



# The Link

A global voice for women

2/2008-2009 N° 213



19<sup>th</sup> SI Europe Congress  
Support Our  
Federation!

SI/E Member Survey  
Defining Our Priorities  
for the Future

Water Projects  
Working  
with WfWP

*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 over 34,000 members in some 1,200 clubs in 57 countries.*

*Soroptimists inspire action and create opportunities to transform the lives of women and girls through a global network of members and international partnerships. Please 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 Editorial Staff

# HELP IMPROVE YOUR MAGAZINE!

The Link is undergoing a facelift! We hope you like the changes in your Federation magazine and welcome your comments. Our aim is to provide an attractive magazine, which communicates messages from SI and your SI/E Federation Board, and presents interesting news from the Unions, Clubs and fellow Soroptimists. Some of you may also gain new ideas for your own activities and projects, or even decide to support an existing effort. The Link should be both stimulating and useful for Soroptimists, and also informative for families, friends and potential members.

The new look is a joint effort of the SI/E Working Group set up to examine ways to improve and modernise The Link. For example, Helma Coolman, Dutch Union, contributed two articles to this issue, and Margaret Støle Karlsen, Norwegian Union, created the wonderful drawing of a 'typical' Soroptimist on page 6. The feedback and suggestions from Elisabeth Elling, German Union, Marie-Christine Gries, French Union and Søs Kjeldsen, Danish Union, have also been extremely helpful for the Group Chair and interim Editor, Christine Cromwell-Ahrens, German Union.

But the topics and photos you provide are the most crucial elements for the success of the magazine. Please try to keep your texts short and remember that photos have to be good enough for printing purposes! The Working Group's concept for the future will be presented at this year's Governors' Meeting in Amsterdam.

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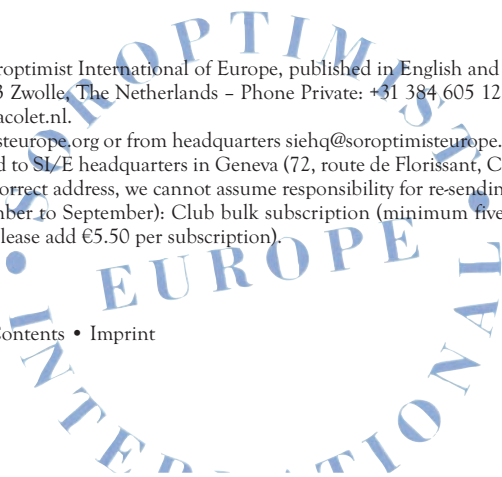
## Cover page



With the help of several German clubs, the water supply of the Chak-e-Wardak Hospital is being rebuilt to ensure continued medical treatment for Afghan children (Photo: Rainer Stadelmann).



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## President's Letter

### Dear Soroptimists,

World Water Day is 22<sup>nd</sup> March! This is clearly a day to remember as SI/E stresses the importance of clean drinking water in its 'Soroptimists go for Water' Federation theme from 2007-2011. The goal is to raise awareness and to accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target to halve the number of 2.6 billion people without access to clean drinking water and basic sanitation by 2015. Soroptimists in all 57 countries of our Federation can celebrate World Water Day by drawing attention to the world's water problems. On 22<sup>nd</sup> March we can show the world that freshwater and sanitation are vital for health, make education possible, generate economic benefits, contribute to dignity and social development and sustain our environment. Whether we have too much or too little, whether the water is too dirty, whether we live upstream or downstream, water affects us all.

### Share the Congress experience

This automatically brings me to the SI/E Congress in Amsterdam from 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> July. We hope to welcome many if not all of our Federation members because it is such a wonderful experience to meet Soroptimists from all over the world. The theme sessions will be professional and informative, while keynote speakers like Fabien Cousteau will emphasize the enormous value of the water projects we undertake. During my travels in Kenya, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Ghana, Mali and Burkina Faso, I have seen with my own eyes how water is essential for life. The difference we make with the installation of a water pump, a sanitation block or a market garden irrigation project translates into improved health, higher chances for education and income-generating products. But above all, these projects give hope for a better future.

The SI/E Board are aware that the current financial and economic crisis is affecting a lot of our members, and we realise that everyone has to consider all expenses carefully. Nevertheless, we hope that our projects and the Congress will be high on your list of priorities.



With the village chief looking on, SI/E President Mariet prepares to cut the ribbon to mark the opening of the new Soroptimist-funded sanitation block in Kumasi, Ghana.

### Check out the new website

We will keep you posted through the website on developments and events. You will have noticed that [www.soroptimisteurope.org](http://www.soroptimisteurope.org) has changed and is much more user friendly. Please let SI/E HQ know if you have important events to report or upload. The video clips are easily accessible and can be used to show potential members and sponsors 'who and what' Soroptimists are. Short video clips on our projects are in the making and will be shown in Amsterdam. We can be so proud of ourselves, and it is truly wonderful to see how active we are.

As you can see, we have also revamped The Link. Shorter and edited articles with better photos make more interesting reading. Wouldn't it be nice to have an article about the situation (for Soroptimists) in your country presented in The Link? We have a multi-cultural Federation, and you may even be able to initiate joint projects and activities with other Unions or Clubs. The Link is truly an important PR tool, and we think every member in SI/E should receive it.

Your Unions and Single Clubs are preparing for the Governors' Meeting in Amsterdam where we will discuss the SI/E policies and our way forward. We have a wonderful and vibrant organisation, and we have great projects. By meeting, cooperating and communicating with each other, we will grow even stronger!

In friendship,

*Mariet*

Mariet Verhoef-Cohen  
SI/E President

With its unique cityscape, Amsterdam, the venue of the 19<sup>th</sup> SI/E Congress, offers visitors a variety of activities.  
Photos: An Stalpers



Good reasons to visit Amsterdam

## A CITY WITH LOTS TO OFFER!

### *Easy access*

Amsterdam is situated at a junction of national and international roads and its main airport, Schiphol, is considered to be one of the best in the world. Amsterdam has a unique compact city centre with many locations within walking distance and an outstanding public transit system with unique transport possibilities via water.

### *Worldwide renowned art & culture*

The city offers a variety of art forms, from traditional to avant-garde. There are many international productions, and the art collections enjoy world fame. Numerous galleries also boast an excellent reputation.

### *Headquarters of many international businesses & organisations*

Amsterdam is the head office address of many multinational and worldwide operating organisations. This gives the city its cosmopolitan allure, without losing its traditional, romantic character and without being absorbed by an international entity.

### *Cosmopolitan meets traditional*

The many cafés, terraces, bars, comedy clubs and nightclubs provide different types of ambi-

ence from classic to trendy. The venues may have international influences or the traditional Amsterdam atmosphere of 'brown cafés', which can be found in both the Jordaan and De Pijp area.

### *Fun & creativity*

Amsterdam is a city with countless opportunities for creating a special welcome for your delegates. Many are familiar with Amsterdam's canal boats, but there are more possibilities for a relaxing intermezzo, like renting a bike for a city tour or a visit to the Vondelpark.

