



# The Link

A global voice for women

I/2011-2012 N° 224



*Meet the SI/E Restricted Board*  
The Right Person  
for the Right Task

*Biennium Theme 2011-2013*  
Water and Food  
for Everyone!

*SI/E Scholarship Fund*  
Beneficiaries Say  
'Thank You'

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 (SIE) 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](http://www.soroptimisteurope.org) for more information about the aims, activities and projects that characterise our organisation.

Note from the Editor

# THE ONLY CONSTANT IS CHANGE

It has been my great pleasure to produce your Federation magazine since the Soroptimist year 2008-2009. With Kathy Kaaf I am now serving my third SI/E President. Within the framework of our goals, each new president brings her own personality to the position and has chosen her own focus under the overall theme of 'Soroptimists go for Water'. A unique new mosaic stone is added to the overall Soroptimist picture, where the only constant is change.

There have been and will no doubt continue to be many challenges to the job, but I love putting together The Link because I am able to follow first hand all the interesting things going on in our Federation and beyond. I salute your creativity in raising money for good causes and your dedication in realising projects. The commitment to improve the lives of women and girls is truly inspiring. But as

SI/E President Kathy says in her President's Letter, we must share this work in order to raise awareness of our organisation. Not only will it help find partners and earn additional funding for our projects, but it will also support our extension efforts.

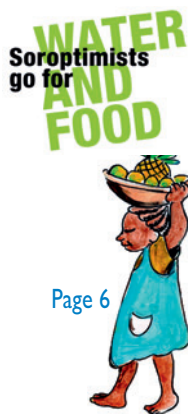
While I regret that the online version of eTIS will be discontinued, it is a relief to know that the excellent SI website will more than compensate any possible information deficit. I can only encourage everyone to consult the homepage and its various links on a regular basis if you want to keep abreast of what Soroptimists are thinking and doing.

I wish all our readers Happy Holidays and a healthy, peaceful and successful New Year.

*Christine Cromwell-Ahrens, Editor, The Link*

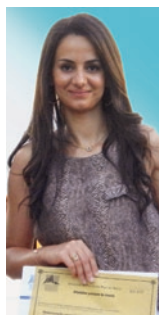
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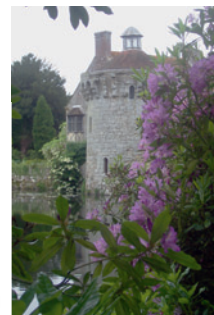
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## Cover page

Thanks to a SI/E scholarship, the Israeli mother of three-year-old Sinai, Yael Tsubary, was able to complete her MA in Community Social Work at the Ben Gurion University.

*Photo: Pnina Evental*

Dear Soroptimist Friends

One of the most triumphant moments in women's history occurred in the first month of my mandate: Three women – **Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Leymah Gbowee and Tawakkul Karman** – were awarded the **Nobel Peace Prize 2011**. The choice of the Norwegian Nobel Prize Committee proves that they recognise the great potential for democracy that women represent and their importance in building peace. Nobel Committee Chairman Thorbjorn Jagland said that the committee hoped the prize would 'help to bring an end to the suppression of women that still occurs in many countries'. Our own 2011 Soroptimist Peace Prize was awarded to Sylvia Borren from the Netherlands, who is using the endowment to further her work on a documentary dealing with women's input in the **democratic transition in Arab countries**.

At the moment the question is if and in what way the Arab Spring has already turned into an Arab winter for those women who substantially supported this unique movement. One can have serious doubts as to whether women will be properly considered in the subsequent political power struggles and governmental work.

There have been several initiatives to include Arab countries not yet found on the Soroptimist map in our organisation. Should we not be more courageous in our support for these highly educated women, many of whom are living under difficult conditions?

It is a particular coincidence that the new **Executive Director at SI/E HQ, Anne Simon**, previously worked in Dubai to launch and lead the Middle East Strategy and Survey Unit of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), where she focused on Women's Empowerment and Leadership in the Arab World. She later summarised the challenges faced by Arab women striving to reach leadership positions in the publication, **'The Arab Women Leadership Outlook'**. Anne Simon will begin work in January 2012. She has dual French-Swiss citizenship and speaks fluent English. After a long and successful career with PwC and as Head of the Communications Unit of the Global Forum for Health Research in Geneva, she decided it was now time to seek employment with an organisation in which she can 'serve a noble cause'. I am sure

that Anne Simon will be an excellent asset to our work as 'a global voice for women'.

The fact is that the utmost level of efficiency required to reach our goal of improving the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment or enabling opportunities can only be achieved through the combination of **our voluntary working members and the highly dedicated and competent permanent staff at our headquarters**. I would like to thank all our staff members who have shown great solidarity and excellence in their work, especially in these recent months.



'Let us all make a new effort to become better known...'

*Kathy Kdaf*  
Kathy Kdaf, SI/E President 2011-2013

There can be no doubt that if we want the necessary commitment to and success of our programme work to continue, we cannot leave this responsibility to volunteers alone, as some of our members have suggested. We can be extremely happy to have such a highly qualified person as Suba Parthiban to support Programme Director Ulrike Neubert and Assistant Programme Director Stina Söderlund. Suba is also a valued photographer for SI/E, who provides us with precious documentary photos. This leads me to an urgent request: please document your projects and activities with high-resolution photos, videos and/or written reports. **To be seen and recognised, we need to document our achievements**. Let us make an effort to become better known as an organisation working to improve access to education and leadership for women and girls.

In closing I send you season's greetings and wish you good health, personal happiness and great success in all your endeavours for the New Year.

Immediate Past President

Eliane **LAGASSE**



Secretary General

Beate **SPEICHER**



Ulla **MADSEN**

President-elect



Christine **PEER**

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President

The responsibilities of the SI/E President, Treasurer, Secretary General, Committee Chairs and appointees are no doubt clear to everyone. However, the President divides the general Federation tasks among her Vice Presidents, Past President and President elect. To ensure you address the right person for a specific task, the following is an outline of the new division of responsibilities among these officers of the Board.

# THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE RIGHT TASK



Asha Vice President **ABDULRAHMAN**



Leena Vice President **VIITANIEMI**



Gerda Vice President **HUISMAN**



Evgenia Treasurer **KOLEVA**

In collaboration with SI/E President Kathy Kaaf and SI/E President elect Ulla Madsen, Past President Eliane Lagasse will coordinate and liaise with SI and SIA on issues pertaining to SI/E. Eliane is also responsible for the SI/E Action Fund and a member of the Committee organising the 20<sup>th</sup> SI Convention in Istanbul in 2015. In addition, she will act as an adviser to Committee Chair Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis on matters pertaining to the Constitution and By-Laws.

Besides working with Kathy and Eliane on SI and SIA concerns, President elect Ulla Madsen is responsible for the SI/E Peace Prize and the SI Long-Term Theme 'Education & Leadership'. In addition, she is the SI/E Board Liaison for the SI Convention in Istanbul. Ulla also represents SI/E on the SI Audit Committee.

