

**EDUCATE  
EMPOWER  
ENABLE**



**SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL**

**2011-2015**



*Picture: Birthing in the Pacific*

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**132 countries and territories**



**80,000 members**

Representatives at

**6**

UN centres

Over

**4**

Federations

**3,000**

Clubs





*International President Alice Wells 2011-2013*

**T**his wonderful brochure provides a brief summary of the 2011-2015 Quadrennium for Soroptimist International. Two projects are featured from each federation along with key information about the two *December 10<sup>th</sup> Appeal* projects: *Birthing in the Pacific* and *See Solar, Cook Solar*.

International President Ann and I are so grateful to all Soroptimists worldwide who participated and supported these projects and supported our *Educate to Lead* theme with programmes and projects in your own federations.

I was very excited to launch *Birthing in the Pacific* at our last convention in Montreal. Whilst this project was initially planned to up-skill the training of Midwives in Papua New Guinea, it went on to accomplish so much more as funds became available. Community Health Workers and Village Birth Attendants were trained in remote areas of the country where maternal mortality rates were staggering. This project has truly made a difference in saving women's lives in PNG." - **Alice Wells**



*International President Ann Garvie 2013-2015*

**L**eading an organisation where the strength lies within each member is a privilege and the past four years have proved an exciting adventure for me. The invaluable contribution Soroptimists make to enhancing society cannot and should not be underestimated.

The project work showcased in this quadrennial report is testament to the determined efforts of each and every member throughout the world. Such commitment is sure to engage you and clearly illustrates why we should celebrate together the outstanding achievements of Soroptimist International. Every member is a global voice for women and girls, which you serve locally, nationally and internationally and for this, I thank you.

Fifteen years ago I visited Mozambique with one of my Federation Officers, Anne Ainsworth, and the experience was a complete revelation to me. I had never seen such complex poverty and the impact on me was powerful. It was here I witnessed women gathering firewood for cooking and I began to question how women and girls in a community such as this, could survive with no electricity supply. *See Solar, Cook Solar*, my chosen *December 10<sup>th</sup> Appeal*, is now showing the fruits of your labour; empowering, educating and enabling women and girls, globally." - **Ann Garvie**

## Birthing in the Pacific

**B**irthing in the Pacific (BIP) was adopted as an SISWP Federation Project as a response to UN Millennium Development Goal 5 'to improve maternal health'. There is a high maternal mortality rate in Papua New Guinea caused by distance, lack of transport and isolation in remote rural areas. These problems are compounded by a struggling health system that has a severe shortage of skilled midwifery clinicians.

Papua New Guinea's maternal mortality problem was tackled by providing education and training to those working at many levels in the area of health, from community health workers and midwives, to lecturers in the teaching schools. Birthing in the Pacific developed a thorough and cohesive approach that improved the availability of appropriate midwifery care at the national, regional and community level. Inspired by the project, International President Alice Wells chose BIP as her President's Appeal for 2011-2013. With it came the possibility of increasing BIP funds through the fundraising activities of Clubs in the other three Soroptimist Federations.

This access to greater funding was crucial in making it possible to widen BIP's focus of support for maternal health training across most of the Provinces in the country, and remarkable progress has been made. A strong partnership with the PNG National Reproductive Training Unit was developed and 800 health personnel have undertaken residential Essential and Emergency Midwifery Courses. Fifty individual trainers have achieved midwifery teaching diplomas

and 3 individuals have been enabled to present papers at Pacific Region Reproductive Health Conferences.

A major component of the working life of a Community Health Worker (CHWs) is delivering babies, however they often do this with no formal midwifery training. Through a partnership with the Head of the PNG University School of Medicine, 51 CHWs from rural and remote areas have been sponsored to undertake a 6 month residential, competency based midwifery course.

Hard to reach communities have been accessed and awareness raised about the importance of maternal healthcare. New equipment has been purchased and distributed to midwives, CHWs, Community Health Centres and hospitals across the country, ranging from education materials such as NeoNatalie inflatable simulators to midwifery tools, obstetric wheels and birthing beds.

"When I first learned of this project as SI President Elect", President Alice said, "I was immediately touched by the fact that it was a federation-sponsored project that truly supported: a) women helping women; b) education and leadership; c) a project where Soroptimists would get credit for the work being done."





In addition, I also saw it as a project that could hopefully be implemented in other federations. After visiting PNG in 2012, I was even more convinced that this project could truly be life-changing for these women and their families in Papua New Guinea.”

