



# The Link

A global voice for women

4/2012-2013 N° 231



*Governors' Meeting in Berlin*  
**Working Together to  
Bring SIE Forward**

*20<sup>th</sup> SIE Congress*  
**Addressing Food Security  
from Various Angles**

*2013 SIE Peace Prize*  
**Silvana Arbia Honoured  
for Building Peace**

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 58 countries. Soroptimists inspire action and create opportunities to transform the lives of women and girls through a global network of members and international partnerships. Consult our website at [www.soroptimisteurope.org](http://www.soroptimisteurope.org) for more information about the aims, activities and projects that characterise our organisation.

Note from the Editor

FRIENDSHIP IS THE ESSENCE OF SOROPTIMIST

In the interview for this issue, I asked SIE President 2013-2015 Ulla Madsen why should young women become Soroptimists. Her answer perfectly reflects my thoughts (see page 17). However, these past months have demonstrated to me more than ever before what Soroptimist friendship, in particular, means.

This May my husband suffered a debilitating stroke. In the months since this shock and while he has been undergoing intensive therapy, I have experienced an enormous outpouring of support from my Soroptimist colleagues and friends. As I struggle to come to

terms with the consequences of this cruel illness, I am humbled by the friendship and empathy of my friends in and around this organisation. Their words have comforted me and given me strength to tackle the challenges of the future. In the meantime, my husband is making steady progress, and I am optimistic that we will one day return to some semblance of our former active lives, but this whole ordeal has taught me that Soroptimist friendship is not just some hollow cliché: it is the very essence of who we are.

I thank all of you who have supported me without a hint of selfishness. I hope to be a better Soroptimist as a consequence of this experience. And although I will continue to stress the value of our international professional network, the importance of Programme and Advocacy and benefits of our many projects, friendship has now taken on a very special meaning. I sincerely hope I will be as good a friend, as those of you who have stood by me.

Christine Cromwell-Ahrens, Editor, *The Link*

Contents

Governors' Meeting in Berlin	4	Best Practice Awards 2013	18
Evaluation of the Annual Reports 2011-2012	6	SI Changes Its Legal Status	20
SIE Congress 2013	8	Results of Christchurch Appeal	21
SIE Peace Prize 2013	11	Conference on Water Cooperation and Gender Forum in Tajikistan	22
SIE Scholarships 2013-2014	12	Series on Quotas for Women	23
Strategic Plan – Goal 4	14	Federation News	24
Interview at the Change of Insignia	16	News from Unions and Clubs	26



Pages 4-5



Pages 8-11



Page 22



Page 27

**The Link** 4/2012-2013, N° 231 Quarterly magazine of Soroptimist International of Europe, published in English and French  
 President: Kathy Kaaf, Am Römerlager 15, D-53117 Bonn, Germany • Phone: +49 228 67 79 67, Fax: +49 228 67 86 47 • Email: [kathykaaf@arcor.de](mailto:kathykaaf@arcor.de)  
 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](mailto:ccromwell-ahrens@cacs.de)  
 Subscription forms are available on the SIE website [www.soroptimisteurope.org](http://www.soroptimisteurope.org) or from headquarters [siehq@soroptimisteurope.org](mailto:siehq@soroptimisteurope.org). A reminder to subscribers (individuals or clubs): any change of address should be communicated to SIE headquarters in Geneva (72, route de Florissant, CH – 1206 Geneva, Fax: +41 22 789 04 43). If undelivered magazines are returned because of an incorrect address, we cannot assume responsibility for re-sending.  
 Subscription rates (four issues per Soroptimist year starting December to September): Club bulk subscription (minimum five) €10.00 per subscription per language. Individual subscription per language € 12.50 (for airmail please add € 5.50 per subscription).



Cover page

Rwandan Governors Liberata Irambona and Consolée Uwibambe join the 2013 SIE Peace Prizewinner, Silvana Arbia, on stage in Berlin.

Photo: Irene Hell

Dear Soroptimist Friends

SIE President Kathy Kaaf greets guests to the concert in the Jewish Museum on the eve of the ambitious and well-attended Congress in Berlin.

Photo: Regine Peter



During the last weeks of my biennium I have enjoyed receiving many enthusiastic reactions to the Congress in Berlin. Thank you so very much for this positive response. It is extremely rewarding that the tremendous work of the Congress team and hundreds of further Soroptimists has been recognised in this way! This successful gathering of 1,800 Soroptimists from all over the world offered the ideal forum to discuss the theme of Water & Food, make new friendships, cement long-standing ties and enjoy the unusual aspects of Berlin. I am also pleased that so many of you took advantage of the post-Congress tours.

In late August I had the pleasure to be present at the twinning ceremony for the Union of Greece and SI Tirana of Albania. The joining of hands, minds and hearts for our mission and vision is so precious and necessary that I urge you to consider more of these twinings, which are generally between mature and younger Unions, while Friendship Links are between two clubs.

I am most grateful for the many projects which you implemented during these past two years. Such a huge amount of time, energy, love and money was invested to combat the inequalities in this world and to help especially women and girls gain better opportunities. Our success is founded on the freedom each club enjoys to perform a range of advocacy initiatives, programmes and projects with its own dynamism and enthusiasm.

The rotation system of presidencies is good, but the link between the work and achievements of pre-

ceding presidents should be guaranteed. I have been fully committed to promoting the theme of my successor Ulla Madsen, 'Let's Go Green'. I hope she and the new SIE Board will find the existing connections useful to show how environment interacts with water & food. For example: urban gardening is a wonderful way of combining efforts for a cleaner environment with a sense of community, which often results in greater interaction with people of a migrant background. And then there is always the satisfying bonus of being able to eat the things that you have personally planted and grown!

In closing I would like to express my deepest sorrow over the catastrophe in Syria, which once again shows how women and children are so often the innocent victims of conflicts. I am currently investigating if we can provide some kind of immediate and/or long-term aid to the women and girls in refugee camps. Of course, individual Soroptimists may want to donate to aid organisations, and I can recommend our partner for the Congress, the Welthungerhilfe, as one of the few organisations offering direct help in Syria. If someone has particular contacts in these areas who would like to partner with us, please let the Board know.

In my final President's Letter I would like to thank all of you who contributed to the success of my biennium, above all the SIE Board and the HQ staff at Geneva who have worked so hard to make our organisation fit for purpose. I would also like to express my gratitude to you, dear members of SIE, who offered me your friendship and your support.

I wish my successor Ulla Madsen and her team strength, wisdom and the luck you need to make the best out of your good intentions for a rewarding term of office.

Let me end with the adages I found so suitable regarding the effects of teamwork which is inalienable in a network like ours:

Teamwork divides the task and doubles the success. Teamwork is working together – even when apart. None of us is as smart as all of us.

Take care and let us keep in touch through our work for the best of women's networks: Soroptimist!

Yours

Kathy Kaaf, SIE President 2011-2013



# WORKING TOGETHER TO BRING SIE FORWARD

This year's Governors' Meeting played host to a large international delegation, several Past SIE Presidents, 49 Governors, most Union Presidents and numerous Silent Observers.



The agenda of this year's Governors' Meeting was extremely full and the related documents extensive. But this annual conference is crucial for the business of our Federation, and indeed our organisation as a whole.



The venue of the Meeting from 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> July was the Maritim Hotel in Berlin. But the scene was set for business at the Governors' information session on the eve of the Meeting at which the new Strategic Model was explained in detail. In a different room SI Germany hosted an exchange among Union Presidents.

SIE President Kathy Kaaf welcomed the special guests in attendance, who included virtually every key figure in our international organisation, several Past Federation Presidents and a number of SI officers. After the roll call and candle ceremony, the 49 governors settled down to business in the presence of numerous Union Presidents and Silent Observers.

## Elections and Appointments

The first order of business was the elections. Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis was voted SIE President elect 2013-2015. The four Vice Presidents are Tonny Filedt Kok-Weimar (1<sup>st</sup> Vice President), Françoise Murebwayire, Ulrike Neubert and Elena Savu. Programme Director is Christine Peer; Assistant Programme Director Emine Erdem. Verena von Tresckow-Bronke was elected Finance Controller. Renata Trottmann Probst is the new Constitution Chair with Mariann Jørn-Hansen Egholm and Judica van Riessen joining her on the Committee. Maria Luisa Frosio will continue as Extension Chair, with Asha Abdulrahman and Mihaela Noditi as her Committee colleagues. The Scholarship Committee consists of Mariana Abrantes de Sousa (Chair), Linda Schang and Hava Shurany-Feldman.

All of the appointees were confirmed in their positions. They are: Secretary General Birthe Sonne-Schmidt, Communications Officer Gerda Huisman, Editor of *The Link* Christine Cromwell-



Three SIE Presidents (from left) President 2013-2015 Ulla Madsen, President 2015-2017 Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis and President 2011-2013 Kathy Kaaf.



SI Italy President Flavia Pozzolini and Italian Governor Luisella Bellinasso proudly display their special extension commendation.

Ahrens, Liaison Africa Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, OSCE Representatives Irena Coufalova and Véra Maria Gregor, EWL Representative Renate Smith and Council of Europe Representatives Françoise Ferey and Bettina Hahne.

## Discussion on proposed charity status

One of the most highly anticipated topics on the agenda was the SI proposal to change the legal status of Soroptimist International to a charity. The SIE Board had prepared a SWOT analysis based on input from SI for their own decision-making process and shared it with the Governors. Many European Soroptimists were concerned about this step, so with the support of the Governors, the SIE Board reached the decision to vote against the change to charity status (for results see page 20).

