Soroptimists go for WATER AND FOOD

Programme NEWS

Soroptimist International of Europe

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Project of the Month

This month's winner is the **SI Club of Kifissia-Ekali** of Greece, for their action project "Food Security." The Programme Focus Objective for the project is no. 4: "Ensure women and girls have food security and access to the highest attainable standard of health care." The project also falls under the current President's theme of water and food security.

The goal of this project was to provide food for women and girl victims of violence, during the course of their training and/or education. The project was undertaken in partnership with Friesland Hellas AE, an association which aims to provide food security for women and girls who have been victims of physical and/or sexual abuse. The alimentary support provided to women and girls during their education ensures their well being and academic or vocational performance, which in turn opens up opportunities for them to work legitimately.

The club collected funds by means of donations from members and via sponsors. The funds were used to buy food, and to procure the means of storing and distributing it in regular installments.

PFR #23551 states that a sum of $ 5,000 has been raised and that about 55 women/girls have been helped.

Congratulations, Club Kifissia-Ekali!

Soroptimist Presence at the World Water Forum in Marseille

Soroptimist International of Europe, as part of the Women for Water Partnership, co-organized a pre-conference in Marseille, France in preparation for the 6th World Water Forum. During this two day conference, the weekend before the World Water Forum started, women from different women's networks had the opportunity to exchange their knowledge and ideas as well as come up with joint messages to propose to the Forum.

This Forum was seen as particularly crucial as it also prepared for Rio+20. For this reason, the messages the women's groups proposed were for the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development as well as the Forum. The overall theme of the pre-conference was 'Women Leadership in Water'. Three priority themes were tackled as part of this topic:

1. **Women's role in water and food security;**
2. **Community water supply and sanitation;**
3. **Water, peace and security.**

Ministers, water professionals, women's civil society organizations and young professionals all presented their Best Practices on each of the topics.

The motto of this year's World Water Forum was "time for solutions". The focus on all levels has been implementation and action as opposed to just dialogue. Here are some of the key messages and solutions that were concluded from the pre-conference:

- Let us move from talking to action

Solution: MDG 9 – Half by the year 2015 all water and development related fora and conferences. Put all the money that is saved into a Women and Water Development Fund.

- Needs-based approach! We know the what, involve us in the how!

Solution: Move from consultation to participation. Put women's civil society groups at the centre of needs assessment process.

- Empower women to play central role in the provision, management and safeguarding of water!

Solution: Empower women through water and sanitation and they will move on to integrated community development.

- Sustainability of water / sanitation provision and management is a social issue, not a technical issue!

Solution: Organize local community involvement and use existing civil society mechanism as a network.

- **Involve us as opportunities for rapid change! Promote women's leadership!**

Solution: Give women access to knowledge and resources to make informed decisions and be leaders in their own communities' development.

- Dare to let go and delegate responsibility to local level!

Solution: Women hold the keys to their community's development.

- In times of crisis, put your money where your mouth is!

Solution: Fund locally owned successful projects that have potential of up-scaling to ensure sustainability.

- From policies to implementation, the principal actors change!

Solution: 2013 International Year of Water Cooperation. Take us on board to accelerate and meet the water-related internationally agreed development goals.

These messages and solutions were prominently presented on a catwalk during the High Level Special session during the World Water Forum where Ministers of Environment of Uganda and South Africa, Ambassador of Green Cross, USAID Head of mission and Mayor of Bangangte in Cameroon spoke. The High Level Session received a lot of media attention and attracted large number of participants.

SOROPTIMIST PROJECT MATCHING

www.soroptimistprojects.org

This month, we feature the project **"KE0005 – Water and Sanitation for Grandmothers/Widows".** This project aims to improve access to potable water and sanitation by installing rain water harvesting tanks in grandmother and widow headed households. The Kawere village has large quantities of rainfall all year round but households still lack potable water. Initially, the project will facilitate an assessment of the needs of all the grandmother headed households in Kawere village. After installing rain water harvesting tanks, the project coordinators will conduct information sessions for the heads of households and inform them on good water and sanitation practices.

April 7 – World Health Day

Every year, World Health Day is celebrated on April 7th to commemorate the anniversary of the founding of the World Health Organization in 1948. World Health Day is a global campaign which invites everyone to focus on a single health challenge that has a global impact. This year's topic is Ageing and Health, with the theme "Good health adds life to years." The intent of this theme is to reflect on how good health throughout life can help older men and women lead full and productive lives and be a resource for their families and communities.

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As the median age of the global population is steadily rising, the number of people aged 60 years and more is expected to triple between 2000 and 2050. In the WHO European Region, average life expectancy in many countries already exceeds 80 years for women and 75 for men. This unprecedented phenomenon offers both opportunities and challenges for individuals, their families and society. In this 21st century, there is a need to rethink ageing and how we can respond to population ageing keeping health at the core. For more information please visit: http://www.who.int/world-health-day/2012/en/index.html

SoroptiVoice Blog Needs You!

Would you like to write about your recent club activity? Have you funded a new project? Are you undertaking a new advocacy event? Please email anna@soroptimisterntional.org if you would like to contribute to SoroptiVoice Blog and tell the world about your activities.

FEATURED WEBSITES:

women-rio20.ning.com/

Women on the road to Rio+20 is a platform for sharing and discussing views and perspectives from women around the world on the Rio+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development approaching in June 2012. The conference will mark the 20th anniversary of the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio and as such its goal will be to renew the international community's goal to sustainable development, to assess the progress to date, the remaining gaps in implementation, as well as emerging challenges.

The purpose of "Women on the road to Rio+20" is to create an online community where women worldwide can voice their opinions, share their stories, comment on analyses, and generally prepare for the upcoming conference. The site allows each person to create a profile, join groups with similar interests, participate in discussion on the forum page, learn about upcoming events, chats and read

Other women's blogs on issues about climate change, development, and women's participation.

www.fao.org/sofa/gender/home/en/

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
for a world without hunger

Not many people know that in the fight against global poverty and hunger, closing the gender gap between men and women in agriculture is a crucially important target. For this reason, FAO has launched a new website to help promote its work in advancing gender equality in agriculture. FAO estimates that as many as 150 million people could be lifted out of poverty if women had equal access to land, education and training, financial services, and technology among other resources and opportunities.

Women today are less likely than men to own land or livestock, adopt new technologies, use credit or other financial services, or receive education or extension advice. Closing this gender gap could create not only increased opportunities for women, but would mean generating significant gains for the agriculture sector and for society. Farm yields could increase by 20-30% which could mean reducing the number of hungry people in the world by 12-17%. Just by closing the gender gap.

FAO's Gender and Agriculture website presents engaging facts, thought-provoking videos, innovative policy recommendations and other resources that the public can use to learn more about gender, food, poverty, and agriculture.

http://www.uncsd2012.org/

RIO+20 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development
Rio de Janeiro, Brazil • June 2012

This is the official website of the Rio+20 UN Conference on Sustainable Development. The objectives, themes, the zero draft document, and the proposals put forth by the major groups are all presented on this site. The site also has important resources on the topic of the conference.