“Whilst the original intent was to train midwives, it also became apparent that the completely untrained Village Birth Attendants (VBAs) living in rural and remote areas were significant in the lives of the pregnant women in their communities. They also needed basic health education and training to recognise women at risk, ensuring where possible they gave birth at a Health Centre. I had the exciting opportunity of meeting the first 15 VBAs who were trained by SI Ramu. These women were from many villages in that province and in just the first nine months after their training, they helped 106 women deliver; they helped 55 women reach a health facility, and supervised 51 births themselves. In addition, they also provided antenatal care and helped mothers with family planning.” In total 90 VBAs in two provinces have received this training. Birthing in the Pacific is and continues to be, a truly remarkable project.





See Solar, Cook Solar, International President Ann Garvie's President's Appeal for 2013-2015 is lighting up the lives of communities across the globe – delivering solar powered, sustainable projects to educate, empower and enable women and girls. There are currently six projects in action, all funded through the December 10th Appeal and widely supported by each of the Federations, clubs and members around the world. The first projects now in place are those at Musasa Primary School in the Rwenzori mountain range, Western Uganda, and Fiji Solar Cookers, at three sites on the islands of Vanua Levu and Viti Levu. Other projects in their early stages include those in Mali, Papua New Guinea, Nepal and at a second school in Uganda.

The project at Musasa Primary School in rural Western

Uganda was proposed by SI Dunfermline (SIGBI), who had a long standing relationship with the school. With around 700 pupils, sustainability was a key factor in the approach. The project includes the installation of solar panels at the school and a solar cooker. The panels provide power for lights and laptops provided by SI. The cooker will provide meals for the whole school as well as allowing for income generation. The installation of a rainwater system with biosand filters is now complete – a highly sustainable approach that has actively involved the whole community. This will provide safe, clean drinking and washing water for the school and community.

Fiji Solar Cookers, submitted by SISWP and proposed by the Soroptimists of Fiji, will deliver nine solar cookers across three rural locations; two sites on the main island of Viti Levu and one on the neighbouring and smaller island of Vanua Levu. Three solar cookers have now been installed at two sites - Hart Home, Ba Viti Levu, providing homes for widows and single parent households, and Nelson Palmer SDA Primary School, Navosa. This combined project has an estimated 260 beneficiaries. Following installation in both settings, women and children gathered together for educational sessions involving simulated play and informal talks. The Fiji team were delighted to note the children's enhanced understanding of renewable energy, in particular solar energy.

The third location is a boarding house for children and teachers of Kubulau District Primary School, Vanua Levu. Logistics are being finalised as this is the toughest and most remote of the three sites in Fiji. The project is generating a lot of awareness and interest in SI at large.

livelihood and environmental awareness, it's a win-win situation for all involved. It's been a pleasure working with the local communities in Fiji".

The See Solar, Cook Solar team will also work in collaboration with SI Bayside, SISWP, providing an estimated 400 solar lights to the Soroptimists in Lae, Papua New Guinea, which builds on an existing project between SISWP and SI Lae. The Mali Solar Power project was submitted by SIE and planned by the Soroptimist Alliance Club, Timbuktu. It will provide solar power to 20 families in the village of Koriomé, Timbuktu, reaching an estimated 120 beneficiaries. With project planning currently underway development and implementation is proposed for later in 2015. Early planning for See Solar, Cook Solar in Nepal includes solar lights for 60 families and the Kinyaminagha School, Uganda is the second school in Uganda chosen to receive support. Again proposed by SI Dunfermline as a result of their ongoing relationships with schools in Western Uganda, Kinyaminagha has 672 pupils and will see solar power installed in order to light the whole school.

Through these transformative projects, the impact of See Solar, Cook Solar cannot be underestimated; ultimately benefiting women, girls and their communities in all aspects of their lives.



# Diary of a Soroptimist

## Andrea Simon, President, SI Barbados, SIGBI Federation

Since becoming President of Soroptimist International Barbados I have literally hit the ground running. From local conferences on topical issues such as juvenile justice to planning meetings, responding daily to various emails, meeting prospective members, attending subcommittee meetings and reviewing budgets, there's always something to do. As a young attorney-at-law it can prove challenging at times balancing the demands of my practice with that of overseeing the work of the Club but the rewards are worth it.

Our Club's main ongoing project since 1991 has been the management of the Soroptimist Village & Activity Centre in Eden Lodge St. Michael Barbados which provides subsidised housing and weekly activities to senior citizens, the majority of whom are women. I attend the Centre weekly for subcommittee meetings and for other club business. We recently partnered with the Young Women's Christian Organisation (YWCA) to assist with the Milk-a-Thon initiative sponsored by local milk producers. Specially designed milk cartons were sold in various supermarkets and patrons encouraged to buy a carton which would then be donated to children in need.

