

# Soroptimist International of Europe

# ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018





# CONTENT

|    |   |      |
|----|---|------|
| 1  | Foreword                                  | 3    |
| 2  | Organisational Structure                  | 4    |
| 3  | About Soroptimist International of Europe | 5    |
| 4  | Where We Are                              | 6    |
| 5  | Our Projects                              | 7    |
| 6  | Best Practice Awards                      | 9    |
| 7  | Funds                                     | 11   |
| 8  | Scholarships                              | 12   |
| 9  | Mentoring                                 | 13   |
| 10 | Virtual Development                       | 14   |
| 11 | Orange the World                          | 15   |
| 12 | Contact                                   | back |

# FOREWORD

## from the SIE President

Starting a new biennium as President of our organisation marks the beginning of a journey. I had a vision about the direction I wanted to take on this journey, but it was clear that I could not make it alone. The support and cooperation of the Restricted and Enlarged Board members have been crucial for the success. I am very grateful for their ongoing enthusiasm and commitment; without their hard work and dedication, we would not be where we are today.

I am extremely pleased that our biennium motto, 'We stand Up for Women', has been so well received. This choice of a culturally neutral slogan arose from my conviction that, as Soroptimists, we should focus on women's issues and on the fight to defend women's rights. The idea was to inspire Clubs and Unions to address topics with which they can best identify.

On the following pages, this Annual Report highlights some of the many accomplishments: the projects in our Federation, the Best Practice Awards, Union and Club Scholarships, SIE Funds and the Mentoring activities. In particular, I would like to draw your attention to two specific initiatives that were launched to sharpen our identity and to strengthen our organisation for the future:

**Advocacy:** Although I do not want in any way to diminish the value or importance of our project work, I chose to prioritize advocacy in this biennium in order to give women and our causes a stronger voice. To this end we encouraged our Unions to appoint Advocacy Coordinators, and I am delighted by the positive response to our call.

**Virtual Development:** In recognition of the different lifestyles and attitudes of younger generations, we reached out to Unions to discuss new models, such as eMembership. We also investigated ways to enhance the rights of our members by establishing Virtual Unions. Our motivation is



to secure the future of our organisation.

