

PROJECT OF THE MONTH

This month's winner is the **SI Club of Mumias**, Kenya, for their project: "Keep our girls in school." The Programme Focus objective of this project is no 1: "Increase access to formal and non-formal learning opportunities."

Since the majority of the population in Mumias lives below the poverty line, many of the girls stay home during menstruation as they cannot afford sanitary napkins. Others use rags or old blankets to be able to attend school, which is unhygienic and dangerous, as it can cause infections.

The goal of this project is to distribute sanitary towels, panties and soap to girls during menstruation, enabling them to continue to attend school. In addition, the club members explain the efficient use of these products to both girls and their mothers to improve hygienic conditions in Mumias.

SI Club of Steirisches Ennstal-Gröbming, Austria, donated € 2000 through Soroptimist Project Matching to support Club Mumias' effort. PFR no. 23206 states that as a second step, the club would like to involve parents and guardians so that they can buy the sanitary towels at a subsidized rate and educate them about this important subject for girls.

Congratulations Club Mumias!

Best Practice Awards Application Deadline Approaching!

All Unions and Single Clubs are kindly asked to submit their nominations **before February 29, 2012**. Please send your questions and applications to suba@soroptimisteurope.org.



The United Nations Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on
GLOBAL SUSTAINABILITY

The UN Secretary-General launched the High-level Panel on Global Sustainability in 2010 and requested it "to reflect on and formulate a new vision for sustainable growth and prosperity, along with mechanisms for achieving it." The regional launch of the Panel's report took place on 6 February at the UN office in Geneva. With the participation of panel members as well as other high-level personalities, the panel discussion on the report was an important opportunity for Soroptimists to network and learn more about the work of the Panel.

The report sees economic growth, environmental protection, and social equity as one and the same agenda: **the sustainable development agenda**. It provides a set of practical and sustainable solutions which will require commitment and action "from citizens across all sectors of society." This report also serves as a significant contribution to the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) in June this year. To read the full report "Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A future worth choosing" and its recommendations, please visit: www.un.org/gsp.



One of the most important areas of sustainable development is water. It is an area that presents major challenges but responding to them is crucial for sustainable development.

One such challenge is the water shortage created by the amount of water used to produce the foods we consume every day. This year on **World Water Day – March 22**, the focus is on **food security**. In line with Soroptimist International of Europe's biennium theme "Soroptimists go for Water and Food," the slogan of World Water Day is "The World is Thirsty Because We are Hungry." For more information, please visit: www.unwater.org/worldwaterday/.

Here are a few suggestions for action that are listed on the above page to cope with population growth as well as to ensure access to nutritious food to everyone:

- consume less water-intensive products.
- reduce the scandalous food wastage: 30% of the food produced worldwide is never eaten and the water used to produce it is definitely lost!
- produce more food, of better quality, with less water.
- follow a healthier diet.

Actions have to be taken at all levels of the supply chain – from producers to consumers! Join the campaign "Water and Food Security."



12 > 17 March 2012
MARSEILLE - FRANCE
TIME FOR SOLUTIONS

In the wake of World Water Day, the world's largest meeting around water will be held in Marseille, France from 12 to 17 March. Every three years since 1997, the World Water Forum mobilizes all stakeholders to gather at one place to bring water high on all political agendas. To reach sustainable development goals, the remaining water issues have to be tackled. To learn more about the Forum:

www.worldwaterforum6.org/ and to provide solutions:

www.solutionsforwater.org/.

In preparation for the 6th World Water Forum, Soroptimist International of Europe and Women for Water Partnership (WfWP) in collaboration with other women's organizations are arranging a preparatory meeting in order to unite women and their organizations participating in the Forum to exchange experiences of prior Fora with newcomers and to facilitate concerted action as women's Major Group. WfWP has successfully organized such preparatory meetings prior to previous World Water Fora in Mexico and Istanbul (Turkey). In 2009, WfWP worked in close cooperation with Soroptimist Turkish Union and the Federation.

