

President's Report

Dear Zontians

October is shaping up to be a busier month for our club with the Fashion showcase on Sun 12 October. I know many members and particularly Maggie Williams have been very busy with organizing this event, which should be very professional, an excellent fundraiser for the Anglicare Home Away from Homelessness project to build residential facilities for homeless women, and an enjoyable event that will highlight Zonta.

It is pleasing to see the end result of the fundraising contributions from last year's Project Now fashion parade. The accommodation wing at Moonyah run by the Salvation Army to house women in the recovery program from alcohol and drug misuse has been completed, and is due to be opened later this month. The Rotary Club of Brisbane Planetarium has invited Zontians to join them at Moonyah for a breakfast meeting on 13 November and to tour the new facility.

There was a good response to the recent membership survey, which will assist the planning meeting to be held at 6.30pm Monday 13 October. In addition we will be asking members to expend some of their creative skills over the next six weeks to assist with providing items for sale at a Christmas fair in late November or early December. All ideas and suggestions are welcome.

Look forward to seeing as many members as possible next Monday

Regards
Maree

Zonta International Response to Ebola in Liberia

Dear Zontians,

We are reminded daily via the news media of the magnitude of the Ebola outbreak and its devastating effects in West Africa, particularly in Liberia – the site of the Zonta-supported Liberia Fistula Project. Like you, I am concerned about the fistula survivors we are committed to helping, the medical staff caring for them, and all Liberians who are threatened by this deadly disease.

In situations like this one, our first instinct is to ask how we can help; however, we need to be mindful of our mission and limitations. Zonta International is not a relief agency. As an organization, we do not have the human or financial resources to take action when humanitarian or natural disasters occur. For that purpose, we do have an [Emergency and Disaster Funds Policy](#), which is available for you on the Zonta International website.

We remain committed to sharing any updates on the project in Liberia as we receive them. UNFPA, our partner in Liberia shared the report – "[Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak: Overview of needs and requirements](#)". On pages 24 and 25, you will find information specifically on Liberia. I am scheduled to speak to our contacts at UNFPA this Friday, 26th of September, and will share any additional information I receive after that call.

Warm regards, Maria Jose Landeira Oestergaard
President, Zonta International Foundation

The deadline for recording your intended absence from the dinner meeting is 9am on the Friday before. Failure to notify Jenny in time will mean you will still have to pay the cost of the dinner (\$43), since the Club will be charged for it regardless.



The yellow rose,
Zonta's symbol

Inside

- Breast cushions
- Positive investment in girls
- UN International Day of the Girl Child

Date Claimers

**October 13th,
6.30pm USC
Dinner and Planning
Meetings**

Dinner Apologies:

Apologies go to **Jenny Grant-Taylor** 33533591 or 0417745919 or jgrant-t2@bigpond.com

no later than 9am on the Friday preceding dinner meetings. Please let Jenny know beforehand if you:

- are bringing a guest
- have special dietary needs
- are returning after an absence

**Wed 29th October
Board Meeting
6pm
Ashgrove Library**

As I walked out the door toward the gate that would lead to my freedom, I knew if I didn't leave my bitterness and hatred behind, I'd still be in prison.

Nelson Mandela

Breast Cushion Bonanza

A couple of weeks ago, Margaret, Karen, Trish, Lynette Liddle, and Lyn Hill got together at my home to complete another batch of breast cushions and drain bags that I had made. Demand has been increasing, as Princess Alexandra Hospital would now like to take as many as ZCBN has in stock. Since June, they have received 78 cushions and 30 drain bags (photo below). Earlier this year, the Royal Brisbane was given 30 when they had run out and needed an immediate top-up. QE2 has also been given some. So far this year, the club has donated 116 breast cushions.

The need for breast cushions will continue, so I hope to be able to organise another “breast cushion day” before the end of the year. Willing helpers will be welcome.

