

SEPTEMBER 2010
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TIS



The International
Soroptimist



اليوم الدولي للسلام
٢١ أيلول / سبتمبر

国际和平日
9月21日

International Day of Peace
21 September

Journée internationale de la paix
21 septembre

Международный день мира
21 сентября

Día Internacional de la Paz
21 de septiembre

a global voice
for women

Soroptimist



International



President's update

Dear Readers
Dear Soroptimists

The theme of this issue of TIS is Peace and it makes me think of a quotation of the Russian philosopher and writer Leo Tolstoy: "Everybody thinks that the World should be changed, but nobody thinks that he (for Soroptimists: read 'she') has to change him/herself."

Each of us always has the best intentions and the most sincere wishes for a better world, but if we are honest, we often forget to change our own attitudes and to respect the differences of others.

Or, as we agreed in the ground rules for discussion at the recent SI Board Meeting, "We agree to disagree."

In the updated "Where We Stand" paper about "Women and... Peace-building". We – as Soroptimists – "are committed to working towards the achievement of sustainable peace and support the promotion of effective methods of conflict resolution and arms limitation.

"Global peace is integral with a sustainable environment, the just sharing of natural resources, fair social and economic development and the promotion of human rights.

"Soroptimist International is also committed to the equal inclusion of women in all peacemaking activities and the maintaining of that peace."

How can we, as Soroptimists, take action towards a more peaceful world?

Again we find the answer in the "Where We Stand" paper:

"Soroptimist International will act to implement in practical ways our commitment to peace, security and justice for all people with special attention paid to the PARTICULAR NEEDS of WOMEN and GIRLS and work with other non-governmental organisations and appropriate bodies to monitor actions of governments in the realisation of a culture of peace and non-violence."

Yes indeed, dear readers: We have the words and the tools, so let our actions speak louder than words!

Hanne Jensbo

What is Soroptimist International?

Soroptimist International, a worldwide organisation for women in management and the professions, is a global voice for women through Awareness, Advocacy and Action.

Our Vision

Soroptimist International is a vibrant, dynamic organisation for today's professional and business women. We are committed to a world where women and girls together achieve their individual and collective potential, realise aspirations and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide.

Our Mission

Soroptimists inspire action and create opportunities to transform the lives of women and girls through a global network of members and international partnerships.

IPP Margaret Lobo is honoured



We are delighted to report that Soroptimist International's Immediate Past President, Margaret Lobo, was recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours List and became a Member of The Order of Australia (AM) in the General Division. The citation read; "For service as an advocate and promoter of the status and health of women, particularly through Soroptimist International."

Margaret says, "I am thrilled that Soroptimist International was mentioned and share this award with every member who works tirelessly to achieve our goals and objectives".

Margaret was presented with her award at a ceremony in Government House, Perth, Western Australia, one of several ceremonies held across Australia on 10 September. The Governor of Western Australia His Excellency Dr. Ken Michael presented the awards on behalf of Quentin Bryce.

New appointment at SI HQ



Anna Aiken has been appointed SI HQ Programme Officer and took up her post in July.

Anna is a British national who is half Danish. She has a 1st class BA in History and Philosophy from Exeter University and an MSc (Distinction) in International Development.

Two of the modules for her Masters were 'Gender and Development' and 'NGOs within a Changing International Context'. Anna has volunteer experience

with Christian Aid and Food for the Hungry in Uganda. Her last post was as a Research and Policy Assistant for ACRE (Rural Community Council for Cambridgeshire).

We all wish Anna every success in her new role.

TIS: December 2010

The theme for the December issue will be Soroptimists for Education and Leadership. The deadline for submissions is 24 November and the magazine will be published on 15 December. Please send the text for your articles or news saved as a Word document or typed into the body of the email and send photographs saved as JPEGs to: editor@soroptimistinternational.org. Thank you.



From **the editor**

How many languages are there in the world? Well, the Ethnologue quotes 6,909 living languages, that's one language for every 862,000 people on Earth.

Europe, which is home to 25 per cent of the World's population has only 234 languages spoken on a daily basis.

Although English does well as the World's business language it is only third in the league table of native speakers of a first language, with 328 million.

That is only 1 million behind Spanish but a long way from the 845 million Mandarin speakers. 94 per cent of languages are spoken by only 6 per cent of the World's population, which means that there are hundreds of languages with just a few hundred speakers.

Soroptimist International has members in 125 countries – that means an enormous number of languages are spoken just within our Soroptimist world – it's no wonder we don't always understand what others are saying.

But there is one word that every Soroptimist understands, Peace. The word peace is on every page of this issue of TIS and it is in the heart of every Soroptimist; one of the main tenets of this organisation's work.

I hope this issue of TIS will help you, inspire you and encourage you to do something amazing to raise awareness and promote peace in your world.

The Soroptimist International Long Term Project is to be Education and Leadership

Soroptimist Clubs worldwide overwhelmingly chose Education and Leadership for Women and Girls as the topic for the SI Long Term Project to be launched in Montréal in 2011.

Visit the SI website to read the first edition of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) that will be updated throughout the year!

We need your help!