The primary purpose of the pre-conference is to provide women and their organizations with a platform where the different women's networks from the various continents and from different sectors in society exchange their knowledge and ideas as well as identify their joint priorities for the Forum. The pre-conference will be held in Marseille from 10 to 11 March.

The empowerment of women and girls as leaders starts at the local level with the intention to change women's disadvantaged social status, to improve their quality of life in their community and to bring about their personal development. Women's education, health and welfare are generally more advanced when women are involved in decision-making, are included in the development process and are able to create appropriate strategies for empowerment of local women. The empowerment of women and girls as leaders in their communities and beyond is a crucial resource for development as it addresses the root cause of many issues women suffer from, including having low social status and no "say" in society.

Taking this into consideration, the



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theme of the preparatory conference is 'Women's Leadership in Integrated Water Resources Management at all levels'. The intention is to highlight the role of women and their organizations in providing tailor-made solutions to deal with day to day challenges in their communities, both in rural and (semi)urban settings; the overarching goal is to identify strategies and tailor made approaches to fully use their potential in the socio-cultural settings they live in.



**SOROPTIMIST
PROJECT MATCHING**

www.soroptimistprojects.org

This month, we feature the project **"AM001 – Preventive programme against cervical cancer in rural regions of Armenia."** The SI Club of Yerevan in Armenia aims to develop a cervical cancer prevention programme for socially vulnerable women and girls. An increase in the number of cervical cancer cases in Armenia prompted the Club to initiate this project. The goals are to improve prevention mechanisms, early diagnostic and treatment of cervical cancer, targeting especially women and girls from socially vulnerable groups. In addition, this project seeks to decrease the high rates of mortality associated with cervical cancer in rural areas of Armenia.

Funds needed: 3445 EUR

To contribute to this project, please email: suba@soroptimisteurope.org



Every year, International Women's Day is celebrated on **March 8**. This year's theme is: **Connecting Girls, Inspiring Futures**. Thousands of events are organized in March to celebrate this occasion. Soroptimists will be joining these activities. We would kindly ask you to share your stories with us so that they can be published in The Link and featured on our SIE website!



We are only weeks away from the start of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) at the UN in New York. 35 Soroptimists will be part of the SI delegation to the CSW. You can also contribute to the momentum by lobbying your governments and local decision

makers. Find all additional information:

<http://www.soroptimistinternational.org/who-we-are/news/post/251-advocacy-kit-for-csw-56-launched>

Global Voice – One Year On!

Next month, Global Voice celebrates its first birthday. From an initial distribution of only 100, Global Voice now has over 1,250 subscribers. However, we are sure there are a lot more Soroptimists and non-Soroptimists in our Federation to share the Global Voice with. Please take a few minutes to read the January issue and forward to a friend:

www.soroptimistinternational.org/resources/the-global-voice

SoroptiVoice Blog Needs You!

Would you like to write about your recent club activity? Have you funded a new project? Are you undertaking a new advocacy event? Please email anna@soroptimistinternational.org if you would like to contribute to SoroptiVoice Blog and tell the world about your activities.

FEATURED WEBSITES:

www.wsscc.org/

The Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council (WSSCC) is a global multi-stakeholder partnership and membership organization that strives to achieve sustainable water supply, sanitation and hygiene for all people in the world. It works towards its mission by promoting collaboration among sector agencies and professionals who are working in this sector.

www.girleffect.org/

The Girl Effect is a movement created by The Nike Foundation with the support of the NoVo Foundation, the United Nations Foundation and the Coalition for Adolescent Girls. They target girls "because when we all invest in girls, everyone wins: girls, their families, their communities and their nations."

www.reproductiverights.org

The Center for Reproductive Rights uses the law to advance reproductive freedom as a fundamental human right. Having recognized the importance of reproductive healthcare in a woman's life, the center attempts to create possibilities for women where they can make their choices without being coerced. So far, the legal team at the Center has helped to strengthen laws and policies in more than 50 countries.