



The Link

A global voice for women

3/2009-2010 N° 218



Partnering in Haiti
Clean Water for
People in Need

SI/E Scholarships
Helping Women
Realise Their Dreams

Sorooptimist Peace Prizewinner
Community Building
Across Ethnic Lines

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

Soroptimist International of Europe (SI/E) is one of four federations of Soroptimist International. It has some 35,000 members in over 1,200 clubs in 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 for more information about the aims, activities and projects that characterise our organisation.

Note from the Editor

THINKING GLOBALLY FOR WOMEN

Some time ago, I attended an Annual General Meeting of one of the Unions and was surprised when some of the delegates said they were not interested in the aspect of being part of an international organisation. The remark was not only a shock, but it also saddened me because these Soroptimists have no idea what they are missing. I realise that not everyone can attend Governors' Meetings and meet women from all over our Federation, but what about the joys of inviting your Friendship Link clubs for a visit and experiencing first hand Soroptimist solidarity and friendship? The Link allows everyone to share in this experience.

As Editor, I receive all sorts of information about the activities of our Clubs and Unions. The projects across borders are not only inspiring, but also offer concrete help to thousands of people, whether they involve digging wells for communities without access to clean water or providing education for young women and children in need. Let us not forget this important aspect of solidarity in achieving our goals. Imagine how exciting it is that SI/E is not only able to support its own Club Port au Prince in Haiti, but can also offer aid to thousands of other victims through its partnership with arche noVa and other organisations. This is what being an interna-

tionally recognised organisation is all about. By working together, we can achieve more. And why shouldn't we be proud of these efforts and publicise them in the media? We stand to earn even greater respect from our partners and thus accomplish more for women and girls!

Christine Cromwell-Ahrens, Editor, The Link

Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| arche noVa at Work in Haiti | 4 |
| Helping Women Realise Their Dreams | 6 |
| Select Scholarship Candidates Now! | 7 |
| Study Tour to Moldova | 8 |
| 21 st General Assembly in Africa | 9 |
| Soroptimist Peace Prizewinner Reports | 10 |
| Biennium Theme Projects | 12 |
| Federation News | 14 |
| News from Unions and Clubs | 18 |

Cover page



With the help of Club Karen Blixen, the Little Rock Development Centre provides a nurturing learning environment, meals and health care to vulnerable children from the Kibera slums in Kenya.



p. 4/5



p. 10/11

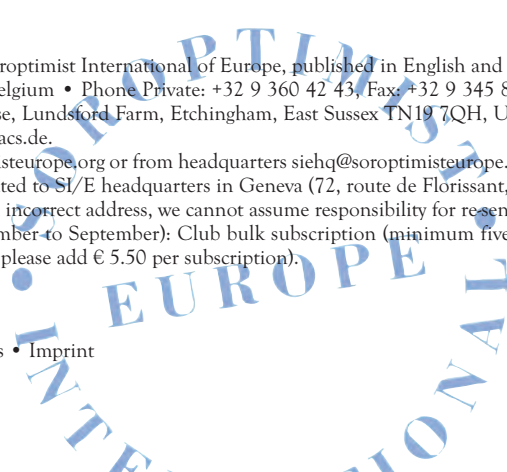


p. 14



p. 22

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Dear Soroptimist Friends,

Soroptimist stands for empowering and transforming the lives of women and girls; the 35,000 members of SI/E substantiate this mission through service work and projects. This issue of *The Link* illustrates how we realise this mission in many different ways. You will read how members have implemented a variety of projects with the same goal: giving women and girls the opportunity to fulfil their potential and live their dreams.

Doing more than just building schools

Education is the key to progress and essential to achieve a better life. It is well known that by educating girls and women, the whole family benefits. Soroptimist has therefore always supported educational projects, but we want to do more than just build schools. We want the young women to progress in their careers by giving them guidance and advice from experienced professional women (mentors) or by allowing them to continue their studies in the best circumstances (scholarships).

As the Mentoring Project, initiated by the German Union, matches the vision of Soroptimist so well, we have expanded the programme throughout Europe. Created many years ago, the SI/E Scholarship Fund has since helped scores of women realise their professional dreams. Some of them have even become Soroptimists. In the future we intend to give greater importance to scholarships and will try to link them with the Mentoring Programme.

Education enables young women to support themselves and makes them less vulnerable to false promises of glamorous jobs by traffickers. Soroptimist projects like the ones in Moldova or Romania have been very effective in the prevention of human trafficking.

Receiving credit for our work and generosity

Soroptimist is also friendship and solidarity, and the earthquake in Haiti has brought out the best in our members. The reactions were fast and overwhelming. Indeed, we were so fast that, instead of one well-planned action, many clubs and union sent money directly to different organisations. We have no way of keeping track of all the various projects and donations, since contributions by and the name of Soroptimist are often left unmentioned. Of course, helping those in need is more important than publicity, but why shouldn't SI/E receive credit for its work and generosity? We cannot quantify the results of our Haiti appeal, because nobody knows the total amount of donations. Centralisation of information is important for any organisation, and SI/E, which has to collect data for international agencies, is no exception.

In recognition of Soroptimist's continued work for peace, PP Heidrun Konrad initiated the SI/E Peace Prize to honour particularly outstanding achievements. In Amsterdam in 2009, the third Prize was presented to Valdete Idrizi for her excellent work in peace- and community-building in Mitrovica, a region in Kosovo with many ethnic conflicts. A year later Valdete has reported

how the endowment was used, and she has not disappointed us. She has initiated projects addressing the common interests of the various ethnic communities. One of the most successful – with a major impact on women's health – is the 'Mitrovica Breast Cancer Initiative' aimed at improving the prevention and treatment of breast cancer.

We are also very proud of the Danish Union's work on the Women and Climate Change project, which has now been extended to Kenya. Receiving such a substantial grant from the Danish Foreign Ministry to fund such an important awareness-raising effort is a great honour for our Danish Soroptimists.

Implementing the Strategic Plan for SI

SI needs to re-evaluate its role to remain a significant player in a fast-changing world. We must assess the needs of our members as well as determining our requirements of them in line of the growing pressure of career, family and social obligations. Although sometimes difficult to accept, we must change if we want to attract dynamic young women and maintain the interest and enthusiasm of existing members. SI and SI/E are addressing this issue with the implementation of the strategic plan. In this connection, SI has asked members to select a Long Term Project, and I invite all of you to actively participate in this voting process.

My Board and I are interested in the opinions of members and the SI/E Governors' Meeting is an excellent opportunity to make your voices heard. I hope that this event in Ghent will bring stimulating discussions and that afterwards all of us will be satisfied with the progress made!

In friendship

Eliane Lagasse, SI/E President

SI/E President Eliane Lagasse, here with her granddaughter Charlotte, wants Soroptimist International to succeed in its mission to improve the lives of women and girls.



Clockwise from far right: Mat Anderson of arche nova reports to President of Club Port au Prince, Nadège Bance Jacques, on the progress of the project.

Helpers from arche noVa have worked untirelessly to aid the people of Haiti.

The arche noVa teams have installed five of these SkyHydrants, which purify water without electricity or chemicals.

German teams engage locals to help distribute hygiene toiletries.

Clean water is crucial to preventing diseases such as diarrhoea in disaster areas.
(All photos courtesy of arche noVa)



CLEAN WATER FOR PEOPLE IN NEED

i n H a i t i

'Initiative for People in Need' is the motto of German aid organisation, arche noVa. Their teams have been in the country since shortly after the earthquake in January. In the first weeks activities involved setting up temporary water treatment units. Since then SI/E and arche noVa have partnered to secure safe drinking water and hygienic conditions on a long-term basis.

