

PROGRAMME NEWS

No. 2, December 2009

Dear Soroptimists,

Thank you very much for your positive reaction to the Programme News! This is now our second issue and the response we have had from you so far was very encouraging. Keep giving us feedback – we are very happy to accommodate any suggestions!

PFRs

The Soroptimist year has just begun and **Programme Focus Reports** are streaming in! In the last couple of months, we registered approximately 120 PFRs from 13 Unions. This is wonderful and gives the programme team a feeling of achievement. Thank you all for reporting on your contributions towards the empowerment of women and girls within our ten objectives using **Awareness, Advocacy and Action!** This evidence of our work will strengthen our presence in international fora and within the UN agencies – making SOROPTIMIST truly a **global voice for women!**

We have also strengthened our Programme Department at the Headquarters with Megan Billings, whose time is dedicated to editing and uploading the PFRs. It is obvious that those Unions which trained their clubs on PFR submission have a very high response quote. We would therefore like to encourage all UNIONS to include a brief training session during your delegate meetings on how to do PFR reporting using the Internet. It is really simple and fun. In case you have problems, the HQ is always ready to help!

Single Clubs are still not reporting enough – which creates concerns about the reasons why. Please let us know how we can assist you in this important exercise.

SI/E Best Practice Awards

The PFRs will give us the base for selection of the **Best Practice Award**, which will be presented during the 2010 Governor's meeting in Ghent, Belgium. This year's BP brochure was highly appreciated by all clubs and we aim at improving on the layout, as we have more time for planning and designing the brochure. We are in the process of revising the criteria and will send it to all the UNIONS and Single Clubs at the beginning of the year. This will give you ample time to do the pre-selection.

PEP

The **Project Exchange Pool** is a pool or a bank in which projects can be linked together, where ideas for a joint project can be exchanged, and where assistance can be offered or asked for. The objective of this great idea is to pool resources between clubs, which have an action project and clubs which are able and willing to do fundraising for this project. Projects submitted by Soroptimist clubs will be posted on www.soroptimistsgoforwater.nl and for further questions, please contact Gerda Rosiers at gerdarosiers@hotmail.com



Human Rights Day is celebrated annually across the globe on **10 December**. The date was chosen to honour the United Nations General Assembly's adoption and proclamation of the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)** on 10 December 1948 as the first global proclamation of human rights.

Soroptimist International has celebrated 10 December for many years through special focus on different projects which is called the **“SI President's Appeal.”** The SI President selects a project to provide direct assistance to women in need. This year, SI President Hanne Jensbo has selected **“Hopes and Dreams for Everyone”** – a project to prevent human trafficking from **Moldova** by providing life-skill education and sustainable living conditions for vulnerable children. This is a continuation of the project which SI Union of Norway has successfully carried out for four years from 2005-2009 together with the SI clubs in Moldova. Further funding is urgently needed for the project to continue.

Moldovan women are trafficked to the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Western Europe. Girls and young women are trafficked within the country from rural areas to Chisinau; children are also trafficked to neighboring countries for forced labour and for the

purpose of begging. Young girls living in boarding schools are particularly exposed to the dangers of trafficking. Some are there because their parents are among the half million Moldavians who have gone abroad to find work. By the age of 16, they have left school, have no support and often, nowhere to live. President Tamara Ambroci-Ivano, Club Causeni in Moldova reports that 800,000 (men, women and children) are victims of trafficking in Moldova.

We can help make “Hopes and Dreams for Everyone” come true by donating to the “SI December 10 President’s Appeal 2009.” For more information, please see

http://www.soroptimistinternational.org/html/president_s_appeal.html

“Discrimination lies at the root of many of the world’s most pressing human rights problems. No country is immune from this scourge. Eliminating discrimination is a duty of the highest order.”

- Navi Pillay
UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

The Latest News from the Council of Europe

One of the most exciting developments for SI/E’s NGO work at the Council of Europe in recent months is that we gained eligibility to submit **collective complaints** against violations of the **European Social Charter**. The Charter defines rights and freedoms and establishes a supervisory mechanism guaranteeing their respect by the State parties.

These rights and freedoms concern all individuals in their daily existence and focus on housing, health, education, employment, social and legal protection, free movement of persons and non-discrimination.

The State Parties to the Charter must submit annual reports showing how they implement the provisions of the Charter in law and in practice. The European Committee of Social Rights (ECSR) is the body responsible for monitoring compliance in the member states which have ratified the Charter. Under the 1995 Additional Protocol providing for a system of Collective Complaints, which came into force in 1998, complaints against violations of the Charter may be lodged with the ECSR by organisations which adhere to certain criteria and have been approved for this procedure by ECSR. The ECSR examines each complaint and, if the formal requirements have been met, declares it admissible.

After submitting a formal application, SI/E achieved eligibility to lodge collective complaints in October 2009 and now plans to file a complaint – ideally together with other women’s organisations – on **equal pay for work of equal value**.

Beijing +15 / CSW

The experience of a life-time is waiting for you as a Soroptimist if you participate at the **NGO Global Forum for Women: Beijing+15 (27 & 28 February 2010)** and the fifty-fourth session of the **Commission on the Status of Women (1-12 March 2010)** at the UN Headquarters in New York.

You will be astonished at meeting so many representatives of NGOs from all over the world and you will definitely be amazed when hearing about their work to advance the status of women. You will also of course meet Sorores from all of the four Federations.

Next year’s CSW will review what has happened since Beijing 1995, the implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Representatives of ECOSOC-accredited NGOs may attend all open official meetings of the Commission.

All members are welcome to attend this exciting meeting which addresses many aspects regarding the status of women. All arrangements for travel, visa and accommodation, and other expenses, are the responsibility of the participants themselves. For pre-registration, please contact

suba@soroptimisteurope.org

In case you can’t make it, sign up with the following website, which will give you regular updates : <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing15/index.html>

We would like to encourage all of you to enjoy surfing our website www.soroptimisteurope.org.

It is updated regularly and has all the latest information and newsletters available for inspiration and sharing with potential Soroptimists. It is a great PR tool showcasing the wonderful programme work we do worldwide.

We look forward to your comments and suggestions about the Programme News.

Please send your comments directly to Suba Parthiban at suba@soroptimisteurope.org

Happy Holidays!!!

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