

A photograph of two women laughing together outdoors. The woman on the left has long dark hair and is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt and a red skirt with a gold and yellow patterned sash. The woman on the right has short blonde hair, wears glasses, a blue and white striped shirt, and a grey blazer. They are standing in front of green foliage.

Chapter 1:

The Soroptimist
Model

SI President 2009-2011, Hanne Jensbo, visits China
for an All China Women's Federation conference

Soroptimist International

is a worldwide service organisation dedicated to improving the lives and status of women and girls. Soroptimist International operates at three levels. First, local clubs, where women join together with other like-minded women for addressing the most pressing issues and challenges facing women and girls, networking, and friendship. Second, local clubs are joined together at Federation level. Our Federations embrace the importance of looking

outside traditional national and regional boundaries and are built upon partnerships, particularly between clubs in the Global North and clubs in the Global South. Finally, our Federations are joined together internationally to create our worldwide organisation. At international level, SI brings together the work happening every day all over the world to act as a global voice for women and girls, primarily through our work in international policy setting and awareness raising.

Who We Are, 2010

Approaching **40,000** professional and business women members

Over **3,000** local clubs in communities worldwide

Present in **124** countries/territories

Active in **Six** major UN centres

19 permanent representatives to the UN

424,070 women and girls served through **4,670** local, national, and international projects

Soroptimists reported raising **USD \$7,901,614** to improve the lives and status of women and girls – including on the ground projects and international projects

SI authored **13 UN statements**, 4 oral and 9 written

SI contributed to and/or supported **9 joint NGO statements**, 3 oral and 6 written

SI organised **19 formal panels/workshops/side events** at UN conferences, meetings, and events, and many other informal information sharing events

SI has held **9 policy meetings** with UN staff

SOROPTIMISTS SPEAK OUT

In 2010, Soroptimist International, for the first time in its 89 year history, opened a worldwide vote for members to participate in setting SI's international focus leading up to and beyond our centenary celebration in 2021. Members worldwide overwhelmingly voted education and leadership for women and girls as the issue on which they wish to concentrate for the foreseeable future. This was the culmination of a long, strategic process and we are extremely proud of the

work and the progress that has been achieved to get us to this point. From this decision this global impact report was born – the first of what will be an annual publication, intended for internal and external audiences alike, to show how Soroptimists are changing the lives of women and girls for the better. We also highlight the most pressing challenges and solutions in accessing education and leadership.



Young women students at a Soroptimist sponsored school in Colombo, Sri Lanka

The essence of the Soroptimist model is simple: educate women and girls today to create the female leaders of tomorrow. SI knows how important it is for women and girls to be afforded the opportunity to lead and participate in decision making (read on to learn about why!) – at local, national, and international levels. We also know that, in order to get to that place, we need to educate, empower, and

enable – *our E³ model*. We *educate* women and girls by increasing their access to the skills necessary to take on whatever challenge they desire – from basic literacy and numeracy skills to vocational training to health or sanitation to climate change to preparation for running in elections and everything in between. Improving physical environments, such as gender appropriate sanitation facilities or building dormitories, also increases access to skills and thus also falls within this framework.

In doing so, SI *empowers* women with confidence and choice, giving them the tools necessary to achieve their fullest potential. These two ‘E’s are primarily under our ACTION strategy. Thirdly, we go beyond the individual woman or girl and work within the wider community to *enable opportunities* for women and girls to use their skills and confidence as leaders and role models. We achieve this under our ADVOCACY and AWARENESS RAISING strategies. SI educates individual women and girls with skills, empowers them with confidence, and enables opportunities in the wider community. Put it all together and we have a positive collective global impact which transforms the lives and status of women and girls worldwide, opening doors for women and girls to become leaders in many different ways.

The Soroptimist Model

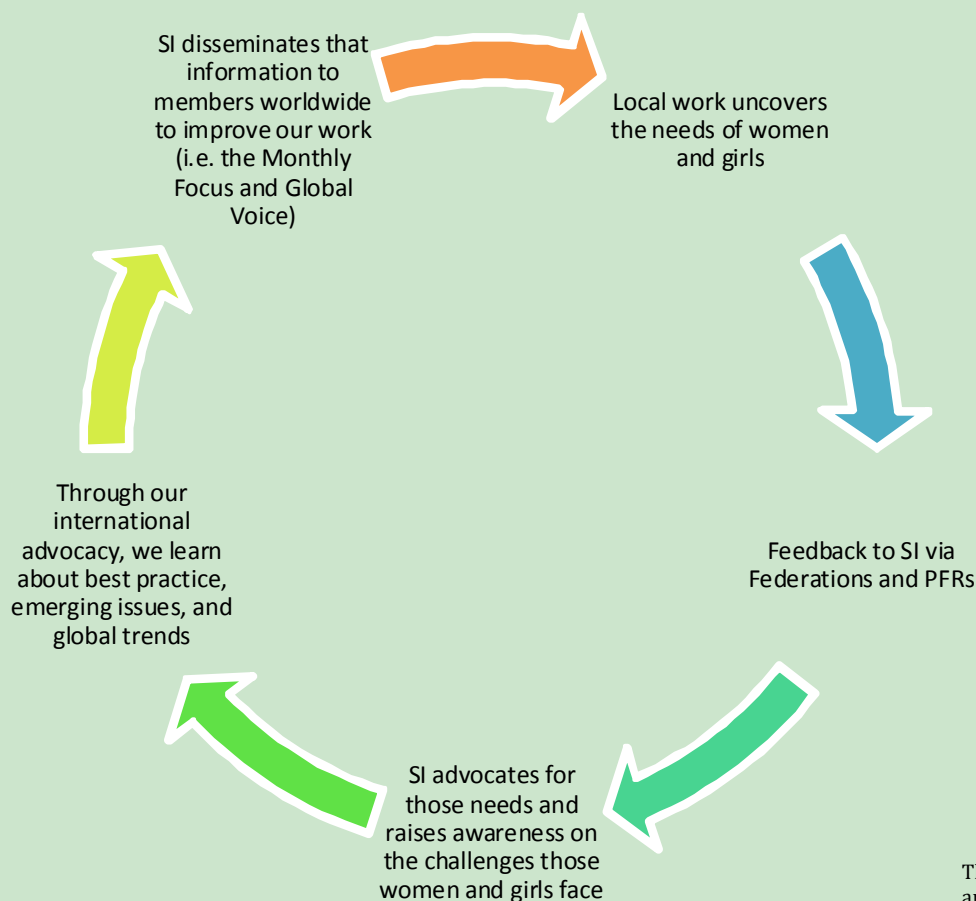


Educate to Lead

Soroptimist International is also deeply grounded in connecting the local actions undertaken by clubs and members to our global advocacy and awareness raising work. There is a constant feedback loop between the two – first and foremost, our advocacy and awareness raising work is driven by the voices of the women and girls whom we serve at local level. Being an advocate is a responsibility, and for SI to truly be a global voice for women and girls, we must listen to the needs and solutions which come from those whom we serve. On the other side of the feedback loop, actions taken at local and national levels are

informed by our advocacy and awareness raising work – we learn from our international partners and from global policy settings forums and act as a conduit to disseminate that information to members around the world to inform their work. This could be new and emerging trends, successful best practices, issues and challenges that we may not have known about before, and, most importantly – solutions. This constant exchange of information makes our work in action, advocacy, and awareness-raising responsible and responsive. And it’s fun!

Connecting local to global



The Monthly Focus and Global Voice are communications tools available on our website, www.soroptimistinternational.org