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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR PROGRAMME & ADVOCACY TEAM!



Reading, learning, access to education: most of us have had the privilege to take these things for granted throughout our lives. President Elisabetta's Federation-wide "My Book Buddy" project is a sobering reminder to us of how many children are still denied their basic right to education. Similarly, as we prepare for the **16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence**, we are reminded of the countless women and girls whose basic human right to live in security continues to be trampled on. Disturbing as these facts may be, they are also an inspirational opportunity for us to come together as a movement to say a resounding "no" to violence -- and a resounding "yes" to access to education. Through projects and initiatives like these, we must continue to make a positive difference in women's and girl's lives -- to help secure their rights and contribute to a better future.

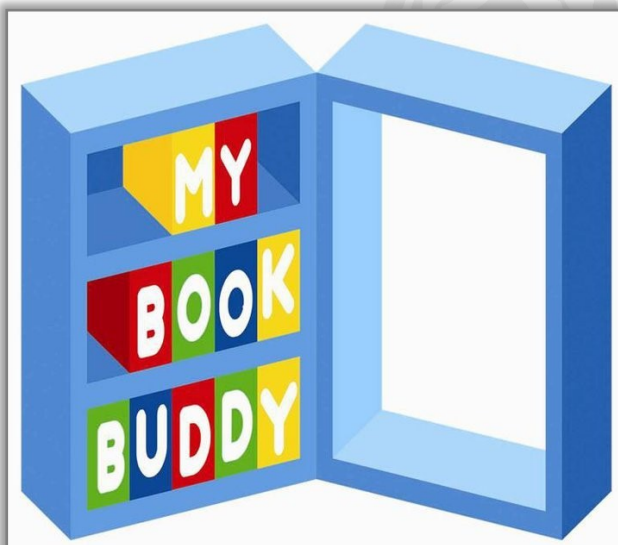
Renata Trottmann Probst, President Elect and head 'Programme & Advocacy'

This month we talk about: MY BOOK BUDDY

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PROMOTING LITERACY IN COOPERATION WITH MY BOOK BUDDY



The website for our Federation project is now operational, and we hope that you all have seen it (<https://sie-mybookbuddy.org>)! The last update is that we have added a FAQ (frequently asked questions) page!

Please have a look at these 'questions and answers' and let us know if you think something is missing to be able to start your activities. Many clubs are already busy filling in the application form to nominate a school. **We would love to hear how Friendship Links are working together. One example is SI Club Angoulême in France which has a Friendship Link with SI Club Bamako Lumière in Mali.** They decided to collaborate to support a school in need of books and raise the required money. The ultimate plan is to implement a *My Book Buddy* library system. Isn't this great? Why not follow their example? We are very curious which clubs will be first to set up the library system!

Marlène van Benthem, SIE Programme Director, Caroline Junier, SIE Assistant Programme Director



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PROGRAMME & ADVOCACY NEWS

HOW CAN WE MAKE THIS FEDERATION PROJECT A SUCCESS?

Our goal is to have an additional 34,000 girls reading books by the end of this one-year partnership. We have chosen two days to be active in all our 62 member countries with fundraising:

- ◆ April 23 = World Book Day
- ◆ September 8 = UN Literacy Day



UNESCO has already said that if this project is a success, they will give us a platform to make our vision and

results visible. In the coming months we encourage you to invite the teachers in your clubs (or mothers with young children at school) to organise sponsored reading events.

In addition to raising the money for the My Book Buddy bookcases, we hope to show the importance

of developing reading skills as they are the portal to jobs and autonomy for girls.

An awareness campaign in all our 1265 local communities will really make an impact and demonstrate that we Soroptimists are truly investing in education! The aim is to enable and empower women and girls to create equal opportunities in their lives and societies.

To achieve this goal we need the expertise available in our Federation: to handle communication and social media, to translate information for your members, to organise fundraising events, to support and inspire all of us!

We would like to make your ideas and event scripts available on the website, thus creating an SIE marketplace of experience which clubs can use in their own communities.

Stay tuned to our website:

<https://sie-mybookbuddy.org>

For a year, this website will be our communication channel. If you have questions, please contact the PD team at programme@soroptimisteurope.org.

We want to provide access to books for needy women and girls within the 62 countries of the SIE Federation. The idea is to improve literacy and widen knowledge among women and girls. Literacy is the key to education and creates opportunities for jobs and economic empowerment.