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Christine Peer is the Liaison for the 20<sup>th</sup> Congress in Berlin in 2013 and, based on her experience with the SI/E Congress in Vienna in 2005, will help fundraise for the Berlin event. She will also oversee 'Water & Food Projects' and, together with SI/E HQ, coordinate our Friendship Links.

Policy & Strategic Planning is the responsibility of Vice President Gerda Huisman. She is also the SI/E Board Liaison for

the European Mentoring Programme. The preparation and evaluation of the annual reports in French from Unions and Single Clubs outside Africa has also been assigned to Gerda. She will also compile the overall coordinated report of all Unions and Single Clubs.

Vice President Asha Abdulrahman will collaborate with Vice President Leena Viitaniemi to promote the Peace Marathon in Kigali. Asha also has the very important position of SI/E Board coordinator for the work towards a Proposed African Federation. She will oversee the preparation and evaluation of the annual reports from African Unions and Single Clubs in English, whereas Maria Soumonni, Extension and Follow-Up Africa Officer, will assess the reports received in French.

In addition to her responsibilities in connection with the Peace Marathon mentioned above, Vice President Leena Viitaniemi will monitor the progress of the Twinning of Mature and Young Unions and Single Clubs. She will also work together with VP Gerda in the preparation and evaluation of the annual report received in English from European countries.

To see the entire Board and the various appointees, please consult the SI/E website: [www.sioptimisteurope.org](http://www.sioptimisteurope.org).



# WATER AND FOOD FOR EVERYONE!



School gardens are a good way to promote children's interest in healthy food.

Have you ever heard of Princess Gardens or Guerrilla Gardens? SI/E President Kathy Kaaf has already done a lot of research relating to her Biennium Theme 'Water and Food'. In the following article she shares some exciting ideas that will surely inspire action.



A calendar with pictures drawn by Kenyan children is being sold to earn money for a fishpond in Nairobi.

Women who tend their own gardens can not only provide for their family, but also earn an income by selling the produce.

Soroptimist International of Europe could not be more up-to-date than with our new biennium theme, 'Water and Food'. Since I started to delve into the subject of 'Water and Food' in the summer of 2009, I have collected hundreds of thrilling details, which fill six fat files in my study.

### Creative ideas for projects

Take, for example, Princess Gardens. Is it a farming pilot project started somewhere in the countryside? No, on the contrary! It is mobile community garden located at Moritzplatz in Berlin-Kreuzberg, a site in the German capital which had been a 6000-m<sup>2</sup> wasteland for over half a century. A group of friends, supporters, activists and neighbours, led by Robert Shaw and Marco Clausen, cleared away rubbish, built portable organic vegetable planter boxes and soon reaped the first fruits of their endeavours.

And what about Guerrilla Gardening? It is a worldwide phenomenon in which plants or vegetables are planted on 'appropriated' land – usually in urban areas that are in a poor, neglected condition. Guerrilla Gardeners often do their work at night, converting an ugly space into an attractive and useful planted plot. Even the Duchess of Cornwall had to admire their work in south London! (For more information see *On Guerrilla Gardening: A Handbook for Gardening without Boundaries* by Richard Reynolds.)

### Fishponds and school gardens

All these ideas may be interesting, but Soroptimists are no less creative in their activities. There is already a wonderful project subsidised by the proceeds from the sale of our 2012 calendar of colourful pictures drawn by children at Boma Rescue Centre in Nairobi. The money is helping to fund a fishpond looked after by the Embakasy Girls' Secondary School in Nairobi. This project is particularly innovative, as it provides an alternative source of protein. Another project of these girls aged between 14 and 20 is a school garden. SI Millimani in Nairobi has established a competition between the Girls' School and the co-educational Peter Kubukosya School. The awards will be for the most creative and best-kept garden and the one producing the most vegetables. Clearly, kindergarten and school gardens benefit every community. The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) have published a useful CD titled *Setting up and running a school garden*, which can be downloaded at [www.fao.org](http://www.fao.org).



Please have a look at the Project Matching section, which you can access at [www.soroptimistprojects.org](http://www.soroptimistprojects.org), in which SI/E and SIA members support projects suggested by clubs around the globe. Any club can set up a project, describe it in detail, point out its sustainability and ask for help to finance it. Using a similar system, more than 200 projects were implemented under Past President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen's motto, 'Soroptimists go for Water'. If you want to post your ideas and seek collaboration, please contact our SI/E HQ Programme Executive Suba Parthiban at [suba@soroptimisteurope.org](mailto:suba@soroptimisteurope.org).



### Food waste versus starvation

Besides gardening, another supremely important issue for Soroptimists everywhere is raising awareness of scandalous food wastage. In developing countries it is educating on how to conserve food. In industrialised countries it is encouraging people to buy less at a time, to freeze small portions and to use leftovers in a creative way – like our grandmothers did!

We are also painfully aware of how important it is to protest against excessive speculation in agricultural commodities. Why not invite, on a community basis, your politicians to speak out against this scandalous – and artificially created – shortage of foodstuffs? After all, banks were saved during the financial crisis. But who advocates for people who must survive without enough food? Soroptimists cannot fail to take action in a world in which almost one billion people are suffering from starvation. We have to shake up the stakeholders involved in this scandal.

The world population can be fed if we use our imagination and determination to work for this goal. Please join me in our SI/E engagement for Water and Food!

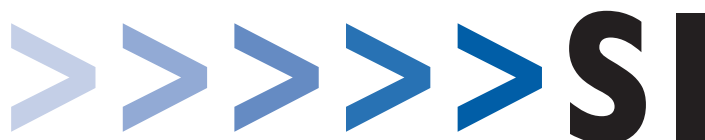
The SI Board, Silent Observers and Programme Voting Delegates agreed on new Programme Goals and this summer, which were presented in *The Link* N° 223. The Programme work based on these strategic SI, and it is our SI/E Programme team that is key to promoting, supporting and documenting the projects



Our winning Programme team (from left): Stina Söderlund, Suba Parthiban and Ulrike Neubert.

A true team effort

# PROGRAMME IS THE VERY BACKBONE OF



First of all, let's present our Programme team: Ulrike Neubert, Kenyan Union, has been Programme Director (PD) since 2009, when the new structure was introduced. Before that, she was the SI/E Programme Liaison, so she brings a lot of Programme experience to her position. Ann-Christine (Stina) Söderlund, Swedish Union, also with experience as Federation Programme Coordinator, has been Assistant Programme Director from day one as well. However, it is unrealistic to imagine that volunteer Soroptimists could handle the complexity and sheer volume of the Programme work without the full-time assistance which guarantees continuity when the PD and APD change. SI/E HQ Programme Executive Suba Parthiban is therefore a key support for and an important link to the PD and the APD, as well as to the Soroptimists driving programme throughout the Federation.

## Giving direction, offering expertise

Both the SI/E PD and the APD are elected positions for a two-year term, with the possibility for re-election once. Their responsibilities are to promote SI Programme Focus Objectives, SI Projects, UN initiatives and SI/E Projects to the Unions and Single Clubs by working with and giving direction to the Union and Single Clubs Programme teams. They also liaise with and report to SI, the SI Programme Team and the PDs of other Federations on Programme work.