The agenda continued with the vote on proposals, presentations of and additions to the reports of the SIE officers, Committee Chairs and those responsible for SIE funds as well as an account by the SIE HQ Executive Director Anne

Simon. The Board accepted the suggestion of the Action Fund to distribute grants to 12 Clubs, totalling € 48,274, and the Governors adopted this proposal. The Governors also approved the 17 grantees who are to be given SIE scholarships for a total of € 110,000, and the candidate for the Dr Suzanne Noël Scholarship received € 2,000, (see details on pages 12-13).

## Positive response to Strategic Plan

Thursday's proceedings began with remarks by SI President Alice Wells. The agenda then continued with SIE matters. The response to the work of Task Force on Structure was generally positive, and members seem to be enthusiastic about the new Strategic Model and Plan.

Extension Committee Chair Maria-Luisa Frosio presented this year's Extension Award to SI Germany and a special commendation award to SI Italy. VP Gerda Huisman then gave some highlights from the Coordinated Report (see article on pages 6-7).

Reports on Mentoring, Training, Twinning of Mature and Young Unions, Friendship Links and Open Heart - Open Door followed, before Communication matters were discussed. Afterwards, SIE representatives to European organisation reported on their Advocacy efforts.

SIE President elect Ulla Madsen thanked SIE President Kathy for her dedication and achievements. She then went on to reveal her biennium theme, which will be presented in detail in the next issue of *The Link*.

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 the draft.

The next Governors' Meeting will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark from 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

SIE President Kathy Kaaf (right) and SIE Extension Committee Chair Maria-Luisa Frosio praised SI



Germany for its outstanding Extension, which earned the Union this year's top award.



# DETAILING OUR STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

As announced at the Governors' Meeting in Budapest last year, the Annual Report form for Unions and Single Clubs has been completely reviewed. The questions are now aligned according to the five Goals of the new SIE Strategic Plan.

The SIE Board thanks the 24 Unions and 60 Single Clubs for the details of their activities, development, challenges and successes, which are an invaluable source of information for evaluation and discussion on policies and strategies.

In contrast to previous years, it was decided not to create a so-called Coordinated Report, which was merely a collection of all the individual reports submitted, without an analysis or evaluation. Instead, we have collected the quantitative and qualitative data from the reports for the various Goals or aspects thereof. The statistics related to the themes of scholarships and mentoring programmes, Programme and Advocacy and Institutional Development/Extension are presented in seven documents. They tell us, for example, that the figures for membership have hardly changed in the past year: there is again a slight decrease in the total number of members, while the number of Clubs in the danger zone is more or less the same. Unions inaugurated eleven Clubs, but another twelve had to close down.

### Over €7 million in funding

In the section on Programme, numbers on scholarships and mentoring programmes offered by Unions and Single Clubs were provided for the first time. They will form the basis for a further investigation into the content of these programmes and the possibilities of collaboration and sharing

best practices. Figures on projects had to be specified for each of the five Objectives of Goal 1. We appreciate that this exercise presented occasional difficulties to the reporters, especially Unions, as the report forms were distributed too late for them to ask their Clubs to follow the same method of reporting. Adding up the amounts of funds spent by Single Clubs and Unions on scholarships and programme, and the grants from the various Federation funds, the amount reaches the grand total of € 7,241,684, a sum which all of us should proudly tell the world!

### A gold mine of information

Two more lists were compiled: one of outstanding projects – one project proposed by each Union and Single Club, and another one of the feedback contained in the comments and observations made in relation to each of the five Goals. This last one is a mine of information on Clubs' and Unions' achievements and setbacks, prosperity and misfortune, problems faced and solved, questions and proposals. Undoubtedly, some readers may be surprised to discover that their Clubs and Unions face the same problems as many others do, or to learn about the creative solutions that have been found, while others may be inspired by the Presidents' observations and proposals to improve their own Club's or Union's programme and procedures. The Board meanwhile will carefully study all

these comments and consider how to work them into their policymaking, in the means and contents of communication, such as the preparation of guidelines, the content of the website, extension work, and the improvement of communication at all levels of our organisation.

### Further revisions possible

To sum up: the adapted report form resulted in more structured and relevant information, though further improvements should still be possible, most importantly in the exactness and completeness of the figures. For example, the provenance of financial contributions should be clarified so as not to count the same amounts twice, i.e. by both the donating and the receiving party. Another factor is the time spent by members on projects: these too are invaluable contributions and should be converted into a financial equivalent. Very importantly, to get an optimal insight into the achievements made by our members, the reporting discipline needs to improve. Over 30% of the Single Clubs did not submit a report, and though all Unions did, it is highly probable that many Clubs did not report to their Union, which causes the final result of over € 7 million to be too low.

The PowerPoint presentation summarising the Annual Reports for the Governors and the underlying documents may be found in the members' area of the website [www.soroptimist-europe.org](http://www.soroptimist-europe.org), in the section Downloads. Then go to Governors' Meetings -> GM 2013 - Reports of the SIE Board -> Goal 4, Extension and see items under no. 13 b) ii.

Gerda C. Huisman, SIE Vice President 2011-2013

### MENTORING PROGRAMMES

8 Unions Total		
mentorships offered	111	111
Soroptimist mentors	129	
non-Soroptimist mentors	6	135
Soroptimist mentees	100	
non-Soroptimist mentees	175	275

20 Clubs		
mentorships offered	149	149
Soroptimist mentors	59	
non-Soroptimist mentors	16	75
Soroptimist mentees	141	
non-Soroptimist mentees	953	1094

### TOTAL OF FUNDS SPENT

Unions and Single Clubs	
Scholarships	€ 433,791
Programme	€ 6,572,881

Federation	
Action Fund	€ 69,568
Disaster Fund	€ 30,109
Roswitha Ott Fund	€ 24,835
Scholarship Fund	€ 110,500

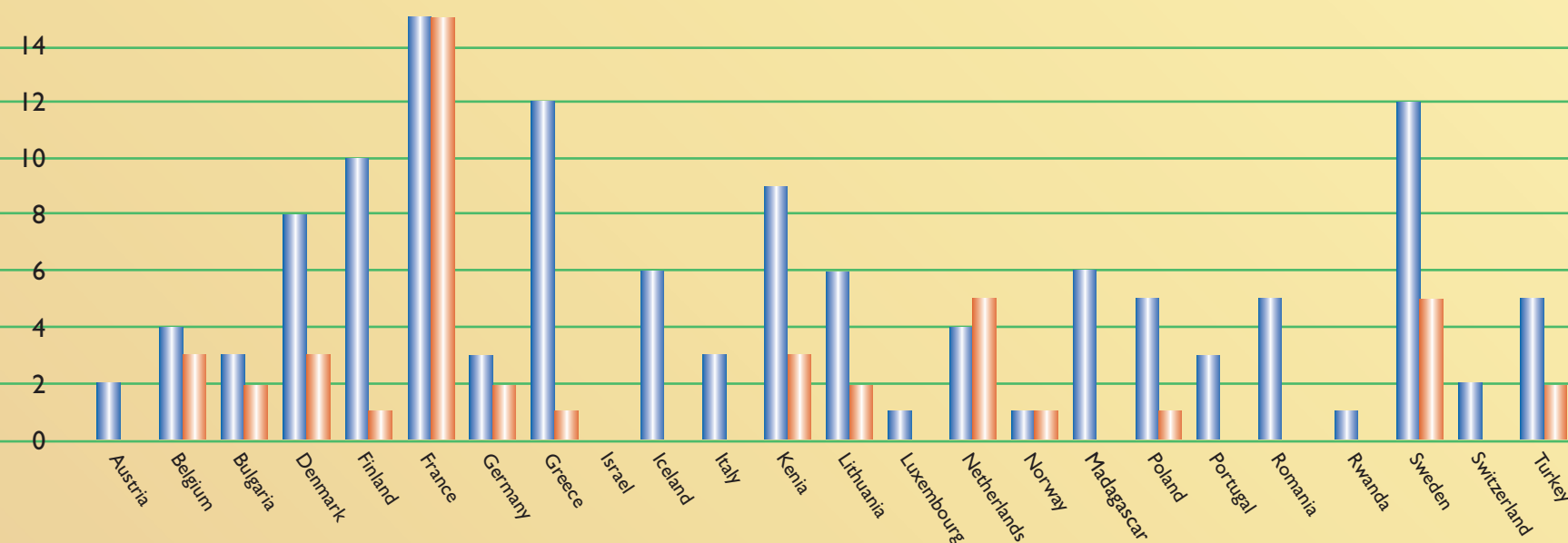
€ 7,241,684

### GOALS 1 AND 2 total number of projects

2011-2012	6741	(Goal 1: 5613 – Goal 2: 1128)
2010-2011	5115	
2009-2010	2407	

### GOAL 1 total amounts spent

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







After a performance by the Girls' Choir of Berlin and flag presentation, the audience stood for the candle ceremony.

Photo: Nadja Nickerl/Irena Wille

## ADDRESSING FOOD SECURITY FROM VARIOUS ANGLES

*After years of preparation, SIE President Kathy Kaaf, the Organising Committee under the direction of Heide Ibach and countless helpers welcomed Soroptimists from all over the world to the 20<sup>th</sup> SIE Congress, held at the Maritim Hotel in Berlin from 12<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> July. Participants enjoyed three days of unforgettable impressions, interesting talks, practical advice and inspiring moments – all in the spirit of friendship.*

The prelude to the official programme on Thursday evening was a multicultural evening of Music and Poetry in one of the most awe-inspiring and symbolic venues that Berlin has to offer: the Jewish Museum. The Duo *Wajlu* with accordion player Katharina Mütter and violinist and singer Roswitha Dasch offered an **exhilarating potpourri**



of Yiddish and gipsy lyrics and musical pieces in the original East/Central European languages. Together with Nora Gomringer, a leading German lyricist, they soon communicated their enthusiasm to the audience. During the interval the guests enjoyed a drink in the inner garden and shared a time of exchange and meditation in this highly stirring commemorative venue of Judaism.

