



Advocacy Coordinators Training 8-9 February 2019

REPORT





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DAY 1

Welcome and Introduction

Elizabeth Otieno-Nyadwe, SIE Vice-President Advocacy, welcomes the participants on behalf of the Advocacy & Programme team, and opens the SIE Advocacy Training 2019. She introduces the trainers and organizers, who are, in addition to herself: Ingeborg Dietz, SIE Programme Director, Bettina Hahne, SIE Representative to the Council of Europe, Renate Smith, SIE Representative to the European Women's Lobby, Sabine Mach, SIE Representative to the OSCE, Amélie Duval, SIEHQ Advocacy Officer, and Bintou Koita, SIEHQ Programme Officer.

Icebreaker and expectations

For the Icebreaker, Bettina Hahne asks the participants to recreate a map of the world by standing next to each other, according to their country of origins. Each participant then introduces themselves: their name, Union and functions held at Union level.

Following the icebreaker, participants share their expectations for the training:

- know what the expectations of SIE are,
- have a clear definition of the difference between programme and advocacy,
- have practical ideas of what to do back home,
- know more about the areas of SIE advocacy,
- how to speak with one voice,
- how to connect advocacy to the strategic plan
- what does advocacy mean in practical terms.

Interactive session: Role of Advocacy Coordinators and expectations for the training

The aim of this first interactive session is to clarify what the role of Advocacy Coordinator entails. Participants split in 4 groups to answer the following questions:

1. How do you see your role as Advocacy Coordinator?
2. Who do you expect to be working with?
3. What are three women's rights topics that you would like to advocate for?

Participants then share the results of their discussions, which correspond with the Advocacy Coordinator's Job description (see Annex I).



Advocacy Coordinator Role	Working with...	Women's rights topics
Translator: go-between SIE and Union Inspirational link Voice of the local Club, the Union and SIE Works both ways Raise awareness within the Union, in cooperation with other women's organisation	SIE Board / Advocacy Union Boards Politician/government Other women NGO Other Advocacy Coordinators Communication Officer Public and the media	Elimination of violence Gender equality in the professional world (management roles) Representation Education (including for girls) Safety Economic Empowerment Equal treatment

Advocacy as a tool for Change

Bettina Hahne explains why Advocacy is important by introducing the participants to the concept of Advocacy as a tool for change. Advocacy helps fight gender stereotypes and habits, change the mind-set of society and policy makers and finally claim new laws and regulations (see full presentation and speech in Member area).

Key Concepts of Advocacy in SIE

Elizabeth Otieno-Nyadwe provides a definition of Advocacy: supporting and defending a particular cause or policy. For Soroptimists, this means actively defend women's rights and address women's issues. She explains that Advocacy is a process and outlines the main steps necessary for Advocacy actions. She then provides advice on how to do effective advocacy, for example by forming alliances with like-minded organisations.

Advocacy needs in Unions

Ingeborg Dietz leads a second interactive session on Advocacy needs in Unions. The four groups discuss, share and list their experiences and requirements regarding their advocacy objectives, goals, activities and achievements up to now, and their needs (see table below)

Union	Activity	Goal	Achievement	Need
Rwanda	Peace marathon	Soroptimist promotion	8000 participants	Time and money
Poland	Letter to speaker of Poland (Orange the world)	Raise awareness	All women in Poland were wearing orange flowers	More media coverage
	Poster-activity	Activate young women to vote	Lot of feedback and questions on Instagram +1500	More cities to join
Netherlands	Social media campaign	Promote Soroptimist	Higher spread in social media	Less complaints of Soroptimists
Austria	Orange the world	Awareness of violence even in Austria	Lot of buildings: -response -media	Raise spread More cities Repetition



