

WIL E-News

MARCH 2017

WIL TARGETS INDIA FOR THE NEXT VILLAGE BANK

WIL's Microfinance Committee selected India as the focus of WIL's next empowerment bank. It is the world's largest democracy with a Constitution that grants certain rights to women, including property rights, but for large swaths of the population these rights are still illusory. The country's grinding poverty, especially in rural areas, hits women the harder because of cultural practices that still persist. Loans have enabled women to sell milk because they were able to buy a cow. Others have been able to buy materials so they can use their sewing and weaving skills to generate income. Still others have been able to purchase start up inventory to sell products at market stalls and open small grocery stores. For some rural women purchasing a bicycle was critical to getting their wheat to market.

The Committee has a goal of funding two banks in 2017 and will soon begin to explore funding an empowerment bank in Peru.

WIL REACHES WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES IN SIERRA LEONE THROUGH THE PATRICIA KIND FAMILY FOUNDATION

The \$5,000 funding was made possible by a grant from the Patricia Kind Family Foundation following a recommendation from our WIL member, Sharon Kind, who is a trustee of the foundation. Street Child is a UK charity which has been working in Sierra Leone since 2008 to protect vulnerable children. Street Child developed a Family Business Program through which they support the primary caregiver, usually women, by helping them start or grow a micro business whose profits will keep the child in school.

\$ 7,500 IN EMPOWERMENT GRANTS AWARDED

Adele Lindemeyer recently announced empowerment grants awarded to 8 organizations whose focus is on improving healthcare, education and leadership for

women and girls. For example, in the post-conflict area of Senegal the WIL grant will be used to purchase packaging and promotional materials for handmade soap products, as well as for travel costs for the disabled women to sell their products at local fairs. In India the grant will enable the hiring of two assistant teachers to serve in their primary schools, and in Kosovo WIL's grant will be used for a five day capacity building and leadership program.

WIL AMBASSADORS TRAVEL TO GHANA FOR KNOWLEDGE AND SERVICE

Nine WIL women travelled to Ghana in early November to gain firsthand knowledge of the hardships that women and girls endure. Providing service was part of our agenda. WIL members shared their experiences with the Afafanto Scholars and the Larabanga village women. Forty-three women attended Carol Cunningham's presentation on a new process for making fuel. Afterwards, the women broke up into smaller groups for a discussion on how the village women can capitalize on this idea in Larabanga to earn money and save the environment at the same time. The village women were energized. The idea that they could earn money and save the environment at the same time energized the village women and men alike. It will be exciting to see how they move forward with what Carol shared with them

CLOSING IN ON 100

We are very close to our goal of 100 members and hope you will help us surpass the goal this year! There are still 2 programs and a members party coming up but the membership dues have been cut in half - only \$100.00 for new and renewing members and \$50.00 for students. So, tell a friend what a great organization we are, bring a friend to a program, and encourage everyone to join WIL. (And watch for new membership options for next year!) Complete information and enrollment are available through our website at www.wil-gp.org/join-midyear-special.

**Watch for the Power of 10 –
WIL celebrating our 10th Anniversary year!**

Women International Leaders (WIL) of Greater Philadelphia is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization committed to empowering women in developing countries. Members support developing Village Banks with microfinance loans, training programs, artisanal collectives, education and health initiatives, that raise women's economic and social status, promote self-determination and help women become community leaders.

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