



Hope & Homes for Children

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL RAISE £1,000,000 (1.168 000 Mio Euros) FOR WOMEN IN WAR-TORN SIERRA LEONE

Soroptimist International, the Global Women's Organisation celebrated reaching its £1 million fundraising target for Hope and Homes for Children's lifesaving work with women and children in Sierra Leone.

Soroptimist International ~~works~~ is committed to transforming the lives of women and girls across the world. Hope and Homes for Children works in ten countries across Europe and Africa, supporting the world's most vulnerable children and families. It took Soroptimists just four years to raise £1 million (1.168 000 Mio Euros) for the charity, with the funds being spent in Sierra Leone on a joint venture entitled, '*Project Sierra: a Family and a Future*'.

The hangover from Sierra Leone's bloody ten year civil war in the 1990s – in which amputation and rape were the rebels' trademarks – has all but crippled the West African nation. A legacy of poverty is destroying thousands of lives, homes, communities and families every year.

By providing healthcare, counseling, education, vocational training and access to childcare, *Project Sierra* is improving the lives of some of the most deprived women and children in Sierra Leone.

On presenting a cheque for £1 million to Hope and Homes for Children, Soroptimist International's President Alice Wells said: "Congratulations must go to all Soroptimists

worldwide for the dedication, time, money and support they've given to *Project Sierra* over the past four years.

"Visiting Sierra Leone two years ago was an incredible, rewarding experience for me.

"To hear a young woman say 'you have changed our lives' was truly heartwarming."

More than 70 per cent of Sierra Leone's population are unemployed and live below the national poverty line - surviving on just 52p a day. Life expectancy for women is 48 years and nearly a third of all children die before their fifth birthday. In partnership with Hope and Homes for Children, Soroptimist International's *Project Sierra* is tackling the country's problems head-on.

Alison Sutherland, the International Project Liaison for Soroptimist International Project Sierra, lives in Sierra Leone. Alison said: "I have seen firsthand how *Project Sierra* has made a real difference to the lives of so many women, children and their families in need. Reaching the £1 million target was an amazing innovative fundraising effort."

Anne Macdonald, *Project Sierra* Project Liaison for Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland, added: "We have travelled an amazing journey during the last four years and we are thrilled that many thousands of vulnerable families are now able to live in a stable family environment."

Thanks to support from organisations like Soroptimist International, Hope and Homes for Children had a positive impact on the lives of more than 26,000 people across the globe in 2010.

Joe Glackin, who oversees Hope and Homes for Children's work in Sierra Leone, accepted Soroptimists' cheque for £1 million on his charity's behalf.

Joe said: "*Project Sierra* is a sustainable programme that's transforming thousands of lives and we're eternally grateful to all Soroptimists for helping to fund it.

“It has enabled us to empower vulnerable young mothers, strengthen families at risk of breakdown and help young children living on the streets return home.

“The huge fundraising effort and practical support we’ve received from Soroptimist International has made an unquantifiable difference to vulnerable women and children in Sierra Leone.”

For more information about *Project Sierra* visit www.ProjectSierra.org or www.sigbi.org or www.hopeandhomes.org

Pictures:

1. and 2. Cheque l to r: Alice Wells Soroptimist International (SI) President, Joe Glackin Hope & Homes, Liz Morgan-Lewis SI Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) President, Anne MacDonald SIGBI Project Liaison, Patricia Donohue SI Americas President Kathy Kaaf SI Europe President.
3. girls at project in Bo, Sierra Leone welcoming Soroptimists
4. mother and baby

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Notes to Editors:

About Project Sierra: “A Family and a Future”

- 4 year partnership project 2007-2011 between Soroptimist International and Hope and Homes for Children. For more information visit www.projectsierra.org
- Aim - to raise £1 million (\$2million USD) to help disadvantaged women and children in Sierra Leone face their futures with confidence.
- By strengthening families at risk of breakdown, helping young children living on the streets return home and empowering vulnerable young mothers, Project

Slerra will enable more children to grow up in a caring family environment – giving them the opportunity to fulfil their potential

- A replicable project model.
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About Soroptimist International

- Soroptimist International is a global women's organisation with 90,000 members.
- Soroptimists are committed to a world where women and girls together achieve their individual and collective potential, realise aspirations and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide.
- Soroptimists inspire action and create opportunities to transform the lives of women and girls through a global network of members and international partnerships.
- For more information visit: www.soroptimistinternational.org and www.sigbi.org

About Hope and Homes for Children

- Hope and Homes for Children is a leading charity in transforming harmful and outdated childcare practices in Central and Eastern Europe and Africa.
- Hope and Homes for Children helps children grow up in loving families in their own countries by closing orphanages, preventing child abandonment and supporting families at risk of breakdown due to the pressures of poverty, conflict, disease or discrimination.
- Hope and Homes for Children works in ten countries: Belarus, Moldova, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Sudan and South Africa.
- Hope and Homes for Children's pioneering models for closing institutions are recognised as best practice by UNICEF and other international bodies.
- To help transform a child's life visit www.hopeandhomes.org
- Registered Charity No. 1089490