SI HQ is still working hard to build up a photo bank to showcase Soroptimist projects and activities around the world. If you have good quality 'action' photos, please share them with us by e-mailing them, preferably in JPG format to



hq@soroptimistinternational.org. Please ensure that we have your name, club and contact details, together with descriptive photo captions and any necessary permission for the photo to be used by SI. Photos may be used in Soroptimist publications or on the SI website.

Soroptimist International

A global voice for women

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TIS:
E-magazine is published on the website every quarter, March, June, September and December.

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Articles, letters and other materials published in this magazine do not necessarily express or reflect the official views of Soroptimist International or those of the Editor.

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editor@soroptimistinternational.org
and you will receive your very own digital magazine each quarter, free of charge!

a global voice
for women

Soroptimist  International

Best Practice Winners 2009-2010

The awards for this year, selected by SI's Programme Team, focus on three essential goals from the Programme Objectives.

Visit www.soroptimistinternational.org to download the new book with details on all of the winning projects!

OVERALL WINNER (Objective 7): SIA SI Guayaquil 'Disaster Aid for Women':

A devastating flood destroyed many homes in an area where many poor single mothers live. The club responded by applying for a grant of \$20,000 from SIA and partnering with a local organization to help with ordering and delivery of material for housing. Members organized the construction of cane and bamboo houses for those single women affected by the floods. They also arranged for medical and emotional help for families. They also brought in organic gardening experts to teach the women to garden. The result – 40 new houses were built and 80 women and children were helped.

Objective 5

'Improve access to clean water, sanitation and essential food resources'

WINNER: SIE SI Swiss Union 'Lambani Tribal Village Toilets Project': Twelve clubs of the Swiss Union have been raising money to provide toilets for a remote village in India; to date 62 toilets have been built and there is enough funding to build toilets in a neighbouring village.

Federation winners:

SIA SI Yamanashi-Crystal 'Donate a Well'
SIGBI SI Karachi Central 'Make the Education Minister Aware'
SISWP SI Riverina Region 'Water Justice for All'

Objective 6

'Mitigate the effects of climate change and integrate sustainability into personal choices and government policies and programmes'

WINNER: SISWP SI Thailand 'Global Warming Awareness Building': The members helped fund a booklet 'Public Guidance to Reduce Global Warming', a handy reference for measures to reduce waste and lower energy usage and reusable canvas tote bags with slogans about reducing waste.

Federation winners:

SIE SI Les Deux Sources 'Les Deux Sources Partnership'
SIGBI SI Stafford 'Reducing CO₂ Emissions'

Objective 7

'Meet the needs of women and girls during and after armed conflicts and disasters'

Federation winners:

SIE SI Italian Union 'Atelier Rwanda'
SIGBI SI Ellesmere Port and District 'Tsunami in Sri Lanka'
SISWP SI Johor Bahru 'PROJECT ABC'



SI Swiss Union: Lambani Toilets



SI Italian Union: Atelier Rwanda



SI Johor Bahru: Project ABC



Soroptimist International has a team of representatives based at each of the main UN centres in Geneva, New York, Paris, Rome and Vienna, as well as at the regional centres for Africa, West Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean.

For the first time, we are also sending local Soroptimists with the necessary experience to World Health Organisation (WHO) regional meetings. Our representatives ensure that the development of international policy and debate is inclusive of the needs of women and girls.

Here are some key dates where SI Reps will be participating or where issues affecting women and girls will play an important role in the policy discussions:

20 Sept: UN General Assembly Millennium Development Goals Summit. This is a high level meeting to discuss the progress of the MDGs. A critical topic for discussion at the summit will be gender equality.

21 Sept: International Day of Peace
Visit www.internationaldayofpeace.org for more information.

Upcoming events at the United Nations

30 Sept - 1 Oct: The Conference of NGOs in Consultative Relationship with the UN (CONGO) Geneva Component of its Civil Society Development Forum - "Women's Human Rights and Development: Inclusion, Participation, and Equality". This meeting will discuss progress on internationally agreed goals and commitments in regard to gender equality and the empowerment of women.

4 -22 Oct: 47th Session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). The Committee reviews national reports which detail the action taken by States to improve the situation of women and highlights important areas of future action. Countries to be reviewed at this session are the Bahamas, Burkina Faso, the Czech Republic, India, Malta, Tunisia and Uganda.

11-15 Oct: 61st Session of the World Health Organisation Western Pacific Regional Committee Meeting. The President Elect of SI South West Pacific is attending this meeting to discuss progress in the West Pacific, including issuing a statement under the agenda item on Women's Health.

11-16 Oct: 36th Session of the Committee

on World Food Security at the Food and Agriculture Organisation. This Committee reviews and follow up policies concerning world food security. Our Rep in Rome will participate as a speaker.

18-22 Oct: 5th Session of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Our Reps in Geneva will be attending this session which includes discussion on human trafficking.

31 Oct: 10th Anniversary of Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security
SCR1325 was the first formal and legal document from the United Nations Security Council that required parties in a conflict to respect women's rights. You can read more about UNSCR 1325 in this issue of TIS.

25 Nov: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women. The date marks the anniversary of the murder of the Mirabal sisters in 1965. This day also marks the beginning of the 16 days of Activism against Gender Violence.

