



The Link

A global voice for women

4/2009-2010 N° 219



*Governors' Meeting
Striving for a
Greater Impact*

*Best Practice Awards 2010
SI/E Board Recognises
Outstanding Projects*

*SI/E Coordinated Reports
Identifying Our Strengths
and Weaknesses*

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

Soroptimist International of Europe (SIE) is one of four federations of Soroptimist International. It has some 35,000 members in over 1,200 clubs in 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 organisa-

Cover page



These are just some of the Soroptimists from all over the Federation who attended the reception at the town hall on the eve of the Governors' Meeting in Ghent.

Photos: Michèle Francken

Note from the Editor

KEEPING THE BEST CONTENT MIX

In a break from tradition, we chose to show a whole collection of photos taken at the reception in Ghent on the eve of the Governors' Meeting in July on the cover page of this issue. Soroptimist and photographer Michèle Francken expertly captured the atmosphere of the event in her pictures, which also demonstrate the cultural and age diversity of our Federation. Indeed, I feel one of the main tasks of *The Link* is to convey this diversity of our organisation, whether in terms of members, locations, activities or projects. Your contributions are vital to achieve this mix of topics, and I thank you all for your material. But please keep in mind that your article is just one of many. As editor, I have the responsibility to produce a magazine that reflects the variety of our members and projects. This means I may be forced to edit and shorten articles. I know this can be painful for the author,





but it is necessary in order to ensure that everyone has their contribution published. To underline my point, I encourage you to take a look at the various articles featured on the pages allotted to 'News from Unions and Clubs'.

Once again I feel compelled to mention the subject of photos because sadly, with a few exceptions the quality is not getting better. Those of you who responded to the survey on *The Link* stressed that photos are crucial to making the magazine more attractive and interesting. Please remember this when photographing an event or a project. Take close-ups – and show us the faces of people. You will see what a difference it makes to the appearance and charm of your magazine.

Christine Cromwell-Ahrens, Editor, The Link

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 President: Dr Eliane Lagasse, Meerlaan 21, BE-9620 Zottegem, Belgium • Phone Private: +32 9 360 42 43, Fax: +32 9 345 85 46 • Email: elianelagasse@hotmail.com. Editor: Christine Cromwell-Ahrens, Lundsford House, Lundsford Farm, Etchingham, East Sussex TN19 7QH, United Kingdom • Phone: +44 1580 819 319, Fax +44 1580 819 077 • Email: ccromwell-ahrens@cacs.de.
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Dear Soroptimist Friends,

The last few months have seen many meetings at every Soroptimist level: statutory club meetings, Union Annual Meetings, the SI/E Governors' Meeting (GM) and the SI Board Meeting. After all these dates, I wondered if we hold too many meetings, all of which take time and cost money. So, why have so many meetings? Is it because of the rules and regulations, statutes or the so-called SI Policy, Procedures & Programme? Are they really useful and do they help Soroptimist forwards?

Attending Union meetings, I was impressed by the interesting discussions and the active participation of the delegates. Participants talked passionately about the future of their union, how to make better projects, how to expand membership and how to balance the budget in difficult economic times. After the GM in Ghent I also had a good feeling because of the enormous commitment and open debate. We may not always agree, but different points of view can be enriching.

Staying in touch with members

As I said at the GM, it is our duty to explore and discuss changes that enable SI/E to better achieve its mission of inspiring action and creating opportunities to transform the live of women and girls. SI/E must stand out and be more attractive to professional women than other women's service clubs. For this, we must stay in touch with the expectations of our members and potential new members.

In fact, the purpose of all our meetings should be to evaluate whether our organisation is continuing to be of benefit to our members through projects, friendship and networking. As in every business, we need to define our goals and objectives, find strategies to accomplish them and look at the financial implications; in short, we need a strategic plan and a structure to our meetings through a precise agenda. It makes meetings more productive and worthwhile.

For the strategic, long-term direction of our Federation, SI/E has decided to focus on goal development, policy development and evaluation. Adapted from the plan of the previous biennium, our strategic plan aims to maintain continuity in our objectives. As shown in the survey report on pages 6-7, extension and retention will have to be a priority. Far too many clubs have just the minimum number of members and an aging membership.

But meetings are not only useful to define our goals and strategies; they also give members the opportunity to network and to use our international connections for the benefit of women – both members and non-members. Our Scholarship Programme and the new Mentoring Programme are two cases in point. Individual members can even use the SI network for advancing their own careers.

Receiving credit for our work and generosity

So, you can work strategically at meetings; you can make friends and network and you can discuss projects – the third and perhaps the most important pillar of our organisation. The Coordinated Reports of Unions and Single Clubs show the diversity and importance of the projects in SI/E. Reading about projects is interesting, but discussing them, exchanging experience, giving and receiving advice at meetings can be much more productive. The new Project Matching of SI/E and SIA, a sort of extended PEP, and the collaborative Disaster Fund are ultimately the result of our discussions across Federations with an aim to strengthen our impact.

After receiving a clear mandate through the vote of all members, SI Board confirmed Soroptimist for Education and Leadership as the Long Term Project at its meeting in August. It will be launched at the 2011 SI Convention in Montreal, also with the input of the Programme Voting Delegates (PVDs) from all Federations. SI/E has a number of PVDs, designated by the Unions and Single Clubs. Now that the Governors have approved the proposal that Unions have Programme Directors and Assistant Programme Directors, I suggest that they act as the PVDs. They are involved in programme work and could become the ambassadors for the LTP.

As your SI/E President, I try to represent your interests in the best way possible at all these meetings. After all, you are the true VIPs of our organisation. So, although I urge us all to think strategically at every level, we must also enjoy Soroptimist and its work for the well being of women and girls.

In friendship



SI/E President Eliane addressed Soroptimists and guests at the dinner celebrating the anniversaries of the Swiss Union and the Clubs of Geneva.

Eliane Lagasse, SI/E President

GOVERNORS' MEETING IN GHENT BELGIUM

Striving for a Greater Impact

The venue for this year's Governors' Meeting in July was the beautiful historic city of Ghent in Belgium, whose alderwoman Catharina Seghers welcomed the SI/E delegation at a reception at the town hall. Over the following days, SI/E President Eliane Lagasse adeptly steered participants through a full agenda.



Also assisted by her Board, SI/E President Eliane Lagasse moderated the – at times – lively discussions during the Governors' Meeting in Ghent.



Ghent alderwoman Catharina Seghers (right foreground) welcomed the Soroptimists at a reception in the Town Hall on the eve of the Governors' Meeting.

Photos: Michèle Francken

After the formal welcome, roll call and candle ceremony, SI/E President Eliane summarised her plans and expectations for the GM. She noted that the economic situation of the world, and particularly of Europe, poses a double challenge because more women and girls need help, while fewer people and companies are willing to donate money. 'The only solution is to work more efficiently and combine our efforts to have a greater impact,' she said.

The agenda was accepted with a few changes, and the minutes of the 2009 GM were approved. SI/E Treasurer Evgenia Koleva was re-elected for a second term (2011-2013). The proposals then generated lively debate. SI/E President Eliane gave an overview of the topics to be discussed at the SI Board Meeting in August. Participants were also informed about various SI/E matters for consideration, such as the Policy Plan and collaborations with SIA. The GM approved all SI/E Board member reports.

IPP Mariet Verhoef-Cohen reported that 19 applications for 2010-2011 Action Fund grants had been received and evaluated. Of these, the Board proposed and the Governors accepted 13 allocations at a total of € 50,750.

The Scholarship Committee Chair Anabeth Stüder announced that the Committee had received 31 applications for the 2010-2011 scholarship grants. The 14 scholarship applicants suggested by the SI/E Board and approved by the Governors were awarded grants for a total of € 72,000.

Outside the formal agenda, participants heard a thought-provoking speech by management consultant Anne-Marie Ballaux on the subject 'How to be a charismatic leader'. A further highlight of the meeting was the presentation by Extension Committee Chair Nilgün Ozler on the results of the Coordinated Reports (see article on pages 6-7).

It is the responsibility of the governors and delegates to pass on the exact voting results to their respective membership, but the minutes of the GM will be available in Member Area of the SI/E website, after the governors have had the opportunity to comment on the draft.