### From a scientific lecture to rousing sing-alongs

Day one of the Congress offered a versatile programme with something for everyone's taste. The Berlin Girl's choir opened proceedings with the flag ceremony and unique performance. Dilek Kolat, Berlin Senator for Labour, Integration and Women's Issues, welcomed the 1,800 participants to the German capital. SIE President Kathy Kaaf then set the stage for the coming programme with her introductory address on the theme, 'Visions of Paradise – Soroptimists Go for Water and Food'.

Bärbel Dieckmann, President of the aid organisation *Welthungerhilfe*, underlined the role of women in securing food for families and communities. She also made a case for establishing access to sufficient food as a human right. Her informative speech was followed by a video message from Professor José Graziano da Silva, Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO).

Dr Ellen Hoffman, Lecturer at the Faculty for Organic Agricultural Sciences, University of Kassel, used case studies from West African Sahel and the Dzungarian Basin in Asia to illustrate a highly academic analysis of how to strengthen livelihood of small farming operations through innovations in water-efficient food production.

Next on the programme was Dr Auma Obama, Author and President of her Foundation Sauti Kuu for disadvantaged young people. Her passion for empowering young people through good nutrition, sports activities and high-quality education was clearly evident as she explained the successes of her project in rural Kenya.

Before the lunch break, entertainer Katrin Höpker invited the auditorium to join her in a rousing sing-along – the perfect touch to raise the spirits for lunch among friends!

The afternoon of Theme Sessions offered participants the chance to learn more about subjects geared to their individual tastes and needs. Pupils from the Kaiser-Heinrich Gymnasium in Bamberg enthusiastically presented their projects in German, English and French. Under the supervision of their teachers, the young people actively cultivated, gardened and processed local and traditional products, while also learning about developments in European laws. Planning and working in and with nature for their project clearly raised the pupils' awareness.



At the session **'Eat Yourself Well'**, nutritionists Professor Anja Kroke and Dorle Grünewald-Funk

reminded us of the main elements of proper nutrition and the connection between diet and health. While 1.4 billion people in the world are affected by hunger, another 1.4 billion people suffer from obesity.

This full and informative day rounded off with a truly creative evening programme, organised and implemented by Berlin and Postdam Soroptimists. The Hosting Friends tours ranged from tourist highlights to a personalised visit to an industrial factory.

### Food for thought continued on Saturday

The second day of the programme started off with Selina Juul's lively talk on food waste. Her shocking facts and figures gave everyone cause to rethink habits. She then joined the panel including Dr Diana Bracco, Chair of Expo 2015 in Milan and CEO of Bracco Healthcare; Professor Werner Kloas, Head of the Leibniz Institute of Freshwater Ecology Inland Fisheries and winner of the German Sustainable Development Research Prize 2012; and Dr Ingrid Wüning Tschol, Senior Vice President and Head of Health and Science of the Robert Bosch Foundation. Under the expert moderation of journalist Astrid Oldekop, the panellists discussed a wide range of challenges and issues centred on the topic 'Too hungry, too satisfied'.

On a lighter note, the audience watched per video transmission as Maritim chef Alexander Sommerfeldt oversaw the food preparation of his young assistants who used produce from their own school gardens. The pupils then marched into the auditorium to present their dishes. →

SIE Congress 2013



Dr Auma Obama's commitment to helping the youth of Africa inspired the auditorium.

Photo: Regine Peter



**Moving tribute to the late  
IPP Eliane Lagasse**

After the coffee break the conference hall President elect Ulla Madsen introduced a moving video tribute to IPP Dr Eliane Lagasse, which celebrated her many accomplishments as a longstanding leader of our organisation and highlighted the projects implemented in Africa during her presidency 2009-2011. In response, the entire audience stood in respectful silence. The Congress Committee later presented Eliane's husband, Pierre De Maeschalck, with a cheque for the foundation established in her name.

SIE President Kathy then delivered an overview of her biennium, during which SIE gained 34 new clubs. She thanked her Board and all those who worked so hard towards its success.

SI President Alice Wells and each of the Federation Presidents – Raquel Arreola Ruiz for SIA; Pat Black for SIGBI, and Siew Yong Gnanalingam for SISWP – subsequently greeted participants and summarised their activities. All of these presentations are available on the Congress website: [www.soroptimist.waterandfood.eu/en/press.html](http://www.soroptimist.waterandfood.eu/en/press.html).

In their afternoon theme session, SIE Programme Director Ulrike Neubert, assisted by APD Stina Söderlund, explained in a concise and professional manner how to improve Clubs' project design and implementation. She walked us through the whole process and explained the elements of project formulation and implementation. However, she emphasised evaluation and reporting. After all, each project's goal should be to achieve sustainable results!

Organic farming was another of the afternoon's popular theme sessions. Dressed in their traditional garments, Kenyans Njeri Kinuthia, Dr Alice

Special thanks to SI Germany for its enormous support for the SIE Congress.  
Photo: Regine Peter



**SIE Congress 2013**



In a theme session Alice Boumann of the Women for Water Partnership (left) and SIE VP Asha Abdulrahman discuss how we can network more efficiently. Photo: Irene Hell



Soroptimists from Bamberg, Madgeburg and Bochum won 'KUULLus' by sculptor Editha Pröbstle that there raffled off at the gala dinner. Photo: Nadja Nickerl/Irena Wille

Oluoko-Odingo and Rose Makunzo Mwangi entered the room dancing and singing. Women sing this particular song while doing farm work; it means, 'we are the women of the soil'. Their projects are aimed at combining typical African farming methods with innovative techniques that help keep the soil healthy, protect the ecosystem and enhance food production.

Saturday evening SI Germany President Roswitha Briel greeted the throng in the *Palais am Funkturm*, where the guests enjoyed a drink at the invitations of the German Union. The gala dinner under the motto *Töne, Tänze, Temperament* gave Soroptimists the opportunity to chat with friends, meet new people, enjoy the music of the live band or simply stroll through the garden.

**Announcing Best Practice Awards and the Peace Prize**

Katja Flieger began proceedings with a witty and concise summary of the theme sessions. SIE President Kathy then delivered her photo reportage of the vast number of creative and successful Water and Food projects, realised by Soroptimists throughout the Federation. This was the perfect

**SIE Peace Prize 2013**

lead-in to the announcement and presentation of the SIE Best Practice Awards (see pages 18-19). Subsequently, the infectious enthusiasm of the delegation from Turkey and a video showing Istanbul's cultural diversity whet everyone's appetite for the SI Convention 2015.

The crowning touch of the Congress was the presentation of the 2013 SIE Peace Prize to Italian judge Silvana Arbia (see adjacent article).

As tradition dictates, SIE President Kathy then officially passed the baton to her successor Ulla Madsen. A big fan of advocacy and our motto 'A Global Voice for Women' Ulla underscored the

importance of our 'Educate to Lead' efforts, empowering women and combating violence against women. In addition to these priority objectives, her biennium theme will have a focus on sustainable development and the environment.

Finally, Roswitha Ott, widely known as 'Mama Africa', was joined by two young women on stage to read the Final Declaration, also available on the Congress website. The ideal closing to a wonderful weekend with multiple 'Visions of Paradise'!

Contributors: Françoise Ferey, Cornelia Schöner, Herta Krasnitz, Gabriele Fluegge and Anne Simon

**SILVANA ARBIA  
HONOURED FOR  
BUILDING PEACE**



Silvana Arbia (left) received the Peace Prize certificate from SIE President elect Ulla Madsen. Photo: Irene Hell

As the Chair of the Peace Prize Jury 2013, it was a great pleasure and honour for me to announce the winner of the SIE Peace Prize 2013 at the Congress on 14<sup>th</sup> July, 2013: Silvana Arbia, an Italian judge and until recently Registrar of the International Court in The Hague. As Senior Trial Attorney and later Chief of Prosecutions for the United Nations International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), she dedicated nearly a decade of her life to re-establishing justice in Rwanda from 1999-2008.

Silvana Arbia played a key role in making people's stories heard and convicting those responsible for the atrocities committed in Rwanda in 1994, including genocide, crimes against humanity and using rape as a weapon of war. Her hope and desire was to repair the unforgivable injustice done when the world stood by as these horrific crimes took place in Rwanda.

