

a global voice
for women



ANNUAL REPORT 2020

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

Cover Image:
A player from the
the BEYOND FOOTBALL project



CONTENTS

FOREWORD

Page 3-4

ABOUT SOROPTIMIST

Page 4

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Page 5

ROAD TO EQUALITY

Pages 6-8

WOMEN, WATER & LEADERSHIP

Pages 9 - 10

ADVOCACY

Pages 11-16

FINANCE

Page 17

CLOSING REMARKS

Page 18

FOREWORD

BY SHARON FISHER
SI PRESIDENT 2020-2021

At the beginning of 2020, the Soroptimist calendar highlighted many important global milestones. The year would celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations (UN); the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and the 5th Anniversary of the Sustainable Development Goals. Plans were taking place for the 100th Anniversary of Soroptimist International (SI), and more, with the year looking forward in its review of the progress made in gender equality, and the empowerment of women and girls.

2020 would take a prominent position in the history books, but not for the events predicted. Instead, 2020 would be remembered as the year of COVID-19. The year the world was forced to pause as a virus swept across the globe causing devastation.

Plans were cancelled, events postponed, businesses closed, and projects delayed. The year of the pandemic saw women's human rights challenged. On the front line, we witnessed women impacted in greater numbers, called upon to take greater risks and face unusual and dangerous challenges, whilst behind closed doors, a 'shadow pandemic' showed increasing numbers of women trapped in situations of violence. In February 2020, our SI delegation attended the Commission on Social Development, in person, and were active in



several events, with a SI UN Representative taking a leadership role.

The theme of homelessness was the subject of our written statement, and we delivered oral interventions, as well as hosting and participating in a side event. Within a week, it was clear the world was changed, as UN centres closed their doors, travel restrictions ensued, and millions of people lost their lives to the virus.

As we were initiated into the world of virtual meetings, it wasn't long before Soroptimists found ways to support each other; new ways of doing old things and responding to the challenges with innovation and fluidity. Soroptimists were encouraged to share their collective impact in response to COVID-19, and clubs and members started sewing masks, making gowns and responding in multiple ways to meet the needs of their local communities.

The SI 'Road to Equality' welcomed everyone on a virtual road trip to learn and become advocates for women and girls left behind, as they overcome barriers to gender equality. We introduced a series of SI Voices Webinars and to date, have hosted ten webinars with expert speakers, showcasing projects, stories, and the lived experiences of women and girls. Soroptimists from around the world joined together virtually to listen and learn. The SI 100th Anniversary event moved from a planned San Francisco venue, becoming a global virtual event, to celebrate our Bright Past and Brilliant Future.

1-3 October 2021 will join thousands of Soroptimists together as we launch our next 100 years. During the year, SI reviewed its advocacy structure, and divided the work into four committees. *The Global Voice Committee* would deliver our messaging; *Global Impact*, our project work; *Global Policy*, would focus on the UN Representatives role as influencers of policy at the UN; and, *Global Development*, would look at memberships, partnerships and sponsorship opportunities. We hope and expect this to increase and maximise the capacity of our advocacy work.

Sharon Fisher

ABOUT SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL

VISION

Women and girls will achieve their individual and collective potential, realise aspirations and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide

MISSION

Soroptimists transform the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment and enabling opportunities

PRINCIPLES

The advancement of the status of women; High ethical standards; Human rights for all; Equality, development and peace; and, The advancement of international understanding, goodwill and peace

Founded in 1921, Soroptimist International (SI) is a global volunteer movement with five Federations. A network of around 71,000 club members in 121 countries. Although women and girls make up half of the population they are consistently discriminated against, and

71,000 CLUB MEMBERS IN 121 COUNTRIES

their human rights often ignored. For almost 100 years, SI has advocated for human rights and gender equality through education and empowerment.

At the heart of SI's advocacy work is its activity at eight United Nations Centres, in which Representatives ensure the voices of women and girls around the world are included in international decision making.

On the ground, Soroptimists take action through project work, awareness raising, and lobbying of governments to support and realise equality for women and girls. SI takes action to Educate, Empower, and Enable women and girls' to achieve their individual and collective potential, and to realise aspirations, and have an equal voice in communities worldwide.



Soroptimist International recognises the valuable contributions of the the Board of Directors, Committees, Staff, Soroptimist Federations, Clubs and Soroptimist membership, without whom the results we now witness within the pages of this report would not have been achieved.

