

# Soroptimist International

## **Best Practice International Recognition 2005 – 2006**

**Chosen by the Federation Programme Directors/  
Liaisons as the best examples of projects with an**

- international dimension**
- focused on women and girls**
- and 2003-2007 Programme Focus**

**All of them deserve our congratulations for their  
awareness, advocacy and action.**

**ONE project in each Programme area  
will be chosen by the International President for  
special recognition.**

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## Human Rights and the Status of Women 2005-2006

### **Soroptimist International of the Americas**

#### **SI Kasuga and SI Fukuoka-Minami, Japan**

##### ***Prevention of Trafficking***

- Current estimates indicate that there are approximately 700,000 victims of trafficking worldwide. Japan has signed but not yet ratified the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and this disturbed the Clubs because Japan has an enormous prostitution industry, is one of the most prosperous countries receiving trafficked women and yet its government regulations are quite lenient. They decided to raise awareness of trafficking in the hope that their government would enact appropriate legislation for victims.
- They printed and distributed 6000 leaflets and 1000 posters in eight languages on trafficking and victim support. They fundraised and held an international symposium and a lecture in Fukuoka which were duplicated in several other cities. The increased attention in the media and Japanese society was dramatic. The Club is also working with another NGO to promote shelters for trafficked victims.

### **Soroptimist International of Europe**

#### **SI Bruck/Mur, Austria**

##### ***A Better World for Albanian Women and Children***

- The town of Rubik, Albania with eight thousand five hundred inhabitants has an employment rate of only 5%. SI Bruck/Mur, Austria determined to fund an income generating project to help women and children. They founded a small dressmaking factory by adapting rooms in a school for tailoring and for classes on information technology. In doing so they helped women overcome the traditional Albanian family situation of patriarchy and isolation and offered them counselling and the opportunity to achieve self-determination as well as some employment security.

### **Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland**

#### **SI Perth, Scotland North**

##### ***The SAVVY Project in partnership with Mercy Ships International***

- 250 women hours and a modest financial outlay of £110 for leaflets by the Perth Club has reaped rewards in their quest to raise awareness of the preventable and treatable problem which devastates the lives of young women and destroys families; a by product of ignorance, lack of education, low status and low self esteem of women, ~ **fistula**, resulting from childbirth injury or war-associated abuse. Through a pound-for-pound system the Club raised over £2,700 and attracted a further £1000 to the newest Mercy ship, the *Africa Mercy*, working through surgery to rehabilitate and reintegrate girls and young women in West African countries. Money has also sponsored a bed in the ship's Gynaecology ward, purchased surgical handbooks and aided clinical research at a new land-based clinic and Fistula Centre in Sierra Leone. The campaign was presented to the UK Programme Action Committee and the club is hopeful it will give it full and further support.

### **Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific**

#### **SI Fremantle, Western Australia**

##### ***Women's Refuge Legal Referral Service***

- The WRLS is targeted to meet the needs of women from domestic violence situations and is aimed at improving their access to legal services. So often it is a lack of money that deters women from hiring a lawyer and seeking legal advice thereby foregoing property settlements to which they are entitled. The project helps women proceed through the legal system with emotional and financial support. A Directory of local solicitors who will take on their cases on a pro-bono basis or at a lower charge has been set up. The Club took on this project and provided seed funding and later secured a grant. Good results are ensuing and women who were named on the title deeds of their homes but were unable to secure their 50% rights are now being helped.

## Education 2005-2006

### **Soroptimist International of the Americas**

#### **SI Asahikawa, Japan**

##### ***JFC Scholarship Programme ~ Paguasa Project***

- A journalist invited to the Club to talk about the current condition of Asian women talked about the JFC Support Network that helps children born of Filipino women and Japanese men. As a result the members decided to provide scholarships for JFC children, especially girls living in the Philippines who had been abandoned by their Japanese fathers and who desperately wanted to learn. The aim was to educate the girls and thereafter provide them with opportunities to find stable jobs and become self sufficient.
- The Club undertook research, communicated with JFC and raised the necessary funds to educate at least 5 girls in each year of the 5 year project. Members intend to correspond with the girls and will all read the quarterly journal of the JFC Support Network, MALIGAYA, to learn more about the girls in the Philippines and hopefully plan a visit to Manila.