Their responsibilities and tasks necessitate close collaboration with the SI Programme team – both to share SI/E Programme expertise with the SI Programme staff and other Federation Programme teams and also to inform the SI/E Board and members about pertinent SI decisions and standpoints, as well as those of other Federations. The



Objectives at the Montreal Convention goals represents the very backbone of that put life into the theory!



PD and APD participate in developing 'Where We Stand', the central document that inspires and directs our Programme work, and in selecting Best Practice winners, both at SI and SI/E levels. The PD and APD motivate and direct the Programme work of the Union and Single Club PDs and Programme Coordinators, respectively. In addition, the APD has also been instrumental in updating the Training Manuals so essential to new SI/E clubs.

### HQ staff support is essential

Under the direction of the SI/E Executive Director and in cooperation with the PD and APD, the SI/E HQ Programme Executive performs a wide variety of tasks to support and complement the work of the PD and APD. She produces the monthly Programme News, maintains the Project Matching (PM) website, evaluates and monitors PM projects and coordinates projects receiving grants from the Disaster Fund. These tasks require close contact with her SIA counterpart. She also organises and conducts training seminars on SI/E Programme. Through reports, photos, YouTube video clips etc. she documents and promotes SI/E projects, thus ensuring that our work is publicised. In this capacity she is often the Programme team member who is asked to visit projects and represent SI/E at programme-related events. As a result, she is an important and regu-

lar contributor to *The Link*. Indeed, as a full-time Programme worker she can most effectively provide routine guidance to clubs and members on projects and Programme Focus Reports (PFRs) and regularly answer the many email requests from members regarding programme.

The SI/E HQ Programme Executive oversees the work carried out by the Programme Assistant at SI/E HQ, which includes documenting all the PFRs according to Unions and Single Clubs. Based on these results, she works out the statistical analysis of PFRs for the Programme team, which is then used for the wider audience at SI/E Board Meetings, Governors' Meetings (GM) and SI Board Meetings. She assists the PD by updating and following up all the Programme issues discussed at or resulting from the GM.

Depending on subject matter and availability, the various members of the Programme team represent SI/E at the UN or other international events, for which Programme expertise is required. For example, the PD joins the SI/E President at the annual meetings of Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the UN in New York. The SI/E President may delegate the Programme Executive to attend conferences such as the World Water Forum, where detailed knowledge of related projects is required.

All three members of the Programme team participate in regular conference calls with the colleagues in other Federations and at SI level. They were all present at the SI Convention in Montreal this summer, where they also organised, coordinated and moderated workshops on effective programme management, respectively. In fact, the team's training skills are often in demand at various SI/E events as well.

Many of the team's tasks clearly overlap and complement each other, but each individual of the team is crucial for the success of our Programme work!



Ulrike Neubert explains the work of the Kwetu Training Centre for Sustainable Development to Swiss and Canadian students participating in the study trip to Kenya privately organised by Suba Parthiban and funded by a Swiss NGO.

Suba Parthiban gave Union PDs and APDs helpful tips for their Programme work at the recent seminar in Rotterdam.





**SI Budapest in Hungary is very grateful to all the clubs and individual members in Europe who have helped support the victims of the Red Toxic Sludge disaster, which occurred in southwest Hungary in October 2010. Thanks to all the generous donations, the club has contributed to building a music school and cultural centre in Devescser.**

## REVITALISATION WITH GENEROUS SI/E SUPPORT

As reported in *The Link* 2/2010-2011, members of SI Budapest visited the disaster area in January and met the mayors of the most affected towns. It was a sad atmosphere with many people still mourning their loved ones. Ten people perished in the disaster; one of them was just a baby. Many victims lost their homes with no hope to return.

SI Budapest actively worked to find the most effective support and maximise help with the funds received from SI/E clubs. We ultimately decided to collaborate with the mayor's office of Devescser and the Rotary Club Veszprém in Austria to establish a new cultural centre in Devescser to revitalise the area.

On the first anniversary of the tragic event, we were happy to officially open the new cultural centre for the Devescser victims. The music school will give the opportunity for 70 children to regularly participate in music education. In addition, the centre's director – a very dynamic, professional woman with a golden heart – has many plans how to fill the centre with life and culture.

The three classrooms for music lessons that were financed with the help of the € 28,000 donated by

SI clubs can also be used for other community activities. It will enable us to organise additional programmes at the cultural centre, such as a Christmas event for children or health prevention workshops for parents, thus ensuring sustainable support.

At the inaugural event in the presence of the mayor, high-standing representatives from several churches and the Rotarians, SI Budapest President Erzsébet Varsányi spoke about the Soroptimist contribution and our efforts behind the creation of this establishment. She also talked about Soroptimist International's activities and specific support for these projects.

It was a truly heart-warming event. Hundreds of victim families were present at the opening ceremony. The photo exhibition about the disaster brought many of them to tears. The future students of the music institute performed movingly. The mayor of Devescser, who cited 'human greed' as the ultimate cause of these futile deaths, remembered those who were lost.

We are convinced that the essence of the Soroptimist help from all over Europe is not alone the material contribution to this wonderful centre, but it is the selfless and immediate help to these people in their misery. THANK YOU to all contributing clubs and members!

Katalin Juhos, (katalinjuhos@yahoo.com) and Ágnes Soós Nagy, on behalf of President Erzsébet Varsányi, SI Budapest

Donations from Soroptimists helped finance the music classrooms for the town most affected by the disaster.

Music pupils performed at the opening ceremony for the cultural centre.



The Disaster Fund, a collaboration with SIA, gives grants to projects providing long-term relief to women and girls after disasters. Sadly, there have been several circumstances in recent months requiring our aid. The SI/E Board has already approved or will issue grants to projects benefiting internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Somalia and earthquake victims in Turkey.

# LONG-TERM AID FOR VICTIMS IN NEED

## Helping Somali IDPs

The drought and famine affecting the Horn of Africa have been in the news for months. It is heart-wrenching to see photos of thousands of Somalis fleeing the effects of drought into the already over-filled refugee camps in Southern Somalia, Kenya and Ethiopia. Experts estimate the number of people affected by the food security crisis at some three million. The situation is made worse because few humanitarian organisations are currently able to operate in the region. Access to food for IDPs is below survival needs. Water is in short supply, and the hygiene situation is appalling.

The SI/E Board has decided to take a two-pronged approach to this problem with one grant to a project initiated by SI Rolle in Switzerland and another earmarked for a proposed collaboration with SOS Children's Villages International in the Mogadishu and Baidoa camps.

SI/E Vice President Asha Abdulrahman has contacted SOS and will draw up a project proposal, which will initially be funded by a Disaster Fund grant of € 6,500. SOS have experience in, among other things, getting food directly to victims, offering hospital referral services, distributing toys to children in camps and running mobile medical clinics. Exact details of our joint project in Somalia will be in the next issue of *The Link*.

SI Rolle has submitted a request for a grant to finance a Somali Women Survival Assistance Project to be realised in the Afgoyie corridor on the outskirts of Mogadishu. Club member Dr Christiane

Garin Al-Azahri is married to Somali diplomat Dr Yusuf O. Al-Azahri who is able to send aid directly to the region. The objective is to save the lives of 50-100 displaced women and girls who lost all they owned when they fled their homes in nomadic villages. Dr Al-Azahri can secure direct assistance to the women with a monthly transfer of cash to buy water, food and simply shelters. The SI/E Board has approved an initial grant of € 6,500 towards the project, which is estimated to cost a total of about € 13,000.

