

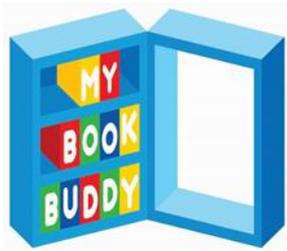
Cooperation Announced on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of International Literacy Day

**Soroptimist International of Europe partners with My Book Buddy to Combat Illiteracy**

Geneva, 7 September 2016 – Soroptimist International of Europe (SIE), the largest Federation of the worldwide organization of women in management and professions, will partner with the Dutch organization, My Book Buddy (MBB), to provide disadvantaged women and girls with greater access to books in a joint effort to combat illiteracy. ‘We are pleased to announce this partnership on the 50th anniversary of International Literacy Day,’ says SIE President Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis.

With some 34,000 women in more than 1250 clubs in 62 countries in Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Caribbean, Soroptimist International of Europe will support My Book Buddy in finding schools and refugee camps which would benefit from the unique MBB system. The concept developed by the Dutch organization involves setting up bookcases with books for children (aged 6-12) at schools and refugee camps. MBB also trains the teachers to use their library system that allows the children to borrow books and read them at home. This offers the added advantage that other family members can improve their reading skills as well. In addition, the MBB librarian training gives teachers an additional qualification.

Soroptimists around the organization will raise funds to finance the MBB library systems. One idea is to organize reading events at members’ local schools under the motto, ‘Children Read Books for Children Who Need Books’. ‘By promoting literacy we can help disadvantaged women and girls improve their lives and achieve economic empowerment,’ says SIE President de Franciscis. ‘The partnership with My Book Buddy is a win-win situation because the Soroptimist network of clubs can identify schools and refugee camps that would gain from MBB’s tried and tested library system.’



Soroptimist  International of Europe

Soroptimist International was founded in Oakland, California in 1921. Today, there are more than 75,000 members worldwide in some 3000 clubs in 123 countries. Derived from Latin *soror* (sister) *optima* (best), which is interpreted as 'the best for women', Soroptimist International sees itself as a global voice for women.

Founded in 2010, the My Book Buddy Foundation is a private non-governmental organization operating throughout the world. Since opening the first library in a primary school in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya, the My Book Buddy library system has provided access to books to more than 170,000 children to date. 'My Book Buddy believes that the collaboration with the Soroptimists in the different countries is an opportunity for so many underprivileged girls, their teachers and parents to read and open a window to the world,' notes Founder and Director of My Book Buddy Cathy Spierenburg.

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