



Soroptimist International of Europe **BEST PRACTICE AWARDS 2023**

WHO ARE SOROPTIMISTS?

Soroptimists are professional women who are actively engaged in their communities, who have a global vision of the world and of women's issues, and who are in touch with local challenges for women, their conditions and their rights.

What are the key focus areas Soroptimists work in?

- Education
- Women's Empowerment
- Elimination of Violence Against Women
- Health and Food Security
- Sustainability

What are Soroptimist Clubs?

Soroptimists are organised into Clubs in their cities/towns/villages, each having approximately 30 members. All projects you will read about here are the work of one or several Clubs. Soroptimist Clubs have been around since 1921.

What are Soroptimist Unions?

When a country has more than 5 Clubs and at least 100 members it forms what's called a Union. There are 21 Soroptimist Unions across Europe, the Middle East & the Caribbean.

How many members and Clubs are there in Europe, the Middle East and the Caribbean?

Currently, 30,228 women are members of the 1,152 Soroptimist Clubs in this region! (Or 1,153 if you start the next one?)

How do Soroptimists advocate for women's rights?

Soroptimist International of Europe holds special consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and participatory status at the Council of Europe and the European Women's Lobby.

We are a 'global voice for women'!





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The very programme we Soroptimists commit to, embraces both projects and advocacy.

Dear Soroptimists,

If you have opened this brochure, eagerly looking for the winners, and are only now starting to read this introduction, it is my pleasure to tell you that there are many more winners than those featured here. That being said, undoubtedly the overall winners are our organisation itself and the women and girls we stand up for.

Within our Federation, a fresh dynamic has emerged as Clubs and Unions have repositioned our organisation by implementing the 3 A's: Action, Awareness and Advocacy. Each of the projects in this brochure embodies elements of these three pillars, making it a winning practice. The very programme we Soroptimists commit to, embraces both projects and advocacy. In our latest meeting with Union Presidents and Officers committed to Projects and Advocacy, the message was clear from everyone involved that our programme of projects and advocacy is what highlights our identity and makes us an impactful organisation.

We have a lot to be proud of. We have continued to increase the amount of funds raised through projects, going from 5.5 million euros over 15 months in 2020-21 to a staggering 9.3 million euros during the equivalent period in 2021-2022.

Our pride extends beyond the sheer quantity of projects. In this brochure, you can also

witness their growth in all senses of the word, which undoubtedly makes us a more attractive organisation. Our membership statistics affirm the correlation between the focus of our projects, advocacy, the visibility they create, and the growing number of new members.

Thank you to ALL members in our Federation, tirelessly working to spread our message through Action, Awareness and Advocacy, and thus gaining well deserved recognition for your achievements! Special thanks go to Programme Director, Sandra Gonzalez Sköld; and Assistant Programme Director, Jitka Kratochvílová, both strong believers of our new, innovative approach. Like all of us, they have enjoyed the impressive professionalism of SIEHQ Senior Programme Officer, Bintou Koïta, and we are all thankful for the work she has carried out on this year's Best Practice Awards.

I started my biennium with “We know we can, let's show we can”, well, you each certainly did! The remarkable projects you are carrying out embody this spirit and show that we are building a DYNAMIC and attractive organisation. Let's continue moving forward, standing up together in true TEAM spirit. Afterall, we are proof that ‘Together Everyone Achieves More!’

Yours sincerely,
Carolien Demey,
SIE President 2021-2023

MESSAGE FROM THE PROGRAMME TEAM

As our lives return to normal after the global pandemic, new challenges have emerged. The war in Ukraine continues, a deadly earthquake in Türkiye, and floods and wildfires devastating many places. Despite these disasters, the number of applications to this year's Best Practice Awards exceeded our expectations, with over 100 projects spanning our five focus areas: Education, Women's Empowerment, Elimination of Violence Against Women, Health and Food Security, and Sustainability. What a remarkable display of determination!

Among the submissions, Türkiye stood out with the highest number of applications, and we would like to congratulate our Turkish sisters on their efforts.

Once again, this year we acknowledge exceptional projects with three additional awards: the 'Union Award', the 'Special Biennium Prize', and the 'Special Award' – (please see pages 14, 8 and 12). The financial reward of 1.000 EUR for one of the projects will be a valuable incentive for further work.

We were very pleased to see the long-term commitment of our clubs to society. Numerous projects were run in cooperation with the local partners, schools, and authorities for several years

Thanks to your incredible work across Europe, UN Women supported our successful 'Read the Signs' campaign during 2022 and will do it again this year. This takes part annually during 'Orange the World's' 16 days of activism, starting in November.

In early July, a training weekend for Programme Directors on Advocacy emphasised the need to integrate advocacy at every level, from clubs to our Federations. As a non-governmental organisation awarded the highest consultative status at the United Nations since 1984, it is our privilege and responsibility to advocate for women's and girls' rights.

During this year's Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) in New York, UN Women Executive Director, Sima Bahous stated, "We are running just to stay in place." This sentiment is exactly why we must not stop our efforts to make this world a better place for women and girls. While setbacks and women's rights violations persist worldwide, we extend our gratitude to all the clubs and unions whose relentless work prevents us from moving backwards and helps drive us forwards.

