



The Link

A global voice for women

4/2013-2014 N° 235



Governors' Meeting 2014
A Bottom-Up Approach
Secures SIE for the Future

Membership Consultation
A Heartfelt Thank You
to All Participants!

2015 SI Convention in Istanbul
Educate to Lead: Fresh Ideas
Empowering Women

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 some 85,000 members in more than 3,000 clubs in 126 countries. Soroptimist International of Europe (SIE) is one of four SI Federations. It has some 35,000 members in over 1,250 clubs in 59 countries. Soroptimists inspire action and create opportunities to transform the lives of women and girls through a global network of members and international partnerships. For more information about the aims, activities and projects that characterise our organisation, please visit our SIE website at www.soroptimisteurope.org.



Note from the Editor

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER AND EMPOWERS

The original quote stems from the English philosopher Francis Bacon: 'For knowledge itself is power'. With the word 'knowledge' there is a lot of room for interpretation, but basically, you can break it right down to being informed. Many of us have experienced the situation in business life, in the classroom or even in discussions with children. The more knowledge you have on a subject, the more confident you feel when asked questions. Having the information and knowledge at your disposal also allows you to make educated decisions. In this respect, knowledge empowers.

This approach applies to many aspects of life and is also relevant to our organisation. Providing the Governors and

Union Presidents, and ultimately the membership at large, with a wide range of information puts them in a much better position to understand their leaders and to make decisions. But it also works the other way around. The more the Board knows about the members, the better they will be able to lead the organisation. That is why a bottom-up approach can be so fruitful, and why the Membership Consultation and Coordinated Reports are so valuable. So, let's keep this dialogue going. And remember these words when the endless reports are distributed in preparation for the next Governors' Meeting!

Christine Cromwell-Ahrens, Editor, The Link

Cover page



Villy Makou, SI Athens Kifissia Ekali, took the photo titled 'Blue + Yellow = Green', earning her the first prize in the category Women and Girls for a Healthy Environment.

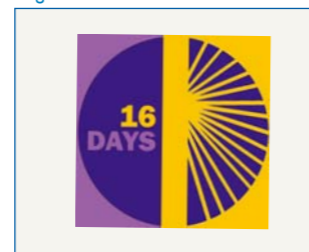
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Dear Soroptimist Friends

I hope you've had a nice and relaxing summer and are now energised to kick off the new Soroptimist year! There are certainly many things to look forward to in the second half of my biennium.

International Day of Peace

To mark the 30th anniversary of the General Assembly Declaration on the Right of Peoples to Peace, this year's International Day of Peace on 21st September has taken the same theme. This anniversary is an ideal occasion for Soroptimists to reaffirm our commitment to promoting peace, and to otherwise commemorate the Day through education and public awareness on issues related to peace. Let us all hope for peace where there is war and where atrocities continue to be committed against humanity.

The 2015 SI Convention in Istanbul

The four Federations have unanimously approved the budget adjusted by the Local Committee of the SI Convention. It is therefore a great relief and pleasure for me to announce that the SI Convention 2015 will take place in Istanbul, one of the world's most fascinating cities. I want to thank the SI Chair of the Local Committee Emine Erdem, the SI Convention Treasurer Yasemin Ozes, the members of the Local Committee and SI Chair of the Convention Janny Spierenburg for their fantastic effort to achieve this result. Now it is up to us to ensure the SI Convention from 9th-12th July 2015 achieves the success it deserves, so please save the dates!

Results of the Membership Consultation

A big thank-you to Chair of the SIE Extension Committee Maria Louisa Frosio, Executive Director Anne Simon and the staff at SIEHQ for reviewing and evaluating the results of the Membership Consultation (some 2,500 slides!). The Unions have already received a general presentation highlighting the overall findings and an analysis relevant for their respective Union. It is my hope and expectation that this valuable new tool will inspire you to recruit new members and retain current ones, a concern of equal importance.

New SIE Constitution & By-Laws

Thanks to the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, members can already access the amended versions of the Constitution & By-Laws and Solidarity Fund Statutes. I urge you to study the new rules carefully because the Governors approved many significant and landmark changes at the annual meeting in Copenhagen. They will surely benefit and strengthen our organisation for the future.

Nordic Days

I was pleased to attend the Nordic Days, which were organised in September by SI Grindsted-Billund of Denmark. The theme was education, focusing on young people. I congratulate the organisers on the high quality of the speakers. The more than 150 participants no doubt left with a greater understanding of the kind of education young people require

in our part of the world and with interesting reflections and suggestions on what it could be. The next Nordic Days will take place in Finland in 2016.

For the new Soroptimist year I wish you the best of luck with your projects and a fulfilling and enjoyable club life. Please don't forget the biennium theme 'Let's go green - working for a healthy environment'. I invite all Soroptimist Clubs and members to make sustainability and environmental protection not only a priority for their projects, but their personal responsibility.

Best of luck to the Unions and Single Clubs who have chosen to work in line with the Strategic Model, based on the 'Triangles' of responsibility. Please let us know how you get on and do not hesitate to contact any of the Board Members or me in case you have questions or comments.

It was a pleasure to meet so many Soroptimists throughout my first year as president. Regardless of whether the con-



The Nordic Meeting gave SIE President Ulla Madsen (left) the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with 150 Scandinavian Soroptimists.

tact was face-to-face or by email, phone or Skype, the dialogue has been a motivating and inspirational experience. It has also given me a lot of energy, for which I am very grateful.

We have achieved fantastic project results together, so let us continue in this good spirit and use the results of the Membership Consultation to attain equal success in gaining new members and retaining the present ones.

WE CAN DO IT.

Yours

SIE Executive Director Anne Simon, SIE President Ulla Madsen and SIE IPP Kathy Kaaf listen attentively to the interventions of the Governors.
SI Italy received the overall Best Practice Award for their protected courtrooms for minors.



The Governors, Union Presidents and Single Club delegates were highly engaged during the two-day Meeting.
Jeanne Nyirakamana (left) and Appoline Kangabire were pleased a photo from Rwanda won a prize.



A BOTTOM UP APPROACH SECURES SIE FOR THE FUTURE

Governors' Meeting
2014

With 72 amendments to consider and countless reports to digest, participants in the Governors' Meeting in July had little time to enjoy the beautiful city of Copenhagen. In addition to tackling the routine agenda, the delegates from the Federation's Unions and Single Clubs engaged in strategy discussions addressing the challenges facing our organisation.



Belgian Governor Carolien Demey commented on the results of the Membership Consultation the evening before the Governors' Meeting.

The corridors of the Radisson Hotel were abuzz with chatter. To the great satisfaction of SIE President Ulla Madsen and SIE Board, the much-touted bottom-up approach had clearly fuelled the enthusiasm of the Governors and their Presidents. It was evident during the opening event on Friday evening with the presentation of the results of the Membership Consultation, that the participants had truly embraced the spirit of the open exchange. For more details, see the article on pages 6-7.

The official meeting began on Saturday. After SIE President Ulla greeted the international officers the 50 Governors, Union Presidents, representatives of Single Clubs and Silent Observers, SIE Executive Director Anne Simon read the roll call. President Ulla then executed the initial points of the agenda, before setting out the aims for her biennium and indeed the days ahead.

