

Project  **Independence**
Women Survivors of War
Soroptimist International
& Women For Women International

**Women for Women International
Update to
Soroptimist International
June 2008**

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Overview

Women for Women International (WWI) provides women survivors of war, civil strife and other conflicts with the tools and resources to move from crisis and poverty to stability and self-sufficiency, thereby promoting viable civil societies.

Women for Women International was founded in 1993 to help socially excluded women, in many instances a family's sole breadwinner and caregiver, overcome the horrors of war and civil strife — family loss and widowhood, rape, murder, forced migration, poverty, starvation, trafficking and torture — in ways that can help them rebuild their lives, families and communities.

Through a tiered program that begins with direct financial and emotional support, Women for Women International fosters awareness and understanding of women's rights; offers vocational and technical skills training; and provides access to income-generation support and microcredit loans that together can help women restart their lives in ways that are independent, productive and secure.

Women for Women International's rights-based development approach empowers women to take control of and rebuild their lives. The women, in turn, contribute to rebuilding their communities, societies and economies by equipping them to fully participate in the decision-making processes that affect their lives. These strategies are organized into three main program areas:

- Direct Aid (Sponsorship), which provides funds directly to women, for a period of one year, so they can meet their families' immediate basic needs;
- Leadership Development and Skills Training (Renewing Women's Life Skills or ReneWLS), which builds and broadens women's existing skills so they can find employment, in addition to providing rights awareness education; and
- Income Generation Support, which provides concrete options for women to use their new skills to support themselves and their families and participate in the rebuilding of their society.

Women for Women International's contract with Soroptimist International provides that Soroptimist International will raise awareness and funds to expand capacity of WWI's programs in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda as well as to support 1,200 individual women directly as they move from victim to survivor to active citizen through the above three programs, and 600 women in attaining microcredit loans. In addition, the contract allows for up to 20 percent of the funds raised through Project Independence: Women Survivors of War to be used for material development and administrative requirements. The details of WWI's programmatic activities in 2007-2008 are included in the report below and reflect the impact of much-needed support from Soroptimist International through Project Independence: Women Survivors of War.

Perhaps most impressively, Women for Women International closed its partnership with Soroptimist International by wildly exceeding its fundraising and outreach goals:

- Sponsorship
 - Goal: 1,200 women sponsored through Project Independence
 - Result: 1,960 women sponsored, exceeding goal by 63%
- Microcredit
 - Goal: 600 women in Bosnia and Afghanistan receive loans through Project Independence

- Result: Met goal with 600 women receiving loans – additional funds raised by Soroptimist International provided some of the seed funding to help us to launch our lending activities in Afghanistan.
- Fundraising
 - Goal: \$1.2 million raised to support women and activities in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda
 - Result: \$2.2 million raised, exceeding goal by 83%

Women for Women International is proud and honored to have partnered with Soroptimist International to support and build our programs in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda. Without the support of a global organization, WWI would not have been able to achieve all of the wonderful outcomes listed below. Thank you for all you have done to support women survivors of war around the world.

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| 2007/2008 Program Summary |
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In 2007 support from Soroptimist International and our friends helped us reach a record 43,361 women in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Kosovo, Nigeria, Rwanda and Sudan. In each of these places, the violence and insecurity of warfare is real and democracy is fragile, but women are the glue that holds society together—making sure that there is food to eat and children are safe. When women thrive in areas like education and employment, society as a whole benefits.

Despite the challenges, Women for Women International remains dedicated to helping the women we serve not just to survive but to thrive, advancing a social movement that will stimulate the action and leadership necessary to create and sustain just and peaceful societies:

In 2007, Women for Women International:

- Distributed more than \$14.6 million in direct aid, microcredit loans and other program services, increasing the total amount of aid distributed in our fifteen year history to \$46 million;
- Expanded program services to serve an additional 40,000 women, assisting 300,000 additional family and community members;
- Facilitated the exchange of more than 111,500 letters between sponsors and their sisters;
- Received Charity Navigator’s highest four-star rating, for the fourth year in a row; less than 5% of organizations ranked by Charity Navigator receive this honor 4 times.
- And, since 1993, given more than 153,000 women the tools they need to improve the lives of some 831,000 family and community members.

