

## Strength in teamwork

**E**ast Midlands networkers have forged an alliance with an international charity in a determined drive to empower women at home and overseas.

Lincoln based Angels Bring Business (ABB) has officially teamed up with Women for Women International (WfWI) in a major push to inspire and encourage more females to fightback from life crises and become economically independent.

WfWI International was established about 20 years ago by Zainab Salbi and works to provide women survivors of war with the resources they need to move out of poverty to a state of stability and self-sufficiency.

The organisation works in eight different countries, including Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria, Rwanda and South Sudan. To date it has helped more than 384,000 women, by training them in life skills.

ABB was established in the depths of the recession by



*ABB members at a recent meeting.*

Wendy

Spalding-Siracusa and Josephine Peacock who are passionate about supporting women in business, whether they are at the start-up stage or a leading player in an established business.

When they started Angels Bring Business, Wendy and Josephine had a vision of partnering with a charity which shared our vision and ethos on an international scale.

“It was one of those serendipitous moment when Josephine and I found that, independently, we had both come across and wanted to support the same charity.”

Josephine said: “It shouldn’t matter where you empower women to be economically independent, that’s just about geography. We face similar challenges and those of us, who are the lucky ones, can grow by giving back to those less fortunate.”

Supporters of WfWI’s work can already sponsor a woman, for £22 per month, to help her move to self-sufficiency.

Both ABB and WfWI are now getting behind the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative, which is being spearheaded by William Hague, Foreign Secretary and Angelina Jolie, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

WfWI director Shivonne Graham believes that rape in war is an issue on which we can make a difference and which will, in turn, unlock progress in raising the status of women in their local community and thereby benefit the community as a whole.

In addition to working on her own business, Josephine assists as a counsellor at Women’s Aid which supports victims of domestic abuse. She sees, at grassroots level, how sexual violence shatters womens’ confidence and leaves them isolated.

Many people would say that war rape is similarly distressing – but on a much bigger scale.

Through Wendy’s work at solicitors Sills & Betteridge, Josephine has been able to connect with Chrystal Theofanous who heads up the “domestic abuse” centre of its family law department.

Chrystal and her team also represent women of forced marriages and honour-based personal attacks, where sexual violence is sometimes seen as the norm in a relationship and used to suppress the women concerned.

**Find out more about ABB at [www.angelsbringbusiness.com](http://www.angelsbringbusiness.com)**