Maria Elisabetta De Franciscis, SIE President 2015 - 2017



in Europe
in Africa
in the Middle East
in the Caribbean



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PROGRAMME & ADVOCACY NEWS

SERIES OF “MY VISION”...

For this issue we have the testimony of **SIE VP Extension Eastern Europe, Anna Wszelaczynska.**



“I see Soroptimism as an organisation gathering women and girls from different generations and backgrounds working arm in arm to empower and educate women and girls, eliminate violence against those unable to defend themselves, and working together for a sustainable and healthy environment.



Networking to achieve these aims with other Soroptimists: active, creative, professional women, and the outside world. Implementing valuable projects during which everybody benefits, donors as well as beneficiaries, who gain satisfaction and pleasure. There

are several examples of such projects in our Best Practice Awards leaflets. We can always organise fund-raising events to raise money for projects: garage sales, fashion shows, cooking events with celebrities, lotteries, handmade Christmas cards, or gifts.

A modern organisation providing a forum for continuous learning and sharing experience, offering an opportunity to build friendship and make friends on whom you can always rely. With members who are not afraid of modern technologies, because people themselves don't change. In the past people wrote paper letters, now they write using keyboards, so what's the difference? And why should we leave new ways for youngsters? Can't we learn? Are we that stupid? I believe we can adjust to the modern world and that we have a lot to offer, especially to younger generations who understand modern technology but are otherwise exactly the same as other youngsters before them: vulnerable and easy to abuse.

Let's treat new technologies as a challenge and opportunity. Let's not be like Medieval scribes when first printed books appeared. They thought it was end of the world when it was actually the beginning. I think we are in a similar situation.

So let's be optimistic, even Soroptimistic! Let's use the opportunity, let's change the world as we have done in the past!”

WHAT MAKES A GOOD PROJECT? PERSPECTIVES FROM THE AUSTRIAN PROGRAMME TEAM!

The Austrian programme team held four workshops for the Austrian PD Teams between 2014 and 2016 to discuss the following topic: **What is a Soroptimist project and how is it different to fundraising projects?** Our definition included the following points:

- It should make an improvement to ‘society’
- It should be something new
- It is not necessarily based on fundraising
- It can be lobbying
- It can be picking up a social challenge and finding a way to solve it
- It needs to be based on programme focus themes of the Union, the Federation or Soroptimist International
- It is sustainable
- It encourages all CS to work together on one issue
- It allows working together with other Clubs and or other NGOs....
- It can be managed, verified and evaluated
- It has a beginning and a predetermined end
- It is not funding an existing project
- It should be used for public relations



To help clubs to find a project we shared our ideas and the ongoing projects.

To show the importance of having a club project and to encourage our

clubs to write a report and talk about their activities, we launched the first Austrian Project Prize, with €3000 for the Best Practice project on the 2014-2016 Austrian focus theme ‘Caring is Sharing’.

23 projects were sent for acceptance and they were evaluated by a jury of 4 women from different professional backgrounds (only one of them, Marlène van Benthem, a Soroptimist).

The winner was Club Steyr with a project that enables women in an Austrian city to ask for any assistance they need by filling out a form that has been created by the local Soroptimist Club members. The form is forwarded to the club and, together with a local department, the Soroptimists are able help the woman quickly, avoiding overly bureaucratic procedures.

Sabine Mach, Programme Director Union of Austria

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PROGRAMME & ADVOCACY NEWS

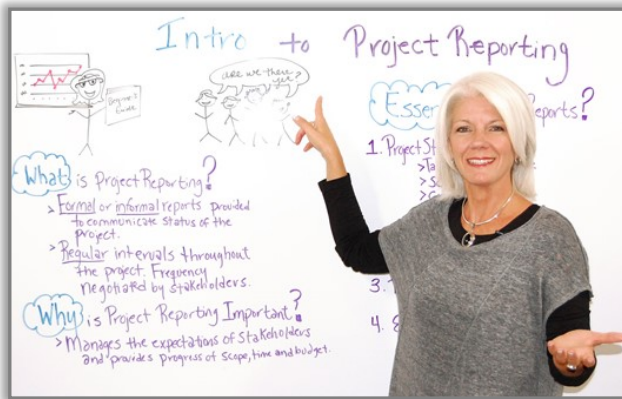
THE PFR SYSTEM—TIPS TO REPORT A PROJECT

A project

- is not an activity e.g. a lecture or fundraising event
 - can focus on awareness, advocacy or 'be hands on' (action)
 - makes a real difference in the lives of the women and girls or their communities
- is based on SMART objectives:

Specific—Measurable—Achievable—Realistic - Timebound

- ⇒ Please be specific about what you do and who you help. If you support a training center, a women's home, or a school etc. please write its name. Writing "we donated money for the training center," is too vague. Which training center? What was its name? What did this training center do?