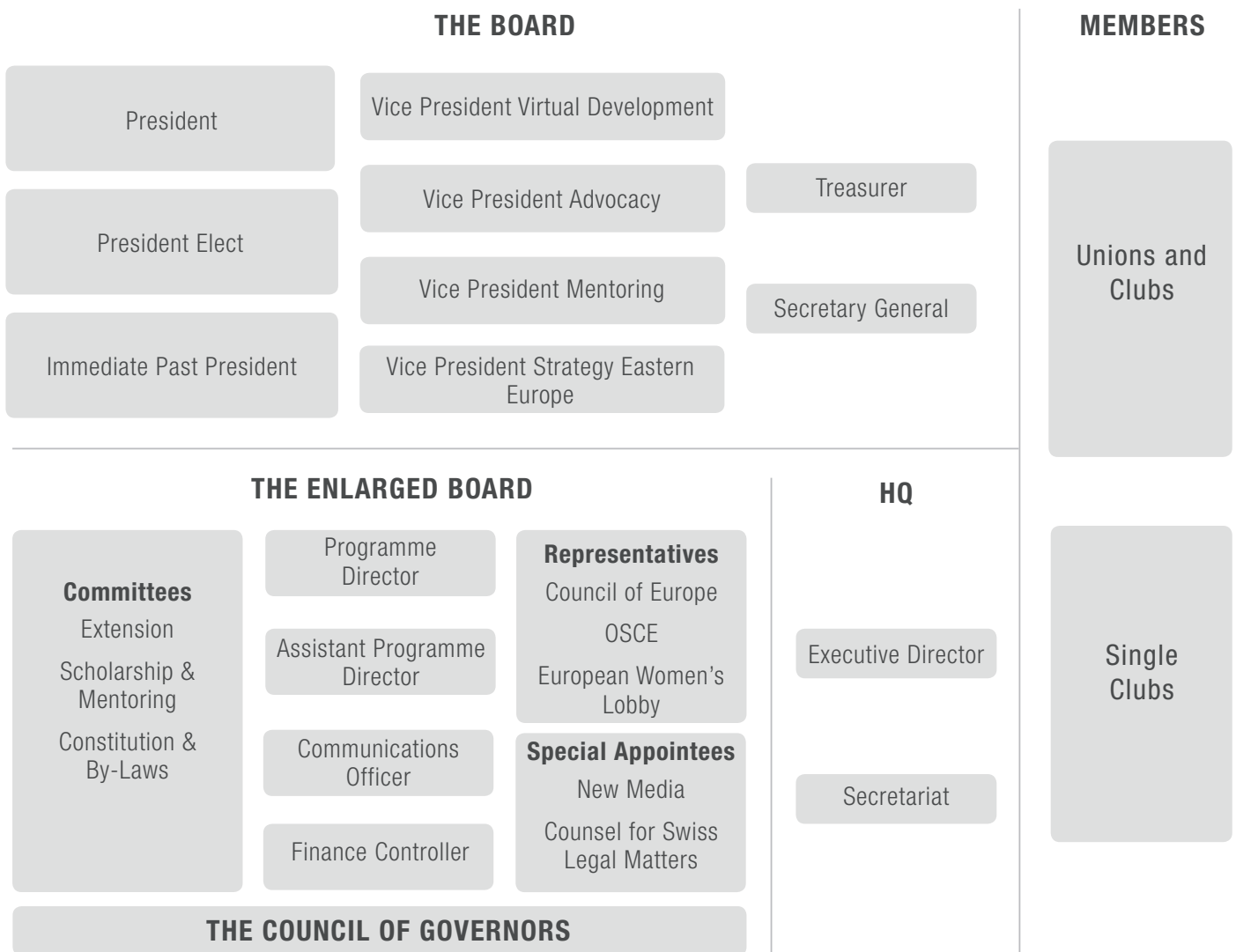
This Annual Report records our progress at the halfway point in the journey of this biennium, and I am proud to say that we have already achieved a lot. My heartfelt thanks go to all elected and appointed Federation members for their invaluable efforts in bringing our organisation forward. I am also humbled by all of the Soroptimists who tirelessly plan, develop and realise the wonderful projects that have contributed to making our organisation a global voice for women.

All this demonstrates how We stand up for Women!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "Renata Trottmann Probst". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Renata Trottmann Probst  
SIE President 2017-2019

# ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE



# ABOUT

## Soroptimist International of Europe

Soroptimists educate, empower and enable women and girls to improve their lives. Soroptimist International of Europe (SIE) is a network of almost 34,000 professional women who work together at local, national and international levels to achieve this aim. SIE currently has 1,256 Clubs, operating across 59 countries in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean. It is the largest of the four Federations making up Soroptimist International, which counts over 74,000 women as members.

Our ambition is to transform the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment and enabling opportunities. We want to see women and girls achieve their individual and collective potential, realise their aspirations, and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide. As Soroptimists, we strive for the advancement of women's status, high ethical standards, equality, development and peace, and the promotion of international goodwill and understanding.

One of the ways we achieve this is through advocacy. Soroptimist International of Europe holds general 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. SIE also participates in the work of OSCE through its permanent representatives. This allows SIE to advocate at the international level and lobby for the ratification and implementation of treaties concerning women. We also demand that priority issues for women receive their rightful place on the sustainable development agenda.

Our members include women of all ages, representing a wide range of professions. As such, we are a platform to share our knowledge and experience. We want to ensure that all women and girls have the opportunity to become leaders in their communities, and we will continue to lobby for them at all levels of society.