## Two earthquakes hit eastern Turkey

In response to a letter sent by SI/E President Kathy Kaaf and SIA President Pat Donohue, Turkish Union President Şenay Önder reported that no Soroptimists or their families were affected by the earthquakes which struck the area around the town of Van. As there are no clubs in this region, the Union Board has decided to collaborate with another organisation which is providing aid to women and girls in the disaster area in order to realise a longer-term recovery project aimed at job training. They are currently working out the details and will also be given an SI/E grant.



Malnourished and dehydrated children wait with their parents for aid in a Banadir Hospital in Mogadishu.

Photo: UN photo

## A Call for Donations

Help us support these projects by donating to the Disaster Fund. Please stipulate which project you would like to support, such as 'Turkey' or 'Somalia', and clearly mention your club. For transfers from the Eurozone, please use the SI/E account at Credit Agricole de Savoie, Saint Julien En G, France (IBAN: FR76 1810 6000 3496 7040 0803 955, Swift code/BIC:AGRIFRPP881). Donations from non-Eurozone countries should be sent to UBS, CH – 2001 Neuchâtel, Switzerland, Account N° 290/INI05239.0 (IBAN: CH30 0029 0290 IN10 5239 0, Swift code/BIC: UBSWCHZH80A).



SI/E Scholarship Fund **BENEFICIARIES SAY**

# 'T H A N K

Belgian Héléne Koerver gave a viola concert for Soroptimists and their guests to show her gratitude for the music scholarship.

Through the Soroptimist network Moroccan Lamyia el Iktissadi, shown here with SI/E Past President Monique Rivière, was also able to find a job.

The names are announced at the Governors' Meetings, but we seldom hear how the beneficiaries of SI/E scholarships have fared afterwards! Here are the stories of three young women who received SI/E grants 2010-2011 and seven physicians who were given Dr Suzanne Noël scholarships, which as of 2012 will be part of the SI/E Scholarship Fund.

Thanks to the SI/E scholarship of €9500, Belgian musician Héléne Koerver was able to fulfil her dream of achieving a MA in Music at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston. SI Bruxelles Doyen, who suggested her for a scholarship, organised a concert in September so that Héléne could demonstrate her talent in performing with the viola.

SI d'Agen nominated Moroccan Lamyia el Iktissadi for a scholarship in 2010-2011 to help her complete her studies in civil engineering at the 'Institut Supérieur Aquitain Bâtiment et Travaux Public' (ISABTP) of the University of Pau. At the graduation ceremony this September in Biarritz, to which SI/E Past President Monique Rivière and three members of the French club were invited, Lamyia publicly and emotionally thanked the Soroptimists for their generous support of € 9000. Her graduat-

ing class participated in the construction of a school with appropriate sanitary facilities in Manombo, Madagascar. With the help of the Soroptimist network, Lamyia has now even found a job.

After completing her MA in Community Social Work from the Ben Gurion University in Israel, Yael Tsubary, who was nominated by SI Givatayim, Israel, and received a grant for € 4000, sent a letter of thanks to the Scholarship Committee. 'The scholarship made it possible for me to continue my work for the foreign community, while studying for the MA,' wrote the 32-year-old mother of two girls. Yael is now a community worker at the Mesila Aid and Information Centre for Migrant Workers and Refugees in Tel Aviv.

**Dr Suzanne Noël Scholarships**

Marie-Claire Pasteur, Suzanne Noël Fund Administrator, reports that 19 scholarships were granted for a total of €153,460 between 1992 and 2010. Seven candidates were selected for the 2010-2011 scholarships. SI/E approved an additional grant from surplus funds so that the following candidates could receive the amounts needed for their training:



Dr Aurélie Bous (31, SI Charleroi, Belgium): €4,810. Aurélie is specialising in breast reconstruction surgery and has been training at the Centre Léon Berard in Lyon, the Institute Gustave Roussy in Villejuif and the European Institute of Oncology in Milan.

Dr Anca Sibeau (32, SI Targoviste, Romania): €3,500. With this grant, Anca will be able to complete a doctorate in dermatology in Bucharest's Faculty of Medicine in conjunction with a third year specialising in reconstructive plastic surgery and microsurgery.

Dr Sanda Smud (28, SI Zagreb, Croatia): €5,600. Sanda is the only woman in Croatia to specialise in breast surgery and implants and was accepted at the Akademikieniken in Stockholm to train with a breast implant and facial reconstruction specialist. Sanda set up a partnership between the Zagreb Hospital and the Akademikieniken to send specialist surgeons to Zagreb to train Croatian doctors in these techniques.

Dr Stéphanie Cousin (32, SI Nantes, France): €2,500. Stéphanie visited the breast surgery services in Toulouse, Strasbourg, Paris and Lyon, and her report is extremely detailed and technical. This special training will enable her to improve and broaden her surgical skills in breast reconstruction

and to improve aesthetics without external implants.

Dr Talia Marival (32, SI Riviera Sud, Pointe-à-Pitre, France): €5,000. Talia is currently living in Belgium and spent six months in the Plastic Surgery service in Brussels working for a specialist in Dupuytren's disease. Talia assisted and performed plastic and cosmetic surgery with leading experts.

Dr Stella Turkan (40, SI Chisinan, Moldova): €4,800. Stella is already an experienced and highly qualified surgeon, but the head of Moldova's Institute of Oncology backed her application to perfect her plastic and reconstructive surgery skills, so she spent six months training in this field.

Dr Elisabeth Zeltitz (36, SI Bergen, Norway): €6,297. In order to gain experience in reconstructive hand surgery to repair tendon injuries, she worked at Glasgow's renowned Royal College of Surgery. In July she took part in the 23<sup>rd</sup> Congress of the International Society of Biomechanics and also attended Australia's Hand Surgery Society's Annual Meeting.

All Suzanne Noël scholarship winners have expressed their sincere gratitude to SI/E for the opportunity to learn or perfect their skills and will present reports to the clubs that nominated them.

Former Israeli journalist Yael Tsubary could follow her dream of community service in Tel Aviv after earning an MA degree in social work.

Photo: Pnina Evental

Thanks to a Dr Suzanne Noël grant, Dr Stéphanie Cousin was able to improve and broaden her surgical breast reconstruction skills.

YOU'

## SI STAND WAS A HUB OF COMMUNICATION

The three days of the 64<sup>th</sup> Annual UN Conference of the Department of Public Information for Non-Governmental Organisations ([www.un.org/dpingoconference](http://www.un.org/dpingoconference)) in September 2011 in Bonn, Germany was a whirl of photos, radio interviews and interesting conversations. SI President Alice Wells led the delegation of 15 Soroptimists at the 'Sustainable Societies – Responsive Citizens' conference, which also marked the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Year of Volunteers.

