



The Link



A global voice for women

I/2012-2013 N° 228



*The SIE Strategic Plan
Addressing Challenges
of the 21st Century*

*European Meeting and Friendship Days
An In-Depth Discussion
of Ageing*

*SIE Scholarships and Grants
Submit Your
Applications Now!*



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 for more information about the aims, activities and projects that characterise our organisation.

Note from the Editor

PLEASE KEEP TEXTS BRIEF !

Imagine flicking through your favourite glossy magazine, and there were no photos illustrating the articles. Instead, all the pages are filled from top to bottom with text. Boring, right? Now, turn to the pages that are supposed to carry the short news items. Instead of short snappy dispatches, a single article extends over two or three pages. Surprised, right? And finally, the section usually reserved for garden tips suddenly features a recipe for lasagna. That's it, you'll say. The editor has gone batty!

Without giving it much thought, every reader knows what to expect from the structure of a magazine, and every editorial team must work within these bounds. Magazines have to adhere to certain rules of journalism and graphic design – otherwise, you can be pretty sure they'll lose readers. At the very

least, however, the product will be unattractive and unprofessional.

I realise how enthusiastic contributors to the The Link are about their articles, and each has made an effort cover all the details. But you are not alone in the Federation. Many other Soroptimists have poured their hearts into their reports and expect to see them in the issue too. So, please keep your news items for the Union and Club pages to no more than 300 words. The double pages in the front are meant to carry features of a maximum of 700 words – with lots of photos, just like any glossy magazine. Of course, it is my job to help with editing, but to avoid disappointment, please keep texts brief – and photos high-quality!

Christine Cromwell-Ahrens, Editor, The Link

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Cover page

The Adolescent Girls Network in Haiti, supported by a Disaster Relief grant, has already reached 550 girls and hopes to help more.

Photo: AmeriCares

Dear Soroptimist Friends

May I begin by expressing my sincere condolences to our Soroptimist friends in Guinea for the tragic loss of Aïssatou Boiro. This cowardly assassination (see page 17) brings home the consequences faced by such courageous champions against corruption. Aïssatou was a model Soroptimist and set an example for all government officials. Only weeks before, news of Malala Yousafzai's attempted murder shocked the world: shot by Taliban fighters because she campaigned for girls' education in Pakistan. Let it be said that we Soroptimists will not allow their messages to be forgotten.

On a more mundane note: Nowadays no organisation of importance can operate without a strategic plan. We are all well aware of our vision, mission, values and goals. But when it comes to a strategic plan, some of us may have problems because they are not used to developing a plan and working with it. I personally do not like the word itself, as it derives from a war context, and I like to avoid words with any such connotation. Therefore I would prefer to say roadmap. Both terms mean the same: a combination of goals for which our organisation is striving as well as the means and policies by which it is seeking to get there. Our task force has worked hard on the new SIE strategic plan, which is presented in this issue. I thank them very much for their excellent efforts! And thank you to all those who contributed to producing the final strat plan through their valuable input.

I had the pleasure to attend the Friendship Meeting of the German-Speaking Countries in Bad Ischl, Austria with the important theme: 'Women create sustainability'. It was an intensive weekend with great keynote speakers, but also excellent theme sessions. I went to the workshop of social expert Dr Michaela Moser on 'A good life for all'. During the session with assigned roles, I was a farmer in the mountains. Being at the bottom of the poverty scale was a truly eye-opening experience!

Another high-level meeting focusing on 'Active Ageing – Solidarity & Gender Equality' took place in Nicosia on the isle of Cyprus: the 9th European Meeting & Friendship Days. It also featured prominent keynote speakers, including the 2010

Nobel laureate for Economic Sciences, Professor Christopher Pissarides, who spoke on active ageing in modern societies.

In this issue of The Link, you will also learn what has been achieved with disaster grants in Haiti. It is a bitter irony of the fate that hurricane Sandy struck not only the US, but also Latin American countries and the Caribbean, including this island, which seems to have the worst of luck regarding natural disasters. In Haiti alone more than 70 deaths are to be mourned, and fears are growing of food shortages because of the extensive damage to crops. There is concern that floods and unsanitary conditions could lead to an increase in cases of cholera. So, we will no doubt have to continue our help to this country belonging to our Federation.

Please submit nominations for the 5th SIE Peace Prize 2013, which is endowed with € 20 000 (!). Last time there were only seven applications for this prize, and my aim is to achieve at least 77 nominations to show that Soroptimists know and support the women or organisations working in line with our commitment for peace. Of course, Clubs can also nominate our own Soroptimists for this prestigious award.

Bravo to SI Italy for their initiative to create and finance child-friendly interrogation rooms at courts. This model can and should be imitated in other parts of the world.

This issue of The Link is at the end of the year. The girls in the photo are part of a group of musicians who have been supported by my own club, SI Bonn-Bad Godesberg, with instruments as part of the project 'Play Beethoven'. With them I would like to send you my season's greetings. I wish you all good health, personal happiness and great success in all your plans and programmes for the New Year.

Yours in friendship,

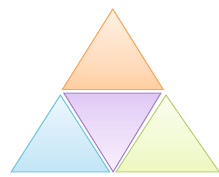

 Kathy Kaaf, SIE President 2011-2013



Thanks to the support of Kathy's own club, SI Bonn-Bad Godesberg, these budding musicians are able to perform at a school concert with their own saxophones.

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY

Every worldwide organisation is – to varying degrees – beginning to feel the effects of the current socioeconomic turmoil and the growing competition of associations with similar goals. Soroptimist International of Europe is no exception. The SIE Board has set about tackling this issue with energy and enthusiasm. The following is a presentation of their initial results.



The SIE Strategic Plan

Building on the work accomplished at SI level since the Board Meeting in Montreal last year, a SIE Task Force ‘Structure and Strategy’ was put together in January to assess the current situation of our organisation and to come up with strategic structural measures so that SIE can grow in the 21st century with drive and determination. The Task Force is composed of five members: Immediate Past President Eliane Lagasse, President elect Ulla Madsen, Vice President Gerda Huisman, Executive Director Anne Simon, and chaired by Finance Controller Hafdis Karlsdottir.

During several brainstorming sessions, the team analysed the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation and identified the areas to be assessed – with particular focus on membership and strategies and scenarios to re-engineer growth.

To ensure that global challenges would be properly reflected, the Task Force also conducted a major review of the strategic plan, realigning SIE to SI’s mission. A first draft of its work-in-progress was presented at the Governors’ Meeting in Budapest. The current version of the key Goals and Objectives is provided as a separate insert to this issue of *The Link*.

After developing the Goals and Objectives, the Task Force devised a new Structural/Organisational model with a more in-depth elaboration of goals and objectives that are grouped by area of expertise and/or interest. This allows greater teamwork. Each Goal with its Objective has been

allocated a proper framework of action and placed into a well-conceived structure.