Women for Women International provides its core program in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda to address the immediate and long-term needs of women in conflict and post-conflict environments. With the support of Soroptimist International and Project Independence: Women Survivors of War, Women for Women International deepened and expanded its program services in 2007 to provide 29,470 additional women with our programs in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda, a 24 percent increase over the 23,670 women served in these three countries in 2006; a 96 percent increase over the 15,000 women served in 2005; and a more than 460 percent increase over the 5,200 women served in these three countries in 2004.

Women for Women International not only helped women in their individual transformations, but also helped them mobilize their collective strength to bring about sustainable peace, reconstruction and economic growth on a much larger scale. As the aggregate impact of our program grows, more and more of the women who graduated feel the momentum generated by initial improvements in their lives. To help women sustain this momentum and use it to create lasting, women-led community change, we increased the breadth and depth of our programming and are working towards establishing a more permanent presence in the communities where we work.

This strategy helped ensure that women are: 1) equipped to sustain an income after graduation, receiving effective business training in order to make their own ventures more successful and better able to access employment opportunities; 2) ready to take action to realize rights for themselves and others; and 3) prepared to take on leadership roles in their communities.

Highlights of Key 2007 Initiatives:

▪ Sustainable Livelihoods

To expand women's access to employment, self-employment, and sustainable income generation opportunities upon graduation from our program, we used the data and insight that each chapter office collected through its comprehensive market assessment to prioritize focus and re-align our skills trainings to address the unique circumstances of the local economy.

Our flagship agribusiness program is the **Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative (CIFI)** and was piloted in Rwanda. Over the next three years, 3,000 women in the country will improve their food security and income generation by learning to base their crop selection and methods of production on market considerations.

▪ Community Education

Recognizing that change does not occur in a vacuum, and that violence against women will not stop unless the perpetrators' views of women are transformed, the **Men's Leadership Program (MLP)** engages male leaders as advocates for gender equity and prepared them to use their positions within the community to change the behavior and attitudes of other men.

In 2007, we expanded the MLP to Afghanistan and documented the success and scalability of the program model in the Spring issue of our bi-annual journal, *Critical Half*, entitled "Engaging Men in 'Women's Issues': Inclusive Approaches to Gender and Development."

▪ Investing in Women's Leadership

A vital aspect of Women for Women International's operational model is the leadership of local staff, as we believe that their views, perspectives and voices represent what is essential in their countries. Our Country Directors are authentic spokeswomen who have earned grassroots credibility, and learned to leverage relationships with those in power at the community and national levels to create important policy platforms.

Over the last year, Women for Women International significantly increased our investment in local and national leadership. Country Directors were able to broaden their impact as grassroots advocates on behalf of women survivors of war. Bosnia and Herzegovina Director Seida Saric participated in a UN panel discussion about the use of rape as a weapon of war, and Afghanistan Director Sweeta Noori participated in a number of high-profile events in the UK, including Chatham House's Second Annual

Women's Rights Lecture given by Cherie Booth, QC (wife of former Prime Minister, Tony Blair) and gave a number of BBC interviews.

- **Public Diplomacy**

When women thrive, all of society benefits. While we work with women at the grassroots level, we also bring the issues they face to the forefront of public consciousness through our publications and other outreach efforts. By mobilizing support for women survivors of war since 1993, Women for Women International spearheaded a dynamic public diplomacy effort, making a real difference in the lives of more than 153,000 women and 831,000 family and community members in some of the most war-torn areas in the world.

Women for Women International continued to build our reputation for gender and development expertise by amplifying the voices of women at the grassroots. With the launch of our signature *Stronger Women, Stronger Nations* report series, Women for Women International was better able to bridge the gap between the traditionally male-dominated front-line discussions of war and post-conflict reconstruction and the back-line discussions where women are working to pick up the pieces of their families and mend the social fabric of their communities. Women's economic, social and political circumstances act as a barometer for society as a whole. The best way to gauge the overall strength of a nation is through surveys and analyses of this kind.