Sandra GONZALEZ SKÖLD,
Programme Director
Jitka KRATOCHVÍLOVÁ,
Assistant Programme Director



Sandra Gonzalez Sköld, SIE Programme Director, & Jitka Kratochvílová, SIE Assistant Programme Director at the 67th Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) in New-York - March 2023

Jury 2023

- Sandra GONZALEZ SKÖLD**
SIE Programme Director, Chair of the Jury
- Jitka KRATOCHVÍLOVÁ**
SIE Assistant Programme Director
- Anna WSZELACZYŃSKA**
SIE Immediate Past President
- Gertrud ÅSTRÖM**
SIE Representative to the European Women's Lobby
- Jutta GABLITZKA**
SIE Representative to the Council of Europe
- Dora VRDLOVEC**
SIE Representative to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

SIE BIENNIUM AWARD 2023

EDUCATIONAL MODULE: What you can do to eliminate violence against women and girls?

Union of the Netherlands, Suriname & Curaçao

For several years now, the Dutch Soroptimists have been involved in a large-scale project combining education with raising awareness of violence against women and girls. This project focuses on the adults of tomorrow who will play a decisive role in driving change.

Violence in relationships affects a significant number of teenagers. This is concerning because it occurs during a crucial developmental period, with the first romantic relationships contributing to identity formation, intimacy exploration, as well as emotional, relational and sexual fulfilment.

Throughout this project, the Soroptimists wanted to address, discuss, and counteract violence. The objective was to dispel taboos around violence and encourage young people to reflect. Two Dutch Clubs, SI Isalania Zwolle and SI Bilt-Bilthoven collaborated with the Seneca Publishing Company, to develop a workshop to empower young adolescents with skills to deal with and prevent gender-based violence. This resource is available to all schools across the Netherlands.

During the United Nations' Orange the World Campaigns of 2021 and 2022, members of SI Isalania Zwolle and SI Bilt-Bilthoven organised webinars for Soroptimists and educators and reached out to teachers at local secondary schools to support them in delivering the workshops.

Highlights:

- In 2021, the workshop was given to approximately 800 pupils at five schools.
- In 2022, the workshop was improved and participation from Soroptimist clubs and schools increased (downloading the workshop materials and participating in webinars). The workshop was given to approximately 3,000 pupils across 18 schools.

The workshop consisted of:

- An informative presentation on the prevalence and nature of gender-based violence, how it evolves, prevention strategies, the Orange the World campaign, and discussion prompts for the students,
- Films showing interviews with two former victims, one of whom was a former pupil of a school where the workshop was held,
- A practical assignment that tasks students with creating awareness and prevention posters.

This initiative provides an opportunity to equip individuals with tools to prevent violence, to empower students to voice their thoughts, and to promote dialogue among teenage girls and boys. The Soroptimists are committed to further rolling out this workshop so that the benefits it delivers will be felt by generations to come!

LINKS:

Link to the workshop: <https://www.senecaburgerschap.nl/servicehuis/soroptimisten>

Link to [short film](#) about Tessel's experience of violence included in the workshop.

PROJECT ACHIEVED BY:

- Creating the necessary educational tools to raise awareness of violence among teenagers,
 - Taking practical action through workshops,
 - Communicating widely so that the project has national resonance.
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WOMEN & GIRLS REACHED:

3 000

FUNDS RAISED BY THE UNION:

1 250 €

PARTNERS:

Soroptimist Vrouwenfonds, SI Isalania Zwolle, SI Bilt-Bilthoven (as well as several other Dutch Clubs), and the Seneca Publishing Company

Let's "Orange the World"

Geweld tegen vrouwen en meisjes: wat kun jij ertegen doen?



Stelling 1

- Iemand uitschelden is ook geweld.



Stelling 2

- Een meisje voelt zich onveilig als ik in het donker achter haar loop.



Stelling 3

- Een meisje met een kort rokje of een naveltruije vraagt erom nageloten te worden.



Stelling 4

- Als een vriend van jou een meisje lastigvalt, zeg je daar iets van.



SPECIAL AWARD “NEW MEMBERS & VISIBILITY”

WOMEN IN STEM! The NERD project

Union of Italy

In October 2021, the initiative known as ‘WOMEN IN STEM!’ was launched in cooperation with [IBM](#) (International Business Machines Corporation). This project engaged 27 Universities, 28 Soroptimist Italian Clubs, and a remarkable involved 15,127 female students who participated in STEM courses. Its primary objective was to raise awareness among young female students of their potential and abilities in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) fields.

The project centred around two SIE Programme objectives: Education and Empowerment. Its overarching goal was to demonstrate that mathematics and computer science represent creative, interdisciplinary, and social disciplines, with problem-solving aspects – all areas in which women excel! By cultivating young women’s potential in science, the Soroptimists aimed to empower and support them in their future careers and encourage their leadership aspirations.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the collaboration between the Italian Soroptimists and IBM involved **25 Italian universities**. A total of **15,127 young women** took part in plenary sessions, which were split into **490 working groups** supervised by female IBM tutors, who led classroom sessions and workshops. Through these sessions, the female students were encouraged to believe in their potential to pursue STEM-oriented vocations. The 2021/2022 edition of the project was carried out as follows:

- 25 sessions were conducted across 25 Italian universities.