25 Nov – 10 Dec: 16 days of Activism against Gender Violence

10 Dec: Human Rights Day.

Remember to keep checking the SI Blog for updates on our UN work. This is available through our website: www.soroptimistinternational.org.

Ground breaking sessions for SI Annual Board Meeting



Rosie Coutts, Executive Director, SI reports:

After many weeks of preparation for the SI 2010 Board Meeting, 46 delegates met at the Sheraton Skyline Hotel at London Heathrow, including Board members, Federation consultants, Federation executive staff, SI postholders and members of SI HQ staff.

The Board tackled a full agenda over its three day meeting, whilst managing to include a day long session on vital strategic planning. Everyone was gratified by the spirit of consensus in the meeting and the will shown by the entire Board to modernise and invigorate the organisation. Significant decisions were taken in all areas, with particular emphasis on strategic planning:

- A Strategic Plan to set the future direction of the organisation
- Task force to review SI's organisational and board meeting structure
- Review of SI Constitution and Policy, Procedures & Programme Manual
- Approval of Long Term Project concept paper
- A pilot UN Liaison for Europe appointment
- 'Where We Stand' SI position statements – streamlining and revision
- Transfer of Finance Chair functions to the SI Treasurer from 2011-13 biennium
- The establishment of an Audit Committee
- Extension Committee to change to Organisational Development Committee
- Approval to start the process to establish a charitable vehicle to receive funds for the Long Term Project

Strategic Plan: August 2010

VISION

Soroptimist International is a vibrant, dynamic organisation for today's professional and business women.

We are committed to a world where women and girls together achieve their individual and collective potential, realise aspirations and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide.

MISSION

Soroptimists inspire action and create opportunities to transform the lives of women and girls through a global network of members and international partnerships.

VALUES

- **Human rights for all**
- **Global peace and international goodwill**
- **Advancing women's potential**
- **Integrity and democratic decision making**
- **Volunteering, diversity and friendship.**

GOAL 1 – PROGRAMME

SOROPTIMISTS WILL ENSURE THAT WOMEN AND GIRLS ENJOY EQUALITY, LIVE IN SAFE, HEALTHY AND EQUITABLE ENVIRONMENTS, HAVE ACCESS TO EDUCATION AND HAVE LEADERSHIP AND PRACTICAL SKILLS.

OBJECTIVES and Strategies:
To be set by the Programme Team.

GOAL 2 – ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL WILL HAVE A DYNAMIC, FLEXIBLE AND RESPONSIVE MEMBERSHIP, WITH AN INTERNATIONAL POINT OF CONNECTION, COMMITTED TO THE DELIVERY OF ITS VISION AND MISSION.

OBJECTIVE 1: Increase members' engagement and affinity for being part of a global organisation.

- Strategies:
1. Hold a convention of clubs in Montreal, Canada.
 2. Distribute a quadrennial report (electronic only).
 3. Share and utilise Federation experiences and expertise with

club orientation programmes.

4. President to make official Federation visits.
5. Encourage and promote attendance at Federation conferences.
6. Use TIS as a mechanism for member engagement and affinity.

OBJECTIVE 2: Increase membership
Strategies:

1. Develop strategic overview of extension needs on global basis.
2. Share and utilise Federation experiences and expertise in helping clubs to recruit and retain members.
3. Collate, analyse and report statistical information, noting trends.
4. Review and revise as appropriate.
 - the minimum number of members required to charter
 - the minimum number of members to maintain a club
 - classification
 - membership types
 - numerical requirements and expectations of Federations
 - criteria for accepting new members.
5. To assess the readiness and intent of clubs in Africa to form a Federation.

GOAL 3 - STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP
SI WILL BE A STRATEGIC ORGANISATION WITH DYNAMIC AND PROACTIVE LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS, ABLE TO DELIVER RESULTS AND ENSURE ITS VISION IS ACHIEVED.

OBJECTIVE 1: Improve performance management and decision making. Strategies:

1. Review the SI Strategic Plan annually.
2. Review and revise existing PPP's utilising a policy governance approach.
3. Monitor progress quarterly through a written report that accompanies the financial statements.
4. Conduct board development and post holder orientation
5. Facilitate regular communication between SI and Federation chief staff officers.
6. Develop systems to ensure effective governance and decision-making.
7. Use the mega-issue process to bring options and alternatives to the board on major issues.
8. Review and revise as appropriate who attends board

meetings, the role of silent observers, consultants and programme voting delegates.

OBJECTIVE 2: Develop leadership capacity
Strategies:

1. Share and utilise Federation experiences and expertise in governance and leadership development.
2. Conduct leadership development for SI Board and post holders.
3. Provide appropriate professional development for SI HQ staff.

OBJECTIVE 3: Establish strategic financial planning and control
Strategies:

1. Ensure that the allocation of resources in the SI annual budget reflects the strategic priorities of the organisation.
2. Monitor and enhance Board's awareness, responsibilities, and oversight of SI financial status.
3. Consider financial impact in decision making
4. Create a financial policy manual.
5. Review and revise as appropriate depreciation and investment policies.