The Governors re-elected Anne-Marie Hendrickx to the position of SIE Treasurer for the term 2015-2017.

Mandate to simplify the Constitutions

Renata Trottmann, Chair of the Constitution and By-Laws Committee, took the floor to begin the massive task of voting on the 72 proposals for amendments to the Constitutions of Soroptimist. Before the process began, however, Chair Renata asked the Governors for a mandate to draft new, leaner Constitutions. This SIE Board proposal was passed by an overwhelming majority. Subsequently, Renata invited Soroptimists with a legal background to volunteer for the working committee charged with drafting the revised Constitutions. For details of the amendments that were approved, please see page 9. Finally, Renata announced that the Governors had approved the



addition of a Single Club in the new country of Serbia and the dissolution of SI Chernivtsi, Ukraine, and SI Tskhaltubo, Georgia, in the email ballot.

Reports in line with the Strategic Model

The agenda continued based on the groupings under the Strategic Model. Goal for goal the activities of the Board were presented and discussed. All the documents pertinent to the Governors' Meeting are available in the Members' Area of the SIE website, and your Governors will inform their members about the salient issue. The information is so varied and extensive, coverage has been divided over two issue of *The Link*, and even then it would fill an entire magazine to report on all the various topics.

In the last issue we presented SIE President Ulla's speech on her biennium theme. The Best Practice Award winners were also announced, as were the winners of the Photo Competition under the motto 'Women and Girls Stop Wasting'. Besides the account of the amendments to the Constitutions, we are publishing separate articles in this issue on the Membership Consultation, the Coordinated

Report, the SIE Scholarship recipients and the winners of the Photo Competition's second theme, 'Women and Girls for a Healthy Environment'. There was no Dr Suzanne Noël Scholarship awarded this year.

Of the 18 Club applications to the Action Fund the Board agreed to distribute grants to 16 Clubs, totalling €51,560, and the Governors adopted this proposal. The two remaining clubs were encouraged to seek other sources of funding. Details of the successful grants for the wide range of projects are available on the website.

Exciting happenings in 2015

Above and beyond the general business of the Federation there were greetings from SI President Ann Garvie and President elect SIGBI Jenny Vince. Some of the exciting happenings in 2015 were also on the agenda. SIE Executive Director Anne Simon informed the participants about 'Defeating Violence against Women and Girls Project' (more details in the next issue of *The Link*). In addition, a special programme for visitors to the Expo 2015 in Milan (see page 14) has been organised by the local clubs.

SIE President Ulla explained the current situation with the SI Convention in Istanbul in 2015 (please also see the President's Letter in *The Link* No. 234). This issue has been resolved (see the report about the SI Board Meeting on page 17).

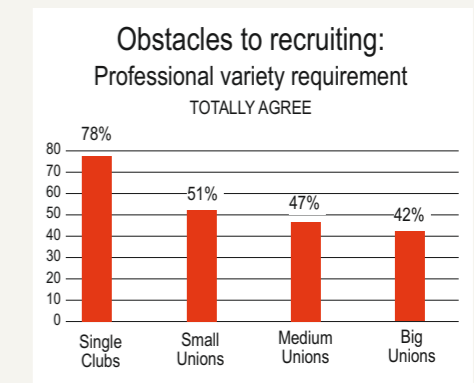
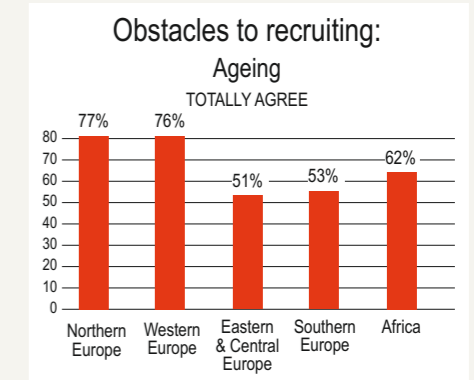
The minutes of the GM will be available on the Members' Area of the SIE website, after the Governors have had the opportunity to comment on the draft.

The venue of the next Governors' Meeting from 30th-31st May 2015 will be in Lisbon, Portugal.

SIE Membership Consultation

A HEARTFELT THANK YOU TO ALL PARTICIPANTS!

The SIE Board, Governors and Union Presidents express their appreciation to the 707 Clubs who responded to the first consultation on SIE membership. Representing 53% of all clubs and totalling about 19,500 members, this participation is truly the largest collective effort ever undertaken.



In a few years, Soroptimist International will celebrate its 100th anniversary and whether in Iceland, Ethiopia, Germany, Portugal or Turkey, all Soroptimists will proudly reflect on our history. Indeed, many things have happened in 100 years: new Clubs continue to be chartered, new members recruited and four Federations created with a fifth one in preparation. But, most importantly, as the backbone of our mission, thousands of projects have been implemented that have improved the lives of countless women and girls. To achieve this, Club members have tirelessly collected millions of euros. Each and every Club can be proud!

It is equally clear that the world has also changed in these 100 years – and faster than Soroptimist. New countries have appeared, while others have disappeared. The population has almost quadrupled, and the demographics are changing. New technologies have transformed the face of the globe. Certain economies have prospered, while others have experienced social and economic upheaval. Though the scale may be different, Soroptimist Clubs have evolved as well, and many are impacted by these influences.

Understanding the issues

To sustain our future, it is crucial to know your thoughts and views about the state of our organisation and to hear your challenges in retaining and recruiting members. Equally important is what makes Clubs successful and attractive. Through the Membership Consultation, you shared your concerns.

Amongst the key findings, Clubs indicated that economic constraints were the major reason for members leaving the organisation (62%), closely followed by ageing (59%). Disappointingly, conflicts within the Clubs (47%) were also a factor. Asked about obstacles to recruitment, Clubs confirmed that financial difficulties as well as age (both 70%) played a role. Interestingly, the low visibility of Soroptimist (67%) is a serious issue as well.

One member per profession rule is also hindering recruitment (48%). This is relevant across geographies, but particularly so for Single Clubs (78%). Clubs also confirmed the three key reasons for retention of members: strong friendship (95%), teamwork and members commitment

SIE Executive Director Anne Simon and Extension Committee Chair Maria Luisa Frosio moderated the discussion.

The participants listened attentively to the results.

(94%) and the high quality of projects (90%). In addition, importance is placed on the recognition for Club projects (76%).

Unsurprisingly, Soroptimist values are an important factor in attracting new members (90%), followed by the high quality of our projects. This confirms that Clubs without projects are not attractive. On the other hand, members also underlined the key role of the organisation as a professional network. In light of the economic challenges mentioned above, this is not a surprise, but actually shows how our organisation can be useful in different ways and play different roles at different times.

Participants engaged in lively discussions

On the eve of the Governors' Meeting in Copenhagen, Governors, Union Presidents and Single Club Delegates reviewed the first results of the survey and later discussed the findings in working groups. The Governors then presented their thoughts and analyses of the review and for each of the challenges. They also addressed a list of potential ideas and solutions.