THE BOARD OF DRIECTORS 2020

Sharon Fisher
Christine Johnstone
Karen Cromer-Johnson
Carolien Demey
Wendy Logan
Kirsti Guttormsen
Sue Williams
Beverly Bucur
Kathy King
Dawn Marie Lemonds
Ann Hodgson

COMMITTEE CHAIRS 2020

Beverly Bucur: Chair of Advocacy
Ann Hodgson: Chair of Finance
Kirsti Guttormsen: Chair of Governance
Dawn Marie Lemonds: Chair of Communications
Ayushi Kundu: Chair of President's Appeal
Johanna M. Raffan: Chair of Dublin Convention

PRESIDENTIAL APPOINTMENTS

President's Appeal: Ayushi Kundu Olga
Public Awareness: Sue Riney
Procedural Consultant: RoseMary Reid
Archivist: Gerda Huisman

Special Advisors to Advocacy: Linda Witong and Pat Black
Strategic Relations: Bette Levy
SI Convention: Johanna M. Raffan



THE SI ROAD TO EQUALITY - STRONGER TOGETHER

‘Road to Equality’, the 2019-2021 SI President’s Appeal strategically focuses on six topics that prove barriers to women and girls in achieving their full potential. These barriers to gender equality incorporate the United Nations (UN) theme ‘Leave no one behind’ acknowledging the importance of supporting those furthest behind. COVID-19 has certainly impacted the SI President’s Appeal in unexpected ways, beginning with a dramatic increase in all forms of gender-based violence, the root cause of women and girls being left behind. COVID-19 impacted the many projects initially identified by the Appeal, with many having to be canceled or postponed, due to the outbreak.

It became evident we needed to rethink our strategy. ‘Masks for Equality’ was initiated to gather information on the Soroptimist response to COVID-19, and we discovered in spite of many being in their homes avoiding the pandemic, Soroptimists were responding in amazing ways. Many were sewing masks and hospital clothing, providing Personal Protective Equipment, offering to step up locally wherever and however they could, and most importantly taking care of each other through interaction on social media, and other communication platforms. Hundreds of thousands of protective items were produced and delivered to front line workers around the world.

The one thing we wanted to do from the beginning was to educate our members to be advocates for the Appeal issues: Human Trafficking, Migration, Domestic Violence, Female Genital Mutilation, Rights of Older Women, and Child Marriage, and this was a extraordinary opportunity. Initially supporting some seminars and campaigns, we shifted the focus online and explored new ways to learn, and to advocate for change.

The first SI Voices webinar ‘Exploring the Road to Equality’ was launched in August 2020, with a further nine webinars to follow, each with the format of three speakers for each webinar, including an expert on the subject, a speaker who had lived through the experience, and a project or campaign to showcase how Soroptimist International makes a difference.

With a mix of projects on the target issues, each was accompanied with education, building awareness and engagement of Soroptimists and friends, and motivation to turn up the volume of our global voices, to transform the lives of women and girls. The webinars have proved a great success and have united our global membership. It has proven the slogan of the pandemic is accurate:

“We are Stronger Together”.