- Each partner university hosted a plenary session, either online or in person, during which the project’s objectives and the Soroptimist mission were explained, with the participation of a Soroptimist member as a role model.
- Students also had the opportunity to participate in a three-day workshop on the digital world, organised by IBM in July 2022.

Moving forward to the 2022-2023 academic year, which began in September 2022, the Soroptimists, succeeded in increasing the project’s reach to include 27 universities! Furthermore, in May 2023, the [Fondazione Bracco](#) in Milan hosted an awards event honouring the top 36 projects developed by students participating in the Women in STEM! initiative. Prizes were awarded to projects aligned with the [17 goals](#) of the [United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). The ceremony was held in the presence of the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of IBM Italia, [Stefano Rebattoni](#), and featured a speech by the President of SI Italy, Giovanna Guercio.

PROJECT ACHIEVED BY:

- Collaborating with a world-renowned partner at the cutting edge of technology,
- Relying on experts in the field to offer qualitative workshops and exchanges to female students,
- Involving role models for the benefit of young female students in order to motivate and inspire them.

WOMEN & GIRLS REACHED:

15 127

PARTNERS:

IBM Italia, 27 of Italy’s most prestigious universities and 28 Italian Clubs. Financially, the entire project was supported by IBM, their tutors and the universities involved. Also, 25 Italian Soroptimists made their professional skills available free of charge as role models.

PROGETTO NAZIONALE NERD?
STEM orientamento e sperimentazione



CLUB NAPOLI

Napoli 25.02.2022 h. 15.00-17.00

III° Incontro on line
Università Federico II
di Napoli



Dopo il diploma? **Scegli Informatica e cambia il mondo!**
Informatica. Crea, progetta, realizza.

Additional links:

https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/progetto-nerd-7000-studentesse-italiane-che-si-sono-cimentate-l-ia-ibm-AEWPicVD?refresh_ce=1

<https://www.soroptimist.it/it/attivita/premiazione-progetto-nerd-44243/>

UNION BEST PROJECT AWARD

SI POLAND WAR ZONE INITIATIVE - PROJECT MATCHING

Union of Poland

In February 2022, when war started in Ukraine, Poland quickly became the country with the largest number of Ukrainian refugees. During the first day alone, more than 200,000 people entered Poland. Every Soroptimist Club in Poland started emergency aid initiatives along the Poland-Ukraine border, with a particular focus on aiding women and children. They needed food, clothes, medical attention, legal assistance, and access to a safe place where they could rest after their exhausting escape. Polish Soroptimists not only welcomed Ukrainian families into their homes, but also delivered meals, and organised collections of food, clothes, bedding, and blankets.

To meet the growing needs and raise more funds, the Soroptimists promoted their actions through the [SIE Project Matching](#) platform. This tool, created by the SIE Federation to unite financial support with projects, became an essential source of funding.

Through Project Matching, the Union of Poland raised funds from across the globe to carry out projects aligned with programme objectives including **education, empowerment, elimination of violence against women and girls, health, and food security.**

In addition to Project Matching, the Polish Clubs independently raised funds to support women and children, while often leveraging their **Friendship Links** with Soroptimist Clubs in other countries.

Adapting to the evolving needs of refugees

several months into the conflict, Soroptimists expanded their efforts by:

- Offering psychological support to address the traumatic aftermath of war, including symptoms of post-traumatic stress, such as anxiety, sadness, guilt, sleep disorders, and nightmares.
- Enhancing local social integration by facilitating employment and offering Polish language courses,
- Providing family 'holiday trips' - a pleasant break for uprooted mothers and their children whose daily lives have been disrupted by the war.

Remarkable outcomes were achieved through SIE Project Matching and other funding. **Over €170,000 was collected to carry out projects, resulting in aid reaching 23,000 Ukrainian women and children.**

PROJECT ACHIEVED BY:

- Responding to the specific needs of the displaced people,
- Initiating a major fundraiser,
- Activating all possible channels of mutual assistance within SIE to obtain financial support.

WOMEN & GIRLS REACHED:

23 000

FUNDS RAISED BY THE UNION:

171 243 €

PARTNERS: Multiple Soroptimist Unions and Clubs, (from all five Federations) via Project Matching





EDUCATION

Increase access to learning opportunities

Soroptimists educate women and girls to lead



TOP PROJECT

BEON-MINDFUL ONLINE IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Club of Ellwangen / Jagst – GERMANY

RUNNERS-UP:



Sunflowers

Soroptimists from Pendik Istanbul, Türkiye

Provide equal opportunities in education for children with limited financial resources and support their academic and social development in a specific rural area of Istanbul.

PFR: 21920, 21921, 21922, 21923, 21924, 23294, 23295, 23306



Corporate Directors Program

Soroptimists from Kuwait, Kuwait

Train women & men on the importance of corporate governance. The goal is to tackle the issue of women in leadership positions in large companies and to empower women to take on more corporate leadership positions.