Union	Activity	Goal	Achievement	Need
			-cooperation with UN women	
Germany	DSI videos on youtube about our work and goals	Publicity	40 short clips experience in media Lots of likes (100-500 per video)	More clips Ongoing process
Turkey	“Orange” Sound of silence Photos of members: black + black rope Signs with messages Film shared on social media	Be visible Our message: no to violence against women	Reaching many people via social media (facebook – local TV channels)	Minimum cost Investment of all club members Active on social media Time investment: 2 weeks Tape and message board
Greece	“16 days of activism” PD/APD activity in November	Message: No to violence against women Visibility	Press attention Orange cocktails Human chains	Contact with press TV spot Interview TV
Israel	What would help to change to be a woman	Understand what we are working on Involve everyone	List with topics	Send message in newsletter Group the answers and join a team
Belgium	Zonta action on 16 days to orange the world	All landmarks in orange + press release. Attention “no to violence”	Collaboration with Zonta 80% ok Taskforce strategic approach (5 year plan) Decision makers should be aware	Time PD-team (Union and Clubs) Social media Local politicians
France	Since 25.11.2013: Violence against Women Cinema	Awareness-raising through movies and round tables	65 000€ funds were raised (tickets) and given to organisations fighting violence 82 Clubs, 64 shows and 7800 participants	To share with other Unions similar experiences
Madagascar	16 days of activism: spot out if there is violence and of what kind	Identify the reality through self-declaration	SI-Madagascar documented the need to fight violence (through statistics based on answers to questionnaire)	To be continued, to be systematic, make more partnerships (public private partnerships) in the country and outside
Italy	STEM play game – free	Encourage/support successful students in	Increased the advancements in	To distribute in the SI Unions



Union	Activity	Goal	Achievement	Need
	Maggy girl	STEM	mathematics by using the play game in STEM	Take similar products from the other Unions
Kenya	Women to the Parliament	Constitution	Presented across the country	Women are models for girls Create networks
Romania	STEM – support development of girls and women	Go beyond statistics	Participation of women in digital transformation	Share with Europe and abroad. Good practices
Norway	Storytelling theatre “Chosen it”	Awareness of trafficking Public shows Free school shows	Knowledge of global trafficking into school universities (army) Knowledge of Soroptimist	Press coverage Spread the word (4 years) Financial support (Governmental)
Sweden	“Solvatten” Sunwater	Make people aware of the need of clean water	Let women and their families get clean water through solar UV cleaning water tanks	Fundraising and distribute the tanks
Bulgaria	Revival for hospital School for children with long-term medication needed	Keep children in touch with education during their stay in hospital for months	No disappointed children and mothers with children with cancer, leukaemia, mucoviscidosis etc.	Fundraising Encouraging and supporting teachers ready to work with the small patients
Finland	Create press releases 5 times a year	Give tools for Clubs to reach decision makers-media-public	Ready-made press-releases for Clubs to utilize	Ready-made study about the topic
Iceland	Courses for mentors that are helping women who are escaping violence	Make better mentors	More awareness about violence against women	Fundraising Supporting More information to the press



DAY 2

Biennium Theme: We Stand Up for Women

The [2017-2019 Biennium Theme “We Stand Up for Women” video](#) is shown. Then, Elizabeth and Bettina lead a discussion on the pitfalls of Advocacy. They explain that Unions and Clubs should be cautious of the themes they choose to promote and in whose name they will be speaking, as they will be perceived as representing the whole of Soroptimist. Participants share that religious or political beliefs may be sensitive issues that Soroptimist should try to steer away from so as not to create polemics.

The trainers then suggest a list of Advocacy themes that could be relevant for SIE Advocacy:

- Violence against women in all and every form
- Equal pay & job opportunities
- Access to education
- Child brides
- Forced marriage
- Female Genital Mutilation
- Equal political representation of men and women
- Ageing in women/stand up for older women
- Equal housework
- Gender stereotypes

Programme and Advocacy

Following Ingeborg Dietz’s expert guidance, participants split into four groups and discussed how to improve women’s status in the workplace, and work out an advocacy strategy to raise awareness in order to achieve a change. The theme was: *“Changes, chances and risks on economic development and on new workplaces by digitization”*. The result of their discussions was as follows:

Questions	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	Group 4
Defining the issue – <i>What problem are you working on and what are the solutions you are working towards?</i>	It’s okay to be a leader	Losing existing workplaces Encourage and train women to find new opportunities and workplaces Flexible options	Lack of confidence. Giving women confidence Women – you can do it Men – you can trust them	Women all over the country don’t know how to use the Internet. Don’t have access to the knowledge, or social media.
Goals and objective – <i>What are you trying to change?</i>	Everyone can be a leader Realistic mindset	Educate them to new technologies Inform them Empower to think in new ways	Break the gender-based stereotypes Early child development	Mindsets, skills. They don’t know what they are missing.
Target audience(s) –	Schools	First of all	Policy makers in	The policy makers:



<p>Who do you want to reach, e.g. employers, managers, policy makers, women in leadership, civil society, etc.?</p>	<p>Employers: awareness Women/teachers Universities</p>	<p>employers to inform them about their rights and their managers and all the policy makers.</p>	<p>Education (more male teachers in kindergarten) Employers (make professor job names gender sensitive)</p>	<p>free internet access, civil society, other women</p>
<p>Activities and materials – How will you reach your target audience?(in writing, face-to-face meetings, seminars/events, through the media, etc.)</p>	<p>Social media : talk about it Role models Webinars</p>	<p>Campaigns in media information and discussions with managers and employers to come up with new ideas.</p>	<p>Education Mentoring Role models Social media - twitter</p>	<p>Different methods. Depends on the countries. Monitoring the members of the parliaments.</p>

SIE Representation in affiliate institutions

The SIE Representatives each introduced the institution where they represent SIE:

- **European Women’s Lobby (EWL)**

Renate Smith-Kubat presented the EWL, which is the largest umbrella organisation of women’s association in the European Union, and works to promote women’s rights and equality between women and men. They provide very useful resources for advocacy activities (webinars, publications etc.). There are a number of opportunities for Soroptimists to participate in EWL work, for example by responding to their call for experts and call for actions.

- **Organisation for Security & Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)**

Sabine Mach presented the OSCE, which is a forum for political dialogue on a wide range of security issue. SIE is present in a majority of its participating States. Many of the topics that the OSCE focuses on, SIE also has an interest in, such as Human Rights, Gender Equality, Education, and Combatting Human Trafficking.

- **Council of Europe (CoE)**

Bettina Hahne provided information on the CoE, whose mission is to foster the peaceful living-together of all citizens of Europe, by promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law. SIE has participatory status at the CoE. One important treaty that was developed by the CoE is the [Istanbul Convention](#), which helps Soroptimist underpin their advocacy claims in the area of the elimination of violence against women.



Planning Advocacy Activities

Elizabeth and the participants discussed key points to ensure smooth planning of Advocacy activities. She also presented them with a Federation timeline with key dates that the Federation celebrates:

Date	Day
October 11	International Day of the Girl Child
October 18	EU-Anti-Trafficking Day
November 25	Elimination of Violence against Women
November 25-December 10	16 days of activism
December 10	Human Rights Day
January	International Day of Education
February 6	Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation
March 8	International Women’s Day
July 30	World Day against Trafficking

Advocacy Best Practice Project

Participants discussed in four groups and answered a number of questions regarding four different projects (see annex):

1. The Orange the World campaign prepared by the Union of Belgium to raise awareness on violence against women
2. A national film gala organized by the French Union on the occasion of International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women
3. A flash mob organized by SI Club Wien Ringstrasse, Austria, to raise awareness on violence against women
4. An inter-company crèche building constructed thanks to the action of Club Fort-de-France in Martinique

The questions were:

- What is the main issue for this project? Is it clearly defined and satisfactory for you?
- Are the targets clearly defined? What? Why? Time frame?
- How many members are involved in the project?
- Point out the various steps and advocacy tools used in the project
- What makes this project special?
- Are there any more steps that could be added?
- What is the outcome of the project?
- Did the outcome meet the set targets?
- How can this project continue/ work on?
- Think about other ideas of promoting the theme of the project?
- Is there enough visibility for Soroptimists in this project?
- Do you think that this project could work in your Union?



Motivation in Advocacy Work

The Union Coordinator from France presented their film activities on four specific dates of the year, including International Day for the Elimination of Violence against women and International Day of Women. She also presented their yearly salon for women artists and craft makers, as well as their booklet “Soropina” with a female hero, distributed to children in school. The Unions of Belgium and Austria shared their experience with the 16 days of activism and raising awareness on the elimination of violence against women. Finally, the Union of Poland shared that her Club in Warsaw had raised awareness on the issue of women’s vote via the publication and distribution of a poster on public transportation, newspapers and social media.

Following the presentation of the Warsaw campaign for women's votes, there was the spontaneous decision to implement a similar campaign for the elections of the European Parliament. This project is the first ever simultaneous one initiated in several unions in a coordinated fashion, even if it does not concern all Unions. Orange day is also a project done in several unions, but was always individually done by the unions and clubs.