Afghanistan

WWI currently serves 3,537 women in Afghanistan's Balkh, Herat, Kabul, Kapisa, Nangarhar, Parwan and Wardak provinces, benefiting another 19,995 additional family members. In 2007, with the support of Soroptimist International, we expanded into Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province. The first among other provinces in the country to eradicate the poppy trade, WWI considered it critical at this time that the women, men and children of this region be supported as they strive to continue this record. Women need viable opportunities to earn an income as well as increased awareness of their human rights. Among other issues, there was evidence that child marriages were increasing in large part because women are not aware of their rights and families do not have alternative means of support. Furthermore, women lacked vocational skills and did not know how to connect to markets or how to manage their income. We are now serving 1,600 women in Jalalabad alone.

Literacy Training

The state of women's education in Afghanistan is dire. WWI-Afghanistan's participant profile indicates that 93% of program participants had not had formal education training, and as a result 92% of participants were unable to read and write more than their name and 79% cannot add or subtract. Program participants had consistently identified literacy as one of their greatest needs. Many women felt that with the ability to read and write they were much more effective at meeting their own as well as their family's needs.

In an effort to address this need and with the direct support of the funds raised by Soroptimist International over the last several years, WWI-Afghanistan developed a formal literacy program, making use of a literacy curriculum developed by UNICEF that specifically targets adult women. It took a rights-based approach to literacy training by integrating rights awareness information into literacy education. The sessions are interactive and very hands-on, focusing on reading as well as writing. Visual aids, such as posters and illustrated handbooks, are often used in the classroom.

The literacy classes attracts women from as young as 16 to as old as 60, all of whom otherwise had been denied the opportunity to be educated. Nabila, 20 years old, was one of the 420 women enrolled in the WWI-Afghanistan literacy program; she reported that, "I was an uneducated woman. I wished to assist my children with their school lessons but could not. That was before participating in the literacy, manual and health trainings. Fortunately now I can read primary school books to the fifth year and assist my children. It gives me a happy feeling. I can count myself an educated women as I can read signs." Women voluntarily enroll in this portion of the program, and attend classes five days a week for at least two hours per day. The training lasted for a period of nine to twelve months, depending on the region.

Health Training

The state of healthcare and awareness in Afghanistan is dire as well. 90% of program participants can only rarely or sometimes access medical treatment and support. Maternal mortality rates in Afghanistan are among the highest in the world. To address this situation, WWI-Afghanistan was able to develop, with the direct support of Soroptimist International, voluntary health awareness training to increase participant knowledge of community and maternal health issues. The health training curriculum includes units on prevention and transmission of communicable diseases, immunizations, AIDS/Epidemiology, first aid, community health awareness, reproductive health, and pre- and post-natal care.

There are currently 200 women enrolled in the WWI-Afghanistan Health Awareness program. Rahela, 21 years old, reports with pride that, "The health trainings were so useful for me that now I can give instructions to women in my neighborhood about their children's health. I have a wonderful memory: one of my neighbors' sons had diarrhea, and her mother did not know what to do. When I heard about it, I made him some ORS [Oral Rehydration Salts]—I learned it from my health training. At that time I had such a fantastic feeling, I can not express it." The goal of this course is to educate women on basic health issues while giving them a foundation for good personal health practices for themselves and their families.

Vocational Skills Training and Income Generation Activities

All WWI-Afghanistan participants continue to receive vocational skills training and technical assistance in business development. The business training focuses on budgeting and women's contribution to the household income, and has been integrated into the rights awareness and leadership education training. This basic knowledge served as a foundation for more in-depth business development and management topics.

Women attend two-hour long vocational skills training classes once a week for a period of four to six months (depending on the type of training) in groups of no larger than fifteen. All training is provided by local instructors with expertise in the various skills. Vocational skills trainings offered to participants include beauty parlor training, food processing, fruit processing, and carpet weaving.

88% of WWI-Afghanistan program participants are not employed in productive work when they are enrolled, and only 3% of participants receive any sort of vocational training prior to joining the program. Women also cite specific obstacles to earning an income, including lack of jobs available and lack of skills. Women join the WWI-Afghanistan program hoping to improve their economic situation by learning marketable and other skills.

In an effort to shape strategy and provide further direction in supporting program participants' integration as productive members of their local economy, WWI used funds raised by Soroptimist

International in part to implement a market assessment process aimed at evaluating the market and its livelihood possibilities in the communities where WWI-Afghanistan operates. The resulting Market Assessment and Income Generation Plan were designed to leverage the vocational skills program participants receive in the WWI-Afghanistan program to align with market viability. To that end, WWI has engaged a consultant to forge partnerships with local businesses and university training programs to serve as market linkages. These developments will allow future program participants to gain employment or self-employment in market-viable vocational skills, thereby improving program graduates' ability to earn a sustainable income.