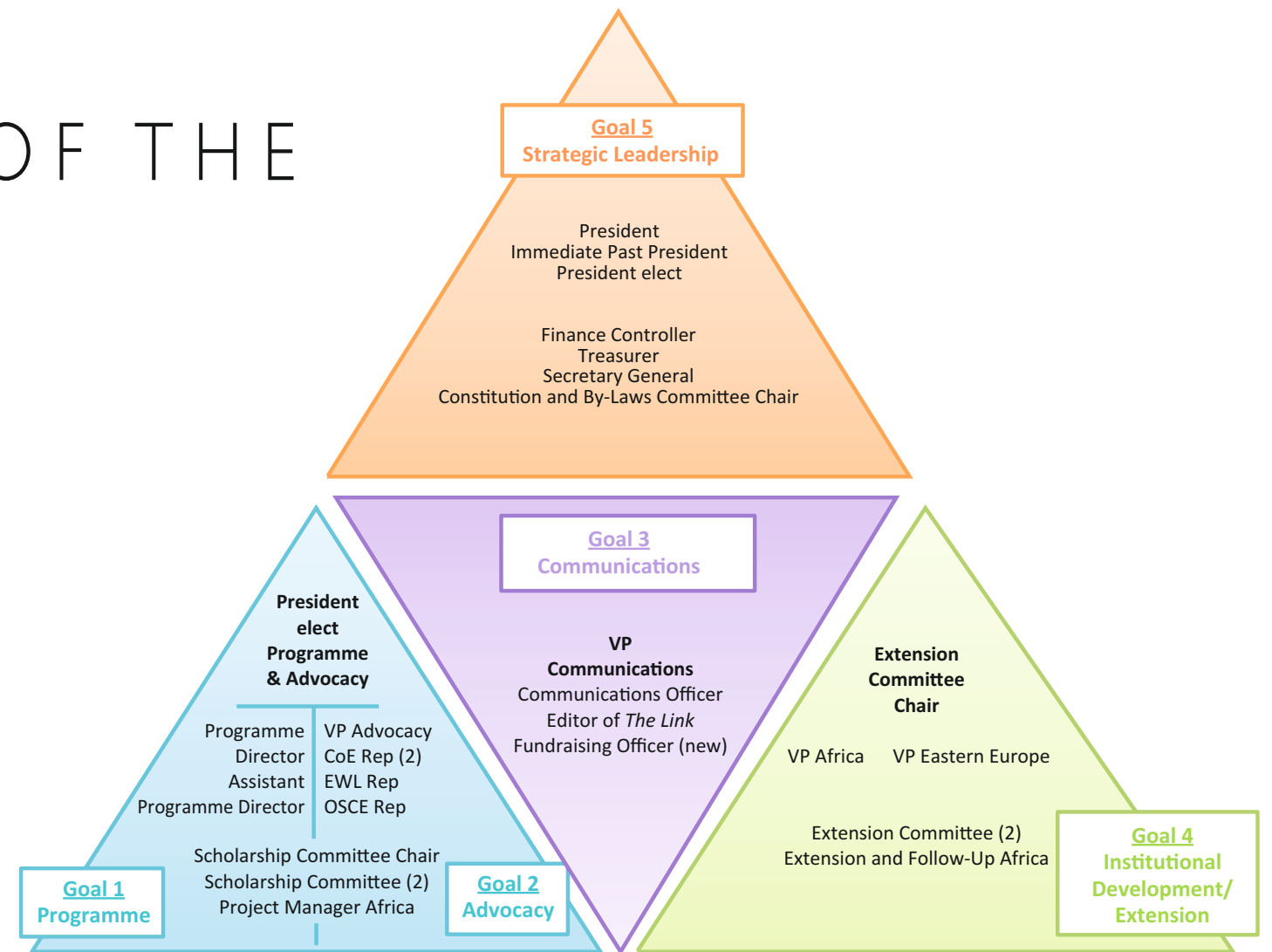
At its meeting in October 2012 the Extended SIE Board assigned individual Board Members responsibilities and devised an Action Plan of activities, targeting specific results on every front for the current and next biennium.



The five Strategic Goals are represented by four triangles:

Goal 5 - Strategic Leadership falls under the responsibility of the Federation President who is supported by the President elect, the Immediate Past President and the Secretary General. In the new model key areas – such as Finance and Accounting and Constitution and By-Laws – work closely with the President on strategic orientations. Together, they will ensure the organisation makes use of all its resources and develops in a sustainable manner.

Goal 4 - Institutional Development/Extension remains the responsibility of the Extension Committee Chair supported by her Committee members. Extension Africa also falls into this group. The new model includes two Vice Presidents to reinforce regional development: Africa and Eastern Europe.



THE SIE STRATEGIC MODEL

Goal 1 and 2 - Programme and Advocacy are given special attention with an additional layer addressing the key *raison d'être* of our organisation focused on lobbying and championing the causes of women and girls. The overall responsibility of this triangle falls with the President elect. The Programme Director continues to drive programme, while one of the Vice Presidents will act as an Advocacy Director. Her role is to support the representatives of each major institution in which we have a status of influence, i.e. the Council of Europe, the OSCE, European Women’s Lobby etc. The Scholarship Committee Chair and her team as well as any Board Members with thematic expertise in, for example, water, food security, etc. will also be engaged. In the longer term, one could tap into scholarship grantees’ resources to strengthen our knowledge on specific issues and prepare position papers.

Goal 3 - Communications and PR – are essential to any organisation in the 21st century and therefore this triangle is strategically placed at the centre of the model. Communication supports numerous goals – from fostering better internal communication i.e. networking between members, addressing extension needs, promoting professional and personal relationship channels to ensuring that the proper messages and achievements are communicated throughout our organisation. With the support of the Editor of *The Link* and the Communications Officer, a Vice President will be in charge of this strategic goal. The aim is to have a Fundraising Officer to assist in this work.

In subsequent issues of *The Link* the activities related to each individual Strategic Goals will be presented in greater detail.

Hafdis Karlsdottir, Chair of the ‘Structure and Strategy’ Task Force, in collaboration with SIE Executive Director *Anne Simon*



SIE President Kathy Kaaf, Professor Constantinos Phellas and Professor Asghar Zaidi covered a wide variety of aspects of ageing in the first session.

AN IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION OF AGEING

SI Nicosia and SI Paphos hosted the 9th European Meeting and Friendship Days in Cyprus from 28th-31st September 2012. As intended by the initiator of this SIE event, this occasion allowed 'Soroptimists to get to know each other beyond borders in a spirit of friendship which is the cornerstone of our international organisation'.

In line with the European Commission's declared focus in 2012, the 'European Year for Active Ageing' was the subject of the working day held on Saturday in the amphitheatre of the University of Nicosia. President of SI Nicosia Rita Kourouki opened the seminar by welcoming the speakers and the numerous Soroptimists from SIE and SIGBI. Past SI President Marie Jeanne Bosia then took the floor and recalled the themes of the previous eight European Friendship Days. Maguy Chabert, who founded this special SIE event in 1988, explained the motivation behind the meeting.

Facing the challenges of ageing

Dr Asghar Zaidi, Professor of International Social Policy at the University of Southampton and Director of Research at the European Centre in Vienna, began the first session. He highlighted the Centre's activities in collaboration with the European Commission to promote active and healthy ageing and to ensure quality of life, equality and solidarity between generations.

Professor Constantinos N. Phellas, Vice Rector of the Faculty for Research at the University of

Nicosia, then presented a critical approach to the conceptualisation and measurement of quality of life in social gerontology as well as health and social care. According to his research, the quality of life for the elderly depends on a number of fundamental changes in the way societies perceive and respond to ageing.

Tackling the subject with humour, SIE President Kathy Kaaf spoke of the joy of eating and ageing well. The audience was especially amused by her remark that some people feel eating in old age is like having sex in younger years! On a more serious note she also explained that adequate nutrition and a well-balanced diet were of vital importance to prevent and reduce the common health hazards of ageing.

Active ageing and life-long learning

In the second session, Professor Mary Koutselini, University of Cyprus and UNESCO Chair in Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, presented the findings of an investigation on active ageing in different cultural, economic and political systems. She showed ways in which age and gender are interrelated and what measures and what effective strategies can be applied to active ageing.

European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth Androula Vassiliou underlined the importance of lifelong learning for active ageing. The European Commission has been raising awareness of the contribution older people make to society and encouraging policy-makers to create better opportunities for their social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development.

2010 Nobel laureate for Economic Sciences Professor Christopher Pissarides of the London School of Economics made a case for the fact that older people could be a benefit to the economy and society, as many of them continued to work or would choose to do so if the opportunity existed. Others contributed to the economy through informal or voluntary work.