The next Governors' Meeting will be held in Palermo, Italy on 28th-29th May 2011.

RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING PROJECTS



The winners of the 2010 SI/E Best Practice Awards for the most outstanding projects in each of the ten Programme Focus Objectives were announced at the Governors' Meeting in Ghent, Belgium in July 2010. The Selection Committee – comprising the SI/E Programme Director, SI/E Assistant Programme Director and the SI/E Programme Officer – was very impressed by the 92 projects nominated by Unions and Single Clubs.

In recognition of the Federation theme, two winners were chosen for PFO 5 'Improve access to clean water, sanitation and essential food resources': one for hands-on service and the other for advocacy and awareness creation. The overall winner was the 'Stop Trafficking' project jointly realised by the Danish and Romanian Unions.



Above left: Club San Marino helped empower women in Rwanda with their project to support traditional craft techniques, including jewellery.

Above right: The overall winning project was 'Stop Trafficking', a collaborative effort of the Danish and Romanian Unions.

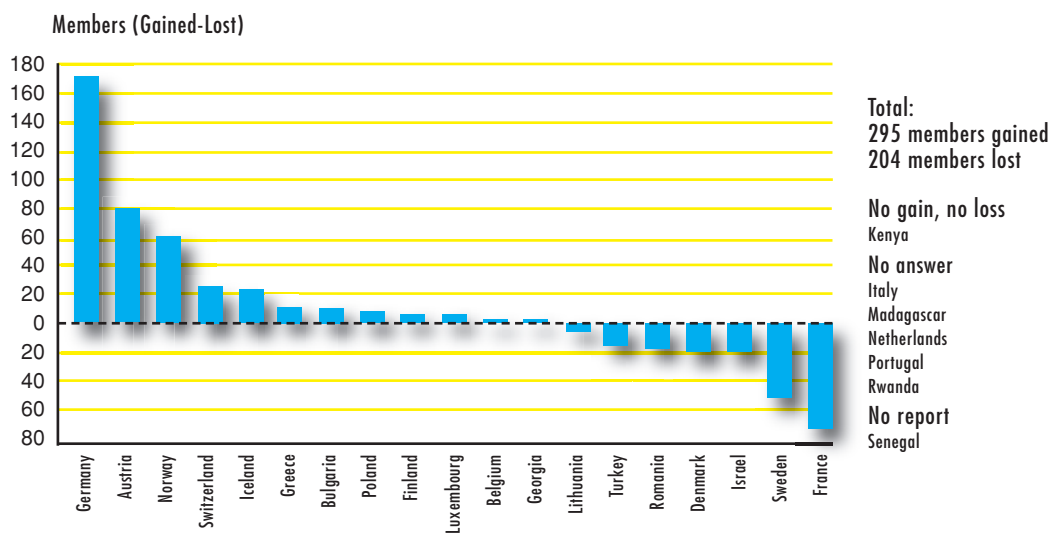


SI/E President Eliane Lagasse presented the certificates to the ten winners. 'I congratulate all members who are so involved in programme work,' Eliane said. 'I hope these awards will be an incentive for clubs to submit more Programme Focus Reports to document how they are making a difference.'

The brochure featuring the winners and describing the projects in detail can be downloaded from www.soroptimisteurope.org.

Here are the winners for each PFO:

- >> Objective 1
Eliminate poverty and gender discrimination through ensuring women's full social and economic rights
'Formation des jeunes filles et femmes en metiers', realised by Club Gisenyi, Rwanda
- >> Objective 2
End human trafficking and all forms of violence against women and children
'Stop Trafficking', realised by the Danish and Romanian Unions
- >> Objective 3
Ensure access to health care for women and children
'Pap smear for women in the Solomon Islands', realised by Club Sondrino, Italy
- >> Objective 4
Support programmes and policies that eliminate HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis and other major diseases
'Alzheimer: l'aide aux aidants', realised by the French Union
- >> Objective 5
Improve access to clean water, sanitation and essential food resources
'Lambani tribal village toilets project in South India', realised by the Swiss Union
'Image of water in the arts', realised by Club St Petersburg, Russia
- >> Objective 6
Mitigate the effects of climate change and integrate sustainability into personal choices and government policies and programmes
'Stop using plastic shopping bags', realised by Club Karadeniz Ereğli, Turkey
- >> Objective 7
Meet the needs of women and children during and after armed conflicts and disasters
'Rwanda: a jewel in the Green', realised by Club San Marino
- >> Objective 8
Promote peaceful conflict resolution, inter-cultural and inter-racial tolerance and condemn genocide and terrorism
'Meeting of Cultures', realised by Club Gaziosmanpaşa, Turkey
- >> Objective 9
Ensure equal access to education and training for women and girls throughout their lifespan
'From first aid to future opportunities for single mothers', realised by Club Tammeroski, Finland
- >> Objective 10
Assure women's advancement in management, politics and decision-making
'Mise en place d'un centre d'accueil denommé Maison de la Femme', realised by Club Antananarivo Doyen, Madagascar



IDENTIFYING STRENGTHS AND

The annual reporting system of the Unions and Single Clubs was changed in order to obtain more solid information and a more realistic picture of our organisation. The results pertaining to the Unions and Single Clubs in the 2008-2009 SI/E Coordinated Report were presented at the Governors' Meeting in Ghent. The following is a short summary.

Due to space limitations, this article for The Link will mainly focus on the information regarding the Unions, since Unions represent the majority of the membership in the European Federation. Some striking points show our strengths, while others show our weaknesses.

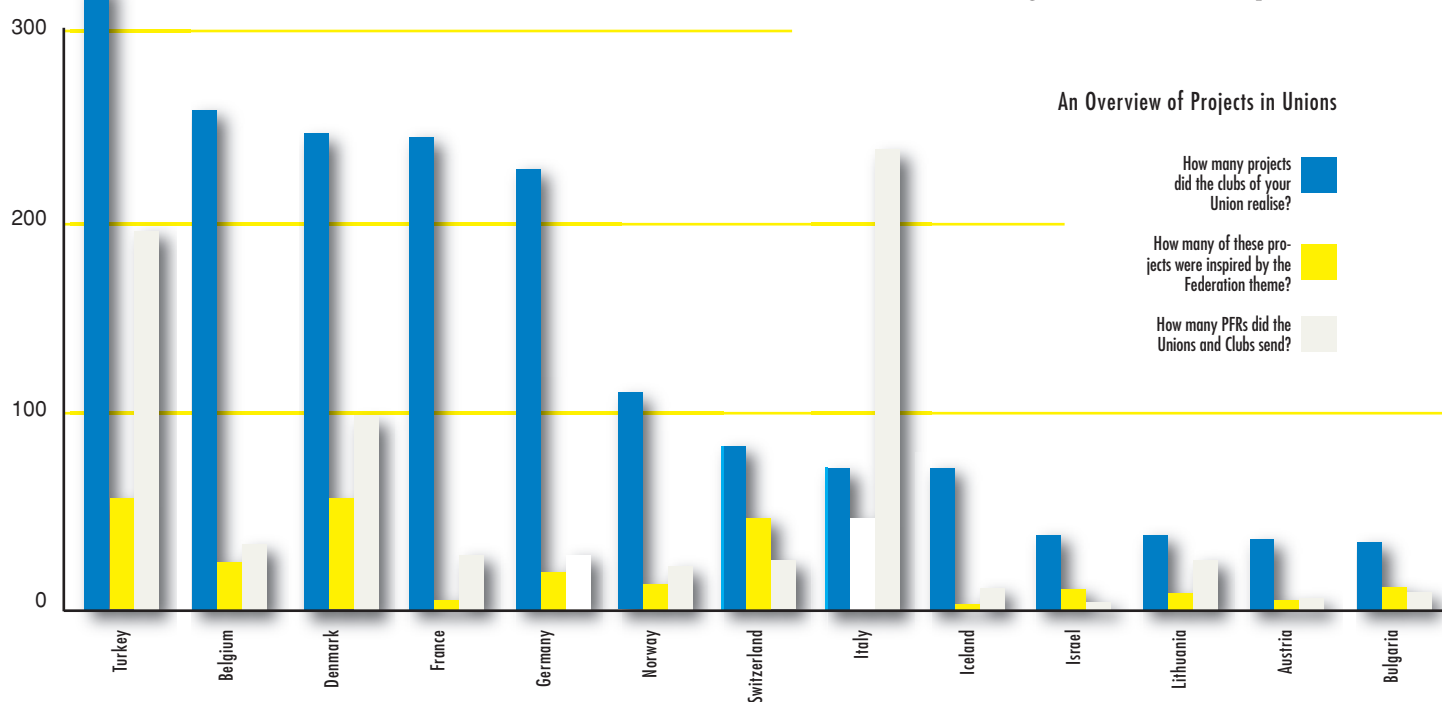
Based on the data collected, 1,950 projects were realised in the Unions of the SI/E, 327 of which

were inspired by the Federation theme and 765 were documented with a PFR. Unions raised an impressive € 3,661,874 for projects.