Similarly, if you write "We helped women in difficult situations." This isn't enough information. Which women? Where do they live? And why is their situation difficult? Always keep in mind **that others who aren't familiar with your work** are reading your PFR and **won't know what you are referring to** if you don't specify names, places and situations.

- ⇒ Please remember that if you are reporting meetings among Soroptimists you should list how this meeting contributed to a project and then describe the project. For example, if you organized a fundraising activity, don't describe the fundraiser, **describe that project that is going to benefit from the money raised.**
- ⇒ Whenever possible, **list all activities related to the same project in one PFR.** If you performed different activities to fundraise and they all support the same project, they **should all be reported together.**
- ⇒ The establishment of a friendship link should not be reported in a PFR **unless both clubs completed a project together.** In that case, the focus of the PFR should be the project that the two clubs worked on.

Bintou Koïta, SIE Programme & Advocacy Officer

FOLLOW-UP SIE PD TRAINING

HOW MUCH IS ONE HOUR WORK OF A SOROPTIMIST WORTH?

During the PD training we have discussed how to improve the PFR system. The following wishes have been proposed by the Unions:

- Questions 11 to 13 need to have a header that says: these 3 questions are only for Single clubs so HQ can help them if necessary.

⇒ **Why:** So that Clubs in Unions can ask for the Union's PD for help.

⇒ **We as PD team have decided to add to this header:** *But we kindly ask all clubs on a voluntary basis to share difficulties you have encountered and solutions that worked for you, so that we may learn from each other, increase efficiency and improve results.*

- In the French translation the word "**problème**" in questions 9 to 12 encountered difficulties (same word for different meanings), so we have decided to change this word in questions number 11 and 12.
- The most important request was that the Union PD's get a confirmation by email as soon a project report is filled in. **This has been implemented. Now not only the PD's but also the project leader and the President receive confirmation once the project is approved.**
- The last suggestion was to find a **better way of reporting projects that have nothing to do with money and fundraising**, but receive in-kind support from members and clubs. We know that these activities happen both on large or very small scales and are in fact the backbone of our organisation. It is obviously possible to report such projects at the moment and just omit the budget questions, but we learned that the current phrasing gives the impression that we think that how much money we have raised is the only important consideration. If this is the case, we need to change our communication on this report system, because after all it is the results that count!

In the next few months, we will discuss with the SIE Programme & Advocacy Team on how to change this PFR system in such a way that you really can report also these wonderful activities, so important to publicise at all levels of our society. We shall return to this in our next Programme and Advocacy News.

But we have a very important question for you all:
> **what is the cost of one hour's work of a Soroptimist?**

My challenge to you all is: come up with ideas on this subject. So that we can make a professional report on our results and determine what monetary value an hour of our work represents!

Marlène van Benthem, SIE Programme Director



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PROGRAMME & ADVOCACY NEWS

35,000 SOROPTIMISTS ARE ENGAGED IN PROGRAMME & ADVOCACY

Soroptimist International Club of Gent Scaldilys

The Soroptimist International Club of Gent Scaldilys in Belgium has a long-standing relation with “CAW” a shelter for women and their children victims of domestic violence. CAW had the ambition to create in their premises a sewing room for the women of the shelter. The Soroptimists from Gent have supported this initiative by organizing a successful fund raising event to provide the material.

Moreover, this project does not stop here: the machines come with sewing classes given by some Club’s members. From personal and professional perspectives, women in the shelter can acquire knowledge and enhance their skills resulting in regaining confidence and economic empowerment



Soroptimist International of Addis Ababa & Soroptimist International Union of the Netherlands

Ambo School Project: A new project initiated by SI Netherlands to support 125 school children in Ambo. Ambo is a small town about 80 kilometers from Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

This project supports 102 children with school materials: uniforms and school supplies.