International Day of Peace

Tuesday 21 September

This is the Soroptimist International Statement for all members to use in their advocacy work in promoting peace building. It is one of 12 brand new statements that SI has developed to replace the former Where We Stand with approximately 5 more statements “under construction”. These new statements feature more “user friendly language”, a simpler format, and examples of ACTION Soroptimists have undertaken putting programme work behind our words. SI statements henceforth will only be developed in this style and will most importantly, always be woman and girl focused according to our mission!

Where We Stand: Women and..peace-building

Soroptimist International is committed to working towards the achievement of sustainable peace and supports the promotion of effective methods of conflict resolution and arms limitation. Global peace is integral with a sustainable environment, the just sharing of natural resources, fair social and economic development and the promotion of human rights. Soroptimist International is also committed to the equal inclusion of women in all peacemaking activities and the maintaining of that peace.

Soroptimist International urges governments to:

- include women in decision making processes concerning conflict resolution, peace mediation and negotiation, and in preventive diplomacy;
- ratify and implement all conventions and treaties relevant to the limitation and reduction of arms;
- actively support UN and other international peace-keeping initiatives;
- take all necessary steps to end sexual violence in conflict and to support women and girls who have experienced sexual violence in conflict situations;
- co-operate internationally to ensure access to education, housing, health care, and employment for women and girls in affected areas, both during and after conflict;

- acknowledge that the limitation of arms and the reduction of the size of armed forces will have positive economic and social consequences for women and girls in many countries;
- work towards the total and permanent elimination of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons; and
- secure a worldwide ban on the production and use of cluster munitions and secure the clearance of contaminated territory of unexploded bombs and mines.

Soroptimist International supports:

- gender mainstreaming in all activities relating to peace-building and peacekeeping;
- the full implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 – Women, Peace and Security;
- early education promoting the concept of peace, leading to a genuine awareness of justice, freedom, dignity and equality for all people;
- partnerships with other organisations which encourage the exchange of ideas between communities and individuals from differing countries and cultures;
- the promotion of human rights for women and girls in situations of armed conflict;
- interventions which support the specific needs of women and girls during and after conflict situations;
- training programmes which sensitise

officials to the particular needs of women and girls during and after armed conflict; and

- the promotion of non-violent forms of conflict resolution and the involvement of women and girls in the development of a culture of peace and non-violence.

Soroptimist International will:

- raise awareness by continuing to draw the attention of governments and civil society to the impact of conflict on women and children in particular and demonstrating to all the economic and social benefits of a culture of peace and non-violence;
- advocate through its involvement in worldwide international goodwill and understanding programmes support of the Millennium Development Goals and all United Nations initiatives for peace, particularly initiatives which promote the equal inclusion of women and girls in peace-building and maintaining peace; and
- act to implement in practical ways its commitment to peace, security and justice for all people with special attention paid to the particular needs of women and girls, and work with other non-governmental organisations and appropriate bodies to monitor the actions of governments in the realisation of a culture of peace and non-violence.





UN Resolutions

Reilly Dempsey, Programme Director Soroptimist International HQ

Security Council Resolution 1325 (UN SCR 1325), the first resolution on women, peace and security, was unanimously adopted by United Nations Security Council on 31 October 2000. The international community formally recognised the disproportionate and inherently different effects armed conflict has on women and girls. It also recognised how important it is to include women in peace-building efforts, negotiations and conflict resolution, and peace-keeping operations. The key provisions of UN SCR 1325 are:

- Increased participation and representation of women at all levels of decision-making in conflict resolution, peace-building, and maintaining peace.
- Attention to the specific protection needs of women and girls in and after conflict, particularly around the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war.
- The importance of a gender perspective in post-conflict processes, including increasing the number of women peace-keepers.

There have been eight follow on resolutions which build upon the work in UN SCR 1325 and further clarify the immediate and effective steps that governments must take to address the inequalities in armed conflict and the aftermath experienced by women and girls.

This October marks the tenth anniversary of UN SCR 1325. This will be a year of commemorations of this historic achievement as well as assessments of the effectiveness of implementation to date.

Soroptimists have been actively supporting the implementation of UN SCR 1325 since its inception. An article titled 'Historic First for Women at the United Nations' was published in the June 2001 edition of TIS, announcing the adoption of UN SCR 1325. Reports from SI UN reps document further the work that SI has been doing to realise the promise of this resolution.

Aloha! Salaam! Shalom!

Talat Pasha, SIGBI Assistant Programme Director, International Goodwill and Understanding, SI Karachi Central, Pakistan

What is Peace?

Peace describes a society or a relationship that is operating harmoniously, without violent conflict; commonly understood as the absence of hostility, war, disturbance or agitation.

It may be used as a greeting or farewell. The Hawaiian word "Aloha", Arabic "Salaam" or Hebrew "Shalom" all mean "Peace".

As war and conflict involves tremendous suffering for all especially women, it is important that their needs and concerns are taken into account. Women, though always targeted in conflict situations, are frequently excluded from decision-making opportunities in peace process negotiations and post-conflict reconstruction.

Where we are:

It is clear from these resolutions that gender is indeed central to international peace and security. However, accountability, implementation and action on the ground remain seriously lacking.

The "women's rights are human rights, and human rights are women's rights" mantra raised expectations that violence against women would be taken seriously by governments and people around the world. Instead, the epidemic of gender violence,

namely rape and other forms of sexual violence has escalated from war zones to main streets and blind alleys including rural areas without formal wars.