Governments must also provide incentives to keep older people in the labour force longer. When unemployment is high, older workers are often encouraged to retire with the aim to create new jobs for the younger. But the recession in the 1980s proved that this approach did not produce the desired results. Older people have different needs and different skills to contribute to the economy. This is a challenge that modern societies must address.

Many thanks and congratulations

Closing the seminar, Anastasia Aslanides, a very active member of SI Nicosia and co-ordinator of the Meeting, summarised some of the main conclusions. In short, it is clear that life does not end at 60! The aim of the seminar was to determine effective strategies for active ageing and thanks to the eminent speakers the target was achieved!

The second part of the meeting was dedicated to discovering the culture, history and beautiful nature of Cyprus. To our friends in Cyprus we extend our thanks and congratulations and look forward to meeting again at the 10th European Meeting and Friendship Days.

Note from the Editor: A more exhaustive version of this report is available as a download from the SIE website.



Professor Mary Koutselini and European Commissioner Androula Vassiliou listened, as Professor Christopher Pissarides explained why people over 60 were a not financial burden.



Soroptimists from near and far participated in the informative discussion of the challenges of ageing in Cyprus.



Anastasia Aslanides of SI Nicosia, who co-coordinated the event, summarised some of the main conclusions of the fascinating discussion on active ageing.



Established in 1968, the SIE Scholarship Fund awards scholarships/grants to women pursuing further training or a career change. Women who have started professional and/or vocational training are also eligible if they live in a developing country where SIE is represented. Last year scholarships totalled €105,500. The deadline for 2013-2014 grants is 15th January 2013!

SIE Scholarships and Grants

SUBMIT
YOUR
APPLICATIONS
NOW!



Thanks to the support of SI Ferrara and an SIE scholarship, Honorine Mujyambère, shown here with Patrizia Querzoli Modestino, realised her dream of a higher education.

The candidates may be Soroptimists or non-Soroptimists. Preference will be given to candidates who are in their last year of studies or are enrolled in training courses in professions or businesses that are non-traditional for women. Unions may nominate two candidates and Single Clubs one candidate. Nominees from Unions must be based on recommendations by their Clubs. The Club that suggested the candidate is responsible for the application as well as the follow-up of the grantee's progress during the scholarship period.

Support for plastic surgeons

In memory of the founder of the first SI in Europe, SIE also awards a Dr Suzanne Noël Scholarship, to female physicians specialised in plastic and/or reconstructive surgery. This scholarship usually helps to fund special courses in this field.

Last year there were more applications than ever, which made it very difficult for the Scholarship

Committee to choose the grantees. However, we are convinced that we selected qualified candidates and only regret that there was no more money available to support even more young women.

In the meantime a letter with the appropriate application forms has been sent to all Union and Single Club Presidents. Applications can also be downloaded from the Member Area of the SIE website (www.soroptimisteurope.org). Please ensure you provide all the necessary information.

Grantees thank SIE

The Club that nominates a successful candidate must also ensure that the grantee submits a final report to SIE. These reports are very useful in monitoring the impact of the scholarships/ grants.

For example, Kasmina Katsiaryna from Belarus, who received a SIE Scholarship in 2010-2011, was supported while studying for a Masters degree in Political Science from Södertörn University in Sweden. She wrote: 'I have gained a deeper knowledge of both Swedish and international politics at a theoretical level, as well as of how things work at a more practical level in administration ... The scholarship gave me a great financial independence ... I used the financial assistance primarily to pay for my university fees, books and study materials.'

Subsequently, she worked as an assistant to an international observer during the elections in Belarus and was able to gather valuable information for her future research.

SI Ferrara in Italy nominated Honorine Mujyambère from Rwanda for a scholarship in 2011-2012. After receiving a Bachelor of Science degree in Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering from Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST), Honorine participated in a one-year Master's Programme in Italy offered by SI Ferrara. In 2009 she graduated with an International Master's degree from the department of Environmental and Regional Policies for Sustainability and Local Development at the University of Ferrara. But her dream to continue her studies did not end there: 'I applied to the University's PhD programme in Telecommunications Engineering and was immediately accepted.' After working hard during the first two years of her studies, Honorine secured a SIE Scholarship for her final year, thanks to SI Ferrara's nomination. She has since com-

pleted her PhD studies and is currently doing an internship. 'I would like to take this opportunity to thank SI Ferrara and Soroptimist of Europe, (because) with all your help and care, my dream has been realised.'

SI Vienna Belvedere in Austria suggested Ulrike Repnik for a scholarship in 2011-2012. In her final report Ulrike expressed her gratitude for the grant: 'I finished my Master's degree in Intercultural Competencies at the Danube University Krems with distinction in 2011. It was mainly because of the SIE scholarship that I was able to finance this university course. ... it also enabled me to do an internship in Bangalore in India at the NGO EQUATIONS.' For her Master's thesis, Ulrike analysed travelogues about India published by the Austrian newspaper Kronen Zeitung.

These are only a few excerpts from the final reports which show how grateful these young women are for SIE support.

Annabeth Studer Meyer, SIE Scholarship Committee Chair
annabeth.studer@bluewin.ch



As a co-editor, Ulrike Repnik (right) contributed to a study on women street vendors and tourism in India.

Haiti after the earthquake

LONG-TERM SUPPORT FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS

After the devastating earthquake rocked Haiti in January 2010, Soroptimists around the world generously donated hundreds of thousands of euros to help women and girls rebuild their lives. Soroptimists are ensuring that almost three years after the catastrophe, women and girls are not forgotten.



Much of the focus of long-term projects is on girls who receive information on reproductive health, hygiene and cholera prevention.

We allocated US\$ 50,000 to Relief International, an organisation originally founded to provide emergency, rehabilitation and development services to women. Relief International identified a need for vocational training for earthquake-affected women and girls, so the Soroptimist donation funded a project called Small Business Development Training for Women. This programme provided vocational training courses paired with financial literacy instruction and increased awareness about domestic, gender-based and sexual violence as well as how to be protected. The Soroptimist contribution was the sole source of funding for this project, which directly assisted 1,288 women and girls, as well as indirectly assisting another 12,691 beneficiaries.

AmeriCares, a relief organisation that supports emergency medical needs and long-term humanitarian assistance projects around the world, received \$ 11,000. The organisation used the donation for its Haiti Adolescent Girls Network, a collaborative

effort involving several organisations committed to empowering and protecting adolescent girls in Haiti. This network has since reached 550 girls through weekly gatherings at which they discuss sexual reproductive health, hygiene, cholera prevention, leadership and rights, as well as financial literacy. The next stage of this project will focus on gaining access to even more girls.

More recently, a grant of US\$ 50,000 was awarded to Madre, an organisation meeting urgent needs in various communities to advance women's human rights. With the support of Soroptimists, Madre and KOFIV, the women's centre in Haiti, have provided support to over 750 rape survivors and other women and girls identified as highly vulnerable to gender-based violence in the past six months. Those affected were given access to a secure, central space where they could recover from the violence they experienced. In this period, 119 women have received peer-to-peer counselling and psychosocial support through individual and group therapy. Up to 12 women and children per night take refuge in this secure shelter. So far, more than 50 women and children have used the emergency shelter and over 3,000 women and their families received health and hygiene supplies. In recognition of our Haitian partners' work, Malya Villard-Appolon, co-founder of KOFIV, has been elected one of this year's CNN Heroes! This is indeed a testament to all the courageous and ground-breaking work of these women.

Suba Uma, SIE HQ Programme Executive



A collaboration of several organisations, the Adolescent Girls Network set up by AmeriCares has reached 550 girls in its empowerment and protection programme.