The lack of clean water and basic sanitation facilities are two of the biggest problems in the areas hit by the earthquake. arche noVa is using SkyHydrants™ to increase and guarantee access to safe drinking water in Petit-Goâve, Grand-Goâve and surrounding areas. These ingenious devices purify water without the need for electricity or chemicals. So far, the arche noVa teams have installed five SkyHydrants. They have also set up a small water-testing laboratory to monitor the quality of the water provided at the distribution points as well as in spot-checks at household level.

Securing water for camps

In Carrefour, a SkyHydrant has been installed in a camp supported by a group of American missionaries. Because Carrefour is some distance from arche noVa's main base, they have agreed to operate and maintain the unit. Another SkyHydrant supplies patients, staff and visitors with safe drinking water in a hospital in Carrefour run by ACTS World Relief. The water is also used in a kitchen that produces 3,000 meals per day.

In Petit Guinée on the outskirts of Petit-Goâve where at least 80% of the buildings were destroyed, arche noVa set up a facility for drinking water that serves a Child Friendly Space operated by the Czech organisation People In Need and a clinic installed by the International Medical Corp. The site has since had to be abandoned because of ownership issues, but the SkyHydrant on an adjacent property still functions as the only safe drinking water source for the community. As there were no remaining structures to place a tank on, arche nova constructed a water tower for the SkyHydrant. At a second site in Petit Guinée two SkyHydrants have replaced the original treatment unit set up by arche noVa.

arche noVa has installed a SkyHydrant in a camp supported by ADRA Czech. As there was no water distribution system here in the past, this site will be the first permanent installation where it will be necessary to build the capacity for the community to eventually take over

responsibility. This will ensure the sustainability of the water provision and the proper maintenance.

Educating people on water safety

Depending on the raw water source, the water treated by SkyHydrants usually has some residual taste and sometimes even a slight colouration, unlike the water sold by private vendors at a high cost. Although perfectly safe, people often do not seem to trust the quality of the water, as they are not used to drinking water with a taste, even if the suitability of SkyHydrant water is guaranteed through regular testing. It has therefore been necessary to educate the people on this issue, which is why arche noVa started campaigns through its Hygiene Promotion Teams. They also raise awareness of hygiene and act as a monitoring mechanism.

Plans for more projects

As donations to arche noVa have continued, including € 7,000 raised by Clubs Aalen and Ellwangen, and the SI/E Board are impressed by the quality of their work in Haiti, a second project will be supported. The goals of this project are to provide drinking and service water to two schools in Petit-Goâve and reduce the number of diseases caused by a lack of water and unhygienic conditions. To achieve this arche noVa will construct and install two water systems, educate the children in hygiene, distribute toiletries and monitor the water quality.

Club Port au Prince has been following the progress of the arche noVa projects. Thanks to the generosity of many Soroptimists, they are also able to fund the rebuilding of a school. We will keep readers informed of the progress of this project.

In addition to the donations to the SI/E fund, there have been many other initiatives to help the people of Haiti, including donations of over € 25,000 from the German Union to HelpAge, which is also working in areas hit by the earthquake, mainly targeting the elderly.

Successful scholarship beneficiaries

Just how life changing a SI/E Scholarship can be is illustrated by the stories of the following three beneficiaries who finished their studies in 2009. Their experience and success may encourage other candidates to apply for the next period, which begins in October 2010!

Software that helps the disabled

Having worked as a physics teacher for more than 20 years, Romanian **Aurora Constantin** had constantly searched for ways of improving her students' interest in physics. She felt that Information and Communication Technology offers a broad opportunity to involve students in active learning. As a disabled person, she knew that the line between accessibility and non-accessibility often depends on a very small design modification. So, she decided to study Information Technology to pursue her ideas about education methods and assistance for the disabled.



It was a proud moment when Aurora Constantin received her Masters diploma from the University of Glasgow.

Aurora was offered a place at the University of Glasgow, but had to secure funding of the yearlong studies for a Masters degree, made dearer by the added expense of assistance for a wheelchair user. With a scholarship from the University and an € 8000-grant from the SI/E Scholarship Fund, Aurora was able to realise her dream.

In Glasgow, Aurora broadened her knowledge of computer science and learned new teaching methods and strategies. Through collaboration with other students, she was able to improve her communication skills and her English. She discovered the new field of Human-Computer Interaction, which ultimately became the theme of her successful dissertation and is now the subject of her continued research.

After returning to Romania, Aurora took up a teaching position at 'Radu Greceanu' College in Slatina, where she made use of her new knowledge to develop educational software, particularly for people with impairments. For example, she produced software useful for students with physical disabilities because it involves an interaction

through voice only. Together with other Club Slatina members Aurora intends to organise a computer course for people with disabilities and for the under-privileged (especially women).

Pollution control using solar power

El Hajjaji Souad is a charter member of Single Club Rabat, Morocco. The 40-year-old has a PhD in Materials Science and currently works as a lecturer at Med V Agdal Rabat University. The SI/E scholarship enabled her to study photochemistry. Her team is developing photocatalysts for water and air pollution control using solar energy. Setting up this branch of research will help protect the environment. It will also promote the social and economic development of arid and semi-arid regions by producing reasonably priced water.

Thanks to the SI/E scholarship of € 5000, Souad was able to take a six-month course at the German Research Centre for Environmental Health in Germany. The aim of the course was to train in analysis techniques for organic matter such as pesticides in water and the soil. She also investigated the photo degradation of pesticides



El Hajjaji Souad learned new analytical methods during the six-month course in Germany.

REALISE THEIR DREAMS!

in water under exposure to sunlight and studied the kinetics of the degradation as well as the nature of the generated photoproducts. The results of the research conducted during the course have since been published in international journals and in papers for various symposia. The course has also enabled her to develop a long-term relationship with the research institution. She is continuing her research in Morocco in partnership with her PhD students.

Improving skills and building confidence

Antoinette Uwimana is 40 years old, a mother of three and the current President of the Rwandan Union. Thanks to the € 4500 SI/E scholarship, she was recently able to complete a two-year Masters programme in Public Health at the National University of Rwanda. The



scholarship helped cover the costs of her yearlong studies, but as Antoinette says, above all it gave her the courage to start the programme that is inaccessible to many women with modest incomes. Through her studies, she has improved her managerial skills, especially in the public health sector, and she feels even more confident about her professional qualifications. After earning her Masters, she applied for a higher position and is now Portfolio Coordinator responsible for Education, Tourism and Water & Sanitation with the SNV (Netherlands Development Organisation) in Rwanda. With an increased salary she will be able to repay the loan used to help fund the studies.

'I would like to offer my sincere thanks to the Soroptimists of the European Federation for the scholarship which allowed me to move on to the next stage of my career,' says Antoinette, also speaking for both Aurora and Souad. 'I would like to encourage clubs, unions and the Federation to continue this scholarship programme because education and professional training are the keys to overcoming the obstacles to women's development.' Clearly, our Scholarship funds have been well invested in these three women!

The SI/E scholarship gave Antoinette Uwimana the courage and the means to start a Masters programme in Public Health.

SI/E Scholarship Fund

SELECT CANDIDATES NOW!

Through its Scholarship Fund SI/E awards a number of women scholarships each year to enable them to complete their studies or to take part in training for their professional or vocational advancement. When the new Soroptimist year starts in October, letters and forms for applications are sent out, and the deadline for applications to the Scholarship Committee is 15th January. Due to administrative needs, it is unfortunately not possible to change these dates.