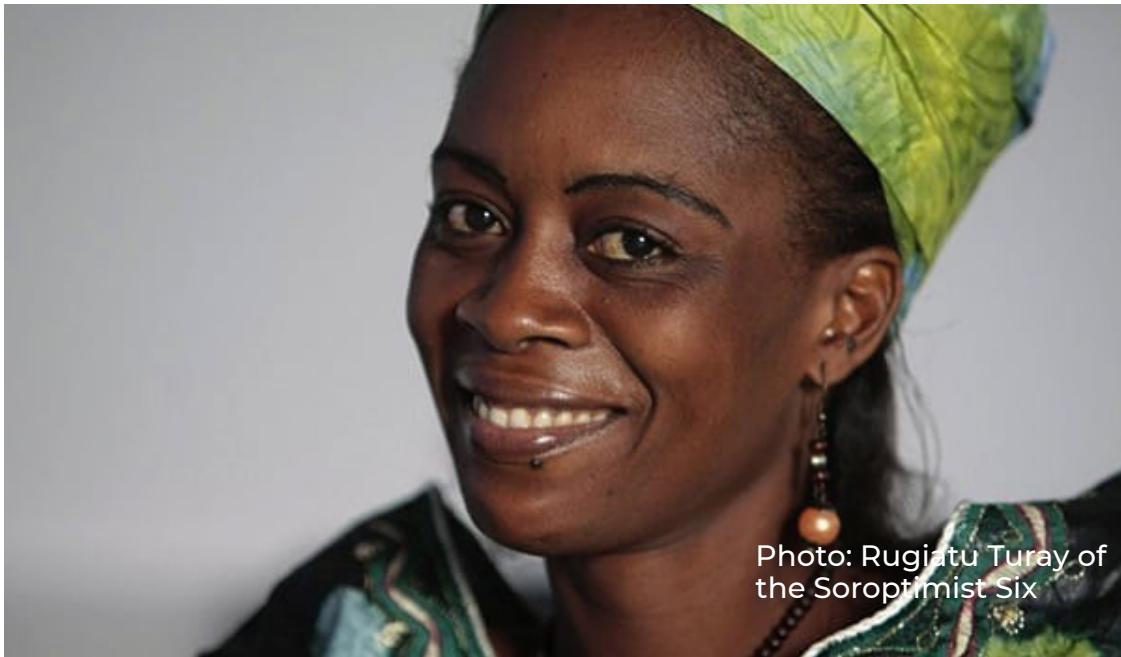


Photo: Rugiatu Turay of the Soroptimist Six

IN ACTION WITH GLOBAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

Our partnership with the Global Media Campaign to End FGM has continued throughout the year with the 'Soroptimist 6' active in their respective countries and at the same time using their voices and media to include awareness about the pandemic with hand washing and social distancing information. Their audiences have grown as has the desire to learn about COVID 19, so as the anti FGM activists deliver messages by radio, the COVID 19 message is delivered at the same time. So far four of the five countries they are working in have succeeded in seeing change. It is slower in Sierra Leone so extra effort is being put into that country as we move into 2021. Once a girl is cut, she is considered ready for marriage, becoming a victim of child marriage, meaning this project touches on two of the Appeal themes. The 'Soroptimist 6' have reached millions of viewers with their campaigns in Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Gambia.

IN ACTION WITH LUGARI TRAINING CENTRE

We have started working with the Lugari Community Centre in Western Kenya, where we had planned a Leadership Academy for their 10th Anniversary of the program in October 2020. It was postponed several times with the girls out of school in Kenya, so we decided to step up and help them finish a building, increasing the capacity of the centre so more girls can attend. The Leadership Academy will now take place later in 2021. We hope by then some of our members will be able to join a study tour as originally planned. This project addresses FGM, Child Marriage, the rights of women and girls and the value of education. The Road to Equality Appeal has raised enough funds to sponsor this program and include up to 250 girls at their 10th Leadership Academy. This is certainly good news. Khayanga Wasike, the founder, is a Soroptimist and is supported by her local Soroptimist club in many activities at the center.



Photo: Beyond Football with Shreeja India

IN ACTION WITH SHREEJA INDIA

We have also commenced work on a project in India called 'Beyond Football' in partnership with Shreeja India. The program will train up to 250 girls from 10-12 villages in the Burdwan district in football, to reduce instances of child marriage, trafficking and domestic violence. Many of the girls come from very poor backgrounds, and are usually first-generation learners.

Sport is used as a tool for self-development helping to promote bonding and friendship between the girls who then often feel united and empowered to stand up against malpractices. We have funding to support this program for two years. During COVID-19 the girls who have little themselves, have stepped up to help distribute relief kits to the girls' villages.

The 'Road to Equality' has been supported by members and clubs around the world and despite fundraising being impacted by COVID-19, we have succeeded in making this appeal successful.

The virtual road trip has found our members, provided awareness on the topics, and has found many women and girls who will benefit from our support. The virtual bus on the 'Road to Equality' will continue the road trip into 2021, thanks to the generosity and commitment of our united membership.



Photo: Beyond Football with Shreeja India

TOTAL DONATIONS RAISED IN 2020
£119,906



WOMEN, WATER & LEADERSHIP 2017-2019

WEWASH

At the beginning of 2020, Mariet Verhoef-Cohen joined Diana Iskrevia from WeWash, Bulgaria, to visit the Appeal project in Bulgaria. Looking to evaluate impact, additionally discussing a possible follow-up with the different groups. Due to the COVID-19 situation, future plans for Bulgaria were postponed, however, discussions are taking place on projects in the Plovdiv area, as funding has been put aside to continue the project in 2021. COVID hit hard and made the rural communities further aware of the importance of clean drinking water and sanitation.

During the visit in 2020, it was learned that one of the young women trained to lay tiles had completed the tiling in her own home during renovation of the family house, with the family keen for the daughter to study at university, confident that she would be able to find tiling jobs during weekends, to financially sustain her studies.

A change in attitude and mindset is also clearly visible. The women now understand they have rights to water, and have learned how to claim these rights, becoming voices within their community. Some women have also gained plumbing skills and set up their own businesses.

EARTHQUAKE RECOVERY THROUGH WATER, SHELTER AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Lombok Indonesia - In early September 2020 when domestic travel restrictions due to COVID-19 were eased briefly, the Soroptimist International of Jakarta (SIJ) Project Manager, Lily Kasoem, was able to make three trips to Lombok, where she conducted extensive monitoring and evaluation of the Appeal project to date. To keep abreast of developments, the Project Director is in regular contact via phone and email with the local Project Field Officer, who additionally submits monthly reports to the SIJ Project Team.