PFR: 20570



Tailoring training for young women regarding self-sufficiency in Kisoko Dida, Tororo, Uganda

Soroptimists from Haderslev, Rodding-Gram-Toftlund, Kolding, Tonder, Sonderborg, Varde, Aabenraa, Grindsted-Billund, Vejen - Denmark

To offer young women tailoring training, which gives them an education and the opportunity to achieve financial independence and personal empowerment.

PFR: 22657

EDUCATION

TOP PROJECT

BEON-MINDFUL ONLINE IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Club of Ellwangen / Jagst, GERMANY

Young people are the main explorers of the digital world. According to a UNICEF report, one in three internet users is aged between 11 and 16, and almost two-thirds of 15 to 24-year-olds use the internet ¹.

The digital world, with all its opportunities and risks, plays a significant role in the lives of children and adolescents. What are these children and teenagers doing behind their screens? What are they looking for and what are the risks? What impact might this have on their psychological development? And what challenges does this present for us as adults and parents in the digital age?

In response, the Soroptimists of Ellwangen developed a project called [BeOn - Mindful Online](#). Its objective is to promote reflection on media consumption and to develop a healthy approach to social media. It encourages more mindful interactions online, by raising awareness of online violence, hate speech, cyberbullying, infringement of image rights, and self-presentation.

This cross-target group prevention project involves active participation from children, teenagers, and school social workers, while also providing information for parents and educators.

BeOn consists of three interconnected modules. These are made up of workshops for students in grades 5, 6, and 8; videos for parents offering expert information and tips on media usage; as well as a peer-to-peer framework. These have been implemented in several schools through collaboration between an external social media specialist and the schools' social work departments. Additionally, informational events are held to provide insights into the digital world.

From the idea's conception in 2019, **BeOn was successfully launched in the 2021/22 academic year across six secondary schools in Ellwangen, with approximately 1,500 students participating.** BeOn will run for a minimum of four academic years. During this time the city of Ellwangen will provide an annual grant of 5,000 euros with the remaining costs being covered by SI Ellwangen, donors and sponsors.

¹ - <https://gdc.unicef.org/resource/growing-digital-world-benefits-and-risks>

PROJECT ACHIEVED BY:

- Offering advice to help young people embark on their digital adventure,
- Raising awareness of digital risks, such as cyber-bullying or other incentives for dangerous practices,
- Including key people to accompany those affected (children and teenagers).

WOMEN & GIRLS REACHED:

1,500

by completion this number should increase to over 6,000

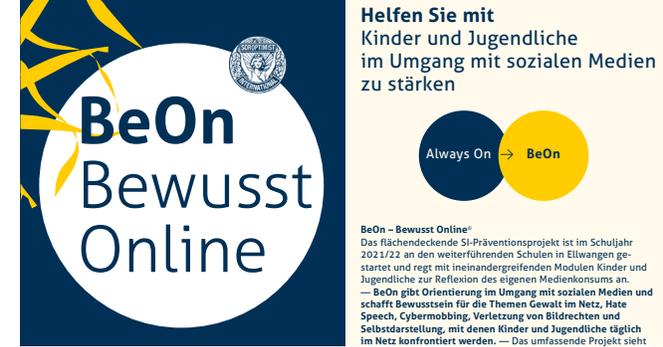
FUNDS RAISED BY THE CLUB:

45 000 €

FUNDS RAISED BY PARTNER(S):

ANNUAL GRANT OF **5 000 €**

PARTNER(S): CITY OF ELLWANGEN





WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

Increase economic empowerment

Soroptimists empower women to find employment



STANDING UP FOR WOMEN IN TIMES OF CRISIS - ENHANCING WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS

Club of Zagreb Centre - CROATIA

RUNNERS-UP:



Let's talk about money *Soroptimists from Wien-Ringstrasse, Austria*

To support women and young people on their way to financial independence and self-determination through an interactive financial workshop.

PFR: 23709



Art in Buldan- International Festival of Women Artists *Soroptimists from Karsiyaka Izmir, Türkiye*

Promote the organisation through the unifying power of art and to create an environment highlighting the work of artists and craftswomen sisters.

PFR: 21578, 22401, 22432, 22499, 22436, 22441, 22446, 22579, 22580, 22581, 22582, 22583, 22590.



Female soccer - The generations of change *Soroptimists from Viareggio Versilia, Italy*

With this project, the Soroptimists wanted to focus on persevering gender differences in the football world, where women still encounter considerable difficulties.

PFR: 21092

WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

TOP PROJECT

Standing up for women in times of crisis - Enhancing women's entrepreneurial skills

Club of Zagreb Centre - CROATIA

This project was designed to support women living and working in the County of Sisak-Moslavina, Croatia, following a devastating earthquake in December 2020. This is a low-income region, and the earthquake has exacerbated the situation, with many people being obliged to leave to find work.