I will be working with a local film writer on producing a skit about human

trafficking as part of our Purple Teardrop Campaign, (a SIGBI initiative), launched on International Women's Day 2013. One of my plans as President is to raise awareness about this issue in the Secondary Schools of Barbados and as such, we intend to use the skit as a way to introduce the topic. We have a mentorship programme called the New Horizons Project held every Saturday morning at the Juvenile Reform Institution for Girls in Barbados. I attended a dance workshop hosted by the Club as an initiative of this project, which the girls thoroughly enjoyed. I try to attend sessions once a month as I love interacting with the girls.

Further to this, I am very active in my church, teaching Sunday school and leading a ministry there. The benefits of being a Soroptimist are so worth it, making a real impact on my own personal development. Our programme has benefited girls at the Juvenile Reform School, seniors at the Village and Activity Centre and many other girls that we seek to empower in the secondary schools in Barbados.

Although busy, I have the privilege to be able to unwind in the crystal clear warm waters of the Caribbean Sea. I joined Soroptimist International Barbados because I wanted to give back to my community and affect change in my society. Being a Soroptimist has allowed me to network with individuals with similar ideals and goals providing me with an opportunity to be a part of something much larger than the club in which I serve.





## Education and Training Awards for Women

The cornerstone programme for SIA, the Live Your Dream Awards (formerly the Women's Opportunity Awards) is continuing to reach increasing numbers of women. The awards provide cash grants for those who have primary financial responsibility for themselves and their families, in order that they continue their education and increase their standard of living. Each year nearly 80 percent of SIA clubs participate, honouring more than 1,200 women with \$1.7 million in support of their education and training.

Impact is measured annually through SIA surveys of past region-level recipients. Consistently, nearly 90 percent of recipients who complete their education indicate they have secured higher paying employment within three years of receiving the award. Eighty-five percent report an increased standard of living.

Besides the increased standard of living, the award has a very personal effect on women. Repeatedly recipients speak of the amazing feeling of receiving an award from a group of successful women, frequently with their children in attendance. Each year between 95 and 100 percent of recipients report an increase in self-esteem; and more than 90 percent report that they now serve as a positive role model for their dependants.

A Live Your Dream Award recipient said: "Most

importantly, I can be independent, never again putting myself in a position to feel stuck in an unhealthy, abusive situation. I now have a means to support myself and my family, and hope that my children will see that education is the key that unlocks many doors to freedom, to opportunity, to happiness."

SIA and its clubs continually create new ways to build the impact of the programme and raise awareness of its transformative effect on women's lives. Strategies undertaken during the 2011-2013 biennium included supporting newly chartered clubs by providing \$1,000 for their first club-level award recipient. The "at-large" award category for women not living in areas with Soroptimist clubs was expanded – such applications were judged at SIAHQ and eligible for \$1,000 awards. The provision of resources beyond cash awards increased impact on award recipients, these included mentoring, job training, tax or financial advice, tutoring and childcare.

During 2012, SIA engaged the Fels Institute of Government, a research and consulting firm based at the University of Pennsylvania, to study the programme. Fels confirmed the data, demonstrating how the Live Your Dream Awards programme yields measurable impact results in four key areas: quality of life; confidence and sense of self-worth; self-determination; and continuing the growth cycle.

**"With this evidence in mind, it is fair to say that the Live Your Dream Awards is a smart strategy that out-performs other philanthropic efforts... With greater financial resources, Soroptimist will be able to extend the Live Your Dream Awards to even more women, helping them to reclaim their dreams. Enhancing this proven program will increase the impact for women, their families, communities, nations and the world."**

*Fels Institute of Government.*

## Dream It Be It Career Support for Girls

In 2013-2015, SIA developed a new global programme for girls. Officially launched at SIA's convention in July 2014, Dream It, Be It: Career Support for Girls targets girls in secondary school facing obstacles to their future success. The programme provides girls with access to professional role models, career education and the resources to live their dreams.

**The goal of Dream It, Be It? Through education and access to role models, girls will be empowered to pursue their career goals and reach their full potential.**

In 2013, SIA completed extensive research in an effort to identify the needs of girls and the best way for clubs to address those needs. A worldwide survey of girls resulted in 412 survey responses from girls in 22 countries. SIA Clubs conducted 50 focus groups with girls in seven countries and SIA staff consulted secondary research and interviewed experts working with girls. The research revealed that girls need access to mentors and trusted adults who can share their knowledge and guidance. This proved the perfect intersection between the needs of girls and the support Soroptimist is able to provide.

The 2013-2014 club year was spent on design. A programme was devised that could be implemented by clubs as a one-day conference, or a series of small group mentoring sessions. The name, background, and design and planning materials were launched at SIA's convention in July 2014 with great fanfare.