SIE Extension Committee Chair Maria Luisa Frosio presents the findings of the Membership Consultation.

Many agreed that the ageing of clubs was an obstacle to recruitment.

The restriction of one profession represented is also a hindrance to gaining new members.

Responding to the findings and Club needs

The consultation produced numerous interesting results. During the summer months, every question was analysed in depth, and each individual Union and Single Club received 150 slides with its own results. We hope a number of rapid responses can be passed on to the Clubs, particularly in terms of communications. Other aspects are bound by the Constitution and By-Laws and will need to be carefully investigated. Certain challenges, such as difficulties in attracting new members, no doubt require greater attention and strategic thinking.

Many organisations around the globe envy our model. Our values and concrete impact on women and girls are unique. This is why we must always endeavour to adjust to the rapid changes in society and in younger generations.

Please rest assured that SIE President Ulla Madsen and the SIE Board, supported by the staff at SIE Headquarters, will continue to address your concerns in the second year of the biennium.

Maria Luisa Frosio, Chair of the SIE Extension Committee, and Anne Simon, SIE Executive Director



The Greek delegation accepted the first prize on behalf of Villy Makou, SI Athens Kifissia Ekali, for her photo titled, 'Blue + Yellow = Green'.

Part Two of the SIE Photo Competition

WOMEN AND GIRLS FOR A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

The results of the SIE Photo Competition were announced at the Governors' Meeting in Copenhagen. In the last issue of *The Link* we featured the winning photos in the category, Women and Girls Stop Wasting. Women and Girls for a Healthy Environment was the second theme.

The four criteria for evaluation were how well the photo depicted the theme; artistic perfection; originality of the subject and orientation to Advocacy. Two winners were chosen for each theme. One additional photo in each of the two categories earned an 'Honourable Mention' award, based on their cleverness and sense of humour.

The first prize for Women and Girls for a Healthy Environment, shown on the cover of this issue, was awarded to Villy Makou, SI Athens Kifissia Ekali (Greece) for her photo titled 'Blue + Yellow = Green'.

The photographer who won the second prize was Ilknur Baltaci Mateescu, SI Izmir (Turkey) for her photo 'Dance for a healthy environment'.

Renate Smith Kubat, SI Bruxelles-Doyen (Belgium), won an Honourable Mention award in this category for 'Treasures found on the side of the road'.

Many congratulations to all the prizewinners and thank you to all those who submitted photos!



The second prize went to the photo titled 'Dance for a healthy environment, photographed by Ilknur Baltaci Mateescu, SI Izmir.



Renate Smith Kubat, SI Bruxelles-Doyen, received an Honourable Mention award for her 'Treasures found on the side of the road' photo.



SIE Constitution and By-laws Committee reports

THE AMENDMENTS AT A GLANCE

Our various Constitutions can only be amended or changed every six years. The process for amendments started in 2012, when the Unions and Single Clubs were invited to make their proposals. It was completed with the voting procedure at the Governors' Meeting in Copenhagen.

The most fundamental decision was to give the mandate for new Constitutions. An overwhelming majority supported the proposal of the SIE Board to draft new, leaner Constitutions at all levels. This will mean that only the most important issues will be regulated in the Constitutions. It leaves more room for flexibility and national legislations in the By-Laws, while reducing the future costs of re-registrations with governmental institutions.

To ensure that the new Constitutions reflect the legal culture of all SIE regions, the C&BL Committee invites interested members with a legal background to become a part of the working committee for a new Constitution. Please communicate your interest to the Chair of the C&BL Committee, renata@casarena.ch

Adjustments to the SI Constitution

Following last year's change to the SI Constitution, a number of changes had to be made to the SIE Constitution, as all references to the SI Constitution were reviewed and most of them could be removed.

New Clubs

To facilitate the foundation of new clubs within Unions, the existing article has been expanded by three new paragraphs, giving more flexibility to existing clubs to form new clubs and to members becoming founding members of a new club. It is the responsibility of the respective Union's Extension Committee to ensure that communication with existing clubs is managed properly.

Articles pertaining to Single Clubs

To better integrate Single Clubs, five Single Clubs of a country that have elected a coordinator shall be entitled to send one representative to the Governors' Meeting with the right to speak.

In exceptional circumstances, when the regular functioning of a Single Club or even Union clubs is

not possible anymore, the Extension Committee together with the Constitution and By-Laws Committee may recommend the dissolution of said units. Past experience, when disagreements between club members or difficulties with the Board rendered normal club life impossible, has led to this article.

Member termination or readmission

In the past we have seen various cases where a member could seriously disturb the peace of a club. According to the Constitutions, it was not possible to remedy the situation. With a new section in the Constitutions of Clubs and Single Clubs, a club now has this possibility, as serious disturbance of the peace and the functioning of the club is recognised as reason to terminate membership.



Following a proposal by SI Sweden, the three-year waiting period has been abolished, and a member that left a club in good standing may reapply for new membership without delay.

Changes Solidarity Fund

New clubs have to pay the full fee from the start. If necessary, they can apply to the Solidarity Fund for support. Rules of the Solidarity Fund have become stricter to ensure that recipients are aware of their responsibilities.

You will find the revised statutes of the Constitutions, By-Laws and Solidarity Fund together with a Q&A in the Members' Area of the SIE Website under Downloads - Leadership.

Renata Trottmann, Chair,
SIE Constitution and By-laws Committee

The C&BL Committee after the Governors had voted on the amendments (from left): Mariann Jorn-Hansen Egholm, Chair Renata Trottmann and Judica van Riessen

3,315 projects funded by €7,682,326!

TREMENDOUS RESULTS ACHIEVED IN 2012-13

The annual Coordinated Report is a summary of all the data provided by Unions and Single Clubs. It also contains a lot of very valuable comments, suggestions and concerns pointed out by Unions and Single Clubs. In the following article, SIE Secretary General Birthe Sonne has summarised the compiled data.

The Coordinated Report for the period 2012-2013 is divided into five parts in accordance with the five goals of the SIE Strategic Plan. The five parts are reported in detail on 125 pages, which can be accessed from the Members' Area of the SIE website (Downloads/Meetings/GM 2014-Reports of the SIE Board/Goal 4/item 9 c) together with all the other documents relating to the 2014 Governors' Meeting.

100% of the Unions (24 of 24) and 61% of the Single Clubs (66 of 92) submitted reports. Of course, the Coordinated Report can only reflect the data received, and these findings are summarised as follows:

Goal 1 - Programme

Goal 1 generated the largest amount of data because it included details of scholarships, mentoring programmes and projects related to the five Programme objectives.

In 2012-13 10 Unions, 15 Single Clubs and 18 Union Clubs granted scholarships totalling €876,640 to 1,554 beneficiaries. Grants were given to women at all four levels of education: high school, university, further education and vocational training. However, the largest number of grantees (40 %) were involved in vocational training. This group received the second largest amount of money (Graph 1).

Half of the Unions (13 of 24) offered mentoring programmes. Some clubs in nine Unions introduced their own programmes, while only seven Single Clubs took part in this activity. The total number of mentorships was 487. The number of mentees, i.e. the women who benefitted, was 1,457, a quarter of whom were Soroptimists. The total number of mentors was 707, and almost all of them were Soroptimists.