In March 2021, the Project Director totally revised the original Capacity Building/Training Plan, to be funded under this Project. Due to interruptions to the training schedule because of the pandemic, several major changes were made. If possible, the following training programs have been planned for 2021: Intermediate and advanced classes in Weaving; Literacy Classes (Beginners to Intermediate); Youth and Community Awareness Programs; Marketing and Basic Financial Literacy; and, Health, Hygiene and Sanitation.

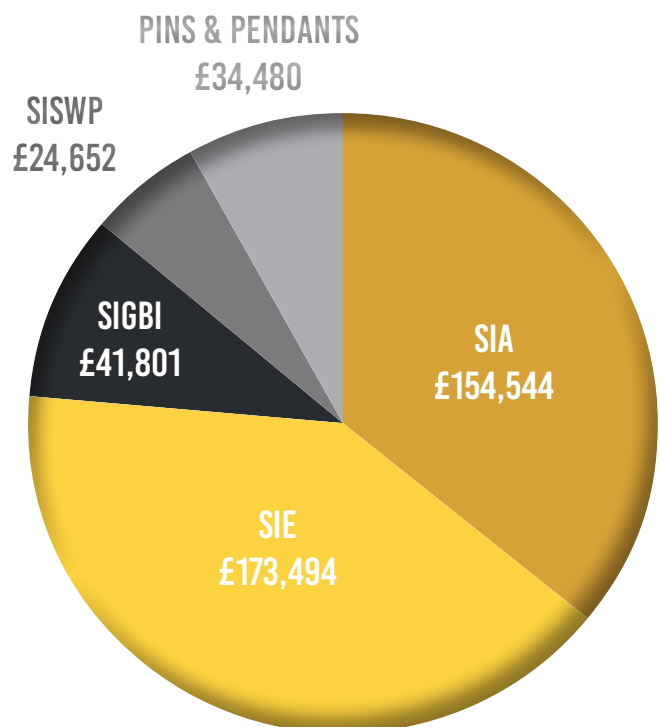




Photo: The Greenhouse
Mwihoko Women, Kenya

MWIHOKO WOMEN GROUP

This Kenyan project is ongoing and will be continued by the Soroptimist International Union of Kenya. Distribution of farm inputs in March 2020, helped increase yield, increasing food availability and income. Land preparation of the grounds at the centre were completed early, and onions, sweet peppers, vegetables, potatoes, maize, beans, cassava and bananas were cultivated in the demonstration plot. Extension and green-house training took place in June 2020, with an agriculture expert visiting the group to carry out training on the growing of tomatoes in the green-house, and also visited the farms to see the activities of group members.

In 2020 a kitchen and pantry were constructed, and the women are now able to cook in the kitchen whenever the centre is in use. Water pipes which run from the community borehole to the community homesteads have been installed. This has saved time spent fetching water from the borehole, enabling the women to focus on other activities such as farming and income generation.

CLEAN WATER FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Achievements of the project include access to water, vocational training, and involvement in organic farming. The SI President's Appeal project in Sarawak, Malaysia, is still being monitored by the Project Management group.

Due to flooding and storms during 2020, rainwater harvesting tanks were damaged, however, the devastation was cleared and repaired by the trained women welders. Vegetable plots are producing good crops women are empowered as they take charge of the situation, helping them to break out of the cycle of poverty.

All the Appeal projects are sustainable, ongoing, and will continue to benefit the community, empowering the women participating. Further information on the Women, Water & Leadership Soroptimist International President's Appeal can be found on the Soroptimist International website.

Past President, Mariet Verhoef-Cohen, and SI PA Coordinator 2017-2019, Hafdis Karlsdottir



ADVOCACY



In 2020, we witnessed, once again, that the far-reaching impacts of any crises are never gender-neutral. Whether on the front line as a health care worker saving lives, or within the home, women and girls continue to be the unsung heroes during the COVID-19 pandemic whilst also being disproportionately impacted by it. Of the 96 million people who will be pushed into extreme poverty by the pandemic, 47 million will be women and girls. Why is this happening? For the majority of women in economies of any size, COVID-19 has resulted in many women or girls no longer having access to employment, income, education, health care, housing, basic services or sufficient food. However, their obligations regarding unpaid care, domestic work burdens, and their exposure to various forms of gender related violence, have skyrocketed as a result of this pandemic. Estimates also show an additional 11 million girls may leave school by the end of the pandemic and previous crises suggest

that many will not return. Women and girl's inability to continue their education during this pandemic has already increased vulnerability to teen pregnancy, child marriage and gender-based violence. The pandemic's fallout has also been the most severe among women who are already vulnerable e.g. migrant workers, refugees, marginalised racial and ethnic groups, single-parent households, youth and the world's poorest. To make matters worse, it is predicted that their economic insecurity and lack of education will continue to negatively impact lives long after the pandemic subsides. Soroptimists, as well as many other Non Governmental Organisations (NGO's) are addressing these challenges in order to ensure that the COVID-19 pandemic will not reverse women and girls' hard-won gains in gender equality.