It was extremely rewarding to collaborate in cementing SI's reputation as a competent organisation on all gender-related social, educational

and economic issues in the context of sustainable development, environment management and poverty eradication. Reilly Dempsey and Anna Aiken of SI Headquarters drafted an SI declaration calling for governments to be held accountable (volunteerism is important, but it cannot completely replace the roles and responsibilities of governments) and women and girls to be recognised as decision-makers and agents of change for sustainable development. Their efforts paid off, as their input was ultimately included in the final Declaration of the 64<sup>th</sup> UN DPI/NGO Conference.

SI sent delegates to roundtable discussions or workshops to collect the impressions and information so crucial to all of us. Ute Johannsen, President of SI Bonn-Siebengebirge, and Dorothea Lewerenz, President elect of SI Bonn Bad-Bad Godesberg, together with six members from the clubs of Bonn manned the well-visited SI stand at the conference, which offered a monitor streaming films and a notebook running a PowerPoint presentation and featured a three-metre poster with the headline 'A Global Voice for Women'.

Kathy Kaaf, SI/E President

The Soroptimist delegation enjoyed the successful collaboration at the UN DPI Conference and welcomed many visitors to their stand.



### Last issue of eTIS

## KEEP INFORMED VIA THE SI WEBSITE !

Sadly, the online eTIS will appear for the last time in December 2011. The SI Board decided at its July meeting in Montreal to discontinue publication in order to save costs. However, the SI website offers a wealth of news and comments, and we urge everyone to consult it regularly. In addition to the general information, we can recommend the Monthly Focus, which deals with a topical issue or challenge affecting women and girls, and the SoroptiVoice-BLOG, featuring opinions and reports contributed by Soroptimists from different parts of the world. You can also subscribe to SI's monthly newsletter, Global Voice. The Member Area contains interesting UN reports and detailed information on the Convention. To submit your Programme Focus Reports, please click on 'Online Reporting'. And the website also offers links to all the various social networks. All in all the SI website is not only a vital source of information, but also a modern means to promote our organisation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century!



## INSPIRING ACTION – TRANSFORMING LIVES

At first I could not believe it: the Federation of Great Britain and Ireland organises a conference every year that is comparable to our quadrennial SI/E Congress. I take my hat off to them – especially since I started the preparations of our own event!

I had the privilege and the pleasure to present our Federation to the 1200 Soroptimists participating in the 77<sup>th</sup> (!) Annual Conference at Brighton's top venue, the Dome Theatre. In fact, it was the anniversary of my first visit to Brighton exactly 50 years ago.

President Liz Morgan Lewis had taken into account previous conference feedback and included just two keynote speakers, both of whom were impressive and inspiring: Ann Cotton, the founder of CamFed, the Campaign for Female Education, and Sandi Toksvig, the writer and broadcaster on British radio and television, who reaped huge applause and heartfelt laughter.

In a fascinating presentation of the many projects Soroptimists had worked on in the 26 countries of their Federation, SIGBI President Liz highlighted the clubs' programme action work as a key feature of the Conference in order to share examples of best practice and celebrate the success of their work. I was most impressed by projects focusing on regular visits to a women's prison, the creation of a food bank centre which liaises with supermarkets to stop food wastage, Life Skill Sessions for girls, which were exclusively given by Soroptimists, and the initiative 'Enabling Women to Stay in Science'. Soroptimists of GBI really do inspire action and change the lives of women and girls!

I especially appreciated the contribution made by Nicola Grinstead, a trustee of Girlguiding UK, who spoke about the negative

self-image prevalent among teenage girls. 'Girls tell us that they are finding it quite tough to accept their appearance!' The Girl Guides asked the UK Government for help and were invited to speak to Parliament about this problem. The result is the 'Give yourself a chance' campaign to boost self-esteem.

The hour-long electioneering debates of the four (!) SIGBI candidates who were campaigning for the position of International President were especially thrilling. The clubs had submitted 100 questions that were cut down to a shorter list and presented to the candidates. The delegates were asked to make 'educated decisions' on how their club would vote.

In her inaugural address Maureen Maguire, SIGBI President 2011-12, appealed to members to hold together in true sisterhood. She showed an impressive video on geese demonstrating unique group cohesion in flight, which is the key to their success in the skies.

The announcement that Project Sierra had raised the targeted £1 million, one third of which SIGBI had contributed, was the crowning touch of this extraordinary event.

*Kathy Kaaf, SI/E President*

From left: SI President Alice Wells, Joe Glackin from Hope & Homes for Children, SIGBI IPP Liz Morgan Lewis, SIGBI Project Sierra Liaison Anne Macdonald, SIA President Pat Donohue and SI/E President Kathy Kaaf at the presentation of the cheque for £1 million.



Nobel Peace Prize

## HONOURING OUTSTANDING WOMEN!

Well done to the Nobel Prize Committee for selecting three women to receive this year's Nobel Peace Prize: President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia, Liberian peace activist Leymah Gbowee and Yemeni journalist and human rights activist Tawakkul Karman. As Soroptimists, we commend their non-violent struggle for women's rights and peace in their respective countries. 'We cannot achieve democracy and lasting peace in the world unless women achieve the same opportunities as men to influence developments at all levels of society,' said Nobel Committee chairman, Thorbjorn Jagland, when announcing the laureates. In her congratulatory letter, SI/E President Kathy Kaaf wished Ellen Johnson Sirleaf all the best for her future commitment to conflict resolution and the empowerment of women. She also informed her of our plans to charter a SI club in Liberia.



Proposed African Federation Conference

## AN INVITATION TO NAIROBI!

Nairobi, Kenya will be the venue of the joint conference of the Soroptimist International Proposed African Federation from 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> March 2012. The Eastern, Central and Western Zones of Africa will also be represented, which includes the countries in the Federations of both Europe (SI/E) and Great Britain & Ireland (SIGBI).

The main objective of this Conference is to bring together Soroptimists from all over Africa and other Federations with the aim to work towards the effective creation of the SI African Federation (SI AF). The Conference will give our African Soroptimists the opportunity to share their ideas with the other Federations. The plan is to develop the criteria for the election of an SI African Board as well as to evaluate efforts and achievements attained so far in the African Zones.

'We look forward to seeing as many members as possible in Nairobi, as this is a very important step towards the creation of an African Federation,' says newly appointed Project Manager for Africa Mariet Verhoef-Cohen.

Please complete and return the attached registration form by 15<sup>th</sup> January 2012 to one of the following organisers:

↑ Maria Soumonni, Interim Executive Secretary of the West and Central Africa Zone, has been one of the driving forces behind the Proposed African Federation.

Some 100 Soroptimists from all over Africa attended the 2011 Conference of the Proposed African Federation in Lomé.



### **Vivian Namayi Namwalo**

Eastern Region President  
SI Future African Federation  
P.O. Box 16072-00610  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel: +254725589242  
Email: sikenyaunion@gmail.com  
Email: vinnam88@yahoo.com

### **Josephine Nwokedi**

Western & Central Zone President  
SI Future African Federation  
P.O. Box 54409  
Lagos, Nigeria  
Tel: +2348033160068  
Email: udezulu.nwokedi@yahoo.com

### **Betty Yieke**

Union of Kenya President (HOST)  
P.O. Box 16072-00610  
Nairobi, Kenya  
Tel: +254 722845262  
Email: sikenyaunion@gmail.com  
Email: byieke@yahoo.com  
www.soroptimist-kenya.org





Whether you compete, join the Fun Run or are just a spectator – the Peace Marathon is an unforgettable experience and helps promote the image of our organisation in Rwanda.