The headline speaks for itself when it comes to the five objectives in Goal 1. Compared to the last couple of years the amount of money spent has once again increased despite of crises and economic fluctuation (Graph 2).

Sadly, the comparison of the number of projects to the number of PFRs is not as positive, as far fewer PFRs were written than projects implemented (Graph 3)!

The number of PFRs reported is a bit higher than the actual number in the database. I am sure this problem will be resolved with the new and much easier reporting system on the SIE website.

Graph 1

	Number of Grantees	%	Total in euros	%	Average amount per grantee in euros
High school	405	26	190,222	22	470
University	310	20	189,386	22	611
Further education	225	14	259,756	29	1155
Vocational training	614	40	237,276	27	386
Total	1554	100	876,640	100	

Graph 2

2009-2010	€5,066,708
2010-2011	€5,164,000
2011-2012	€7,241,684
2012-2013	€7,682,326

Graph 3

	No. of Projects	No. of PFRs
Single Clubs	230	29
Unions	313	99
Clubs in Unions	2772	869

Goal 2 - Advocacy

As for Goal 2 the annual report asked for hours spent with advocacy projects. Although this number is very impressive, I am sure it is much too modest (Graph 4).

Goal 3 - Communication

The number of reports received is already mentioned in the introduction, but it is also interesting to note how many of the clubs in each Union submitted a report. This graph shows the number as a percentage, and ideally it should be 100 percent (Graph 5).

Where no column is shown the Union either did not ask for a report or did not answer that question.

It is clearly very difficult for Unions to know what is going on in their Clubs if they do not receive any feedback.

Goal 4 - Institutional Development (Extension/Retension)

As of 30th September 2013 there were 1,174 clubs in our 24 unions with a total of 33,119 members. That means there is an average of 28 members per club. However, in reality we have 176 clubs with 18 or fewer members.

The number of Single Clubs was 92 in 35 countries. The number of members in the 65 Single Clubs who answered that question was 1,233. The average number of members per club is 19, but the actual number ranges between 10 and 41.

Goal 5 - Strategic Leadership

In this section of the Annual Report Unions and Single Clubs indicated whether they had held training sessions at various levels of the organisation and provided details of the content (Graph 6).

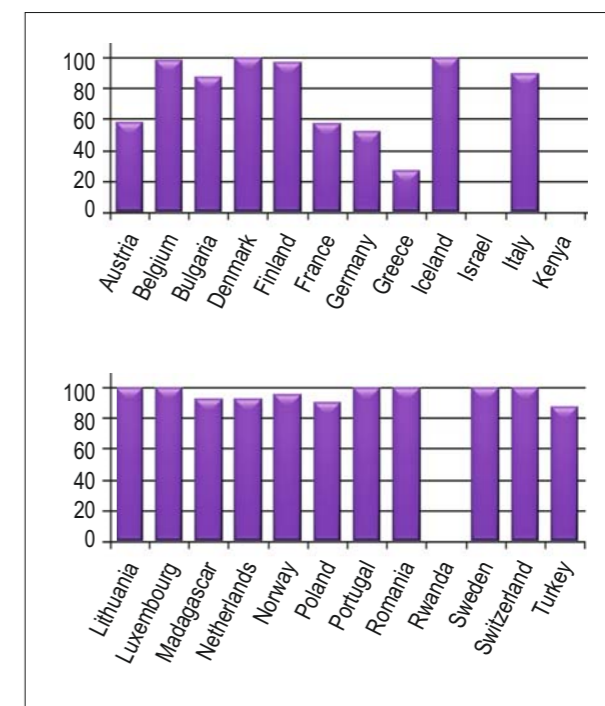
It is crucial for every Soroptimist to know as much as possible about the organisation and the responsibilities of officers at the various levels of the organisation. Therefore it is hoped that the training will be increased at every level.

The new Soroptimist year begins on 1st October, and the SIE Board will therefore soon ask Unions and Single Clubs to report on the period 2013-2014. The Annual Report form, which has only been changed slightly, will be sent to Unions and Single Clubs in the coming weeks. Unions have already received a form which can be used by their clubs. We kindly ask you to note the deadline of 11th January 2015.

Graph 4

	No. of Projects	No. of hours spent
Single Clubs	53	4,498
Unions	52	4,159
Clubs in Unions	527	29,078
Total	632	37,735

Graph 5



Graph 6

No. of Unions offering:	all kinds of training	4
	some training	18
	no training at all	2
No. of Single Clubs offering:	training to all members	24
	training to some members	19
	no training at all	23
No. of Union Clubs offering:	training to all members	12
	training to some members	8
	no training at all	4

SIE Scholarships make a difference

PROVIDING THE EDUCATION TO LEAD

At the Governors' Meeting in July, SIE Scholarship Committee Chair Mariana Abrantes de Sousa announced the candidates for SIE Scholarships 2014-2015.

As part of her biotechnology studies, Scholarship grantee Michal Olshevitz from Israel will explore the impact of DNA in disease prevention and treatment.

The Committee received 34 applications for 2014-2015, including those of the Suzanne Noël Scholarship. The total sum requested was about €315,000, the amount granted €100,410. We discussed every application thoroughly and made our choices based on accomplishments and future potential as well as the information provided. Our 22 recommendations were presented to the Board and then approved by the Governors. Here are the grantees:

SI Armenia €6,100: The legal assistant aims to obtain a UK LLM degree. She was a mentor in and co-founder of Young European Peers 2012.

SI Austria €2,800: The first candidate co-ordinates a Village Service organisation that has won prizes for Social Integration. With a Master's study programme in Social Innovation, she seeks to learn more about promoting civil participation, and using social media to achieve this.

SI Austria €2,300: The second candidate completed university while raising 2 children. She plans to use new on-line marketing skills from her studies to be a Master of Science in On-Line Marketing to strengthen her own business.



SI Croatia €4,500: The grantee wishes to complement her professional qualification with a Master of Architecture and to study how architecture can strengthen the social fabric beyond providing shelter.

SI Finland €3,000: The first candidate is an immigrant and a third year nursing student. She wishes to continue her studies towards a Master's Degree in Public Health.

SI Finland €4,700: Changing her career from psychology, the second candidate, also an immigrant, is studying for a BA in International Business, while working part-time.

SI France €7,200: After University studies, the candidate was accepted into a French exchange pro-

gramme for students from Albania. She has already studied one year of a Master's degree in Civil Engineering at the École Centrale de Nantes. With the prestigious ECN French/English course, she hopes to help with his country's reconstruction.

SI Greece €7,500: The candidate received an award for distinction during the academic year 2008-9. After earning a Master of structural engineering, she intends to continue for a doctorate to gain expertise seismic-resistant steel and composite structures.

SI Iceland €7,500: The first candidate is pursuing studies in International Business to be a part of the change needed in Iceland after the Financial Crisis.

SI Iceland €7,500: With a PhD in Mechanical Engineering, the second candidate seeks to become expert in sustainable geothermal energy harvesting. She co-founded an NGO fighting drug abuse.