SI Special Advisor to Advocacy, Linda Witong



2020 was a historic year for the United Nations (UN). Significant dates included the 5th anniversary of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the 10th anniversary of UN Women, the 20th anniversary of resolution 1325, the 25th anniversaries of both the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, and of course, the 75th anniversary of the UN.

In 2017, SI was invited to join a small group (UN2020) that were on a mission to ensure that the 75th anniversary of the UN did not just go by unnoticed or just a party but instead would be an opportunity to transform the UN to be fit for purpose for the current circumstances similar to the 50th anniversary and formation of the Human Rights Council. As the group was all male, primarily think tanks, SI was needed to ensure a more grassroots and gender-based approach was included.

UN2020 core group, initially found Member States had no appetite to create a resolution. UN2020 found that the rise in populism, left little interest in looking beyond the UN's 75th anniversary. This did not stop UN2020, and we pushed forward, meeting with 45 Missions and the EU, to encourage Member States to join our cause, successfully finding several persons to act as champions.

In 2018, H.E. Maria Fernanda Espinosa, was selected to be the President of the 73rd General Assembly, and after several meetings with her and her staff, she agreed to appoint facilitators to draft a modalities resolution that would establish a high-level session for the 75th anniversary. Whilst we were disappointed by the narrow scope, we understood this to be a major victory, and had UN2020 core group not been aggressively pursuing this initiative, it probably would not have happened.

Simultaneously, UN2020 has expanded its outreach to civil society, building the core group from seven to a coordination group of 13. and Activities have developed to include many programmatic events, including hosting a two-day virtual 'People's Summit', creating a People's Declaration for the 'UN We Want', an online 75th anniversary 'Thank You - UN' electronic book, side events during various UN fora, and a Town Hall style meeting for civil society.

With 2020 winding down, Member States reconfirmed their commitments to the mission of the UN in a high-level meeting during the General Assembly. For UN2020, it was time to re-address the role of UN2020 going forward, beyond that of a name change. The decision was made to continue as a coalition of organisations with an interest in the UN. The new 'Coalition for the UN We Need' (C4UNWN), was established as a more formalised group. Whilst SI will not be on the new steering (executive) committee, we will remain a partner in the coalition going forward.

SI UN Representative, Bette Levy

HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM

The 2020 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), which met from 7- 16 July 2020, was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The theme was 'Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development'. Much of the HLPF's attention was focused on the impact of COVID-19 on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The 2020 public health crisis became an economic, social and human rights crisis. COVID-19 exacerbated the vulnerability of the least protected in society and highlighted existing economic and social inequalities, and inadequate health and social protection systems. Forty-seven countries presented Voluntary National Reviews, and spoke about the impact of the pandemic on the achievement of the SDGs. 'Building back better' became the rallying cry for creating safety nets for the most vulnerable; investing in public health and education, and building more sustainably.

At official meetings, civil society participated through the mechanism of the Major Groups and other Stakeholders (SI is a member of the Women's Major Group), despite many technical difficulties. SI submitted its annual report on implementation of the SDGs, in addition to a statement in collaboration with Women for Water Partnership and Association of Country Women Worldwide.

Regrettably, Member States could not agree on the annual Ministerial Declaration to reflect the outcome of the 2020 HLPF.

SI UN Representative, Frances Zainnoeddin

COMMISSION ON SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The 58th Session on the Commission on Social Development was held 10 - 19 February 2020. The theme of the Commission was 'Affordable Housing and Social Protection Systems for All to Address Homelessness'. SI was very active in the Commission, submitting a written statement, providing an intervention during the general session delivered by SI President, Sharon Fisher, and organising a side event.

The side event, 'The Rise of Homelessness in Ageing Women', discussed work done by NGOs for homeless older persons, and the policy changes that are necessary to prevent homelessness. Speakers including SI President Sharon Fisher, and UN Representatives Frances Zainoeddin and Maria Fornella, pointed to the fact that older women represented a fast-growing population in homelessness around the world.

Causes of homelessness included: ageism and age discrimination in the work place, which often results in forced retirement, leaving older persons with little or no income security. Inability to pay rent or lack of inheritance rights for widows can lead to eviction, and homeless may arise from abandonment by families, mental illness, (often undiagnosed due to lack of access to health care), or the impact of natural disasters. To add insult to injury, following a lifetime of providing unpaid care for their families, older women often live in poverty.