**33,332**  
professional  
women

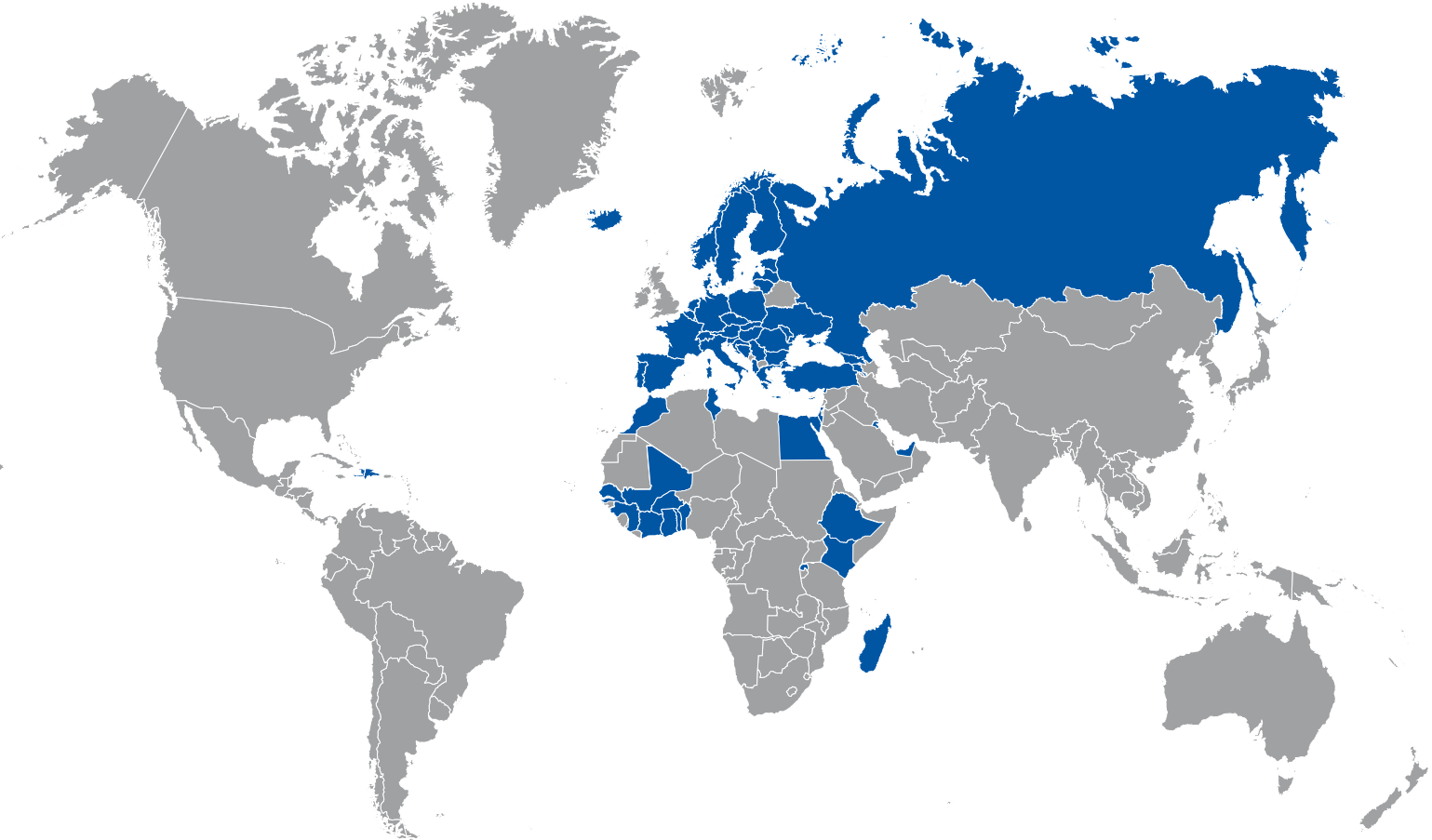
---

**1260**  
Clubs

---

**59**  
countries

# WHERE WE ARE



**59**  
countries

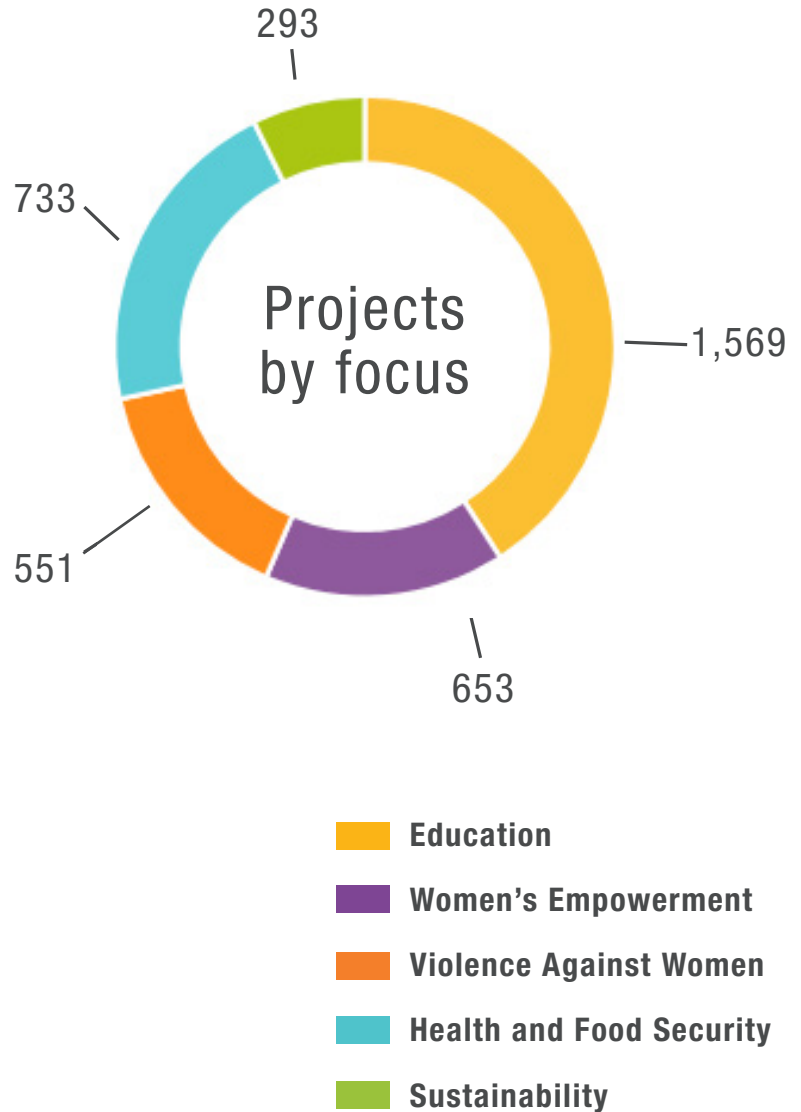
**24**  
Unions

**83**  
Single Clubs

- Europe 48
- Africa 33
- The Caribbean 2

# OUR PROJECTS

Single Clubs and Unions implement projects that focus on five main areas.