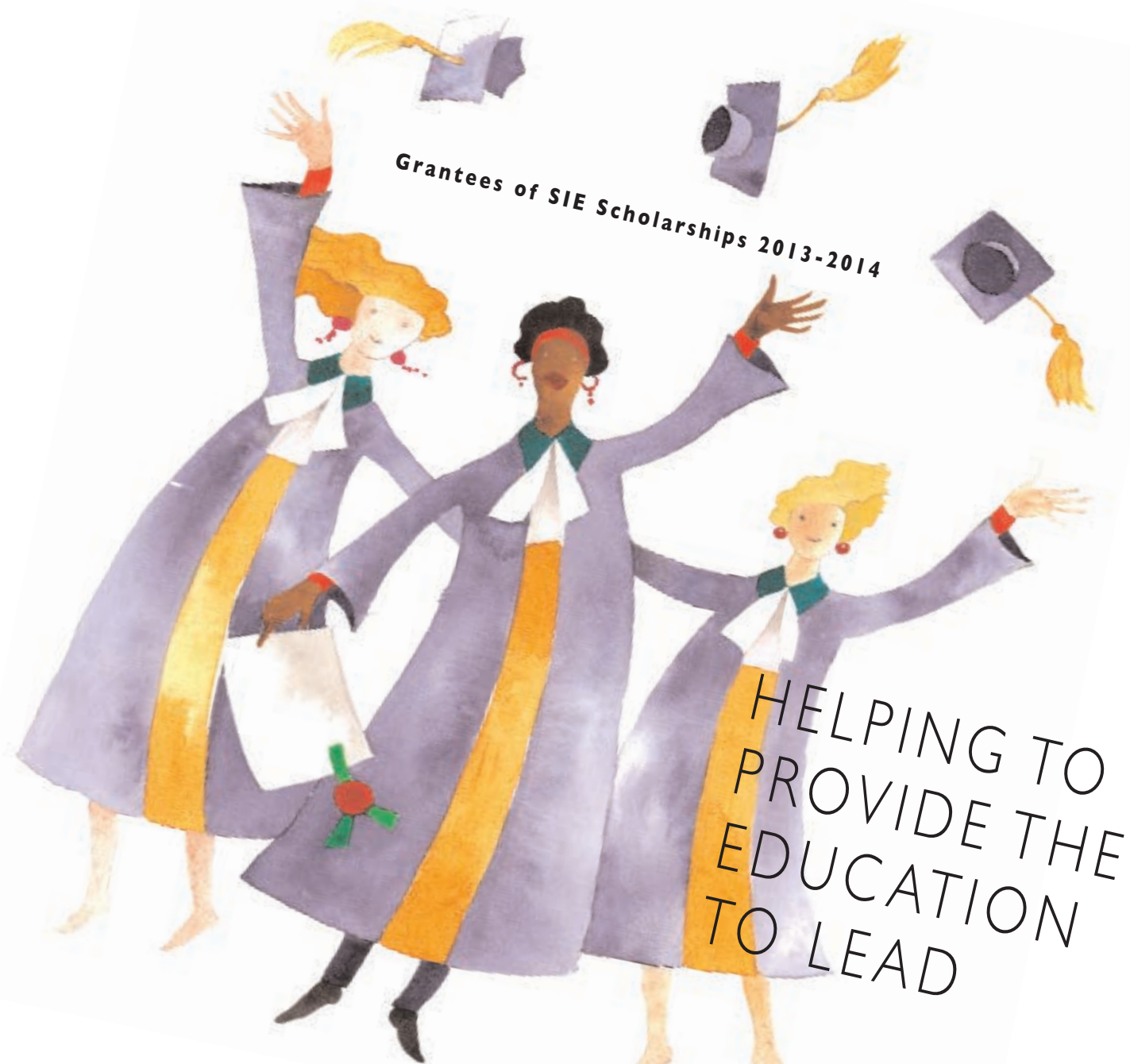
Silvana Arbia was leader of a trial team which secured 12 indictments and finalised 22 pre-trial cases. Her book, *While the World was Watching*, was published in November 2011 and won the 2012 'Levi Award', a prestigious Italian literary award. 'I decided to write this book to narrate the nine years I spent in Africa, dedicated to prosecuting those responsible for the innumerable episodes of genocide that resulted in the massacre of one million people in the three months from April to July 1994,' says Silvana Arbia. 'I didn't arrive there by chance, but by choice. After long years of working as a judge in Italy, I felt a great desire to contribute to achieving

international justice in one of the most tormented countries of the world.'

Silvana Arbia is a remarkable woman who, by leading the judicial settlement to get the perpetrators convicted of the massacre in Rwanda, showed the world that justice can be served. Through her exceptional effort for justice and peace, she made a difference to so many people in Rwanda and the rest of world. To hear Silvana Arbia's heartfelt acceptance speech, go to [www.soroptimistseurope.org](http://www.soroptimistseurope.org). The 2013 Peace Prize jury also consisted of Bolette Christensen, CEO of Child Foundation Denmark, Françoise Ferey, SIE representative to the Council of Europe, Trine Jensen, Vice Chair of the Board of the Danish United Nations Association and Mimi Jakobsen, General Secretary of Save the Children, Denmark. The prize itself comprises an endowment of €20,000, a specially made statue and an official certificate.

Ulla Madsen, SIE President elect 2011-2013





SIE Scholarship Committee Chair Annabeth Studer Meyer announced the recipients of the Scholarship programme 2013-2014 at the Governors' Meeting in Berlin in July. The following is a summary of the successful grantees. A more detailed description is available on the SIE website.

The Committee received 40 applications for SIE Scholarships 2013-2014, including those of the Dr Suzanne Noël Scholarship. The total sum requested was about € 400,000; the amount available was € 110,000. Sadly, it was clear that we were going to have to disappoint some applicants. We discussed every application thoroughly and made our choices based on qualifications and the information provided. Our recommendations were proposed to the Board and ultimately presented to the Governors for approval. We are very sorry not to be able to accept more requests.

**SI Austria – € 5,500:** The 24-year-old candidate is pursuing a Master of Arts Programme in Peace Development, Security and International Conflict Transformation to support in her daily work with female sex workers affected by violence and exploitation.

**SI Denmark – € 10,000:** The 40-year-old working physiotherapist needs support for her full-time studies for a Masters in Health Science.

**SI Greece – € 2,000:** The grant for the self-employed physiotherapist candidate will fund a special physiotherapy course in Germany aimed at

infants, children and adults suffering from disturbances of the postural and movement apparatus. A Soroptimist from Munich will provide home hospitality.

**SI Iceland – € 6,000:** The scholarship will allow the nominated gynaecologist to finish her last year of studies towards a PhD in the Polycystic Ovary Syndrome and the risk of endometrial cancer, which is a critical subject for women.

**SI Iceland – € 8,000:** The candidate is working on a PhD in Public Health Sciences focusing on epidemiology of women's health. The scholarship will help fund her research on sexual violence exposure and its effects on subsequent pregnancy and birth outcomes.

**SI Israel – € 6,400:** The 34-year-old PhD candidate in Sociology and Anthropology is one of the first Palestinian women to study Zionist history. She plans to teach at an Israeli University, thus promoting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

**SI Italy – € 4,000:** The candidate of Romanian origin and working as an Italian teacher is doing a Masters Degree in specialised legal translation. She already received different Italian prizes for her work. The grant will cover tuition and software for a special Internet course offered by the University of Genoa.

**SI Italy – € 10,000:** This student is now in her second year of a two-year course at the Boston Ballet School. She aims to be professional ballet dancer. From 2008-2012 she was accepted by several famous ballet schools, including Bolshoi Ballet Academy, and has already been awarded numerous prizes.

**SI Kenya – € 5,500:** The 51-year-old nominee is working towards a PhD in Disaster Management, Major Food Security, which aims to help small-scale farmers reach higher productivity and become self-reliant citizens. A PhD will enable the grantee to teach at local universities.

**SI Lithuania – € 10,000:** The candidate's PhD project in Law focuses on an analysis of American financial literacy programmes and practices in trying to mitigate Lithuania's financial woes, with gender aspects and women's issues as a special interest. After completion, she hopes to continue her research in Lithuania.

**SI Madagascar – € 8,000:** The grantee with a Masters in Public Law and Political Science would like to study 'law and security of maritime and oceanic activities' to mitigate ecological problems in Madagascar. These studies are not offered in her country, and women have not been involved in this important subject for Madagascar so far.

**SI Portugal – € 8,500:** After working for many years with immigrant communities in social services, the candidate chose to pursue a higher education. The grant will help her finish the last year of her Masters studies in Social Service.

**SI Romania – € 7,000:** The candidate is in her last year of a PhD in French Literature, studying at the University of Craiova in collaboration with the Université Blaise Pascal at Clermont-Ferrand, France. On completion of her PhD, she intends to teach French in her home country.

**SC Yerevan – € 1,450:** The 19-year-old candidate will receive help for the fees towards her Bachelors degree in Management at the Université Française in Armenia.

**SC Tallinn/Estonia – € 7,000:** The scholarship is awarded to a 23-year-old candidate who is in her last year of Masters studies in Management and Economics of Innovation at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. The study programme examines how technological and business innovations affect industries, their competitiveness and impact on society and gives the applicant the opportunity to build a professional international network.

**SC Struga, FYROMacedonia – € 6,000:** The grantee is in her last year in an Executive MBA Programme. She wants to transform her small family company into barrel-making enterprise and to open a Centre for Development of Emotional Intelligence in her country.

**SC Kegums-Ogre/Latvia – € 2,000:** The grantee has a BS in Philology and is participating in a post-graduate programme on Social Process Analysis and Management. This study will open up new opportunities for her future career.

#### Dr. Suzanne Noël Scholarship

**SI Vlnius Old Town, SI Lithuania – € 2,000:** The grantee is a specialized plastic and reconstructive surgeon and intends to participate in the five-day Regensburg Course in Facial Plastic Surgery in collaboration with the US Mayo Clinic.

The Governors elected a new SIE Scholarship Committee for 2013-2015. I would like to thank all Soroptimists with whom I have had fruitful discussions and contacts in the past four years. I am sure SIE Scholarships will remain an important tool to improve the lives of women through SI's long-term Educate to Lead theme.

*Annabeth Studer Meyer*  
SIE Scholarship Committee Chair 2009-2013





# BUILDING MEMBERSHIP TO

Our series on the Strategic Plan continues with a description of Goal 4 – Institutional Development/Extension. It is a key issue facing all service organisations today.

Next year we will celebrate the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Soroptimism in Europe. From the very beginning, Extension has been a vital focus of our organisation. And today more than ever, Clubs, Unions, Federations and Soroptimist International all ask the same question: How can we increase our membership? Although Soroptimist International as a whole has been losing members for the past 10 years, SIE has seen growth – except for the past two years when we have also begun to lose members.

## Goal 4 – Institutional Development /Extension

Soroptimist International will be a thriving organisation of Unions and Clubs with members committed to its vision and mission.

