



The Link

A global voice for women

4/2010-2011 N° 223



Governors' Meeting in Palermo
Strategic Decisions for
Our Organisation

An Interview with SI/E Presidents
On the Verge between
Present and Future

European Mentoring Programme
Positive Feedback
from All Sides

Soroptimist International (SI) is a worldwide organisation for women in management and professions, working through service projects to build a better world for women and children. There are currently over 90,000 members in more than 3,000 clubs in 124 countries.

Soroptimist International of Europe (SI/E) is one of four federations of Soroptimist International. It has some 35,000 members in over 1,200 clubs in 58 countries.

Soroptimists inspire action and create opportunities to transform the lives of women and girls through a global network of members and international partnerships. Consult our website at www.soroptimisteurope.org for more information about the aims, activities and projects that characterise our organisation.

Cover page



Mentor Eveline Bastin and her mentee Liesbeth de Waele from Belgium are just one of the tandems in the SI/E Mentoring Programme.

Photo: Sarah Vermeulen

The Link 4/2010-2011, N° 223 Quarterly magazine of Soroptimist International of Europe, published in English and French
 President: Dr Eliane Lagasse, Meerlaan 21, BE-9620 Zottegem, Belgium • Phone Private: +32 9 360 42 43, Fax: +32 9 345 85 46 • Email: elianelagasse@hotmail.com. Editor: Christine Cromwell-Ahrens, Lundsford House, Lundsford Farm, Etchingham, East Sussex TN19 7QH, United Kingdom • Phone: +44 1580 819 319, Fax +44 1580 819 077 • Email: ccromwell-ahrens@cas.de.
 Subscription forms are available on the SI/E website www.soroptimisteurope.org or from headquarters siehq@soroptimisteurope.org. A reminder to subscribers (individuals or clubs): any change of address should be communicated to SI/E headquarters in Geneva (72, route de Florissant, CH-1206 Geneva, Fax: +41 22 789 04 43). If undelivered magazines are returned because of an incorrect address, we cannot assume responsibility for re-sending.
 Subscription rates (four issues per Soroptimist year starting December to September): Club bulk subscription (minimum five) €10.00 per subscription per language. Individual subscription per language € 12.50 (for airmail please add € 5.50 per subscription).

Note from the Editor

LOOK WHAT YOU ARE MISSING!

Since my appointment as Editor of *The Link*, I have been very lucky to have received steadfast support from SI/E IPP Mariet Verhoef-Cohen and SI/E President Eliane Lagasse. It has been a pleasure working with both of them over the past four years. Our only regret has been that *The Link* reaches such a limited number of Soroptimists in our Federation – in fact, just about one quarter of our membership! We know from the survey conducted a few years ago that the main reason why subscriptions are so low is the language barrier. Therefore, to draw more members' attention to our magazine, we decided to have this issue published in German and Italian, the third and fourth largest language groups in our Federation, in addition to our English and French versions. The costs are fully covered by *The Link* budget. So, we hope those of you who are able to

read your Federation magazine for the first time will see why it is a valuable source of interesting information about SI, SI/E and our work!

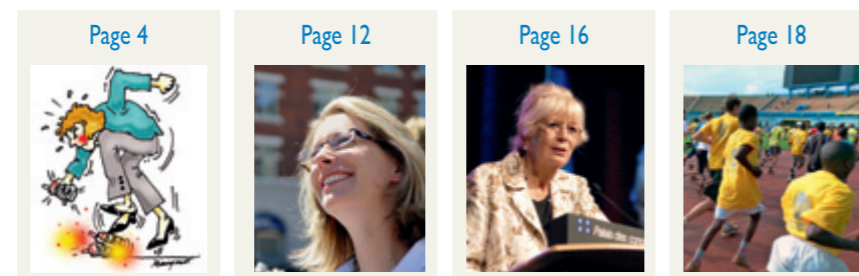
Heartfelt sympathy for SI Norway

On a more personal note, may I express my deepest condolences to Soroptimists who have been personally affected by the horrific tragedies in Norway. Words feel so inadequate in such times of grief and disbelief, but please know that our thoughts are with you. As my friend Margaret Støle Karlsen says, 'Our response will be more democracy and more openness.' That is why we salute Norway and Norwegians!

Christine Cromwell-Ahrens, Editor, *The Link*

Contents

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|----|---|----|
| 2011 Governors' Meeting in Palermo | 4 | European Mentoring Programme | 12 |
| SI/E Peace Prize 2011 | 6 | SI Convention in Montreal | 14 |
| SI/E Best Practice Awards | 7 | Thoughts from the Outgoing SI President | 16 |
| Interview with SI/E Presidents | 8 | Federation News | 18 |
| Soroptimist Project Matching | 10 | News from Unions and Clubs | 20 |



Dear Soroptimist Friends

I started to write this letter a few days after the terrible tragedy in Norway when in a bomb attack and shooting spree a madman killed 78 people, many of them very young men and women. In the immediate aftermath, the media virtually reported hourly on the event, and there was all kind of speculation. Two conclusions stood out in the turmoil of information: at first, everyone assumed it must be a terrorist attack by Muslim extremists, but once it was known the suspect was a blond Norwegian man, everybody agreed that he must be mad.

In fact, all of us wanted him to be different, to have some sort of psychiatric disorder because it is far too painful to accept that our modern society, which puts up with open intolerance, extreme right-wing views and xenophobic ideas, could be partly responsible. The most violent and aggressive discussions are often held today under the guise of freedom of speech and opinion, and for some unstable people the line between words and actions is easily crossed.

A lack of tolerance

With communication and access to even the most remote areas so easy and with so many people travelling and migrating, you would expect that regular contact with different cultures, religions and traditions would engender tolerance and acceptance. Sadly, the reverse seems to be true; our society lacks tolerance, is not interested in different points of view and often shows no respect for 'strangers'.

The keynote speaker at the SI Convention in Montreal who impressed me most, former Governor General of Canada Adrienne Clarkson said: 'You don't need to love or even like everybody, but you must be curious about everybody and talk to them as a way to understand and bridge the differences.'

Perhaps I am being naïve, but I think organisations like Soroptimist International are useful in bringing people together. Our members come from all over the world, have different political and religious beliefs, different social and cultural backgrounds, but they share the same vision: to empower women and girls. And they work towards the same goal: to provide help and support for those in need.



United in the same spirit

The Convention was the best example of this hypothesis: the some 1000 very diverse women who came together and for three days were united in the same spirit of service to the community, in appreciation of the projects implemented by their sisters worldwide and in their determination to develop new and better projects.

SI accepted the mission to educate women as leaders and to assure that these women will, in turn, educate their children to become more open, tolerant and peaceful adults. Women can change the world and we Soroptimists are making our contribution.

This is the last President's Letter of my biennium. Although the message of this letter is not particularly cheerful, I can assure you that the presidency itself was a positive experience and I have enjoyed – almost – every moment of it. I had a wonderful Board, and it was a pleasure to work with them. Executive Director Jenifer and her staff in Geneva offered extraordinary support, and I received so much friendship from the members that it makes all efforts and nights spent at my PC more than worthwhile.

In conclusion, I wish Kathy Kaaf and her team all the best for their term of office.

In friendship
 Eliane Lagasse,
 SI/E President 2009 – 2011





Talented artist and Norwegian Governor Margaret Støle Karlsen captured the confusion with the electronic voting system.

STRATEGIC DECISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

This year's Governors' Meeting (GM) took place in May on the beautiful Italian island of Sicily. However, the full agenda calling for some difficult decisions to be made on the future of the organisation left no time for sunning at the pool.