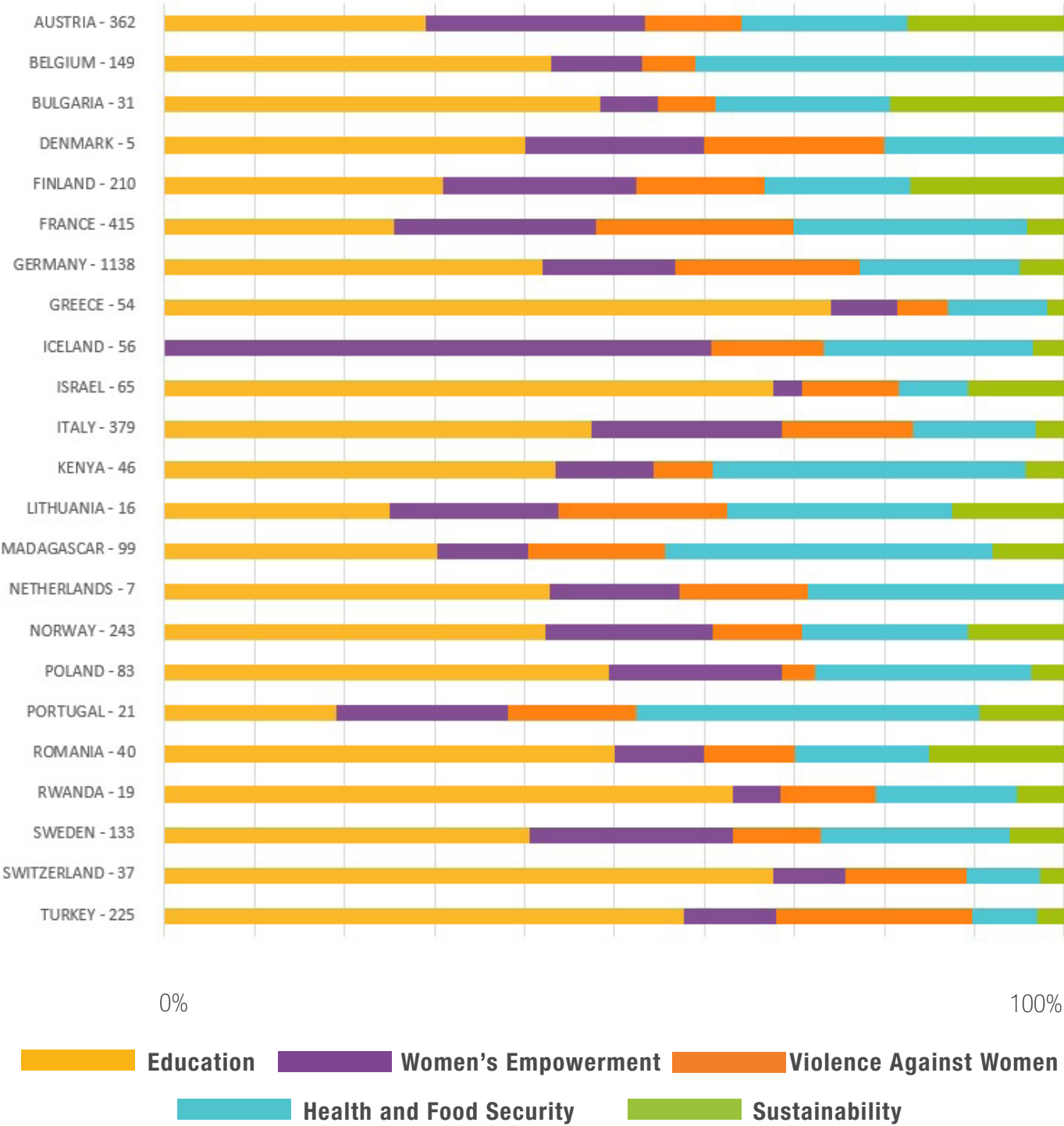
From October 2017 to September 2018 SIE members raised

**6,189,145 €**

and carried out

**3,799** projects.

# Projects per Union





# BEST PRACTICE AWARDS

SIE Unions and Clubs have implemented thousands of projects that focus on our key areas: education, women's empowerment, violence against women, health and food security, and sustainability. Each year, SIE grants Best Practice Awards to top projects.



## 2018 Project of the Year Award

“Valgt det...” a performance about human trafficking – the slavery of modern times

### Union of Norway

Changing the attitudes, in particular those of potential customers and young people, is necessary to prevent human trafficking. Soroptimists launched a storytelling theatre on human trafficking to inform, engage and create debate on human trafficking, in particular among young people. By interviewing the police, rescue systems and victims, they put together very personal stories to put on a heart breaking performance about real life characters.