The Task Force on Structure together with the Extension Committee identified a few potential threats to Soroptimist, such as the current socio-economic turmoil and its effects on every organisation around the globe, the growing competition of associations with similar goals as ours, the ageing Soroptimist community and the challenges of member recruitment and Club retention. So what can we do to make it a feasible choice to be a Soroptimist?

An Action Plan for each Objective is summarised below to show some of the key focus areas currently being addressed by the Institutional Development /Extension Committee and the two Vice Presidents.

### Objective 1

#### Develop membership and increase the total number of Unions and Single Clubs

Shift the focus from charity to active involvement and mentoring, stimulate the clubs as professional network and show the international connection as a plus for professional, young(er) women

- Create more visibility, for example through events like the Congress in Berlin
- Promote the work done by members and address the ‘What’s in it for me’ factor
- Further develop the membership database to include professional data as a strong networking tool
- Support the development of an African Federation

Promote the organisation by delivering clear and simple statements comprehensible for all

- Disseminate attractive messages as developed by the Communications' group
- Develop a recruitment campaign: Every (professional) Soroptimist will use her other network(s) to champion the organisation every time she has an opportunity

Promote the creation of new clubs rather than reviving old clubs with ageing members, as long as the rationale for the creation of new clubs is not driven by personality clashes, etc.

- Make Extension-related information more accessible to all so that a greater number of members can be on message with respect to recruiting and retention

### Objective 2

#### Enhance benefits for members in order to increase their commitment and loyalty to the organisation

Stimulate contacting other clubs when travelling abroad

- Promote database usage – engaging members to build new friendships with like-minded women
- Encourage feedback and broader exchanges on both Clubs’ challenges and successes
- Finalise the calendar and messaging system to disseminate information and promote efforts

### Objective 3

#### Heighten member satisfaction with the Soroptimist experience

Assess retaining challenges and opportunities

- Create an online ‘Member Satisfaction Survey’ (that also allows for more detailed comments to be shared)
- Further develop an Extension Training, finalize and promote the membership manual

### Objective 4

#### Create ways in which interested women can engage with SIE

Every Soroptimist will at any given time know how many women and children they have been helping/have made a difference for and how much money was involved

# SECURE THE FUTURE



## THE SIE STRATEGIC MODEL

- Display monthly facts and figures on Soroptimist actions on the website
- Promote the SI Global Impact Report

In order to stem the decline in our membership numbers, particularly at a time when our association faces a number of challenges, we must value fully the reasons for our staying together – that is:

- > forming an integral part of an international organisation capable of developing in different directions, from projects to friendly and professional contacts;
- > belonging to a network of women able to address issues and problems related to civil society and to

achieve important results; and

> being a reference point for many clubs and many Soroptimists in disadvantaged areas, i.e. clubs and Soroptimists waging daily battle for rights that are vested in a number of countries but still must be conquered day after day in many parts of the world.

Thus, Extension – a personal challenge for all Soroptimists – is a crucial tool at our disposal, to be used both to retain existing members and to grow our membership, all the while reconciling tradition and innovation in order to fulfil our mission at best.

*Hafdis Karlsdottir, Chair of the Structure and Strategy Task Force, and Maria Luisa Frosio, SIE Extension Committee Chair*



After two eventful and productive years, Kathy Kaaf will step down as SIE President on 30<sup>th</sup> September.

She and her successor Ulla Madsen took a few moments to reflect on the work accomplished, the tasks ahead and Soroptimist on the whole.

SIE President 2011-2013 Kathy Kaaf



Photo: Nadja Nicker/Trena Wille

SIE President 2013-2015 Ulla Madsen



### Interview at the Change of Insignia

## 'SOROPTIMISTS AND SOROPTIMIST HAVE A LOT TO OFFER!'

>>> **KATHY**, every President adds her own personal touch to the job. How would you summarise the most important legacy of your biennium?

The SIE Congress in Berlin – with some 1,800 Soroptimist and non-Soroptimist participants and its substantial thematic work on Water & Food, involving many Soroptimists as contributors and stakeholders – is surely the most important legacy. Apart from that, I am proud of the positive atmosphere and matter-of-fact style of my Board and Governors' Meetings. We quickly

developed an excellent spirit of teamwork as each Board Member found her individual 'niche'.

As a journalist, I place great importance on communication. In my Monthly Letters I informed the Presidents, Governors and Board Members on topical issues relevant to our Federation, crucial events pertinent to women as well as trends and sociopolitical developments. My President's messages, transmitted via our SIE website, in some cases as video clips, reached both Soroptimists and non-Soroptimists. Video messages were an ideal means of contact when I could not attend an event in person.

Expressive photos have helped promote Water & Food projects and motivate others to initiate similar activities of their own.

I hope our African Soroptimists have seen that I believe in Africa's future and in the future of an African Federation, and that we Soroptimists should be **at the spearhead** of a movement to invest in women's education and leadership on this continent.

>>> **What were the proudest moments of your presidency?**

I do not feel proud, but rather deeply grateful for what I was able to achieve with the help of so many: the Board, SIE HQ staff and Congress team. I am also thrilled about the countless 'Water & Food' projects. So many Soroptimists have worked hard to improve women's living conditions and have had a positive impact on families and whole communities in this context.

>>> **With your experience as an SIE President, what do you see as the biggest challenges facing our organisation?**

We have to recruit more members internationally. Each of us has to be an ambassador for SI. We should make better use of our contacts, especially with women in the public eye who are influential at all levels of society. We should be more professional in making ourselves known and in welcoming potential members to our club meetings. After all, it is our job to show them that Soroptimists and Soroptimist have a lot to offer!

>>> **ULLA**, after six years of water themes, you have decided to focus on environmental issues in your biennium. How can Soroptimists make their own mark on such a popular subject?

First, we must differentiate between our Soroptimist mission or our global role and biennium themes, such as 'Lets Go Green'. Our Strategic Plan sets our priorities and our engagement to improve the lives of women and girls through Education, Leadership and Empowerment. During my presidency, I intend to work towards the delivery of this ambitious plan and will support every project along these objectives. But as a biennium campaign, I will also encourage Clubs and members to look at what I consider is our individual and collective responsibility as an organisation: to ensure sus-

tainable development and to protect our planet. Working for a healthier environment is in line with the various 'water' themes of my predecessors. In past years, Soroptimists have proved to be highly creative in realising projects that serve their communities – by creating gardens, building sanitation facilities, drilling wells etc. But we must recognise that resources are scarce and not properly conserved. 'Working for a healthy environment' addresses the longer term and our engagement and responsibility as world citizens.

Projects can focus on protecting and preserving our earth by avoiding waste, recycling, saving energy, reducing pollution, promoting public transport, protecting and creating parks, increasing solar use etc.

Through 'Advocacy' Soroptimists can and should take the additional approach of influencing their local or national authorities to implement sustainable development in their communities.

>>> **Won't it be difficult to measure our impact on this broad theme?**

Unfortunately, the measurable impact would be evident by our inaction!

>>> **Why should a young professional woman become a Soroptimist in today's world?**

Soroptimist International offers a unique worldwide network of professionally, socially and culturally diverse women. A club provides wonderful opportunities to develop new friendships and to share and gain knowledge and experiences with other members. But equally important in times when individualism reigns is experiencing how our clubs and members truly help improve the lives of women and girls through projects and cooperation.

>>> **How do you hope to grow SIE in the coming years?**

As President Elect, I actively contributed to the Task Force on Strategy and Structure. I believe that we now have the appropriate organisational model to further develop our organisation. Through a proper focus on extension, together with the on-going delivery of meaningful activities combined with good communication to make our voices heard, I am convinced we will attract new members.



# RECOGNISING OUTSTANDING PROJECTS

Sweden funded water treatment units that use solar energy to purify water, thus primarily helping women and girls.



Through SI Switzerland's Microcredit project, women can start up their own businesses, like this woman whose interior design shop secures her livelihood.



*SIE Programme Director Ulrike Neubert and Assistant Programme Director Stina Söderlund presented the 2013 SIE Best Practice Awards at the SIE Congress in Berlin. There were two awards for each of the five Programme Focus Objectives to recognise outstanding and exemplary projects in the respective thematic areas.*

SIE President Kathy Kaaf congratulated the winners. 'We all should be inspired by their creative ideas for sustainable projects and successful implementation.' She also thanked the outgoing Programme team for its 'outstanding work in managing, supporting and evaluating SIE's programme work'.

A special 'Educate to Lead' Award was presented to SI Italy for its 'Leadership for Women - Build Your Career' programme. The Italian Union has been working in the area of education and leadership for more than 30 years. Through this programme, women graduates under the age of 28 are offered a three-day course to advance their leadership skills.

**The winners of 2013 SIE Best Practice Awards are:**

**PFO 1**

Increase access to formal and non-formal learning opportunities

- SI Hafnarfjörður and Gardabaer, Iceland - 'Discover your X-Factor'
- SI Bellinzona and Valli, Switzerland - 'Awareness of the Danger Involved in Using Drugs, even occasionally'.

**PFO 2**

Improve access to economic empowerment and sustainable opportunities for the employment of women

- SI Etiler, Turkey - 'Weaving Lives'
- SI Switzerland - 'Microcredit Soroptimist - Microcredit Solidarity Switzerland'

**PFO 3**

Eliminate violence against women and girls and ensure women's participation in conflict resolution

- SI Izmir, Turkey - 'Violence against Women'
- SI Cluj-Napoca, Romania with SI Denmark - 'Our Option: Without Violence'

**PFO 4**

Ensure women and girls have food security and access to the highest attainable standard of healthcare

- SI Madagascar with SI Italy and SI Germany - 'Seeds for All'
- SI Cotonou Doyen, Benin, with SI Vallauris-Sophia-Antipolis-Mougins, France - 'Together We Say No to Woman and Child Mortality'

**PFO 5**

Address the specific needs of women and girls by improving environmental sustainability and mitigating the effects of climate change and natural disasters

- SI Eldoret, Kenya - 'Pass on the Gift of Solar Lanterns'
- SI Sweden - 'Solvatten - Solar Safe Water System'

For more detailed information about each project, please order the SIE Best Practice Awards.