Attending members signed a pledge to support girls and 95 percent said they would encourage their clubs to start planning their participation. More than \$20,000 was raised at the launch event to support the development of Dream It, Be It.

Throughout the 2014-2015 club year, SIA clubs were encouraged to start planning a local-level Dream It, Be It project—including conducting a community assessment, selecting a model (one-day conference or small group mentoring sessions), creating an advisory group of girls to give input to the project, and identifying community partners, speakers and sponsors. During that same time period, SIA developed the Dream It, Be It curriculum and the Club Project Guide. The seven-session curriculum was launched in January 2015, covering topics such



as career opportunities, setting and achieving goals, and moving forward after setbacks or failures.

Members expressed excitement and support for SIA's new girl programme and in March 2015 500 SIA clubs reported plans for participating in Dream It, Be It - devoting 19,610 volunteer hours to the programme, and spending \$127,810.47 to support their project efforts. SIA distributed five \$1,000 planning prizes to clubs in support of their local Dream It, Be It projects.

Dream It, Be It materials are still being developed, and SIA will next launch an evaluation database in order to measure the impact of the new programme.



## Union of Rwanda - San Marco Residential Training Centre

**San Marco Residential Training Centre was set up for vulnerable people of the Rwandan society, following the 1994 genocide that decimated the population and hindered the country's capacities to cope with daily life.**

Rwanda is part of the European Federation of Soroptimist International (SIE). The first Club, SI Kigali, was chartered in 1992 and Rwanda became a union in 2005.

The Centre has helped reconstruct Rwandan society, promoting education of young girls and women. Providing social and economic assistance to abandoned women and girls, it helps women, elderly women, orphaned children, and widows of the genocide.

The Centre, equipped with running water, adequate toilets and showers, includes four school



**MORE**

classrooms, a kindergarten, four blocks with living quarters for eight widows, four blocks of sleeping quarters (42 beds), a dining room, a kitchen and a multifunctional building for 400 persons that can be rented for different activities.

Helping women build their social, professional, and economic independence, the centre started as an initiative of Bettina Scholl-Sabbatini, together with Soroptimists from Luxembourg and Kigali. Operating since 2004, over the years it has received the generous support of numerous Clubs, including SI Italy, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark, Germany, Norway – to name only a few. Entirely self-financed, it offers education for children between the ages of three to sixteen as well as vocational training such as sewing and computer classes. Nearly 100 children and teenagers attend the SI primary school.

The Clubs of Kigali and San Marino have also created a particularly successful cooperation model, offering young women various classes in crafts including high quality jewellery making – merging traditional techniques with vegetable fibres and state of the art design. International workshops with art students of the University of Venice and Kigali under Professor Gaddo Morpurgo, exhibited their art works during the International Exhibition of Architecture in Venice in 2010. This was the first time an African country was to exhibit at this famous biennale. Jewellery made at the San Marco centre is sold not only in Rwanda but exhibited in art centres and fairs in Italy, San Marino and Luxembourg – with all the money returning directly to the artists.

San Marco's garden facilities served as pilot project for school gardens during SIE's biennium theme 'Soroptimists go for Water and Food'. A greenhouse

for tomatoes was installed and the rich harvest sold on the market. Italian Soroptimists organised eight 3-day training sessions, 'Para-Jurist Education in Rwanda' for more than 300 Rwandan women and men. Participants learned about discrimination against women in the sphere of land tenure and about family law, inheritance law, and property law. They are now all able to advise women in rural areas about their legal rights on land tenure.

Judge Silvana Arbia, recipient of the SIE Peace Prize 2013, visited San Marco Centre on the occasion of the chartering of new clubs in Rwanda and was very much impressed. She chose to support the Rwandese Soroptimists in their dedication to education.

For ten years Soroptimist International of Europe organized the International Peace-Marathon, which again was an idea and initiative of Bettina Scholl-Sabbatini. The marathon became a symbol of peace, which was so hard to develop after the Genocide in 1994.

Whatever interesting event took place in Rwanda, San Marco Education Centre was at the heart of all manifestations.



## Union of Italy - 60 Protected Courtrooms for Minors

Children in front of a court, either as victims or as witnesses, suffer additional trauma on top of what they have already been through. To reduce the psychological strain on minors who are obliged to testify in court hearings, Flavia Pozzolini, Union President of Soroptimist International of Italy, initiated the national project 'Protected Courtrooms for Minors'. In child-friendly spaces children can now be interviewed without anguish when giving evidence. Italian clubs have advocated for these protected spaces in particular because a large majority of victims of child abuse are girls. The project is on-going with sustainable success.