SI UN Representative, Maria Fornella

COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Our bags were packed, and we were ready to go, but just days before the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) was to begin, it was cancelled due to COVID-19. Our lives were put on hold, and we have still not recovered. The UN worked to transition to a virtual format and many meetings were postponed until 2021.

The UN CSW convened the 64th session for a procedural meeting. Beyond the opening statements, the meeting allowed for the adoption of the Political Declaration. Member States also had the opportunity to deliver position statements on the Political Declaration. Negotiations on the Multi-Year Program of Work were completed, and the document was adopted on Friday, March 13, 2020. In the Political Declaration, Member States reaffirmed their will for action.

Our UN representatives followed the development of the Political Declaration and worked with other NGOs to suggest inputs to this document. Additionally, we participated in virtual meetings, submitted a written statement for CSW64 and participated in the Feminist Movement Action Plan.

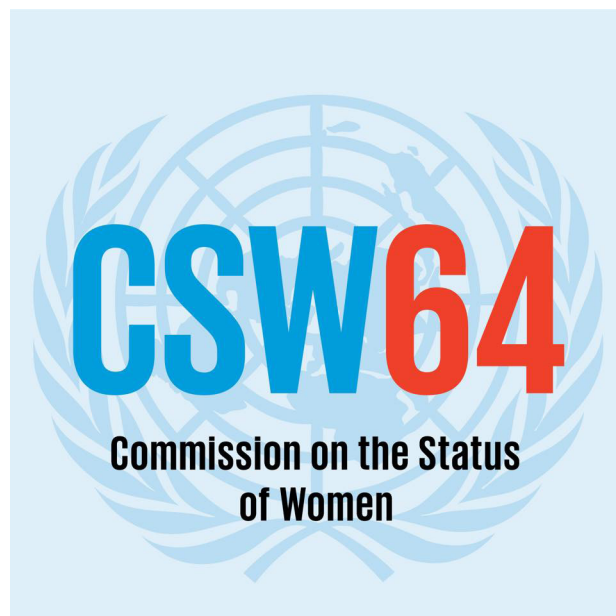
BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION

2020 was the 25th Anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action, the most progressive blueprint ever for advancing women's rights and is a comprehensive guide to understanding and combatting the key barriers to gender equality. The document identifies 12 critical areas of concern: women and the environment, women in power and decision-making, the girl child, women and the economy, women and poverty, violence against women, human

against women, human rights of women, education and training of women, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, women and health, women and the media, and women and armed conflict.

IS THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION RELEVANT TODAY?

25 years after its adoption, global leaders recognised that progress made falls far short of what States committed themselves to in 1995. During 2020 our UN Representatives and the SI Advisors to Advocacy wrote a series of blogs about the 12 areas of the Beijing Platform that can be found on the Soroptimist website. Our team of UN representatives in New York during 2020 were Bette Levy (Center Contact), Frances Zainoeddin, Barbara Rochman, Vanesa Treers, Maria Fornella, Jacqueline Shapiro, and Marie D'Amato Rizzi, who completed her service as a UN Representative in the April of 2020.



ADVOCACY

GENEVA

The second largest UN Centre, Geneva focuses on Human Rights and Peace and Security. Our three Representatives, Berthe De Vos (Centre Contact), Kristin Reynisdottir and Stacy Ciulik, with Ulla Madsen leading the team. Representatives follow the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and Universal Periodic Review following countries where we have Soroptimist clubs.

VIENNA

Christine Peer, Center Contact and Vice-Chair of NGO CSW Vienna, Martina Gredler, Second Vice President of the Conference of NGOs, and Marion Precht, treasurer of the Sustainable Development Committee are our Representatives in Vienna. Work in Vienna focuses on issues relating to violence against women and girls. SI Representatives attend The Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, The Convention on Organised Crime, and the Commission on Drugs annually, focusing on issues relating to women and girls.

PARIS

The focus of our work in the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) is Education. In 2020, Marie-Christine Gries was our Center Contact, and our additional representatives were Rina Dupriet and Evelyne Para. Marie-Christine finished her second term as treasurer of the UNESCO NGO Liaison Committee in December 2020. Topics of work included Global Citizenship, the Futures of Education, a Global Initiative to reimagine how knowledge and learning can have the future of education and the planet, International Day of Education, International Literacy Day, the Day of the Girl Child, and the gender gap in science and technology. The year ended with the NGO Conference held in December.

NAIROBI

The main focus of their work is the UN Environmental Program (UNEP). UNEP-5 which was to take place in 2020 was postponed until 2021. The team followed the work on the United Nations Environmental Assembly and the Committee of Permanent Representatives in preparation for 2021. The team also reported on World Environment Day. The theme for 2020 was 'Time for Nature', focusing on infrastructure to support life on earth and human development.

