



**WIL E-News**

**NOVEMBER 2016**



## 400 WOMEN ACHIEVE ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE THROUGH WIL SUPPORT

Women have been critical contributors to developing countries' economic growth and are estimated to represent over half of entrepreneurs; however, due to limited education and business skills, cultural impediments, and lack of access to banking, women are limited to small enterprises in an informal sector.



Since 2008, Women International Leaders of Greater Philadelphia (WIL) has taken the lead to establish 15 “village banks” that provide microfinancing to women in 13 developing countries - Ghana, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Tanzania, Haiti, the Philippines, Dominican Republic, Kenya, South Africa, Sierra Leone, Mexico, Zimbabwe and Uganda. These women are now the new micro-entrepreneurs for their families and communities. And we won't stop there...

## CAMBODIA IS 2017 TARGET

Cambodia, which has a population close to 16 million and a GDP growth of 7% last year, according to the World Bank, still faces development challenges in the areas of education, health and infrastructure. Almost 17% of their population lives below the poverty line and 90% of the poor live in the countryside. WIL has committed to establish a Village Bank in 2017, providing critical capital to women.

## LEADERS TRAVEL TO GAIN INSIGHT

This month, ten leaders from the WIL board and membership will travel to Ghana to meet with village women from the area where WIL established a microfinance bank. We will learn more about their businesses and explore strategies for microfinancing as well as speak with experts in Ghanaian economics to find other ways to support women's empowerment.

## WHAT DO THE COUNTRIES OF SIERRA LEONE, NIGERIA AND HAITI HAVE IN COMMON?

These developing countries are just three of eight that were selected by WIL to receive empowerment grants in 2016 totaling \$6,000 for critical life needs. With seed funding, a children's library was built with an English language-learning program; first-time water purification system was developed to distribute clean water to 2500 women; a cervical cancer screening program was expanded in an area with a



high incidence of this cancer; and 300 women and girls participated in workshops to address teen pregnancy and combat sexual assault and abuse. These examples demonstrate the continued impact of WIL's grant program on international efforts to empower women and girls.

## MORE THAN JUST MONEY

Although microfinance is a major focus of WIL, active service and hands-on support in our local community also play an important role. Many WIL members have invaluable expertise to share in building our neighborhoods. Recently our involvement included helping the Nationalities Service Center (NSC) with welcoming and gathering supplies for refugees arriving in the city; consulting with NSC staff on phone bank operations, fund-raising and marketing strategies. Several WIL members consulted with Schools for Sustainability to enhance their environmental curricula. We even pitched in on a walk/run event to help raise money for a new shelter for trafficked girls and young women.

## GUEST SPEAKERS, NETWORKING AND GOOD WINE...

WIL members strive to educate themselves and others about the challenges to women's empowerment. Regular meetings and special guest lecturers help members learn about women's global issues and develop solutions to the challenges women face. Recently, we sponsored a lecture on the crisis of women and girls in Syrian refugee camps and how a local Philadelphia organization, Narenj Tree, provides emergency assistance, medical and basic supplies. WIL contributed a small grant to this organization as well as suggestions for expanding, strengthening and leveraging

their governance structure.

Visit our website [www.wil-gp.org](http://www.wil-gp.org), to learn how you can have an impact in our community and in the world.

Better yet, become a WIL member and join us at our annual Members Holiday Party on December 1 at a private home in Queen Village, from 5:00-8:00 pm. You'll meet many wonderful and committed women, just like you!

Get more details and register by clicking on link: [Annual Holiday Party](#)

Location will be provided upon your registration.

*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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