To avoid delays and stress, I kindly ask all Presidents of Unions and Single Clubs to begin thinking about possible candidates for a scholarship now. The more thought you put into your choice, the higher the chances your candidate will be selected for a scholarship.

For all the necessary information please see www.soroptimisteurope.org/MemberArea/Funds/guidelines/Scholarship or contact me at annabeth.studer@bluewin.ch. Please use this opportunity to give deserving women a chance for a grant!

Annabeth Studer
SIE Scholarship Committee Chair

EMPOWERMENT THROUGH EDUCATION



Above: The young girls entertained their guests with Moldovan folk-dances.

Right: Norwegian Union President Edle Utaaker signed the agreement to extend the partnership with the International Organisation of Migration.

More than 20 Soroptimists from eight countries visited Moldova in March 2010 to learn more about the Norwegian Union's project, 'Hope and Dreams for Everyone', which is also the subject of Hanne Jensbo's SI President's Appeal 2009. The objective of this Study Tour was to see firsthand the success of this project, witness the importance of education in protecting vulnerable children and meet the beneficiaries in person. This programme was first initiated in partnership with the clubs in Moldova in 2005 to prevent human trafficking by providing life-skills education to children. Empowerment through education is a vital aspect to fighting human trafficking. With the help of this project children learn how to be better prepared for personal development. Training in life skills includes career guidance, health care, sex education and insight into domestic violence. Advice from government offices helps empower children to be independent and build self-esteem.

Together with SI President Hanne, we travelled across Moldova to Chisinau, Napadova, Soroca, Balti and Edinet where we met beneficiaries of the project in boarding schools as well as girls who have moved on to higher education. It was fascinating to see the confidence of the girls who have been

involved in the programme for many years compared to that of those who had just started.

Our partners who implement the project locally are International Organisation of Migration (IOM) and The Child Right Information Centre (CRIC). CRIC organises seminars in Moldova for older pupils where the beneficiaries of the project are identified. It also monitors the children's situation through contact with the boarding schools.

We were warmly received in the schools we visited. The girls had prepared cultural programmes for our entertainment, including singing, dancing, modelling and displaying their handicrafts. The many presents the girls had prepared for us were equally overwhelming!

In Edinet, we took part in the inauguration of a well for a kindergarten. In addition to interesting water projects, Club Edinet is also sponsoring in collaboration with Norwegian Soroptimists 12 traditional embroidered costumes for 10 villages. The girls are embroidering these clothes as part of the initiative 'Youth for Tomorrow'.

Club Chisinau celebrated its 10th anniversary together with more than 100 guests. With so many Soroptimists present, a mini seminar was organised to share experience with various projects and devise new initiatives. We also met two interesting Moldovan personalities: journalist Alina Radu risks her life by writing critical articles about trafficking and corruption, and painter Eleonora Romanescu refuses to sell her paintings because she wants her country to inherit her work.

The 'Hope and Dreams for Everyone' project has indeed helped transform the lives of children who have had a traumatic past. The support of every single Soroptimist is appreciated to fund the education of these Moldovan girls. Empowerment through education has definitely proved successful in the fight against human trafficking.

Suba Parthiban
SI/E Programme Officer



STEP BY STEP TO AFRICAN UNITY



Lagos, Nigeria hosted the 21st General Assembly for the East, West and Central African zones in February 2010. 127 Soroptimists from Benin, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Ghana, Mali, Sierra Leone, Togo and Nigeria participated in the Joint Meeting of the Future African Federation. Representatives from Rwanda, Guinea, Kenya, Burkina Faso and Gambia sent apologies. The Nigerian hospitality was showcased to all delegates. Everyone was warmly welcomed at a special reception hosted by the President of SI/Nigeria, Theresa Odogwu.

Many prominent guests attended the opening ceremony. Of particular interest was the address of Abimbola Fashola, the wife of the Governor of Lagos State. The First Lady expressed her support for the aspiration to form the African Federation with the aim of addressing specific African needs. She also acknowledged the impact of SI worldwide and the milestones SI/Nigeria, including the partnering with the state government. She called on participants to face the challenges posed by poverty, HIV/AIDS, cancer, maternal mortality, etc. and encouraged us to continue the good work.

Professor Adenike Grange, the former Federal Minister of Health, then delivered a stimulating lecture on how to reduce the high rate of maternal and infant mortality in Africa, which she began by saying, 'The healthy future of society depends on the health of the children of today and their mothers, who are guardians of that future.'

The General Assembly per se began with a minute of silence in remembrance of Lynn Dunning, other Soroptimists and their family members who had passed away.

After reviewing the minutes of previous meetings in Addis Ababa and Cotonou, goodwill messages from SI/E President Eliane Lagasse and from Margaret Oldroyd from SI/GBI were read. One of the further highlights was the training given by the SI/E Extension and Follow-up/Africa Officer, Maria Soumonni, on Extension. She reminded

attendees that Extension should be a personal challenge to all members.

Several recommendations of the previous meeting in Cotonou were discussed. Among other things, it was decided that for better accountability, the three committees (Finance, Constitution/By-Laws, and Extension) should report quarterly to the Immediate Past President, the President and the Provisional Permanent Secretary Maria Soumonni. In addition, Nigeria has the responsibility of producing a directory of all members of the Future African Federation.

An unforgettable friendship evening at the President-elect's house offered a colourful close to the meeting. The 22nd General Assembly of the Future African Federation, West and Central African zones will be held in Abidjan, Ivory Coast in 2011.

Delegates from Mali and Nigeria met with SI/E Extension and Follow-up/Africa Officer Maria Soumonni (third from right).

Programme Focus Reports

DOCUMENTING OUR SUCCESSSES

More you realise that from November 2008 to May 2010, the Unions and Clubs of SI/E submitted 1306 Programme Focus Reports to the SI database, documenting projects at a total cost of \$3,755,303 which have helped nearly five million women and more than 1.5 million girls? As impressive as these figures may sound, they are not even close to revealing how much we have actually accomplished because many worthwhile projects go undocumented. For April 2010, for example, a total of just 37 projects were uploaded to the website. Italy tops the list at 10, with France close behind at eight, but for instance Germany and Sweden have no projects listed at all. Please take the time to document your efforts in a Programme Focus Report. They are valuable sources for our UN representatives and show how much we are doing to improve the lives of women and girls.



Soroptimist Peace Prizewinner

COMMUNITY BUILDING ACROSS ETHNIC LINES

Valdete Idrizi stands at the Mitrovica Bridge, which became a symbol of the ethnic divide between the Albanian and Serb communities in one of Kosovo's most volatile cities.

The Soroptimist Peace Prize and endowment awarded to CBM Director Valdete Idrizi at the 2009 SI/E Congress in Amsterdam has been of great importance to the further development of Community Building Mitrovica (CBM), both in terms of implementing its mission and vision as well as restoring peace and confidence among the divided ethnic communities living in Mitrovica. Here is Valdete's report: →

The SI/E endowment enabled us to initiate a needs assessment of the ethnic communities in divided Mitrovica that seeks to identify the common interests of communities living beside each other. Many projects aiming to address these common interests have been drafted since last summer, whereby each of them required mobilisation and interaction of the various ethnic communities in Mitrovica.