Peace for women should not be taken only as absence of wars and conflicts. Tribal customs, religious beliefs and internal displacement due to natural disasters also affect the peace of women around the world.

A woman is killed every two hours in Brazil and this average puts the country in 12th place among nations registering the most violent deaths for women. Most of the victims are killed by relatives, husbands, boyfriends, or former partners they rejected. Women become "victims of Honour" in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

It is sad that it has taken graphic images of girls raped in the eastern Congo, and young girls with acid thrown in their faces in Afghanistan for daring to return to school to shame our collective conscience, but the world is now responding.

The road ahead for us

We must move beyond words, resolutions and stocktaking exercises to establish and implement an ambitious, achievable agenda for action on women and armed conflict.

Our success must be measured by the degree to which we protect the lives and well-being of women and girls faced with the horrors of war and conflict:

- we must empower women to play vital roles in peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction and governance
- we must prevent armed gangs from abusing women in conditions of disaster and displacement
- we must hold government officials, security forces, tribal chiefs and warlords alike accountable for sexual abuses and prevent traffickers from turning women and girls into commodities
- we must build strong civil society networks for women and end the stigmatisation of women leaders.

Make the dreams explode

The dreams embodied in UN SCR 1325 must be deferred no longer.

"What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore – and then run? Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over like a syrupy sweet? Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it explode?" (*Langston Hughes*)

WHAT CAN YOU DO AS A SOROPTIMIST?

1. Be more aware. Visit these websites:

www.internationaldayofpeace.org

www.peacewomen.org

www.unwomen.org

www.unifem.org/campaigns/1325plus10/

2. Actively participate on Peace Day! Some suggestions are:

- SIGN UNIFEM's "Say NO to Violence Against Women" petition:<http://www.saynotoviolence.org/> ;

- **START** a project in your club that actively promotes international peace and celebrates the diversity of the people of our world.
- **THINK** about difficult issues: Human Rights, violence against women, child abuse, women's rights.
- **WORK** actively to promote women in positions of power.

We need our voices and opinions to be heard in places where it matters.

Music and the Arts: an eternal tool of peace

Dawn Marie Lemonds

International Programme Director



“Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me.”

As we head towards recognition of the International Day of Peace it reminds me that each of us carries a powerful “weapon” for peace within us – the ability to be civil, to promote harmony rather than conflict, to inspire new generations of people in our world to be part of the world and not merely occupants.

And, if we are so inclined, to continuously plant seeds of peace through time tested and new traditions of peace including making music.

Soroptimists have created and participated in many diverse types of programmes using music as the mechanism for promoting the cause of peace and also using music as a mechanism for bringing people out of conflict.

In Italy, children from a rough neighbourhood were given music education as an opportunity to learn a new skill and earn the capacity to develop a better life.

Hundreds of Soroptimist clubs throughout the world have used concerts as mechanisms for generating awareness of peace promotion such as peaceful conflict resolution, intercultural exchange and racial harmony and often earned money for international peace projects while doing it.

Sponsoring choirs of children who learn international songs of peace have been very successful International Peace Day projects – most recently in Finland.

‘Musicians without Borders’ is a fabulous project that takes musicians from Hamburg, Germany to Ecuador and teaches street children to make music.

Soroptimists in Orange County California joined UNIFEM and other local NGOs to share a film, music and dance festival called ‘Her Story’.

In Melbourne at the annual UN DPI/ NGO Conference the most amazing 250 person orchestra, dancers, choirs and artists performed a Diversity Concert with the theme of ‘We are all connected’ ending with the drums of many cultures and ages in a celebration of unity.

Peace promotion can be big...and it can be quiet and contemplative.

Soroptimists understand that the arts can get to the core; a visceral and soulful approach that is needed to help us all find that place of personal connection and humanity only experienced by humans.

Music has the ability to promote the global peace we all desperately crave...let it begin with me.

Soroptimists join WAGGGS & NGOs in Melbourne

Dawn Marie Lemonds, International Programme Director

A combined delegation of 28 women, 12 Soroptimists and 16 WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) joined forces in Melbourne from 30 August to 1 September to address the issue: ADVANCE GLOBAL HEALTH-Achieve the MDGs.

President Elect Alice Wells and International Programme Director, Dawn Marie Lemonds led the team, starting out at a pre-conference strategy meeting to identify the critical issues of gender and violence against women, developing their plan to get their message across to the other NGOs, the UN and the DPI/ NGO Declaration that resulted from this conference.

This is the first UN Event in Australia and SI was well represented by 10 SISWP leaders including Federation President Yvonne Simpson, International Past President Leigh Ellwood Brown and Federation Programme Director Robyn Cain. Your SI/WAGGGS team presented a workshop, had media interviews and many opportunities to publicly present our issues.

Happily, the final Declaration included almost all of the issues we stood for

and now NGOs around the world will need to work with government delegations to embrace this Declaration at the High Level MDG Summit to be held in New York 15-17 September. 1600 attendees participated in 54 workshops, four round table sessions, special delegation meetings and the opening and closing sessions. They received critical and cutting edge information addressing the reality that “Health is the tie that binds all of the Millennium Development Goals together”.