### *Shopping paradise*

The variety of available goods is one of the major attractions of shopping in Amsterdam. There are several shopping areas, such as the Negen Straatjes (nine little streets), the famous Kalverstraat and the exclusive P.C. Hoofstraat. The year-round markets at Waterlooplein and the Albert Cuypstraat attract hundreds of thousands of visitors every year.

### *Colourful & multilingual*

Currently people representing 174 different nationalities live and work in Amsterdam. 'Amsterdammers' are known to be outspoken, multilingual, hospitable, innovative and entrepreneurial. These skills contribute to doing business on a high international level with a smile!

### *City of knowledge*

With two highly developed universities and academic medical centres, Amsterdam has established itself as a centre of knowledge for important sciences. It is also an attractive meeting place for anyone involved in science and research, such as in the fields of new media, life sciences or information and communication technology.





SI/E Congress 2009 in Amsterdam

## SUPPORT OUR FEDERATION!

When plans for the 19<sup>th</sup> Congress of the SI/E Federation began years ago, no one could have anticipated the worst recession in 50 years. This dire economic climate has clearly taken its toll on registration. But organisers have put together a fabulous programme so please consider what you are getting for your money!

As you know, SI/E organises a Congress once every four years. The main purpose of this event is to gather members of our Federation as well as from other parts of the world to share a special Soroptimist experience. It is a forum to present the results of our efforts to further our goals and to reflect on the future of our organisation. But most of all, it is an opportunity to see old friends and meet other Soroptimists.

'Soroptimists go for Water', the theme chosen by SI/E President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen for her term of office 2007-2009, which President-elect Eliane Lagasse has decided to continue for 2009-2011, has inspired many projects throughout our Federation. We all can be proud of these success stories, some of which have been described in *The Link*. The Congress offers the opportunity to honour these efforts. Indeed, President Mariet and her

team have put together a programme of extremely high standards. The fact that dedicated oceanographer and environmentalist Fabien Cousteau, grandson of legendary Jacques Cousteau, has agreed to be one of the keynote speakers is a tribute to the professional standard of this year's Congress in Amsterdam. To read more about his commitment, go to [www.fabiencousteau.org](http://www.fabiencousteau.org).

The last issue of *The Link* contained more information about the programme and the speakers. You can also find all the details of this event from 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> July 2009, on the official website, [www.soroptimistsgoforwater.nl](http://www.soroptimistsgoforwater.nl). Particularly worth



The venue of the 19<sup>th</sup> SI/E Congress is 'Het Muziektheater' in Amsterdam, where there is plenty of room to present the various Federation water projects. Photo: An Stalpers

mentioning are the theme sessions, which will be organised by professional organisations.

Those of you who have attended professional seminars or conventions know that such events are costly. For our event, however, the € 340 early registration fee includes the entire Congress Programme, all sessions, tea/coffee breaks and lunches. The fee for individual days also covers the full programme of the day plus breaks and lunch. Incidentally, the deadline for the less expensive early registration fee has been extended to 15<sup>th</sup> April 2009. If you register early, you will automatically participate in a draw in which the two winners will have their fees reimbursed, including the Hospitality Evening and the Gala Dinner!

President Mariet and the organisers have done an admirable job in gaining sponsors for the Congress, but even companies are feeling the pressure of the recession, and this is reflected in their donations. The only way for our Congress to be a success – and financially viable – is for our members to attend. So, please show your support for the Federation and register now. You will not regret it!

SI/E Board 2007-2009

### Filming Soroptimist Projects on Site in Africa!

The SI/E Board commissioned BUZZMEDIA NETWORK to film some of the successful projects financed and realised in the various collaborations between Unions and Clubs in Europe and Africa. Filmmaker Heinrich Dahms thus joined SI/E President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen during her tour through Africa in February 2009. Mariet was warmly welcomed by villagers both old and young who showed their gratitude in many ways. This woman in Mali is extremely proud of the banana crop that she was able to grow thanks to a Soroptimist-financed water system. The clips will be posted on our SI/E website in April.



## SI/E Member Survey

# DEFINING OUR PRIORITIES FOR THE FUTURE

The SI/E Federation conducted a survey in 2008 that was inspired by the SI Strategic Planning Process and the French Union's questionnaire. These studies focused on SI and how it can be developed. Our survey was directed to members of SI/E to determine how the European Federation can be better organised and strengthened.

The survey provided a comprehensive membership profile as well as the views and expectations of our members on Soroptimist issues, such as extension and retention, communication, etc. For the full results, please go to [www.soroptimisteurope.org](http://www.soroptimisteurope.org). This article highlights some of the salient conclusions. Our aim is to reach every SI/E member and to stress these important issues.

## Who is a Soroptimist?

A Soroptimist is a woman of about 60. She is very likely to be a college/university graduate, knows English or French or both and is financially well off. Most likely she is married, has one or two children and has been a member for about 15 years. She joined SI because she wants to serve her community and country and identifies with Soroptimist values and objectives. She attends most club meetings, takes part in club activities and is willing to introduce new members to her club. Of all Programme Areas, her club focuses primarily on Education and Culture and Human Rights and Status of Women. European Soroptimists have easy access to and regularly use the Internet.

## Our organisation is ageing

Considering this profile, the most striking conclusion is that our organisation is ageing. Therefore, recruiting new and young members should be our first priority.

According to the survey, an average of six members joined the clubs over the past three years, and the average age of these new members was 45. During the same period, an average of three members left the clubs. Although the number of new members is greater than the number of members lost, and even if the ratio were to remain the same, there will be both numerical and proportional losses over the years. The average age of new members is also quite high. This



**T**he whole world will once again be on the move on Sunday, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2009. Within 24 hours and in all 24 time zones, thousands of people will put on their walking shoes and join in a five-kilometre walk to campaign against poverty and hunger.

End Hunger - Walk the World is a global event initiated in 2003 by TNT, a global mail and logistics company, in partnership with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). TNT and WFP work together with FAO and many NGOs to heighten awareness about poverty and hunger and raise funds for WFP-supported school feeding programmes in the poorest countries. Such programmes are a powerful way to reduce child hunger and increase the enrolment of more children, and particularly girls, in schools, which is part of our SI Programme Focus 2007-2011 and the UN Millennium Development Goals.

More than 800 million people do not get enough to eat, most of them are women and children. Almost 200 million children under five years are underweight due to lack of food, and one child dies every seven seconds from hunger and related causes. For only about € 40 a year we can fill a plate of porridge for a needy child in school. Now, you too can help end hunger by participating in a walk against hunger on 7<sup>th</sup> June.



Photo: Jeff Rowland

Young girls in Tanzania are just one example of the children who benefit from the school-lunch programme.

For details how to organise a 'Walk', visit [www.WFP.org](http://www.WFP.org) and click 'How to Help'. Under 'For Individuals' and you will find 'Walk the World' and 'How to Find Out More'. There may also be a WFP Office nearby which you can contact directly. By organising a 'Walk', your Club will be encouraging many more children, and specially girls, from poor countries, to attend school and help them fight hunger and concentrate on their studies.

*Else Larsen*  
SI Representative to FAO

Will you participate?

**'WALK  
THE  
WORLD'**  
TO HELP  
END  
HUNGER

means we will lose members and continue to be a middle-aged organisation unless we modify our recruitment policies.

