SIROW Supports YWCA Southern Arizona 29th Annual Women’s Leadership Conference

SIROW’s Cate Clifton, Allison Dumka, and Courtney Waters attended the YWCA’s 29th Annual Women’s Leadership Conference on November 10th at the JW Marriott at Starr Pass. The day was packed with inspiration for taking the lead in both career and community.

The conference featured powerful keynote speakers. Brit Gilmore, President of The Giving Keys, delivered the breakfast keynote address. Brit spoke about using business to improve the world. The Giving Keys is a Los Angeles-based company that creates jewelry from recycled keys that are stamped with inspirational messages. Even more inspiring than the engraved words is the story behind the keys. Most of The Giving Keys’ employees are individuals experiencing homelessness who, through employment at the company, are getting back on their feet.

Patty Rodriguez, Senior Producer for On Air With Ryan Seacrest and co-founder of Lil’ Libros, delivered the lunch keynote address and spoke about following your passion. Lil’ Libros is a bilingual children’s books publisher featuring prominent Latino cultural figures including Celia Cruz and Frida Kahlo. In the face of rejection, Patty started her own book company so that her young son could grow up seeing himself and his culture represented in literature.

The YWCA Women’s Leadership Conference included smaller breakout sessions on topics such as running for office, achieving work/life balance, highlighting ‘localistas’ (successful Tucson women entrepreneurs), negotiation skills, overcoming self-doubt, challenging microaggressions and privilege, as well as financial planning, social media, and collaborative leadership. Two prominent themes arose throughout the event; looking inward first, and knowing your ‘why,’ or finding a strong motivating purpose in your work.

SIROW thanks the YWCA for this incredible annual event, and looks forward to supporting next year’s 30th anniversary. For more information, please visit the YWCA Southern Arizona at www.ywcatucson.org.


**Goals**

- Engage in collaborative feminist research on topics pertinent to the lives of girls, women, and families;
- Develop and conduct outreach, education, service, research, and trainings with regard to mental and physical health, sexuality, legal matters, education, workforce, equity, diversity, and other issues;
- Address social inequalities and group-based disparities;
- Examine and support women’s contribution to literature, the arts, and Southwest heritage;
- Advocate for women and families by linking researchers with community organizations and policy makers;
- Identify, illuminate, and disseminate research on girls, women, families, and gender differences.

**Addressing Gender Issues and Building Economic Capacity in Myanmar (Burma)**

The University of Arizona’s Southwest Institute for Research on Women (SIROW) continues to play a key role in the *Developing a Sustainable Seafood Industry for Burma* (also known as Myanmar) project. This project aims to improve the capacity and infrastructure of Myanmar’s sustainable seafood and fishery industry. It is funded by U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and led by Dr. Kevin Fitzsimmons (Director of the University of Arizona’s College of Agriculture and Life Sciences International Agriculture Programs and Professor of Soil, Water, and Environmental Science) in collaboration with University of Yangon in Myanmar, Pathein University in Myanmar; Auburn University in the U.S.; the private and public sectors; and several non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

SIROW’s Dr. Korchmaros recently spent time in Myanmar continuing her work to ensure gender equality in participation and benefit from the project. While in Myanmar, Dr. Korchmaros facilitated two *Gender Issues & Empowerment* workshops. One was held in the Hlaing Tharyar Township attended by female community members ages 13 to 25 years old. The other was held at Pathein University attended by undergraduate and graduate students and faculty. These workshops focused on the rights of females and males under the Myanmar constitution, societal expectations and restrictions placed on females and males associated with career options, and strategies to addressing gender-based inequality and inequity.

Dr. Korchmaros also presented on *Collaboration in Research* as a means to build economic capacity. Researchers in Myanmar face many of the same challenges faced by researchers around the world, including lack of funding, equipment, and other resources. Dr. Korchmaros discussed collaboration as a means to address these challenges and facilitate the research efforts of Myanmar scholars and professionals, effectively building their expertise and the economic capacity of Myanmar. Dr. Korchmaros presented on *Collaboration in Research* to three groups of attendees of the *Shared Experiences in Developing Sustainable Seafood in Myanmar* training conference held at Yangon University and to graduate students and faculty at Mandalay University.

SIROW is excited to be a part of such a timely multidisciplinary effort to strengthen Myanmar’s capacity for economic development and sustainability!

For more information about, please contact Dr. Korchmaros at jkorch@email.arizona.edu.

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*SIROW’s Dr. Korchmaros, Shannon Branigin (student intern), and Ei Lin (who provided translation support) with attendees of the *Gender Issues & Empowerment* workshop held in the Hlaing Tharyar Township.*

*SIROW’s Dr. Korchmaros with attendees of the *Gender Issues & Empowerment* workshop held at Pathein University.*