With funds donated by Soroptimists, Relief International offers Small Business Development Training to women in Haiti.

MADRE organises training for KOFIV community outreach workers, who then relay the information on gender-based violence to women's groups in displacement camps and impoverished neighbourhoods.

QUOTAS FOR WOMEN IN BUSINESS AND POLITICS?

Following the introduction to our series on quotas for women in the last issue of *The Link*, Karin Jäger, Barbara Kohl and Verena von Tresckow-Bronke from SI Germany present their points of view on the subject.

Karin Jäger: In Germany, where there are no quotas for women in either business or politics, the statistics speak for themselves: As of 14th January 2012 56 of the 160 publicly traded companies in Germany had no women in either their Executive or Supervisory Boards. If you take the absolute figures, women hold only 22 Board of Management positions out of a possible 653, which means the share of women in top management positions in Germany is just 3.37 per cent.

rate cultures generally prejudiced against women and the persistent 'glass ceiling' in the business world. Why should we think this might change any time soon? Surely, it will not, and that is why I am for statutory quotas for women.

Barbara Kohl: Would a quota for women result in better supervisors and company managers? Not if the necessary business knowledge and management competence is lacking. In that case, a quota for women would only replace the

tematic support and better conditions for women, such as more flexible working hours and childcare are, in my opinion, far more important for a lasting improvement in career development than short-term targets.

Verena von Tresckow-Bronke: Professional success comes from substantive and technical competence as well as a passion for work. Persuasiveness and inner contentment are necessary because they offer the strength needed

PRO **CONTRA**
Karin Jäger takes the pro standpoint:



Lawyer and Senior Civil Servant in Brandenburg's Ministry of Economics and European Affairs

PRO **CONTRA**
Quotas for Women? No, thanks, says Barbara Kohl



Economist and Bank Officer

PRO **CONTRA**
And Verena von Tresckow-Bronke agrees!



Public Auditor, Tax Consultant and Partner in her own firm

In July 2001 an agreement promoting equal opportunities for women and men in private business was reached between the Federal government and the most important industrial associations. The aim was to increase the proportion of women in top positions. The result: the percentage of women in Executive Boards increased from 1.2 per cent in 2006 to 3.2 per cent in 2012. After 10 years of voluntary self-commitment, any sort of gender equality in management positions is still a distant dream.

Studies show that the causes for this insufficient representation of women in management lie with the difficulties in reconciling work and family life, corpo-

'old men's network'. Managers have to be qualified. Those who are good will make it! I want to be chosen for a job based on my capabilities - not because of some mandatory list! I do not want to end up having to justify myself because people will assume I only got the job due to quota requirements!

A quota only deals with the symptoms, without getting to the root of the problem. Politicians should instead work harder at persuading companies and public authorities why they need to change. After all, studies have shown that companies managed by or with women achieve greater success, better market positions and higher profits. Sys-

to perform exceptional work. To achieve positions hitherto reserved for men you need enormous commitment. Leadership qualities, which are often coupled with a vision, must come from within and require determination. A mandatory quota may create an opening for management positions, but it cannot guarantee fulfilment in and passion for work. Programmes that support women on their career paths to the top and in achieving their personal goals are far more productive than any legislative quotas.

In the next issue we will hear from Austria, Denmark and Norway. Why not join the debate?



Mali has been a focus of many projects and activities to empower, educate and enable women and girls.

'Educate to Lead'

CREATING OUR FEMALE LEADERS OF TOMORROW

Soroptimist International is committed to the empowerment of women as leaders and decision makers. Women's participation in decision-making, at local, national, and international levels is a fundamental prerequisite for the realisation of women's rights and gender equality. Not only does the inclusion of women's voices and a gendered perspective improve their status, but it works to improve society as a whole.

This is the part of the rationale for the long-term SI theme 'Educate to Lead'. And in order to achieve our ambitious goal we empower, educate and enable women and girls on all levels (we call it the '3 E Model'). Empowerment and Education are mainly linked to our ACTION strategy, as we provide access to skills and knowledge which empower women and girls with confidence and choice by giving them the tools necessary to achieve their full potential.

Global Impact Report

Under our AWARENESS-raising and ADVOCACY strategy we work within the wider community to create an enabling environment and opportunities for women and girls to use their skills and confidence as leaders and role models. 'Educate to lead' can refer to any of our five SI programme objectives as the 2011 Global Impact Report which features 'Educate to lead for...sustainable development' proves. Sustainable development is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The examples presented in this report show multi-faceted interventions using the 3 E's throughout the Soroptimist world.

In 2011 our members carried out 2667 'Educate to lead' projects which directly benefited more than 93000 women and girls and raised close to four mil-

lion US\$ to support this work. 41.90 % of projects addressed the specific learning needs of adult women; 35.86% worked to increase enrolment and retention; 18.64% helped girls and young women in the transition from school to work; and 3.2 % increased women's participation in decision-making. The report can be downloaded from the SI website. This information showcases our achievements in pursuing our goal 'Educate to Lead'.

Soroptimist Peace Prize

A CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

SIE President elect Ulla Madsen has issued a call to nominate candidates for the 5th Soroptimist Peace Prize to be presented at the 20th SIE Congress on 14th July 2013 in Berlin, Germany. This prize recognises a woman or a group of women who has undertaken outstanding projects to promote peace.

The first Peace Prize was given to Vera Bohle at the SIE Congress in Vienna in 2005. After Heidrun Konrad's presidency, a Peace Fund was set up to administer the funds for further prizes. Since then, this prize - consisting of a certificate, a statuette designed by Luxembourg Soroptimist Bettina Scholl-Sabbatini and an endowment of € 20,000 - has been awarded every two years to Carla Del Ponte, Valdete Idrizi and Sylvia Borren, respectively.

The criteria for candidates and details relating to the application are available for downloading from the SIE website. Please note that the deadline for receipt of nominations - by email to knud.fm@mail.tele.dk or by post to Ulla Madsen, SIE President elect, Amagerbrogade 30., 2/tv, 2300 Copenhagen S, Denmark - is 12th January 2013.



The SIE Peace Prize statuette, designed by Bettina Scholl-Sabbatini.



20th SIE Congress

A view of Dresden across the River Elbe demonstrates how beautiful this city is.

Top: Frederick the Great's Sanssouci captures the imagination.



Conference in Italy

From left: SI Italy President Flavia Pozzolini, SI Rep to the FAO Cinzia Palmi and SIE Extension Committee Chair Maria Luisa Frosio were among the speakers in Piacenza.

20th SIE Congress in Berlin

A PROGRAMME WITH 'VISIONS OF PARADISE'



With just a few months before the SIE Congress in Berlin, the programme has been polished, and the tours have been planned. The various Theme Sessions will convey the latest findings and information on 'Water and Food' in line with the plenary events. This will include practical information, which every participant can put into practice and share with others. For example, how to plan and evaluate a club project will be presented by competent experts. Healthy eating is a particularly hot topic today and will be covered by two nutritional experts. African speakers will expound on 'A Healthy Earth for Healthy People'. Another session will deal with how we can network more efficiently.

Two additional sessions with practical help are 'Beans from Princess Gardens', which demonstrates the success of urban gardening and 'More than Carrots and Cabbage', at which pupils and teachers present their successful school project. These sessions involve projects that clubs can support or realise themselves. Participants may choose from a variety of exciting sessions and pass on useful information to their clubs and communities.