SI/E Governors' Meeting in Palermo

The GM weekend began with a reception at the 14th century Palazzo Steri in Palermo. Professor Roberto Lagalla, Rector of the University of Palermo, greeted the SI/E delegation on behalf of the city. SI Palermo President Margherita La Loggia-Polizzi then welcomed the Soroptimist guests, before renowned Italian harpist and Soroptimist Elena Zaniboni-Giambanco gave an enchanting performance. A reception was held in the magical courtyard. Special thanks goes to IPP SI Italy Giovanna Catinella Dara for her 'behind the scenes' help in organising this event and the entire weekend, which SI/E President Eliane Lagasse acknowledged with a bouquet at the Gala Dinner.

SI/E President Eliane Lagasse began the programme on Saturday morning by welcoming the 176 participants and, in particular, the official guests, including SI President Hanne Jensbo, SIA President Sharon Fisher and SIGBI President Liz Morgan-Lewis, each of whom later gave interesting and enlightening presentations to the assembly. Several SI/E Past Presidents, SI officers and Silent Observers were also in attendance.

After the roll call and candle ceremony, President Eliane thanked the Governors for wading through the extensive material in preparation of the

meeting. She stressed that the proceedings of the GM are so important because SI/E must evolve in order to achieve continued success. 'If we want to be the most popular organisation for today's professional women, we must face today's challenges and bring solutions adapted to the current circumstances.' She went on to reiterate why it is crucial to have a strong and capable team at SI/E HQ. 'At this GM we will discuss how to make SI/E more efficient and better adapted to the needs of members.'

Election of new SI/E Board

The Governors accepted the agenda with the requested changes and adopted the minutes of the previous Governors' Meeting in Ghent. The next point of order was the elections. The Governors elected the following Board Members: SI/E President elect Ulla Madsen; SI/E Vice Presidents Christine Peer (1st VP), Gerda Huisman, Asha Abdulrahman and Leena Viitaniemi; SI/E Programme Director Ulrike Neubert and SI/E Assistant Programme Director Ann-Christine Söderlund; SI/E Extension Committee Maria Luisa Frosio (Chair), Daniela Stern and Nilgün Özler; SI/E Constitution & By-Laws Committee Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis (Chair), Renata Trottmann-Probst and Lis Ehmer-Olesen; SI/E Scholarship Committee Annabeth Studer Meyer (Chair), Rodica Maciucă and Nelleke Fonteijn; SI/E Finance Controller Hafdis Karlsdóttir.

The following appointees were then confirmed: SI/E Editor of *The Link* Christine Cromwell-Ahrens; SI/E Public Relations Officer Tuula Puntila; SI/E Extension & Follow-Up Africa Officer Maria Soumonni; SI/E Project Manager for Africa Mariet Verhoef-Cohen; SI/E OSCE Representatives Irena Coufalova (Prague) and Vera Gregor-Voha (Vienna); SI/E EWL Representative Renata Smith-Kubat; SI/E CoE Representative Françoise Ferey; SI/E Secretary General Beate Speicher; and finally, SI/E Consultants to the SI Board Meeting in Montreal Hafdis Karlsdóttir and Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis for Finance and Constitution questions, respectively.

Dues increase approved

The Governors subsequently voted on a number of proposals and amendments to the By-Laws, several of which are discussed in separate articles in this issue. Details will be provided by your Union and Single Clubs. The GM accepted all SI/E Board Member reports, but not without extensive scrutiny and discussion. The most heated debate centred on the increases of SI/E and SI dues, which were eventually approved by a narrow margin.

Action Fund grants to nine Clubs totalling €43,892 were proposed by the Board and accepted by the Governors. The GM also approved the 13 Scholarship Grants suggested by the Board.

Besides the awarding the SI/E Peace Prize to Sylvia Borren, the honouring Roswitha Ott for her years of service to Africa and the presentation of the SI/E Best Practice and Water Prizes (all covered in separate articles), a further highlight of the GM was the leadership training led by SIA Executive Director Leigh Wintz.

After the Governors have had the opportunity to comment on the draft, the minutes of the GM will be available on the Members Area of the SI/E website. The next Governors' Meeting will be held in Budapest, Hungary, from 14th-15th July 2012.

In her opening speech to the governors, SI/E President Eliane Lagasse stressed the importance of modernising our organisation.



SI/E President 2011-2013 Kathy poses with some of her newly elected SI/E Board.

A PASSIONATE ADVOCATE FOR PEACE

The winner of the 2011 Peace Prize of Soroptimist International of Europe, which includes an endowment of €20,000, is peace activist Sylvia Borren from the Netherlands.



Conferred every two years, the SI/E Peace Prize honours people or organisations deserving special recognition for their remarkable achievements to promote peace. Past recipients are Carla del Ponte, former Chief Prosecutor of the UN International Criminal Tribunal, Vera Bohle, consultant at the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, and Valdete Idrizi, peace activist from Kosovo. This year's Peace Prize was presented to



With her vast experience and dedication to promoting peace, Sylvia Borren is a worthy winner of the 2011 SI/E Peace Prize.

The SI/E Peace Prize sculpture was designed and created by Soroptimist Bettina Scholl-Sabbatini.

Sylvia Borren at the SI/E Governors' Meeting in Palermo, Italy, on 28th May 2011.

The prizewinner is not unknown to Soroptimists: Sylvia Borren gave an inspiring speech at the 2009 SI/E Congress in Amsterdam, which focused on water issues. Borren has had a long and impressive career as a leader in civil society and global movements through her commitment to fighting poverty and her efforts to further democracy and gender equality. As a long-time Executive Director of Oxfam-Novib and Co-Chair of World Connectors she has put many of her ideas successfully into practice. In February 2011 she was appointed Executive Director of Greenpeace Netherlands.

Sylvia Borren is a strong advocate of women's rights. As a member of the International Women's Committee, a Peace Committee for Israel and Palestinian Territories (IWC), she has worked tirelessly to implement Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council. Her outstanding merits and qualifications have been recognised by Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands, who awarded Sylvia Borren Officer of the Order of Orange-Nassau, one of the highest distinctions in the Netherlands.

Sylvia Borren takes a holistic approach to gender justice and in doing so promotes peace. Access to safe water and sanitation is the key in the struggle for justice, says Borren. As one of the writers of the musical composition 'Poverty Requiem', she describes the many different ways poverty affects people. Young people of different races and nationalities have performed the Requiem 60 times in 25 countries. As co-chair of Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAO) she encourages men and women to collaborate in the fight against poverty.

The jury included outstanding non-Soroptimist personalities: Prof. Rita Süßmuth, German Federal Minister of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth 1985-88 and President of the German Bundestag 1988-98; Carla Del Ponte, currently the Swiss Ambassador to Argentina and SI/E Peace Prize winner 2007; and Heide Schütz, President of Women's Network for Peace, Bonn. Soroptimist jury members were Françoise Ferey, SI/E Representative to the Council of Europe, and myself. I also acted as President of the jury.

Kathy Kaaf, SI/E President elect



Far left: SI France educated school-children on the importance of water. Left: Multi-cultural understanding was the focus of SI Borge's project.

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING PROJECTS

The 2011 SI/E Best Practice Awards for the most outstanding projects in each of the ten Programme Focus Objectives were announced at Governors' Meeting in Palermo, Italy. It was challenging for the SI/E Programme Team to select the winners, as each and every project had been well developed and successfully executed.

Endowed with the € 10,000, the SI/E Water Prize 2011 was awarded to SI Alliance de Tombouctou for its project involving the construction of latrines in Koriomé, Mali. The goal was to provide the community of Koriomé with basic sanitation facilities to improve public health. After having constructed a well, the Club installed ten latrines for the community school and households.