When the project began in 2011, only six protected courtrooms existed in the whole of Italy, two of them initiated by Soroptimists. Club members contacted the courts' administration, the President and/or Public Prosecutor, offering the expertise of qualified Soroptimists: lawyers, architects and engineers. In addition they were provided with financial support or suggested sponsorships to build adequate and well-equipped courtrooms. Italian Soroptimists worked

closely with municipalities, lawyers, the police force, and psychologists, often acting as facilitators between government officials and experts. A total of 60 protected courtrooms were created between 2011 and spring 2015.

**A protected courtroom is comfortable, child-friendly and equipped with an audio-visual recording system so that the child (either victim or witness) can give his or her testimony to the judge in privacy – and without being subjected to cross-examination in the presence of the alleged offender. The protected courtroom's communication system is also connected with the main trial room, in case interaction between the judge and child is needed, whilst keeping the child in a stress-free environment.**

Legal experts have reported that audio-visual recordings allow the judge and jury to evaluate facial expressions and body gestures, which can add to the verbal testimony. The courtroom for protected hearing can also be used in civil proceedings involving marital separation and in cases of violence against women.

In May 2013 Italian Soroptimists organized a conference 'When Justice Meets the Child' (Quando la giustizia incontra il minore). The conference gathered high-level experts on the legal and psychological aspects of interrogating children. All of their speeches were summarised in the book with the same title. The Italian Minister for Justice Annamaria Cancellieri praised the Soroptimist project in her preface.

## Gender Sensitizing the Future Generations

**What never gets highlighted are the stories of women and girls in this violence ridden community who stand up, who fight the misogynistic attitudes, who empower and enable others through education to make a change, however small.**

The December 2012 gang rape of a medical student in a moving bus and her subsequent death shook the very conscience of India like never before. What responsibility did Soroptimists - educated women have? How were we going to mitigate this onslaught of violence against women?

Four Soroptimist clubs in India were joined together in feeling embittered and angry and chose to tackle the matter head on. We could do something – we could address the future generations, the younger minds not yet conditioned to the ignominy of patriarchal structures and the societal mores that accept violence against women as normal. We had to talk and listen too, to the young audiences that were more rational and unafraid to blaze a different path.

February 2013 Eve Ensler's call for One Billion Rising - provided SI Pune Metro East a focus point for their troubled thoughts. They would meet students in schools, teach them about safe touch, and inform the young about the commonalities of boys and girls – prepare them to understand the physical and mental changes and impress upon them the need for mutual respect. This was to be project One Billion Rise, (OBR), which has so far reached out to more than 9000 children in just 18 months, and continues to bring about change.

'Relay-shun ships' and 'Women Acting in Kodaikanal Educating and Uplifting' (WAKE UP) are projects of SI Kodaikanal. They worked with school children through street plays, marches and interactional activity to sensitize them to the common ground that boys and girls shared. Sensitizing the police was important too. The club members together with the women from the public petitioned with a 1000 plus signatures for better treatment of women at the (local) police station.

SI Bangalore provided guidelines for safety, including awareness on issues relating to self-protection. Programmes were conducted with a self-defence display and training was given to the students. The 'Rape Aggression Defence Programme', addressed the needs of the girls looking at subjects of attitude, behaviour and taught simple but terrific techniques, empowering girls and helping them to overcome their restrictions.

'Healthy Relationship' was organized by SI Chennai in conjunction with Association for Non-Traditional Employment for Women (ANEW) and The International Foundation for Crime Prevention and Victim Care (PCVC). The aim was to sensitize the girls in violence infested under-privileged backgrounds. 180 girls attended a day-long workshop, where forms of abuse were identified and they were made aware of help they could seek.

Gender sensitization covered informing parents and teachers, to listen to their wards and be the counsellor, friend and therapist to their children while watching for tell-tale signs.

These four clubs excelled themselves and were joint winners of Best Practice Awards at the SIGBI Harrogate Conference 2014.

## SAME Project

In spring 2011, SI Keighley set about looking for a hands on project, one which would meet the local needs of its multicultural town. A meeting was organised at Eastwood School, which caters for children aged four to eleven years, mainly from a Pakistani/Bangladeshi background. A project was decided on that would reach out to women who would not normally participate in activities outside the home or their community. Zaibun Khan, community outreach worker, warmly welcomed the club and allowed them to use their facilities.

A few meetings took place in order for everyone to get to know each other, skills were shared and the work of SI explained, Project Punjab was shown as a practical example of the work done by Soroptimist International. A fundraising event was held in the summer term and with the help of Talat Pasha of SI Karachi Central, a school was identified and the £750 raised at the event used to make improvements. Talat visited Eastwood showing a video of the transformation, inspiring the group to raise a further £1,300 the following year, which was used to pay for a teacher.