Projects are defining activities

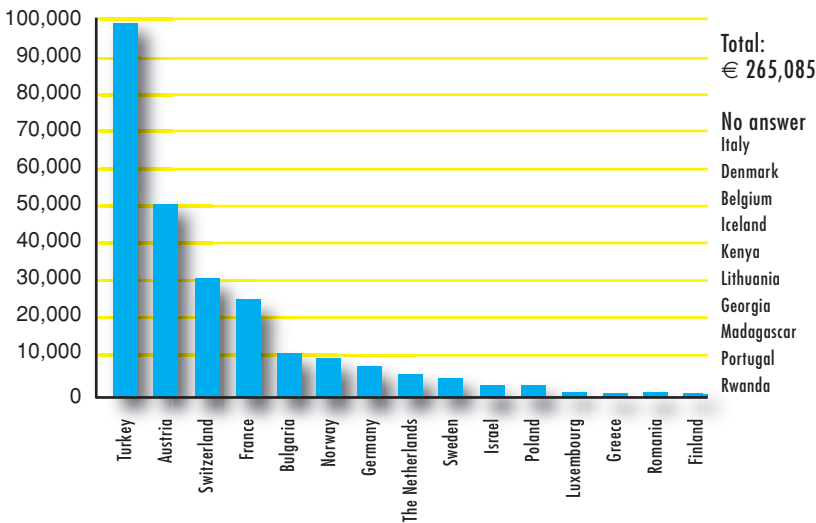
The amount actually spent on projects in this time period was € 2,717,135. The Single Clubs of the SI/E reported 155 projects with just 32 PFRs. They raised € 409,120 and spent € 362,800. All totalled, SI/E raised € 4,071,000 and spent € 3,080,000 on projects.

This sum cannot be underestimated. The figures underline the strength of our organisation in working towards our aims and ideals. Many of these projects were realised in cooperation with other partners. What is striking is that the most important

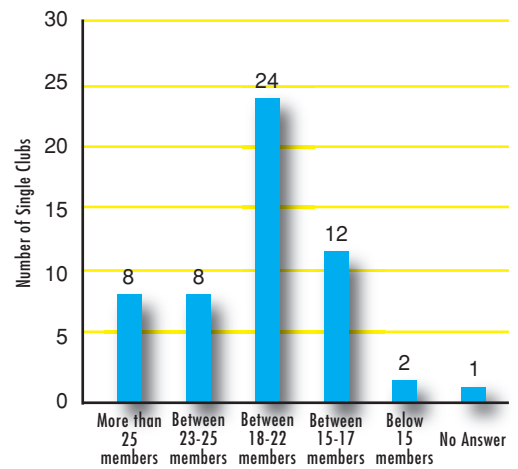


Scholarships/Funds

What is the total amount of money given (in euros)?



Number of Members in Single Clubs



WEAKNESSES

partners involved are local Clubs and Friendship Links - that is Soroptimism. We can also conclude that Soroptimists cooperate closely with local and national officials.

Interesting insights

The survey showed that Unions have a wide range of sources when budgeting their projects. 22 Unions indicated that Club members themselves sponsor their projects, and they are thus the number one source. The answers also verify the importance of Friendship Links in supporting projects.

Only six Unions have PR officers, which indicates that there is room for much improvement in PR work. 17 Unions gave scholarships totalling € 265,085 to 580 recipients at all levels of education.

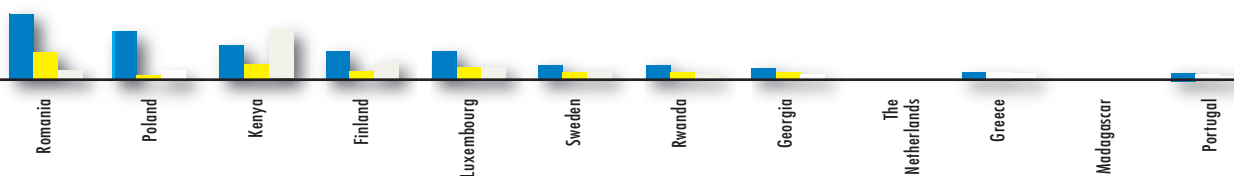
Extension is crucial

The number of clubs, the number of new clubs and the number of clubs lost vary according to the specific conditions in the respective Unions. Therefore, for a more in-depth interpretation, it is advisable to look at the charts. The number of members, the number of new members and the number of members lost also depend on the conditions in the respective Unions.

Of the 55 Single Clubs that reported, eight Clubs had more than 25 members, eight Clubs had 23 and 25 members, 24 Clubs had between 18 -22 members, 12 Clubs had between 15 - 17 members and two Clubs had fewer than 15 members. On average, the starting number for a new club is between 18 and 22 members. This means 24 clubs have not grown. According to the Constitution, club membership between 15-17 is a probation situation; 12 clubs are in this position. Again according to the Constitution, a club should be dissolved if membership goes below 15. Two clubs are at this stage. This means, only 16 of 55 Single Clubs appear safe. There are 26 clubs in nine Unions with fewer than 15 members. Even worse is that there are 77 Clubs in 17 Unions with between 15-17 members. These figures indicate a threat to the future of our organisation.

Obviously, this is only a brief summary of the results. Please visit the SI/E website www.soroptimisteurope.org for the complete study. Although it was the first year with the new reporting system, the response was good. So, this success allows us to draw some crucial conclusions. However, we urge all SI/E Union and Single Club presidents to use the correct format in future to enable us to create an accurate picture of our organisation.

Nilgün Özler
Chairperson, SI/E Extension Committee





Clockwise from left: SI/E President elect Kathy Kaaf was impressed by the organisation of SIA President Cathy Standiford's Convention, attended by some 1500 Soroptimists.

41st Biennial Convention of SIA

A PERFECTLY ORGANISED AND INSPIRING EVENT



The SIA Convention takes place every two years. It combines two events that are held separately in the European Federation: the Congress and the Governors' Meeting. At this year's event from 7th-10th July in San Francisco, some 500 voting delegates discussed and voted on reports, proposals and bylaw revisions in the presence of around 1000 non-voting Soroptimists. Clubs of good standing (clubs with the required minimum of fifteen members that have paid their dues) each had one vote. All clubs had to pay a mandatory contribution of US\$ 325 to the Convention, even if they did not send a delegate.

Everything was perfectly organised. Discussion of each proposal was limited to a maximum of ten minutes. After this, it was possible to vote for an extension of the debate, but only for a further five minutes. A maximum of two minutes was allowed for each of the speeches, and no one was allowed to speak more than twice on the same subject. During the brief pauses for electronic voting, music was played, and even SIA President Cathy Standiford joined in!

Speakers read from the teleprompter, and all speeches were simultaneously translated into four languages: Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Japanese and Portuguese. Board members were only on stage when it was their turn to speak, while the advisers

to the Board, including the so-called 'Parliamentarian', were on stage the entire time. The Parliamentarian need not be a Soroptimist. Each day of the three-day programme started with a 'Thought of the Day', which was either a poem or a reflection.

SI President Hanne's sense of humour was highly appreciated during her speech on the second day. She gave an overview of her busy programme of visiting Soroptimists all over the world and inspired participants to continue and intensify their efforts and projects.