The answers to the question 'is the Soroptimist organisation attractive to women under 30' are quite interesting. The number of 'no's' increased with the age of the Soroptimist, while younger members tended to answer 'yes'. Are perhaps older members discouraging younger ones to join SI?

### The importance of PR

Nearly half of our members claim that Soroptimism is well known in the community and nationally. Our experience shows this might not be so. If SI becomes better known in our communities and countries through efficient public relations, it will help attract new members and facilitate finding sponsors for projects.

The survey also indicates that members attach greater importance to local and national projects. What can we do to increase international interest? In an organisation spread over in two continents and 57 countries, the only answer is improved communication. Although our members have easy access to the Internet and use it regularly, most do not look at the SI/E website or subscribe to The Link. This is a shame because both these tools are excellent for promoting international communication and organisation.

In conclusion, it is our belief that for Soroptimism to flourish and be effective in the future, it must place greater emphasis on extension. We must change our ways and perceptions to remain strong into the future!

*Nilgun Ozler*  
2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President, SI/E

From left: SI/E President Mariet and SI President-elect Hanne joined Union President Liliane Rasoamahenina at the inauguration of the Soroptimist monument. Below: Village children wait for the opening of the water pump.



### Celebrating SI and Human Rights Day

Soon to consist of 11 clubs, the Madagascan Union and its President Liliane Rasoamahenina offered the prominent delegation from Europe a varied and top-class programme during their official visit. The guests learned firsthand what this Union has accomplished and why it has so much potential.

In recognition of the 'Soroptimists go for Water' initiative, the Foreign Office invited SI/E President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, SI President-elect Hanne Jensbo, Dutch Governor Tonny Filedt Kok with her husband and Anne Marie Jensen, Club Aarhus of Denmark, to an official celebration on 10<sup>th</sup> December 2008, International Human Rights Day and our worldwide Soroptimist Day. On this occasion, the Chancellor of the Madagascan government made Mariet and Hanne 'Knights of the National Order'. This celebration was honoured by the presence of the Minister of Water who presented Madagascar's water plans. It was noted that the Madagascan Union introduced its own first water project in October 2007.

On Wednesday afternoon the race began for the delegation to see all the achievements and activities in this wonderful island country. And a race it was: they attended the opening of a desperately needed water pump, witnessed the chartering of the new Club Mananjary and visited a meeting of Club Fenoarivo Atsinanana in formation. The programme also

## MADAGASCAR HONOURS SOROPTIMISTS

included exchanges of ideas and information, workshops, the Presidents' meeting, courtesy visits, social evenings livened up by good food and introductions to many Madagascan Soroptimists. SI/E President

Mariet covered a wide range of subjects in her speeches: from the changes within our Federation and the new SI/E HQ staff in Geneva to SI/E's policy plan and the importance of PR and communication. She also reminded us to use the SI/E websites, to write PFRs and to work actively on extension. And of course, she heartily invited us to attend the SI/E Congress in July 2009.

SI President-elect Hanne Jensbo spoke about the impact of expansion and the importance of choosing a single SI project for the next 10 years. Every Soroptimist is encouraged to suggest a topic.

Finally, the European delegation joined the Union President Liliane in inaugurating the stone monument to commemorate their visit, and they donated ultrasound equipment that had been financed by the SI/E Action Fund to the HJRA hospital. At the farewell dinner put on by the three clubs of Antananariv, the guests took the opportunity to drink the water of Manangareza, which, according to Madagascan tradition, has the power to make foreigners return to the country.



Madagascan Union





Saline Croustaud was particularly hit by the hurricanes in the summer of 2008 (below). Under the supervision of President Jozeth (standing) Port-au-Prince Soroptimists distributed seeds to the people of Saline Croustaud.

### 10 years of civic service to the community

On the initiative of Club Basse-Terre of Guadeloupe, Club Port-au-Prince was chartered ten years ago and brings together women from a variety of professions. From the start, one of the Club's objectives has been to impact the lives of our fellow Haitians in need.

Over the past decade, Club Port-au-Prince has supported various organisations, including Grace Children's hospital, a nursery school in Furcy and a school in Jacmel. Every Christmas, members distribute presents to children in hospitals, orphanages and other centres for children.

But the true test of civic service came in the summer of 2008, when Haiti was hit by four major hurricanes that destroyed nearly everything outside the Port-au-Prince area. With the needs of the population being so vast, we decided to target certain districts and formed a plan of action.

After assessing the situation, we contacted both local and international organisations to raise funds for the victims. As a result, we were able to distribute food and sanitary towels to the particularly badly hit region of Cabaret through an association called the Colombes St-Marcoises. Bottled water, food and a generator went to a temporary shelter in Jacmel serving 600 victims.

However, our greatest efforts were concentrated in Saline Coustard, a

# DEDICATED TO HELPING HAITIANS IN NEED

village some 20 minutes from the capital, sheltering several hundred families and largely left without government aid. After seeing the degree of flood damage and a population still deprived of basic necessities, we provided tools for people to clear the mud out of their homes and improve their

living conditions. To combat health issues such as dermatosis and diarrhoea as well as ailments due to the lack of potable water and adequate food, we contacted the Port-au-Prince's Rotary Club and arranged for a medical expert to visit and for the distribution of medical supplies and high protein food. Soroptimists also gave the people of Saline Croustaud carrot and onion seeds and plan to provide some goats and pigs.

In their concerted efforts, the Port-au-Prince Soroptimists succeeded in engaging both local and international benefactors to donate medical supplies, blankets, food and money. We thank everyone who worked with us to assist the disaster victims and hope to sustain the spirit of solidarity that we have established over the past decade. If any other unions or clubs would like to support us, your donations will be most appreciated.



Jozeth K. Guillaume, Club President  
Edith Lataillade, Past Club President



The solar pump in Badja also provides local widows with enough water for their vegetable gardens.

## PROJECTS WITH THE WOMEN FOR WATER PARTNERSHIP

In the last issue of The Link, I reported on water projects in partnership between SI/E and Women for Water Partnership (WfWP), under my and Estelle Smith's responsibility. In 2008, seven projects were realised with WfWP in Togo, Rwanda, Ghana, Mali, Sénégal and Niger for a total of € 33,900. Here are details of the projects initiated by Club Lomé I/Togo, Club Kigali/Rwanda and Club Kumasi/Ghana, respectively.

Soroptimists go for  
**water**

The Women for Water Partnership is a world-wide collaboration of women's organisations that are active in the field of water and sanitation. The projects supported by WfWP must fulfil certain criteria pertaining to the

- people (women) benefiting from the project
- number of pupils per toilet/latrine/sanitation service (in schools)
- litres of water made available per person per day
- distance of the houses to the water/sanitation facility
- guaranteed operation & maintenance, and
- monitoring.

### A solar pump for Badja



The solar pump project for the Market Garden of Badja was implemented with local widows, who found themselves without any source of income after their husbands died. An agronomist from Club Lomé 1 discovered their tragic situation in 1998. After they attended several courses about market gardening, the Club purchased three hectares of land for them. Ten years later in 2008, the initial wind turbine of the well had to be replaced by a new pump. The Club decided to install a solar pump with a capacity of 10 m<sup>3</sup> per day. The well now provides the whole population of the area with drinking water, and there is still enough water for the vegetable garden of the widows from Badja. Two technical engineers guarantee the operation and maintenance. The Club now intends to install a tank to store the precious water.

no access to education are girls. They may be orphans, young widows – in part with children – or simply young women in distress.