Cancer knows no borders

One excellent example is the 'Mitrovica Breast Cancer Initiative', which was established last year from the existing Women's Centre in the Miner's Hill neighbourhood in the Northern part of the city. This Initiative aims to strengthen interethnic ties between communities and within neigh-

bourhoods in Mitrovica by directly addressing a pressing, shared need among all citizens. Improvements in service, education and information regarding breast cancer, prevention and treatment in the Mitrovica region have since been achieved. It furthermore seeks to make recommendations to local government authorities and relevant institutions regarding the establishment or improvement of mechanisms for the planning, monitoring and assessment of breast cancer prevention and occurrence in the project target area. Cancer does not discriminate among ethnic lines; its incidence, cruelty and impact on the lives of its victims and their families are similar to all. In the divided city of Mitrovica, north Kosovo, cancer patients and their families are constantly reminded of, and having to face, the limitations in health care in the field of oncology. Cancer crosses borders, ethnicities and religions, and therefore all communities should react together. The project already scored extraordinary results. At present, CBM is identifying potential donors to enable the continuation of the project and lobbying for mobile mammography that would reach women in both sides of the city.

In addition, CBM, in cooperation with BBCI (Balkan Breast Cancer Initiative) members, organised the Annual Walk on 24th October 2009 to raise awareness about breast cancer. Several hundreds of citizens of Mitrovica, different ethnic backgrounds, representatives of International Institutions in Kosovo including Embassies, Kosovo Government representatives, civil society organizations and Kosovan doctors participated in the event with the aim to increase awareness about breast cancer and its early detection. Speeches were delivered, leaflets on breast cancer were distributed and many discussions between citizens and medical specialists were conducted.

Network supports ethnic minorities

Establishing a women's network in Mitrovica is another concrete example. It aims to support ethnic minority women's groups to strengthen their role in their communities and work for the normalisation of life and the empowerment of women in the ethnically divided city and the Northern part of Kosovo, particularly in the multi-ethnic neighbourhoods. Some projects already started in 2010 and seek to establish the three new women groups (centres) and to link them in a Mitrovica women's network.

In addition, with the support of Soroptimists, CBM managed to obtain 1000 more books for the library of the Technical School in northern Mitrovica, which is used by the students of four secondary schools in Mitrovica, and many students are displaced from other parts of Kosovo. The endowment also supported the professional capacity building of CBM staff in order to implement projects aiming at conflict resolution and peace building.

As this brief highlight shows, the endowment of the Soroptimist Peace Prize has made a significant, sustainable impact on the work of CBM as a civil society organization at the forefront of peace-building in Kosovo and the wider region. It has been both a catalyst for new developments and the strengthening of existing initiatives and projects, furthering CBM's mission and vision of a society marked by peace and mutual understanding. CBM continues to fulfil its important role as an organisation dedicated to the people of the city and region it calls its home; its message continues to be carried forward by its multi-ethnic, committed staff, under the leadership of its inspirational direction.

Young people show their appreciation by marching with a banner 'Valdete – we are proud of you'.

Valdete tries to reach an agreement with Albanians and Serbs about the return of Albanians to that part of the city.

Photos: Besnik Hasanaaj



SHARE YOUR PROJECTS WITH OTHERS

Club Cotonou Gazelle has constructed three wells in Benin for more than € 24,000. The third, financed by Club Lippstadt for € 7,900, was recently inaugurated in Italebe.

Not all Clubs have access to or knowledge of interesting projects. The Project Exchange Pool helps publicise proposals and encourages joint sponsoring. So far, Clubs have proposed 57 water and sanitation projects in 18 countries in Africa, Eastern Europe, Suriname and Haiti, some of which have been successfully completed.

There is no doubt that the SI/E biennium themes 'Soroptimists go for Water' and 'Safe Water = Safe Life' have inspired our members. Within the less than three years that SI/E has promoted water and sanitation, our Clubs and Unions have funded or are sponsoring PEP projects at a cost of more than € 400,000. The SI/E water website currently lists 187 projects fully sponsored by clubs and documented in a Programme Focus Report for a total amount of € 875,000. This means that since September 2007 projects have been sponsored for a total in excess of € 1.3 million. As not all Clubs have submitted details to PEP or PFRs, this total figure is no doubt much higher.



All PEP projects are checked to determine whether they fulfil certain criteria. As a result, they offer SI/E clubs the opportunity to support a well-structured project proposed by another club. So, please consult the SI/E water website regularly for information on projects in need of support: www.soroptimistsgoforwa

ter.nl/SoroptimistsgoforWater/ProjectExchangePool/tabid/200/Default.aspx. Here are some examples of the projects in Africa on the PEP site:

Club Flamboyant, Ivory Coast is rehabilitating a pump in Yomidi for € 1,828 with the help of Clubs Akureyri, Austurland and Skagafjördur in Iceland. Club Bamako Espoir, Mali is constructing a well in N'Tanguala, with the cost of nearly € 5,000 financed by Club Düsseldorf-Pempelfort and Gerda Vedder. The same club is also constructing wells for about € 5,350 in Mountougoulabougou, which will be financed by Silvia and Bruno Aufdenblatten, and in Kouloulabougou, with the support of € 4,550 from Dr. Silvia Huggler and Roswitha Ott from Fund ANJA.

Club Tombouctou, Mali is building a well in Toya, Tombouctou, in cooperation with the NGO AMADE and the village of Toya. The cost of € 7,000 will be financed by Club Bad Ragaz, Switzerland. AMADE is also cooperating in the construction of two blocks of toilets for Koriomé, Tombouctou, for eight families and the school. The € 7,000 will be covered by the Austrian Union and Austrian Clubs.

Club Ouagadougou Princesse Yennega, Burkina Faso is constructing a well in Bobo Diolassou, while Clubs Neuss, Münsterland Süd-Nordkirchen and Pforzheim with the help of the Deutscher Hilfsfonds will sponsor the required € 5,700.

Club Ténéré-Niamey, Niger is constructing two blocks of toilets in Kindergarden Kollo, for nearly € 3,800, which is financed by Seniorenbrocki Glatbrugg, Switzerland. The Icelandic Union is donating € 4,550 for the construction of two blocks of toilets in Kindergarden Bamboo Béri.

Club Lomé Aurore, Togo is seeking the support of different clubs for its project to build a well in Kpota, Lomé, at a cost of nearly € 7,000.

Women for Water Partnership is supporting two projects: Club Addis Ababa, Ethiopia plans to cap and protect two springs, construct two distribution points and train women in sanitation and primary health care, at a cost of nearly € 8,000. Club Kisumu Winam, Kenya will provide a water system for the Murumba primary school (600 persons), build six toilets and a washing facility for girls and training in water management and hygiene for over € 6,300.



At the 10th anniversary celebration, Club Marrakesh Fondateur was able to motivate the guests to generously donate to their project.

Fundraising celebration in Morocco

SANITATION FOR RURAL SCHOOLS

On a visit to five schools in rural areas outside Marrakesh, Soroptimists from Club Marrakesh Fondateur discovered that if toilets exist, they are insalubrious, and most of them do not have doors or if they do, the doors are broken or do not close. There was often a lack of water and outdated and unusable septic tanks. Even if the schools are supplied with water, the taps have been ripped off and do not work. For these reasons, a large number of girls leave school at a very early age, sometimes as young as nine.

Club Marrakesh Fondateur has decided to recondition the septic tanks, renovate the toilets and taps and ensure that the roofs of the toilets do not leak at these 5 schools – to the benefit of more than 600 girls.

This ambitious project is both in line with the SI/E Biennium theme and also ties in with the goals of education for girls and equal opportunities for everyone through access to knowledge, health and education.

Making the most of their 10th anniversary celebration in the presence of SI/E President Eliane Lagasse, SI/E Past President Monique Rivière and myself, the club organised events to raise substantial funds towards the project to install toilet facilities and supply drinking water to these five schools.

