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Helsinki, Finland

**Education - Interactive Panel**  
**“Putting Promises Into Practice”**

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The distinguished panel of Margaret Alderson, Lynn Dunning, Marie-Jeanne Bosia Berberat and Jeannine Jacquemin explored the role of education in “Putting Promises into Practice” to assist in gaining gender equality. The panel was ably moderated by Eileen Mitchell.

The thrust of the panel was that it is imperative that girls, in order to gain self esteem and become self confident and productive members of society, must be afforded the opportunity to gain an education. “Literacy and communication in the hands of a few means power over many.” “Education must be accessible to girls - not just girls accessible to education.” In order to attain gender equality, we need to educate men to be sensitive and caring as well as women to be self confident.

Girls are often subject to discrimination and sexual violence. How can behaviour be changed? “EDUCATION, EDUCATION, EDUCATION” An educated woman is less likely to submit to practices harmful to herself and her children. In the future, interactions of human beings are going to be more important than ever - therefore, teachers can no longer be just “purveyors of knowledge”, but must work with students in an interactive way in order to help both girls and boys learn the “art” of communicating with each other and solving problems created.

Many of the jobs young people of today will undertake haven't been invented yet! So these children must have the skills to think creatively in order to deal with the unpredictability and uncertainty of society. These include literacy, numeracy, and technology skills. They need to develop self-confidence and the ability to share ideas with others. Quality of relationships will be critical.

How can Seroptimists - as individuals - and members of clubs, work on changing curriculums to meet the needs of our children? We must educate our sons in a different manner and help them develop different attitudes. Become involved in community schools. Work on support projects at the club level.

“Without democracy there cannot be equal rights: There cannot be democracy without education.” There are no quick fixes. It was suggested that we each obtain a copy of the “Platform for Action” which offers ideas of how we can help.

A challenge was given - as we leave to go back home, think about how you yourself can help put into practice some of the promises to help obtain gender equality.