A tour for every taste

With the excursions after the Congress you will have the chance to get to know a region steeped in history, blessed with delightful scenery and full of cultural riches. Seven clubs formed after the re-unification of Germany – Bad Schandau/Sächsische Schweiz, Dessau, Dresden, Leipzig, Magdeburg, Pirna and Pots-

dam – are thrilled to show guests from around the world and other parts of Germany their cities and *Länder* during post-Congress tours of one to three days. These unique excursions, organised and accompanied by local Soroptimists, will offer the possibility to see the historically and culturally interesting surroundings. If you have already made the trip to Berlin, do visit this part of Germany that for many years was closed to the outside world. The costs are reasonable, and the personal touch of knowledgeable natives will make these tours truly special.

Potsdam with its 300-year Prussian history and Frederick the Great's Sanssouci, Leipzig with its muses and 'Peaceful Revolution', a journey along the German Romanesque Road from Magdeburg to Quedlinburg, art and nature at the World Heritage Site of Dessau and along the River Elbe from Dresden to 'Saxon Switzerland' – take the opportunity during one of these excursions to gain new impressions and create unforgettable memories of Soroptimist friendship!

Heide Ibach, Chair of Congress Committee Berlin 2013

A high-level conference in Piacenza

WOMEN, DEVELOPMENT AND FOOD SECURITY



In line with the SIE Biennium Theme, the high-level Women, Development and Food Security conference held at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Piacenza on 22nd October, investigated women's role in world development and in feeding the planet.

The opening addresses were delivered by the Director of the Piacenza Campus of the University, Mauro Balordi, and by Professor Piersandro Coconcelli, Director of Expolab, which is a both a physical laboratory and a

think tank where some hundreds of university professors are working in many branches of science. Founded in 2011, the Expolab will work up to World Exposition in Milan in 2015 to support and coordinate scientific activities and actions related to the motto 'feeding the planet, energy for life'.

President of SI Piacenza Simona Ceruti explained the purpose of the conference, i.e. to emphasise the remarkable role of women in agricultural production in developing countries and to show that if women are given better access to land, technology and other agricultural resources, starvation could be reduced and food security achieved. She hopes that with their greater awareness of world hunger, young people will be able to win the war against hunger. She also announced a contribution to the University's project to provide food to the Tangi Gharo school for young women in Afghanistan.

Top-notch speakers

Emeritus Professor Giovanni Galizzi spoke about the relationship between poverty, hunger and discrimination against women, all factors contributing to global hunger. SIE Extension Committee Chair Maria Luisa Frosio described the development of women's rights over the past 60 years, citing concrete steps along the way ranging from CEDAW to the World Conference on Women in Beijing.

SI Rep to the FAO Cinzia Palmi explained how this UN organisation works with governments to create security networks and to improve rules and international standards. Flaminia Giovannelli, Under-Secretary of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, described the O Viveiro project in Mozambique offering education and hand-craft skills to girls. Professor Simona Beretta spoke on the concepts of women's unique role in growth and development.

SI Italy President Flavia Pozzolini concluded the conference by presenting her own biennium motto 'Women for rights, rights for women'. This involves organising seminars in Rwanda to advise women on their legal rights in connection with land tenure (see adjacent article). These valuable sessions are literally sowing the seeds of legal awareness!

Elisabetta Fontana Bottrighi, SI Piacenza

SI Italy helps Rwandans



PROTECTING WOMEN'S LAND TENURE

Within the broad framework of the biennium theme, SI Italy decided to promote a project to protect women's land tenure in Africa. In October 2011, we offered the African Unions and the Single Clubs our target-oriented support. From the replies, we singled out SI Rwanda, with whom we are linked through a long-lasting relationship of cooperation, and in particular SI Kigali. With this Club we implemented a campaign of vocational legal training for the women of different districts of Rwanda about their right to land tenure. Although the Rwandan legislation recognises equal rights to men and women, in concrete terms discrimination against women related to land tenure is widespread in those districts where tribal routine procedures still survive.

The project aims to organise three-day training courses for women, each one coming from one of the 416 districts in the country. Eight courses are scheduled, each with 52 trainees. Once back home, these trainees will be able to sensitise and advise the village women about their rights, especially as far as ownership and land tenure are concerned. The overall budget is approximately € 37,000, which includes transport expenses, accommodation and teaching material.

Clubs have pledged support

SI Italy has already allocated € 18,000 to finance half of the courses, and the first session took place in Rwanda in November 2012. As the cost per participant is just € 90, we asked each Italian club to adopt one or more women. As the clubs are responding enthusiastically we hope to carry on with this project successfully.

*Flavia Pozzolini, President, SI Italy
Vanna Naretto, Programme Director, SI Italy*



SI Italy in Rwanda

Participants in the first training session that took place in Rwanda will be able to advise their village women about their land rights.

Council of Europe

'ONE IN FIVE' CAMPAIGN

Did you know that one in five children in Europe falls victim to some sort of sexual abuse? This shocking statistic has prompted the Council of Europe to initiate a Europe-wide campaign against child abuse. Information material has been produced to increase understanding of sexual violence and to promote the campaign messages. Most of the information is designed for use by decision-makers, advocacy groups, INGOs and professionals working for and with children. But the idea is also



The book produced by the Council of Europe is a very sensitive treatment of the subject of sexual violence against children.

to empower parents and children to prevent and report sexual violence.

The One in Five website - www.coe.int/t/dg3/children/1in5/default_en.asp - provides background information and the latest campaign news. The main aim is to achieve ratification and implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse as well as to raise awareness of the problem and to equip those affected with the knowledge and tools to prevent and report sexual violence against children.

'The Underwear Rule' campaign to prevent sexual abuse, with its website www.underwearrule.org, TV spots, a book titled *Kiko and the Hand*, encourages dialogue between parents and children. The material is available in English, French, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Czech, Russian and Serbian. For more information contact Françoise Ferey, our rep to the Council of Europe, francoise@free.fr.

Deutschsprachiges Freundschaftstreffen 2012

'WOMEN MANAGE SUSTAINABILITY'

The Austrian Union organised in cooperation with SI Bad Ischl the Deutschsprachiges Freundschaftstreffen (German-speaking Friendship Meeting) in Bad Ischl from 14th-16th September. This meeting is held every two years in Germany, Switzerland or Austria. This year's theme was 'Women Manage Sustainability' (*Frauen schaffen Nachhaltigkeit*) with the aim to show why women, and specifically Soroptimists, should play an important part in the decision-making processes at all political, economical and social levels.

Some 280 Soroptimists from about 15 European countries came with family members or friends to attend this special conference. Among the guests were former SI President Hanne Jensbo, SIE President Kathy Kaaf, Past SIE President Hei-

Federation News



Prominent guests and organisers of the Deutschsprachiges Freundschaftstreffen take the stage in Bad Ischl.

drun Konrad, 1st SIE Vice President Christine Peer, German Union President Roswitha Briel and Swiss Union President Ursula Lutz-Isler.

President of the Austrian Parliament Barbara Prammer, SI Austria President Gertraud Pichler and SI Bad Ischl President Edith Schäffer opened the symposium. Excellent keynote speakers, including Professor of Informatics at Ulm University Franz Radermacher and Professor of the Institute for the Environment Regional Development Sigrid Stagl of the *Wirtschaftsuniversität* in Vienna, provided deep insight into this broad and complex theme. The speakers at the seven workshops, moderated by Soroptimists, were also highly competent. Workshop results were presented at the Sunday session. Dr Christine Haiden, Editor-in-Chief of *Welt der Frau*, gave the closing speech. Heide Müller's beautiful harp music accompanied the proceedings.

On Friday SI Bad Ischl arranged a visit to the Kaiser villa where the Emperor Franz Josef and Empress Elisabeth once lived. The Friendship Evening dinner took place at the Laimer Urschlag, a rustic mountain restaurant and featured children performing folklore music and dances.

