information inputting again
- Continuity of inputting
- Guessing the number of women and girls helped
- Costing the project
- Demonstrations needed on an ongoing basis
- Needs to be a lot more user-friendly than it is at the moment
- Could complete form offline then copy and paste it into the online form
- Internet connection
- Translation to English – understanding the questions
- Should set time limits for inputting reports and quarterly reports rather than lots of reports saying very little
- Should be able to upload videos to the database
- Updating of projects
- Need to be able to put reports in for other Clubs

Feedback on the usefulness of the FPAC meeting was that it is so good to be able to meet all the FPAC Chairs from all the countries to discuss projects that are going on in different parts of the world. More Workshop activity could be included, and perhaps a focus for the year. Could the form for the FPAC reports be improved so that they are easier to produce. Understanding how SIGBI connect to the UN. Memory sticks should be handed out containing all the presentations and reports given at the meeting.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
Barbara said that the UKPAC Study Day was being held at the Aztec Hotel in Bristol on 9 July 2016. The keynote speaker would be Kevin Hyland, Commissioner on Anti-Slavery.

Annette Oke, FPAC Nigeria, reminded everyone that the Chibok girls were still missing after nearly two years. There are still “Bring back our Girls” T-Shirt available for £5, and these girls should not be forgotten.

23. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
The next meeting will be held on Thursday 10 November 2016 at Hilton Hotel, Malta.