SI/E President Eliane Lagasse presented the certificates to the winners: 'I am proud to see how hard all the Clubs and Unions have worked and the great results they have achieved in line with the mission of Soroptimist'.

Suba Parthiban, SI/E HQ Programme Executive



SI Denmark and SI Kenya were the overall winners for their Women and Climate Change project, which also received wide media coverage.

SI/E Best Practice Awards

The winners of 2011 SI/E Best Practice Awards are:

PFO 1:

Eliminate poverty and gender discrimination through ensuring women's full social and economic rights:
SI Milimani, Kenya – 'Women's Entrepreneurship'.

PFO 2:

End human trafficking and all forms of violence against women and girls:
SI Austria – 'Violence Against and Among Children'

PFO 3:

Ensure access to health care for women and girls:
Turkish SI Clubs Ankara, Anittepe, Cankaya, Emek and Gaziosmanpasa – 'Providing Home Health Care Services and Training'

PFO 4:

Support programmes and policies that eliminate HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis and other major diseases:
SI Skjern-Tarm, Denmark – 'Kawempe Home Care Kampala, Uganda'

PFO 5:

Improve access to clean water, sanitation and essential food resources:
(Hands-on service)
SI Dakar, Senegal – 'Projet d'appui du quartier de Dalifort pour l'approvisionnement en eau potable, la confection de fosses septiques étanches et l'installation de pompes mi-forage'

PFO 5:

Improve access to clean water, sanitation and essential food resources:
(Advocacy)
SI France – 'Création d'un sous-main éducatif sur l'eau'

PFO 6:

Mitigate the effects of climate change and integrate sustainability into personal choices and government policies and programmes:
SI Denmark and SI Kenya – 'Women and Climate Change'

PFO 7:

Meet the needs of women and girls during and after armed conflict and disasters:
SI Ankara, Turkey – 'Refugees'

PFO 8:

Promote peaceful conflict resolution, inter-cultural and inter-racial tolerance and condemn genocide and terrorism:
SI Borge, Norway – 'Multicultural Meeting and Understanding'

PFO 9:

Ensure equal access to education and training for women and girls throughout their lifespan:
SI Netherlands, Surinam and The Netherlands Antilles – 'Hidden Treasures'

PFO 10:

Assure women's advancement in management, politics and decision-making:
SI Italy – 'Training for Women: Growing Up between Career and Passion'

The overall winner was the 'Women and Climate Change' project of the Danish and Kenyan Unions. The brochure with more details can be ordered from SI/E HQ in Geneva or downloaded from the SI/E website.

ON THE VERGE BETWEEN PRESENT AND FUTURE



Eliane, what are the biggest changes in our organisation since you took office in 2009?

The biggest change and the greatest challenge has been the implementation of the SI Strategic Plan with the parallel discussion about its structural modifications. The diversity of our organisation, which is, in my opinion, its biggest asset, is at the same time the biggest obstacle to achieving a consensus on how SI should function. SI must evolve into a more professional, modern structure, while keeping the organisation grounded in the fundamental values for which Soroptimist has always stood, i.e. service to the community, friendship and international networking. SI is at a crucial point in its history, and we all must work to bring the Federations closer together in a progressive and united SI.

Are you pleased with the projects realised during your biennium and in line with your theme?

I am thrilled about all the projects realised over these two years – and not just the ones in line with my biennium theme. For me the most important aspect of a project is its support for women and girls in whatever way they deem necessary. Water and hygiene are crucial, but education and health also. I am proud of all clubs and members and what they have achieved. The spirit of my biennium was to make life easier and better for women and girls, and all projects have contributed to this.

What are the most difficult and the most rewarding aspects of being SI/E President?

On the positive side, I have met many wonderful, committed Soroptimists during my presidency. To see their enthusiasm in realising projects is inspiring. On the other hand, nothing truly prepares you for the amount of work the presidency involves and the conflicts you encounter. I cannot



and would not expect everyone to agree with my vision for SI/E, but as the SI/E Board was democratically elected, and every major decision has been discussed and approved by the Governors' Meeting, I find the lack of trust in elected representatives shown by some Unions disheartening. I can assure you that all of us have always acted in good faith and with the interests of our members in mind.

Have you any parting words of advice to Soroptimists in general and Kathy in particular?

My advice to all members is to remember that SI and what it stands for are important – not individual members. Be it the youngest member or the SI/E President – it is the dedication to SI core values that defines your impact. Once elected, it is your duty to do the best you can. Equally, once members elect their leaders, it can and should be expected that they trust in those officers to steer SI/E in the right direction within the bounds of the Constitution.

Kathy, what is the motivation behind the specific focus of your biennium water theme?

'Water and Food' is a continuation and a broadening of the water theme. An estimated one billion



people suffer from starvation in developing countries, while more and more young people in industrialised nations are seriously affected by obesity and its consequences. So, projects can address the issue from different perspectives. The economic-political side of the theme may interest some clubs, while other may prefer a more hands-on approach.

How do you intend to incorporate the Long-Term SI 'Education and Leadership' theme into your biennium?

'Education and Leadership' can be integrated into practically every project. It is not enough to support women by, for example, giving them a water-harvesting tool or by financing a small business. We must also offer them at least a basic education and assistance in financial management. They should also be empowered to participate in democratic processes and motivated to lead. The European Mentoring Programme started by the German Union and now enlarged to include more countries is a fantastic means to promote leadership.

In light of the many challenges facing our organisation, what is your recipe for a successful future for SI

The 2009-2011 biennium of Eliane Lagasse (left) draws to an end on 30th September. Kathy Kaaf then assumes the SI/E helm for the next two years. Here, Eliane reflects on her experience, while Kathy shares some thoughts on what to expect in the coming biennium.

as a whole and our Federation in particular?

For sustained success, we need clearly defined goals, a strategy to achieve them and enthusiastic members who are willing to work towards improving the lives of women and girls. As many members have to balance the obligations of profession and family with their commitment as Soroptimists, SI/E and SI can only remain viable with the help of dedicated HQ staff who are committed to our organisation and its values.

Another sine qua non is a well designed and functional website, which is the business card of every organisation as well as a means to

disseminate information to members quickly.

How would you characterise your personal leadership style?

I am a passionate team worker. It is a pleasure to work with intelligent and qualified women, each with her specific strengths. I am also a good learner who willingly accepts criticism on condition that it is constructive. My motto is: those who have the best arguments win. Good communication is the key; and transparency is a prerequisite for good governance.

I am very much looking forward to cooperating with the 2011-2013 SI/E Board and the highly motivated staff at SI/E HQ. We are privileged to help others. I appeal to all Soroptimists to do their best to be the best for the best of women and girls.



SI Yerevan hopes to raise awareness of cervical cancer through counselling.



Soroptimist Project Matching

ONE YEAR ON!

SIA and SI/E are pleased with the progress of this initiative and are focused on getting more projects funded. Recently, both federations approved a new logo for the programme, and the website is undergoing a redesign that will be presented in the next issue of *The Link*. The following are three new projects requiring support:

AM0001 – Awareness-promoting preventive programme against cervical cancer in rural regions of Armenia

Despite its increasing prevalence, cervical cancer is a largely unnoticed issue in Armenia. This cancer and other medical issues of the reproductive system disproportionately affect poor women. SI Yerevan has begun a project to design Armenia's first cervical cancer clinic and prevention programme. Without such a facility and programme cervical cancer cases have increased in recent years, and the club hopes to reverse this trend by educating women about the causes of cervical cancer and offering affordable healthcare.