Funds raised:

**50,000 €**

Number of beneficiaries:

**2,500**

# TOP PROJECTS

## EDUCATION Top Project

A student and a solar lamp for better school results in the village of Poura, Burkina Faso

### Club of Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso)

Most villages in Burkina Faso do not have electricity. Girls are especially disadvantaged because after school they must complete domestic chores and once free for homework, it is already dark. Soroptimists mobilised funds and organised the delivery of lamps in 7 villages for the education of girls (and boys). After the first donation, the results of the end-of-year exams were spectacular in Poura, demonstrating that rural children can succeed if they are given a minimum of good study conditions.



Funds raised:

17,300 €

Number of beneficiaries:

500

## WOMENS' EMPOWERMENT Top Project

KAT18

### Club of Köln-Römerturm (Germany)

Soroptimists worked together to promote artistic and cultural processes with the aim of improving the living conditions of women artists within KUNSTHAUS KAT18, an art space where mentally disabled artists work. The two Clubs in Köln collaborated to finance the completion of an apartment to be used by non-disabled "artists in residence" who work together with disabled artists for a workshop. The outcome of the workshop was quite positive: a 6-week exhibition with intermittent performances by disabled artists in the well-known Museum Kolumba in Cologne!



Funds raised:

4,500 €

Number of beneficiaries:

9

# FUNDS

SIE has established funds to allocate resources to specific areas of work.

## Federation Scholarship Fund

awards grants totaling in excess of 100,000 € per year to young women covering needs such as university fees, vocational training, and general support during studies. In memory of our founding President, the Dr Suzanne Noel Scholarship Fund provides financial assistance to female doctors to perfect their knowledge of, and experience in, plastic and reconstructive surgery.

## Disaster Relief Fund

targets the specific needs of women and girls recovering from the effects of natural disasters and armed conflicts.

## SIE Action Fund

supports humanitarian projects and promotes educational programmes.

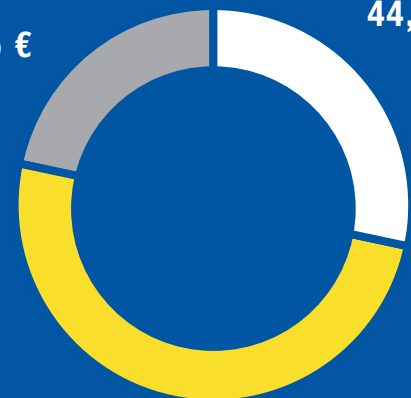
## Roswitha Ott Fund

provides health care and education to children with special needs and children in need as well as financial assistance.

## FUNDS RAISED FROM MEMBERSHIP FEES

**SOLIDARITY  
FUND**  
33,795 €

**ACTION FUND**  
44,948 €



**SCHOLARSHIP FUND**  
78,757 €

# SCHOLARSHIP

Education empowers women and girls to realise their potential and thrive in their careers. That is why we find it imperative to support them through scholarships. Contrary to the scholarships given out through the Federation Scholarship Fund where grantees are sponsored by the SIE Federation, the funds for these are raised by Unions and Clubs themselves.

## UNIONS

|                     |      |           |
|---------------------|------|-----------|
| High school         | 139  | 129,558 € |
| University          | 2712 | 634,862 € |
| Further education   | 490  | 79,359 €  |
| Vocational training | 306  | 95,198 €  |

## SINGLE CLUBS

|                     |    |          |
|---------------------|----|----------|
| High school         | 42 | 5,673 €  |
| University          | 56 | 13,250 € |
| Further education   | 14 | 5,829 €  |
| Vocational training | 69 | 21,523 € |