In terms of publicity, the most effective feature of the Convention was the passing of a proposal condemning trafficking. One of the keynote speakers, the investigative journalist Victor Malarek from Canada, spoke on the 'worldwide flesh trade' and referred to the Internet as the 'biggest brothel in the world'.

At the end of the Convention, SIA Past President Alice Wells announced the official start of the Disaster Recovery Fund and Project Matching between SI/E and SIA. For more details, see the article below.

Kathy Kaaf, SI/E President elect

Project Matching Programme

LINKING EFFORTS FOR GREATER IMPACT

The Soroptimist Project Matching Programme is a new network to offer or request assistance for projects. Based on the idea of the SI/E's existing Project Exchange Pool, the objective of this initiative is to match resources between clubs on a larger scope in a joint effort between SI of the Americas and SI of Europe. The support can be in the form of funds, expertise or materials. This collaboration

will broaden the spectrum of clubs that need assistance and clubs that offer support and hence will have a larger impact on Soroptimist work to help women and girls worldwide. Through the various projects, it also expands SI/E's partnership with other Federations.

The Soroptimist Project Matching Programme site will be accessible through the respective Federation websites. Clubs seeking support can submit project proposals via the website. Proposals will originate from clubs, regions or unions within SIA or SI/E and the programme department of the relevant headquarters will evaluate the project. Once a project is evaluated and accepted, the respective Federation will upload the project onto the Project Matching website.

Club that would like to support a project can browse through all suggestions and find a project to support. The main categories are projects seeking help, projects in progress and projects completed. When a club wishes to donate to a project, by clicking the 'support' button you can send a message to the appropriate HQ, which will then contact both clubs to facilitate a written agreement between them. The money is then sent to the corresponding HQ, which in turn transfers it to the project organisers. Six months after the money has been transferred, the club conducting the project must submit an initial report on the progress and the use of the funds to SIA and SIE, as well as the supporting club. The headquarters will monitor the status of the projects as well as make all updates regarding the projects on the Project Matching website. This Soroptimist Project Matching website will be launched in October 2010. As soon as both Federations are assured that this venture is working satisfactorily, the other Federations will be invited to participate. For more information, please contact suba@soroptimisteurope.org.

Suba Parthiban, SI/E Programme Officer

The Project Matching Programme website will be launched in October 2010.



SI Board Meeting

DRIVING THE STRATEGIC PLAN

The SI Board met in the UK in August of this year, and the general consensus of the 46 participants with varying responsibilities was that real progress was achieved thanks to good teamwork and structured discussions. SI will communicate the details of the various decisions, but the SI/E Board feels it is important to summarise the three essential SI goals that were discussed and adopted:

• Goal 1 – Programme

Soroptimist will ensure that women and girls enjoy equality, live in safe, healthy and equitable environments, have access to education and have leadership and practical skills.

• Goal 2 – Organisational Development

Soroptimist International will have a dynamic, flexible and responsible membership, with an international point of connection, committed to the delivery of its vision and mission.

• Goal 3 – Strategic Leadership

Soroptimist will be a strategic organisation with dynamic and proactive leadership at all levels, able to deliver results and ensure that its vision is achieved.



The individual Programme objectives, strategies and work plan will be elaborated at SI level in the coming weeks, but these goals are common to all Clubs, Unions, Regions and Federations. All of us are called upon to work with these principles in mind.

The voting members of the SI Board also confirmed the decision of the membership to choose Soroptimist for Education and Leadership as the Long Term Project for our organisation, which will be launched at the 2011 SI Convention in Montreal. The December issue of TIS – The International Soroptimist will provide more details.

With SI President Hanne Jensbo looking on, International Assistant Programme Director Margaret Cook announced the SI Best Practice Award winners.



“ Women are not just victims of violence. They are often the driving force for peace.”

Bulgaria's former Ambassador to the UN Stephan Tavrov

The 10th anniversary of this Resolution is a good occasion to reflect on the effectiveness of implementation and the lack of accountability. It should serve as an incentive to encourage and insist on the responsibility to implement real action for women in conflict situations. Indeed, Soroptimists can draft a plan of

action to implement UNSCR 1325 at local, regional and national levels as well as to use local media to spread information about the Resolution or find new ways to use this Resolution in their countries. Attention must be also paid to the subsequent UN Security Council Resolutions on women, peace and security, i.e. 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009).

Now that the General Assembly has voted unanimously to create a new dynamic entity focusing on the needs of women and girls on 2nd July 2010, we can even mobilise more support for UNSCR 1325. The new UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, called UN Women, will merge four of the UN agencies and offices focusing on gender equality: UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), the Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW), the Office of the Special Advisor on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women (OSAGI), and the UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW). Please visit www.unwomen.org/ to learn more about the new entity. UN Women must take up the leadership to implement UNSCR 1325's recommendations and ensure that women's organisations receive financial and technical support to do their work at the grassroots level. Soroptimists, as a powerful network of professional women, can ensure that women take the lead in ending wars and building sustainable peace.

To read the resolution, please see <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/PDF/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement>.

Suba Parthiban, SI/E Programme Officer



WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 was unanimously adopted in October 2000 during the Namibian presidency of the UN Security Council.



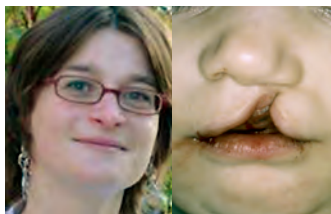
UNSCR 1325 is often referred to as an international landmark resolution, as it is a legal and political framework that recognises the significance of the participation of women and the incorporation of gender perspectives in peace negotiations, humanitarian arrangement, conflict resolution, peacekeeping and peace building. It is a milestone because it is the first time the Security Council has ever turned its full attention to the issue of women and armed conflict. This time, women are treated not only as victims or just as a vulnerable group, but rather as active agents – decision-makers at all levels. Resolution 1325 calls upon all parties to armed conflict to take measures to protect women from gender-based violence and respect women's rights, recognising that women are disproportionately affected by armed conflict.

Dr Noël Scholarship

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU

Belgian Dr Diane Franck is one of the plastic surgeons to receive a Dr Noël Scholarship from SI/E. Here is a personal account of her training.

Two years ago I came to Paris to present my project for the Dr Noël Scholarship which involved a course in breast reconstruction at the European Institute of Oncology in Milan. After discussions with Professor Demey, my



Far left: Dr. Diane Franck trained in surgery to correct cleft lips (left), the most common facial birth defect.

supervisor, we decided that I would do my further training in oncology at the Institute J. Bordet with Professor Deraemaeker, and that my scholarship would be used for further training in children's surgery, another field I am passionate about.

So, I ended up working with Professor Sommerlad and his team at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children in London for six months. Professor Sommerlad is one of the world's leading experts in treating cleft lips and palates (harelips). Cleft lips and/or palates are the most common facial birth defects and affect on average one child in 750 with a higher rate in Asia.

Treatment requires a specialised multidisciplinary team, including, obviously, surgeons, but also an orthodontist, speech therapist, otorhinolaryngologist and audiometrist, and with the participation of geneticists, psychologists, nurses and paediatricians. Essentially, the surgery involves reconstructing the normal anatomy of the lip and palate, which allows high-quality growth, both psychologically and socially as well as with regard to bone, dental and auditory growth.

I would like to thank SI/E from the bottom of my heart that I was able to join this extremely competent and dedicated team.

Special relations with SISWP go back to 1995, when five Clubs in Izmir – Izmir, Göztepe, Alsancak, Kordon and Karsiyaka – invited Soroptimists who were relatives of ANZACs – the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps stationed in the Mediterranean – to a Peace Tour as part of the SI/E Peace Project. Ten members of SISWP accepted and stayed at the homes of Turkish Soroptimists. They all enjoyed the tour, whereby Gallipoli, the battleground of their ancestors, was a particular highlight.

Our relations deepened when I won the Grant of Friendship given by nine clubs in New South Wales region in 2008. During my visit, I shared so much with the SISWP sisters, and some of them asked for a new tour in Turkey.