For the greatest possible impact, this treatment and prevention programme will target Armenia's most vulnerable women. Medical treatment fol-

lowing informational sessions is entirely optional for women in the target groups, but the centre will also offer nonmedical services such as raising awareness of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and counselling. Considerable medical supplies, PR resources and office space are necessary to reach the 200 women already identified as at risk.

Funding needed: € 3,445

KE0004 – Keep Girls in School

Girls in Mumias, Kenya are often forced to skip school during menstruation due to inadequate sanitary supplies. As they are likely to fall behind in their schoolwork, these frequent absences jeopardise their education and cause many to eventually drop out. Those who do



Providing girls in Mumias with sanitary napkins enables them to attend school regularly.

choose to go to school while menstruating often resort to using old rags instead of sanitary napkins, leaving the girls vulnerable to infection.

SI Mumias hopes to raise awareness and distribute supplies. The club needs soap, panties, sanitary napkins and monetary donations so that menstruation no longer threatens the future of the village girls. The club will supervise counselling for girls and their mothers to explain the use and importance of proper hygiene so as to end the unsafe practices in Mumias. By enabling girls to attend school more comfortably and more consistently, this project positively impacts their prospects for a successful future.

Funding needed: € 8,000

PAN0001 – Soroptimist Training Center for Women and Girls

SI Volcan has begun construction of a permanent training centre for women and girls in Panama. Tourism in the small town of Volcan is a rapidly growing sector, and the goal of this project is to prepare unemployed women and girls to take advantage of this economic development.

In a previous project, 'Manos de Esperanza,' SI Volcan offered classes on subjects like quilting, cooking and gardening and has already seen some of its participants attain jobs. Women with this training have not only gained valuable skills and income, but also an increased sense of self-worth and accomplishment. To continue these classes, a permanent, specialised facility must be built. SI Volcan plans to construct a building that will serve as both a training centre for women and girls and a meeting place for Soroptimists.

Funding needed: € 12,400

Suba Parthiban, SI/E HQ Programme Executive

Roswitha Ott steps down

FUND IN HONOUR OF 'MAMA AFRICA'

The Governors' Meeting in Palermo adopted the SI/E Board proposal to set up the 'Soroptimist International of Europe – Roswitha Ott – Fund for African Children with Special Needs and for Children in Need'. Roswitha herself has provided the initial funding of € 30,000 from which grants will be awarded to support projects focusing on children in Africa. 'I am convinced that we as Soroptimists must play an active role in fighting poverty and the ruin of countries in sub-Saharan and Western Africa,' says Swiss Soroptimist Roswitha Ott. Indeed, her heart has been in Africa for many years. This passion was seeded and deepened through 10 years of service on the Board of SI of Europe as Vice President responsible for Africa, Extension and Follow-up Africa and most recently as Project Manager Africa. But her social commitment extends far back to her days as a teacher in the first International School in the United States, where she was involved in the integration of black children and experienced race discrimination for the first time.

In addition to the many direct donations from SI Clubs throughout the world, Roswitha has personally collected over one million euros for SI/E projects in Africa in the past 10 years. With this support, many projects have been realised with and for women ranging from building wells to providing potable water, from constructing medical dispensaries to financing schools and training opportunities for girls, from combatting AIDS to educating against female genital mutilation. Other projects have helped numerous orphanages.

In addition to collecting donations and overseeing projects, Roswitha has devoted much time to motivating African Soroptimists, establishing links with European clubs and generally helping with project management. Many Africans are themselves involved in humanitarian work under difficult circumstances. 'But we Soroptimists of Europe can show support through friendship and financial aid,' stresses Mama Africa Roswitha. And when Soroptimists donate money to Clubs in Africa, one can be sure that the aid goes directly to the people and the projects.

'I thank all the Soroptimists who have welcomed me with warmth and friendship in Africa over the years,' says Roswitha. 'They have been an inspiration, and I am very pleased that this Fund will allow me to provide further help in the years to come.' From October 2011 SI/E Past President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen will be the new SI/E Project Manager Africa.



As a sign of appreciation for her dedicated efforts in Africa over the years, SI/E President Eliane Lagasse (right) presented Roswitha Ott with a silver tray.



Left: Belgian mentor Ingrid Ghys with her mentee Sarah Vermeulen.

Right: Swedish mentee Anna Lundgren strikes a pensive pose.

(Photos: Liesbeth de Waele)

I am looking forward to more Mentoring Programmes,' says German mentor Birgit Menzel at the completion of the first European Mentoring Programme of Soroptimist International of Europe (SI/E) in collaboration with the EAF/European Academy for Women in Politics and Business in Berlin. Many shared Birgit's conclusion when the 'Advancing Women' programme culminated this summer at a successful seminar in Malmö, Sweden. The objectives of the Mentoring Programme were to support young women in their professional and personal life and to encourage their social involvement in line with the goals of SI/E and the EAF.

After assessments in early summer 2010, the 25 mentor/mentee tandems from four countries were matched (12 from Germany, six from Sweden, four from Belgium and three from Luxembourg). The active part of the mentoring took place from September 2010 till June 2011. Two thirds of the Soroptimist mentors had experience in one of the mentoring blocks conducted by the German Union or other programmes.

European Mentoring Programme

POSITIVE FEEDBACK FROM ALL SIDES



The SI/E programme is based on three pillars: mentoring, qualification and networking. All aspects were well received by the participants. In fact, the majority of the mentors and mentees intend to pursue their relationship. Two of the three workshops were conducted together with mentors. The topics with the most positive feedback included leadership training, goal setting and motivation. In addition to the three joint workshops, there were also one or more national meetings among mentees.

'I have been particularly impressed by how the mentees have formed a strong network across borders, which has also included the mentors and the national coordinators,' says EAF Board Member and Soroptimist Dr Helga Lukoschat. Indeed, this networking among mentees was seen as one of the highpoints of the programme, and the group plans to stay in touch.

Interestingly, some two thirds of participants changed jobs during the programme, thus achieving promotion or moving on into their 'dream' positions. In their own words, many mentees worked up the courage to make these changes thanks to the SI/E programme. Belgian mentee Liesbeth De Waele summed up the experience: 'The Mentoring Programme made me realise that my possibilities are endless, if I just believe that I can achieve anything.' One cannot imagine a better project in line with the SI 'Education and Leadership' theme.

A particularly positive outcome was that three quarters of the young women visited SI Clubs to talk about the programme. And Swedish mentees intend to form a new club in Stockholm as a result! It is clear from this overwhelmingly favourable response that the Mentoring Programme should be continued.

Annabeth Studer Meyer (centre) with Scholarship Committee colleagues Nelleke Fontein (left) and Gerd Wold-Goddard.



Annabeth Studer Meyer,
Chair of the Scholarship Committee

SI/E Scholarship Fund

PREPARING WOMEN FOR PROFESSIONS

'SI/E intends to place greater importance on scholarships,' is the key outcome after the discussions held and decisions made at this year's Governors' Meeting in Palermo. In line with SI's new Long Term theme under the motto 'Education and Leadership', SI/E scholarships help women finance higher education or change their professions.

The figures in 2011 speak for themselves: 29 applicants requested more than € 230,000, whereby SIE had just € 70,000 to allocate, which was ultimately distributed to 13 grantees. The detailed list is available on the website.

From the coming year the Governors approved an increase of € 0.48 per member, which will be subtracted from allocations previously designated for the Solidarity Fund and the Dr Noël Fund. In addition, a one-off transfer of € 100,000 from the Solidarity Fund was agreed, which will allow the Committee to award more grants in the coming years.