SI Israel €2,200: Studying Biotechnology and Food Engineering, the candidate wants to specialise in disease prevention and treatment.

SI Italy €8,400: With post-doctoral research in criminology, the first candidate will learn about the UK's effective MARAC's multi-agency approach in support of women victims of domestic and gender violence. She has various publications and volunteers at a legal help desk at CADMI women's shelter, Milan.

SI Italy €4,200: With an MSc in public health and tropical medicine, the second candidate hopes to better address health needs in Africa by designing health projects for the NGO where she works.

SI Latvia €1,210: The candidate is a lawyer and finishing the Master's degree in Legal Science will allow her to help women and children in crisis.

SI Madagascar €5,700: A combined study of politics, economics and leadership will open possibilities for promotion for this candidate, and position her to work for international organisations in her country.

SI Mali €5,000: The candidate seeks an international degree in Accounting and Auditing.

SI Chisinau, Moldova €2,000: The candidate has matriculated in a Master's programme in Romania to gain international business skills.

SI Portugal €5,600: The candidate seeks funding for a Master's degree in Management to pursue a career in Human Resources focusing on professional development.

SI Romania €2,000: The candidate seeks to combine her computer science background with the new Honours programme in Technology and management to be able to form her own company. She is already involved in social projects and the youth-led AIESEC organisation.

SI Rwanda €4,000: The candidate seeks a Master of Human Resources to help her to manage her staff as well as the school sponsored by the club.

SI Sweden €5,500: After having served as Vice-chair of Ethiopian Women in Agriculture and the environment and as a member of parliament, this candidate sought political asylum in Sweden. She was accepted into a special programme at the Swedish University of Agriculture, where her research will shed light on the situation of women in Ethiopia who are heavily impacted by large-scale cropping land acquisitions.

SI Turkey €2,500: With a Master of Integrated Systems Biology, the candidate intends to work on complex diseases as a researcher in biomedicine.



Recommended by SI Craiova and granted a scholarship of €7000 in 2012-2013 to pursue studies in Computer Science, Diana Babiac, shown here working as a volunteer at an orphanage in Ipoh, Malaysia, wrote, 'I will always be thankful for your help when I was in desperate need.'



COME AND SEE THE FUTURE WITH US!

The city of Milan will host the EXPO in 2015 from 1st May to 31st October. The motto is *Feeding the Planet: Energy for Life*. 145 countries will participate in the exposition and over 20 million visitors are expected.

With its distinguished history, broad geographic distribution and varied experience, Soroptimist International shares with the Expo the language

and culture of innovation, as well as a focus on social issues and protection of the future. The Expo is therefore an extraordinary opportunity for Soroptimists to interact with institutional, social, industrial and cultural representatives from different countries.

In cooperation with SI Italy, SI Milano alla Scala and SI Milano Fondatore are offering Soroptimists from around the world the opportunity to get together, exchange ideas and connect with members of different countries, cultures and professions – in a concrete manifestation of Soroptimist values.

Managed through a collaboration with AIM Group International, the service consists of an hospitality programme for a maximum of 600 people from 8th-11th June 2015. There are two options, whereby the larger module comprises a full five-day programme, while the two-day programme is more content-focused.

Details are available on the website: www.soroptimistforexpo.com. In addition, a Facebook page has been created, where information on the development of the Expo will be provided regularly.

We have been working for almost two years to put together the best programme so as to offer the warmest, most interesting and most inspiring welcome possible. And we hope to see many of you next year at the Expo. For more information and details, please go to Soroptimistforexpo@aimgroup.eu.

Alessandra Dubini Braghenti, SI Milano alla Scala

Programme

Option One

* Sunday, 7th June

Arrival in Milan

* Monday, 8th June

Visit to the EXPO including a welcome drink

* Tuesday, 9th June

A full Soroptimist day at the prestigious University of Bocconi, including a debate on the evolution of taste as the cause and effect of important economic, social and health influences. The event will offer the opportunity to debate the various Expo issues, and Soroptimists will be encouraged to share the discussion in their countries and local areas.

Participants are then invited to attend the opera 'Carmen' by Bizet at the Teatro alla Scala.

* Wednesday, 10th June

Tour of the city with a choice of cultural and social itineraries, and, at the end of the day, a dinner to celebrate the pleasure of coming together in pursuit of 'living for the future';

* Thursday, 11th June

Optional tour of neighbouring areas of particular interest and beauty, followed by receptions at local Clubs.

Option Two

* Tuesday, 9th - Wednesday, 10th June

A second module offers a two-day programme and is available to anyone interested in making a shorter, more content-focused visit.

Save the date in your (electronic) diary !



FRESH IDEAS EMPOWERING WOMEN

The 20th SI International Convention 2015 will take place from 9th - 12th July 2015 in Istanbul, Turkey. It will be absolutely wonderful to welcome you in Istanbul, one of the largest cities in the world and a melting pot of European and Asian influences where East meets West. Fascinating, bustling and friendly – Istanbul is a mix of traditional and modern worlds.

The SI Convention venue will be the Hilton Istanbul Bosphorus Hotel, which offers a beautiful view of the Bosphorus. Opening ceremony, keynote sessions, closing ceremony, breaks, exhibitions, as well as workshops will all take place there.

Expect a versatile programme

The Convention Committee is a dedicated team of Soroptimists from the SI Turkey. They are working tirelessly to ensure that as many people as possible take part in this event and enjoy the special atmosphere. Our leitmotif is 'Fresh Ideas Empowering Women'. The Convention will offer an interesting and enlightening programme, including keynote speakers, debates and professional workshops, some of them with a Turkish flavour! There will also be ample opportunities to meet inspiring Turkish businesswomen. And of course time will also be allotted to cover many important Soroptimist matters.

Pre- and Post-Convention Tours

Details on pre- and post-Convention tours will be available by October 2014. This will enable you to book early flights. And check our website regularly for a special offer from Turkish Airlines!

Registration starts November 2014

Information on the programme, hotels, registration, and all other relevant details will be available from October/November 2014 onwards!

Exhibition stands

During the Convention, there is an opportunity for Unions and Single Clubs to have exhibition stands to publicise their organisation or sell

goods. We have kept the costs low at €170 per stand for three days (including VAT). For further information please contact chair@si-istanbul2015.org.

Help us find sponsors

We invite you to help us find sponsors. The support of your company or business for this convention will form a valuable social involvement. The SI Convention offers an excellent platform to present companies, brands, products and services to our powerful global network. It will be an ideal opportunity to gain potential customers. The sponsorship brochure can be found on our website: www.si-istanbul2015.org.



The SI Convention Committee (from left): Esra Disperati, Local Committee Secretary; Janny Spierenburg, SI Convention Chair; Ann Garvie, SI President 2013-2015; Emine Erdem, Local Committee Chair; İnci Artan, Local Committee Programme Director; Beril Atakul, Local Committee Communication Officer; Lale Kaplan, Local Committee Social Programme Coordinator; Pat Carruthers, SI Treasurer 2011-2015, and Yasemin Ozes, SI Convention Treasurer. Committee Member SIE President Ulla Madsen is missing in this photo.