So, my Club Göztepe announced a Friendship Tour for SISWP in May 2010. The tour for the 16 Soroptimists and their 10 spouses/relatives lasted 10 days. Starting in Izmir, they visited Canakkale, Gallipoli, and the historical sites of Pergamon, Troy, Ephesus, Shrine of Virgin Mary, Aphrodisias, Hierapolis, Sardis and Pamukkale in Denizli. The tour ended in the sea resort of Cesme. Visitors enjoyed home hospitality with Soroptimist families, and Club Göztepe members accompanied the guests throughout the tour, enjoying and sharing the moments together. New friendships were formed among the Soroptimists of both Federations and the guests were grateful for the hospitality shown by Turkish Soroptimists.

Bergün Kardes, Club Göztepe/Izmir,
Governor of Turkish Union

SISWP visitors to Turkey

BRIDGES
ACROSS
OCEANS



The Friendship Tour included a visit to Bee Point Cemetery in Gallipoli, where Mustafa Kemal Atatürk addresses the mothers of ANZACs in an epitaph.

Naiade purifiers in Rwanda

WATER CHANGES LIVES

Children in Gisenyi queue up to fill their containers and bottles with water from the Naiade. Gisenyi Soroptimist Marianne Mukankaka and Luud Roos clean the filters of the water purifier.

Five Naiade water purifiers were installed under the supervision of four Clubs in Rwanda in 2009. Dutch Soroptimists Luud Roos (Club Nijmegen) and Betty Meyboom-de Jong (Club Friesland Zuid) visited Rwanda this year to see how the Naiade project has worked out. Here are excerpts from their report.

At the 'l'Hirondelle' private school with 660 students, the Naiade stands in a cage at the entrance of the property, providing potable water to students and teachers. Every day a Soroptimist from Club Kibungo supervises the building activities and the Naiade at the school.

Club Kigali Etoile is responsible for the Naiade located in a little house at the ground of a public school in Biyamana. A janitor fills it with rainwater collected from the gutter. The 2000 pupils know they have to press the green switch to fill their bottles with potable water.

In Gisenyi, one Naiade is located at the school grounds for 1200 children. The second Naiade is sited at the training centre of the Club Gisenyi. Here 45 girls are trained in sewing, embroidery and if necessary reading and writing (see Best Practice Awards on page 5). Pupils, Soroptimists, neighbours and a centre of complementary medicine use the potable water, and the Naiades are functioning very well.

Club Kigali had requested that a new part be sent from The Netherlands for the Naiade next the water tank at the San Marco Centre, which in itself is an extremely successful project with much support from other European clubs and unions (see Best Practice Awards on page 5). A skilled technician and a warehouse with spare parts are necessary to support and advise the Soroptimists. Thanks to the Naiade the pupils began to drink water rather than soft drinks. Another programme was introduced to explain rules of hygiene to the children.

All Naiades except the one in Biyamana are filled with water from the water pipes directly through a hose or indirectly with buckets. Bacteria and viruses that cause diseases are filtered and the ultraviolet lamp kills any remaining bacteria, thus sterilizing the water.

Suggestions on how to earn money with the resulting drinking water – such as selling it to other schools, restaurants, a medical association, and parents of the schoolchildren – were discussed in all Clubs with a Naiade under the guidance of Rwandan Union President Antoinette Uwimana. In time they hope to be able to pay for technicians, the maintenance and the replacement of the Naiades by themselves.

The Soroptimists in Rwanda are very proud of the accomplishments with these water purifiers and hope to obtain more. The Naiade project may have formed just a little drop, but it is a potable one!



French Clubs collaborate on project

GETTING THEIR HANDS WET

Ondine and her companion Milo are featured on the placemats and the accompanying booklet.

(Copyright: Maïté Laboudique)

A work group in each club met several times to draw up a plan. One idea was to make placemats with educational illustrations about water and distribute them to primary schools. Each club submitted suggestions, and ultimately Club La Rochelle's proposal was chosen.

Designed by children's book illustrator Maïté Laboudique, the concept is based on two characters, Ondine and her faithful companion, Milo. The four sketches showing them facing situations and problems related to water were reproduced on placemats printed on recycled paper. 10,700 placemats in all were printed.

Each club contacted its local Academy inspector as well as its local primary school directors for the distribution. For example, Club Poitiers signed a partnership agreement with the Academy of Vienne. A press release was sent to local newspapers in the cities of the respective clubs. Club Angoulême had plasticised placemats made for the l'Assemblée Générale des Déléguées as well as for Club Presidents to promote this initiative.



At the initiative of Maguy Normandin, Vice-President of the Southwest, Michèle Ingrand, Environmental Coordinator of the French Union and Marie-Claude Bertrand, President Elect of the French Union, eight clubs of the Poitou-Charentes Region - Angoulême, Châtelleraut, Cognac, La Rochelle, Niort, Poitiers, Royan and Saintes - representing 200 Soroptimists have developed a group project designed to sensitise children on issues of waters, its vital importance, and its preservation in terms of quantity and quality. In addition, individual clubs organised conferences and workshops on water.

Marie-Claude Bertrand,
President elect French Union

Conference in Greece

WATER IN EVERYDAY LIFE

The Greek Clubs Piraeus and Palaio Faliro organised a public conference about water in the town hall of Palaio Faliro earlier this year. George Faturos, the former Minister of Agriculture, spoke about the stories, myths and ecological issues surrounding lakes in Greece. At the same time a video presentation took participants on a tour through the Greek countryside. Maria Akakiou and Panagiota Balabini, both teachers of Greek literature, then gave speeches on the history and myths surrounding certain fountains and water as inspiration for poetry, respectively. After that, a group of folk dancers performed on water themes. The mayor of Palaio Faliro awarded Niki Loy, a Greek pupil from the Ralleio Lyceum of Piraeus, a prize for the best composition on the topic 'Imagine life without water'. Greek Deputy Governor Haris Nicoli presented the booklet she wrote about words with the prefix 'water' or 'hydro' and similar expressions used Greek. As a souvenir, everyone received an aromatic plant that needs little water to survive.



The performance of Greek folk dancers was inspired by water themes.



6th Peace Marathon in Rwanda

THE RACE GOES ON ...

'We are definitely going to be even more involved in the next Peace Marathon 2011', remarked many of the some 30 Soroptimists who had gathered for a meal with SI President Hanne Jensbo after this year's event in Kigali. The Peace Marathon was a Soroptimist idea, driven by Bettina Scholl-Sabbatini from Club Esch-sur-Alzette of Luxembourg, and the Rwandan Ministry of Sports and Culture and the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS) have also been crucial for the realisation. However, the Marathon would never have taken place without Jean-Pierre Ernzen, a Luxembourg sport professor and expert for logistics, and his team of helpers.

This year 2,387 boys and girls between the ages of 10-14 participated in the children's race on Saturday before the Marathon. The most prominent participant in the five-kilometre Run for Fun on Sunday was SI President Hanne Jensbo. Seeing the problems with water distribution at the four checkpoints, our Soroptimists will be at the checkpoints next year. Children from the schools we subsidise

could help distribute water, fruit and sponges. This would also be a good way of promoting our organisation and demonstrating our contribution to this important event in Rwanda. And there is more good news: Jean-Pierre will soon start a three-year assignment in Rwanda to further develop the country's sports activities. He will no doubt ensure that we have more influence on the arrangements of next year's Marathon.

Indeed, preparations have already begun: Guida Biewer, Club Eisleck, who has run at every Marathon, will again be our treasurer for this event, which SI/E co-finances with more than €10,000. The 7th Peace Marathon in Kigali will take place on 22nd May 2011, after the SI East and North African Meeting. We hope a big SI/E delegation will travel to Rwanda to support this event. The programme will include excursions to Uganda and/or Tanzania, which will be publicised on our website. Our partner in Kigali is: www.mercatorassistance.rw. We realise that trips to Rwanda are not cheap, but the wonderful landscape, the dynamic and very young Rwandans who seem to have overcome the disastrous genocide, an encounter with the gorillas are experiences you will never forget. And last but not least there are six Soroptimist clubs in this very small country with outstanding projects to visit.

Kathy Kaaf, SI/E President elect 2009-2011



The Soroptimist name is closely associated with the Run for Fun event in Kigali.

In a sign of solidarity for the Marathon in Rwanda, soldiers in Afghanistan staged their own race in support of peace.