The Governors' Meeting confirmed the SI/E Board's suggestion to have the Dr Noël Fund as part of the Scholarship Fund. Formed in honour of the founder of the first SI Club in Europe, the Dr Noël Fund awards grants to young physicians specialised in plastic surgery. A Soroptimist from the French Union will join the Committee to oversee this Fund.

In order to allow a better follow-up of grantees and to have a more efficient tool for reporting, a special scholarship archive will be included in the existing SI/E database. It will be launched at the start of the new Soroptimist biennium in October 2011. For privacy reasons access will be restricted.

The Committee also plans to upload a list of other scholarships offered by individual Unions or Clubs on the SI/E website. This was the purpose of the questionnaire sent to all Unions and Single Clubs last year. If you have not yet returned it, please do so immediately! This will give women access to other scholarships.

Please start thinking of applications for SI/E Scholarships 2012-2013 now! The deadline is 15th January 2012, and the forms will be sent to all Unions and Single Clubs at the beginning of the new biennium.

For all further information, please consult our website www.soroptimist-europe.org or the Chair of the Committee at annabeth.studer@bluewin.ch.

1200 WOMEN • 70 COUNTRIES • ONE VISION

SI
Convention
2011

From left: Soroptimists from all over the world gathered in Montreal for the SI Convention.

The SI/E contingent poses for the camera. Members of SIA wish incoming SI President Alice Wells all the best for her biennium. SI Convention Chair Yvonne Machuk (right) passes on the SI banner to Nilgün Özler, who is the Chair of the next Convention in Istanbul. (Photos: IPI)



Three German Soroptimists are experiencing our first SI Convention. Two of us have been on holiday in the Canadian countryside and ask ourselves, 'Do we really want to do this? Return to big city life of Montreal, swap the serenity of whale watching for dreary air-conditioned conference rooms, struggle through speeches in English and demanding workshops?' Yes! Just 10 minutes into the programme and our Soroptimist hearts are racing. We greet the representatives of each country with thundering applause and revel in the midst of the global SI community.

At the Friendship Evening we meet fellow acquaintances from Germany and from our Link clubs. Well-prepared women attending their umpteenth Convention present us with potato pins from Idaho, candles in the form of roses from San

Francisco and koala bears from Australia. We invite them all to Germany to join us in celebrating Club Frankfurt's 60th anniversary in 2012 and to attend the SI/E Congress in Berlin in 2013.

Over the next three days, we hear Canadian women with amazing biographies and varying cultural backgrounds give outstanding talks on the Convention theme 'Women: Leaders in Civil Society'. They show how a vision can become reality – a truly moving experience. The topics are covered in greater detail in the workshops.

The Best Practice projects demonstrate how our organisation of nearly 90,000 women has done so much good and is now ushering in the new worldwide SI theme, 'Education and Leadership'. As different as the projects are, they all have one thing in common: sustainable change is best achieved

through educating women. It is particularly satisfying to hear SI President Hanne Jensbo specifically mention our German Union Mentoring Programme and encourage other countries to join the European-wide programme.

Making a symbolic journey around the globe, we witness the change of insignia: Hanne from Aarhus, Denmark to Alice Wells from Phoenix, Arizona. Similar to this passage from one continent to another, the venue of the next SI Convention in 2015 will be Istanbul, the city that links Asia with Europe.

In Canada, German sobriety meets North American enthusiasm. It takes getting used to, but was it a problem? Not at all! We respect each other's differences. After all, we are united in two ambitious goals: to improve the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment or enabling opportunities, as well as to be a global voice for increasing access to education and leadership for women and girls.

Further 'highlights' of the Convention are singing Canadian songs, friendly hostesses at each escalator, SI on YouTube, marvellous outfits at the gala event including a Scottish kilt, maple syrup galore, breath-taking circus numbers, daily 'Lost and Found' announcements, a toast and colourful balloons welcoming Alice and several generations of former SI Presidents on stage – everything and everyone is excellent.

We are proud of our German SI/E President elect Kathy Kaaf, who receives warm applause for her witty words during the plenary assembly.

Dear Soroptimists, join us in Berlin and Istanbul – it is worth it!

Annette Büssenschütt and Roswitha Briel, Club Wiesbaden
Sigrid Niebling, Club Fulda

EXEMPLARY PROJECTS

SI
Best
Practice

The winners of 2010-2011 SI Best Practice awards for the Programme Focus Objectives 8-10 were announced at the Convention in Montreal. Three SI/E projects were among those recognised:

- The 'Soroptimist Film Festival for Children', implemented by SI Assen, Friesland-Zuid, Friesland-Noord, Leuwarden and Stadskanaal, The Netherlands, for PFO 8: 'Promote peaceful conflict resolution, inter-cultural and inter-racial tolerance and condemn genocide and terrorism',
- 'A New Horizon for Migrant Workers, Women in Refugee Status, their Children and Young People in Israel, realised by SI Israel, for PFO 9: 'Ensure equal access to education and training for women and girls throughout their lifespan',
- 'I Want to Succeed' (Voglio Farcela da Sola), implemented by SI Alto Novarese, Italy, for PFO 10: 'Assure women's advancement in management, politics and decision-making.'



IPP Hava Shurany-Feldman accepts the SI Best Practice certificate on behalf of the Israeli Union.

To download the list of all the winners, please go to the Members Area of the SI website.

SI/E played an instrumental role in six workshops held at the SI Convention in Montreal.

Karen Lundbo and Birgit Aarsnes of SI Denmark and Asha Abdulrahman of SI Kenya conducted a workshop titled, 'A Changing Climate', which demonstrated how developing and developed countries can work together to alleviate climate change. Rose Mwangi of SI Kenya and Chinwe Ezenwa-Mbah of SI Nigeria partnered in their talk workshop 'Land Rights and Economic Empowerment' in East and West Africa. Rose presented case studies of projects providing life-changing assistance to Internally Displaced Persons after the political unrest in Kenya in 2007.

Liv Handeland of SI Norway contributed to the 'Soroptimist Strategies to STOP Trafficking' workshop, organised by SIA, by documenting the Norwegian Union's work in Moldova.

SI/E-led
Workshops
in Montreal

INSPIRATIONAL CASE STUDIES

SI/E President Eliane Lagasse featured with representatives from other Federations in the workshop on 'Women in the Aftermath of Disaster'. She outlined how SIA and SI/E set up Soroptimist Disaster Grants to aid women and girls to rebuild their lives in Haiti after the earthquake. This case study also demonstrated how collaborating with partner organisations, such as arche noVa, ensures that donations go to relief and not to finance the administration.

SI/E Programme Director Ulrike Neubert led a popular workshop on project design, 'Skill up! Managing for Success'. The key message to the 90 participants was plan before you start a project, based on the SMART principle (Specific – Measurable – Achievable – Realistic – Timebound).

And finally, the 'Water for Life' workshop was organised and moderated by SI/E Programme Executive Suba Parthiban. The three panellists – Eliane, SI Rwanda President Antoinette Uwimana and Leslie Moreland from WaterCan – presented outstanding water projects in Africa, in which women are key stakeholders.



Liv Handeland of SI Norway and Asha Abdulrahman of SI Kenya each addressed an interested audience at two of the workshops.



Thoughts from International President 2009-2011

A BIG THANK YOU FROM HANNE!

« It has been a privilege and a great honour to serve our organisation as International President, and I have really enjoyed the two years at the helm of Soroptimist International. »

Outgoing International President Hanne addresses the audience at the SI Convention in Montreal.

My biennium has been a time of many changes at different levels. I experienced how the words 'Be the change you want to see' are easier said than done, as we are an organisation of many cultures and traditions. Several changes have already been implemented, and I am convinced more will be realised one day.