Rina Dupriet,
SI/E Vice President

Club Lucerne

THREE WELLS FOR MADAGASCAR

When Club Lucerne in Switzerland celebrated its 50th anniversary last year, the members decided to make a gift of water in line with the Federation theme, 'Soroptimists go for Water'. Since some Lucerne Soroptimists had personal contact to Club Tuléar in Madagascar, they chose to use the donations collected from their anniversary celebrations for a well project there.

Tuléar, the capital of the Southwestern province, is a very arid area, stricken by poverty. As clean water is a major problem, the members of Club Tuléar suggested constructing wells in various quarters of the city, including near a large school.

After much preparation, correspondence between Clubs and the surprise visit of the Club Tuléar Vice President, the project finally took shape. The idea was presented at the anniversary celebration, which also featured the 10-man Madagascan band 'Ny Malagasy Orkestra'. Thanks to the generosity of the guests and a raffle, enough money was collected to finance three wells.

Two of the three wells, named Lucerne and Pilatus, have since been built and inaugurated. The third is under construction and will be called Reuss. The Madagascan Soroptimists are committed to the sustainability of the wells. This October a delegation from Club Lucerne will travel to Madagascar to see 'their' wells.

A follow-up project to install water supply mains is already planned. Perhaps other SI/E Clubs would be interested in supporting us in this venture!

Annabeth Studer,
Club Lucerne, Kastanienbaum,
E-Mail: annabeth.studer@bluewin.ch

Club Lucerne collected enough money to finance three wells in Madagascar, two of which are in full operation after an official inauguration in the presence of Soroptimists from Club Tuléar.





The venue of the European Friendship Days in Spain is the charming hilltop town of Mijas.

8th European Friendship Days

CATCH THE EARLY BIRD

Mijas, Spain is the venue for the 8th European Friendship Days from 15th-17th October 2010. Organising this event is a big challenge, especially in Spain – a country with more than 40 million inhabitants but where Soroptimist International is not well known and many find our name unpronounceable!

10 percent of the Spanish club members were present at the SI/E Water Congress in Amsterdam. All 10 of us had a great time and took the opportunity to get to know each other better.

During the Congress we heard that the European Friendship Days did not



have a venue for 2010. So, a small group of us considered the possibility of organising the event in Spain. In recent years the Spanish clubs have been working together more frequently: we have our own website, a national leaflet instead of individual editions and have joined forces on several projects. There is good feeling between the clubs, which is a great starting point!

At our interclub meeting last October, we discussed the idea of hosting the Friendship Days and decided to 'go for it'. Our goal is to offer a great event. We have started with a positive theme and found a splendid location, interesting speakers and good interpreters. In addition, the event provides an opportunity to experience the amazing culture and tastes of southern Spain.

We have chosen the theme 'The Power of Optimism' in order to infuse everybody with good vibrations and renewed energy. You can keep up-to-date with our latest programme news by following the special pages on our website www.si-es.org.

We are not just five small clubs; we are part of a big, worldwide organisation. We want to show everyone what we can do. With your support you, our Soroptimist sisters, we will ensure the success of our event, draw attention from the press and help us to grow SI in Spain.

So sign up today. Early bird rates apply until the 30th June. Hasta la vista!

In honour of Müfide Ferit Tek

TURKISH UNION OFFERS SCHOLARSHIP

In memory of Müfide Ferit Tek, an exceptional woman and founder of the first SI Club in Turkey, the Turkish Union has introduced a scholarship in her name for European Soroptimists. The author of various poems, novels and articles devoted her life to help Turkish women understand and utilise their own capabilities and skills. The aim of the scholarship of € 2500 is to promote Turkish culture and traditional art.

Born in 1892, Müfide Ferit Tek spent her childhood in Tripoli during the last years of the Ottoman Empire, where her father served as a lieutenant colonel. She was a particularly bright child and at seven she went to a convent school. Here she

learned French and Italian, while also being home tutored in Turkish and science. Her father wanted her to study medicine so she could treat the village women who refused to see male doctors. Although it was normally forbidden, she was at the time one of the few Turkish women to go abroad to study at the Lycée de Versailles in France. Sadly, her dream

Müfide Ferit Tek, who founded the first Soroptimist Club in Istanbul, Turkey, is the inspiration for this special scholarship.



of becoming a doctor ended when her father died after a prolonged illness.

Müfide Ferid Tek's articles for the newspaper 'National Sovereignty' were circulated among soldiers. One of those articles titled 'Antep, The Veteran' was so highly regarded by the National Assembly that the city was renamed Gaziantep, which means Antep, The Veteran in Turkish.

In 1921 Müfide Ferid Tek travelled to Paris with her ambassador husband, where she enrolled at the Sorbonne to study Oriental literature. She was the first woman to attend the School of Political Sciences in Paris and graduated with honourable mention. Later she lectured politics in Paris. She was also the first Turkish ambassadress to represent her country in both Paris and London. After serving

with her husband in Poland and Japan, she eventually returned to Turkey, where she died in 1971.

The Müfide Ferid Tek Scholarship will be awarded to a Soroptimist from the European Federation who is pursuing studies or training in Turkish handicrafts, e.g. calligraphy, marbling, miniature painting, etc. or in classical Turkish musical instruments, such as the Turkish reed flute or the oud. Soroptimists studying the Turkish language are also qualified.

Please send applications to me at soroptimist@soroptimistturkiye.org or soroptimist@superonline.com. The deadline is 1st September 2010.

Neriman Hacibeyoğlu,
Chairwoman of the Turkish Union Scholarship Committee

Council of Europe event

ACTING TOGETHER FOR BIODIVERSITY

To mark the International Year of Biodiversity, the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe staged the European Biodiversity Day on 28th April at the Palace of Europe in Strasbourg. SI/E Representative Françoise Ferey was part of the Biodiversity Working Group of the Sustainable Development Committee, which organised the meeting.

The presidents of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities and the Conference of INGOs of the Council of Europe, the highest officials of the three pillars of the Council of Europe, signed a joint declaration for the protection of biodiversity as a highlight of this remarkable event, the first ever of its kind. Within their own competencies and specific fields of actions, each pillar will endeavour, among other things, to work together to improve the state of biodiversity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by promoting an adapted lifestyle and a change of policies. They will encourage innovation and the development of clean technologies as well as the careful management of land and natural resources.

The Declaration also urgently requests the Committee of Minister to invite the governments



of the 47 member states to acknowledge that the right to a healthy environment is an integral part of human rights and to take the necessary measures to ensure its translation into concrete law.

The European Diversity Day brought together many national and local political officials, researchers and teachers, students as well as INGOs representatives. Several United Nations organs also participated, as well as the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the European Commission, the European Environment Agency and the city of Strasbourg.

An exhibition on 'Biodiversity, a vital asset for Europe' showing the various issues discussed during the debate was officially opened after the Declaration was signed. The afternoon was devoted to talks on biodiversity and ecosystem services as well as a roundtable discussion on post-2010 challenges, featuring several European specialists on the environment.

President of the Conference of INGOs Jean-Marie Heydt (left) opened the exhibition, which demonstrated the importance of biodiversity.

TRAINING AMBASSADORS FOR 'GREENNESS'



Left: The workshop participants learned how to take practical action and will take this information back to their communities. Below: Kenyan Soroptimists are planting indigenous trees to help mitigate climate change.

this part of the project the Kenyan Union will partner with the Kenya National Cleaner Production Centre (KNCPC).