2010 Meeting for French Speakers

WOMEN, CULTURES AND INITIATIVES

The two-day 16th Meeting for French-Speaking Soroptimists, organised by the Clubs Diekirch, Eisleck and Mosaik in Luxembourg, took place in Clervaux in May 2010 under the patronage of Her Royal Highness Grand Duchess Maria Teresa. This year's chosen theme was 'Women, Cultures and Initiatives'. More than 100 people attended the event, including Rolande Becker, a member of Club Lyon and co-founder of the French-Speaking Days.

After an extensive presentation of 'Children's Rights in Luxembourg' by Soroptimist Marie Anne Rodesch Hengesch, President of the Luxembourg's Children's Rights Committee, Marie Josée Jacobs,



Rina Dupriet opened the meeting in Clervaux with the traditional candle ceremony.

Minister for Families and Integration and a Soroptimist, spoke on 'Women and Volunteering'.

Germaine Goetzinger described the life of Aline Mayrisch de Saint Hubert, a woman of letters, feminist and philanthropist. Charles Goerens, member of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, then talked about 'the role of women in development', especially with regard to microfinance. Carmen Maganda from the University of Luxembourg discussed issues related to water. Frank Wilhem, a Professor at the University of Luxembourg, closed the event with a marvellous slide show on graphic artists and French-speaking writers from Luxembourg. The presentations will be published in a booklet for the European Federation.

Rina Dupriet, SI/E Vice President

Seminars in Romania

CHALLENGING AND EMPOWERING

As reported in earlier issues of *The Link*, the idea behind 'Train the Trainers' seminars is for participants to go home and organise events in their own countries. Since participating in such a semi-

nar in September 2009, Elena Savu and Rodica Maciuca of Romania have put on five seminars for nearly 100 people. Here is their report.

The first seminar was held for Romanian Union board members, club presidents and programme coordinators from all the seven clubs. As the participants were 'insiders', we started the session with a quiz about SI/E, followed by lecture-type presentation. A discussion followed, and we answered questions. The objectives of the first seminar were to update Soroptimists in top positions on organisational, operational and administrative issues and to train them to deal with these problems themselves, also in helping other club members.

The next three training seminars were for the Clubs in Brasov, Bucharest and Targoviste. Participants also included non-Soroptimists so there was short input from the trainer followed by group discussions to encourage interaction. In addition to briefing members, building more unity, and strengthening the Union's contact with the clubs, the seminars publicised Soroptimism and helped recruit new members. Five of the 12 guests have already attended club meetings, and it is hoped they will soon become members.

We invited 12 students from the Technical University of Bucharest to a fifth seminar to familiarise them with Soroptimism for later recruitment. In a few years, these students will become professionals who could be a valuable asset to our organisation. Indeed, five students volunteered to work on the Union's trafficking project.

Running these seminars was both challenging and empowering. We have learned a lot about Soroptimism, about management and about ourselves. Proof that our message reached the target is that we now have more active clubs and prospective new members. But we also experienced the friendship, warmth and understanding so familiar to the Soroptimist spirit. We thank Ulla Madsen for her advice and teaching, Kirsten Sveder for organising our first seminar and to President Eliane Lagasse for letting all this happen.

*Elena Savu, President of the Romanian Union
Rodica Maciuca, Governor of the Romanian Union*

Whether for Soroptimists, non-members or potential recruits, the seminars in Romania were well received.



SWITZERLAND CELEBRATES

The Soroptimist movement in Switzerland began in Geneva in 1930, when the first club was established. So, the Swiss Union decided to celebrate its 60th anniversary there, providing an opportunity for the two Clubs in Geneva to cele-



Swiss Soroptimists gathered to celebrate the 60th anniversary of their Union.

brate theirs too (80th and 25th, respectively). After the Delegates' Meeting of the Union, various events were organised from 7th to 9th May 2010, which culminated in the gala evening with 170 guests. Water-themed flower arrangements, tables named after various regional rivers, talented musicians and a large number of Swiss Soroptimists as well as friends from Belgium, France,

Italy, Germany, Poland and Ukraine all added to the evening's festive and convivial atmosphere.

The tombola generated the equivalent of nearly € 4,000, which was supplemented by additional donations. With the money raised, the Geneva clubs will support the installation of a water filter in Kenya by H₂O Energies, and the Swiss Union an orphanage in Koshariza, Bulgaria.

Guests received a copy of a brochure commemorating the contribution of Eleanor Roosevelt to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. To mark our celebrations, a Soroptimist from Geneva also created a beautiful heart in silver that can be worn as a brooch or pendant, symbolising Soroptimist friendship, feminine elegance and our commitment to water. It is for sale on the Swiss Union site, and profits will go to the water filter project in Kenya.

Many thanks to everyone who joined us for these special celebrations!

*Donatella Benjamin, President Geneva-Charter
Gabrielle von Roten, President Geneva-Rhone*



Water-themed flower arrangements adorned the tables at the gala dinner, also attended by SI/E President Eliane.

Training in Versailles

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP MEETING

SI/E Vice President Rina Dupriet invited the Unions and Single Clubs for which she is responsible to Versailles, the home of her own club, for a meeting to become better acquainted and learn more about Soroptimism. More than 120 Soroptimists from nine

countries attended the meeting in June. After visiting Claude Monet's gardens in Giverny and the park of Versailles, participants attended the magical spectacle of the Chateau's Grand Musical Fountain display and fireworks. Rina also organised a short training seminar

for 25 Soroptimists from Greece, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Mali and France. She reported on the latest news from SI/E and SI, and participants took the Soroptimist Quiz, used in the Train the Trainers Seminars. Everyone received a DVD with the Soroptimist anthem as a souvenir.

The training session was greatly appreciated and participants agreed that more seminars of this kind should be organised, especially to discuss PFRs.

Rina Dupriet, SI/E Vice President

Soroptimists from around the Federation listened attentively to their hostess and SI/E Vice President Rina Dupriet.



Support for a Nature Reserve in Geneva

EXPERIENCING BIODIVERSITY FIRST HAND

On the occasion of the gala evening to mark the Swiss Union's 60th anniversary, President Emma Brugnoli presented Alexandre Breda, President of Pro Natura Geneva, with a cheque for the equivalent of more than € 23,000. The following day, the new Pointe à la Bise Nature Centre was inaugurated in the presence of SI/E President Eliane Lagasse and Mayor of Collonge-Bellevue Francine de Planta.

In line with the SI/E water theme, President Emma had suggested that Swiss clubs focus their activities from 2008 to 2010 on 'Water and Nature Reserves in Switzerland' by supporting the country's various Nature Centres, whose environmental education objectives are to encourage enthusiasm for nature, to put people back in touch with nature, increase awareness of biodiversity's wealth and fragility and educate with regard to protecting the environment.

Clubs were invited to support their neighbouring Nature Centres, while the Swiss Union project supported the Pointe à la Bise Nature

Reserve, part of the Nature Centre in Geneva. During the visit, Pro Natura volunteers provided explanations and advice and showed us their work. The reserve has undergone a new layout to receive scores of visitors and has new equipment including a webcam link to a raft on Lake Geneva for a close-up observation of the birds.

The three days of anniversary celebrations in Geneva drew to a close over a rustic buffet in these marvellous surroundings.

*Anne-Catherine Rinckenberger-Desprez,
Swiss Union Coordinator for the Environment 2008-2010*

SI/E President Eliane Lagasse (left) and Swiss Union President Emma Brugnoli enjoyed the newly inaugurated Nature Reserve Centre.



A SHARED SEMINAR EXPERIENCE

When Club Marmara organised a seminar on 'Irregular Migration and Human Trafficking' in April 2010, the Turkish Club also invited Danish Soroptimists from Club Marieger Fjord to attend the seminar as a speaker or guests. The ties between the two Clubs have historical roots. In 1989 Sanay Sokullu, the then Governor of the Turkish Union and member of Club Marmara, had the honour and pleasure of presenting the charter to Club Marieger Fjord. On the occasion of the Danish Club's 20th anniversary in September 2009, Thea Dalsgaard, Governor of Danish Union and a member of Club Marieger Fjord Club, extended an invitation to join in the celebrations. Sanay, Narcin Unsal and Birsen Ulufer flew to Denmark and enjoyed the tremendous hospitality. This experi-

ence also showed that although Soroptimists may come from different geographical and cultural backgrounds, we still face similar problems. The Danish Union Project 2005-2010 'Stop Trafficking' perfectly illustrated this point.