# A PERSONAL ASSESSMENT



After the first biennium with a Programme Director for SI Italy, I would like to make a final assessment of the tasks involved. The Programme Focus Objectives, defined by SI every four years, serve as guidelines for Club and Union activities. Many Unions in turn choose to identify specific projects based on international objectives. In such cases each Club, even if independent in planning and deciding on projects, is encouraged to develop these specific projects. The main task of the Programme Director at Union level, aided by the Assistant Programme Director, is to coordinate each Club's activities to three different levels: SI; SIE and Union level. My personal experience as PD has been interesting, varied, complex and



Vanna Naretto from SI Italy

time-consuming! I regularly visited national and international websites, recorded projects of each Italian Club and listed them all by objectives - not only by reading clubs' reports but also by consulting websites and our magazine. I recorded all published PFRs and calculate statistical figures by objective and by starting date. If necessary, I asked Clubs for assistance and supported those Clubs requesting it. I informed the Board about Clubs' activities and kept in touch with PDs of other SIE Unions. I also sent regular reports to the SIE PD.

I followed one of our national projects on the SIE biennium theme of Water and Food - [www.soroptimist.it/en/Progetti/1924-water-&-food.asp](http://www.soroptimist.it/en/Progetti/1924-water-&-food.asp) and helped organise paralegal training in Rwanda, which meant regular contacts with Rwandan Soroptimists. I also arranged to present Madagascar's 'Seeds for All' project on the Project Matching website. In addition, I was involved in selecting the Italian projects to participate in the SIE Best Practice Award competition.

- From a Union point of view I would say that:
- Clubs which selected a PD and an APD with complementary experience and linguistic and computer skills achieved a good standard of work.
  - Although the PD should work closely with her Club Presidents, the role is independent.
  - Sadly, some Clubs did not report on their work.
  - Other Clubs have good Programme work and report their activities on the national website, but do not submit PFRs, so that their activities are not communicated to SIE and SI.

It is therefore the challenge of the PD and APD to ensure that Union and Club work is properly communicated so that it is more visible at other levels of and outside our organisation.

Vanna Naretto, Programme Director, SI Italy (2011-2013)



Mariet Verhoef-Cohen could make use of her vast knowledge of water issues in the Conference discussion.



# GENDER FORUM EXAMINES WOMEN'S ENGAGEMENT

Together with our partner, Women for Water Partnership (WfWP), SIE organised a Gender Forum on 19<sup>th</sup> August, the day before the High-Level International Conference on Water Cooperation and Gender in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

for effecting change in water governance, **A critical mass** of women in positions of influence in water management should be actively pursued, and this requires targeted investments in women, including capacity development, **Adequate financial support** is a critical element in furthering gender equity and women's meaningful engagement in water cooperation. Establishing an international 'Women for Water Fund' is of great importance to empower women and facilitate their action,

**As a follow-up** to the Dushanbe Gender Forum, a full-fledged Women for Water working conference in Tajikistan is to build on the Forum's momentum,

**Gender equity** – i.e. equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities for women and men in their different roles in society – is a key element of good governance.

Our expectation is that the outcome documents will contain adequate measures to ensure that we as women stakeholders can execute our action plans, in order to make meaningful contributions to effective water governance and cooperation which will sustain water resources today and in the future for the benefit of all.

Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, SIE Delegate to WfWP, SIE Liaison Africa as well as Mistress of Ceremonies and Moderator of the Gender Forum

Delegates from SIE and the Women for Water Partnership joined forces to organise the Gender Forum.



The Conference addressed women's central role in water issues. Some 150 women and men from across the globe – including Ministers, UN Agencies, water specialists, NGOs, leaders of civil society and SIE VP and member of the WfWP Steering Committee Asha Abdulrahman **as a panellist on Water Cooperation for Ecosystems** – had a lively discussion on the basic reality and challenges of securing sufficient water for daily domestic and productive needs without jeopardising the environment, while also taking into consideration the needs of future generations. The project to rehabilitate the Mau Forest, funded by SI Kenya and wider Soroptimist support, was specifically cited in the context of good practices.

The professional and traditional roles of women are a significant social capital that can and should be used for

**Effecting** the changes in water governance needed for social and economic development and environmental integrity,

**Bridging** the gap to stakeholders and ensuring cross-sectoral and transnational exchange and cooperation,

**Preventing** and resolving conflicts around water.

The Conference itself underpinned and added to the main outcomes of the Gender Forum by affirming that:

**Water** cooperation should begin and end with women's full inclusion at all levels and breach traditional gender stereotypes,

**The social capital** of women needs to be mobilised



## Quotas for Women in Business and Politics?

# THE ANSWER IS THERE IS NO ANSWER

The series on quotas for women in business and politics concludes with the remarks submitted by Elisabeth Brandl from Austria and a comment summing up the situation, i.e. there is no clear-cut consensus among Soroptimists!



**Elisabeth Brandl, Freelance Mediator:**

After initial opposition (who wants to be a quota woman?), I am now a proponent of quotas. Why? There are several reasons.

Presupposing their professional qualifications, women are needed in decision-making processes for their 'soft skills' – such as social competencies, a sense of responsibility towards the use of resources, the ability to perceive problems from different angles, etc. These qualities are particularly important in times of mismanagement, corruption and exploitation.

For years in many Western countries, more girls than boys finish secondary school and go on to higher education. In some academic fields, women gain more than 50% of the degrees. It is therefore not a question of finding competent women, but rather a reluctance to promote them into positions of power. Longstanding old boys' networks often determine career advancement – and not every man at the top is highly qualified.

What many women lack is the self-confidence in their own abilities. They also must be willing to balance professional careers with family life. In addition, today's 'superwoman syndrome' pressures women to perform perfectly at every task. And then they must overcome still common, yet antiquated prejudices.

The status quo will continue, unless the course is forcibly changed. As long as women's issues remain 'issues', as long as men largely decide what is good for women, and as long as women are under-represented at the top – we need quotas.

### So, we agree to disagree

The contributions over the past months have shown that there is no consensus among Soroptimists whether we should have quotas for women in leadership positions in business and politics. There is simply no easy answer. We agree that the current situation is not acceptable and the percentage of women in top jobs must increase, but suggestions for the way forward is subject to personal opinion and experience. However, one thing is clear: the SI theme 'Educate to Lead' addresses the weaknesses in the status quo and deserves our full support!



SIE Mentoring Programme 2012-2013

## MENTEES AND MENTORS CELEBRATE AND REFLECT

Mentees, Mentors and Coordinators from Belgium, Germany, Luxembourg and Sweden enjoyed splendid sunshine into the evening hours during the final weekend of the 2<sup>nd</sup> SIE Mentoring Programme in Stockholm from 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> June. This was the crowning touch to another successful programme, which had begun with the selection of mentees and their matching with SIE mentors, followed by the opening seminar in Belgium in October 2012.

As an introduction, Swedish Gender Mainstreaming expert Gertrud Aström informed participants about the facts and figures of the country's gender equality politics, which provided an interesting perspective for the subsequent discussion. Sweden is among the most advanced European countries in terms of gender politics and offers far more equal opportunities for women. Afterwards, the mentees reflected on their process under the motto 'magic moments and our future'.

In the evening, mentees, mentors and country coordinators came together for a dinner and lively

conversation on board a boat, which offered unforgettable views of Stockholm and the Shären.

Saturday's programme began with Leadership Training for mentees and an exchange of experience among mentors. The so-called reflection walk for the 'tandems' gave the pairs an opportunity to review their months together and discuss what was achieved. The German mentees worked out a plan to further publicise the programme by recording interviews to be uploaded onto the Internet. That evening Union Presidents from Sweden and Norway, Birgitta Hansson and Sigrid Ag, joined the group, as did SIE Vice President Gerda Huisman, who is responsible for Mentoring on the SIE Board. The time was used for networking and learning about the mentoring experience.

Before the final ceremony and presentation of the mentees' graduation documents on Sunday, participants could take a bus tour of the city. With its national and interunion training sessions the programme offers the young women an interesting learning experience and opportunities to network and exchange experience among peers. It is a sustainable and successful effort to educate women to lead and an outstanding tool for public relations for our organisation – also helping to promote our goals.

As soon as funding is secured and a sufficient number of mentors are willing to take part, the next round of the Mentoring Programme will be announced.

*Christel Lisa Dillmann, responsible for the PR of the Mentoring-Programme*



Participants in the final meeting of the Mentoring Programme gathered for a group photo in Stockholm.

9<sup>th</sup> Peace Marathon

## CARRYING THE TORCH FOR PEACE IN RWANDA

The 9<sup>th</sup> Peace Marathon in Kigali, Rwanda, held on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2013 was a rounding success! SIE Vice President Leena Viitaniemi praised the better and more professional organisation of the happenings. A particular highlight of this year's event was the march to the stadium where the competitions took place with a Peace Torch. As the official representative of Soroptimist International of Europe, Leena also had the honour to be one of the torchbearers. Dozens of Soroptimists went along.

Over 400 children participated in this year's Run for Fun, and more than 1000 runners from some 30 countries ran in the official Marathon. Leena and SIE Vice President Asha Abdulrahman once again had the opportunity to meet many important sport leaders and local dignitaries in Rwanda. This time there was a special Soroptimist tent near the stadium, where local



More than 400 children participated in the Fun Run in Kigali



SIE VP Leena Viitaniemi carries the peace torch to the stadium to herald the beginning of the 9<sup>th</sup> Peace Marathon.

members presented their activities and products.