SI and WAGGGS made a strong case for the reality that no society and indeed the world can be healthy as long as women and girls live in fear of epidemic levels of gender violence worldwide.

Virtually every major speaker addressed the shortcomings in progress on MDG5 (maternal health), as evidenced by persistently high rates of maternal



Dawn Marie Lemonds and International President Elect Alice Wells with one of the Girl Guides at the conference

mortality and morbidity Women and children, especially girls, most acutely face the results of climate change, civil unrest, and economic crisis.

We were all challenged to continue to “carry the banner” to our governments to achieve the MDGs in this, the last five years of the campaign.

For more information about activities that Soroptimists engaged in go to the Soroptimist International Programme Blog and ACT NOW section at www.soroptimistinternational.org and the conference site www.undpingo.org.

Peace activities must go on!

says Heidrun Konrad, SIE President 2003-2005

Each 21 September, the International Day of Peace confirms what we as Soroptimists live and believe; it is one of our most important goals: to promote worldwide peace. Of course new, current or recent projects are very important but isn't the continuation of well established peace initiatives the other side of the coin, which is at least as interesting and important?

I am very grateful to my successors, SIE Presidents Monique, Mariet and Eliane that the idea of the "Peace Prize", started in 2005, is going on until today. The biennial prize is given to an outstanding woman working for peace who receives a wonderful trophy designed by Bettina Scholl-Sabbatini and €20,000, for a peace project of her choice.

One of the longest ongoing activities is the "Open Heart-Open Door" initiative which is an exchange programme for Soroptimists¹. This idea can also be integrated as a peace project complementing events such as Charter ceremonies or other club festivities.

Also, Soroptimists following the SI Pilgrim Way as in, for example, the Route of St. James in Northern Germany are surely always welcome to stay over night at the home of a club sister.

And let us not forget our international youth events such as the Youth Croisières or Walk Abouts. In order to overcome national obstacles among the youth world wide, these initiatives try to implement the peace idea by holiday exchanges.

I would like to thank all participating

¹www.soroptimisteurope.org/en/projects/open-heart-open-door.html



countries on behalf of the participants who "re-import" the peace idea in their home countries.

May I express my thanks and happiness for the engagement of all Soroptimists involved within these and many other peace activities!

We shall all not forget that each initiative helps to complete the peace mosaic that is so much needed.

CEDAW in New York

Papua New Guinea Soroptimists participate in the 46th session of CEDAW

Lois Beilin reports

The 46th session of CEDAW (Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women) was held at the UN in New York, 6 July – 6 August, 2010.

The CEDAW committee of 23 experts examined eight state parties: Albania, Argentina, Australia, Fiji, India, Papua New Guinea, the Russian Federation and Turkey during the session.

The state governments prepared a full report on the status of women and girls in their country. The Committee of experts currently includes a former Soroptimist from Jamaica, Dr. Barbara Evelyn Bailey, an international expert on gender and development studies at the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica.

The CEDAW experts examine state parties, using the articles of the Convention, the Optional Protocol and recommendations and, at the end of this session, CEDAW will add a new recommendation on older women.

Each state government submits a report providing information on the status of women and girls according to the articles of the convention as well as responding to issues raised in the state's prior report.

NGOs of that country are encouraged to provide alternative reports to the CEDAW experts to have the complete information on the status of women and girls in each country.

The NGO reports may be sent to

CEDAW in writing or provided orally and individuals may present violations of human rights directly to the committee. The CEDAW committee encourages NGOs, UN agencies, and other entities in civil society to facilitate participation and attendance of NGO representatives at the sessions.



Soroptimist Dame Carol Kidu, Papua New Guinea

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

The state party of Papua New Guinea was headed by Dame Carol Kidu, Minister for Community Development, who also is a Soroptimist.

Two other Soroptimists were responsible for speaking and preparing the alternative NGO report on the status

of women in Papua, headed by the National Council of Women. They were Soroptimist Judy Muliap and a soon-to-be SI member, Theresa Jaintong. Other members of the NGO team were Dr. Ovoru Sepoe, Tapora O and Serah Garap all of Papua New Guinea.

The NGO report was well received and experts met with the NGO representatives both as a group and as individuals to ask questions, get more information and in general, to corroborate or dispute the state's report. The thorough work of the NGO group illustrates how the CEDAW process works for the greater benefit of women and girls.

The 47th Session of CEDAW will be in Geneva in 4 – 22 October 2010 and the Bahamas, Burkina Faso, Chad, Czech Republic, Malta, Tunisia and Uganda will be the state parties examined.

The 48th Session of CEDAW will be in Geneva, 17 January – 4 February 2011 when Algeria, Bangladesh, Belarus, Israel, Kenya, Liechtenstein, Sri Lanka and South Africa state parties will be examined.

State government and NGO reports, names of experts and states that are to be examined in the upcoming sessions are available online from the Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights: www.ohchr.org



Workplace Campaign to end domestic violence

Dawn Walsh, SIA Programme Manager

For a woman suffering from domestic violence, it is easy to think that the workplace would be a refuge for her – a place where she could find peace and relief from her abuser.

Unfortunately, this is not always the case. When a woman is being abused at home, she does not leave the abuse behind when she leaves for work. Abusers often harass their partners at work, by telephone, text or email.

