

FAWCO Region 9: "The Displacement Dilemma"
Summary of Business meetings and fun– December 5-6, 2014
Amman, Jordan

Submitted by Louise Greeley-Copley Region 9 coordinator

There were twenty attendees at the Region 9 conference from: Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Dubai, Qatar, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Austria.

The meetings were held all day Friday, December 5th and Saturday the 6th. Eight attendees arrived several days earlier to volunteer with *Collateral Repair Project* a community center servicing refugees. The volunteers helped to clean and organize the community center and were invited to several homes. They also shared a dinner with a group of refugees from Iraq at the center.

Monica Jubayli 1st VP of communications gave an excellent presentation on FAWCO and how belonging to a global network adds value to the clubs around the world. We discussed "what does FAWCO mean to you?". For several newcomers they wanted to understand more of the work FAWCO does, and why clubs would want to donate their philanthropic money to FAWCO projects. Region 9 clubs and individuals have been the beneficiary of Foundation Awards and received money for member charity projects. The work of the Foundation is to carefully vet all proposals. June summed it up best when she said "FAWCO has given the members of her club and the club itself a voice in the global area." That voice contributes to peace and understanding.

Laurie Richardson 3rd VP for Committees wore multiple hats and gave several presentations on the work of Task Forces, The Target Program "*Free the Girls*", US issues, FAWCO youth project, and UN NGO activities.

There was an excellent presentation from the FAWCO Foundation sent by Foundation President Michelle Hendrikse Dubois. We hope we were able to answer any questions the clubs had about fundraising and the programs offered by the foundation.

Louise Greeley-Copley a FAUSA Counselor spoke about repatriation and the FAWCO Alumnae group *FAUSA*.

We had a session on club best practices which included:

- Volunteers - How do you get them, keep them and show the love
 - Communications
 - Appreciation
 - Recognition
 - Clear guidelines: what is the organization mission, What is their job, how do they do the job, what tools and resources are available
- Administrative Guidelines or Operational Procedures: What are they?
 - These are all the details of the organization
 - Who does What, Where, When, Why and How
 - Concise job descriptions
 - Policies: Financial, Philanthropic, Social, Conflict resolution, Media, Confidentiality, Security.....etc.
 - Review every year with input from each board member. Should be a fluid document and change with the times, technology, and organizational circumstances.
- Media Policies: Do you have one and what is in it.

- Facebook groups, blogs, newsletters, PR, Twitter, and photographs.
- Who can share, what can be shared, How we share.

Therese Hartwell organized the volunteer group and moderated the Panel of NGO's from refugee organizations for a discussion of displaced persons and needs.

Organizations represented: *US Embassy Regional Refugee Coordinator, Collateral Repair Project, Family Kitchen, Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors without Borders), Mercy Corps, Syrian American Medical Society, United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR)* See separate report.

Saturday morning we began with a discussion of US issues led by Judy Furukawa the chair of citizenship committee for FAWCO.

We introduced a new program of Individual Membership in the FAWCO global network for people in areas that do not have a FAWCO club. We will pilot this program in Region 9.

We continued our discussion of Refugee issues with our Lebanon club. Not only has Lebanon had a huge influx of refugees from Syria, but also several of our attendees have experienced what it is like to become a refugee during several decades of conflict.

The discussion was an excellent lead into a great workshop on Personal Displacement organized by Tosin Arowojolu from Bahrain- *Empowering women and clubs in a time of crisis*. Tosin grew up in Nigeria and studied Civil Engineering in New York. She worked for the city of Los Angeles as a construction manager for the Bureau of Engineering. Tosin and her family moved to Bahrain in 2009 where she was the president of American Women's Association of Bahrain for two years. She is a certified coach, speaker and trainer with the John Maxwell Group and enjoys speaking about leadership and empowerment issues.

Everyone in our group shared very moving stories of personal displacement including: knowing families that have had accidents, divorce, deaths, domestic violence, evacuations from a country during a coup, escaping a hurricane, becoming a refugee during War, and Dianne Reed shared her experience about being shot during a terrorist attack. Everyone agreed with John Lennon who sang, "Life happens when you are busy making other plans..."

We talked about the need for planning: financially, emotionally, the logistics of a surprise displacement. We all agreed there are key elements that everyone must organize no matter where you live and take into account the laws of where you reside. It is so important to be connected to neighbors, friends and family and even with organizations like FAWCO. Louise and Tosin prepared USB sticks with resources, articles, and plans for each attendee to take home with them to work with their families and to share with club members and friends.

When the meetings adjourned we spent an hour organizing and filling gift bags for two hundred women refugees at the CRP community center. The former AWA Dubai generously donated the jute bags. Monica, Judy, and Theresa carried the bags to Amman. All attendees also brought extra boxes and suitcases with items for the "Woman to Woman" goody bags. Items included: soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes,

combs, wipes, hand lotions, lip balm, tissues, notepads and pens, tea, chocolates, biscuits, airline kits, emery boards and scarves.

We delivered the bags on Sunday afternoon to an enthusiastic crowd. Two hundred women were invited to the distribution and over three hundred showed up. It was well organized, very emotional for all of us, and we would have loved to be able to give more if we had more to give.

On Sunday morning we also visited the Al Bac'q refugee camp outside of Amman. It is one of the oldest camps in Jordan and settled by Palestinian refugees. We brought material, embroidery threads and canvas to a sewing co-op. The Co-op also had a nursery school and we were invited to participate in an art project with the little ones.

The 2014 region 9 conference in Amman was intense with the subject matters we discussed and with the projects and people with which we engaged. But we also squeezed in some fun. On Friday evening we were the guests of Amanda and Samir from CRP for wine and Mezze at their country home. It was a lovely evening. After filling bags and lunch, many of us visited the ancient Citadel in Amman and viewed the roman amphitheater. We had a glorious sunset. From the Citadel we found our way to Wadi Finan Art gallery. We were invited by the owner who Dianne had met several weeks earlier in the UAE. Jordanian hospitality is legendary and we were treated to a magical evening at Suha's gallery.

It takes a team to create the magic of a Regional meeting. Thanks go to:

- Therese Hartwell for ground work in April and organizing Volunteer project and panel.
- Theresa Dommatt for the beautiful invitation.
- Renuka Matthews for managing registrations.
- Pat Sedberry for the Directory extraordinaire and admin.
- Sue Quinn for researching tour options.
- Tosin Arowajulo of Bahrain for presenting the workshop on Personal Displacement.
- AWA Dubai for the Bags for "Woman to Woman".
- And all the attendees for giving their time, money, gift items and hearts for this special conference.