### Soroptimist Project Matching

NEARLY €10,000  
RAISED IN ONE  
MONTH!

We have great news about the Soroptimist Project Matching! In October 2011 alone, we raised € 9,281 for four projects on [www.soroptimistprojects.org](http://www.soroptimistprojects.org). The donations have all been transferred to the clubs needing support, and they have started implementing their projects. More and more Soroptimists are eager to promote their projects on this platform, and interest to fund the well-conceived projects presented on the site is steadily increasing. Here is the most recent project on the Project Matching site, which is related to our current biennium theme:

**ML0010 – Planning  
for a market garden in  
Bandiagara, Mali**



The goals of this project are to improve household food production throughout the year and to deliver produce to local hotels, which are well-visited thanks to the tourism in this area. Further objectives are to increase women's income through the sale of fresh and dried vegetables in neighbouring markets and to diversify the income-generating activities. The plan is to fence in a perimeter of one hectare around the community well to allow women of the Dioro Dogo Association to use the garden space more efficiently. This fence will also protect valuable crops from animals.

**Funds needed: € 2,832 EUR**

Please visit the Soroptimist Project Matching website for regular updates and keep supporting the efforts of our clubs.

### A Call to the Peace Marathon 2012

## BOOK YOUR TRIPS TO RWANDA NOW!

Preparations for the 8<sup>th</sup> Peace Marathon in Kigali on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2012 are well underway. The organisers hope to repeat the success of this year's event in Rwanda with more than 1,200 participants. Once again, there will be preliminary competitions for schoolchildren to select the best contestants to run in Kigali.

The Marathon is the perfect occasion to meet our Rwandan Soroptimists and to see their various successful projects, such as the school of Les Hironnelles and the San Marco Centre. You can compete in the Marathon itself, run for pleasure or just enjoy the fantastic atmosphere as a spectator. With a bit of luck, Minister of Sports, Youth and Culture Mitali K. Protais will be able to convince the Rwandan President Paul Kagame to participate in the Marathon in 2012, as he promised.

In addition to having the option of seeing the gorillas in their natural habitat, the organisers have once again arranged an interesting accompanying programme in Rwanda and Uganda including a game drive, a boat ride on the Kazinga Channel and a visit to the equator.

To find out more about the travel programme and the prices, please see [www.kigalimarathon.com](http://www.kigalimarathon.com). As in the past, the overall contact for both the Marathon and the tourist programme is Guida Biewer from Luxembourg: [biewerg@pt.lu](mailto:biewerg@pt.lu).

With the project in Mali local women will be able to grow produce for their own use and/or for sale in neighbouring markets.

Leena Viitaniemi, SI/E Vice President



## Projects in Benin

# BOTH INSPIRING AND AMBITIOUS

Governor Herta joins Soroptimists from SI Sika-Or in front of their well in Houeygbe.

While in Benin to charter SI Calavi Colombe, Herta Kaschitz had the chance to visit the current projects of four Benin Clubs. Here is her report:

The most moving moment was having the great honour of placing the foundation stone of the maternity hospital, which SI Cotonou Doyen aims to build. It will serve some 6,000 inhabitants. Obviously, the Club will need a great deal of financial help to realise this project costing € 60,000, and I urge everyone to support this outstanding cause (see adjacent article).

SI Amazone supports a Counselling Centre in Akassato for abandoned or abused girls, victims of human trafficking or in trouble with the law. The girls are offered accommodation, food, literacy skills, education, professional training or family mediation. SI Amazone has taken responsibility for two girls, one of whom is now a textile dyer and the other a hairdresser.

SI Sika-Or built the first artesian well in Houeygbe at a cost of € 5,000. I was touched by the delighted looks on the faces of the women and children as they fetched clean water.

The last project I visited was the first well in Ifangni, a village with a population of 3,500. This well, built at a cost € 7,900, was largely funded by a group in Porto, Portugal, with a contribution of € 800 from SI Cotonou Gazelle. The club is monitoring the project, which allows women from the village to invest the proceeds from the sale of water into a microfinance fund.

*Herta Kaschitz, Governor of the Austrian Union*

## SI Košice organises summer camp

# FUN AND WORK FOR TALENTED CHILDREN

The children gathered for a group shot during their outing to Košice.

The camp orchestra accompanied the performance at the farewell party.

Photos: Tomáš Čížmárik

The international summer camp for talented children is the main project of SI Košice in eastern Slovakia. It is the seventh time the club organised this camp, which took place in August in the beautiful mountain area of Zlatá Idka. This former mining village, where gold and silver were once extracted, lies about 17 km west of Košice.

22 children sponsored by SI clubs in Czech Republic (Prague), Poland (Kraków), Ukraine (Uzhgorod) and Slovakia attended the camp. Participants were chosen on the basis of their talent in the arts – i.e. dancing and singing or playing a musical instrument.

The children worked and relaxed during their week at the camp. Workshops were offered in painting, dancing, singing and playing the musical instruments. The children also visited the interesting sights nearby and spent half a day in Košice,



SI Cotonou Doyen

## A TALE OF WATER...AND FRIENDSHIP!



The awards ceremony for pupils who drew pictures depicting Adouanko in the rainy season.

In early August 2008, our project, 'Soroptimists go for water in Adouanko', drew the attention of SI Valauris Sophia-Antipolis. So, they launched a drawing competition at local schools to support us. The theme: 'Children united for blue gold for Benin.'

SI Cotonou Doyen then organised its own competition in the local school. The pupils were asked to depict Adouanko in the rainy season, during which the village near Cotonou is cut off by water from the lagoon. At the awards ceremony in March 2009, local women's associations expressed their concern about basic health and sanitation problems. Our awareness and advocacy campaign, which were covered by the local media, alerted the public authorities, and the drinking water problems have now been resolved.

In another partnership with SI Sophia-Antipolis of France, which helped fund the project, and with the technical/financial support of CREPA Benin, we have built six ECOSAN portable latrines at a total cost of € 15,398. The inauguration took place September 28, and now some 300 women are benefitting from these facilities.

And finally, in the presence of Austrian Governor Herta Kaschitz, the first stone of a maternity hospital was laid in Adouanko. This bold project, aims to address the important risk of childbirth mortality, given the village's remote location. The final cost is estimated at roughly € 60,000.

*Raima Osseni Moudachirou, President 2011-2012, and Françoise Widmer, SI Cotonou Doyen*



SI Cotonou Doyen President Raima and Austrian Governor Herta Kaschitz lay the foundation stone for the new maternity hospital.