WWI helps women in war-torn regions rebuild their lives by providing financial and emotional support, job skills training, rights awareness and leadership education and access to business skills, capital and markets. As part of this ongoing commitment, and with the support of Soroptimist International, WWI-Afghanistan established a Microfinance Institution in 2004. Many of the women who received loans are opening their own businesses for the first time and use their loan funds to purchase start-up equipment and supplies. As of fall 2007, we were providing over \$3 million in micro-credit loans to 13,608 women, almost triple the number of clients we were serving a year ago, while continuing to maintain at least a 98% repayment rate.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

WWI-Bosnia and Herzegovina operates programs in 32 municipalities across six cantons in Bosnia and Herzegovina and serves 2,894 women – and we expect. In addition, WWI-Bosnia continues to expand its successful microcredit lending activities. In 2007, our loan program served 3,332 new clients and loaned more than \$6 million.

Although the war officially ended in 1995, socially excluded women in Bosnia and Herzegovina still face steep challenges to improving their lives and becoming active in their communities. Much regional variation exists in terms of access to resources, and women in remote, isolated areas are particularly vulnerable to exclusion.

The transition to a market economy that began before the war has changed the economic and social landscape. The state plays a much smaller role in providing jobs and a social safety net, and this is a difficult adjustment for many women. Self-employment is a new notion for most, yet for many of the women we serve, it is an important route to financial sustainability.

Although a minority of Bosnian women has achieved high levels of professional success, most women still struggle against traditional attitudes and other barriers that limit active involvement in their communities. This is a particular factor for women with low levels of formal education and limited access to resources and social networks. These are the women targeted by WWI-Bosnia's programming—those most likely to be left out of decision-making and community structures.

Nada Ler Sofronić, an expert on women's rights and gender in Bosnia and Herzegovina, conducted focus groups with graduates of Women for Women International-Bosnia's program in March 2008 as part of an outcome evaluation, conducted in part with the funds raised by Soroptimist International. She concluded that "women agree that their influence in the decision-making processes in the community and in public is almost nonexistent. They are often treated as nothing more than housewives." When she asked focus group participants about the participation of women in decision-making structures, one woman mentioned that women have not been included "as if we were still one step behind the men. Another stated, "Women have always been neglected—the general opinion here is that men rule. Women should not allow this."

As witnessed by members of Soroptimist International during our field visit to Bosnia in 2004, some graduates of WWI-Bosnia's program have taken pioneering steps toward challenging these obstacles by forming local associations. Graduates have formed eleven associations in their communities with a variety of goals, including the promotion of women's rights, inclusion of women in local governance structures, and local community development. Each association has between 30 and 140 members, and includes both graduates of WWI-Bosnia's training program as well as other women in the community.

In most cases, these associations represent the first public initiatives by women in the communities they represent. This in itself is a significant achievement. At least two of the groups have made important strides toward promoting women as decision-makers by encouraging the election of group members into their local assemblies. Other actions include traveling to neighboring villages to educate women about a law for gender equality, taking part in radio discussions about the role of women in society, actively participating in workshops to bring attention to violence against women, and organizing public forums about the importance of women in decision-making and civic action.

The efforts of these groups represent an important step toward building a broad-based grassroots movement of women taking action on issues in their communities. As associations build skills and seek common ground, they have the power to be a significant force of change in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the same time, the members of these groups are the most socially excluded women in Bosnia and Herzegovina who have not had the benefit of training in community development, building and managing associations, and advocating for women's causes.

The associations have requested additional support from Women for Women International-Bosnia to strengthen their structures and capacity to promote women's active citizenship in their communities, and this is a focus for the organization over the next year. They are currently functioning at only the most basic levels, although most are formally registered. Nada Ler Sofronić concluded in her outcome evaluation report for the organization that "it would be extremely important for Women for Women International to consider further support to newly-established women's groups and to encourage women to step out of the old way of life. We emphasize that this [starting the associations] is an extremely important first step that should not remain at this level. In our opinion, once perspectives are opened and the process started, it should not be stopped as this can reduce the achieved results."