The San Marco Centre is a project geared especially towards young women who have had no schooling, have given up their education or who were unable to continue with secondary education or any vocational training. Construction of buildings began in 2003 on a three-hectare plot. The project is supported by clubs in Luxembourg, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, San Marino, Italy, Sweden, Iceland and SI/E as well as by the Kiwanis Club of Esch-sur-Alzette in Luxembourg.

Connecting a water supply and the plumbing within the buildings were two major problems. The first step was to purchase the necessary pipes, fittings and plumbing fixtures. Once the funding was obtained, the work itself took a month. The plumbing has now been installed in the four dormitories, four studios for widows, the multi-purpose hall, the kitchen and dining areas as well as in the latrines for the nursery school. Some 580 people are currently reaping the benefits of this project.

In the next issue of *The Link*, I am hoping to report on more Women of Water projects in Mali, Sénégal and Niger.

Roswitha Ott, SI/E Project Manager Africa

Counterclockwise from upper right below: The San Marco Centre in Kigali is a much needed education facility for young women in Rwanda. By digging a borehole and building toilet and bathroom facilities, Club Kumasi helped solve the sanitary issues in and around the village of Ayeduase.



### Helping to solve sanitary issues

With nearly 4000 inhabitants, Ayeduase is one of 13 villages surrounding the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. The university itself has a population of about 20,000 students. The digging of a borehole and the construction of toilets and bathrooms, supported by Club Kumasi, have solved many of the village's sanitary issues. The borehole provides a nearby and clean source of water. There is now a decent place to bathe, and the toilets are clean and hygienic. Income will be generated through the sale of water and the use of the facility. This extra money will be used to pay the salaries of the workers.

### Financing sanitary and kitchen facilities

In the aftermath of the genocide in 1994, many of the children in Rwanda who now have



Over the past years, many clubs of the German Union have supported former surgery nurse Karla Schefter and her Chak-e-Wardak Hospital in South-Eastern Afghanistan. In line with 'Soroptimists go for Water', Club Hamburg initiated a project to reconstruct the collapsed water supply of the hospital and also gained support from other clubs in its District in Germany.

The Chak-e-Wardak Hospital in Afghanistan has served the local population for 20 years.



Since its inauguration in August 1989, the Chak-e-Wardak Hospital has grown into a fully equipped 60-bed clinic with 40 beds for women and 20 for men. Headed by Karla Schefter, it is the only clinic in the province of Wardak providing basic health care to a rural population of over 400,000 people and is one of Afghanistan's five best hospitals. It is equipped with two operation theatres, an x-ray department, ECG and state-of-the-art ultrasound facilities. There is a well-equipped laboratory, dispensary, physiotherapy centre and a regional vaccination centre. Later, a dental department and an ears, nose and throat station were added. In 2005/2006 both wings of the hospital were fully renovated, including the sanitary installations.

The hospital's family wing for women and children stands to benefit from the reconstructed water supply system.

Photos: Rainer Stadelmann



Although Chak-e-Wardak remained open during the war against terrorism and did not suffer any damage, the increasing number of patients (now some 7,000 per month), the civil war and the bitter cold of last winter have led to the complete collapse of the hospital's water supply. In April 2008, Karla Schefter reported about the dramatic situation to Club Hamburg, so the members decided to take action with this project to repair and reconstruct the water supply for the hospital's family wing for women and children. Thanks to Gabrielle Oeben-Schroeder, Vice-President of District 1 of the German Union, other clubs of this district have also answered the call.

Karla Schefter provided quotations for the costs and local specialists are controlling the progress of the work. The estimated total cost of the project is some € 20,000. The clubs have already collected nearly € 5000 for this ongoing project.

For more information about the hospital and Karla Schefter's work in Afghanistan, please go to [www.chak-hospital.info/en/](http://www.chak-hospital.info/en/). If you would like to support this extremely worthwhile water project, please contact Heide Rabenberg, President of Club Hamburg, [heide.rabenberg@gmx.de](mailto:heide.rabenberg@gmx.de).

Chak-e-Wardak Hospital in Afghanistan

## RECONSTRUCTING THE WATER SUPPLY

Soroptimists go for  
**water**

Soroptimists go for  
**water**

To celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Club Pesaro will give the Italian city and its 100,000 inhabitants a very special gift. It will improve the final stretch of the river Foglia flowing through the town centre and its surroundings, thus reviving an area once considered the city's 'green walkway'.

The Club and its President Silvia Pantanelli are able to realise this unique 'Pax per Aquam' project thanks to the work of architect and fellow member Fiammetta Malpassi. With the help of the local city council and the provincial authority as well as private sponsors, the recovery also encompasses some of the inner-city area surrounding the river. The corresponding final stretch of the river links the historic outskirts of Pesaro to the town centre's 'green lung' Miralfiore Park. Over the years, this section had become practically inaccessible to smaller boats wanting to make their way into the river from the Adriatic.

With the project 'The Foglia - A River To Be Lived', the Italian Soroptimists hope to recover the traditional path that goes from the historic Ponte Vecchio (Old Bridge) to Miralfiore Park by rearranging the route, restoring the ancient footbridge, planting trees and renewing the furnishings (fencing, benches, baskets, flowerpots, signals, etc.) along the street with the support of the local city and provincial authorities.

The project started in April 2008, and the work is well underway. One of the most important jobs was to remove World War II rubble near the so-called Ponte Nuovo (New Bridge) at the far end of the river. This operation, also made possible thanks to significant contributions from other sponsors, was crucial inasmuch as it was the rubble that prevented the natural flow of the river and, consequently, also the navigability of the Foglia.

Club Pesaro with a unique project

## THE FOGLIA – A RIVER TO BE LIVED



Removing the rubble near the Ponte Nuovo at the far end of the river will help restore the natural flow.

It will still take months to complete the project. Renewing the street furnishings along the walkway will continue with the support of the city council and province, who are also finishing work on a cycle path on the opposite bank of the river. Indeed, this Soroptimist project is very unique and destined to make the bond between the club and the city much stronger.

*Simonetta Marfoggia, Club Pesaro*



Participants in the seminar in Moscow (above left) welcomed the exchange with more experienced Soroptimists. As the former Follow-up in Africa, IPP Monique has always been particularly dedicated to helping African Soroptimists. President-elect Eliane Lagasse attended the meeting in Ouagadougou.

Training to become good Soroptimists

## FORGING A STRONGER ORGANISATION

The European Federation has expanded rapidly in both Eastern Europe and Africa over the past 20 years. As Follow-Up in Africa and then SI/E President-elect, I saw how hard it is to maintain cohesion between such diverse clubs and to gain new and retain old members. So, I made member training one of the priorities of my term as SI/E President.

My aim was to help our clubs – both new and established – become more effective and more aware of belonging to an international network of women and sharing the same ideals. I also wanted to convince them of the importance of exchanges between the Federation, the unions and the clubs.