The Addis Ababa Club also provides support for 30 destitute women, thanks to the help of the Action Fund. Its overall objective is to reduce poverty and enable the women to be self-supportive

through life skills training, Basic Business skills, Provision of sanitary materials and seed money to start their own mini-business. 150 family members of the target beneficiaries will be supported economically.



Soroptimist International Club of Kuwait



Long-term hospitalisation can take a great toll on patients – especially if they are children. In the hope of improving the emotional and

physical wellbeing of children in the most difficult of circumstances, as well as supporting their mothers, **the recently-founded Soroptimist Club of Kuwait has been organising visits to patients at the paediatric wing of Mubarak al-Kabeer Hospital.**

Members distributed gifts including arts, crafts, books, puzzles and games. Three teams took charge of different stages of the project: facilitating communication, collecting and wrapping the presents and organising the visits.

To club hopes that their actions will show the children that they are loved and cherished, even by people they don’t know personally.



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NEWS FROM OUR REPS



SIE is one of the international NGOs that enjoy participatory status at the Council of Europe. What does this mean? **SIE is invited to contribute to the mission of the Council of Europe by informing Soroptimists about its achievements which concern all of us like the Human Rights Convention and other conventions that protect the rights of women and children.** On the other hand we are expected to bring evidence from civil society to the Council of Europe.

accepted that it is on average harder for women than men to protect their rights and to obtain a fair resolution of their grievances. Many of the barriers that women encounter are not directly linked to their gender, but are nonetheless gender specific like illiteracy, poverty, psychological vulnerability due to violence, shame, and lack of legal knowledge and awareness. In addition," barriers such as discriminatory laws and social stigma are gender specific and increase dramatically the access gap" says the report. Much work still needs to be done, and Liri is digging deeply into it at present. For a well-produced brochure from her Division, please, click [here](#).

Bettina Hahne,

SIE representative to the Council of Europe

THE EU ANTI-TRAFFICKING DAY



SIE President elect Renata Trottmann Probst and myself had the opportunity to meet with the Head of the Equality Division of the Council of



The EU Anti-Trafficking Day, marked since 2007 on October 18th, is a yearly reminder that "trafficking is an international

phenomenon, knows no borders, nationality or religion." According to EUROSTAT, women and girls remain by far the largest group (80%) of victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation continues to be the most widespread form (62%) of trafficking in the EU. Each year, this day is also an opportunity to reflect on the responses to trafficking that policy makers, civil society and our own organisation have given so far. **The 35,000 members of SIE have condemned trafficking through many projects: building shelters, providing counselling and rehabilitation services, establishing protected courtrooms, raising public awareness.** We should continue calling on our governments to sign, ratify and implement legal instruments such as **the Istanbul Convention**, which recognises gender violence as one of the root causes of human trafficking.

Europe, Liri Kopaçi di Michele to learn more about the activities of her Unit. Perhaps some of you remember Liri from the SI Istanbul Convention in 2015, where she was a speaker in one of the panel discussions, but she certainly does remember us! Liri who is working mainly on gender equality was incredibly impressed by the "thousands of women from civil society who are all implicated in the fight for women's rights". She saw that Soroptimists care for what she does in Strasbourg. For her, "Soroptimist" has a deep meaning since then.

Lately, her Division has participated in a comprehensive study on equal access to justice, commissioned by UN-Women. Though hard data has not been compiled anywhere yet, it is widely

For more: <http://ec.europa.eu/anti-trafficking/>



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COUNTRY FOCUS

GERMANY



SORORES ON BIKES AT FULL SPEED

Nationwide action on bicycles of Soroptimist International Germany emphasised the right to education for women and girls worldwide



On Saturday, July 30th 2016, Soroptimist International Germany, the largest Union of SIE, launched with the nationwide campaign "**Sorores on bikes at full speed**" a new form of women's movement.

The main target was to increase visibility and awareness of the SI brand nationwide, in accordance with our socio-political engagement. The active and athletic members took great pleasure in performing this task.

Organised in 80 out of 215 SI Clubs Sorores, wearing yellow safety vests branded with the SI Logo, mounted their bicycles and set off on tours together throughout Germany following lakesides and the banks of rivers. These included the Rhine, the Ruhr, the Elbe, the Donau, the Lahn, the Main, and the Moselle.

On the **International Day of Friendship and the World Day against human trafficking**, the German Soroptimists wanted to attract public attention to their concerns and to raise funds. At the start and finish area club-members informed and briefed members of the public on projects that form part of the "self-determined life through education" programme.