**3,865**  
SCHOLARSHIPS  
GRANTED

**1,032,396 €**  
SCHOLARSHIP  
GRANTS AWARDED



# MENTORING

In addition to the grants given out through the scholarship fund, Unions and Clubs organise various mentoring programmes that empower women to achieve their professional goals. Mentoring programmes pair up young women starting their careers with established professionals to gain insight and confidence and achieve success. In one-on-one sessions, mentors typically advise on how to deal with workplace scenarios and challenges. Most of the women taking part prove the value of these programmes as they obtain employment or even start their own business ventures shortly after. SIE's Mentoring Taskforce has even published a Mentoring Handbook: a go-to-guide to provide additional support to existing mentoring programmes within our Federation.



photo : Katarzyna Blasiewicz

**1,007**  
mentorships offered

---

**634**  
Soroptimist mentees

---

**324**  
Soroptimist mentees

---

**1,814**  
Non-Soroptimist mentees

---

**91**  
Non-Soroptimist mentees who  
became Soroptimists

# VIRTUAL DEVELOPMENT

Soroptimist International of Europe comprises Unions, Clubs and Single Clubs. Women from all over Europe and parts of Africa can become a Soroptimist by joining a Club! While we are generally well represented in this geographic area, our current rules do pose a few challenges. What if you don't have time to attend club meetings? What if you want to participate in Federation-level meetings or possibly run for a Board position, but the region in which you live doesn't have enough Soroptimists to form a Union, thus preventing you from enjoying these privileges?

These challenges are what led us to consider other – virtual – solutions. Virtual development is key to modernising SIE and ensuring that motivated Soroptimists or potential Soroptimists are not discouraged by the constraints of our organisational structure. After extensive research, we came up with two new ideas: virtual membership and virtual Unions.



## Virtual Membership

Our Federation has a long tradition of professional women collaborating to help other women. This dates back to 1924, when Suzanne Noël started the first club in Paris. Since then members have come together – usually once a month – for club meetings to discuss activities and devise projects that would improve the lives of girls and women. Our world has changed a lot since 1924. The culture of monthly dinner meetings culture is no longer attractive for many working women.

Because SIE wants to appeal to younger women, we are developing a new concept: eMembership. Thanks to modern communication technology, we hope to offer Soroptimist membership to those women who are attracted to SIE's values and objectives, but are not able to commit to monthly dinner meetings. These women, who are often younger, are familiar with digital communication and may not have a permanent home at one location due to professional demands. The beneficiaries of our mentorship and scholarship programmes are included in this demographic.

## Virtual Unions

We are also pursuing the organisational concept of Virtual Unions. Single Clubs exist in countries in which there are not enough clubs to form a Union. Their members do not enjoy the same rights as those in Unions. To ensure equality of all members, we are encouraging Single Clubs to come together to form "Virtual Unions". In addition to gaining voting rights, they would then be able to attend trainings and would be eligible to run for Federation offices.

All these changes are aimed at modernising our Federation and securing its future.

# ORANGE THE WORLD!

November 25th is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. It marks the beginning of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence Campaign, a campaign by individuals and organisations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls which concludes on December 10th, Human Rights Day.

Each year, during these 16 days, Soroptimists “Orange the World” through activities aimed at raising awareness of, or contributing to the elimination of, violence against women.



Soroptimists carried out orange activities such as forming human chains, illuminating city landmarks in orange, putting on plays, hosting themed events, sponsoring art exhibitions and handing out information to the public.

Supporting the call from UN Women to “Orange the world” is one of the many ways Soroptimists Stand Up for Women!



## **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.

If you want to make a difference in your community, further women's issues on a wider scale, extend your professional network and make new friends outside your normal circles, we invite you to find out more about us!

[soroptimisteurope.org](http://soroptimisteurope.org)

 [@SoroptimistInternationalofEurope](https://www.facebook.com/SoroptimistInternationalofEurope)

Headquarters: 72, route de Florissant, CH-1206 Geneva, Switzerland  
Tél. +41 22 346 08 80 • [siehq@soroptimisteurope.org](mailto:siehq@soroptimisteurope.org)