Rwanda

Women for Women International has been offering its services in several locations in Rwanda since 1997, and currently serves 5,514 socially excluded women there; the ability to expand our programming in Rwanda is due in large measure to the funding and support raised by Soroptimist International over the last 4 years. WWI-Rwanda has already graduated another 15,428 women from our one-year intensive program. During that year each woman received monthly direct aid, emotional support from their sponsors through letters, rights awareness education about women's role in the family, politics and economy and job skills trainings that enabled them to become self-sufficient upon graduation. We have seen that when women thrive in areas like education and employment, society benefits as a whole. And when women suffer, it is only a matter of time before all of society is at risk. Women, and their well-being, are the key to peace and to preventing future crisis.

As part of our goal of deepening our programming and broadening its impact in Rwanda, in 2008 we launched our Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative to address the need of the socially excluded women we serve to provide food security and generate an income for themselves and their families;

and established a Women's Opportunity Center to serve the needs of both program participants and graduates in a more meaningful way. These two projects are closely linked.

Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative

WWI-Rwanda's primary focus in the area of income generation in 2008 is to provide relevant agricultural training which will directly serve the needs of the majority of the women with whom we work. Launched in January, WWI's Commercial Integrated Farming Initiative (CIFI-R) will train 3,000 women over three years in the necessary skills, techniques and sustainable practices of commercial integrated farming, and then continue to engage them beyond the training and into successful market relationships. Integrated farming practices enable farmers to grow a variety of crops on one piece of land, meaning that a farmer could grow a typical crop for local market demand alongside a less typical, preferably higher value crop which has a niche market within a wide variety of potential markets. This approach therefore makes it possible for farmers to obtain better returns from the land and generate a sustainable income while still feeding their families. This project is located in Rwanda's Kayonza district.

The Women's Opportunity Center

WWI will establish Women's Opportunity Centers in seven of the countries where we currently execute our core programs. These initial Centers will serve as centralized hubs of women's commerce, leadership and active citizenship. They are located in communities where the greatest number of women and graduates may access them. Anchored by our core programs, the Centers provide us with the permanence and capacity necessary to make a deeper and more lasting impact on women's lives and their communities. The Centers are the foundation on which women can build their future success, and help WWI achieve its objectives through providing WWI with permanence and the capacity for "deeper" programming. Our Center in Rwanda is located in Kayonza, and houses the CIFI-R project as well as facilities to serve at least 50% of the participants enrolled in our programs in the coming years.

Public Relations

Women for Women International's Sponsorship Program gives voice to women at the grassroots and encouraged them to share their stories with a network of sponsors who reside in 56 countries around the world. In 2007, Women for Women International facilitated the exchange of more than 111,500 letters between sponsors and their sisters. The stories the women share help to educate sponsors about the dynamics of conflict, injustice, and social exclusion, while inspiring many to become active in their own communities on behalf of the women and the challenges they face. Since the start of the partnership between Women for Women International and Soroptimist International, members of Soroptimist International have sponsored more than 1,960 women, exceeding our goal of sponsoring 1,200 women by 63%!

Public Relations with External and Soroptimist International Audiences

Throughout the project, WWI and Soroptimist International made raising awareness about Project Independence: Women Survivors of War a priority. Some of these public relations activities include:

- Over 750 speaking events have been presented by Dawn Marie Lemonds, the Federation Liaisons (Jocelyn Hanby, Eileen Mitchell -SI/SWP, Jackie Paling-SI/GBI, Nordelia Gradowski-SI/A, Mariet Verhoef-Cohen and Giovanna Catinella Dara-SI/E) and Project Ambassadors for Soroptimist International clubs and external audiences, including churches, other civic organizations and local legislators around the world.

Partnering With Local Soroptimist Clubs

Women for Women International explored ways for Soroptimist clubs in Rwanda and Bosnia and Herzegovina to partner with our field offices to promote the project and benefit the women there. Since the study tour to Bosnia and Herzegovina in September 2004, the Women for Women International office there and Soroptimist International have collaborated on several occasions, and continue to keep each other updated on shared priorities and activities. During the Study Tour to Rwanda in 2006, Women for Women International staff from the US and Rwanda met with members of the local Soroptimist International club to plan trip activities. In addition, Study Tour participants were able to meet with members of the Kigali Club and visit their local site where they are building a comprehensive women's center, including shelter and services.