We look forward to seeing you in Istanbul!
SI Local Committee 2015



A Call to Action

16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER VIOLENCE

Today, women and girls are subjected to many forms of human rights violations solely on the basis of their gender. One in three women worldwide face abuse, violence and rape everyday. In no country of the world are women free from this fear and terror.

25 November is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and the start of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence. The campaign spans these 16 Days in order to highlight the link between violence against women and human rights day, which is celebrated on 10 December. Since its inception in 1991 over 5,167 groups in 187 countries have taken part.

The 16 Days Campaign is an opportunity for individuals and groups around the world to call for the elimination of all forms of violence against women by:

- Increasing women's safety
- Highlighting the nature and prevalence of violence against women
- Raising awareness of violence against women as a human rights issue
- Showing solidarity among women around the world
- Promoting women's leadership
- Lobbying governments

• Strengthening local work to tackle violence against women

In 2014 the 16 Days Campaign continues with the theme, From Peace in the Home to Peace in the World: Let's Challenge Militarism and End Violence Against Women! The Centre for Women's Global Leadership has developed a 2014 Take Action Kit (TAK) with resources to initiate and support activities (<http://16days.cwgl.rutgers.edu>).

Let us join the Campaign and make our voices heard in the fight against gender based violence by taking action relevant to our specific aims. We know best on what and with whom we can engage – whether our governments or communities – to challenge and change in positive terms the structures which perpetuate gender-based violence.

And let us be heard! Communicate your actions as widely as possible using local media, facebook, blogs, and of course report the results to SIE.

Ulrike Neubert, SIE Vice President



SI Board Meeting in Kent, England

IMPORTANT DECISIONS TAKEN FOR THE FUTURE

With the cooperation among the four Federations in recent years intensifying, it was particularly exciting to attend the SI Board Meeting in August. SI President Ann Garvie presided over the meeting, which was held in a positive, professional and dynamic atmosphere.

Together with PE Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis, IPP Kathy Kaaf and myself as SIE's voting members, VP for Advocacy Elena Savu and Chair of the C&BL Committee Renata Trottmann participated as consultants. As a member of several SI Task Force Groups and our essential supporter, Executive Director Anne Simon also attended the meeting, as did PP Mariet Verhoef Cohen as a Silent Observer. After intense and fruitful discussions, the voting members made several crucial decisions to secure the future of SI:

>>>Unanimously accepted SI Convention Local Committee's adjusted budget. It was a happy moment, especially for the SIE representatives.

>>>Enacted SI's status as an incorporated body. All four Federation Presidents and Ann Garvie signed the transfer of assets, i.e. the building housing the SI HQ in Cambridge (see photo).

>>>Adopted byelaws for SI, which replace the former PPPs. The manuals which accompany the bylaws for operational purposes will remain as 'liv-

ing' documents, to be updated as necessary with the approval of the SI Board.

>>>Create a Task Force with representatives from each Federation to form part of the Strategic Plan 2015-2019. The group will deliver a full draft by next April, based on SI's vision, mission and values.

>>>Undertake a review of finances in the light of falling income from membership fees. The aim is to reduce the running costs of SI and to generate more income. Global Executive Director Deborah Thomas will present a preliminary report to the Board by Christmas.

>>>Instead of the Global Impact Report, produce a glossy style publication in time for the Istanbul Convention. The Programme Strategic Planning Team will develop a plan to improve the data-collecting process.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Elisabetta, Kathy or me.

Ulla Madsen, SIE President 2013-2015

Eliminating all forms of discrimination against women LILIAN HOFMEISTER ELECTED TO THE UN CEDAW COMMITTEE

Seroptimist and prominent Austrian judge Dr Lilian Hofmeister has been elected to the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for the term 2015-2018. Throughout her illustrious 30-year career, Lilian Hofmeister has proven her expertise in the field of discrimination against women in various institutions

such as courts, public offices, non-governmental organisations. As a highly esteemed judge at several Austrian courts, Justice Hofmeister acquired first-hand experience in addressing challenges regarding discrimination against women in daily life as well as in implementing women's rights at a national level. Her long-standing work in the

judiciary, and in particular in the fields of women's access to justice and domestic violence, is also why she considered these topics two of her priorities for her candidacy to the Committee. Lilian Hofmeister earned her PhD in law at the University of Vienna. Over the years, she has repeatedly worked as a legal advisor to develop instruments for

the protection of girls and women against discrimination. Moreover, she contributed to the realisation of projects and educational programmes aiming at the strengthening of women's rights (e.g. Belarus, South Africa). She was also a founding member of UNIFEM National Committee Austria (now Austrian National Committee for UN Women).

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which entered into force in 1981 and comprises more than 180 State Parties, laid the foundations for the international protection of women's rights. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women is the body of 23 independent experts

monitoring the national implementation of the Convention. It is also mandated to receive individual communications and to initiate inquiries into situations of grave or systematic violations of women's rights. Dr Lilian Hofmeister is personally committed to fight for the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

SIE Disaster Fund grant

SUPPORT FOR FLOOD VICTIMS IN BULGARIA



Kitchen appliances were purchased for the victims of the floods.

The city of Varna suffered a tragic disaster, when a flood devastated its suburb of Asparuhovo after intense rainfall in June 2014. Twelve people, including four children, lost their lives, and many more remained missing. The entire infrastructure was destroyed. Seeing the severe material, social and economic damage, members of SI Varna and their children wanted to come to the aid of victims.

After meeting the mayor of Asparuhovo, SI Varna decided to join the efforts of other NGOs and take part in a bigger project under the aegis of the Varna Municipality. A total of €15,000 was to be spent to restore the kitchen and playground of a

kindergarten and to buy kitchen appliances for six families. SI Varna planned to donate €6,630, €3,130 of which would be from the Club's own resources. The club appealed for funds through the website of SI Bulgaria, www.soroptimist-bg.com and applied for a grant from the SIE Disaster Fund. Bulgarians living in the Netherlands also donated some money.

At their meeting in Copenhagen, the SIE Board voted to give SI Varna €3,500. Club President Ludmila Dimitrova reported that members visited all the families in Asparuhovo designated for aid. With the approval of the director of the kindergarten, they agreed that SI Varna would buy a refrigerator, a professional stove and a washing machine.

By August Ludmila had informed the Board that the project for Asparuhovo was completed and carefully documented. Seven families were provided with 13 kitchen appliances; five of those families were also given cleaning supplies. The kindergarten received four household appliances and cleaning supplies. The beneficiaries were very grateful for the donations, and many sent letters of appreciation.

SIE Treasurer Anne-Marie Hendrickx writes, 'Thanks to the members of SI Varna for the efficient implementation of this project.'

2014 Nordic Meeting

FIVE COUNTRIES – ONE CONFERENCE



SIE President Ulla and SI Denmark President Ellen took on the challenge of assembling a duck from Lego bricks.

The Nordic Meeting is a biannual meeting for Soroptimists from all five Nordic countries: Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Denmark. SI Grindsted-Billund in Denmark hosted the meeting from 5th-7th September 2014. The theme of the conference was education, and indeed, the participants enjoyed an education on education.