Next year marks the tenth time SIE has helped organise the Peace Marathon in Kigali, which will be held on 18<sup>th</sup> May. After 2014, the SIE Board has decided to turn over the responsibility to local representatives, now that the event has established itself in the marathon calendar

Save the date!

## FIRST SIE CLUB CELEBRATES 90<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY

Suzanne Noël founded SI Paris Fondateur and was the driving force behind Soroptimism in Europe.



SI Paris Fondateur was founded in October 1924 and will therefore celebrate its 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2014. It is the first club to be established on European soil. Its founder, Dr Suzanne Noël, went on to spread the Soroptimist movement across our continent.

In order to include as many the clubs of the French Union and the European Federation as possible, SI Paris Fondateur will celebrate the event on Saturday, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2014, after the Paris Interclub meeting on Nutrition. Naturally, the evening will be held in homage to Suzanne Noël.



SI Bruxelles Doyen

## COLLOQUIUM ON AUTISM MARKS 75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



Above: Club members raised € 28,000 in support of Coupole bruxelloise de l'Autisme.

Far right: SI Bruxelles Doyen organised a high-level colloquium on autism, which combined scientific details with very personal accounts.

SI Bruxelles Doyen decided to celebrate the club's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a scientific colloquium focusing on people suffering from autism. Various activities took place to raise funds for the innovative education project of the non-profit organisation, Coupole bruxelloise de l'Autisme, initiated by parents of autistic children. The organisation's goal is to build accommodation and a day centre for autistic adults in the region, where there is currently a shortage of such facilities. The aim of the colloquium was to increase awareness of the problems encountered by the families of people suffering from autism.

Dr Marie-Dominique de Hemptinne, Coordinator of *Les Aubépines*, a specialised centre for autistic adults and mother of an autistic daughter, opened the conference with an overview of the progress in research to identify the various factors linked to the development of autism. She concluded that autism is a clinical diagnosis and that there is still no known biological marker or any diagnostic test.

Ghislain Magerotte, Professor emeritus on the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences at the University of Mons-Hainaut, is the founder of

SUSA (specialised university department for people with autism) and a pioneer in the care of disabled adults in Belgium. His speech 'Help me carry my luggage' described the realities of daily life for families with autistic children.

Christelle Ninforge, educational psychologist and Head of SUSA Brussels, described the day-to-day work of the 'Adult Accompaniment Service'. Her emotion was palpable as she showed videos illustrating the progress young adults can make when given appropriate care. Her support is vital for the Coupole de l'Autisme's project.

### A moving roundtable discussion

Alice Suls, Vice President of a parents' association to help autistic people (APEPA), moderated the panel discussion with three mothers of autistic children. They addressed the problems of different age groups. The moving and courageous accounts opened the audience's eyes to a painful and little-understood emotional world. The exchange emphasised the urgency of political awareness to remedy the lack of appropriate facilities.

In the presence of SI Belgium President Gerda Rosiers, members of many Belgian clubs and our Friendship Links, François-Xavier Ullens reported about the logistics project of the *Coupole bruxelloise de l'Autisme*. Claire Hublet, President of SI Bruxelles Doyen, presented him with a cheque for € 28,000, which had been raised from activities over the past two years. Ullens and his wife were extremely grateful and thanked the Soroptimists for this generous contribution.

One interesting footnote: Japanese Ambassador to Belgium Mitsuo Sakaba, who attended the event and delivered a greeting, subsequently described our organisation on his embassy website, highlighting the Soroptimist commitment in Japan.



SI Marche-en-Famenne

## MALI SACHEL PROJECT AWARDED THE BELGIAN ACTION FUND PRIZE

When the SI Bamako, Mali, was chartered, a Friendship Link was established with SI Marche-en-Famenne. Given the very high level of illiteracy for girls and women in Mali, we decided to support a long-term the 'Mali Satchel' project, which was coordinated by Adama Sidibé. We sponsored three girls over six school years (2006-2012) so that they could take their baccalaureate. The project covered the cost of their school fees, uniforms, school supplies and their food.

In 2012, two of them passed their baccalaureate and went on to continue their studies at university. Despite the war, two of these young women will soon be able to become leaders and thus help other women as well as their country to develop. After failing her baccalaureate, the 3<sup>rd</sup> goddaughter opted for a teacher-training course, which will enable her to help girls get an education.

Following these positive results and as this sustainable project fits perfectly with the SI's long-term vision 'Educate to Lead', we decided to renew the support for another six years (2012-2018). As she received the prize from SI Belgium President Gerda Rosiers, Carine Ledoux, President of SI Marche-en-Famenne, expressed, on



behalf of all the club members, her pleasure to be able to sponsor a fourth girl.

Our actions in Mali are not only focused on education. We have also contributed to the purchase of a grain mill and, during the famine caused by the war, through SIE we responded to SI Bamako's appeal so that it could buy provisions and essential equipment.

Evelyne Bastin,  
Programme Director, SI Marche-en-Famenne



Adama Sidibé presents a Mali Satchel to one of the beneficiaries in Mali.

The three new goddaughters of the Mali Satchel programme can look forward to support while working toward a baccalaureate.

SI Marche President Carine Ledoux thanks Belgian Soroptimists for the Belgian Action Fund Prize.



Joel Furaha Kombe, Director of the Fumathoka School in Kenya, enthusiastically accepts a cheque from the Soroptimist sponsors.



10 Years of SI Single Club Vaduz

**S**OROPTIMISTS  
ALREADY GO GREEN

SI Vaduz celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding on 17<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> May. We had a splendid time with a reception at home on Friday, a great gala dinner including a fantastic piano concert and an excellent meal on Saturday and a typical Swiss-Liechtenstein farewell brunch on Sunday morning.

Sharing in the celebrations with our Single Club were Soroptimists and guests from Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway and Poland as well as representatives from SI Europe, SI Austria and SI Switzerland. Among the guests was also Past SI and SIE President Hanne Jensbo. As part of the gala evening programme, we put on an impressive show highlighting our many projects. To commemorate our anniversary, we presented the pianist performing at the evening ceremony, Tatiana Maksimova from St. Petersburg, with a scholarship of € 10,000 for her music studies.

On 17<sup>th</sup> July we presented Joel Furaha Kombe, Director of the Fumathoka School in Kenya, and the founding Liechtenstein family of this school, represented by Bruno Kindle, with a cheque for more than € 18,000. SI Vaduz had previously helped to improve the kitchen there in tribute to the SIE Water and Food theme.

In line with the SIE biennium theme 2013-2015, 'Let's Go Green', we intend to set up a school garden to encourage the school to teach planting techniques and sustainable behavior, not only in theory but also in practice. This is a Liechtenstein project in Kenya, which is supported by SI Goldes in Styria and has also been subsidised by the participants of this year's SIE Golf Tournament in Bad Ragaz.

SI Luxembourg

**L**ET'S CHANGE  
THE LAWS!

Soroptimist Monique Laroche-Reeff, President of the National Council of Luxembourg Women (CNFL), presents its demands to Laurent Mosar, President of the Chamber of Deputies.

Changing the laws was the *leitmotif* of an action launched by the CNFL (National Council of Luxembourg Women) under the presidency of Monique Laroche-Reeff, who took on this role in 2012/2013 as representative of the SI Luxembourg. Convinced that an appropriate legal framework is the best way to advance equality between men and women, the CNFL focused its measures on various demands with regard to legislation, which is still lagging behind. The programme brought together opinions, resolutions and positions in a file addressed to the politicians responsible as part of a lobbying campaign. This was backed up by various



conferences, press releases and interviews with ministers, parliamentary commissions, social partners and political parties. Demands were divided into 10 groups: insurance/pension reforms, divorce reforms, collective work agreements, decision-making, communal law, domestic violence, elective abortion, female genital mutilation, prostitution, and tax reform (see www.cnfl.lu). This action will be continued in 2013/14 under the presidency of the Luxembourg section of Zonta International.



FSL President Maggy Berckes (left) and FSL Vice-President Bettina Scholl-Sabbatini with the President and Past President of the Kiwanis.

Fonds Soroptimist Luxembourg

**W**ICKERWORK  
JEWELLERY DESIGN  
COMPETITION

The 'Offer an Idea' project, carried out jointly by the Fonds Soroptimist Luxembourg, the Kiwanis Club in d'Esch-sur-Alzette and the LTAM (Luxembourg's Technical High School for Industrial Arts) is part of an educational, cultural and humanitarian programme and has two main objectives.

On the one hand, it hopes to raise the level of workmanship in two women's cooperatives in Rwanda backed by SI Kigali and SI Gisenyi, which will give them better sales opportunities to achieve commercial autonomy by preserving an ancient wickerwork technique. On the other hand, it enables LTAM students to demonstrate their creativity, using materials from another continent's culture. Students from four senior classes took part in the competition thanks to their teachers' investment. Around sixty ideas were put before the jury.

Prizes amounting to a total of €4,800 were awarded to the nine winners during an official ceremony at the LTAM attended by the High School's Principal and the Mayor of Luxembourg City as well as several students and their teachers and members of the Kiwanis Club and SI Luxembourg.

Maggy Berckes, President, and Bettina Scholl-Sabbatini, Vice-President of the FSL.

Italian Soroptimists

**F**ROM ITALY TO  
BULGARIA AND  
ROMANIA

Ruse, a pleasant city on the Danube River, is a place where history and nature have met throughout the centuries – since the times of the Roman Empire in 45 AD. Here a new club of SI Bulgaria was founded on 3<sup>rd</sup> June. The chartering ceremony of SI Ruse took place at the interesting Museum of History with Soroptimists from many different countries in attendance. The biggest group was from Italy – with 10 Soroptimists from seven clubs.