One of these programmes is the support for the school project for Syrian refugee children at the Turkish-Syrian border in cooperation with Deutsche Welthungerhilfe e.V. SI Germany has now raised more than 222.320€ in donations. The schools are regularly visited to date and counts more than 1,000 boys and girls.



Ingeborg Dietz, SI Köln-Römerturm
Programme Director, SI Germany

PROGRAMME & ADVOCACY NEWS



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GENERAL NEWS

SI PRESIDENT'S APPEAL 2015-2017

On December 10th, 2015, Yvonne Simpson SI President 2015-2017, launched her appeal to the generosity of our four Federations to support women and girls from Nepal in rebuilding their lives after the devastating earthquake of April and May 2015. **This appeal from the SI President, which is part of the SI theme Education and Leadership, is currently underway and continues next year.** Your support is most welcome.

Your first donations have already helped to develop four major sustainable projects in regions particularly affected by the destruction. Among them, two projects are managed by Soroptimists. They cover the training of teachers, computer literacy courses for discriminated women, scholarships and student accommodation for girls and even a shelter for women and girls victims of traffickers.



Picture courtesy of AHF: Conor Ashleigh

Many other projects are waiting for your generosity to allow Nepalese women and girls to become actresses of reconstruction and change, as well as leaders in their households and communities.

For more information on current projects and on the instructions for donations, please click [HERE](#)

You can download as well the [FLYER](#) for the appeal.

A very big thank you for the donations and the future ones.

Caroline Junier, Committee Member Education and Leadership in Nepal

ITALY & HAITI NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

To contribute to the relief effort in central Italy and Haiti, SIE has recently decided to set up two special funds: "SIE Fund Earthquake Italy 2016" and "Hurricane in Haiti 2016" and President Elisabetta is

appealing to your generosity.

If your bank account is in the **euro zone** (Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain) or if you have a bank account in euro in Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, United Kingdom, Slovakia or Sweden), please donate to Soroptimist International of Europe at CREDIT AGRICOLE DES SAVOIE, 74160 Saint Julien en G – France, SWIFT OR BIC: AGRIFRPP881, IBAN: FR76 1810 6000 3496 7040 0803 955.

If your bank account is **outside the euro zone**, please make your donations to Soroptimist International of Europe at UBS, CH – GENEVA, Switzerland, SWIFT OR BIC: UBSWCHZH80A, IBAN: CH30 0029 0290 IN10 5239 0.

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**1 DONATION
HELPS
EVERYTHING**

SIE PEACE PRIZE 2017



The Board of SIE and the Jury of the 2017 SIE Peace Prize are pleased to send out the call for candidates for the **2017 Soroptimist International of Europe Peace Prize Award.**

For more than ten years now, the Soroptimist International of Europe Peace Prize has **awarded and, perhaps more importantly, celebrated** the **outstanding contributions** of certain **visionary women towards the establishment or maintenance of peace** in their own communities and much further afield.

We invite you to nominate a woman or a group of women from your community, from your country, or from further afield for **this important, and monetarily significant, prize** before **January 15th 2017.**

The Peace Prize will be given at the Soroptimist International of Europe Congress in Florence, Italy, in July 2017.

You can download the call for the nomination of candidates from the SIE Members 'area.



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PROGRAMME & ADVOCACY NEWS

GENERAL NEWS

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF EUROPE 21ST CONGRESS IN FLORENCE!

The Soroptimist International of Europe 21st Congress will take place in Florence, Italy on 14-16 July 2017.

We are delighted to announce that the new website of the SIE Congress in Florence is now

available! We invite you to visit the updated website where you will have access to relevant information on the event, the details of the registration, information on the "excellences" of Florence and many more:

<http://www.soroptimistflorence2017.com>

You can also "like" the dedicated Facebook page, by clicking [HERE](#)



Waiting for you in Florence!



IMPORTANT DATES

- Nov 20** Universal Children's Day
- Nov 25** International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women *
- Dec 10** Human Rights Day *
- Dec 18** International Migrants Day

* *The 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence is an international campaign which takes place each year and runs from 25 November to 10 December*

HAVE COMMENTS?

This is YOUR newsletter! If you have a comment, document, link, or anything else that you would like us to communicate in an upcoming edition of the newsletter, please share it with us! Feel free

to send your news to:
programme@soroptimisteurope.org

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