Members of SI Zagreb Centre felt it was important to help female entrepreneurs who chose to stay and rebuild their lives in the area. Collaborating with the **Association of Female Entrepreneurs of Banovina**, they assessed the needs and developed a series of tailor-made workshops aimed at boosting essential skills.

In addition to enlisting experts, the Soroptimists personally engaged in delivering these tailor-made workshops. **A total of five intensive two-day workshops were organised for 13 female entrepreneurs from different backgrounds.**

The workshops covered:

- Turning an idea into a fully developed project,
- Stress management strategies,
- Motivation and resilience in times of crisis,
- Creating and maintaining a personal brand,
- Work-life balance, marketing tools and social media,
- Personal development.

The workshops helped the participants to develop a tourist and catering project. The project culminated in the creation of a logo and the launch of a [website](#) to showcase the products and services offered by female entrepreneurs in the Sisak-Moslavina region. The website was unveiled by the project organisers at the final meeting, which brought together participants, club members and guests.

At the final event, an insightful round table session entitled 'Challenges and opportunities for female entrepreneurs in the Banovina area' was held, moderated by Lidija Pavic-Rogosic, a member of SI Zagreb Centre. Guest speaker, Tomislav Lnenicek from the **Women's Perspective Association**, expressed his support for the project and spoke about opportunities for entrepreneurs.

The project received media coverage, including a notable feature in a television report aired on Nova TV.



PROJECT ACHIEVED BY:

- Promoting the empowerment of women in a disadvantaged area,
- Highlighting female entrepreneurship through tailor-made workshops,
- Teaming up with grassroots partners who possess local expertise.

WOMEN & GIRLS REACHED:

13

FUNDS RAISED BY THE CLUB:

7 650 €

PARTNER(S):

- Association of Female Entrepreneurs of Banovina;
- Nas pet Ltd, where Tanja Mosler (a member of the Association of Female Entrepreneurs and a web designer in charge of the website) works.
- Tagoras Ltd for business consulting, coaching and education - the trainers were Carmen Majetic-Pavic, a therapist and business coach, Elizabet Gasparov, project coordinator, and Ksenija Vorberger, a marketing expert.





VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Eliminate violence against women and girls

Soroptimists fight violence against women and girls



**PRZEMOCOMETR[®] (VIOLENCE METRE) -
Let's fight violence together**
Club of Wrocław - POLAND

RUNNERS-UP:



"Stop Violence" Shopping Bags

Soroptimists from Tamsweg/Lungau, Austria

To raise awareness on VAW, the Soroptimists handed over (to schools, tourist offices, municipal offices, shops) for free 15,000 recycled shopping bags with the print "Stop Violence".

PFR: 22890



Together against cyberbullying

Soroptimists from Köln-Römerturm, Germany

Educate students in schools about responsible use of social media and thus have a preventive effect on violence against women on internet.

PFR: 23731



Orange days (different activities)

Soroptimists from Larvik, Norway

In the frame of the Orange the World campaign, the Club informed institutions and citizens about violence against women through various actions (lighting monuments in orange, exhibition, lecture, musical performance by children, theatre play, etc.)

PFR: 22351, 22470, 22412

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

TOP PROJECT

PRZEMOCOMETR® (VIOLENCE METRE) - Let's fight violence together Club of Wrocław - POLAND

Przemocometr® is an educational initiative implemented by the Soroptimists of Wrocław and [Plakaciary](#), a non-profit organisation fighting for women's rights in Poland. It launched at the start of 2022's international 'Orange the World' campaign, which takes part annually and promotes '16 Days Against Gender-Based Violence'.

The project focused on shining a spotlight on violence against women (VAW) which can manifest itself in physical, psychological, economic, verbal, and even institutional forms. It can affect anyone, irrespective of age, professional standing, or financial status. The Members of SI Wrocław and Plakaciary sought to raise awareness and provide individuals with the means to address such violence.

At its core, the project champions recognising VAW – the first step in combating this issue. This is determined using a 'violence metre' – a crucial tool used to assess the nature of a relationship by providing questions to determine whether a partnership is a healthy or toxic and abusive one.

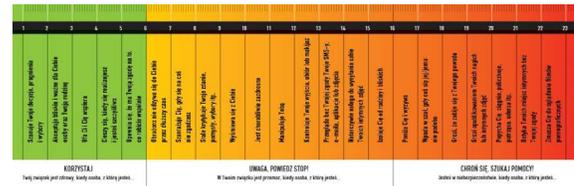
Przemocometr® equips the user with basic information on where to set boundaries in relationships and how to protect oneself from violence. It unmasks and reveals attempts to normalise violence and indicates when to give assistance or ask for help. The Soroptimists, in collaboration with Plakaciary, ran the project at all stages:

- Training and lectures,
- Development of materials,
- Branding and communication.

A well-structured timeline supported the project's success, fostering its promotion and facilitating engagements with experts, institutions, and the media. Consequently, this tool has become a permanent part of nationwide discussions concerning VAW. It has obtained the support of specialists, and prominent figures in science, the arts, and entertainment. The project benefited from being featured in over 20 publications, while the Soroptimists extended its reach to a wider audience through conferences and broadcasts.