Communication & PFRs

Renate Smith-Kubat and Ingeborg Dietz both stressed the importance of Communications and PFRs, which are a key aspect of the Advocacy work. In terms of communication, both internal (Club, Union, SIE levels) and external communications, via websites, social media, flyers, magazines, press contacts, and lobbying letters, are key. An efficient message, visual coherence and good pictures are key for good communication. PFRs should give a short, understandable and engaging account of a project that was implemented by a Club and Union. They are essential to share best practices, for good communication of Soroptimist actions, and give the organization its legitimacy at the level of the Council of Europe and the UN.



Conclusion & Evaluation

Participants were overall satisfied with the sessions of the training, which averaged 4.2 over 5 in terms of quality.

See details below:

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL
1. Welcome and Introduction	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	23.81% 5	76.19% 16	21
2. Advocacy as a Tool for Change	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	19.05% 4	80.95% 17	21
3. Key Concepts of Advocacy in SIE	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.76% 1	33.33% 7	61.90% 13	21
4. Advocacy Needs in unions	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	14.29% 3	28.57% 6	57.14% 12	21
6. Biennium Theme: We Stand Up for Women	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.76% 1	28.57% 6	66.67% 14	21
7. Programme & Advocacy	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.76% 1	9.52% 2	85.71% 18	21
8. SIE Representation in affiliate institutions	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.76% 1	38.10% 8	57.14% 12	21
9. Planning Advocacy Activities	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.76% 1	42.86% 9	52.38% 11	21
10. Advocacy Best Practice Project	0.00% 0	4.76% 1	9.52% 2	33.33% 7	52.38% 11	21
11. Motivation in Advocacy Work	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.76% 1	14.29% 3	80.95% 17	21
12. Communication & PFRs	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	14.29% 3	33.33% 7	52.38% 11	21



Participants shared the following feedback on the training:

What was particularly interesting/relevant:
The first day of the training was really very promising for me about the things that can be done for Advocacy.
The role of Advocacy Coordinator is now clear for me. What is the expectation of SIE and what I have to do for my Union. The exchange of experiences with the other Unions was really interesting. So that we can learn from each other.
-the questions for the exercise on best practice were not relevant and made it difficult to do what was asked - as always there was not enough time to discuss everything so please set up go to meetings to keep us informed and sharing with each other BUT - what an enthusiasm from the trainers, thank you so much for inspiring and empowering us - it was great to meet each other and have relevant discussions about advocacy
The advocacy training was interest for me and i will try to do the best for our union.
What is the role and how we can develop the role further
1. The importance of unified message towards the social, institutional and political environment . 2. the importance of tight relationship and coordination between Programms and Advocacy.
Networking and sharing experiences in favour of enhanced consistency of our actions, in full respect of the diversity. Thank you for the well done first time training and for so carefully looking for improvement. Professionals!
Creating a community Meeting inspiring soroptimist Enjoy all the work and preparation of the SIE team
Group work & interactive sessions
What is the role and how we can develop the role further
SI representation in affiliate institution good to know how to cooperate with them
Exchange of experience with representatives of other unions about campaigns
Presentation of C of E, and EWL, now we know how to cooperate with them
The sharing from other participants and learning was very helpful and informative
Training was interesting cause of I had idea on what advocacy can do. And to meet other members and create relationship between us
For me was it a chance to develop my skills and knowledge about Advocacy and what SIE expect from us on Union level. Good training for CSW63
What you recommend to change in the future:
More examples of Advocacy projects can be discussed and 2 or 3 projects can be chosen and suggested to the unions.
The organisation of the travel with the arrivals at the site.
- information about start and end in advance to avoid extra costs for the Unions - enough time to discuss with each other and be able to share
Time for sharing experience each other.
It might be worth considering if spreading the trainers into the tables could benefit the information flow to SIE in case SIE members want to understand the versatile situations in Unions more deeply.
I think there was not enough emphasis on how to change the social-political-legislative environment other than passing information and bringing to the public knowledge of our existence. How to practically influence influential decision makers. As lobbyists this should be a crucial part of advocacy. We are social advocates, we want to change norms of society through influential leaders, legislators etc. Letting them know what we do and raising general attention of the general public is not enough in my opinion.
Maybe some pre-training materials will support more time for hands on actions. I will not exclude even in advance contributions from the Unions.
Not for now. Thank you all!
City



No comments everything was perfect

Maybe narrow the theme of meeting subject for the next meeting. Because this was the first meeting, it was fully packed with information and inputs, so it will be hard to sort out and remembering everything when we return home. But overall it was a perfect meeting ♥

Earlier announcement of date, venue and program

More coffee breaks and some exercise during the training

The training should take into account that Advocacy issues differ from country...so it should be structured in such a manner. It cannot be generic for everybody.

