FAWCO Region 4 Meeting

November 7-9

The Hague, The Netherlands

**Reach Out: Shared activities/events among Region 4 clubs**

Mary Adams, facilitator

**Description:** Dream café session. Participants were asked to consider successes of regional collaboration in 2019 to prepare a FAWCO Conference speech. A hand out was distributed with specific considerations. After writing their notes, participants were asked to share their dreams.

**Summary:**

1. Create a regional collaboration role per club. This can be done through a regional workshop that develops a consistent roles and responsibility description. This role should be linked to FAWCO as a partner entity. Dream recommendation:
* Practical small steps toward collaboration should be focused on networking and relationship-building activities within the region.
1. The regional rep role must be seen as motivational and exciting rather then time-consuming. A dream example:
* “All Hands on (the same) Deck” approach for fundraising and conference events that include project teams per club.
* A rotating host concept that enables key events to be co-created using local best practices so that “regular” organizers get the opportunity to participate as an attendee and provide feedback.
1. The collaboration strategy should enable individual clubs to expand the impact of key interests and events through collaboration as a region. (i.e. win/win) Dream examples of value include:
* Developing individual club heart pillow projects into a regional Caring Hearts project.
* The Benelux “shares” our kids between the clubs. Our geographic proximity enables the kids to travel easily throughout region 4 to spend two days in each member club city providing Help at Home (local charity and program outreach).
1. Regular inter-club Communication will be a critical success factor. Consider Facebook, Skype, newsletters, etc. to overcome physical distance.
2. Clubs should consider developing a regional corporate sponsorship policy that enables and secures higher levels of funding for regional events, more participation in local philanthropy efforts in branch offices in the same cities as clubs and the ability to promote membership linked to corporate HR departments.
3. Clubs should consider that the development and education grant winners can become empowered women by adopting an attitude of making their world a better place and considering in-country products such as heart pillow workshops.

**Dream 1:**

* Heart Pillow Workshop Conference: Meet for 2 days and discuss tips, best practices and lessons learned.
* Accessory Auction: Meet 1 day to gather inventory (donations)
* Joint projects to give back to the community such as animal protection and human rights.

**Dream 2:**

* Regional communication not seen as extra work, but an added benefit. Communication includes: Facebook Page for region 4, monthly newsletter with regional info, an email group for Presidents/Fawco and Events/other and a monthly club-sharing article in all club newsletters.
* Share best practices that include: ideas for fundraising events from other clubs, rotating big social events within the clubs.
* Heart pillows: shared best practices, share “do day”, shared corporate contacts and support
* Key barrier: overcoming profit distribution from regional events (who gets what?)
* Impact is the support felt by club volunteers and board members.

**Dream 3:**

Collaboration means that I would foresee excellent communication vehicles using new technologies that facilitate greater communication between and throughout the clubs; yhis is the biggest critical success factor for good collaboration.

Collaboration also includes regional interaction with corporations to create a single outreach program based on regional needs and support.

**Dream 4:**

In 2015, Region 4 selected their target project to be women@home, which then was selected by FAWCO Foundation as the new global Target Project.

In 2019, Region 4 conducts quarterly and biannual pillow parties; which we now call Caring Hearts. We have a regional newsletter with a blurb each month with an update.

Major impacts are:

* Yearly fundraising activities
* Quarterly newsletters
* Yearly activity in conjunctions with fundraising
* Collaboration between our Embassies to unite AWC members in our host countries that extends to the Royal Family
* Boards are seen as highly successful and making a significant positive impact for members.

**Dream 5:**

In 2019, the Heart and Mind Gala is held simultaneously with a video conference connection shown at each venue raising money together for a cause – bidding international is possible. We can accomplish this through regional corporate spnosrs such as Shell, Unilever, Hotel chains, etc.

Clubs have formed event project teams. Within each club are representatives that meet regularly to discuss details and logistics. This includes communications for regional PR such as press releases to create awareness and attract new members. US Embassies and Consulate Generals are involved.

**Dream 6:**

In 2019, individual member knowledge is fostered and supported via shared outings and events that have created a bond between clubs. With this bonding, individual members feel a sense of camaraderie. With camaraderie comes a pool of talent to plug into larger events. Larger events offer the opportunity to fund raise to support the community. Fundraising means not only money- but also establishing relationships that help make the world a better place.

**Dream 7:**

In 2019, clubs collaborate by making excursions to each club’s home city with an overnight visit to explore the city, share experiences, expand horizons and connect.

In communications, we have learned and shared best practices between our clubs and how to handle regional events. The overall impact of collaboration is that the clubs in the Benelux are closely drawn together. A key milestone was getting members to commit to traveling to visit each other, and welcoming club members to their cities and events. This has overcome the barrier of only a few “regulars” attending all club events.

**Dream 8:**

In 2019, here are the characteristics of FAWCO region 4:

* Local and regional memberships
* More joint events reaching a larger groups
* Members from sister clubs can attend other club events and get special member discounts
* More sharing of skills/capacity of members between clubs
* Targeting international companies to raise membership levels and seek sponsorship
* Clubs marketed as a potential benefit to a new city
* Create a new Board role: a person who reaches out to companies and seeks connections t6o increase membership
* Regional clubs and local branches of multi-nationals do joint philanthropic activities

**Dream 9:**

In 2019,the biggest barrier that Region 4 overcame was time. Time impacts effective communication. It was decided to focus on one major collaborative goal than a multitude of small objectives. One goal provided a clean line of thought for the clubs and FAWCO to get *All Hands on (the same) Deck.* The region and FAWCO now work as a single organism to support projects such as Le Grand Ball.

Our greatest achievement was Le Grand Ball – with over 300 members from region 4, the US Ambassador/Consul General, Dutch dignitaries and other key guests in attendance. This was accomplished in simultaneous local satellite events per member city and billed as “American Friends of Benelux.” This event raised money for FAWCO as part of the Backing Women campaign with an international auction.

The obstacles that we overcame for the ball included:

* Using the internet to overcome physical distance in bringing people together for event planning
* Unfamiliarity with clubs about their cities
* The burden of one club doing everything
* Recruiting volunteers

The bottom line (gala, project, etc) is that FAWCO and the clubs must work together to promote American Friendship in region 4 as a common goal.

**Dream 10:**

In 2019, region 4 has created a Youth Program. The Benelux “shares” our kids between the clubs. Our geographic proximity enables the kids to travel easily throughout region 4 to spend two days in each member club city providing help at home (local charity and program outreach).

**Dream 11:**

In 2019 – Region 4 empowers women! Regional members who support outside charities through FAWCO grants have taken inspiration from empowering women. For SPOSA Child in the Philippines, all the sponsored girls aim to make the world a better place by: giving workshops, speech enhancement, spreading the news that they are there to fight for what has already been done.

Heart pillow workshops extend outside our club circles and are now being produced in The Philippines. There is enough manpower and supply of materials so that all that is needed are sponsors and friends. For fundraising, we use the talents in The Philippines for media and to promote heart pillows.