So, what was the highlight of my time as President? I have seen a lot of interesting projects, visited many beautiful places and attended numerous inspiring meetings. What impressed me the most, however, were the face-to-face meetings with won-

derful, strong, efficient and professional Soroptimists around the world.

It is a gift and a challenge for an organisation to have such an intensely committed membership at grassroots for our volunteer work. The work in projects, in clubs and as advocates for improving the lives of women worldwide has moved me deeply, and we owe all Soroptimists a big thank YOU – for your time, energy and creativity. Thank you for your devotion to Soroptimist ideals, vision and mission. I cannot imagine a Soroptimist International without you!

SI PROGRAMME GOALS FOR 2011-2015

At its meeting in Montreal on 9th July, the SI Board approved the following Programme Goals for the quadrennium 2011-2015:

Goal 1:

Soroptimist International will improve the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment or enabling opportunities.

Objectives:

1. Increase access to formal and non-formal learning opportunities.
2. Improve access to economic empowerment and sustainable opportunities for the employment of women.
3. Eliminate violence against women and girls and ensure women's participation in conflict resolution.

4. Ensure women and girls have food security and access to highest attainable standard of health care.

5. Address the specific needs of women and girls by improving environmental sustainability, and mitigating effects of climate change and disasters.

Goal 2:

Soroptimist International will be a global voice for increasing access to education and leadership for women and girls.

Objectives:

1. Strengthen and increase SI's presence as an advocate at all levels.
2. Intensify activities and partnerships that raise the international profile and visibility of Soroptimist International.
3. Ensure that the foundation of SI's global advocacy is local and global project activity.

Fortunately, Soroptimists are also critical. At the Governors' Meeting in Palermo and also at the recent SI Board Meeting in Montréal, they asked many questions. Soroptimists in Palermo asked that the SI Board address the question of the benefits of being a Soroptimist. Our members not only form the base of the organisation, they also represent the main source of income and provide vital work to ensure the overall success of SI. So, they asked what SI is doing to ensure members are well taken care of? These questions will no doubt be a big challenge for SI, SI/E and all officers in the future, as it is important to keep a good balance between 'professional' and 'volunteer grassroots' members.

The overall theme for Soroptimist work is now 'Education and Leadership' – whereby both have always been well-known topics of SI projects. Our database shows that education has been the main programme focus objective in recent years. Leadership does not rank quite as high, but I hope for a greater focus on leadership, as the world needs women role models in decision-making processes.

I treasure the moments when a Soroptimist or a woman who has received aid from us says to me: 'I am grateful to Soroptimism for what it has meant to me.' Such a woman will be eternally be thankful to Soroptimism, which may not always be the case with a woman who only wants to have better life conditions, no matter which organisation gives it to her and her family.

Dear friends, I thank you for your support and for all your good input and inspiration, which have been invaluable. I won't say 'good-bye', but rather 'see you around', as I hope to meet many of you again here and there.

Keep smiling, keep up the good work as Soroptimists and always remember my motto: 'Action speaks louder than words!'

Hanne Jensbo, Past International President



Incoming International President Alice Wells announced in Montreal that her SI President's 10th December Appeal will be 'Birthing in the Pacific (BIP)'. (Photo: IPI)

SI Board Meeting in Montreal

EXPERT GROUP REVIEWS SI

The SI Board took a positive step for the future at its meeting in July by creating an expert group consisting of one representative from each of the four Federations to thoroughly review SI's internal operations, structure and activities, including SI HQ, and provide recommendations for implementation to ensure the organisation's financial sustainability.

The Board also approved the new Programme Goals for the next quadrennium (see adjacent article). A consensus was not reached on a new logo, which means SI/E will keep the current version. SIGBI has chosen the 'dynamic S' and SIA will continue with its own design.

SI Voting Members adopted 10th December as a Soroptimist day of action for the new SI long-term theme Education and Leadership for women and girls, and future SI President's Appeals will benefit these projects. Along these lines, incoming International President Alice Wells announced in Montreal that her Appeal will be 'Birthing in the Pacific (BIP)'. The goal is to increase skills and further educate birth attendants and improve facilities to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity. BIP will also widen access to prenatal and reproductive health education and family planning.

Sadly, several agenda items could not be dealt with in Montreal, as the SIA delegation unanimously voted to withdraw from the remainder of the meeting on the afternoon of the first full day. They felt that continuing participation was neither productive nor healthy for the viability of the organisation. SIA issued a statement that the mission of transforming the lives of women and girls was not being served by the existing SI governance model. However, SIA has not withdrawn from Soroptimist International.

For more information on BIP and the actions taken, please refer to the September issue of eTIS or the SI website.

SI/E Presidents past, present and future gather on stage in Montreal while SI/E President elect 2011-2013 Ulla Madsen congratulates retiring International President Hanne Jensbo. (Photos: IPI)



7th International Peace Marathon

A WONDERFUL ATMOSPHERE IN KIGALI

With more than 1,200 participants from all over the world, the 7th International Peace Marathon in Kigali, Rwanda was a great success this year. For the first time SI/E initiated children's races one week before the Marathon in the four cities of our clubs in Rwanda: Gisenyi, Butare, Ruhengeri and Kibungo. Hundreds of children took part and thus the idea of the peace Marathon was spread all over the country. The twenty winners came to Kigali to take part in the Peace Marathon. I am very grateful to the Unions of Austria, Switzerland and Germany who financed this important Pre-Marathon event.

Despite some initial problems before the marathon, everything went very well due to the good teamwork with Guida Biewer, Governor from Luxembourg, and her Marathon friends

Soroptimists helped with the distribution of water at the Peace Marathon in Kigali with participants from all over the world.



from Luxemburg as well as Xavérine Niwemutoni from Club Kigali, who was responsible for the Marathon, and George Kinuthia, our Kenyan friend who assisted us.

Special thanks go to Andreas Rippinger, the German who handled the logistics perfectly and also got along extremely well with our cooperation partner, the Rwandan Athletic Federation (RAF).

Newly elected Minister of Sports, Youth and Culture Mitali K. Protais took part in the Run for Fun, while the mayor of Kigali ran the half marathon. In his speech the Minister expressed his gratitude towards SI for our commitment and asked for our ongoing partnership in this important event. He also promised to mobilise more Rwandans to participate in the Marathon and will even try to convince the Rwandan President to take part in 2012.

This year more Soroptimists were involved in the Marathon – mainly because the Meeting of the Future African Federation had taken place in Kigali before the event. So, some 25 Soroptimists from Kenya and Rwanda helped with the distribution of water. There was a wonderful atmosphere in the stadium, since many additional international teams participated, including the Peace Corps. After experiencing three marathons, I can totally recommend continuing our commitment to Rwanda in the years to come.

Kathy Kaaf, President elect 2009-2011

Rotterdam Seminar TRAINING FOR UNION PDS AND APDS

The SI/E programme team organised a seminar in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, this June to train new Union Programme Directors and/or Assistant Programme Directors and to provide more information about Federation programme matters. SI/E President elect Kathy Kaaf gave an overview of SI projects.

A brainstorming session then addressed different questions and concerns. Participants were



asked to list their expectations of this seminar as well as the reasons why they became Soroptimists. Some felt that SI members should become more active at local level and raise awareness about women's issues. Many reiterated that SI is not meant to be a charity but an organisation serving as a voice of women. Everyone was enthusiastic about the initiative to use such a meeting or seminar as a platform to share experiences and exchange knowledge.

A historical recap of the creation of these two new positions was given. Overall, it was seen as a positive change that can lead to better communication between Federation and Union PDs. Most Unions have already made the change, while others are still transitioning.

The seminar covered a number of SI/E topics, including

- **Programme Focus Reports** – The purpose and structure of the current PFR database were explained. Details of the new database due to be launched soon were also provided.