BANGKOK

Theresa Devasahayam is our representative in Bangkok. In 2020 she attended the 3rd South-East Asia Forum on Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) held on 3-4 October at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thai-land. The Forum focused on the extent to which we have achieved the SDGs in the South-East Asian Region.

Taking the entire spectrum of SDGs, the South-East Asian region has demonstrated that it is not on track to achieve all the goals. Surveying the current rate of progress of the region, it was found that not one goal among the 17 SDGs as of now has been met. While by and large there has been considerable achievement made in reducing poverty in the region, much more work is needed to accelerate the attainment of all the SDGs. In 2020, Theresa also followed the topics of Food Security in South-East Asia and Food Security of Migrants.

GLOBAL POLICY & IMPACT WORK 2020

UN representatives 22

UN Centres where we are active 7

UN Representatives in Leadership Roles 8

Meetings Attended 36

Statements & interventions 32

ROME

Liliana Mosca is our representative in Rome. She focuses on food security and follows the work of the Food and Agriculture Organisation and the World Food Program. These UN agencies share the common goal of eradicating hunger through food assistance, and they work to eliminate the root causes of food insecurity. Liliana attends the Committee on Food Security meeting and the Summit on Food Security annually.

ADVISORS

Special Advisors to Advocacy, Pat Black and Linda Witong support the team. Pat and Linda were very busy during 2020 researching, writing statements and blogs. Thank you to them and SI's outstanding volunteer team of UN Representatives who work tirelessly for Soroptimist International and the women and girls we advocate for.



CONTEXT

The financial statements of SI (Soroptimist International) Ltd were produced in line with the relevant UK accounting principles.

The Finance Committee meets monthly to review financial performance and discuss matters of policy and process. It also meets quarterly with our Investment Manager to discuss the performance of our investment portfolio. The Board continues to receive quarterly management accounts and updates on our investments.

Thanks to the Finance Committee members Kathy King (SI Treasurer), Deborah Thomas (GED), Carolien Demey, Sharon Fisher, Ann Hodgson who finished as Chair in December 2019, and Maureen Maguire, who joined at the beginning of 2021.

I would like to acknowledge Ann Hodgson for the numerous hours she gave to the Finance Committee. A special thank you Ann for work that resulted in vitally needed increased income from member dues in 2020, and in the future.

Wendy Logan, Chair of Finance

RESULTS

The financial statements for the year ending 31st December 2020 show a healthy result mainly due to the following;

2020 saw a large reduction in operating costs due to savings made on meetings, and travel costs, due to the restrictions imposed by COVID-19. This and other cost savings resulted in a reduction in overheads and administration expenditure from £336,429 in 2019 to £241,600 in 2020.

The full effect of an increase in member dues from £3.00 to £5.00 per annum, resulted in an increase in income from £287,966 in 2019 to £353,137 in 2020.

The SI President's Appeal account showed a balance of funds of £70,394 compared to a deficit of £57,628 in the previous year.

The net total value of the managed investment portfolio as at 31 December 2020 was down £13,306 at the end of year valuation; a low point due to the impact of the pandemic. This has subsequently improved.

CLOSING REMARKS

2020 was a year of concern and challenge for all Soroptimists. Our early concerns proved justified as we all witnessed the rapid global spread of the pandemic, COVID-19. With our normal schedule of global meetings interrupted and eventually cancelled, and regions and clubs not able to meet in person, just as our Founders embraced challenge in 1921, Soroptimists everywhere during 2020 embraced the new challenge of digital technology to continue our vital work.

During 2020 our learning manifested in technology, and we thrived. I would like to thank all SIHQ staff for their dedication and delivery of high-quality work, and for seamlessly transferring to working from home.

With the support of SI President Sharon Fisher and the SI Board of Directors, we moved all our meetings online. With the majority of UN meetings too taking place online, we are extremely grateful to our permanent Representatives for positively embracing this way of working, and maintaining SI's influence amongst global policymakers.

For the first time our Annual General Meeting was held online which allowed us to invite Soroptimists to join the meeting. This was our first foray into digital meetings with a global audience, and it was very successful with our meetings licence full to capacity. Shortly after the AGM SI President Sharon Fisher launched a series of webinars as part of the work of her appeal, 'Road to Equality'. With almost all of us unable to venture out, the webinars enabled us to be 'together but apart' learning so much about the many forms of violence against women from the notable speakers and panellists. We learnt about triggers and symptoms, and what actions we need to implement, to combat in particular, the hidden pandemic of domestic violence, which sadly,

but predictably increased during our enforced periods of lockdown. Our SI Appeal, 'Road to Equality' continues to support domestic violence campaigners and we must all lobby our governments to dedicate funds to support victims and survivors.