So, eight Danish sisters from Club Marieger Fjord accepted Club Marmara's invitation to the seminar at the Kadikoy Cultural Centre and were warmly welcomed to the homes of Turkish members. With more than 80 participants, the seminar aimed to create awareness on this rapidly growing social problem in both countries.

Associate Professor Selmin Kaska (Marmara University) gave an overview of irregular migration and human trafficking, while Meltem Ersoy, an authority from the International Migration Organisation (IMO), reported on IMO's studies and projects in Turkey. Thea Dalsgaard, who is also a Past President of the Danish Union, spoke about the Union Project to stop trafficking. Attendees received brochures and CDs prepared by Club Marmara and IOM to raise awareness of trafficking.

The guests enjoyed visiting historical and cultural treasures in Istanbul and a boat trip on the Bosphorus. They also saw the 'Balat Soroptimist House', which had been restored by the Turkish Union as an adult training and meeting centre. The Soroptimists discussed projects and compared cultural and traditional values. Everyone agreed that it is of utmost importance to understand and respect each other to achieve a better world. Thus we also have decided to develop new projects together in near future.

Sanay Sokullu, Club Marmara

Club Marieger Fjord invited to Turkey

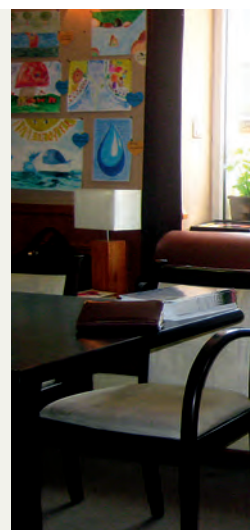
Emine Perviz Erdem, the President of the Turkish Union (far right), warmly welcomes the visitors from Denmark to the seminar.



'WATER – THE SOURCE OF LIFE'

It was a very emotional moment when the book, 'Water - the Source of Life', composed by Bulgarian school children, was launched at a popular bookshop on 12th June in Sofia. Published in four languages, the book presents various stories, all focused on water. Much to the delight of the young authors, businessman, politician and showman Luben Dilov Jr. spoke at the launch and offered the contributor of his favourite story a scuba diving course. Some of the authors who had won last year's competition read their works. The event was widely reported in various media and was the perfect celebration to end the school year!

Marietta Karastoyanova, Club Sofia



Ten young women learned how to sew at the atelier, thus allowing them to generate their own income.



Salon de l'Espoir Brigitte

HELPING PEOPLE WITH AUTISM

Club Bratislava, the oldest club of its type in the capital city of Slovakia, organised the 13th St John's evening celebration this summer on the occasion of the Czecho-Slovakian meeting for Soroptimists from Prague, Brno as well as from Košice and Zilina. The traditional charity auction



Czecho-Slovakian event

The proceeds from the auction were donated to help people with autism.

SCHOOLING OFFERS HOPE

With the enormous generosity and support of Swiss Soroptimists and donors, Club Bamako Espoir has realised a very successful project to educate young girls and train them in sewing in Mali. The project was to set up in cooperation with the nuns at the Centre Vincenta Maria, Marie Immaculée (2005-2010), at which 22 girls have received basic training in three primary classes and one dressmaking course. Roswitha Ott raised € 22,000 in Switzerland to fund the tuition of the girls.

Just € 3,575 financed the rent, equipment and operations of the atelier 'Salon de l'Espoir Brigitte', where 10 girls were trained in dressmaking. These young women now have the possibility to generate their own income, something that would be virtually impossible on their own. 'Club Bamako Espoir did an excellent job of coordinating this project,' says Roswitha Ott, SI/E Project Manager Africa.



Book launch in Sofia

One of the winning authors read her contribution to the book at the launch.

was moderated by the famous duo Justin Topolsky and Jana Danova. Beside the chorals presented by the group Rodokmen, there was a performance by belly dancers, followed by the auction of pictures painted by autistic children.

President Barbora Laucka Vitova explained to guests that Club Bratislava had decided to support people with autism because this illness has recently spread significantly and affects the whole family. The Soroptimists gave the proceeds from this social gathering to a boarding school for autistic children. The money raised from auctioning the pictures and T-shirts was presented to the Society for the Help of People with Autism. Among the guests were the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jan Kubis, and his wife Jarmila.

BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN COUNTRIES

Austrian and German Soroptimists from the Clubs of Eisenstadt, Berlin, Berlin-Mitte, Göttingen, Heidelberg, Magdeburg and Mainz travelled to Israel in February 2010. The journey had been organized by Marianne Krüger-Jungnickel (Club Berlin-Mitte) and Hanna Bickel (Club Haifa Nave Sha'anana, which is linked with Club Mainz).

We met with all Israeli Clubs to learn about their Jewish-Palestinian social projects and to obtain firsthand information about the current situation in Israel. After arriving at Tel Aviv, we were delighted to meet 25 Soroptimists from the Clubs of Givataim, Hasharon and Ramat Gan on the first evening. In the fascinating Roman harbour of Caesarea members from Netanya, Hofit, and Pardes Hanna-Karkur, the link Club of Heidelberg, joined us for a lunch and a visit to the famous archaeological site.

Our stay in Haifa included a visit to the Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center

Left: The German-Austrian delegation poses with Soroptimists from Haifa Neve Sha'anana, Kiryat-Tivon and Haifa Seniors. Below: Sabha Abu-Ganem (left) and Joan Avigur show the guests the Rahat Women's Association.

Photos: Christine Euler



(MCTC) together with the Clubs Haifa Neve Sha'anana, Club Kiryat-Tivon and Haifa Seniors. Mazal Renford, director, and Fannette Modek, past director, informed us about MCTC's mission and recent national and international projects. We also had the opportunity to meet trainees from Mexico (physicians and psychologists) and Ghana (preschool teachers). In addition, Marianne organised lectures about gender policy at the 'Technion', Israel's oldest university. Haifa's Clubs invited us

for lunch in the Mazza restaurant, operated by an Arab-Israeli family and target of a suicide bomb in 2002.

In Moshav Shavei Zion near Lebanese border, we spent an inspiring evening with Club members from Nahariya, Hava Feldmann-Shorni, president of the Israeli Union, and Daniela Stern, SI/E Vice President.

Joan Avigur, the Israeli Union's Coordinator for Economic and Social Development, took us to the Bedouin town of Rahat in the Negev Desert, where



Sabha Abu-Ganem (Rahat Women's Association) described impressive details of Bedouin life, the position of women in Bedouin society, and the goals and activities of her association. In Lakhia we visited the 'Center for Preschool Education' and the associated Desert Embroidery Project presented by Shifa and Kautar Elsana (department-head and Advisor to the Mayor) and Tahina Elkobi (social worker). The head of the municipality Khaled as-Sana introduced the ambitious plans to provide Bedouin young people with education facilities. In Be'er Sheva, Joan guided us to the Negev Artists House, a gallery showing art from old and new immigrants, and to MASLAN, the Women's Support Center for Battered and Sexually Abused Women, which provides highly professional support in various languages.

At Aliya Kedem's home we met with members from Clubs Rehovot and Rishon-LeZion and learned about their important project of teaching Ethiopian immigrants to read and write.

We discussed our impressions of the difficult political situation in Israel and learned about 'the real Israel' - untainted by polemic journalism.

Thanks again to all Israeli club sisters for the warm welcome, hospitality and generosity. This visit improved our German SI network and will hopefully lead to new German-Israeli projects.

Club Helmond Peelland

'SPRING ART' SHOWCASED IN NATURE

The 3rd Spring Art exhibition and sale took place in the most splendid gardens of Dutch garden architect Froukje van den Akker in Helmond, The Netherlands in early June. The way that nature and the creative arts were combined impressed and even thrilled the many visitors.