- **Soroptimist Project Matching** – The Project Matching website is welcomed and appreciated, as evidenced by viewings in more than 114 countries. How the site could be improved for future use was also discussed.

- **Disaster Grants** – The concept and the application of Disaster Grants were presented. As with the Soroptimist Project Matching, this programme is a joint effort of SIA and SI/E. Grants offer long-term support for women and girls who are disproportionately affected by disasters. With growing number of disasters, Soroptimists' generous donations are put to good use through this programme.

- **Project Planning** – The afternoon session was dedicated to group work on project planning. The purpose was to define the difference between a project and an activity.

- **SI/E Best Practice Awards** – The Best Practice Awards have become an important tool to motivate SI/E Clubs and Unions. Union PDs and APDs will be responsible for the selection in the coming years.

Suba Parthiban, SI/E HQ Programme Executive



Top left: Group work in the afternoon helped participants define the difference between a project and an activity.

Below: Union Programme Directors and Assistants enjoyed an information-packed weekend in Rotterdam with the SI/E delegation.



20th Nordic Meeting MID-SUMMER IN SWEDISH LAPLAND

The venue for next year's Nordic Days from 15th-17th June is Luleå, the capital of Swedish Lapland. Soroptimists from Nordic countries, as well as from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, are invited to participate in the meeting with the theme, 'Technology and Health'. The conference will open with a reception on a ship cruising in the archipelago of Luleå. The programme also includes guided tours by the SI Clubs in Luleå to the World Heritage Gammelstad, to Sunderbyns Hospital and to the Storforsen Falls. After the official programme, excursions to Lapponia and the Arctic Circle to experience the midnight sun are also available.

Experience the unique charm of Swedish Lapland in mid-summer.
Photo: Luleå bild

Come to Sweden to discuss how modern technology can be used to support health prevention and health care and many further topics (English will be the conference language). There will also be presentations by professors from Luleå University of Technology and distinguished Soroptimists. Online registration begins 1st December 2011.

FIFA WOMEN'S WORLD CUP 2011
 UNITED IN SPORT
 ENTHUSIASM

Football – and sport in general – brings people together. As with music, sport is widely understood and transcends borders. People of all ages and all religions, people with different levels of education and various professions, people of varying backgrounds – they all come together in stadia. In fact, football promotes integration in a special way.

Values such as friendship, tolerance, respect and fairness are clearly demonstrated in a team sport like football. These are indeed our very own Soroptimist values.

For the German Union, the main theme from 2009-2013 has been and continues to be integration, under the motto 'SOFIA', the acronym for the German 'Soroptimists for intercultural exchange'. The FIFA Women's World Cup 2011 was therefore a perfect opportunity to invite Soroptimists from



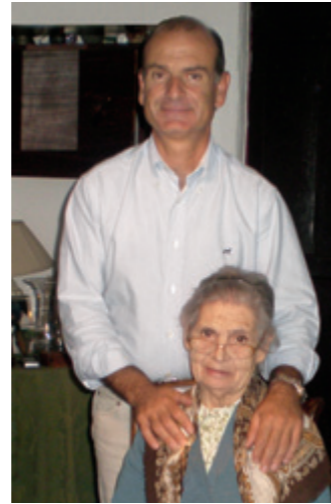
The SI block demonstrated its enthusiasm at the Olympic stadium in Berlin.

near and far to participate in the opening match in Berlin at the end of June. More than 250 Soroptimists responded and spent an unforgettable weekend in the German capital.

As one of the highlights, Club Berlin Dorotheenstadt organised a special tour of the Federal Chancellery, which was followed by a reception at the invitation of Maria Böhmer, Minister for Integration and Migration and herself a Soroptimist.

Many new friendships between Soroptimists of different nationalities were also forged at an evening get-together – a true example of lived Soroptimism. Participants clearly enjoyed themselves, and several agreed it was an experience worth repeating!

Sibylle Lindenberg, President of SI Germany 2009-2011



Alexandra Costa interviewed this satisfied user of the Telecare Service, shown here with her son.

TELE CARE PROJECT
 ROUND
 THE CLOCK AID

The Telecare Project in Portugal started in December 2006 as a partnership between SI Setúbal and the Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Azeitão (SCMA), which operates a day-care centre and also supplies personal assistance to many elderly, bedridden and chronically ill patients. This innovative project makes emergency aid available to the elderly and to patients who live alone through a phone service. By simply pressing the button on the wristwatch-like device provided, immediate contact is established by remote control to an operating centre that offers support 24 hours a day all year long. Within 20 seconds, the Assistance Centre can identify the caller, whose data appears on the monitor. If necessary, relatives are informed, and emergency services are also contacted.

SCMA first assessed where home aid devices were needed, and 25 such devices were installed. The rent for each device was € 14.64 per month. Users received the service free of charge for the first year, with SI/E contributing € 5,000 to cover the costs.

Today, there are 22 users, whereby SCMA has established the charges based on their financial possibilities. SI Setúbal continues to monitor and contribute financially to the project. In April a proactive campaign was launched with the distribution of new brochures and posters in the local health centre and the two 'Juntas de Freguesia' (local councils) of Azeitão, which also got involved with spreading information on the project. An updated adver-

tisement appeared in the newspaper, *Jornal de Azeitão*, which also published an interview with a home aid wearer who lives alone and has already used the service in an emergency situation.

Alexandra Costa, SI Setúbal

SI COSTA DEL SOL
 COLLABORATION
 HELPS VICTIMS
 OF VIOLENCE

The Costa del Sol in Spain is a melting pot of European citizens. It is not just a holiday destination, but also chosen by many as a permanent home. How many non-Spanish nationals live here is difficult to say, because many are not registered. For example, officially there are some 20,000 Danes, unofficially more than 30,000. Many foreigners have not integrated well and speak only a bit Spanish. Most national groups have their own clubs and magazine or newspaper; there are over 30 written media in foreign languages.

As a result, SI Costa del Sol is a fantastic mixture of women of different nationalities. Some have been living and working here for over 30 years, while others have moved to the Spanish coast more recently.

Since 2008, SI Costa del Sol has worked on projects related to gender violence and has been in contact with many local authorities and women's organisations that are working to fight Domestic Violence. The members of seven different nationalities decided to use their contacts and language skills and focus on the non-Spanish population,



The new campaign offering a free Helpline service to women was launched at a press conference.

thus helping the local authorities to reach out to them.

Recently, SI Costa del Sol and the Women's Institute in Malaga (IAM) initiated a campaign primarily aimed at the EU foreign population living in the Malaga province. The goal is to promote the free HELPLINE from the Andalusian government, where women can obtain information about their rights. The information is provided in 51 languages.

This unique campaign has been exceptionally well received by the foreign press, which is collaborating by publishing the helpline announcement as well as featuring articles on the subject. As a side effect Soroptimist International is now also a lot better known in the area. For more information, see www.si-es.org.

Daphne Theunissen and Lene Thygesen, SI Costa del Sol

LUXEMBOURG
 HELP FOR
 UNDERAGE MOTHERS

SI Luxembourg, working closely with the SI Melusina, recently organised a benefit concert with performances by Douane's Musek and Keespelter Musek at the ARCA Centre in Bertrange.

During the event, Union President Margot Feypel-Diederich presented a cheque for € 20,000 to Rita Heyen and Francine Lippert, who run the Zoe group at the Norbert Ensch House, a hostel for underage mothers opened by the Luxembourg Red Cross in Contern. The money was raised over the two years of her presidency through various activities organised by the ten Luxembourg SI Clubs and the Union as well as from private donations.