### A Special Congratulations to Ulla

When Ulla Madsen, SI Kasstrup-Taarnby of the Danish Union, was elected SI/E President 2013-2015 at the Governors' Meeting in July 2011, there was one Soroptimist and friend who was particularly proud, her 'godmother' Birthe Arnholtz. If it hadn't been for Birthe, Ulla may never have become a Soroptimist. With heartfelt pride, Birthe sends SI/E President elect Ulla her deepest congratulations and best wishes.

which is rich in historical monuments. Attended by Soroptimists and family members from Czech Republic, Bratislava, Krakow and Uzhgorod as well as by representatives from the Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis and Patriot clubs of Košice, the farewell party was a great success. Participants performed 'The Sleeping Ruženka', based on the popular fairy tale. Club sister Klára Samuelisová, a teacher at primary art school in Košice, had come up with this idea. At the end of the show everyone sang the camp anthem. Guests also enjoyed the goulash and sweets prepared by the skilled cooks from the Zlatá Idka resort. Afterwards children had a disco party, while the adults socialised.

Saying good-bye was hard, and many tears were shed at the end of the camp visit. Children promised to keep in touch with their new friends via Facebook and hope to meet again next year.

Many thanks to all SI Košice members who helped organise and finance the summer camp. We are also grateful to SI/E for the Action Fund grant and the organisation DAMKO in Košice for their support. More information and photos can be found at [www.soroptimist.sk](http://www.soroptimist.sk).

*Katarína Čížmáriková, President of SI Košice, Slovakia*

Honour for Christiane Carat

## EXCERPTS FROM HER ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Deputy Mayor of Sisteron Daniel Spagnou awarded Christiane Carat, SI Haute-Provence Manosque, the rank of Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur as a Bénévolat Associatif or Community Volunteer in September of this year. 'It is an extremely emotional moment for me today to rise to this rank,' said Christiane at the award ceremony in the presence of her family, the then SI President Hanne Jensbo and many friends.

Christiane went on to say that during her years as both a professional and a volunteer, she has often had the chance to defend the values represented by Soroptimism. 'Being ready to listen, offer relief and provide what life has not given for those less fortunate than ourselves is the leitmotif of my personal engagement', she said. This is why she set up an area devoted to beauty for people suffering from cancer. 'My idea came to fruition thanks to the volunteer beauticians here today,' she stressed and added, 'We work together to give patients a sense of joy and a taste for life by helping them to feel beautiful and providing a little relief.'

Before thanking her family and the people who supported her in her work, Christiane recalled, 'When travelling, I often meet exceptional people who are attentive to the needs of those less fortunate, and I have seen how Soroptimist values are comparable to the values represented by this honour, France's highest distinction which has been awarded to me today.'

French  
Soroptimist  
Christiane Carat  
is awarded for  
her community  
work.



SI Madrid

## LITERATURE PRIZE FOR CLUB PRESIDENT



The National Association of Writers in Greece, awarded Chryssa Georganta, the new president of SI Madrid, a literature prize this year for her poem 'Every Day'. In addition to being an actress, Chryssa is a theatre and film director. In 2005 she founded her own theatrical company called 'Coxcobanx'. She is also a member of ITI (International Theatre Institute) UNESCO.

Chryssa studied economics and worked for several years as a journalist. She is currently studying Greek civilization through the Greek Open University.

As Club President for the next two years, Chryssa's goal is to promote the Soroptimist values and attract new members.

*Every Day by Chryssa Georganta*

*Nothing is more hopeless than  
recovering your liver every night  
Only for an eagle to eat it each morning  
And all of this  
because of a fire strewn in you  
by Prometheus  
Which doesn't let you  
Give up*

Tour of the Aeolian Islands

# AN OVERWHELMING EXPERIENCE

The very young and dynamic SI Lipari Isole Eolie of the Italian Union, which was chartered in 2004, organised a weeklong tour of the Aeolian Islands for Soroptimists and their guests in July 2011. My husband and I had the opportunity to join them and really enjoyed discovering the islands and meeting many Italian Soroptimists and their families. To my great surprise, Monique Gachon, SI Nice, and the two of us were the only non-Italians among the some 40 participants!

Sonia D'Hambra, SI Lipari, and the staff of the Mea Lipari Hotel with its very charming Manager and Soroptimist Sarah Tomasello helped me organise our 12-hour journey from Brussels to Lipari.

It was a most wonderful and happy experience to be splashed into the warm, friendly and relaxed Italian atmosphere – also in the company of the then Italian Union President Wilma Malucelli. All the members of SI Lipari with their President Mirella Nardacci Bruno and Past President Renate Muller-Baghel did their utmost to offer us an unforgettable week of breath-taking scenery as well as many cultural and culinary delights.

Dear Soroptimists, when the tour is offered again, don't miss the opportunity to share in this overwhelming Soroptimist experience. Take my word for it.

Rita De Groot, President, SI Antwerpen



Spectacular scenery in a relaxed Italian atmosphere awaits you during the tour of the Aeolian Islands.

SI Hammerfest President Ellinor Holmgren and other club members congratulate the 2011 Barends prizewinner Solveig

Leinan-Hermo.

Photo: Svein G. Jørstad, Finnmark Dagblad



When SI Kirkenes in the Barends region of northeast Norway was asked to host the Annual Meeting of the Norwegian Union in 1992, it was quite natural for us to give the social part of the meeting a 'regional profile'. Happily, everything went according to plan, and the final accounts showed a profit of about NOK 40,000 or € 5,000.

## The Barends prize in Norway

# REWARDING EXCEPTIONAL WOMEN

The club asked the Union if it could keep the money for a project. The idea was approved, so SI Kirkenes decided to create a foundation which awarded an annual prize to a woman living in the Barends region who had distinguished herself by strengthening cooperation, promoting tolerance and creating a

fertile atmosphere for peace and friendship between people of different languages and cultural backgrounds within the region.

Each year Norwegian Soroptimist Clubs north of the polar circle were invited to nominate candidates. The club with the winning candidate presented the prize of NOK 2000 on 8<sup>th</sup> March, and the winner was publicised in local newspapers and in our magazine Norsk Soroptima. The foundation granted a total of 13 prizes. As all the funds have been exhausted, the last prize was awarded to Solveig Leinan-Hermo in 2011. She is the leader of the Stelaris Dance Company, which also includes two Russian dancers, and received the prize in recognition of her cultural work across the Barends region and specifically her annual Dance Festival Barends, which attracts performers from all over Europe.

It has been incredibly to recognise a single woman for her hard work and achievements. SI Kirkenes is both proud and happy to have concluded such a successful project.

Anne Marie Dalmeyer Nilsen, President SI Kirkenes, Norway

A garden tour for a good cause

## EXPERIENCE THE CHARM OF ENGLAND!

Rolling green countryside, beautifully designed gardens, majestic ancient trees, quaint villages and picnics in romantic parks – the tour of South East England, organised by SI Aalen/Ostwürttemberg from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> June 2012, offers all this and more! The experienced, charming and creative team of Marietta Hageney and Andrea Hoffmann will be your personal guides throughout the trip. You will visit, among other things, the 14<sup>th</sup> century moated Scotney Castle, the famous Sissinghurst Gardens created by Vita Sackville-West, Sir Winston Churchill's Chartwell, English writer Rudyard Kipling's Bateman's Cottage and the church at Tudeley with all its 12 stained glass windows designed by Marc Chagall. The € 975 per person in a



double-room covers the coach trip and ferry ride, five-day hotel accommodation including breakfast and dinner, three sumptuous picnics prepared by your hostesses, private tour guides (German) and admission fees to all attractions. During your stay in England you will also have the opportunity to meet British Soroptimists.

However, perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this unforgettable tour is that 100 per cent of the proceeds will be donated to the club's project to help build a village of 10 houses for orphans in the Dhading region of Nepal in partnership with Children's Future Organisation (CFO). Club member Petra Pachner has personal contacts on site and will carefully follow the construction of one of these orphanages at a cost of € 10,000.

Book your trip now because space is limited! The contact for registration or questions is Andrea Hoffman at [a.u.hoffmann@t-online.de](mailto:a.u.hoffmann@t-online.de) or [www.soroptimist-aalen.de](http://www.soroptimist-aalen.de).

The roses at the foot of the Balkan Mountains are just one of the popular tourist attractions on the tour.



Three anniversaries in Bulgaria

## CELEBRATE WITH WINE & ROSES

The Bulgarian Union, SI Sofia and SI Burgas invite Soroptimists to join them in celebrating their 10<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> anniversaries, respectively, from 31<sup>st</sup> May to 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2012. The organisers have put together a fantastic pre-anniversary celebration programme based on the Thracian Tour arranged in 2010 (see *The Link* N<sup>o</sup>. 217). Participants will be treated to four days of history, culture and nature, which includes visits to Sofia and Plovdiv, a wine degustation in Starossel, a walk through the valley of roses at the foot of the Balkan Mountains as well as a tour the Thracian mural of Kazanlak and the tomb of King Sevt-Goliamata Kasmatka. The programme will culminate in a gala dinner in Sofia on 2<sup>nd</sup> June. For prices and details, please see the invitation on the SI/E website or the details of the tour at [www.thracian-treasure-tour.hit.bg](http://www.thracian-treasure-tour.hit.bg).

Vesselina Tzvetanova, President of SI Bulgaria

The attractions of South East England, such as Sissinghurst Gardens in Kent, will take your breath away.

The mural of the Thracian tomb in Kazanlak is just one highlight of the programme in Bulgaria.





Proceeds to fund arts seminar

## THIS CALENDAR CAN BE YOURS

The extraordinary circumstance of having a French President of SI Offenburg and a German President of SI Strasbourg on opposite sides of the Rhine inspired us to create a shared project which reflects our common goals of international friendship, education and the support of women.

We decided to jointly organise and finance a Franco-German Arts Seminar in the summer of 2012 in cooperation with Kunsthochschule Offenburg (Offenburg Community Arts College) and Ecole des Arts Décoratifs de Strasbourg (Fine Arts Academy Strasbourg).

Arts students from both countries will be encouraged to explore the theme of 'The woman in the 21<sup>st</sup> century'. Mentored by established female artists and curators who are knowledgeable in the arts scene on both sides of the Rhine, these students will also gain insight into the economic aspect of marketing their artwork.

To fund this unusual project, proceeds from the sale of an art calendar, which was conceived by both clubs in collaboration with Soroptimist and artist Corinna Heumann, will go towards the Franco-German Arts Seminar. This attractive calendar is a tribute to the ideals of Soroptimist International and therefore the perfect gift idea for all Soroptimists who wish to share our common goals with a wider audience. For € 15 plus postage and packaging this calendar can be yours. To order, please contact [flenotre@gmail.com](mailto:flenotre@gmail.com).

We greatly appreciate your support for this exciting Franco-German undertaking.

This summer the calendar was officially unveiled at a reception hosted by the German ambassador to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

### Montessori project

## FROM SWEDEN TO LATVIA – WITH LOVE!

'Let's ask our godchildren' in Ogre-Kegums, Latvia what sort of a joint project they would like to do!' This was SI Linköping President Kerstin Sjöberg's idea when she took office a year ago. The Latvian Soroptimists replied, 'We would like to hear from trained Swedish Montessori teachers how they take care of children with special needs, because we want to sponsor a small Montessori centre here.'

We set out to find these teachers and what a serendipity! There is a private Montessori pre-

school and school for children with special needs in our own city. So, we persuaded the headmaster and a teacher to go with five of us to Latvia to give lectures. SI Ogre-Kegums President Sabine Gudeike and other club members, along with Marite



In support of SI Ogre-Kegums' plan to sponsor a small Montessori centre, SI Linköping brought Swedish experts to Latvia for an informative seminar.

ABC, an affiliate of the Latvian Montessori Association, managed all the practicalities and logistics on site.

In the end, some 150 people belonging to member organisations of the Montessori association throughout Latvia, and including university representatives, gathered for the event. They even had to change the venue to a bigger hall! Local TV covered the seminar, and when interviewed about the project, I managed to squeeze in some information about SI/E!

As a proud 'godmother', I am enormously pleased to see what a seven-year-old club can do when they set their minds to it. And it goes without saying that we also had a wonderful time together, seeing their other projects in Kegums and meeting with the club members after the seminar. Back in Linköping, we immediately started preparing our PFR!

*Ann-Christine (Stina) Söderlund, SI Linköping, Sweden*



Please submit your contributions to the next issue of *The Link* by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012!

**NEW SI/E CLUBS TO BE CHARTERED**

**26<sup>th</sup> November 2011**

Meseno (Kenya)  
 Charter to be presented by  
 Guida Biewer, Governor  
 SI Luxembourg  
Club President  
 Jesca O. Oredo  
 Box 173  
 KE – Maseno  
 Phone: +254 714 525 078  
 E-mail: jooredo@yahoo.com

**15<sup>th</sup> December 2011**

Hanegev (Israel)  
 Charter to be presented by  
 Kathy Kaaf, SI/E President  
Club President  
 Lizette Peretz  
 Sayyafan 18  
 IL – 85338 Lahavim  
 Phone: +972 8 6518 250  
 E-mail: 1p4@walla.co.il

**19<sup>th</sup> 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**

**20<sup>th</sup> January 2012**

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
 SI Køge (Denmark)

**21<sup>st</sup> January 2012**

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
 SI Dragør-St. Magleby (Denmark)

**24<sup>th</sup> February 2012**

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
 SI Kouvola (Finland)

**7<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
 SI Toulouse (France)

**14<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
 SI Tarbes (France)

**25<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
 SI Liestal (Switzerland)

**27<sup>th</sup> May 2012**

International Peace Marathon  
 Kigali (Rwanda)

**30<sup>th</sup> June-8<sup>th</sup> July 2012**

Icelandic Soroptimist Week

**14<sup>th</sup>-15<sup>th</sup> July 2012**

Governors' Meeting  
 Budapest (Hungary)

**28<sup>th</sup> September - 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2012**

9<sup>th</sup> European Friendship Days  
 SI Nicosia & SI Paphos (Cyprus)

**12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> July 2013**

SI/E Congress  
 Berlin (Germany)

**INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS DAYS AND EVENTS**

**10<sup>th</sup> December**

Human Rights Day (celebrated by Soroptimists worldwide)

**8<sup>th</sup> March**

International Women's Day

**22<sup>nd</sup> March**

World Water Day