Newspaper/Media Coverage

"The International Soroptimist" Magazine and several of the Federation magazines were very generous in covering Project Independence: Women Survivors of War. This caused quite a bit of interest and all articles that are published and received in published form are posted on the Project Independence Website. Additionally the "Global Voice for Women" Website posted quite a bit of information about the project. Federations, Regions, Unions, and Clubs were urged to send examples of any media they receive for Project Independence to Women for Women International so that it could be included on the website! In total, Project Independence received well over 50 media placements over the four years of the project.

Project Independence Ambassadors

In order to raise awareness about Project Independence among local clubs and neighborhoods, Project Liaison Dawn Marie Lemonds and Federation Liaisons from each Federation recruited "Project Independence Ambassadors" in 2004. These Ambassadors were provided with copies of outreach materials developed by Women for Women International and the Soroptimist International Liaison and their Federations. Throughout the project they received additional updates from their Federation Liaison and SI. Ambassadors were available to travel to clubs and other speaking events in their regions in order to give presentations and answer questions about the project. To date we have reports that more than 70 Ambassadors had been recruited in many areas of SIA, SIE, SIGBI and almost every country of SISWP. Ambassadors were also encouraged to be frequent visitors to the Project Independence website.

Activities conducted by the Ambassadors were as varied as the individuals themselves. Some of the Ambassadors focused their efforts on fundraising activities, while other focused primarily on awareness raising. Ambassadors were self-funded and self-selected so the sum total of their activities is not fully known. An additional benefit of this scheme is that Soroptimist members were getting additional leadership opportunities while promoting this international cause.

Programmatic Updates

Women for Women International provided regular programmatic updates via email and mail as well as its regular newsletter, *Outreach*, to members of Soroptimist International who provided us with their contact information. By sending these updates directly to individual members, information about Project Independence and how it is benefiting Women for Women International's programs in the field was more widely and quickly disbursed.

Fundraising and Sponsorship

Fundraising

Since the launch of Project Independence: Women Survivors of War in July 2003, Women for Women International received \$US 2,080,330 from Soroptimist International members. These funds have come from wire transfers from Soroptimist International headquarters; individual sponsorships by Soroptimist International members and clubs; donations made directly to Women for Women International; and product sales through Women for Women International's website. The following chart illustrates the source and breakdown of funding:

| Donations to Women for Women International* | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Source | Amount in US\$ | Date |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$17,793.50 | 03/05/04 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$14,104 | 06/23/04 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$75,301.80 | 10/01/04 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$80,005.80 | 12/24/04 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$76,504 | 03/11/05 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$111,982 | 04/28/05 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$26,383 | 05/11/05 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$36,235.50 | 07/28/05 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$81,963.30 | 10/05/05 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$25,672.50 | 12/06/05 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$84,534.80 | 03/10/06 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$126,286.60 | 06/09/06 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$187,750.00 | 09/29/06 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$95,819.50 | 12/12/06 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$96,265.00 | 3/19/2007 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$198,370.90 | 06/11/2007 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$178,959.08 | 11/02/2007 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$283,132.85 | 11/15/2007 |
| SIHQ Wire Transfer | \$73,627.09 | 05/20/2008 |
| Direct Donations to Women for Women International** | \$287,589.91 | 07/31/03 – 12/31/2007 |
| Total | \$2,158,281.13 | 07/01/2003- 12/31/2007 |
| Amount Exceeding Goal of \$1.2 million US | \$958,281.13 | |
| *Included are donations received since the program kicked off in July 2003. | | |
| **Direct donations are from general donations, individual sponsorships and product sales | | |

Direct Donations

Women for Women International received direct donations in the form of general donations, individual sponsorships and product sales as follows:

- SIA: \$263,010.88
- SIE: \$ 6,867.50
- SIGBI: \$ 13,813.03
- SWP: \$ 3,898.50

We are so excited to have wildly exceeded our fundraising goals! All additional funds that we receive will continue to be invested in Women for Women International's programs in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda as described above – having an even greater impact on the women survivors of war we serve.