**The name SAME, Soroptimists And Mothers of Eastwood was chosen for the project, highlighting that the group were 'all women who share the same hopes and fears'**

The project and weekly meetings evolved and interests were shared, including a diverse range of lively discussions about controversial current affairs and women's issues. With cultural and educational outings, work within the local community to improve the environment and dining out on a range of different cuisines, the result was that the women became empowered to initiate their own projects which involved the wider community. Following a successful International Women's Day (IWD) event in 2012, the group became involved in the planning of three subsequent events and read out parts of a peace presentation written by one of the clubs members, in front of an audience of around

one hundred women. A successful party was also held to celebrate the Queen's Diamond Jubilee, which involved the school and the local community.

SAME has supported local, national and international charities and proceeds from the 2015 IWD event went to a local midwife working in rural Uganda. This group, made up of Asian mothers with children at the Eastwood Primary School together with members of Soroptimist International of Keighley, has now been meeting regularly for over four years, sharing skills, opinions, fun, learning, new experiences and friendship and now accesses funding to support its activities, dedicated to promoting community cohesion.

Some of the mothers in the group have since joined the club at Soroptimist events: a Regional meeting, a Conference on Violence against Women and its 80th Charter Celebration. They have truly become part of the Soroptimist family.



## Getting children off the streets in Ipoh, Malaysia

Ipoh, the capital city of Perak state, Malaysia, sits approximately 200 km north of Kuala Lumpur and is one of the largest cities in the country. SI Ipoh was chartered in 2009, however it was on a visit to Ipoh in 2013 that SI Sydney member Supriya Dunham, witnessed not only the devastating poverty and living conditions, but also the breadth of projects SI Ipoh members had so far completed, leaving her truly inspired.

In this under-privileged sector of society, many women and children experience neglect and potentially abuse from male family members. Many children are malnourished due to poverty, and guardians often struggle to cope. The resulting impact on education is compounded by a lack of nutrition, values and discipline problems. Many children can appear socially withdrawn, suffer from low self-esteem and have weak communications skills.

Members of SI Ipoh travelled to the Buntong district for a different project, however they soon decided to assist this community in a greater way. SI Ipoh members initiated small projects in an effort to meet and get to know the locals, building trust and seeking to understand the needs of the community. It was here at one of these sessions that they came across a flat for rent and proceeded to set up a learning centre, a retired widow was then hired as the caretaker and educator.

The free learning centre, The Edufun Centre, was officially opened in Dec 2012, managed and funded entirely by members of SI Ipoh. The Club's elected Board of Management became responsible for the implementation of the business plan and the after-school activity for twenty-five girls and five boys, aged

5 to 15 years, five days per week. This thriving centre has since been open every day from Monday to Friday, from 2pm to 6pm.

The Edufun Centre provides academic, social, psychological and emotional support for the children. Those that were once shy and withdrawn and lacking in confidence, are now encouraged, developing confidence and independence and showing an improvement in their communication skills. The Club funds an after school teacher and is informally supported by a social worker.



Children look forward to visiting the Edufun Centre. Parents have notice a marked difference in their children and have requested that the Edufun Centre be opened on weekends.

High powered fund raising is a critical component of the Club's success in securing sponsorship. The Club has shown determination, vision and ambition and is aware that just one location is not enough to respond to the needs of this community, which is beset by violence, crime and hardship.

SI Ipoh won a 2014 SISWP Best Practice Award for this project and a special Uniqueness In Diversity Award from SISWP President Siew Yong at the 2014 SISWP Conference of Clubs.

## Australian Soroptimists Empowering Girls in Papua New Guinea

SI Logan, Queensland South, won a 2015 SISWP Best Practice Award for its project SEW (Soroptimists Empowering Women) PNG.

The project focused on providing non-academic or practical classes for secondary students in a school in Kokopo PNG. SEW PNG was developed as a three-year project, with the possibility of extending this if local contacts remain in place. The first assessment was made after two years.

The primary aim of the SEW PNG project was to establish a sewing classroom with twenty machines available to Year 9 and Year 10 students and to provide associated equipment and materials such as sample patterns, fabric, cotton and scissors. Skilled sewing teachers were trained and mentored, and the school guided in the set up of their own small sewing business. Local business contacts were established to provide opportunities for some school finishing students to be further trained or employed. It was hoped that the girls would also use these skills when returning to their villages, to support their families.