As a first step, my Board published a Training Manual, which the then Vice-President Kirsten Sveder prepared magnificently. Introduced in 2006 and now available for downloading from the SI/E website in more than 20 languages, this training manual serves as a basic tool for recruit-

ing new members, training an interested group preparing to become a new club and organising training seminars. The information provided is easy to copy, read and learn. The glossary helps users to understand our Soroptimist vocabulary.

VP Kirsten first focused on setting up training seminars in English, while I hosted three seminars in French. We were assisted by the Extension Committee and also recruited some experienced Soroptimists as trainers. Many thanks to all of them from Kirsten and me!

The seminars organised in 2007 were very successful. In fact, demand was so high it was not

## HOW TO ORGANISE A TRAINING SEMINAR



A seminar for Arabic-speaking clubs (left) was organised in Marrakesh, and another seminar took place in Reykjavik.

possible to stage all the planned seminars before the end of my term, so it was decided – together with my successor Mariet Verhoef-Cohen – to arrange the remaining seminars during the year 2007-2008. All totalled, there were 19 seminars in Europe and Africa. Kirsten supervised six of them. The last one took place in October 2008 in Morocco, where I gathered Arabic-speaking clubs from Cairo to Marrakesh.

After each training seminar, participants were asked to evaluate the programme. Their responses show that they now fully grasp the idea of the club being part of a greater whole. They also realise that the Federation can actually help them and that each member is essential for our organisation. Advice on how to set up, develop and present a project so that Soroptimist International can become better known is appreciated as well.

I sincerely wish that this post-seminar enthusiasm will endure and that those who have benefitted from training will in turn become trainers in their clubs, unions and countries and thus spearheads for extension and follow-up. And I also hope that the 'Friendship without Borders' ties that have been forged between participants will lead to more fruitful collaboration.

*Monique Rivière*

SI/E Immediate Past President

The training seminars for the clubs in the Eastern European countries, like this one in Brasov in Romania, were especially popular.

In preparing a seminar, one should choose a reasonable hotel with an Internet connection and a projector near an international airport. A local Soroptimist is also useful if interpretation is required. Two members are invited from each nearby 'young' and 'old' Unions or Single Clubs to have a nice range of experience. All participants are requested to read the manual before the seminar. The hosting trainer must prepare a pre-seminar budget for approval and submit a report after the event.

The typical programme for a seminar begins with a get-together on Friday evening. On Saturday the agenda starts off with welcome by the local co-trainer. The SI/E trainer presents the organization. Preferably, the president of a 'young' Union then discusses the difference between clubs in Unions and Single Clubs. The trainer or co-trainer explains the finances and funds. After that, a member talks on 'Why I am a Soroptimist'. Usually an experienced member describes how to run a typical club meeting, and if possible someone from the SI/E Extension Committee discusses extension. These talks are aided by a PowerPoint presentation, provided by SI/E.

In conclusion, an interactive discussion is organized on the following four points:

- finances and funds
- club life and projects (online PFRs)
- extension, retention and godmothers
- SI, communication within SI/E and the glossary

After dinner, everyone has the chance to test what was absorbed in a 'trivia' game.

During these two years, all Unions (except for the Israeli Union which SI/E President Mariet visited in 2008) and 95 % of all Single Clubs in Europe sent one or two representatives to a seminar. Ideally, training in some form should be repeated every second year to keep the clubs updated.

*Kirsten Sveder*

1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, SI/E Board 2005-2007



At the conclusion of a benefit soirée featuring club member and soprano Gudrun Kohlruss (left), Ute von Laufenburg, President of Club Stuttgart, presented a cheque for € 5000 to the Chairman of the German organisation that finances surgery for children born with a cleft lip or palate in the Third World.

## How to fundraise for projects

# A GOOD STRATEGY AND NETWORKING ARE CRUCIAL

Asking for money is something not everyone feels comfortable with – even if it is for a good cause. The following article discusses some important aspects of and useful strategies for successful fundraising.

First of all, it is important to give structure to your fund raising efforts. Why do you want to raise money? Do you want to support an organisation with money, with goods or services, and do you have a goal that a lot of people will relate to. Are you looking to promote your own organisation with these efforts? In other words, do you want to be in the public eye, or do you want the action to remain anonymous.

There are many different kinds of fundraising efforts ranging from acquiring corporate donations to benefit events such as concerts. Many Soroptimist clubs have been successful in raising money through flea or Christmas markets. Another particularly popular way of fundraising these days is to sponsor a person or persons in an event.

Once your club has decided on a project, you will want to generate enthusiasm for your goal. You should begin by building a network of people who are already or also interested in this cause. This may be other clubs or experts outside SI.

## Networking

Once a cause or project is selected, you must decide what your needs are, and how long you are going to support it. Deciding on what, how, when and how long will be the blueprint for your fund raising campaign. Once again, your most important

instrument is networking. First, find out what your own club, or the Soroptimists in your region, can do to help. Is there someone who relates to your cause, or who may be interested in supporting it? Start spinning a web by contacting like-minded people.

## Publicity

Once you have a network, you can start organising your fund raising activities. This can be by asking for donations, or by organising events that let you use the talent and skills available within your extended network. It is important to stress why the activity is being undertaken and to seek ongoing publicity for your activities via your website and press releases, or by directly approaching the media. Donors will want to know what Soroptimists are, and what they stand for. And always explain, what their money will be used for.

It goes without saying that one must express one's appreciation for the donation. In some cases this might mean inviting generous sponsors to attend a club evening or letting them present a talk on their company or organisation. Always check if donors prefer to remain anonymous, but if not, why not mention particularly generous sponsors on your website or in press releases. It is also a good idea to keep sponsors updated on the project and how the money has been spent. Remember: donating for a good cause is a rewarding feeling, and people should be reminded how much their help is appreciated! Indeed, fundraising demands time and energy. But once you have got it up and running, you will enjoy the fruits for a long time.

*Helma Coolman in cooperation with Mechteld van den Beld, both from Club Utrechtse Heuvelrug*



Club Friesland Zuid organised a 30-km biking trip for Women Survivors of War and managed to raise € 1000 through sponsorships of the cyclists.



## Women for Water Regional Conference in Suriname

# SEEING IS UNDERSTANDING!

As the SI/E delegate to the Women for Water Partnership, Gertraud Pilcher attended the Women for Water Regional Working Conference in Suriname and saw first hand the importance of water projects in developing countries.



Participants had the chance to see first hand how simple measures to improve the water supply can help village people.

SI/E joined the Women for Water Partnership (WfWP) in 2008. WfWP focuses on sustainable development through integrated water resource management by enabling the exchange of knowledge and expertise through its international network, facilitating the development of demand driven projects at the local level, advocating full and equal participation of women and their organisations, promoting equity mainstreaming at all levels, and accessing support resources for its members.

In 2008, SI/E received three grants from WfWP for a 'Functional Networking' seminar at the Governors' Meeting in Warsaw, for water projects in Africa under the supervision of SI/E Project Manager Africa Roswitha Ott and for a big water project in Mali in cooperation with Club Nijmegen in the Netherlands. More grants can be expected for SI/E projects related to 'Soroptimists go for Water' in 2009.