Transport from airport to training place or someone to guide to the hotel.



Annexes

Annex I: List of Participants and Agenda

Trainers / Organisers

1. **Elizabeth Nyadwe**, SIE Vice President Advocacy
2. **Ingeborg Dietz**, SIE Programme Director
3. **Bettina Hahne**, SIE Representative to the Council of Europe
4. **Renate Smith**, SIE Representative to the European Women's Lobby
5. **Amélie Duval**, SIEHQ Advocacy Officer
6. **Bintou Koïta**, SIEHQ Programme Officer

Participants (in alphabetical order)

Union	Name	First Name	Function
Austria	Mach	Sabine	Advocacy Coordinator
Austria	Sigmund	Marcella	Union President
Belgium	De Ryck	Katrien	Advocacy Coordinator
Bulgaria	Grigorova	Vihra	Advocacy Coordinator
Finland	Ketola	Tiina	Advocacy Coordinator
France	Dagain	Christine	Advocacy Coordinator
Germany	Ott	Martina	Advocacy Coordinator
Greece	Oikonomidou	Maria	Advocacy Coordinator
Iceland	Björk Ingvadóttir	Maria	Advocacy Coordinator
Israel	Green	Alina	Advocacy Coordinator
Italy	Reggio d'Aci	Michela	Advocacy Coordinator
Kenya	Maru	Winnie	Advocacy Coordinator
Madagascar	Andriamasy Andriamandimbisoa	Lalatiana	Advocacy Coordinator
Netherlands	Croiset Van Uchelen	Lotta	Advocacy Coordinator
Norway	Klingsheim	Veslemøy	Advocacy Coordinator
Poland	Szeremeta	Anna	Advocacy Coordinator
Romania	Serban	Madlen	Advocacy Coordinator
Rwanda	Uwandinda	Magnifique	Advocacy Coordinator
Sweden	Skarner	Eva	Advocacy Coordinator
Turkey	Duran	Nurgül	Advocacy Coordinator

2019 ADVOCACY TRAINING:
FULL PROGRAMME

Friday, 8 February 2019

Time	Session	Presenter
03:00 pm	1. Welcome and Introduction	Elizabeth
03:05 pm	– Icebreaker	Bettina
03:25 pm	– Interactive session: Role of Advocacy Coordinators and expectations for the training	Amelie
03:55 pm	2. Advocacy as a Tool for Change	Bettina
04:15 pm	– Presentation & Q&A	
04:25 pm	Coffee Break	
04:45 pm	3. Key Concepts of Advocacy in SIE	Elizabeth
05:05 pm	– Presentation & Q&A	
05:15 pm	4. Advocacy needs in Unions	Ingeborg, Bintou, Elizabeth
05:15 pm	– Group work/Interactive session	
05:40 pm	– Presentation of group discussions	
06:00 pm	End of First day	

Saturday, 9 February 2019

Time	Session	Presenter
09:30 am	5. Summary of first day	Amélie
09:40 am	6. Biennium Theme: We Stand Up for Women	Elizabeth/Bettina
10:10 am	7. Programme & Advocacy	Ingeborg
10:30 am	– Interactive session	
11:00 am	Coffee Break	
11:15 am	8. SIE Representation in affiliate institutions	
11:15 am	– European Women's Lobby	Renate
11:35 am	– Organisation for Security & Cooperation in Europe	Sabine
11:55 am	– Council of Europe	Bettina
12:15 am	9. Planning Advocacy Activities	Elizabeth/Amelie
12:45 pm	Lunch	
01:45 pm	10. Advocacy Best Practice Project	Renate, Sabine, Bettina
02:00 pm	– Group work/Interactive session	
02:25 pm	– Presentation of group work	
02:45 pm	11. Motivation in Advocacy Work – Challenges and lessons learned	Participants
03:15 pm	Coffee Break	
03:30 pm	12. Communication & PFRs	Renate/Ingeborg
04:00 pm	13. Discussion – Have expectations been met? – Final comments from Advocacy Coordinators	Renate/Participants
04:45 pm	14. Closing Remarks	Elizabeth
05:00 pm	End of Training	

Annex II: Union Advocacy Coordinator Job Description

UNION ADVOCACY COORDINATOR

JOB DESCRIPTION

The Advocacy Coordinator leads and coordinates Advocacy activities, providing guidance to their Union and ensuring the vision and mission of the organization are being followed. The AC works closely with the Union President, Programme Director and Communication Director, as well as with the SIE Advocacy Team.

SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

The Advocacy Coordinator should have:

- a good knowledge of the organization
- knowledge of and interest in Advocacy work
- proven leadership experience and competence in the Union
- the ability to take initiative, work independently and also in a group
- professional experience in lobbying an added advantage
- good written and verbal communication skills, good written English/French an advantage
- good IT skills

RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS

- monitor the strategic positioning of the organization with regards to critical issues affecting the lives of Women and Girls in their country
- develop and implement Union Advocacy messages, in consultation with SIE Advocacy VP
- propose actions and materials to promote Union Advocacy and Lobbying actions
- be the link between the Union and the Federation in all matters regarding Advocacy
- write and circulate Advocacy News, prepare a report for and participate in the Union Meetings



Annex III: Programme and Advocacy Case Study on Economic Empowerment

Project description:

Increasing the state of women in the workplace

Opportunities for women in the digitization process

Background:

Over the next few years, the workplace will see a mass exodus of retiring baby boomers.

This will leave gaps in leadership benches from the executive level down to the managerial base, creating opportunities for women in the workplace now.

We have to face a big change in the workplace caused in the digitization process around the world. Familiar workflows will disappear... What does this mean in the long run for women in profession?

We stand up for women by guiding them to awareness-advocacy and action.

The hope is that “your chosen” project will help and encourage more women for being prepared for management roles and career advancement

Your advocacy task is to take the idea of this challenge containing

“Changes, chances and risks on economic development and on new workplaces by digitization”

and to **work out an advocacy strategy** to raise awareness in order to achieve a change for women’s issues related in the workplace and in leadership roles.

- What will be The Perfect Match?
- **How do you lobby** the stakeholders to tackle concrete action to improve the situation?

Remember following key pointers

Defining the issue – <i>What problem are you working on and what are the solutions you are working towards?</i>	
Goals and objective – <i>What are you trying to change?</i>	
Target audience(s) – <i>Who do you want to reach, e.g. employers, managers, policy makers, women in leadership, civil society, etc.?</i>	
Activities and materials – <i>How will you reach your target audience?(in</i>	

<i>writing, face-to-face meetings, seminars/events, through the media, etc.)</i>	
Message(s) – <i>What is the slogan?</i>	
Implementation plan – <i>Who, what, where and when, i.e. timelines, responsibilities.?</i>	

Summary of Advocacy remarks:

Please do mention that although 'Monitor and evaluation plan' is not included in the exercise, this is a 'must' in real life !!!



Annex IV: Best Practice Advocacy Projects

PROJECT 1: Orange the World

Violence against women and girls is one of the most pervasive human rights violations & a global epidemic. Every year, from 25 November to 10 December, a global campaign rooted in the women's movement mobilizes people worldwide: the so-called "oranging" season, also known as the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

This year, the 54 Clubs of the Soroptimist Union of Belgium have been highly involved in the campaign. As part of a leading women's organisation, Soroptimist International of Belgium used this position wisely and planned several ways to publicise this important campaign in line with the United Nations Secretary General's call to "Orange the world", which uses the colour to symbolise a brighter future without violence.

1. Say "yes" to the UN's call to act and work to end violence against women and girls in Belgium;
2. Stimulate 54 Belgian clubs to work together and even work with other partners such as Zonta, local press and local authorities to have more impact on the civil society;
3. Increase the global visibility of the Soroptimist movement in Belgium.

The outcome and impact of this national action have been very encouraging. Indeed the Soroptimists have managed to spread their message throughout the whole country: around 100,000 people saw their self-designed banners, received mass media coverage and even the town hall of Brussels was coloured in orange. Their influence also reached an iconic building (quite a male-dominated bastion), the Ghelamco Arena (a stadium in Ghent, Belgium that hosts football matches), that promoted their message visible to all the people and cars passing by the highway. Finally, they organized a symposium in Ghent—a cooperation between Soroptimist and Zonta—with very important keynote speakers.