In the worst case scenario, perpetrators come to the workplace and threaten their partners and their co-workers.

The Soroptimist Workplace Campaign to End Domestic Violence is an ongoing effort

to raise awareness about this seldom addressed issue: domestic violence as a workplace concern.

The Soroptimist Workplace Campaign provides information and resources for keeping women safe at work while giving possible victims access to victim services. To this end, clubs across SIA place hot-line cards in employee paycheck envelopes and leave stacks in women's restrooms, where women can feel comfortable picking up a card.

Approaching women in the workplace is important because women who are being abused are often isolated from friends and family members by their abuser. Often, the work day is the only time that the victim is

away from her abuser. This may be her only opportunity to find out about the type of support and services available to her.

In addition to a hot-line number, the cards include a web address for the Soroptimist Workplace Campaign's dedicated webpage. The webpage has been specifically designed to provide information and resources, not only for employees who are the target of domestic abuse, but also for their co-workers and their employers, including guidelines for implementing domestic violence workplace policies.

The Soroptimist Workplace Campaign takes place each year in November – to coincide

with the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women on November 25. For 2009, in addition to distributing hot-line cards, SI Guarapuava (Brazil Region) also presented informational lectures in five community districts. The lectures, each of which attracted roughly 100 people, focused on domestic violence as a workplace concern, what Soroptimist is doing about the issue, and informed attendees of their city's domestic violence legislation.

For 2010, SI Guarapuava has formed "peace committees" whose members will travel to secondary schools to give presentation on the topic of domestic violence.

For more information, visit the Soroptimist Workplace Campaign website: www.soroptimist.org/workplacecampaign

Promoting peace between cultures

Robyn Cain, Programme Director, SI South West Pacific

Several clubs in SI SWP work on projects which promote peaceful relations between cultures within their communities.

SI Canberra works with the Turkish Embassy to help promote the friendships that were forged by troops who fought on opposing sides during the First World War.

It is important that the younger generation understands the significance of Anzac Day, the sacrifices, horrors, victories and longstanding friendships that resulted from the conflict at Gallipoli.

Canberra also has an ongoing project supporting women refugees at the Minmahaw Education Foundation in Mae Sot on the Thai/Burma border through Soroptimist

scholarships to complete distance education tertiary studies with an Australian university. These studies aim to provide women with policy making and management skills to ultimately help lead Burma to become a democratic nation.



Speaker at Creators of Peace

SI Sydney was invited by a group called Creators of Peace to sponsor three young

women coming to Sydney from Kenya, Uganda and Russia for the Creators of Peace Conference.

This is seen as an ideal opportunity for advocacy on the issue of inter-cultural and inter-racial

tolerance with students within the schools we support.

SI Westland worked with the community of Hokitika to organise a Peace Day Walk within the town to raise awareness of the International Peace Day Walk and allowed the locals a chance to show their support for world peace.

SI Johor Bahru worked with UNHCR, Rotary club Johor Bahru, Kota Tinggi, SI Garden City Singapore to start a school for Rohingya refugee children



SI Johor Bahru helped Rohingya refugees

from Myanmar in Kota Tinggi Johor. All children need education and they could not go to local schools as Malaysia did not sign the 1951 UN Refugee Convention.

The children were treated as outcasts and were finding it difficult to be accepted as they could not speak Malay or any of the local languages. This project has won the club a Soroptimist International best Practice award.

Peace Marathon in Kigali, Rwanda

Kathy Kaaf, SIE President Elect, reports:



Last year I was fascinated by a 12 year old boy with green plastic shoes, much too big for him, who came third in the "Five kilometres Run for Fun" in Kigali, Rwanda.

This year 2,387 boys and girls between ages 10-14 participated in the children's race on Saturday before the Marathon and the Run for Fun on Sunday 22 May with its most prominent participant: SI President Hanne Jensbo.

"We are definitely going to be even more involved in the next Peace Marathon 2011", remarked many of the thirty Soroptimists who gathered for a meal with Hanne after the strenuous event.

The Peace Marathon was a Soroptimist idea, driven by Bettina Scholl-Sabbatini from Luxembourg. She wanted to combine former SIE President Heidrun Konrad's motto "Women building Peace" with her commitment to Africa and especially to Rwanda which was deeply depressed after the genocide of 1994. The Rwandan

Ministry of Sports and Culture as well as the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races (AIMS) have been involved in its realisation from the start.

However, the Marathon would never have taken place without Jean-Pierre Ernzen, a Luxemburg sport professor and expert for logistics, and his team of helpers.

Next year's Marathon will be on 22 May, after the SI East and North African Meeting from 20 - 21 May in Kigali.

We hope a big delegation of Soroptimists and their friends from around the world will travel to Rwanda. The programme includes excursions to other African countries like Uganda and/or Tanzania, which will be publicised on our website.

Our partner in Kigali is: www.mercatorassistance.rw. We realise that trips to Rwanda are not cheap, but the landscape is wonderful and the dynamic, very young Rwandans seem to have overcome the disastrous genocide,

although they will never forget some of their experiences. The other reason for you to support the marathon is that there are six Soroptimist clubs in this very small country with outstanding projects. One of them is the training centre "San Marco" in Kigali with a multipurpose convention hall for conferences up to 400 people, a school, dormitories for children and houses for widows and their children.