Furthering our learning opportunities and ways to bring us together digitally, we launched SI Voices, a series of regular podcasts to commence our 100th Anniversary campaign. Content has varied from our history and pioneers, to interviews with SI Presidents and the rights of older women. As we all took to our daily walks, many of us also listened to the podcasts as we walked, learning 'on the go'.

As 2020 drew to a close at SI we had to take the difficult decision to cancel our 100th birthday party planned for San Francisco in October 2021. Once again, we embraced the challenge and switched to an online party, being held in two sessions, over two days, allowing thousands of Soroptimists to join. Maybe not in person, but it will certainly be a much bigger party bringing an opportunity to motivate and re-energise us all to continue our Soroptimist mission.

Global Executive Director, Deborah Thomas



EDUCATE EMPOWER ENABLE

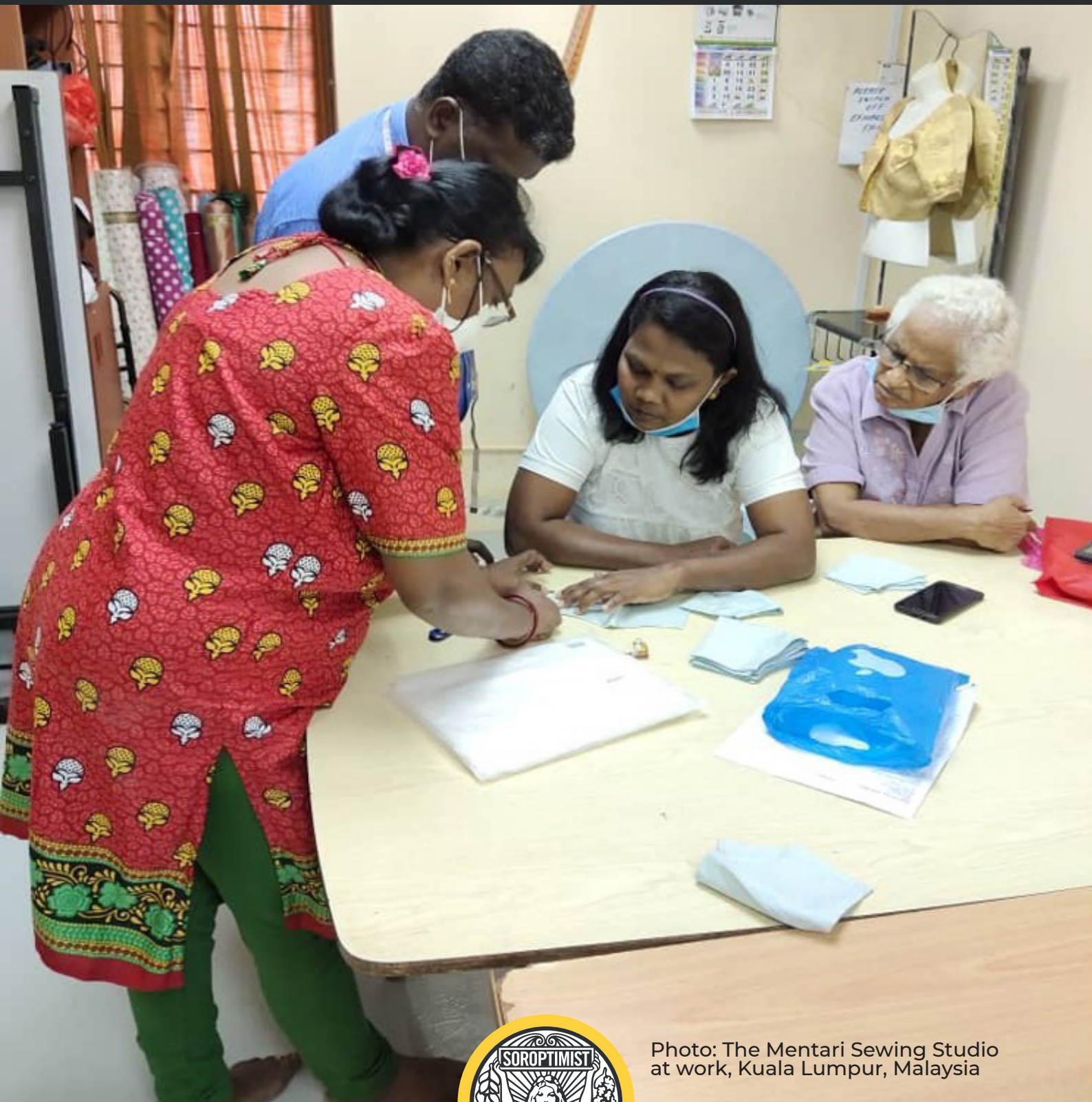


Photo: The Mentari Sewing Studio
at work, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