The symbol of Ruse is the Statue of Liberty (the second after New York), located in the middle of the most prominent square of the city. Another important symbol is the 'Friendship Bridge' on the Danube, the border between Bulgaria and Romania. Freedom and Friendship: the perfect good wishes for the new Soroptimist club! We Italian Soroptimists also crossed the bridge into Romania. After a brief tour we visited the interesting city of Brasov where we met the local club. It was a week of pure Soroptimist togetherness and an unique opportunity to make new friends across borders.

A large delegation from Italy attended the charter of SI Ruse in Bulgaria, and then went on to visit the SI Brasov in Romania.

Wilma Malucelli Immediate Past President, SI Italy





SI Denmark

## COMMEMORATING 75 YEARS IN DENMARK

In the presence of 410 Soroptimists and guests, SI Denmark celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2013 with a lunch. To commemorate the occasion, the Union announced a number of donations and grants, totalling € 70,000.



The donations, all benefiting children, were handed over to *Julemærkehjemmene* in Denmark, the NANU project in Greenland and to UNICEF in Denmark.

*Julemærkehjemmene* targets Danish children suffering from obesity and offers them an opportunity to change their eating habits and life style. The aim of the Nanu project is to create a safe and caring environment and a good quality of life for children in Greenland. Finally, the funds given to UNICEF will be used for a project in North Eastern Kenya, where UNICEF supports mobile education for children from nomadic families who otherwise do not attend school regularly. These nomadic families move frequently with their herds, especially during the increasingly prolonged periods of drought. Each of these three donations amounted to some € 10,000.

In addition, 14 grants, each the equivalent of € 3,350, were distributed to young women of

Our photo shows many of the happy young women who received grants from SI Denmark on the occasion of the anniversary celebration.

Danish or other ethnic backgrounds who wish to study abroad for one semester as part of their regular studies. Danish Soroptimists raised most of the funds made available for this cause through their active participation in a charity auction. They collected items and gift vouchers and put them up for auction through [www.Lauritz.com](http://www.Lauritz.com), who also donated all costs related to hammer stroke and buyers premium.

A special jubilee edition of the Danish Soroptima magazine was issued on the occasion of our anniversary. This issue in Danish tells the story of Soroptimism in Denmark over 75 years. It is possible to access the jubilee edition from our website [www.soroptimist-danmark.dk](http://www.soroptimist-danmark.dk).

Ellen Hansen, Danish Union President 2012-2014

SI Vicenza

## SHOWING SOLIDARITY FOR OTHERS

SI Vicenza organised two events in the name of solidarity in the presence of Wilma Malucelli, Past President of SI Italy. The first was a 'Young Talents in the Arts' show on 20<sup>th</sup> June, featuring a performance by ballet dancer Arianna Marchiori, who received an SIE scholarship in 2013,



Ada Strada won the Putting Green competition which helped raise money for a vocational centre in Rwanda

marimba player Davide Zaniolo, who won 2<sup>nd</sup> prize in SI Italy's national competition *Giovani Talenti della Musica* in 2011, and Chiara Cocco, a high school student who read a short story that had won the Gattinara Rotary Club prize at the Premio AVA 2012 selection. The funds raised on this occasion were donated to a **single mother with children** to help relieve the effects of economic crisis.

The second event, the 6<sup>th</sup> Golf Challenge Cup for SI Italy, took place on 22<sup>nd</sup> June at the Golf Club Colli Berici in the outskirts of Vicenza. Proceeds were donated to the 'Funding the Future' project in cooperation with the clubs of Busto Arsizio -Ticino Olona, Savona, Sondrio, Merania, Varese, Como, Bergamo, Vittoria and Butare (Rwanda). Eva Barcaro Ferrario, a SI Vicenza club member, won the Soror Optima Prize in the competition, while another member of our Club, Ada Strada, won the Putting Green competition. The event was followed by a dinner during which Past SI Italy President Wilma presented a slide show about the 2013 Funding the Future project. It involves the purchase and restructuring of a new 'UBUFATANYE' vocational centre in Rwanda, funded by the fees for the golf competition and the final raffle with gifts donated by sponsors.

Laura Stiassi, Assistant Programme Director, SI Vicenza

Chapel of San Giuliano near L'Aquila

## RESTORATION AFTER EARTHQUAKE

Immediately after the 2009 earthquake in L'Aquila, SI Italy with its then President Giovanna Catinella made available our Union disaster fund and opened a subscription among Soroptimists to help in the reconstruction of L'Aquila. SIE donated € 3,000 and in 2009-2011 biennium (Union President Wilma Malucelli) the total amount reached € 238,000.

Due to the difficulties of working in the centre of L'Aquila, in May 2011, SI Italy chose the



SI Italy President Flavia Pozzolini and SI L'Aquila President Liliana Biondi celebrate the opening of the restored chapel.



The wall paintings in the chapel of San Giuliano were restored with Soroptimist funds.

project proposed by SI L'Aquila to restore the *Conventino* of San Giuliano, the ancient chapel erected near the town by Franciscan friars in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. It has valuable **wall paintings** and is still a place of prayer and meditation, cherished by the population of L'Aquila.

President Wilma signed a contract with the L'Aquila Disaster Authority to restore the structures, the **wall paintings** and also the ancient friars' tunics to be put on display in a little museum beside the chapel.

The work was done throughout my 2011-2013 biennium under the supervision of Superintendent of National Monuments and in cooperation with a special SI commission that I appointed in October 2011. The inauguration took place on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2013 and was one of the first signs of rebirth after earthquake.

Present at the ceremony were Mayor Cialente, Senator Pezzopane, the Archbishop of L'Aquila and visiting representatives of Franciscan order, who all underlined how the chapel was so special for the population of L'Aquila. The sunny skies that accompanied the event seem to highlight the feeling among Soroptimists and all those present that it is possible to implement concrete relief and counteract the consequences of disaster. That's Soroptimist - no more no less!

Flavia Pozzolini, President, SI Italy 2011-2013



Please submit your contributions to the next issue by 10<sup>th</sup> November 2013!

## NEW SIE CLUB TO BE CHARTERED

### 31<sup>st</sup> August 2013

Meru (Kenya)  
Charter to be presented by  
Mariet Verhoef-Cohen,  
SIE Liaison Africa  
Club President  
Lucy Mitu  
Phone: +254 720 814 994  
E-mail: kaluyulucy@yahoo.co.uk

### 7<sup>th</sup> September 2013

Gallura (Italy)  
Charter to be presented by  
Kathy Kaaf, SIE President 2011-2013  
Club President  
Pietrina Pileri  
Phone: +39 339 856 3079  
E-mail: rinapileri@gmail.com

### 14<sup>th</sup> September 2013

De Roos van Schagen (The Netherlands)  
Charter to be presented by  
Françoise Ferey, Representative to  
the Council of Europe  
Club President  
Lilian Dik  
Phone: +31 224 540 183/06-362  
64317  
E-mail: l.dik@hetnet.nl

### 5<sup>th</sup> October 2013

Kutaisi-Colchis (Georgia)  
Charter to be presented by  
Ulla Madsen, SIE President  
Club President  
Nugesha Gagnidze  
Phone: +995 431 257 456/  
599 968 335  
E-mail: n\_gagnidze@yahoo.de

### 12<sup>th</sup> October 2013

Stichtse Vecht (The Netherlands)  
Charter to be presented by  
Irena Coufalova, OSCE Representative in Prague  
Club President  
Evelyn van Royen

Phone: +31 6 460 646 05  
E-mail: evelyn.van.royen@sylics.com

### 9<sup>th</sup> November 2013

Mont-Blanc (France)  
Charter to be presented by  
Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis,  
SIE President elect  
Club President  
Séverine Goncalves  
Phone: +33 6 729 419 64  
E-mail: severinegoncalves@lavitrinemedicale-pissard.fr

### 30<sup>th</sup> November 2013

Mainz-Rosengarten (Germany)  
Charter to be presented by  
Annabeth Studer Meyer,  
Scholarship Chair 2011-2013  
Club President  
Ursula Ebert  
Phone: +49 6136 8463  
E-mail: ebuh@gmx.de

### 7<sup>th</sup> December 2013

Muhanga (Rwanda)  
Charter to be presented by  
Ulla Madsen, SIE President  
Club President  
Marcelline Mukasekuru  
Phone: +250 788 484 959  
E-mail: brmarcelline@yahoo.fr

### 8<sup>th</sup> December 2013

Rwamagana (Rwanda)  
Charter to be presented by  
Ulla Madsen, SIE President  
Club President  
Françoise Uwumukiza  
Phone: +250 788 635 577  
E-mail: umukiza2005@yahoo.com

## FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR SIE

### 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2013

25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
SI Zuid Oost Vlaanderen  
(Belgium)

### 24<sup>th</sup> November 2013

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
SI Biel-Bienne (Switzerland)

### 26<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> January 2014

17<sup>th</sup> International Winter Week  
Kitzbühel (Austria)

### 18<sup>th</sup> February 2014

25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
SI Cotonou Doyen (Benin)

### 18<sup>th</sup> May 2014

10<sup>th</sup> Peace Marathon  
Kigali (Rwanda)

### 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> July 2014

Governors' Meeting  
Copenhagen (Denmark)

## INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS DAYS AND EVENTS

### 21<sup>st</sup> September

International Day of Peace

### 25<sup>th</sup> November

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

### 10<sup>th</sup> December

Human Rights Day (celebrated by Sorooptimists worldwide)