'It has been an exciting task to organise the Nordic Meeting', said Hanne Enggaard, the president of the SI Grindsted-Billund, and added, 'Our club had to put together the conference programme and find the speakers'.



The meeting began Friday afternoon with music, as the Billund Band guided the Soroptimists to a reception with the mayor of Billund. Afterwards, a buffet was served in the Aquarium Atlantis at Legoland.

Saturday was devoted to the conference. Birgitte Birkvad gave an overview of the EU framework for education. Stina Vrang Elias talked about challenges that women face in pursuing a career. Sadly, being competent is not always enough! Hanne Træholt Odegaard explained the

The Nordic Meeting leaders (from left): SI Finland President Merina Hovi, SI Norway President Gerd Halmo, SI Denmark President Ellen Hansen, SIE President Ulla Madsen, SI Iceland President Mjoll Flosadóttir and SI Sweden President Birgitta Hansson.

vision of making Billund the Capital of Children. We were invited to build a yellow duck from LEGO bricks. A lot of fun for the participants, but also a way to illustrate that creativity is hidden in all of us. Needless to say, no ducks were the same!

Futurologist Marianne Levinsen guided us through global trends, noting that today's children are born 'digital natives'. Swedish Soroptimists showed that simple blue T-shirts with our SI logo are a great way to raise awareness.

There was also plenty of time for socialising. 'The meeting was a good opportunity to talk with Soroptimists from other countries', said Hanne Enggaard. 'We organised a banquet on Saturday evening and many participated in excursions in the area on Sunday'.

In addition to putting together a successful conference, SI Grindsted-Billund even made a profit from the sale of local gourmet products and from the lottery, in which the grand prize was a beautiful patchwork quilt, sewn by one of the Club members. The profit will be used to support a school project in Gambia.

'We would like to thank all the participants for making this Nordic Meeting such a great success', sums up Hanne.

Suzanne Noël scholarship

NEWS FROM A SUCCESSFUL GRANTEE

It was in the aisles of a large supermarket in Guadeloupe that I had the chance to meet the father of the young woman who was to become the country's first Suzanne Noël scholarship student.

I had heard of Daniel Marival, a Guadeloupean journalist and Managing Director of a local radio station. When we met, I told him about Soroptimist International (his radio station had covered my handing over of the French Union presidency), our activities and our scholarships, and he talked about his daughter. As the conversation progressed, I realised that she was a potential candidate for the Suzanne Noël scholarship. I asked him to get in touch with his daughter, who was studying in Belgium, to suggest that she



After successfully completing her studies with the help of a Suzanne Noël scholarship, Dr Talia Marival is now working as a plastic surgeon in France.

should apply to the French Union for assistance. One thing then led to another, and I ended up sending her excellent application to the Federation. Talia Marival was awarded a scholarship of €5,000 in July 2010.

It was a great honour for the French Union, long-standing Suzanne Noël scholarship coordinator Marie Claire Pasteur and myself.

In the meantime, Dr Talia Marival is the first woman from the French West Indies to qualify as a plastic surgeon and has just settled in the south of France. She has successfully completed her studies and has just begun a brilliant career. Who knows – perhaps she will become a Soroptimist?

Raphaëlla Mélon, Past President of SI France (2008-2010)

SI Lithuania celebrates the biennium

'LET'S BE BEES'

The motto 'Let's be bees', chosen by President of SI Lithuania Asta Balciunaitiene, welcomed all Soroptimists of Lithuania and their guests to celebrate the 2012-2014 biennium at its 2014 General Meeting. Soroptimists from SI Panevezys organised the event at a beautiful venue, the mansion and now museum of famous Lithuanian teacher, writer, doctor and political leader Gabriele Petkevicaite-Bite. She is the first woman among the founders of the Lithuanian Parliament, and her writer's pseudonym Bite stands for bee.

True to the symbolism of bees, we were very active at our Meeting. We discussed what the 'busy bees' of each club had added to the 'honeycomb of the Lithuanian beehive' and recognised our most active Soroptimists by presenting them with an amber bee's brooch, which was designed by Egle Liskeviciene of SI Alytus.

The results of the 'Let's be bees' essay competition for writers between the ages of 11 and 82, which had been organised by Governor Nijole Petkeviciute (SI Kaunas) and Elona Mikalauskiene (SI Raseiniai), were announced. Participants then watched an educational performance in the form of a dialogue between Petkevicaite-Bite and Zemaite, whose writing talent was recognised and supported by Petkevicaite-Bite. They also wrote 'bee' stories using a goose feather pen,

as Bite and Zemaite used to do. We danced and sang Lithuanian dances and songs together with our guests from Denmark, Annelise Thomsen and Villy Jørgensen. To mark the day, rose bushes were planted in Bite's garden. In addition, we organised a fair of handmade goods such as jewellery, national sashes, as well as jams and honey.

After this unforgettable event our 'busy bees' went home with more inspiration and enthusiasm. Everyone agreed that it had been an exciting experience to share good ideas and emotions.

Asta Balciunaitiene, President, and Nijole Petkeviciute, Governor, SI Lithuania 2012-2014

Aid for flood victims in Bosnia

SPREADING HOPE AND HELP

Three members of SI Vaduz/Liechtenstein and SI Goldes/Südsteiermark went to Bosnia on 29th June 2014 to distribute the goods they had funded through the International Golf Tournament and the Salamanzar Rally. Some €30,000 went to the victims of the big flood last spring which devastated the villages of Prud, Vojskova and Zorice.

Monika Studer (founding and now incoming president of SI Vaduz/Liechtenstein), Johanna Kohlenberger (founding president of SI Goldes/Südsteiermark) and Angelika Prentner (current president of SI Goldes/Südsteiermark) drove to Bosnia to oversee the distribution of goods to the victims of the flood in Bosnia.

We chose people earning no income, who had to support children, were ill or completely without help or family. Anela Nuic, a student of architecture in Graz who speaks the local language and has family nearby, accompanied the three Soroptimists. Her family was amongst the victims of



Monika Studer, Johanna Kohlenberger and Angelika Prentner, shown here with their interpreter Anela Nuic and one of the Austria Army officers who accompanied them, distributed the donations personally to those in need.

the flood who have lost everything. Some officers from the Austrian army accompanied the delegation.

The situation they found in the villages was hard to bear, also because a lot of help had not yet reached the people who suffered the most. Many lost everything they had built up since the last war. Houses lay in ruins. Everywhere there were heaps of wet furniture at the side of the



Celebrity guest Katka Brychtova joined Soroptimists from SI Bratislava, Dasa Stevikova and former ballet dancer Zuzana Bartekova, at the wine auction.

road. Doors, windows, wooden floors – everything had to be removed and rebuilt. Animal carcasses were still lying in the fields, although most had already been taken to incineration plants in Serbia. Many people were not able to return to their homes because their houses still had to be cleaned and fumigated. The Austrian army was helping people generate clean drinking water.

This is the reason why the two clubs decided to make a list of those in greatest need and give the donations personally to the respective families. The people who received the aid were deeply grateful and appreciative of the help provided by the two Soroptimist Clubs.