Machines, unable to be sourced in Kokopo, are purchased in Australia, together with materials, patterns and other equipment, which are then taken to PNG when club members visit or by the coordinator's husband who works in Kokopo. Fourteen machines were provided during the first two years of the project, with the balance to be supplied during 2015. Local PNG businesses assist in the importation of fabrics and the mentoring of the Principal in business practices.



The success of this project is shown not only by the supply of the equipment, but also by the developing skills of the students and teachers with their new electric sewing machines. In 2014, all 215 year 10 students made lined tote bags and Year 9 students sewed samples with fabrics donated by the club. Club members assisted the uniform employees in learning to use multi-sized commercial patterns. Possibilities are currently being explored for a local business to 'microfinance' a school purchase of uniform fabrics. Infrastructure has been established enabling the sewing program to develop and an increased number of students to participate.

SI Logan found it important to have local people and club members visit and assess the project. Such visits support the achievements of the girls in sewing classes and help to understand ongoing needs. They support the Principal in establishing the business, making and selling school uniforms and mentor the sewing lady employed to run this business, as well as the school sewing teacher.

## From our own UN Representative

### Bette Levy

**H**ow many of you think about the United Nations at all in your daily life? As a school girl growing up in New York in the 1950's the UN was an exciting new body, looking to bring peace to the world. We had our annual school trips to the UN, but it wasn't until the 1970's when I moved into the UN's neighbourhood, that it captured my interest once again.

When I first became an SI Rep at the UN in New York in January 2012, I had no idea what to expect. It was daunting trying to figure out the different UN committees, bodies and agencies, commissions, conventions, and the acronyms were beyond comprehension. The NGO side wasn't much easier. There is CoNGO and UN-NGLS and many other committees. So my time is generally split between NGO work and UN work. One could actually be at the UN, 7 days a week and during negotiations 24 hours a day!

On the NGO side of things I am on the executive committee of two Substantiative NGO Committees so I have to attend both the monthly and the executive committee meetings. I attend meetings both in person and online and they can happen at strange times - accommodating time zones is quite tricky. Whilst I'm complaining about a 7:00 am call it might be 2:00 am somewhere else.

As co-chair of the Commission on Social Development Civil Society Forum this past year, not only did I attend all the plenary sessions and meet with member states, but I was also responsible for planning a separate one day civil society event and I facilitated the daily morning briefings for NGOs, with the Commission on Social Development Bureau and UN DESA. Such days are long, starting at 8:30am for morning briefing and finishing at 6:00pm. As part of the advocacy workgroup I meet with member states to ensure that the social dimension (people) are included in whatever the focus at the UN is. Right now that is the Post-2015 Development Agenda and

the Sustainable Development Goals. These meetings give SI an opportunity to get their key asks and wants into the official UN records, ensuring participation at the grassroots level.

I was lucky to have mentors in the Soroptimist Representatives as well as reps from other organizations. That's the thing about the NGO community at the UN, if you show interest in being involved someone will take you under their wing. Do I get tired of the constant and frustratingly slow progress at the UN? Of course, but then I ask myself, what else is there if not the UN... and by that I mean, for the world and for myself. It has made me so much richer as a person. I have a better understanding of issues concerning women in parts of the world I didn't even know existed. It's so much about the amazing people I have met from around the world, all fighting for women's rights. It's about the friends that I have made that I'll never forget, all they do and how they push me to be a better person and do more.



*Left: SI hosts first ever all-male side event featuring Carlos A Gomez and Darnell L Moore: 'Blue is the New Pink: Gender Equality through Men and Boys' at CSW58 Middle: UN Representative Bette Levy with International President Ann Garvie at CSW59 Right: UN Representative Alice Odingo at the UN Environment Programme in Nairobi 2014*

**Soroptimist International Advocates to make gender equality a reality. Every woman and girl MUST have access to education, be economically empowered and live life free from violence.**

## **A word from Hilary Ratcliffe OBE** *International Programme Director 2011-15*

The last four years have seen a real growth in SI's global advocacy work. This is shown in part by our increasing involvement in UN events, such as the annual CSW meeting (the Commission on the Status of Women) held in New York. In 2011 SI had a small delegation, but since then we have developed our network of Soroptimist advocates and in 2015, our delegation included over eighty representatives.

SI's UN Representatives, are active in helping give women and girls a global voice at the UN by attending meetings and contributing to committees. At meetings, SI's UN Representatives can ask questions of government representatives and UN agencies to promote gender equality and hold them to account. If we have ideas on best practice and the actions needed in order for women to realise their human rights,

then the UN is an effective environment for SI to bring those forward.

The knowledge, perspectives and issues we advocate on are rooted in the hands-on project work of clubs. This work carries weight with UN member states. Therefore Soroptimist International's UN Representatives give every Soroptimist member a mouth-piece at the United Nations.