Project achieved by:

- illuminating civil buildings
- hanging up banners
- distributing flyers
- organizing press conferences

Women & girls reached: 10,000-100,000

Funds raised by the Union: 3,500 €

PROJECT 2: National Film Gala

On the occasion of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women on 25 November 2013, French Soroptimists organised a nation-wide event to raise awareness about this important issue. The project involved the screening of the movie *Wadjda*, the first ever film written and directed by a Saudi woman, Haifaa al-Mansour. The film was shown in 80 cities across France and all profits from the screenings went to local associations combating violence against women!



Importantly, all screenings were followed by a debate on the topic of violence against women and girls that involved key local actors.

Facts of note:

- 82 Clubs within the Union of France participated
- 64 screenings
- 7,800 spectators
- 60,000 EUR collected and distributed to organisations fighting violence against women and girls
- a large number of speakers participated, among them representatives of women's rights organisations, representatives of the police and the gendarmerie, doctors, and representatives of organisations that give shelter to victims.

Clubs within the Union of France are planning to continue this extremely successful project in years to come. They perceived the project as an excellent way to advocate for the human rights of women and girls – not least because the project enjoyed massive media coverage across the country!

PROJECT 3: Flash-mob

Since a flash mob requires its participants to be able to dance to a certain type of music and all move in the same way, the members of Soroptimist Wien Ringstrasse organized a workshop at TRIPLE G, together with Triple G Competitive Dance Association, to learn an easy choreography. Choreographies for flash mobs in general are simple steps, so that passer-by on the street, who wish to jump in, can easily do so. The workshop was free of charge and it opened up the opportunity to make new connections with young people, whom we could directly and easily discuss the topic of violence against women and girls with.

During this flash mob participants were given whistles so that they were able to join in on the chorus. The whistles drew a lot of attention to the event. The song, especially written for the flash mob, performed live by the female rapper Samay, informed the public about how women escape from the spiral of violence. As a first aid solution for women in need, 600 cards with emergency numbers and 500 whistles were handed out during the flash mob. The performance was held a total of three times, every 30 minutes, on one of the busiest shopping streets in the center of Vienna. The 3 flash mob performances were announced via electronic display panels within the shopping mile always 15 minutes before they started. National television, the ORF, covered the flash mob and reported on it the same day. The Club Wien Ringstrasse also decided to create a YouTube Video, which appealed very much to all other Soroptimist Clubs in Austria, receiving more than 900 views in the first 14 days. The video was even shown in a school during class and at one of the Austrian Soroptimist Christmas Parties.

Violence against girls and women is one of the most widely occurring Human Rights violations in the world: even in Europe, one out of three women has suffered from a form of physical and/or sexual violence since her 15th birthday. In times like these, it is of utter importance to make a statement and shine a light on violence against girls and women, especially through social media, such as YouTube or Facebook but also pointing out where practical aid and assistance can be requested.

PROJECT 4: Inter-company crèche

The first ever inter-company crèche in the French overseas department opened its doors in 2016 and now has places for 40 pre-school aged children. This innovative initiative of the SIE Soroptimist Club Fort-de France, took four years to come to fruition.

Building work started on 23 March 2012. At the time, the central region of Martinique was the most under-



served area in terms of pre-school care provision on the island. With this in mind and conscious of the restraints for women trying to reconcile family and professional life, the Soroptimists decided to take matters into their own hands.

They first set about contacting, convincing and bringing on board all the necessary partners. The project, which cost a total of €1,704,000, gained the support of key state institutions, such as the regional women's rights delegation, the family allowance agency and the local authorities. The town of Lamentin made available a 2,685m² plot of land, and the Soroptimists created a partnership with the company "Crèche Attitude", a national leader in the creation and management of "turnkey" company crèches.

Today, the nursery is helping to empower women in the region. Mothers who are working, looking for work or in training, can now take advantage of organised, communal care for their young children.

Salaried parents are not the only winners; their employers also feel the benefits associated with the local crèche. Its many advantages include a longer working day, less absenteeism, greater productivity, less travelling time, tax credits, waiver of charges, and a family-friendly image for member companies.

As for the Soroptimists, they have clearly demonstrated their ability to successfully lead a major project!