Dr Vivien Gertsch, President, SI Vaduz

SI Bratislava

AUCTIONING WINE FOR A GOOD CAUSE

SI Bratislava soon celebrates its 20th anniversary. Its charitable activities include support for homes for the aged, young cancer patients and also children from underprivileged families. To mark the occasion SI Bratislava organised the 5th Annual Charity Wine Auction at Cikker's Museum to finance summer holidays for blind and visually impaired children.

Most of the wines offered had won international and national awards. Wine producers had donated 46 wines from the most famous Slovakian vineyards in support of the children. Violinist Peter Michalica donated a signed bottle of 2011 Ruland Blue, as did famous Slovak rocker Jozef Raz. He attended this event in support of his former classmates from secondary school. Deputy Mayor Ivo Nesrovnal and popular presenter Katka Brychtova also auctioned some wine.

Auctioneer Richard Vrabc did a professional job while at the same time entertaining the audience, which included Austrian and Portuguese guests. Later Director of Cikker's Museum Ina Michalicova shared interesting stories from the life of Jan Cikker, a remarkable personality of Slovak classical music and another fan of fine wines!



Participants in the Annual Meeting of SI Lithuania gathered for a group photo.



Leadership Academy as a Twinning Project

TRAINING WOMEN TO LEAD



The Leadership Academy offered 28 young women and 40 Soroptimists a unique experience.

Training the mind, heart, body and soul on the banks of Lake Ohrid is just one aspect of the Leadership Academy.

Katerina Vasileska, Founding President of SI Single Club Struga, and Sevil Ayas Koca, 2nd Vice President of SI Turkey organised the first ever Soroptimist Leadership Academy as a Twinning Project. Held on Lake Ohrid in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia from 16th-25th July 2014, the Soroptimist Leadership Academy gathered 28 young women and 40 Soroptimists. SI President Elect Yvonne Simpson actively participated in the academy as one of the trainers.

The unique experience over 10 days provided participants with a set of skills on how to become leaders, whilst also improving the lives of women and girls within their own communities. The practical holistic training targeted mind, body, heart and soul. It addressed the very core of Soroptimist International – transferring knowledge from experienced women to younger



women who are starting their careers. It also gave women from different social, economic and cultural backgrounds the opportunity to meet, make friends, learn about and create projects for the benefit of the community.

The Academy contributed to the SIE Strategic Goals by encouraging participants to implement projects and helping other women in their communities (Goals 1 & 2: Programme & Advocacy), developing leadership skills (Goal 5: Strategic Leadership), attracting young women to join SI (Goal 4: Institutional Development /Extension) and offering other professionals (non-members) the opportunity to engage with SIE as Academy lecturers (Goal 4: Institutional Development /Extension).

The organisers hope to continue with the Academy and ask Soroptimists to provide scholarships to girls from their cities/countries to allow them to join the programme, to support trainers from clubs to participate and to spread the news about the Academy so that other SI clubs are inspired by the idea. But everyone is invited to attend this training to enjoy the Soroptimist atmosphere and relax at the beautiful UNESCO World Heritage site of Lake Ohrid!

SI Vicenza

GOLF CHALLENGE FOR PROJECTS IN RWANDA

The 7th Golf Challenge Cup for Africa took place in support of the project 'Ubufatanye – Funding the Future' for the women of Rwanda on a beautiful sunny day in May at the Golf Club Colli Berici. In the presence of SI Italy Vice-President Patrizia Salmoiraghi, SI Italy PP Wilma Maluccelli and Extension Committee member



The Rwandan made and Italian designed vegetable fibre jewellery was showcased in an accompanying exhibition.



Participants in the Golf Challenge gathered for a group photo.

Gènevieve Henrot the Soroptimist clubs of Lecco, Merate, Genova and Butare 'Astrida' (Rwanda) joined the clubs of Busto Arsizio 'Ticino Olona', Savona, Sondrio, Merania, Varese, Como, Bergamo, Vittoria and Butare in this year's competition, hosted by SI Vicenza.

The project involves professional training and work opportunities for unmarried mothers and young girls in Rwanda thanks to the purchase and restructuring of La maison des femmes vocational centre offering sewing courses and workshop. In addition, there is support for a farming enterprise for newly chartered SI Butare 'Astrida'.

Gènevieve Henrot highlighted the importance of the Golf Challenge and the accompanying exhibition of vegetable fibre jewellery, made by Rwandan women and assembled by Primavera 85, a cooperative based in Sovizzo (Vicenza) employing disabled young people.

The Golf Challenge was followed by a putting competition open to everybody, including children and beginners. After presenting the prizes to the winners of the golf challenge, the evening ended with a dinner and a raffle with very valuable prizes, donated by sponsors.

Laura Stiassi Forconi, Programme Director, SI Vicenza

Italians on the road to Poland

ANOTHER BRIDGE OF FRIENDSHIP

Twelve Soroptimists from seven clubs of SI Italy and from SI Lugano Lago of Switzerland answered the invitation of the Polish Union to attend the charter of SI Cieszyn at the end of May in the south of the country. 'Enjoy Cieszyn' while discovering the city and country was the motto of the new club.

The Italian group travelled through Poland from Warsaw and Cracow to Cieszyn, located on the border with the Czech Republic in the Silesia region. It is the site of a 'Bridge of Friendship' between the two countries (on a trip last year, we crossed another one in the city of Ruse on the Danube between Bulgaria and Romania). We walked across the bridge spanning the Olza River to reach the other half of Cieszyn in the Czech Republic!

We met friends from the other clubs of SI Poland and some clubs of the neighbouring countries during the charter ceremony in the beautiful Town Hall, lovely venue decorated with the coats of arms of the noble families of Cieszyn history. A 'passage' in the path through the gardens along the river is dedicated to the outstanding women in the city's history. Friendship, multinationality, rich cultural life and heritage: these are the qualities of Cieszyn that we Italian Soroptimists discovered thanks to our new friends.

Wilma Maluccelli, Past President of SI Italy



Please submit your contributions to the next issue by 15th November 2014!

NEW SIE CLUBS TO BE CHARTERED

8th November 2014

Subotica (Serbia)
Charter to be presented by
Ulla Madsen, SIE President
Club President
Livia Biro
Prvog Ustanka 31
24000 Subotica
Phone: +381 638972590
E-mail:
birolivia59@hotmail.com

15th November 2014

Valle Umbra (Italy)
Charter to be presented by
Ulla Madsen, SIE President
Club President
Danila Bizzarri
via A. Vespucci, 4
06034 Foligno
Phone: +39 3407632885
E-mail:
avv.danilabizzarri@live.it

FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR SIE

7th November 2014

50th Anniversary
SI Heidelberg (Germany)

11th November 2014

25th Anniversary
SI Sortland (Norway)

25th November 2014

25th Anniversary
SI Örebro-Wadköping (Sweden)

5th December 2014

50th Anniversary
SI Nyon (Switzerland)

12th December 2014

50th Anniversary
SI Braunschweig (Germany)

INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS DAYS AND EVENTS

25th November

International Day for the
Elimination of Violence against
Women

10th December

Human Rights Day (celebrated
by Soroptimists worldwide)