The project has:

- Increased awareness and knowledge about domestic violence,
- Provided access to information on aid institutions,
- Developed a working tool for specialists,
- Obtained significant media coverage,
- Generated specialised training for Club members, increasing their competencies,
- Brought visibility to Soroptimists' activities in Poland.



PROJECT ACHIEVED BY:

- Running a wide-ranging VAW awareness campaign,
- Promoting a tool to help identify violent behaviour,
- Alerting governing bodies and involving civil society about this major issue.

WOMEN & GIRLS REACHED:

500 000

FUNDS RAISED BY THE CLUB:

111 000 €

PARTNERS:

Plakaciary, Norway Grants (the financial mechanism of the European Economic Area and the Norwegian Financial Mechanism) - financial assistance established by Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein for the countries of Central and Southern Europe.



HEALTH & FOOD SECURITY

Ensure women & girls have access to the highest attainable standard of health care

Soroptimists help provide access to better health and living conditions for women and girls

TOP
PROJECT

GETTING TO KNOW ENDOMETRIOSIS
Club of Club Karsiyaka / Izmir – Türkiye

RUNNERS-UP:



Stillborn and premature children

Soroptimists from Kerteminde, Denmark

Support mothers of stillborn or premature children in a difficult time of their lives by knitting coats and crocheting baskets.

PFR: 21194



Build Bridges: Mental Health

Soroptimists from Lisboa Caravela, Portugal

Contribute to consolidating the systematic implementation of programs to promote socio-emotional skills and mental health literacy in 1st cycle students.

PFR: 23743



Breast Cancer: awareness is needed

Soroptimists from Moda Istanbul, Türkiye

Raise awareness that early diagnosis can save lives in the case of breast cancer and carry out regular check-ups.

PFR: 22674



Fighting breast cancer: “I am aware, I am protected, I am healthy”.

Soroptimists from Marmara Istanbul, Türkiye

Members of SI Marmara Istanbul helped provide access to better breast cancer screening conditions and raised awareness on self-body examination for women from a disadvantaged neighbourhood.

PFR: 22257, 22258

BEST PRACTICE AWARDS 2023

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HEALTH & FOOD SECURITY

TOP PROJECT

GETTING TO KNOW ENDOMETRIOSIS

Club of Club Karsiyaka / Izmir – Türkiye

After a visit to France by members of SI Karsiyaka Izmir in 2017, for the 80th anniversary of SI Versailles where the theme was ‘endometriosis’, the Turkish Soroptimists were inspired to look into the disease.

Endometriosis is a common gynaecological condition affecting women. It is linked to the presence of tissue, similar to the uterine mucosa, outside the uterus. The disease may be asymptomatic. In some cases, however, it causes severe pain and even infertility. **Endometriosis affects almost 10% of women and girls of childbearing age worldwide, or 190 million people**¹.

Through extensive research, the Soroptimists reached an overriding realisation: Despite a growing inclination to discuss health matters, endometriosis remains a taboo or ignored subject for the general public and the medical profession – with diagnosis taking an average of 7 years.

Yet, it is a public health issue that needs to be better understood, publicised, and treated.

The Soroptimists took tangible action regarding information dissemination, awareness building, and prevention. Firstly, they identified a select group of medical professionals who formed the **Endometriosis and Adenomyosis Association**. They learned that the association was looking to collaborate with a non-governmental organisation to increase awareness in society.

Their first event took place 30 March 2022, to coincide with International Endometriosis Awareness Month. Key highlights included:

- They organised ‘**ENDO-MART**’ a march with women and their supportive spouses.
- **ENDO-MART** posters were exhibited for a week on billboards and in public areas with the help of the Municipality of Izmir.
- The activities continued with two conferences that members organised with the Endometriosis and Adenomyosis Association. The conferences were given by **Professor Umit Inceboz** on 16 March 2022 at the University of Izmir, and on 10 May 2022 in a state secondary school. Surprisingly, each conference revealed numerous female students aged 14-20 exhibiting symptoms of the disease.

The ENDO-MART march served as a forum for information sharing, exchanges, and meetings, which were covered extensively by newspapers and media outlets. The work of the Soroptimists will continue with the aim to reach larger audiences.

1 - <https://www.who.int/fr/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/endometriosis>

PROJECT ACHIEVED BY:

- Carrying out in-depth research,
- Collaborating with key actors,
- Educating for prevention and raising awareness.

WOMEN & GIRLS REACHED:

1 672

FUNDS RAISED BY THE CLUB:

1 350 €

PARTNERS:

The Endometriosis and Adenomyosis Association, IRENBE Women’s Health Clinic, the Municipality of Izmir City, and the Health Department





SUSTAINABILITY

Improve environmental sustainability for the specific needs of women and girls

Soroptimists help improve the environment and promote sustainability



'AGEING WITH DIGNITY' AND 'TIME DONATION'
Club of Trier - GERMANY

RUNNERS-UP:



Improvement of soil
Soroptimists from Mezitli, Türkiye

Nurture the future: Separate fresh vegetable and fruit waste from other waste in local bazaars and feed the soil after composting the waste.