Learning to take practical action

So, in April three Soroptimists from each of the 10 clubs in Kenya participated in a five-day workshop at Egerton University in Kenya. The first-class trainers from KNCPC de-mystified and explained complicated issues of global warming, carbon footprints, links between cleaner production and climate change, waste management, recycling and many other issues. The idea is for participants to return to their communities to create awareness on how climate change affects our daily lives and take practical action, such as making rainwater-harvesting and green buildings a part of housing design, constructing dykes in flood-affected areas, introducing drought resistant crops, planting indigenous trees, using fuel-saving stoves and alternative energy, promoting green procurement of goods and services, changing mindsets and attitudes on how to create and promote safer, cleaner, environments at our homes, workplaces, schools, hospitals, industries hotels/restaurants, etc. After days of wonderful bonding and hard work, proud Soroptimists received their certificates and are now ready to work together to make a change for women and girls in their communities and committed to do their part to make the project a success.



As previously reported, more than 300 Soroptimists from 12 clubs in the Danish Union have been working to raise awareness of climate change as part of their 'Women and Climate Change' project with the help of a grant for the equivalent of nearly €17,000 from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Peoples Climate Action (PCA). The project has had excellent media coverage, both in Denmark and internationally and has featured prominently on the PCA website. Following this success, the Foreign Ministry asked the Danish Union to initiate yet another Soroptimist project on climate change, this time targeting women in Kenya.

Partnering in Kenya

Within three months the two Steering Committees in Denmark and Kenya, each consisting of five members including the respective Union Presidents, developed the new Women and Climate Change project, which will run for two years with a grant for the equivalent of nearly € 270,000. The project aims to strengthen the ability of Kenyan women to mitigate the impact of and adapt to climate change. The 10 clubs in Kenya will be active partners and climate change ambassadors in the project.

Another part of the project will focus on implementing cleaner production processes and practices in a number of small-scale textile and hotel businesses that employ many women in Kenya. Here, the aim is to reduce water usage, energy and chemicals, which will in turn lead to financial gains and improve work conditions for their employees. For

Else Larsen

Member of the Danish Project Steering Committee
'Women and Climate Change' SI Denmark and Kenya





Worthwhile efforts in Kenya

JUST € 450 FOR ONE GIRL'S EDUCATION!

'Can you hug me?' said a small, but clear voice. When I turned around, big curious eyes were looking at me. This little girl is one of the street children to be 'saved' by Boma Rescue Centre, situated by the disposal site in the Korogocho slums. The Centre provides daily meals to the children who work and eat near the landfill. The children can also participate in games, sports and cultural activities such as dance and music or training in market gardening. The devoted staff also help in the children's general knowledge. This was evident by their many inquisitive questions. Club Milimani supports the

Centre and sponsors the education of 10 girls at the St. John's Primary School. The Kenyan Soroptimists are looking for clubs/individuals to sponsor the education of 20 more girls (annual fee of € 450 per girl).

Club Karen Blixen is a supporting partner to Little Rock Inclusive Early Childhood Development Centre, which provides a nurturing learning environment to children from the Kibera slums, the largest of its kind in Sub-Saharan Africa. Little Rock currently serves 550 vulnerable children and provides health care, occupational therapy, nutritional feeding programme, library services, day-care and income-generating activities for parents.

A visit to St. Luke's Hospital in Kaloleni, Mombasa underlines the importance of health education. In its quest to sensitise the local population and, in particular, women to use the hospital, the St. Luke's Hospital has various needs. The operating theatre looks more like a torture chamber, and the generator is barely functional, which poses a danger during surgery due to power fluctuations in the area. In addition, there is no system for proper rainwater harvesting, which could provide the necessary water supply. With Soroptimist's help, the hope is to equip St. Luke's Hospital with adequate facilities to serve the local population of 300,000 people.

Your support for all the above projects would be greatly appreciated. Please contact suba@soroptimisteurope.org to offer help or in case of questions.

Suba Parthiban,
SI/E Programme Officer

Club Karen Blixen enables a local Development Centre provide a learning environment to children from the Kibera slums.

Miniseminars for Eastern Europe

A STRONGER SENSE OF BELONGING

The multiplication effect is striking: the 16 participants who attended the Train the Trainers seminar in Bucharest last November (see page 17 of *The Link* No. 217) have since gone on to 'educate' some 200 Soroptimists at so-called mini-seminars in their home countries of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Kosovo, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Slovakia and the Ukraine. A further seminar to update SI/E on the progress will take place in Bergen, Norway, in June for the Nordic Unions and Baltic countries. SI/E First VP Ulla Madsen, who is responsible at Board

level for this training programme, and SI/E Training Consultant Kirsten Sveder are rightly very proud of this success, as documented in the various trainers' reports. In addition to covering details based on the Soroptimist Manual, the organisers allotted time for questions and lively discussions. In some cases, joint projects were planned, and Extension was also a focus of interest. The next issue of *The Link* will feature a personal report from one of the trainers.



Trainer Olga Burova from Club Lviv explains the structure of SI to participants in the seminar at Uzhgorod.



Above: Club President Frances Meier-Gibbons presented a voucher to the president of the Swiss organisation. Below: Club members sold refreshments to raise more funds.

Supporting single mothers in Sofia

A RUN FOR CHARITY IN RAPPERSWIL

Helping single mothers to be reintegrated into society and the working world is the aim of the Day Care Centre Roidestvo Hristovo project in Sofia, Bulgaria, which is supervised and sponsored by the 'Patenschaft Bulgarien' in Jona, Switzerland with the support of Club Rapperswil. To raise money for this project Club Rapperswil organised a run for charity together with 'Patenschaft Bulgarien' last year. Some 40 sponsored runners raced the distance of 300 m (children) and 650 m (adults). Members of the Club also sold food and drinks. The event was a complete success, and Club President Frances Meier-Gibbons was able to present the president of the Swiss organisation a voucher for the equivalent nearly € 24,000.



Promoting Girls' Education in Marrakesh

BOARDING SCHOOL NEEDS SUPPORT

At the initiative of Founding President Touria Binebine, Club Marrakesh helped open a boarding school for girls in September 2005. In the meantime 107 girls have received an education, and 10 of them have since enrolled at university.

The school project has three aims: to help girls from rural areas continue their secondary education, to stop girls interrupting their studies because of poverty, geographical isolation or the lack of transport and to support girls who want an education.

The boarding school was originally designed for 200 girls, but at the moment there are not enough funds to accommodate this number. Each student



The boarding school for girls in Marrakesh.

costs € 94 per month. Despite individual donations, funds raised by dinners and various other events, Club Marrakesh still has not raised enough funds to cover the costs of 200 students. For the time being, the boarding school needs to equip three dormitories and fit out commercial premises to generate income. For more information or to offer your help, please contact Touria Binebine at tbinebine@yahoo.fr, who is president of the girls' boarding school.

Rina Dupriet,
SI/E Vice-President



Soroptimist Prize of the German Union

PROMOTING PROFESSIONS IN SCIENCE

On International Women's Day on 8th March, the German Union awarded for the second time its Soroptimist Prize, which honours people or organisations that have distinguished themselves in supporting women. This may include efforts to increase the number of women in management positions, to help women enter non-traditional professions or to improve the work-life balance for women. The winner of this year's Soroptimist Prize was Professor Dagmar Schipanski, a renowned physicist and Chancellor of the Technical University Ilmenau, for her project to encourage women and girls to study natural sciences or engineering, to support them during their studies and to prepare them for a subsequent career in science. Secretary of the Ministry of Gender, Family, Women and Integration of North Rhine Westphalia, Dr. Marion Gierden-Jülich, praised the accomplishments of

Professor Schipanski, before German Union President Sibylle Lindenberg presented her with a cheque for €20,000.