A classical concert opened the gala dinner. SI Austria then presented its Soroptimist Prize to Helga Hämmerle, SI Bregenz-Rheintal. Since 2001 her Cartable Soroptimist project has funded the education of 230 girls in Mali. The Evi Wunder Scholarship was also awarded to a promising student. I then handed over the insignia of office to my successor Beatrix Reichmann. Roswitha Briel and Incoming SI Germany President Magdalena Erkens then invited all the participants to the *Deutschsprachiges Freundschaftstreffen 2014* in Passau.

Gertraud Pichler, President of SI Austria (2010-2012)

Anti-Graft Champion Assassinated in Guinea

Aïssatou Boiro, Director of Guinea's Public Treasury and a committed Soroptimist in SI Conakry Soleil, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen as she returned home from a meeting in the capital on 9th November.

Guinea's President Alpha Conde had appointed Aïssatou to head the treasury eight months ago. She immediately launched an investigation into the loss of some € 1.5 million from the Treasury and soon dismantled a network of officials and businessmen who had conspired to embezzle government funds.

'Aïssatou Boiro worked tirelessly against corruption in our young democracy,' said President Conde. 'Even though she was taken from us in a terrible way, her work will not be in vain.' He vowed to continue the anti-graft movement.

In her personal tribute Club sister Saran Berete said: 'Always smiling and ready to serve and help others, Aïssatou had a joie de vivre.... She was an honest woman and unre-

lenting in all she undertook. She despised injustice and loved sharing. In short, she was the role model of a good Soroptimist.'

Indeed, her Soroptimist friends both in Guinea and beyond are mourning the loss of Aïssatou, who was Treasurer of her club. 'Our thoughts are with the family of this extremely courageous woman who was an inspiration to all who knew her,' said SIE President Kathy Kaaf. 'We will sorely miss her dedication to the Soroptimist cause in Guinea.'

[Aïssatou Boiro was brutally murdered because of her courageous campaign against corruption in Guinea.](#)



Soroptimist Aïssatou Boiro

Former SIE President passed away

Past SIE President (1977-1979) and committed Dutch Soroptimist Edith Frederiks passed away in The Hague on 28th September 2012. Edith had been a member of SI Leiden since 1954. She was highly engaged in everything she did, including Soroptimist International. She became Union President in 1964 and was Governor for many years. As a token of its appreciation, the Union of the Netherlands granted her honourable membership in 1992. Until recent years, she remained in close touch with Soroptimism and attended national meetings.



Edith Frederiks 1923-2012

Edith was the first female lecturer in plastic surgery in the Netherlands. In 1962 she wrote: 'In our country it is difficult for a woman to become a plastic surgeon; a woman in a general surgical department is very much of an exception and because of prejudice not easily accepted.' Art and culture were her much-loved hobbies.

While acting as a Soroptimist officer, Edith reduced some of her professional responsibilities, as it meant so much to her she was prepared to

make sacrifices. 'One of the positive aspects of Soroptimism is that you get to meet people you would not otherwise have met,' she said. Edith once remarked that she wished all Soroptimists understood how Soroptimist could uplift your life.

In 1980 Edith wrote a text, (possibly) for her own cremation ceremony. It closed with several lines from the poem *When I Am Dead, My Dearest* by Christina Rossetti (1830-1894): 'When I am dead, my dearest, sing no sad songs for me. And if thou wilt, remember, And if thou wilt, forget.' That was the way Edith was. It is thus with great respect and gratitude that we remember Edith.

Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, SI Zwolle, and Greet Bakker, SI Rotterdam-Schieland

European Mentoring Programme

‘WHAT A BRILLIANT WEEKEND!’

A strange feathered passer-by joined the group photo of mentors and mentees in Bruges!



The Meeting consisted of separate training sessions for mentees and mentors as well as plenary sessions conducted by four experienced trainers: Stephanie Stein (EAF), Rita Knott (SI Luxembourg), Ingrid Ghys and Lucy Broeyer (SI Belgium). The three Soroptimists also act as mentors.

In all the sessions there was a lively interaction between trainer, mentees and mentors, and after a first introductory round the animated discussions continued during breaks and meals. Topics of the sessions were expectations, roles and responsibili-

ties of mentees and mentors, understanding oneself and one's role in one's career, establishing mentoring goals and cross-cultural communications.

On Saturday evening the host Union offered a guided tour through the historic city centre of Bruges combined with a dinner walk. Divided into two groups, we enjoyed starters and a main course in two different restaurants before coming together again elsewhere for dessert and coffee. This created an ideal atmosphere for discussions with many more participants than would have been possible at a traditional dinner.

The Mentoring Programme offers invaluable support to young women with leadership potential and a commitment to civil society provided by Soroptimists. Participants are great channels for increasing the public's knowledge of Soroptimism by communicating this Programme, and they are also potential new members. Indeed, several mentees of the 2010-2011 round have since joined a club.

‘What a brilliant weekend,’ enthused German mentee Natalie Assfalg. ‘The countless conversations with other mentees were fascinating, and each reported having more or less the same difficult experience at the beginning of her career, i.e. trying to make her way in a male-dominated business world.’ The Mentoring Programme is an excellent way to help them break through this glass ceiling!

Gerda Huisman, SIE Vice President

Project Matching

TELL US ABOUT YOUR BIENNIUM PROJECTS!

Launched two years ago, the Project Matching platform for sharing project ideas and gaining support from around the Soroptimist world is gathering steam. The following are further examples of projects seeking financial assistance:

MG0001 – Seeds for All

SI Madagascar has initiated a project titled ‘Seeds for All’ to assist small landowners, i.e. agriculturalists recognised as the pillars of the country's economy, but who are the recurrent victims of nat-

ural disasters as well as economic upheaval. The project targets about 180 households, including 45 women and 135 young adults. These beneficiaries are female breadwinners grouped into an association of peasant women and owners of cultivable land.

Funds needed: € 8,663

ML0005 – Truck farming and fruit-tree plantation for women in Tia

Women in the village of Tia, Mali, are rarely able to generate their own income. The purpose of this project is to develop truck farming and a plantation of fruit-trees on a field owned by the Women's group of Tia. Wells will be built to improve access to water for the women. An agronomic engineer will train women for this work. The fruit harvest will be sold on the market. The benefits for the villagers include the possibility to buy food during winter, to send their children to school and to have access to health services. This income-generating activity will revitalise the village and improve the women's socio-economic conditions. SI Bamako Espoir, Mali will supervise the project and allocate the funds. A contract will be signed with the women and regular controls will be made.

Funds needed: € 5,459

The SIE Programme Team would like to call upon clubs to submit more water and food projects promoting the biennium theme ‘Soroptimists go for Water and Food’. Best practices will be awarded at the SIE Congress in Berlin in July 2013.

Keep browsing at <http://soroptimistprojects.org/water-and-food!>



Women and girls are set to benefit from the income-generating project initiated by SI Bamako Espoir involving small-scale farming in Mali.



Children prepare to start their Run for Fun in Kigali!

Soroptimist Peace Marathon

RWANDA IS AWAITING YOU!

The 9th International Peace Marathon will take place in Kigali, Rwanda on 19th May 2013. After this year's extraordinarily successful marathon with more than 900 runners from different countries, next May you will once again have the opportunity to visit this beautiful city, meet our warmhearted Rwandan Soroptimists and run! There are many different options – from a 5-km walk to the complete marathon run of 42.195 km. The atmosphere in Kigali is fantastic, and Soroptimists will once again help organise this prestigious Peace Marathon next year, thus strengthening our image in this wonderful country with a difficult past.

The Run for Children's event is very important for the Rwandan children, as they can then show their skill in running a race against other children of the same age. You will be amazed by the joyful and happy mood of this competition, in which many hundreds of children participate. Coming from simple backgrounds these enthusiastic children enjoy the run enormously and are not inhibited about openly showing their emotions. It is an unforgettable experience to see. Please show your support for this important event for children by giving donations. For more information please see www.kigalimarathon.com.