PFR: 22221



BINARIO 10
Soroptimists from Viareggio Versilia, Italy

The project, aims to redevelop an area of the city of Viareggio, destroyed in 2009 by the railway massacre that hit the city.

PFR: 21093



Bee project in Ethiopia
Soroptimists from Freudenstadt, Germany

Beekeeping training for 4 women in Ethiopia with the aim of empowering women and conserving and sustainably using biodiversity.

PFR: 23624

SUSTAINABILITY

TOP PROJECT

'AGEING WITH DIGNITY' AND 'TIME DONATION'

Club of Trier - GERMANY

The UN has declared 2021–30 the 'Healthy Ageing Decade'. Sustainable elderly care services are a complex topic, especially due to the need to guarantee both safety and quality. Sustainability development covers three dimensions: environmental, economic and social.

The Soroptimists of SI Trier initiated their 'Ageing with dignity' project to support senior women living in nursing homes. The project centres on women because there is a glaring reality: **across all European OECD member countries, pensions paid to individuals aged 65 and over are on average 28% lower for women than for men**¹. Older women are more likely to have worked part-time and in lower-paid jobs, coupled with more often taking on significant caregiving roles for children and parents, resulting in lower pension contributions and, therefore, receiving minimum benefits.

The project offers well-being moments to elderly women with monthly allowances of only €100-120, including pedicures, visits to the hairdresser, and purchases of cosmetics and body care products. Wellness treatments boost communication, encouraging exchanges between residents and helping combat feelings of isolation and abandonment.

In addition, Club members held a major fundraiser in the Autumn of 2022. With support from the relief fund and their own resources,

they successfully raised €18,000! These funds were donated to five nursing homes in the city.

Simultaneously, the Soroptimists started a 'Zeitspende' or 'Time donation' project. Central to this initiative is the idea of developing a culture of 'living well together', with the common thread that **each generation has something to offer to the other**. Female students from two local high schools visited residents of retirement homes, who rarely receive any visitors. Intergenerational encounters have many benefits: sharing precious moments between two different generations, maintaining social ties, and including everyone in society regardless of their age. These young girls documented their conversations and positive experiences with residents in reports for the [Südwestrundfunk](#) and [Trierischer Volksfreund](#) newspapers.

The resounding success of the project led the Soroptimists to continue it throughout 2023.

¹ - [Data from OECD](#)

PROJECT ACHIEVED BY:

- Enabling people to take care of their body and mind through socio-aesthetics,
- Fighting solitude and creating social links,
- Providing a time for listening and sharing through intergenerational meetings.

WOMEN & GIRLS REACHED:

200-250

FUNDS RAISED BY THE CLUB:

18 000 €

LINK:

<https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2030agenda-sdgs.html>



And that's not all, read on for more news!

WOMEN IN WAR ZONES

Only weeks after the five Soroptimist clubs in Ukraine discussed the possibility of forming a new Union, heartbreaking news spread around the globe –millions of Ukrainians, mostly women and children, had to flee Ukraine for their lives. They needed shelter, food, and necessities for their everyday lives. At the same time, millions in Ukraine were under attack, with a great number of internally displaced people lacking medical supplies, generators, and equipment for emergency shelters.

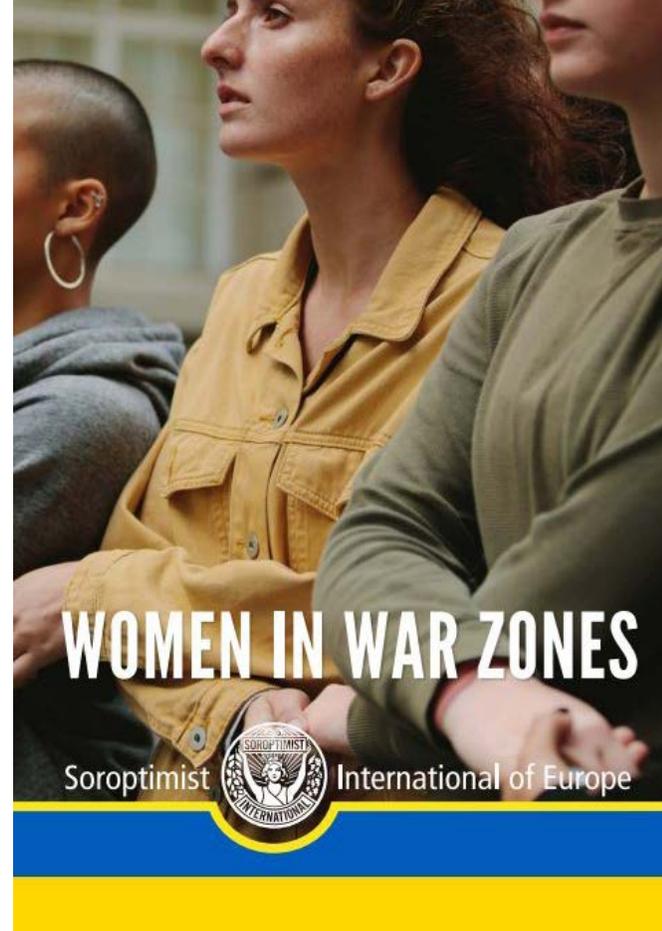
SIE with the Single Clubs and/or Unions in almost all the countries bordering Ukraine were confronted by the necessity to provide immediate assistance. The main challenge was how to channel financial support to the countries with the most refugees and to Ukraine itself.