Soroptimists and guests from Germany and abroad attended the awards ceremony, which was held in Berlin and co-sponsored by the German company Henkel. In their addresses SI/E IPP Mariet Verhoef-Cohen explained the goals and organisation of Soroptimist International, while President Sibylle described our social commitment. Professor Schipanski presented her project, emphasising how important it is for a sustainable future that women take up scientific and technical professions and complete these studies. The event was extremely uplifting and showed once again how Soroptimists are really inspiring change in women's lives.

From left: German Union President Sibylle Lindenberg presents Professor Dagmar Schipanski with a cheque in the presence of State Secretary Dr Marion Gierden-Jülich.

Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, SI/E IPP

Charity Home project

ANGELS IN ST PETERSBURG

An angel in St Petersburg? You must be joking! But when a small angel looked at me through the window of the 'Gallery of Dolls', I found the amazing atmosphere of fairy tales from my childhood behind the door of the shop. To share this experience, three gallery visits with the orphanage children were included in the 2010 'Better life for children' project. This is a part of the ongoing 'Charity Home' project, which Club St Petersburg initiated in the early 1990s.

Club Les Fagnes, Belgium, which generously donated to the project in 2008, and Club St Petersburg offer a bit of sunshine to the children of the Charity Home orphanage. In

2010 we decided to introduce the children to the wonderful world of the arts by encouraging them to perform in a drama and donated the costumes to stage *The Betrothal*, a sequel to the *Blue Bird*, a fairy play by Belgian playwright Maurice Maeterlinck.

The children spent their New Year Party in the magnificent Mikhailovsky Castle, a branch of the famous Russian Museum, and saw Mozart's opera 'The Magic Flute' in the Mariinsky Opera House. We believe that our collaborative effort to offer the orphanage children a happier childhood will bear fruitful results. As Club Les Fagnes President

Rosy Delvenne wrote to our club, 'Our greatest wish would be that all street children in the world would have a better life in the future.'

The children from Charity Home thanked artist and Gallery of Dolls owner Barbara Skripkina ten times as they closed the door of the gallery, waving good-bye to the small angel behind the door glass. They were happy and still in the wonderful world of the beautiful dolls, the small street angels of St Petersburg...

Marina Zakrevskaya, President, Club St Petersburg





Left: The guests were impressed by the visit to Misholot Club for Ethiopian women immigrants, a project supported by Club Rehovoth.
Below: Icelandic and Israeli Soroptimists pose for a group photo while on tour in Northern Israel.

Icelandic Sorores visit Israel

EXPERIENCING FRIENDSHIP WITHOUT BORDERS

There are few things of greater importance than friendship, love, goodwill and understanding. If you apply yourself to a good task, you can be sure that you will be rewarded. That is what makes being a Soroptimist such a great privilege.

Iceland and Israel have neighbouring tables at the SI/E Governors' Meetings. Through the years, the ties between our two countries deepened. The recent visit of nine Sorores from Club Kopavogur to Israel at the invitation of Club Rehovot is a story of 'Friendship without Borders'. A greeting with flowers from Club Rehovot at the airport marked the beginning of a nine-day tour of Israel, highlighting its uniqueness and history.

Our visit included sightseeing and warm encounters with Israeli Soroptimists. On our first full day, we toured the Diaspora Museum and the old city of Jaffa before meeting with the Clubs of Givatayim and Ramat Gan in the Tel Aviv area. We travelled with some of the Rehovot Sorores to the Massada Fortress in the desert and then on to the Dead Sea, where we floated in the salty waters.

The following days included visits ranging from the ruins of Caesarea, an ancient city from the time of Herod the Great, to the churches in Nazareth and the birthplace of Jesus. We also saw the Jordan River, where John the Baptist

christened Jesus, the Lake of Galilee and the Rosh Ha Nikra grottoes. The white chalk cliff on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea opens up into these spectacular caves. Breathtaking!

We met with Sorores from Club Nahariya before touring Acre with its 5,000-year history and the Baha'I Shrine and Gardens of Haifa. At a restaurant on Carmel beach we met two members of Club Neve Shaanan in Haifa.

The three days spent in Jerusalem were immensely varied. The visit to the Holocaust Museum had a deeply lasting effect. We also saw the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, walked through the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem's old city and stood at the Wailing Wall. The Mount of Olives, Gethsemane, the Israel Museum with the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Knesset were also on the programme.

The last day of our stay was devoted to Rehovot itself. We visited the Misholot Club for Ethiopian women, run by the Club. This was followed by a visit to the Weizmann Scientific Institute and to the home of the first President of Israel. All the Rehovot sisters were present at the farewell supper at Nili's home, and they presented us with a certificate for the tree planted in the Israeli Soroptimist Grove. These nine days were truly a wonderful experience, and one we will never forget.

Hildur Hálfðanardóttir, Club Kopavogur
Sylvia Flowers and Aliya Kedem, Club Rehovoth



Club Béthune

TALENTED WOMEN HELP THOSE IN NEED

At the initiative of President Joëlle Declercq-Papin, Club Béthune organised the first 'Women's Creative Fair' to showcase women's talents in the fields of art, letters, culture, crafts, gastronomy etc. More than 72 women exhibited their work. Some of them have their own businesses and used this event to demonstrate their skills, their sensitivity to art and crafts and their taste for creativity.

Supported by the SI/E Vice President Rina Dupriet, the creative fair, which was widely reported in the local and regional press, was a great success. Over 2500 people came to admire the exhibits and, in doing so, found out about SI.

The proceeds from the fair were donated to drilling a well in the Guié Region of Burkina Faso



at a cost € 10,000, a solidarity-based grocery store in Béthune and financing cocoons for Béthune Hospital's Neonatal Department.

The next Women's Creative Fair in Béthune will take place in November 2010! For more information, please contact declercq.joelle0@gmail.com.

The Women's Creative Fair in Béthune offered local talents the possibility to showcase their work.

The Netherlands

CELEBRATING A ROYAL BIRTHDAY

Holland is the place to be on the last day of April! This may be your only chance to see the Dutch go wild. On 30th April the whole country turns orange and celebrates one big party in honour of the Queen's birthday. The national colour orange is derived from the name of the royal family, 'the House of Orange'. People dress in orange, and this colour decorates everything from houses to cars. We call it 'the orange craze'. Every town or village organises street festivals with music, games and even children performing tricks.

Particularly special are the free markets, where adults and children alike sell all kinds of things in the streets - whether new or old and even food. It is not just for profit, but also to get rid of goods that are not used any more.

Several Soroptimist clubs in The Netherlands



take part in these activities, including ours. This year we sold tulips, homemade chutneys and jams, and all kind of accessories like jewellery, handbags, scarves and belts. The money we collected is intended for a hospice in our community.

Proceeds from the market sales of Club Utrechtse Heuvelrug were donated to a local hospice.

Timie Veenstra and Soraya Ebrahimi
Club Utrechtse Heuvelrug

Club Agen helps hospital

A COCOON FOR BETTER GROWTH

Six members of Club Agen presented the Mother & Child Unit of the Saint Cyr de Villeneuve sur Lot Hospital with four 'câlins' (special enveloping cushions for babies), 13 'cocoon' (snug beds for tiny babies) and 24 fitted sheets in March. Several employees of the hospital as well as representatives from the city and the local community attended the event. Danièle Salducci, physiotherapist and member of the Club Marseille, described the benefits of the in utero position in a



French Soroptimists donate special equipment to a hospital for premature and newborn babies.