Luxembourg Soroptimists raised € 20,000 over two years which was donated to the hostel.

Reforestation in Kenya

■ ADOPT A HECTARE FOR PEACE!



With some 5,000 Soroptimist-sponsored trees having been planted since July, the official launch of the Mau Reforestation project took place in late August.

During the post-election violence in Kenya in 2007-2008, the Kenyan Union helped families and particularly women-headed households resettle – with financial support from SIA and SI/E. SI Kenya is now taking their commitment a step further by reclaiming part of the Likia forest block of the Mau Forest Complex to remind us ‘Never Again’.

As part of its two-year SI/E Best Practice project (Women and Climate Change) in partnership with Danish Union, the Kenyan Union plans to use part of the funds to plant

peach trees in the Mau Forest. It took a while to launch the project, but SI Kenya eventually established contact with the Mau secretariat through the Prime Minister’s office. Chair of Mau Secretariat Hassan Noor graciously granted the Soroptimists the right to adopt 20 hectares of the Likia forest block for the next three years. Mau Forest Complex forms the largest closed-canopy ecosystem of Kenya and is the single most important water catchment in the Rift Valley. Likia village near Nakuru suffered massive violence after elections in 2007.

An agreement has been concluded between SI Kenya and the Kenya Forest Services (KFS) to protect and conserve the Mau Forest Ecosystem through rehabilitation aimed at restoring and improving its value for socio-economic development. The KFS will provide the technical advice necessary and assist in the surveillance of the rehabilitated sites. The local community group, the majority of which are women, will provide seedlings and labour.

As part of the Mau Rehabilitation Plan, SI Kenya planted five hectares of trees in June 2011 and will provide forest wardens with four LED lamps and one solar panel. SI clubs in Kenya will participate by adopting one hectare each. The Kenyans are now appealing to Soroptimists around

the globe to show their support by adopting a hectare. For the equivalent of just € 600 1,000 seedlings will be planted on a hectare, and the area will be weeded in the second and third years.

For more details please contact Asha W. Abdulrahman at aabdulrahman@kpa.co.uk and help SI Kenyan realise this exemplary project!

Vinoble décolleté cream

■ BEAUTY FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Often promised, but rarely delivered: a cream that markedly reduces fine lines and wrinkles for a beautiful, firm décolleté. Made from tree fern extract, resveratrol, grape seed oil and hyaluronic acid, the cream developed and produced by Vinoble Cosmetics is a truly natural product that offers state-of-the-art anti-ageing effects. But the unique aspect of this beauty agent is that with every purchase of a 200 ml jar for € 77, Vinoble has agreed to donate € 20 to ‘Soroptimists Go for Water and Food’ projects. Contact www.vinoble-cosmetics.at to place your orders.



€ 20 from every purchase of the Vinoble décolleté cream will be donated to a ‘Soroptimists Go for Water and Food’ project.

2nd Istanbul Water Forum

■ SUCCESSFUL CAPACITY-BUILDING

SI Turkey partnered very effectively with Business and Professional Women Turkey to organise a side event at the 2nd Istanbul Water Forum this May. As reported in The Link No. 214, Soroptimists played a prominent role during the 5th World Water Forum in Istanbul two years ago. After the success of this forum, Istanbul wanted to invite the international water community back to the city to discuss regional water-related challenges.

The side event focused on the dilemma that although women play a major role in the supply, management and securing of water, they are not equally involved in decision-making. Panellists pointed out the importance of women’s inclusion in projects and the accountability and transparency of the water management process.

SI/E Programme Executive Suba Parthiban spoke on the topic of ‘Soroptimists Go for Water – the Success of Grassroots Projects’. She presented the Soroptimist development model, which demonstrates how an initial water and sanitation project can promote the development of an entire village and community. She stressed the importance of women’s leadership in these activities and giving the ownership of grassroots projects to local population. One SI water project in Difémou, Mali alone led to the construction of toilets, maternity wards, mills and far more. ‘What Soroptimists do with their projects is to empower the very capable local women and provide them with the leadership skills to better use their opportunities.’



Among the participants in Water Forum in Istanbul were several Turkish Soroptimists.

‘Thermal Tourism’ project

■ TAKING THE WATERS IN GREECE



Responding to the call of Fotini Kalogera, IGU Coordinator of the Greek Union, 22 Club IGU Coordinators in Greece contributed to the ‘Thermal Waters and Thermal Springs of Greece’ brochure now available to all Soroptimists. The Coordinators provided descriptions and photos of the Thermal Tourism destinations in their respective areas. As Greek Union President Lillian Zello noted in her foreword, thermal springs and their therapeutic effects have been well documented through the ages and are very popular among people who prefer alternative therapies. The 30-page brochure also offers a wealth of information on water as a means of promoting well being, its healing and rejuvenation qualities as well as describing its general health and recreational value.

Kamena Vouria offers a combination of mountains, sea air and medicinal spring waters.



Please submit your contributions to the next issue of *The Link* by 4th November 2011!

NEW SI/E CLUBS TO BE CHARTERED

10th September 2011

Crema (Italy)
 Charter to be presented by
 Gerda Rosiers, Vice President
 SI Belgium
Club President
 Veronica Grazioli
 Via Castello, 1
 IT - 26013 Crema
 Phone: +39 340 232 9297
 E-mail: veronicagrazioli@libero.it

1st October 2011

Feldkirchen/Kärnten (Austria)
 Charter to be presented by
 Hanne von Schaumann-Werder,
 Past President SI Germany
Club President
 Claudia Krappinger
 10.-Oktober Strasse 12
 AT - 9560 Feldkirchen
 Phone: +43 664 461 2581/427
 629 770
 E-mail: claudia.krappinger@
 rakrappinger.at

15th October 2011

Calavi Colombe (Benin)
 Charter to be presented by
 Kathy Kaaf, SI/E President
Club President
 Blandine Legonou Fanou
 04 BP 29
 BJ - Cotonou
 Phone: +229 9740 1905/9001
 5856
 E-mail: blegonoufanou@yahoo.fr

5th November 2011

Vid Hunafloa (Iceland)
 Charter to be presented by

Ulla Madsen, SI/E President elect
Club President
 Sigridur Hjaltadottir
 Solbakka
 IS - 531 Hvammstangi
 Phone: +354 451 2881/845 2838
 E-mail: sirr@simnet.is

19th May 2012

Düsseldorf Königsallee (Germany)
 Charter to be presented by
 Kathy Kaaf, SI/E President
Club President
 Nicola Knüwer
 Peter-Janssen Strasse 10
 DE - 40237 Düsseldorf
 Phone: +49 211 514 27 07/
 mobile: +49 175 2410 666
 E-mail: nknuewer@gmail.com

FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR SI/E

10th September 2011

25th Anniversary
 SI Waldviertel Schrems (Austria)

26th September 2011

25th Anniversary
 SI Kordon/Izmir (Turkey)

28th September 2011

25th Anniversary
 SI Le Quesnoy (France)

15th October 2011

25th Anniversary
 SI Vierre-Less (Belgium)

25th October 2011

25th Anniversary
 SI Ylistaro (Finland)

29th November 2011

25th Anniversary
 SI Brussel 'Iris' (Belgium)

20th May 2012

International Peace Marathon
 Kigali (Rwanda)

30th June-8th July 2012

Icelandic Soroptimist Week

14th-15th July 2012

Governors' Meeting
 Budapest (Hungary)

12th-14th July 2013

SI/E Congress
 Berlin (Germany)

INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS DAYS AND EVENTS

21st September

International Day of Peace

25th November

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

10th December

Human Rights Day (celebrated by Soroptimists worldwide)