Within a few days, connections were established and the first projects started to receive money through the [SIE Project Matching](#) tool and from the [SIE Disaster Recovery Fund](#). To date, thanks to the enormous solidarity from around the world, both from our clubs, Unions and external donors, almost 480'000€ in contributions has been collected for our 20 projects through Project Matching, plus a further €195,151 through the Disaster Recovery Fund!

In April 2022, Soroptimist International of Europe (SIE) made significant strides in advocating at the highest echelons, SIE

Immediate Past President Anna Wszelaczyńska actively participated in a debate organised by the Action for Social Rights - Conference of INGOs. Meanwhile, SIE President, Carolien Demey, and SIE OSCE Representative, Dora Vrdlovec, made their presence felt at the ['22nd Conference of the Alliance against Trafficking in Persons'](#), a distinguished event organised by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). What is even more noteworthy is that, for the very first time, SIE's official statements found their place on the prestigious platform of the OSCE, echoing their unwavering commitment not only to address the issue of trafficking but also to contribute valuable insights regarding the ongoing conflict in Ukraine.

You can learn more on our achievements in the special brochure dedicated to SIE help to Ukraine here :



© S. Ringerike (Norway)



© S1 Poland

Above : UNION OF NORWAY
Welcoming Ukrainian refugees in Ringerike

Below : UNION OF POLAND
Transport and donations of basic goods for Ukrainian women and children

SIE PROJECT OF THE MONTH

Continuing your efforts in sending PFRs! You have been doing a great job since the beginning of the biennium as you have all integrated the importance of reporting projects! The PFR system is an invaluable tool for Unions and Clubs to bring projects into the limelight.

Each month the SIE Programme Team designates the “SIE Project of the month”. The selected project is selected among the PFRs received. The project is then promoted in *The Link*, the SIE newsletter, our website and social media. The idea behind this highlight is to coordinate all the dissemination and transfer activities for the promotion of the work carried out (the results obtained, the internal and external impacts and spin-offs of the project, etc.)

We also need your projects for our **advocacy** work! Indeed our SIE Representatives to international institutions need to justify our work in order to promote SI and maintain our consultative status at the United Nations’ ECOSOC, our participatory status at the Council of Europe and the European Women’s Lobby, and our contribution to the work of the OSCE. **You are uniquely placed to provide a realistic assessment of daily changes in society and act as a sort of “barometer” for women’s rights.**

SIE NEWSLETTER, “THE LINK”

Did you know that every month, the SIE Communications team publishes the newsletter *The Link*? If you still haven’t done so, don’t wait any longer and sign up to receive the monthly newsletter by email!

With the rise of digital media, we need to leverage many different techniques to reach even larger audiences and create lasting change. Digital communication has given associations and non-governmental organizations unprecedented access to a global audience. But with that comes new responsibilities, like using this new technology intelligently and efficiently.

The Link is an excellent way of maintaining links between the Federation and Soroptimists but also between Soroptimists themselves and the outside world. The newsletter is used to convey several types of messages:

- Promote the publication of specific SIE articles,
- Launch an advocacy campaign,
- Invite to Soroptimist events,
- Highlight actions undertaken by Unions and Clubs,
- Generate traffic to our website and social networks,
- Etc.

Please click on the link hereafter to subscribe to our mailing list, so you don’t miss out on this wealth of information: <https://www.soroptimisteurope.org/subscribe-to-the-sie-link-news-bulletin/>
Happy reading!

SIE PROJECT MATCHING

Programme development is the existential goal of our organisation. By putting collective potential into practice, project missions significantly enhance our public visibility. Our grassroots structure gives us the capacity for global impact. Project Matching is an excellent way to join efforts and truly work in a global initiative as Soroptimists!

Through Project Matching, Soroptimists receive support for their projects and offer help. Although the support is mainly through funds, it is most certainly not money alone. Exchanges may also be set up in the form of expertise, offering know-how, giving advice/ideas for good practices, visits, etc. – the list is endless.

To find out more and see the list of projects waiting for support click on the following link: <https://soroptimist-projects.org/>. We suggest that you visit the page regularly for the latest news!

All announced projects show how strongly the work of our fellow members articulates education, equality and solidarity. And it is this same spirit of solidarity that has made it possible to support a large number of women and girls through the series of projects “War zone initiatives” (in response to the war in Ukraine) via Project Matching. When Soroptimists call us, they call you too – let us reach out and help them! Let us try to be more involved and share our knowledge and skills in the Soroptimist spirit.





SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF EUROPE

We are a worldwide network of professionally and socially diverse women.
We are a platform to serve communities, share knowledge and experience.
We educate and empower women and girls to lead.
We fight violence against women and girls.
We give women a voice by lobbying at all levels of society.



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