Water problems in Latin America

### Water problems in Latin America

The situation regarding clean drinking water and sanitation in many of the Caribbean countries and South America is very critical. About 125 participants from Europe, South America, South Africa and the Caribbean countries attended the conference. The subjects included deforestation and its effects on water resources, alternative waste water treatment to protect water resources against contamination from industrial activities (gold mining) and gender issues in water and sanitation.

The gender issue is very important because women are still usually responsible for water management within their families and villages. So women have to be involved at all stages and in all

aspects of the projects. Gender mainstreaming must become a common practice, which means equitable access and decision-making. This was one of the most important conclusions of the conference.

WfWP wants to participate in as many sustainable water management projects as possible. But water management projects involve more than technical solutions. Such projects require the commitment of all relevant stakeholders, as well local ownership, capacity development and partnership. It is clear that a strong network of different partners is necessary to achieve successful water projects.

Participants also had the chance to visit villages and heard about their water resource management programmes and sanitation. This trip to the interior of Suriname was very interesting.

The SI/E theme 'Soroptimists go for Water' will continue until 2011. Many clubs have already initi-



Taking a photo opportunity: (from right) Nelleke Fonteijn, a delegate from WfWP, Marina van Koten and Gertraud Pichler at the Regional Conference in Suriname.

ated 'hands on' water projects, raised awareness or supported water projects mainly in Africa or in Central and Eastern Europe. Joining the Women for Water Partnership has been a very successful and supportive strategy in our efforts to secure clean drinking water and hygienic sanitation for those in need.

Gertraud Pichler

SI/E Programme Coordinator for Environment



Belgian Union launches new project

## SUPPORT FOR FISTULA CLINICS IN AFRICA



Each Belgian club will be asked to sell these handy reusable shopping bags (right) in a carrier pouch (above) to raise money for the SI President's Appeal.

The Belgian Union has launched a project in support of the Fistula Clinics in Africa as part of the International President's Day Appeal. In 2007 the Union raised € 25,000 for the Appeal by selling Soroptimist greeting cards. SI President Margaret Lobo came personally to receive the cheque. The Belgian Soroptimists hope the new 'Stop Fistula' project will be equally successful!

In today's supermarkets, gone are the piles of plastic carrier bags that are so harmful to the environment. Instead, most customers arrive with reusable shopping bags, often sporting logos and slogans for the charities they support. The Soroptimists of the Belgian Union decided to take advantage of this trend by selling their own reusable bags. The proceeds will go to the 'Stop Fistula' project.

### What is fistula?

One in every 20 pregnant women has difficulty in childbirth or suffers obstructed labour. While in Western countries women can deliver a child with medical assistance or by Caesarean section, pregnancy and childbirth in developing countries present a far higher risk. Prenatal care is limited for people who live in remote and often inaccessible areas. If problems occur during labour, swift transport to hospital or for medical assistance is almost impossible. In countries, such as Ethiopia or Congo, where there are few roads, the terrain is rugged, and medical help is not readily available, a mother with a small or malformed pelvis or a badly positioned child may be in labour for five or more days without help.

Women and girls who cannot be completely cured are given ongoing medical care at special villages, like Desta Mender in Addis Ababa, which is supported by Soroptimists.

As a result of prolonged and obstructed labour, the woman's bladder or vagina is torn so that a hole or fistula is caused in the bladder, and sometimes in the rectum. Usually the baby is still-born. When fistulae occur, the woman is unable to control the flow of urine or excreta. Because of the objectionable smell associated with the condition, these women are often rejected by husband and family. They become social outcasts and develop a deep sense of rejection and shame.

Until recently, it was not widely known that the problem can be cured with surgery. While there are no accurate statistics available, it is estimated that as many as three million women suffer from this problem.

### How will the bags be sold?

The bags can be folded into a small protective cover that can be easily slipped into a handbag. They will be sold in sachets of three bags at a price of € 10. Each club in the Belgian Union will receive a number of sachets to sell, depending on the number of members in the club. The bags will be delivered on March 8<sup>th</sup>, International Women's Day. A card will be made available for each bag outlining the three causes of fistula (tradition, poverty and war) and their three effects (dishonour, vulnerability and powerlessness). If all the bags are sold, the profit will be around € 22,500, which the Belgian Union will double!

Clearly, the more bags the Belgian Union is able to see, the more funds will be raised to help these women. SI clubs outside Belgium are welcome to place orders. Please see [www.soroptimist.be](http://www.soroptimist.be) for more information.

### Where will the proceeds go?

The President's Appeal is targeting Desta Mender in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia - [www.fistulatruster.org](http://www.fistulatruster.org) as well as Solfa (Solidarité Femmes Africaines) Fistula Centre in Kisantu and their projects in Bukavu (South Kivu), all in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) - [www.solfanet.org](http://www.solfanet.org). 'Doctors in the Desert' (Médecins du Désert) are working with Soroptimists to create a fistula project in Lubumbashi, DRC - [www.medecins-du-desert.be](http://www.medecins-du-desert.be).

## News from Unions and Clubs

When we heard the disturbing news about the post-election violence in Kenya in early 2008, German Union President Hanne von Schaumann-Werder and I, as Chairman of the German Soroptimist Action Fund, asked members of the German clubs to help their Kenyan Soroptimists – with impressive results. The ‘German Soroptimist Action Fund’ collected a total of € 20,333 for various projects.

Kenyan IPP Mary Kundu submitted excellent proposals from all 10 Kenyan clubs to the Action Fund, and the Board decided to support six projects. Accompanied by Brigitte Mühlberg from Club Hannover, and Gisela Kruse from Club Berlin, I personally brought the money to the clubs of Eldoret, Kakamega, Kisumu, Kisumu Winam, Milimani and Nairobi. We were welcomed in Kenya by Union President Asha and IPP Mary and had dinner with representatives of the Kenyan clubs.

The situation after the violence between different ethnic groups was similar all over the country, but the Great Rift Valley region was particularly affected. In rural areas, we saw several camps where ‘Internally Displaced Persons’ (IDPs) still lived in tents without access to sanitary facilities. IDP is the term for people who either actively fled from cities or were resettled by the government.

Kenyan Soroptimists – some of them personally affected – worked untiringly to identify IDPs and to relieve their situation by providing food, clothes, blankets, medicine etc. and giving psychological aid.

The long list of projects includes a Rescue Centre for street girls who were offered a home, regular meals plus schooling or training in practical skills (Eldoret), the financing of temporary housing and/or small business stalls for women formerly living in camps (Kakamega, Kisumu Winam, Milimani, Nairobi), sewing and knitting materials for a women’s prison where prisoners are trained to enable them to start a business after release (Kakamega) as well as a nursery school for IDP children (Kisumu) and a Rescue Centre for children in a slum (Milimani). It was moving to meet those helped by the clubs and to see the personal commitment of the club members. For instance, we were introduced to a 23-year-old woman whose parents had died of AIDS. She decided to quit her job to care for her six younger siblings – two of them HIV-positive. Brigitte, Gisela and I spontaneously donated enough to cover the secondary school fees for her 16-year-old sister for one year.