Contacts are Guida Biewer from Luxembourg, biewer@pt.lu, or SIE Vice President Leena Viitaniemi, leena.viitaniemi@kolumbus.fi.

WOMEN'S CHOICES MATTER

CERES CAMPAIGN FOR FOOD SECURITY

Dutch Soroptimists and hundreds of ambassadors from other organisations have joined forces in launching an initiative to improve food security. Founded in the Netherlands, CERES will eventually be expanded throughout Europe. CERES stands for Connecting Earth Role models to Ensure Supply and aims to raise awareness of women's crucial role by forging networks to secure the global food supply.

CERES engaged Dutch producers and comedians to make a short movie painting the global picture in a light and funny way. It leaves viewers with the urgent message: 'women, your choices matter'. Two additional movies on the DVD invite women to share their knowledge about food security. Ambassadors show the DVD at get-togethers (like Tupperware parties) and the outcome of their discussions is reported via social media.

Access to food is a human right, which is now threatened by world population growth. The agricultural chain is controlled by only about 10 multinationals. In the industrialised world



A humorous film produced by CERES shows how women can impact global food supply.

women purchase more than 70 % of all food, so these companies depend on them to buy their products. On the other hand, rural women produce over 70 % of food. These women must be provided with financial support, know-how, regulations, seeds and infrastructure through public-private partnerships and international cooperation via the Internet. With social media everyone has an equal chance to contribute to a better world.

Starting at the bottom of the pyramid, with help from the top (UN, Worldbank, FAO, governments, multinationals), and using our consumer power, women worldwide are invited to unite in securing our children's food supply.

For more information, please contact Marlene van Benthem (Programme Director) and/or Nikolet Zwart (Assistant Programme Director) at info@ceresc.com or visit www.ceresc.com.



FROM SOROPTIMISTS WITH LOVE

SI GERMANY'S OWN STAMP

SI Germany has come up with an original idea to mark its 60th anniversary in 2012. The Union has produced a genuine postage stamp! Every letter carrying the unique stamp promotes the image of the organisation, which is why they have been used for Soroptimist 'business', for private letters and as gifts. 40,000 stamps were printed, and 35,000 have already been sold, but the with imminent holiday season the remaining production will no doubt be sold very soon!

UNLOCKING THE SECRETS OF THE UNIVERSE

SILLON ALPIN MEETING

The *Sillon Alpin* or Alpine Corridor is the name given to the valley through the mountain range from Grenoble to Geneva. In 2004, the Grenoble 2000 club created the *Sillon Alpin* Soroptimists, bringing together the nine clubs in the area: Annecy, Grenoble 2000, Le Léman, Chambéry-Aix les Bains, Genève Fondateur,

Grenoble Fondateur, Val d'Arve-Cluses, Annemasse Porte de France and Genève-Rhône. For the 9th year running, these clubs met for a get-together; this time in June for a day-trip organised by SI Genève-Rhône.

After a film and an explanation of its work, we were given a guided tour of CERN (the European Organisation for Nuclear Research). CERN houses the world's largest particle accelerator with a circumference of 27km, buried 100m below ground between Geneva and France. Astrophysicists from all over the world come to CERN to carry out fundamental research to unlock the secrets of matter. Among other things, we heard about nuclei, electrons, quarks and the 'Higgs boson', the elementary particle in the standard model of particle physics whose existence was confirmed just days after our visit!

After a very interesting and instructive morning, the group took the bus along the pretty road through Geneva's vineyards to the village of Satigny, where the 84 participants enjoyed a very



The *Sillon Alpin* Soroptimists enjoyed a film explaining CERN, whose particle accelerator is helping to explain the basic structure of our universe.

convivial meal before visiting the well-preserved village of Dardagny, snuggled among the vines and offering a view of Mont Blanc from its castle.

These meetings are a great way to form friendship links, and the clubs are all looking forward to another round of exchanges in 2013.

SUCCESS WITH EL GORDO

SI COSTA DEL SOL AND SI MADRID

The Spanish Christmas Lottery, *El Gordo*, is an annual national game first established in 1812, when the government thought of it as 'a means to increase revenue from public funds without disrupting the taxpayers'. As measured by the total prize payout, the Christmas Lottery is considered one of the biggest lotteries worldwide with a single winning ticket worth € 400,000.

Many clubs and associations buy tickets and resell them as participations including a profit,

which is designated to a local cause. SI Costa del Sol and SI Madrid have launched *El Gordo* 2012 with the profit from the sales of tickets to go to two similar projects in their areas - helping families in need at Christmas time. The beneficiaries are the municipal food bank *Banco de Alimentos* in Mijas and the *Fundación Pan y Peces* in Madrid, a food distribution Centre that is dedicated to hand out food parcels to more than 350 families three times a week.

To collect further funds for the *Fundación Pan y Peces* SI Madrid recently organised a Solidarity Bazaar and managed to attract an enthusiastic crowd of bargain-hunters. The fact that the event was covered by a popular local TV programme the night before, as well as several posts shown on Facebook, no doubt contributed to its success. At the end of a hectic day, the club had raised € 1558.58 and received a proposal to add the *Fundación Pan y Peces* to the list of candidates for the Carrefour Solidarity Foundation.

More information on this and other projects can be found on the Facebook profile of Soroptimist International - Clubs de España or at www.si-es.org.

The Solidarity Bazaar in Madrid raised over €1500 for the local food distribution centre.



EASING THE STRAIN ON CHILDREN IN COURT

SI ITALY For the past year SI Italy has been working with the Italian judiciary to improve facilities for minors who have to testify in a court of law. By building special rooms where children can be interviewed in private, the 'Protected Courtroom for Minors' project aims to reduce the psychological strain on minors who are obliged to testify in court hearings. Fifteen protected rooms have been inaugurated to date thanks to the backing of Italian Clubs, and four more courtroom projects are ongoing.



SI Italy President Flavia Pozzolini (right) makes the case for child-friendly courtroom facilities in Torino.

In the past, only six protected courtrooms existed in Italy. The lack of special services meant that children's testimonies were either avoided or given in special shelters or private psychological support centres that were not always qualified for the task. The use of these facilities greatly increases the cost of trials. Soroptimists contacted the courts' administration and offered the expertise of qualified members (lawyers, architects, engineers) and financial resources, in addition to suggesting possible sponsors to build adequate and well-equipped courtrooms.

A protected courtroom is comfortable, child-friendly and equipped with an audiovisual recording system so that the child (either victim or witness) can give his/her testimony to the judge in privacy – and without being subjected to cross-examination in the presence of the alleged offender. Legal experts have reported that audiovisual recordings allow the judge and jury to evaluate facial expressions and body gestures, which can add to the verbal testimony. These court-

rooms can also be used in civil proceedings involving marital separation and in cases of violence against women.

The clubs worked closely with different institutions, including municipalities, lawyer associations, police forces and psychologists to realise this projects. Club members served as facilitators for dialogue between government officials and other experts, establishing new lines of communication between actors or reinforcing existing institutional relationships. So far women and children seem to be benefiting enormously from this new safe space to give their testimonies, and Soroptimists have left a lasting legacy in the Italian legal system.

WOMEN, WATER AND WELLS EXHIBITION

UNESCO-IHE SIE's longstanding partner, Women for Water Partnership, opened the UNESCO-IHE's photo exhibition titled 'Women, Water and Wells' in Delft, Netherlands this autumn. The photographs of renowned photographer Gil Garcetti reveal the challenges, hopes, and successes of West Africans, and particularly women, who are faced with the daily task of providing safe water for their families and communities.