Anne Vinning



International Day of the Girl Child

11 October



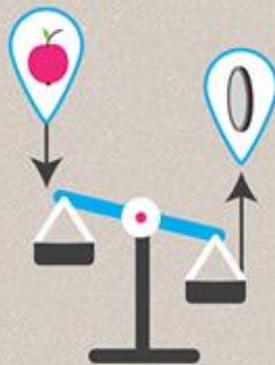
Investing in girls is the **right** and **smart** thing to do

Investing in education and health yields **significant returns** for children.



EVERY \$1 INVESTED

in reducing chronic undernutrition can result in a return of up to \$30.¹



By reducing health **INEQUALITY**

by 1% per year, a country's annual rate of GDP growth could increase by 0.15%.²



171 MILLION

people could be lifted out of poverty if all students in low-income countries acquired basic reading skills.³

[View full infographic »](#)

Celebrating International Day of the Girl Child

**“I will keep very strong”: An Ethiopian girl fights to delay marriage
Kadiga Mohammed fought her parents' decision to have her marry an older cousin at age 16**



Photo credit: Abraham Gelaw

AFAMBO, Ethiopia – From birth, Kadiga Mohammed was set to marry her first and eldest cousin, a traditional practice known as ‘absuma’ in her community in the Afar Region of Ethiopia. When she turned 16, her parents began to prepare for the wedding. But Kadiga was filled with dread – she did not want to marry the man they had selected for her. She mustered the courage to tell them that she did not wish to go through with the marriage, an act of rebellion that enraged them. They refused her pleas to cancel the wedding. In desperation, Kadiga turned to her local district council and, later, to the district Women’s Affairs Office. She was fortunate. After her parents spoke with authorities, they relented.

A deeply rooted tradition

According to the 2011 Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey, the Afar Region has the second-highest child marriage prevalence in the country. Many parents insist their daughters marry early, fearing the girls might otherwise become pregnant before marriage, which is considered a disgrace to their families and communities. But child marriage often derails a girls’ education. “In my culture, when a girl gets married, she drops out of school and stays at home to take care of household chores,” Kadiga said. Child marriage also contributes to high rates of maternal mortality; adolescent pregnancies are higher-risk for both mothers and their babies.

Bringing change to the community

Kadiga says said was emboldened to take a stand thanks to the Programme on the Prevention of Child Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C), an initiative supported by UNFPA, with funding from the UN Association of Sweden. Her community is one of seven where the programme is being implemented, in collaboration with the Afambo District Women, Children and Youth Affairs Office. Through the programme, Kadiga’s school established a girls’ club where students discuss issues such as child marriage, FGM/C, and HIV and AIDS.

The Afambo District Women, Children and Youth Affairs Office also works with a committee of local leaders – including district officials, law enforcement personnel, religious and clan leaders, and school officials. Committee members and other leaders have received training on the harmful effects of child marriage and FGM/C, and they have agreed to work together to end these practices.

In addition, every two weeks, a community conversation is held to raise awareness of the importance of keeping girls in school and ensuring they are not married until reaching at least 18 years old. Spiritual leaders also explain that FGM/C is not condoned by religious doctrine. Still, life has not been easy for Kadiga since she refused to marry her cousin. “I am being ridiculed by the community for resisting my parents’ arrangement,” she said. Some are fearful that other girls may follow suit, she said, and a few parents have considered pulling their daughters out of her school.

No regrets

Kadiga still ended up marrying early, at age 17. But, she says, she married a man of her choosing, and she has been able to continue attending school. Today, at age 18, she is in grade 7 and continues to embrace the Programme on the Prevention of Child Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C). She has become a vocal opponent of FGM/C. Kadiga was subjected to a form of the practice – infibulation – when she was younger, and she fears the resulting scars may pose a problem when she has a baby. Because of this, she plans to deliver at a health facility, under the care of a skilled birth attendant.

“I will never subject my child to FGM/C if she happens to be a girl,” she said, “and I will teach her the consequences of the practice early on.” She says she does not regret the choices she has made. Girls sometimes approach her to tell her she is their role model. As for her critics, Kadiga shrugs off their disapproval. “All this is nothing to me. I will keep very strong and go on,” she said.

Abraham Gelaw

<http://www.unfpa.org/public/home/news/pid/17627>