Innovative Fundraising Ideas

Since the start of Project Independence: Women Survivors of War, Soroptimist International clubs have developed several innovative techniques to raise funds for the project. These include:

- Inspired by the knitting frenzy of the Bosnia Study Tour Group members, the entire group of Rwanda Study Group members knitted squares for a Peace Afghan that was raffled off in California in 2007. This "crazy" afghan was in the colors of the Rwandan flag - green, yellow and turquoise. This afghan included the handiwork of Soroptimist International President Lynn Dunning and is certainly a labor of love that has to date generated over \$3,000 dollars in the Rwandan peace baskets that were being passed at the events for donations.
- Women Singing for Women Survivors of War was the name of a gala concert organized by members of Cheshire, North Wales and Wirral for Saturday of Service 2006. The event, which also included a grand raffle, involved every club in the Region in one way or another. Clubs publicized the event across the region, sold tickets, provided raffle prizes and pitched in to help the event run smoothly. The women who were singing were The Cheshire Chord Company, an international award-winning women's choir. The glamorous and talented choir sang a wide variety of songs, often enhanced with choreographed routines. In introducing items from the program, members of the choir acknowledged the work done by Soroptimists on behalf of women around the world and movingly dedicated one of the songs to Soroptimist International. The program also included a performance by Elfair Dyer, a gifted young harpist from North Wales. Elfair is a member of the National Youth Orchestra. A short presentation by Project Independence Ambassador Kate Moore convinced the audience to buy even more raffle tickets during the interval! As a result, the event raised over £2500 for Project Independence: Women Survivors of War.
- In Amsterdam, SI-Netherlands held a Fado Concerto organized by the Project Independence Activity Group. The fadista, Maria de Fatima, gave a wonderful performance in the wooden, old Amstel Church. The afternoon brought in over 7,000 euro for Project Independence. Everyone had a wonderful time while also raising money for the Project.

Product Sales

Soroptimist International members also had the opportunity to support Project Independence through the purchase of goods made by women in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda and elsewhere around the world the Women for Women International's Virtual Bazaar. To date, Soroptimist International members have purchased \$US 17,940 worth of products from the Virtual Bazaar.

Sponsorships

Club Group Correspondents

One of the features of Project Independence that “ignited” members around the world was the opportunity to correspond with women enrolled in Women for Women International’s programs. In order to capture this enthusiasm, Women for Women International and Project Liaison Dawn Marie Lemonds created “Club Group Correspondents” as a way for clubs to get involved in corresponding with women who were being supported with funds raised through Project Independence. To date, 44 clubs have participated in the project as a Club Group Correspondent

A critical part of each participant’s experience was the opportunity to correspond through letters with the woman that supported her. Letters provided an emotional lifeline to a woman who may have otherwise lost everything. Letters were not only an excellent source of support for the women; they were also a way for supporters to gain a deeper understanding of the culture they live in.

To provide this emotional support through letters, each group of women being supported through Project Independence was matched with members of a club who volunteered to correspond with each participant. It was the responsibility of the club to provide the much-needed emotional support that the participants needed to rebuild their lives.

This process also helped Women for Women International identify women in Project Independence groups to track and follow through their year of training and post their progress on the website, as was planned in the original agreement between the two partner organizations.

Project Independence directly supported 1,200 women through 2007 in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda as they benefited from Women for Women International’s program of direct aid, rights awareness training and leadership education, vocational skills training and income generation support. Funds raised through Project Independence were given directly to these 1,200 women in a monthly donation as part of Women for Women International’s Sponsorship Program. Each participant used these funds to obtain basic necessities for her family – food, clean water, medicine; pay school-related expenses for her children; begin the recovery process by investing in training; or use the funds as seed capital where groups of sponsored women pool their funds to collectively start a cooperative, support a joint project or start a small business.

Funds received through wire transfers from Soroptimist International Headquarters were used to sponsor 53 groups, directly supporting 1,072 women. The chart below shows which clubs sponsored women through the Group Correspondent method.