## Where we Advocate

Geneva Vienna  
Paris New York  
Nairobi Rome

## Advocating on

Human Rights

Crime & Criminal Justice

Environmental Issues

Physical & Mental Health

Financing for Development

Sustainable Development

Social Development

The Status of Women

Disaster & Risk Reduction

Violence Against Woman & Girls

Education & Learning



## A word from Deborah Thomas Global Executive Director

*"It will be continuously challenging" she said. "Hurdles to overcome and hurdles to negotiate over the next 2 years" she said. "Do you want to join me Deborah, as Global Executive Director to Soroptimist International as I start my biennium?" It was August 2013 and I was thrilled to accept this exciting opportunity, offered by International President, Ann Garvie.*

*The 'international' dimension of Soroptimist International is a continuous revelation to me. The global reach and power of your worldwide network is a remarkable force for change. From 'local to global' really happens within the organisation as we in the international office support the agenda for change at the United Nations.*

*We are indeed fortunate to have a notable team of Soroptimists who volunteer at UN centres around the world, informing this global*

*body with invaluable data from your programme work to truly effect change for women and girls.*

*Our role at the Soroptimist International office is to support and grow this essential global advocacy work and to communicate key messages and your wonderful programme work to our global audience. As we transition into the next Quadrennium, my message to you is: "Let's do it. Let no stone remain unturned when beneath it lies a woman or girl who needs our help".*



## Quadrennium 2011-2015 Officers

### President

2011-2013 Alice Wells  
2013-2015 Ann Garvie

### Immediate Past President

2011 Hanne Jensbo  
2013 Alice Wells

### President Elect

2012-2013 Ann Garvie  
2014-2015 Yvonne Simpson QSM

### International Treasurer

*Patricia Carruthers*

### International Programme Director

*Hilary Ratcliffe OBE*

### Assistant International Programme Director

*Anusha Santhirasthipam (2011-13)*  
*Caroline Leach (2013-15)*

### International Presidential Procedural Consultant

*Carwen Wynne Howells*

### International Presidential Human Resource Consultant

*Bozena Benton*

### International Presidential Investment Consultant

*Jenny Vince (2013-15)*

### International Presidential Communications Consultant

*Margaret Hyde (2013-15)*

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**SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS** ARGENTINA BOLIVIA BRAZIL CANADA  
CHILE COLOMBIA ECUADOR GUAM JAPAN SOUTH KOREA MEXICO NORTHERN MARIANA  
ISLANDS PANAMA PARAGUAY PERU PHILIPPINES PUERTO RICO TAIWAN UNITED STATES  
OF AMERICA VENEZUELA **SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF EUROPE** ALBANIA ARMENIA  
AUSTRIA BELGIUM BENIN BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA BULGARIA BURKINA FASO CROATIA  
CYPRUS CZECH REPUBLIC DENMARK EGYPT ESTONIA ETHIOPIA FINLAND FRANCE MACEDONIA  
(FYROM) GEORGIA GERMANY GHANA GREECE GUINEA HAITI HUNGARY ICELAND ISRAEL  
ITALY IVORY COAST KENYA KOSOVO LATVIA LIECHTENSTEIN LITHUANIA LUXEMBOURG  
MADAGASCAR MALI MOLDOVA  MONACO MOROCCO NETHERLANDS  
NORWAY POLAND PORTUGAL ROMANIA RUSSIA RWANDA SAN  
MARINO DOMINICAN REPUBLIC SENEGAL SERBIA SLOVAKIA  
SLOVENIA SPAIN SWEDEN SWITZERLAND TOGO TUNISIA  
TURKEY UNITED ARAB EMIRATES UKRAINE **SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF GREAT  
BRITAIN & IRELAND** ANGUILLA BANGLADESH BARBADOS CAMEROON GAMBIA GUERNSEY  
GRENADA INDIA ISLE OF MAN JAMAICA JERSEY MALAWI MALTA MAURITIUS NEPAL NIGERIA  
PAKISTAN REPUBLIC OF IRELAND SEYCHELLES SIERRA LEONE SOUTH AFRICA SRI LANKA  
ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES TANZANIA TRINIDAD & TOBAGO TURKS & CAICOS  
UGANDA UNITED KINGDOM ZIMBABWE **SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF SOUTH WEST  
PACIFIC** AUSTRALIA CAMBODIA FIJI HONG KONG SAR INDONESIA MALAYSIA MONGOLIA  
NEW ZEALAND PAPUA NEW GUINEA SAMOA SINGAPORE SOLOMON ISLANDS THAILAND