Our experience was unforgettable. President-elect of the Kenyan Union Beatrice (‘Betty’) Yieke kindly escorted us during our entire stay. The clubs hosted us privately and presented their work in the six Programme Areas at meetings with members. The enthusiasm of Kenyan Soroptimists in promoting our goals is exemplary!

*Dorothea Leupold, Club Ulm-Donaustadt,  
Chairperson of the German Soroptimist Action Fund*

### German Soroptimist Action Fund

## AID FOR KENYA



Top: Like this stall supported by Club Nairobi, several clubs financed small businesses for women formerly living in camps.

Above: With the help of German donations, Club Kakamega bought a house for a group of displaced women and their families.

## EDUCATION FUND HELPS WOMEN HELP THEMSELVES



Norwegian Union

Marguerite Mukia from Kenya was 20 years old when she received a grant from Norway and is now working as a nurse.

The Education Fund, one of the main projects of the Norwegian Union, was set up in 1990 to help educate women in less developed countries of SI/E where Soroptimist clubs are represented, mainly in Africa and Eastern Europe. Since then, 322 women have received scholarships amounting to a total of 860,000 Norwegian kroner or € 94,000, thus helping them to create a better

future. In 2008 alone, the Board of the Fund awarded scholarships totalling € 9,400 to 49 women. Practical training is the priority. This can be in one of a variety of fields – such as nursing, teaching, hairdressing and tailoring. Ideally, the schooling is supposed to take place in the woman's home country.

Many applicants have heartrending stories to tell so that it is not easy for the Board to choose from the many worthy candidates. Recipients are extremely grateful because this training opens opportunities for work and thus direct help for themselves and their families. Every year new countries are invited to apply. Among the new countries in 2009 is Moldova.

The Clubs in Norway are asked to contribute to the Fund, and about half of them did so in 2007. An annual art lottery has also raised a substantial amount of money for the Fund.

Training women to help provide for their own livelihood is a perfect example of how Soroptimists are helping to improve the lives of women!

Anne Baggethun  
Club Oslo II

### Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

## REPAIRING THE CONSEQUENCES



Professor Blandine Bonnanet/Tiéba (right), President of Club Ouagadougou, shown here speaking to one of her patients, will perform or organise 100 operations.

Health professionals in Burkina Faso are surgically reversing the medical consequences of FGM as part of extensive campaign to raise public awareness and repair the damage of FGM. This campaign was initiated by Club Ouagadougou and supported by the German Union.

Although generally considered a violation of women's rights, female genital mutilation is still practiced as part of some religious traditions. 'Good' girls must be circumcised before they are married and sometimes even after giving birth. This is thought to be necessary because, among other reasons, an uncircumcised woman is refused funeral rites. On these grounds, the

women and girls in certain African regions undergo circumcision, often performed with inappropriate instruments. Many of the women affected endure difficulties in their sex lives, some suffer urinary problems, and others experience trouble in childbirth.

As a result of the Soroptimist-initiated campaigns in the media, theatre forums and films aiming to raise public awareness, more and more women in Burkina Faso are taking a stand against the practice of FGM. In December 2008, Professor Blandine Bonnanet/Tiéba, obstetrician, gynaecologist and President of Club Ouagadougou, announced she would conduct herself or organise 100 operations to repair the consequences. She performed the first round of 10 in Ouagadougou, and in January 2009 Professor Michel Akotianga led the operating team at Pô, where the tradition is particularly widespread. 'We wanted to decentralise this project so as to allow a large number of women to benefit from this surgery,' said Blandine, who is operating free of charge. The German Union donated € 8,000 for medicine and operating materials. Over the past years, many SI/E clubs and Unions have supported FGM projects in Africa.



Networking Meeting in the Netherlands

## TAPPING INTO EACH OTHER'S TALENTS AND EXPERIENCE



During the 'speed-dating' sessions, Soroptimists with similar professional interests informally interviewed each other.

### News from Unions and Clubs

The idea came from a small group of Dutch Soroptimists who felt we could be making more use of our own network. Indeed, the Dutch Union has now made networking a spearhead in its policy plan. So, some 85 Dutch Soroptimists grabbed their business cards and headed to Amsterdam, where the principal sponsor and insurer Delta Lloyd had provided meeting facilities.

The Dutch Union held a professional networking day in January to learn more about each other's professions and to see how we can use the talents and experience of other Soroptimists in our everyday activities.

It all began with five 'brief encounters' with women whose profession or business might be of interest to others. These were spirited interviews led off by the question "What do you do in real life?" We were a little uneasy at first, but soon everyone got the hang of it, and I was thrilled to find so much talent and professionalism among our fellow Soroptimists!

I was coupled to Karin Jense, who gives fascinating music appreciation lectures with and about musical instruments, and also to Nejad Hosseini, who is researching how to set up a business for coaching people from cultural minorities. Ariane Struyenberg runs three businesses and was looking for someone to lend a helping hand. I have kept in touch with her, and we intend to keep closer contact.

What was remarkable about the afternoon is that it felt as if it had been going for a long time. The superb organisation certainly helped, but so did the theme. After all, doesn't it make perfect sense to use your network for your professional or business pursuits? Initiator Anne-Marie Koenraad called us the pioneers of professional, networking Soroptimists, and Dutch Union President Akke Timmermans held a passionate plea to encourage everyone to keep making the most of these 'extra-curricular' networking opportunities in the future. As one participant put it: 'We all came here with the same purpose: sharing with the others what keeps you busy professionally, what your passions are and what your professional commitment is. Of course, the theme 'Professional women for women' was important binder. It was just wonderful to see everyone so generously sharing each other's professional talents and interests!' SI/E President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen also attended the meeting and said afterwards she would like something similar done at SI/E.

*Helma Coolman*

Club Utrechtse Heuvelrug

Photos: Marianne Ulrich

Members of Club Tonsberg visit Haifa

## FRIENDSHIP LINKS ACROSS THE SEA

Israeli Union President Daniela Stern (left) attended a dinner for Marit (third from right) and Gro (right) hosted by Club Nahariya.

After exchanging New Year's wishes with our Friendship Link Club Tonsberg in Norway for many years, it was time to meet face to face. Marit Marthinssen and Gro Goeystdal from Club Tonsberg accepted the invitation of Club Haifa-Naveh Shaanan to visit for a week in November 2008. All 20 members helped plan the programme of old and new Israel.

On the morning of their arrival, they visited Mount Carmel and the Bahai Shrine and lunched at The Golda Meir International Training Centre, whose director is a Club member. At the evening meeting, they introduced themselves and talked about their club (50 members!) and



projects. We told them about our scholarship for young women studying at the College for Technicians and Junior Engineers of the 'Technion' Institute of Technology.

With the Israeli Soroptimists, Marit and Gro visited historical and religious sites at the Sea of Galilee and learned about the water problems. Soroptimists from Beersheva showed them three Bedouin towns in the south. Going north from Haifa, we toured the Museum at Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot. With members of Club Nahariya including the Past and Present President of the Israeli Union acting as guides, the guests also saw the Grottoes of Rosh Hanikrah

Special Christmas activities

## FROM GUADELOUPE TO GERMANY



Father Christmas was at the market in Pointe-à-Pitre with his donkey loaded up with sweets and presents.