Individual Sponsorships

Although not the focus of Project Independence, there have been individual club members and clubs that requested to sponsor a woman directly through Women for Women International. Working with Dawn Marie Lemonds, Women for Women International developed a system to track these individual members and clubs and their donations. To date, individual members or clubs sponsored 887 individual woman. Although the majority of these individual sponsors are from the United States, there are also sponsors from Great Britain, Australia, Germany, Switzerland and Canada. The chart below also shows how many women are being sponsored through these individual sponsorships.

| Sponsorships Through Project Independence | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Group Correspondence Club | Sister Group Country | Start Date |
| SI/A – Whittier, CA | Afghanistan | 03/01/04 |
| SI/A – Anacortes, WA | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 04/01/04 |
| SI – Chat Line | Rwanda | 08/01/04 |
| SI/A – Greater Minneapolis | Rwanda | 01/01/05 |
| SI/SWP – Nepean & Blue Mountain | Afghanistan | 01/01/05 |
| SI/A – Glendale/Camino Real | Afghanistan | 01/01/05 |
| SI/GBI – London Chilterns | Afghanistan | 01/01/05 |
| SI/A – South Lake Tahoe | Afghanistan | 01/01/05 |
| SI/E – Iceland Group | Afghanistan | 01/01/05 |
| SI/A – Garden Grove | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 03/01/05 |
| SI – Circle of Friends | Rwanda | 03/01/05 |
| SI/GBI – Lisburn | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 07/01/05 |
| SI/A – Fort Bragg | Rwanda | 06/01/05 |
| SI/A – Vacaville | Rwanda | 06/01/05 |
| SI/A – District IV | Afghanistan | 06/01/05 |
| SI/A – Vancouver | Rwanda | 10/01/05 |
| SI/GBI – Cheltenham | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 06/01/05 |
| SI/GBI – Bridgewater, Southwest and Channel Islands | Rwanda | 08/01/05 |
| SI/A – Saguaro Foothills | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 11/01/05 |
| SI/A – Phoenix | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 06/01/2005 |
| SI/A -- Port Townsend | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 11/01/2005 |
| SI/E – Portugal | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 11/01/2005 |
| SI/A -- Oak Harbor | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 10/01/2005 |
| SI/GBI - Aberdeen-Inverness and Naim and Easter Ross | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 11/01/2005 |
| SI/A -- Valley of the Sun | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 11/01/2005 |
| SI/E -- Finland/Turku | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 11/01/2005 |
| SI/GBI – Derby | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 11/01/2005 |
| SI/GBI – Tynedale | Rwanda | 02/01/2006 |
| SI/E – Turkish Union | Rwanda | 04/01/2006 |
| SI/GBI – Poole | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 04/01/2006 |
| SI/A – Southern Region | Rwanda | 04/01/2006 |
| SI/A – Anacortes | Rwanda | 04/01/2006 |
| SI/SWP – Brisbane South | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 05/01/2006 |
| SI/GBI – Falkirk | Afghanistan | 05/01/2006 |
| SI/E – Netherlands | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 05/01/2006 |
| SI/A – Everett | Rwanda | 06/01/2006 |
| SI/GBI – Naas, Newbridge and District | Afghanistan | 07/01/2006 |
| SI/GBI – Ilkley | Afghanistan | 07/01/2006 |
| SI/GBI – Kirkaldy and Dumferline | Afghanistan | 07/01/2006 |
| SI/A – Fort Bragg | Rwanda | 07/01/2006 |
| SI/GBI – Chelmsford | Afghanistan | 08/01/2006 |
| SI/GBI – Channel Islands and Group | Rwanda | 08/01/2006 |
| SI/E -- Achterhoek | Rwanda | 10/01/2006 |
| SI/A – Rancho Bernardo | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 11/01/2006 |
| Women Sponsored through Group Correspondence | 1,072 | |
| Women Sponsored Directly | 887 | |
| Total Women Sponsored | 1,959 | |

Conclusion

Women for Women International is so very grateful to Soroptimist International for its support in raising awareness about women survivors of war in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Rwanda. The outreach from individual members and clubs helped to raise WWI's profile on a global stage, helping us to reach sponsors and new supporters in the UK, Canada, Europe, Asia, Australia, Japan and 56 countries around the world. The energy and enthusiasm of Soroptimist International members was evident at every Women for Women event, and every time Women for Women sent out a call for support for the women we serve. Thank you so very much for your commitment, and for making the world a better place for women.