'câlin' or cocoon for the physical and psychological development of very premature and newborn babies. The period before the age of four months is absolutely crucial. Marielle Boisguérin, a paediatric nurse who manages the unit and a stakeholder in the 'A Cocoon for Better Growth' campaign, organised a training programme with Danièle Salducci for the department's staff.



President Margaret Dennis (right) gave President Patrizia Seppia Canovetti a contribution to the fund for the victims of the railway disaster.

Hospitality Italian style

CELEBRATING NEW FRIENDSHIPS

Club Viareggio-Versilia of Tuscany, Italy, welcomed six members of Club Grange-over-Sands in Cumbria, Great Britain for a week in February to celebrate the Friendship Link between the two clubs. The English Soroptimists experienced the atmosphere of the famous Viareggio's Carnival, which every Sunday in February transforms the quiet seaside resort town into a whirl of music and singing with masses of people coming from near and far to admire the parade and its floats.

Particularly interesting was the visit to the Museum of the Carnival Citadel, where the huge figures made of papier-maché showcase the talent of local artisans.

Besides sightseeing in Pisa, Florence and Lucca and in other lesser-known places like Pietrasanta and Torre del Lago Puccini, the guests enjoyed the informal get-togethers at the members' homes. We talked about our activities, compared our work and discussed how we plan and develop our projects.

At the dinner to celebrate our link, the participants were able to deepen their friendship and sense of solidarity, so familiar when Soroptimists from different countries meet. President Margaret Dennis gave President Patrizia Seppia Canovetti a contribution to the scholarship fund set up for the children and teenagers touched by the railway disaster in Viareggio last June. We hope to increase contacts and common projects in the future.

Maria Vittoria Figaia,
IGU Coordinator of Club Viareggio-Versilia

Summer Get-Togethers 2010

SOROPTIMISTS MEET IN BRUSSELS

President Marianne Palamides and the members of Club Bruxelles Doyen invite all Soroptimists to join them for their third consecutive year of Summer Get-Togethers in the lounge of the hotel 'The Dominican' in Brussels, situated at Rue Léopold 9 behind the Théâtre de la Monnaie. The informal meetings will be held every Wednesday in July and August from 12.30 to 2.30 pm. Parking is available at Monnaie or Ecuyer. The métro station is De Brouckère (direction: Place de la Monnaie). The phone number is +32 (0)2 203 08 08. To sign up please contact President Marianne under the phone number +32 (0)477 61 16 63 or at sorop.palamides@gmail.com.

A journey to the Ukraine

TOUCHED BY WARM HOSPITALITY

Carrying two suitcases plus a large rucksack each, our multicultural Soroptimist group set off to the Ukraine last autumn. Natalia and Svetlana from Club Dnipropetrovsk fetched us from Kiev airport. On the following day we had an extraordinary tour of Kiev. After dinner with Club Kiev, we boarded the night train to Dnipropetrovsk, where the local Club members welcomed us the next morning. Club Dnipropetrovsk showed us their project, an orphanage for some 90 handicapped children between the ages of five and 18. The children, who welcomed us with dances and songs, were thrilled by our little gifts of drawing utensils. Before leaving, we planted a tree on the premises.

In the evening we celebrated the Club's 10th anniversary with the most delicious food. For the hospitality evening we were invited in small groups to the homes of Club members. The next day we visited a school where the children learn traditional Ukrainian painting techniques and then went to a Cossack village. We also explored the sights of Dnjepr. Later that evening we set off by train for Jalta, reluctantly saying good-bye to the Club sisters.

With our guides Olga and Natascha, we started our Crimean Satin Season Tour, which was offered



for the fifth time and we can heartily recommend. The tour offered visits to Massandra Palace, the Mountain Ay-Petri vinery and the Livadian Palace, where the Jalta Conference took place in 1945. Everything from the food to the swim in the sea was fabulous. We even saw a concert of the famous Russian group of Mikal Turetsy. Before some of us left for Lviv, Soroptimists from Club Simferopol treated us to a lunch.

Olha met us at the airport in Lviv. During the following days she showed us the wonderful old town and also the local Club's project, a perinatal clinic for which the Clubs Luxembourg Doyen and Moselle had already financed the renovation of two patients' rooms. In the evening we met more members of Club Lviv. Before departing to our various countries of origin, we enjoyed another tour of Kiev by Club member Tamara, who had also prepared a picnic for us.

The journey left us with many impressions and insights, the most significant of which is that Soroptimism in the Ukraine and probably in most of Eastern Europe requires our support and partnership. By the way, Club Lviv will celebrate its 10th anniversary in September 2010 and would be pleased if many Soroptimists joined the celebrations. We are definitely not going to miss that event!

Maria Deicke, Club Frankenthal

Soroptimists from Luxembourg, Selby, Ringsted and Frankenthal enjoy a hospitality evening with Club Dnipropetrovsk.



The Dominican in Brussels is the venue of the summer get-togethers.

10th July 2010

Meerbusch (Germany)

Charter to be presented by
Governor of Norway
Solveig Haug Urdal
Club President
Ruth Herzog
Lessingstrasse 15
DE - 40667 Meerbusch
Phone: +49 2132 769 909
E-mail: ruth-herzog@web.de

4th September 2010

Lauterbach-Vogelsberg (Germany)

Charter to be presented by
SI/E Finance Controller
Hafdis Karlsdottir
Club President
Brigitte Lox-Coolsaet
Am Lärchentor 8
DE - 36355 Grebenhain
Phone: +49 6643 91 8267
E-mail: brigittecoolsaet@live.de

11th September 2010

Drafi 'Dryades' (Greece)

Charter to be presented by
SI/E Constitution and By-Laws
Chairperson Maria Elisabetta
De Franciscis
Club President
Konstantina Pouli
PO Box 340
GR - 19009 Drafi
Phone: +30 210 604 47 21
E-mail: pythagoras@freemail.gr

18th September 2010

Antakya (Turkey)

Charter to be presented by
Editor 'The Link'
Christine Cromwell-Ahrens
Club President
Oya Mistikoglu
Kislasaray Mah. Inönü
Cad. No: 8/11
TR - Antakya
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3rd-4th July 2010

SI/E Governors' Meeting
Ghent (Belgium)

9th September 2010

50th Anniversary
Club Kuusankoski (Finland)

10th September 2010

50th Anniversary
Club Mikkeli (Finland)

19th September 2010

25th Anniversary
Club Les Fagnes (Belgium)

9th-10th October 2010

50th Anniversary
Club Wuppertal (Germany)

15th-17th October 2010

8th European Friendship Days
Mijas (Spain)

21st October 2010

50th Anniversary
Club Helsinki-Erottaja
(Finland)

21nd-24th October 2010

25th Anniversary
Club Roma Tre (Italy)

29th-31st October 2010

25th Anniversary
Club Vittoria
(Italy)

30th October 2010

50th Anniversary
Club Pori (Finland)

12th-14th July 2013

SI/E Congress
Berlin (Germany)

SOROPTIMISTS EUROPEAN INTERNATIONAL

21st September

International Day of Peace


25th November

**International Day for the
Elimination of Violence
against Women**

10th December

Human Rights Day
(celebrated by Soroptimists
worldwide)

INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS DAYS

 Please submit your texts to the
Editor for the next issue of
The Link by 31st July 2010!

NEW SI/E CLUBS
TO BE
CHARTERED

FORTHCOMING
EVENTS FOR SI/E