For many, Christmas is a special time of year, and it lends itself to a number of activities – both within clubs and in the public. Here are two different takes on the holiday season from different parts of the SI/E world.

Club Traunstein, Germany, initiated an original activity for children in need last year at Christmas. 'Wishful trees' were set up at some local shops. The club prepared numbered blue and yellow envelopes and gave them to local charitable organisations that selected the children. It goes without saying that all information about the children and their family background was treated confidentially. Each child filled an envelope with a note including their Christian name, age and wish and hung it on one of the trees. The requested present, worth about €30, was then nicely gift-wrapped and brought to the respective shop. Distributing the parcels was not an easy logistics task, but all gifts arrived in time for Christmas Eve. Details of the activity were published in the local media. The 'wishful trees' project was an enormous success and well worth imitating!

Also in December, Club Pointe-à-Pitre in Guadeloupe organised a 'Christmas market in colours and lights'. Club President Evelyne Ferraty and town mayor Dr Jacques officially opened the market for which club members had prepared tra-

and enjoyed a breathtaking view of the Mediterranean Sea.

Gro asked to visit to Kibbutz Mishmar Haemek where she had spent a summer in 1966 and so that was arranged as well. Of course, Marit and Gro had to see Nazareth and experience a traditional Friday Sabbath meal at the home of one of our younger members.

Organising a day trip to Jerusalem was perhaps the biggest planning challenge, but we managed to offer a varied and exciting programme before ending the day with a visit to the Room of the Last Supper guided by a Soroptimist.

After their private excursion to the Dead Sea, we all met again to exchange impressions. We were very proud to hear Gro say, 'No tourist has ever visited Israel the way we have thanks to all of you!' Club Haifa-Neveh Shaanan gained two good friends from our Friendship Link, and we hope to meet many more!

*Mira Ron and Fannette Modek, Club Haifa-Neveh Shaanan*



With the wonderfully gift-wrapped presents, Santa's helpers in Traunstein spread loads of Christmas cheer!

ditional Christmas fare. They sold liqueurs such as shrubb (orange rum liqueur) and Christmas drinks like rosella (made from the greens of the hibiscus sabdariffa) as well as black pudding, pork pâtés and rare types of jam. Father Christmas was also there, leading his donkey loaded up with sweets and presents. Later, the 'Groupe Action Musicale' played some modern versions of all the old Christmas songs.

Profits were donated to the 'Association pour l'Aide à l'Enfance et à l'Adolescence' whose President, Claudette Francius-Figueres, is a Soroptimist, and also to fund a sustainable development project in Haiti.

*Margit Bertinger, Club Traunstein*

*Evelyne Ferraty, President, Club Pointe-à-Pitre*

## News from Unions and Clubs

Interclub Meeting in Spain

# THE DRIVE TO GET ON THE SI MAP

Participants in the Interclub Meeting took a break from their full programme for a group photo on the sunny Costa del Sol.



Costa del Sol was the venue for the Spanish Interclub Meeting in November 2008. The participants from the five Spanish clubs enjoyed a wonderful weekend, and the Soroptimist spirit was high. The clubs are looking forward to working closer together and putting Spain on the Soroptimist map. A website and a national brochure will be created in order to attract more members, and eventually, more clubs.

The clubs were happy to see the good results of the common project to support the construction of a well in Agninkata, Togo. The project was completed in August 2008, and the well is now supplying the village with drinking water.

The next national project will be related to domestic violence in Spain. Each club in the five regions intends to take a different approach to this theme.

The participants were particularly thrilled to welcome SI President-elect Hanne Jensbo. She spoke about her work and the future of SI underlining the importance of having contacts within SI and growing as an organisation. Several participants had the chance to exchange their ideas and visions with Hanne.

Club Costa del Sol also celebrated their 2nd anniversary and with time for good food and wine, a constructive meeting and interesting outings. The participants felt it had been an intensive weekend filled with friendship and plans for the future.

*Lene Thygesen, Secretary SI Club Costa del Sol and Coordinator of the Spanish Soroptimist Clubs*

# NEW SI/E CLUBS TO BE CHARTERED

4<sup>th</sup> April 2009

**Bad Schandau (Germany)**

Charter to be presented by:  
Governor, Union of Lithuania  
Aurelija Vaitkuviene  
*Club President*  
Christine Strohbach-Knaller  
Elbweg 22  
DE - 01814 Bad Schandau/  
OT Krippen  
Phone: + 49 (0) 350 28 80 437  
E-mail: Ziegelscheune@t-  
online.de

25<sup>th</sup> April 2009

**Galicja Krakow (Poland)**

Charter to be presented by:  
SI/E Extension Committee  
Chairperson Ulla Madsen  
*Club President*  
Aleksandra Tyranska  
ul. Dielta 36/20  
PL - 31 070 Krakow  
Phone: + 48 124 219 903  
+ 48 667 630 603  
E-mail: olatyranska@gmail.com

25<sup>th</sup> April 2009

**Melk (Austria)**

Charter to be presented by  
SI/E Secretary Gerda Huisman  
*Club President*  
Beate Schober  
Schallaburg 7  
AT - 3382 Schollach  
Phone: + 43 2754 68650  
+43 664 9109917  
E-mail: beate@go2kiev.com

9<sup>th</sup> May 2009

**Lugano Lago (Switzerland)**

Charter to be presented by  
Governor, French Union  
Jacqueline Boullier-Bourgeois  
*Club President*  
Manuela Roosevelt  
Via Brughi 15  
CH - 6949 Comano Ti  
Phone: +41 91 930 8918  
+41 91 960 03 36  
Mobile: +41 (0) 78 642 824  
E-mail:  
roosevelt@springwood.ch

30<sup>th</sup> May 2009

**Arouman de Guyane (France)**

Charter to be presented by  
SI/E IPP Monique Rivière  
*Club President*  
Dominique Loubet  
Villa, Loubet,  
Avenue Saint-Ange, Vieux  
Chemin  
FR - 97354 Remire-Montjoly  
(French Guyana)  
Phone: +33 05 94 38 05 92  
E-mail: domi.loubet@orange.fr

13<sup>th</sup> June 2009

**Dessau-Wörlitz (Germany)**

Charter to be presented by  
Governor, Danish Union  
Thea Dalsgaard  
*Club President*  
Jutta Kramer  
DE - 06844 Dessau-Roblau  
Phone: +49 (0) 340 850 7970  
E-mail: juttakramer-  
dessau@gmx.de

16<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2009

**5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum**

'Bridging Divides for Water'  
Istanbul (Turkey)

27<sup>th</sup> - 29<sup>th</sup> March 2009

**60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Club Bologna (Italy)

3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> April 2009

**60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Club Florence (Italy)

8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> May 2009

**60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Club Rome (Italy)

24<sup>th</sup> May 2009

**5<sup>th</sup> International Peace**

**Marathon**

Club Kigali (Rwanda)

6<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> June 2009

**80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Club Marseille (France)

8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> July 2009

**SI/E Governors' Meeting**

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

10<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> July 2009

**19<sup>th</sup> Congress of Soroptimist**

**International of Europe**

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> September 2009

**10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

Romanian Union



## FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR SI/E

Please submit your texts for  
the next issue of The Link to  
SI/E HQ by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009!