Bronze statues, paintings and ceramics by various artists from the region could be admired (and bought!), including artwork by Tony van de Vorst, Wim Heesakkers, Jos Dirix, Gerard Engels, Susan Reijnders, Elleke van Gorsel, Wilma van Duuren, Fons Timmers and Geert Verstappen. Glass artist of the year Sabine Lintzen also presented her magnificent objects. Mentally handicapped artists from 'Kunst en Ko' in Eindhoven exhibited brightly also colourful paintings, ceramics and paper-mâché objects. Mayor of Helmond Fons Jacobs opened the



exhibition, which ended up raising € 16,000 for two projects: 'Hidden Treasures', a cooperative project of the Dutch Union and the international Foundation of Refugee Students UAF, and the LETS exchange shop. LETS stands for Local Economic Transaction System, initiated by the Humanitas Foundation. Goods can be put up for sale here by anyone in the shop and paid for by services that people can carry out for each other (www.ruilwinkhelmond.nl).

The artwork at Spring Art was displayed in the gardens of Froukje van den Akker.

Club Kumasi

SOROPTIMIST DAY OF SERVICE

Club Kumasi, Ghana, decided to spend the Soroptimist Day of Service in March 2010 with children at an orphanage, which the club adopted three years ago. Ever since, the Soroptimists have been visiting the orphanage and presenting gifts, food and money to the children in a commitment to making their lives better.

On behalf of all Club members, Ruth Brenyah, a Past Club President, Immediate Past President Bettie Solomon-Ayeh and Club President elect Elaine Owusu gave the children clothes, food and drinks. The children, whose ages range from three to 17 years, were delighted. The Soroptimist Day of Service coincided with the Independence Day of Ghana, which the children had celebrated at the



local Sports Stadium. So, they returned to a big and welcome surprise!

The club members played games with the children and told interesting and funny stories. The children were advised to be good and to take their education seriously.

It was a happy day – full of generosity and inspiration for both the Soroptimists and the children.

Soroptimists of Club Kumasi want to change the lives of these young orphans.

Annual Joint Meeting

THE WAY FORWARD IN GHANA

Club Accra 1 hosted the Annual Joint Meeting of Clubs in Ghana on 12th June. The theme this year was 'Soroptimism in Ghana - the Way Forward'. Some 26 members from the clubs in Accra and Kumasi deliberated on how to increase the number of clubs and maintain membership. They also discussed how to improve awareness about the presence of Soroptimism in Ghana. A talk on 'Childhood obesity and non-communicable diseases' completed the programme. The next Joint Meeting will take place in Kumasi at a date to be confirmed.

Helen Afi Gadzekpo, President, Club Accra 1



Participants in the Joint Meeting of Clubs in Ghana posed for a group photo in Accra.

Children's competition

LITERATURE ACROSS BORDERS

A secondary school in the Polish town of Slupsk has been organising literature competitions for the children since 1984. It used to be a local event but since 1997 they have spread all over Poland. Club Slupsk decided to expand the competition to an international scale with children from the United States and Germany. The jury received 10,374 contributions from Poland, 267 from America and 60 from Berlin. The young people wrote about their concerns, dreams, future expectations and problems connected with maturing, etc. The authors met at the official gala celebration on 18th May, where they received their prizes, diplomas and the book with the distinguished stories and poetry. The competition allowed the children to get to know each other and learn about their different cultures.

Thanks to the Soroptimists, especially Maria Pietryka and Club President Marianna Borawska working in cooperation with the school, the Club got a donation from Polish Ministry of Culture - the Book Institute, which was used for translations, printing the book, jury fees, prizes and expenses.

Club Slupsk intends to continue the event in the future depending on whether they are able to get financial assistance from other sources (government subsidies, sponsors etc.).

Maria Rozko, Secretary, Polish Union



At the gala event, the organisers presented prizes, diplomas and the book featuring their work to the children.

Welcome to Vicenza!

LINKED IN DEEP FRIENDSHIP

Thirteen members of Club Steyr travelled to Vicenza, Italy to celebrate their Friendship Link. As a gesture to deepen the ties, the Austrian Soroptimists had even taken Italian lessons, so Club President Elisabeth Wirleitner was able to address the hosts in their language. Club Secretary Ruth Pohlhammer offered untiring support as an interpreter. Maria Rosa Iacono Schwarz, President of Club Passau, which has Friendship Links with both Vicenza and Steyr, also joined the group.

During the weekend the guests toured the city of Vicenza with its Palladian buildings and Villa Valmarana Ai Nani and tried its wonderful gastronomy. But most unforgettable was the warm hospitality and generosity of the Soroptimist hosts, as symbolised by the candle and linking ceremony on the final evening at Club member Pilar Cabo Coin's home.

Over the years, the Clubs had met on several occasions, so this visit offered an opportunity to seal their friendship. The next meeting is planned for Steyr.

Carla Pezzini Plevano, Club Vicenza



The Club presidents Paola Meneghini (left) and Elisabeth Wirleitner sealed their deep bond with Certificates of Friendship during their days in Vicenza.

Club Larvik's original idea

SOROPTIMIST STAMP ON SALE

There are many ways to support SI and its projects, and Club Larvik of Norway has come up with a particularly original idea: to design Christmas stamp. Many people put stamps, for example, on the back of their Christmas letters or cards to show support for a charity or an organization. Now you can promote our organisation by buying these stamps and using them on your Christmas greetings!

Over the years Club Larvik has produced three different stamps and raised the money to print them. One club member designed the stamp and supervised printing. Another member has been responsible for the contact with customers in Norway and other Scandinavian countries. Club members have also sold Christmas stamps to friends and family. We will raise nearly € 20,000 if all our remaining stock is sold, which is expected by Christmas 2010.

One sheet, consisting of ten stamps, costs € 3 plus postage. 60 percent of the proceeds will go to the Education Foundation of the Norwegian Union, which gives scholarships to girls and women in developing countries. The remaining 40 percent will be donated to other projects like Slerra, anti-trafficking projects like the Moldova Project, which was the SI President's Appeal for 2009, or projects realised by our own club.

It would be a pleasure to expand our 'business' to the rest of Europe. So, if you would like to support our work and buy some sheets of our Christmas stamps, please contact me at margaret.stole.karlsen@op.no. Orders placed for an entire club will reduce the individual postage. And if the 'market demand' for our Christmas stamps is high, we will continue with a fourth stamp design in 2011.

Margaret Støle Karlsen, Club Larvik



Margaret Støle Karlsen designed the Christmas stamp that is set to raise nearly €20,000 for various projects.

INTERNATIONAL SOROPTIMISTS EUROPE

23rd October 2010

Ingolstadt (Germany)

Charter to be presented by
Governor, Union of Turkey
Bergün Kardes

Club President

Maria Eberhard-Hözl
Streiterstrasse 3

DE - 85049 Ingolstadt
Phone: +49 841 481 812

E-mail:

maria.eberhard@arcor.de

26th March 2011

Pustertal-Val Pusteria (Italy)

Charter to be presented by
SI/E Secretary General
Marie-Claire Bloes

Club President

Carla Nobile

Via S. Martino 8

IT - 39030 San Lorenzo
di Sebato

Phone: +39 0340 231 8956

E-mail: carla.dok@libero.it

1st-3rd October 2010

25th Anniversary

Club Lisbon Fundator
(Portugal)

5th November 2010

50th Anniversary

Club Hjoerring (Denmark)

5th December 2010

25th Anniversary

Club Antsirabe (Madagascar)

22nd May 2011

International Peace Marathon

Kigali (Rwanda)

28th-29th May 2011

Governors' Meeting

Palermo (Italy)

10th-14th July 2011

19th SI Convention

Montreal (Canada)

12th-14th July 2013

SI/E Congress

Berlin (Germany)

24th-25th October 2010

'Women Strike Back' International Conference in Reykjavik, Iceland

25th November

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

10th December

Human Rights Day

(celebrated by Soroptimists
worldwide)

8th March

International Women's Day

22nd March

World Water Day

NEW SI/E CLUBS
TO BE
CHARTERED

INTERNATIONAL
AWARENESS DAYS
AND EVENTS

FORTHCOMING
EVENTS FOR SI/E

 Please submit your texts to the
Editor for the next issue of
The Link by 15th November 2010!