Speaking on behalf of WfWP's President Alice Bouman-Dentener, SIE Project Manager Africa and



Mariet Verhoef-Cohen speaks to Masters students who want to plan to get involved with water management projects in Africa.



The photo exhibition highlighting the daily task fetching safe water in West Africa was widely publicised.

Past SIE President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen said at the opening, 'This exhibition pays tribute to the work of women on the ground and we thank our long-time partner, UNESCO-IHE for doing us the honor of opening this wonderful exhibition.' In connection with some of their joint projects, she explained how WfWP's bottom-up approach has gained international recognition. 'The Katosi Women Development Trust in Uganda, for instance, was awarded the Kyoto Water Prize 2012 at the last World Water Forum and also won the Rio+20 best practice award.

'Making up half the world's population, women are agents of change,' Mariet stressed, 'and an incredible force.' Women for Water recognises that force and taps into it in order to combat global issues such as waterborne diseases, infant mortality, food security and sustainable livelihoods on grass-roots level.

Gil Garcetti's photographs chronicle the work of non-governmental organisations in the struggle to provide healthy drinking water and to eradicate a variety of diseases linked to unsafe water.

CELEBRATING A 15TH ANNIVERSARY AMONG FRIENDS

SI STEYR celebrated its 15th anniversary together with its link clubs Passau (Germany) and Vicenza (Italy), who are also linked to one another.

Accompanied by Club President Marina Bertazzoni, eight Italian Soroptimists journeyed north to the picturesque city at the confluence of the rivers Steyr and Enns, part of the Austrian *Romanistikstrasse*. They arrived at Hotel Minichmayr, owned by a founding member of SI Steyr, where they were greeted by the welcoming committee, consisting of Club President Gabriele Mayrhofer, Gabriele Corr-Schnurpfeil, who organised the visit and also served as an Italian interpreter, and several more club members. Soroptimists from SI Passau including President Gulin Tunali soon joined in the festivities.

That evening the guests were treated to a city tour by night with a guide clothed in medieval costume complete with lantern, helebard and horn. Participants learned about Steyr's rich history and also sampled Austrian cuisine.

Saturday's programme started with a few acquisitions from the farmers' market and the local shops, followed by lunch at *Knapp am Eck*. We then proceeded to Lamberg Castle with its inner court of dwarfs and antique library. In the adjacent,

The 15th anniversary celebration of SI Steyr provided an opportunity to renew ties with Friendship Link clubs SI Passau and SI Vicenza.



recently restored hall we marvelled at the hand painted tapestries depicting scenes of city and rural life. In the afternoon a vintage postal bus took us to the idyllic *Cristkindl* church, where we admired the crèches for which the region is famous.

Dinner took place at *Naturgourmet Gorfer*, where between toasts and rounds of singing we had fun celebrating our renewed friendship and parted with vows of meeting up soon. The visit concluded Sunday morning with best wishes, hugs and also a few tears!!!

Ruth Pohlhammer, SI Steyr • Laura Stiassi Forconi, SI Vicenza



Please submit your contributions to the next issue of *The Link* by 31st January 2013!

NEW SIE CLUB TO BE CHARTERED

8th June 2013

Zürichsee (Switzerland)
 Charter to be presented by
 Christine Cromwell-Ahrens,
 Editor of *The Link*
Club President
 Ursula Hensel
 Sonnenhalden 7
 CH - 8712 Staefa
 Phone: +41 44 926 47 49
 E-mail: wuhensel@bluewin.ch

FORTHCOMING EVENTS FOR SIE

20th February 2013

25th Anniversary
 SI Neuss (Germany)

9th March 2013

75th Anniversary
 SI Denmark

16th March 2013

50th Anniversary
 SI Kastrup-Taarnby (Denmark)

17th March 2013

50th Anniversary
 SI Bari (Italy)

19th March 2013

25th Anniversary
 SI Lavaux (Switzerland)

23rd March 2013

50th Anniversary
 SI Landskorna (Sweden)

2nd April 2013

75th Anniversary
 SI Lille-Métropole (France)

16th April 2013

25th Anniversary
 SI København Nord (Denmark)

20th April 2013

25th Anniversary
 SI Genk (Belgium)

23rd April 2013

25th Anniversary
 SI Überlingen (Germany)

27th April 2013

50th Anniversary
 SI Karlsruhe (Germany)

27th April 2013

50th Anniversary
 SI Mandal (Norway)

27th April 2013

50th Anniversary
 SI Nijmegen (The Netherlands)

29th April 2013

75th Anniversary
 SI Bergen (Norway)

30th April 2013

75th Anniversary
 SI Gouda e.o. (The Netherlands)

30th April 2013

25th Anniversary
 SI Ravensburg/Weingarten (Germany)

10th-11th July 2013

Governors' Meeting
 Berlin (Germany)

12th-14th July 2013

SI/E Congress
 Berlin (Germany)

INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS DAYS AND EVENTS

10th December

Human Rights Day (celebrated by
 Soroptimists worldwide)

8th March

International Women's Day

22nd March

World Water Day





THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SEVEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN FOR SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF EUROPE	
(Version as of December 2012)	
<p>GOAL 1: PROGRAMME</p> <p>Soroptimist International of Europe (SIE) will improve the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment and enabling opportunities</p>	<p>PROGRAMME OBJECTIVES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase access to formal and non-formal learning opportunities 2. Improve access to economic empowerment and sustainable opportunities for the employment of women 3. Eliminate violence against women and girls and ensure women’s participation in conflict resolution 4. Ensure women and girls have food security and access to the highest attainable standard of health care 5. Address the specific needs of women and girls by improving environmental sustainability and mitigating effects of climate change and disasters
<p>GOAL 2: ADVOCACY</p> <p>SIE will be a global voice for women and girls and an advocate at all levels for their increased access to education and leadership positions</p>	<p>ADVOCACY OBJECTIVES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Contribute to the UN Millennium Development Goals and to those of other organisations (i.e. CoE) as an active advocate 2. Ensure meaningful representation of SIE members as a Global Voice for Women in their respective communities; encourage them to act as agents of influence vis-à-vis authorities and policymakers – whether at local, national or international levels 3. Increase participation and contribution to UN, CoE, ECOSOC, FAO and other European institutions
<p>GOAL 3: COMMUNICATIONS</p> <p>SIE will be known for its efforts to help women and girls achieve social and economic empowerment</p>	<p>COMMUNICATIONS OBJECTIVES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop activities and partnerships that raise the international profile and visibility of Soroptimist International as an organisation 2. Develop communication tools to promote Soroptimists’ roles and activities internally and externally 3. Ensure consistency in brand and reputation management across Unions and Clubs 4. Reach out to other communities and organisations to expand partnerships 5. Encourage public-speaking appearances and generate media attention and coverage
<p>GOAL 4: INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT / EXTENSION</p> <p>SIE will be a thriving organisation of Unions and Single Clubs with members committed to its vision and mission</p>	<p>INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT/EXTENSION OBJECTIVES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop membership and increase the total number of Unions and Single Clubs 2. Enhance benefits for members in order to increase their commitment and loyalty to the organisation 3. Heighten member satisfaction with the Soroptimist experience 4. Create ways in which interested women can engage with Soroptimist International of Europe
<p>GOAL 5: STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP</p> <p>SIE will establish at all levels of its organisation a dynamic and proactive leadership which is able to deliver results and ensure that its vision is achieved</p>	<p>STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP OBJECTIVES</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve performance management and decision making 2. Develop leadership capacity at all levels of the organisation 3. Maintain efficient communication and collaboration between Board Members and HQ, and improve dialogue with Federations, Unions and Single Clubs as well as with SI 4. Maintain strategic overview of global trends which may affect either Programme, Advocacy or Membership 5. Develop and maintain strategic financial planning and control

