

SI Adelaide March Meeting

In March, the club held its Business Meeting at Namaste Nepalese restaurant in Duthy St Parkside. Here's the link to our facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/SISWPAdeelaide/>

At the end of last year sadly, our relationship with the RobRoy Hotel came to an end, so we had to find a new venue, which we've done. This will be the Cumberland Arms Hotel in Waymouth Street. We think this will be a very happy new partnership for us.

However, we decided to have our March meeting at Namaste because last year when our club held a movie fundraiser for Nepal, this restaurant gave us several vouchers for prizes. We wanted to repay some of their generosity. The evening was lovely, the food delicious and the speakers, Susanne Harris and Cheryl Caldwell, the local co ordinators for Days for Girls, were inspirational. Their organisation provides sustainable hygiene packs for women (post birthing) and girls, during menstruation.

<http://www.daysforgirls.org/#!australia/c22pk>

PHOTO

Susanne outlined the genesis of DforG. An American woman, Celeste Mergans was travelling in Africa, where she became aware of women and girls sitting in huts on cardboard during their periods. They also used grass, leaves and sometimes stones (as tampons). Obviously there are a lot of taboos about menstruation, too. Women and girls can be relegated in isolation to an outside "hut" for the length of their period.

This struck a chord with Celeste so she and her friends supplied sanitary products for the women and of course, this was not the answer. (Not the least being, their disposal.)

So...she developed the current product - after 27 changes - launched the first kits in 2011 in Fiji. A washable, reusable, sustainable product.

Some of the problems for girls going to school are the lack of separate toilets and lack of water. Girls miss up to 3 months a year - just menstruating. Less schooling = greater poverty and earlier marriage (menstruation = marriage, regardless of age).

So - inadequate menstruation management spawns all of the issues listed below

- Less: Education
 - Future income
 - Days in isolation
 - Loss of days to infection
 - Sexual exploitation (products are offered in exchange for sex)

Problems overcome by D for G products -

- Separate toilets
- Adequate water
- Garbage disposal

Kits consist of -

- Drawstring bag containing-
- 2 moisture barrier shields
- 8 liners
- 2 pairs of knickers
- 1 washcloth
- 2 Ziploc plastic bags
- Soap

Kits last 3 years, save money (if sanitary products are available), save on waste, meet cultural and environmental needs, are a solution in remote areas and are made in a larger size for post-natal use. Girls receive education on the optimal use of the pads, including how to wash them if there is little available water (hence the Ziploc bags) and because they are dark colours, they are inconspicuous if hung to dry.

The kits are given to the girls and the organization runs on raised money and donations. They are made by volunteers.

We gave a donation of \$100.00 to Susanne at the end of this very interesting and well-illustrated