At this centre, three international workshops in design were held by Professor Gaddo Morpurgo of the University of Venice, Italy, with artists and professors from Italy and the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) on "Artisan Methods of Working with Vegetable Fibres" and "Innovative Materials and Design in Africa".

The reward for these unique initiatives: a stand at the Architectural Biennale in Venice from 29 August till 21 November 2010! See you in Kigali!

Peace on bridges and in armouries



On London's Millennium Bridge at the 2010 event, are (C) popstar and peace campaigner Annie Lennox, London Chilterns Regional President Julie Blackwell (L) and (R) President-Elect Johanna Raffan



The Royal Armouries in the City of Leeds, England, a museum of war-related materials, may seem a strange venue for a Peace event but where better to evoke memories of war and hopes for peace?

For the last six years, the SI C.E. Yorkshire Cluster Group has organised a presentation in the Royal Armouries in Leeds for International Peace Day.

The event has taken many themes, Awareness of Cluster Bombs, Walk the Path of Peace, One year, when 'Hearts and Hands' was the theme, children said prayers and made hundreds of hearts and wrote peace

messages on them, hanging them between the pillars of the building. Last year, one thousand small origami doves of peace were strung together to form the word PEACE in memory of the Hiroshima disaster. The doves were made for us by an elderly gentleman, who often spends his Sundays in the Royal Armouries.

For 2010 a five foot high Peace Pole will be constructed and decorated with Peace messages. Peace badges will be made and awarded as an Ambassador's badge for Peace, to be worn, all day, in all parts of the Royal Armouries.

Join Women on the Bridge for the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day on Tuesday March 8th 2011.

Women will be asked to "stand for peace" on bridges around the world to mark this special day. The bridges can be real or Symbolic, the aim is to show that women will no longer accept their lives being devastated by conflict.

This campaign is being co-ordinated by Women for Women International (WWI), which was our partner organisation for Project

Independence (SI Quadrennial Project 2003-2007). WWI is asking all the womens' organisations across the world to join them and promote the day in every possible way.

Campaign packs will be made available to Soroptimists as soon as possible. This is a great publicity opportunity for us all - we can use publicity materials about International Women's Day before and after the event. It is also a rare opportunity to join other organisations working to improve the lives of women and girls.

Visit: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_MeGKAWs8



Accepting the young mothers, fragile families and street children supported through SI's Quadrennial Project, Project Sierra, back into family and community life is a strong feature of the Project's success.

In July, another 27 young mothers graduated from the Project. Seven already have permanent jobs where they had been interns during their time in the programme. Their graduation preparations included a reconciliation meeting with parents and guardians, and an exhibition showcasing their work in the town.

The Children Living Alone part of Project Sierra runs workshops to help re-unite these children (including 15 young mothers and their babies) with their families. They include discussions about the dangers of driving young mothers from the home onto the street, and awareness of exploitation and abuse they face.

Families are encouraged to accept their daughters and grandchildren back home to return to school.

When the Project team visited schools to motivate the children before sitting their first exams after life on the street, they were happy to learn that most parents also go into school to follow their child's progress.

Workshops to secure full acceptance of previously ostracised families were recently held for over 400 family heads and local leaders in three isolated rural areas. Radio discussions spread the message wider. One Chief encouraged families to be committed to helping themselves become independent and motivated to move forwards in their life when they leave the Project.

66 families recently graduated from the rural Project, their lives transformed by opportunities made possible through the Soroptimist partnership. Most families are dependent on lone

women carers – grandmothers, single mothers or aunts. They are now able to earn an income to feed their families from farming or home-based businesses, and are well integrated in community life, due to YOUR support for Project Sierra – THANK YOU!

The local Project leader wrote to thank Soroptimists, saying: "Know this fact: you are not wasting your time by being part of this great movement. You are changing lives by returning smiles to the faces of the most neglected groups of people in Sierra Leone."

More women and girls are currently going through the Project programmes.

Visit www.projectSierra.org for regular updates, and please continue your support as our SI Quadrennial Project enters its fourth year!

project.liaison@soroptimistinternational.org

Montréal 2011: Will you be with us?

Soroptimists from around the world will gather in Montréal in July 2011 to learn, network and socialise.

Inspirational speakers, instructive workshops and enjoyable social events will ensure that your Convention

experience is memorable.

Soroptimist International President Hanne says: "For all Soroptimists it is a must to participate in a Soroptimist Convention – at least once in your lifetime. For those of us, who have

already participated in several Conventions, it is still a MUST to participate as we don't want to miss this fantastic occasion to meet old and new Soroptimist friends from other parts of the world".



Plan for Montréal!

Plan to join us for:

- Distinguished speakers
- Fun social events
- Inspiring workshops
- Friendship
- Networking



Air Canada/Star Alliance are the official Convention airlines. The Convention hotel is Le Centre Sheraton. Details will be on the website very soon. Registration will open late November 2010. Visa letters will be provided once the delegate has registered for Convention. Any region/district/country or special interest group like the Chatline that wishes to meet during Convention, contact Yvonne Machuk, Convention Chair, to make arrangements. Interested in volunteering at Convention? Contact si-2011@bell.net.