### **Soroptimist International of Europe**

#### **SI Ivrea e Canavese, Italy**

##### ***Immigrants ~ Active Citizens***

- The aim was the foundation of a multicultural laboratory close to the premises of the House of Cultures in the city of Ivrea ~ a meeting place to encourage mutual understanding among the area's various cultures; to promote opportunities of social exchange and integration and to achieve active participation in the life of the city. The Club also contributed to the laboratory by subscribing to several magazines in different foreign languages and by distributing 180 anti racist books to secondary schools.

### **Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland**

#### **SI East Grinstead, South East England**

##### ***The Ghana Education Project (GEP) ~ Nkwanta***

- This project was set up in partnership with the GEP Steering Committee, Tunbridge Wells Girls Grammar School, the British High Commission in Ghana, Scholastic Blue Horizons and Marks and Spencer.
- The Club became involved because it gave them both an opportunity to support an overseas project and have a direct link into the provision of education in a very poor and underdeveloped region in Africa. Members support a teacher, are able to communicate with her on a regular basis and receive good feedback. To date an education centre is now established training teachers; two schools out of six planned are now receiving resources and support, a local Ghanaian company is helping to fund a teacher for 2 years and East Grinstead members have provided materials, books, stationery and equipment.

### **Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific**

#### **SI Hong Kong**

##### ***Chi Shui Soroptimist Elementary School of Hope***

- Guizhou is one of the poorest of China's 31 provinces. In some small villages a single family must share one pair of shoes and one set of clothes. Not only do the people lack grain, money and farm tools but also water, edible oil, salt and housing not to mention education! And so began SI Hong Kong's project in partnership with the Education Department of the City to build onto an existing old school a four storey building with twelve classrooms to accommodate 1000 students with facilities such as a library and a basketball field. The Club President laid the foundation stone in autumn 2004 and the school was completed in the summer of 2005. Members made the long journey to be present at the Opening Ceremony of the Soroptimist Elementary School of Hope, knowing that literacy is integral to the development of children in rural China.
- They are still inviting donations for chairs and tables to fill up the classrooms!

## Economic and Social Development 2005-2006

### Soroptimist International of the Americas

#### SI Hamamatsu, Japan

##### *Supporting Independence of Women and Girls in Tanzania*

- Five years ago as part of their 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary project the Club planted trees in Tanzania through the Green Earth Protection Fund. In the report they received afterwards they noted the hard physical work of the women and girls, collecting wood and carrying water. After consulting with GEPF, who provided a spare room in their building, the members opened a work centre in Tema Village in the Kilimanjaro Mountains. They recruited 20 girls, purchased sewing machines, desks, chairs, recruited teachers and a security guard and opened the school in 2005. The Club has continued to organise events to raise funds with help from sister clubs and the Hamamatsu Venture Club. The GEPF which was originally centred on tree planting is now interested in welfare work. Together with Soroptimist they are improving the lives of women and girls in helping them to maximise their potential.

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### Soroptimist International of Europe

#### SI Winterthur, Switzerland

##### *Start Up Training for Business Women in Market Economy Conditions*

- In partnership with the Kutaisi Club in Georgia the Winterthur members supported business women either to start a business or to help develop an existing activity. The aim was to strengthen the Georgian women and give them the confidence to create new jobs on their own and thereby improve their economic situation.

### Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland

#### SI Columbo, Sri Lanka

##### *Tsunami Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction*

- In the aftermath of the Tsunami and the rebuilding of their Nation the assistance given by this Sri Lankan Club is almost limitless. They acknowledge the help and support they have received from sister Soroptimists.
- Palane Sri Wajiragnana School: furniture, cassette radio, equipment for art, dance and music departments. Mahamaya Girls School: laboratory equipment and furnishings; Tangalle: sewing machines and coir machines for village women; Karapitiya Field Hospital: endoscopic training equipment and flooring; Thilini Lace Centre: two sewing machines to help a woman rebuild her lace business; Papyrus Recycled Paper Project: rehabilitating and restoring a recycling business begun by a retired school Principal; Pre School at the Church of the Holy Spirit: rebuilding, furnishing, landscaping and fencing
- Lack of space prohibits further reporting.

### Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific

#### SI Bangsar, Malaysia and Friendship Link Partnership SI Kyoto-Toka, Japan

##### *Goat Rearing Project*

- The Orang Asli indigenous people of Malaysia are generally poor and less well developed. Most have large families and live in remote areas. When the men disappear into the jungle to collect produce or find work the women and children are left to fend for themselves. Originally the club helped the women by buying plants and bamboo from them, later progressing to a chicken-rearing project. Last year their Friendship Link SI Kyoto-Toka, Japan offered to donate Y500,00 to a joint project and after conducting a feasibility study and receiving advice from relevant government agencies it was decided to set up goat rearing. Goats were chosen because they are hardy and their meat fetches a good price.
- The project, its implications and responsibilities were fully explained and thirteen families volunteered to take part. The families built their own goat sheds and 33 goats, all screened by the Veterinary Department were supplied, ~ one male to four/six females, some of which were already pregnant meaning an almost immediate increase in the size of the herd. At the official handover this year the Kyoto-Toka and Bangsar members were greeted with a traditional welcome, garlands and dance.

## Health 2005-2006

### **Soroptimist International of the Americas**

#### **SI Norwalk, California USA**

##### ***Breast Self Examination Cards***

- The members of this small club were very mindful of breast cancer. For many years they had been involved in fund raising events and now four of their members had been or were currently receiving treatment for the disease. All of them regularly examined their own breasts with the help of special cards hung in their showers.
- When in 2003 they formed a new Friendship Link with a Romanian club and asked if the women of Brasov would be interested in having the cards printed in their own language the idea was enthusiastically received.
- The services of a translator were donated, the wording proof read by the Romanian members, and 2,500 plastic coated BSE cards were produced by the Club with instructions on them to contact one of two Brasov doctor members if breast abnormalities were found.
- SI Brasov will distribute the card and it means that over 2000 Romanian women will benefit.

### **Soroptimist International of Europe**

#### **SI Tenere-Niamey, Niger, Africa**

##### ***Improve Nutrition for Women and Children***

- In co-operation with the Roswitha Fund, and through the personal intervention of Swiss Soroptimist Roswitha Ott, ten tons of food were transported and distributed to nearby villages where the populations are made up of seventy per cent women and children. This highly humanitarian mission, that received media coverage, contributed to save many lives from famine in a country that has been suffering a severe drought for the past four years.

### **Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland**

#### **SI Ile-Ife, Nigeria**

##### ***Mentoring Girls, and Work and Peace***

- This is a continuing HIV/Aids project jointly funded by London Mayfair and Ile-Ife.
- Mentoring. Girls in rural areas of Nigeria who turn to prostitution as a way out of poverty are highly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and the increased infection of women is at crisis point. A Soroptimist Mentoring programme is essential.
- Work Study initiated by member Stella Williams and with help from the Joint Education Support Services girls and youth can now be assisted through a work study programme.
- Ile-Ife and Modakeke War These two areas have continually suffered from civil conflict. When the University established a Peace Corps the Club joined the volunteer group and worked to bring peace. Lack of resources is a constant problem with payment of salaries often unsure.

### **Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific**

#### **SI Helena, Western Australia**

##### ***Healthy Mother, Healthy Baby***

- Maternal and infant mortality in Bali is double that of Indonesia in general and 90 times that of Australia. 'Australia Second Home's (ASH) report' after the 2002 bombings exposed the very poor but nevertheless expensive cost of hospital treatment on the island. Club members who met midwife Robin Lim were inspired by her vision of simple ways to improve the conditions of child birth plus her training of women in hygienic methods all combined with her integration of local customs and traditions. They resolved to help Robin's Ubud clinic.
- It began with one member taking vitamins and baby blankets in her luggage on a visit to Bali, another co-ordinated a collection of baby clothes and medical supplies and the Club held a 'Bali Night' function with the proceeds going directly to the Clinic's bank account. More money will be raised through the sale of emery boards and magnifying cards. Robin now has a qualified midwife to assist her and has even travelled to Aceh with her team to establish a clinic there on the lines of Ubud. SI Helena views this as an on-going project, small but integral to the overall recovery process of Bali and Indonesia.

## Environment 2005-2006

### **Soroptimist International of the Americas SI Jackson, Wyoming, USA**

#### ***Cash for Kids - Recycle project***

- The members knew that many items in their community were being dumped in with the regular trash and not being disposed of properly but knew of only one recycle programme in their area and it only accepted ink cartridges.
- So they began by collecting literature from the recycling company, making it known to members through newsletters, cards and announcements at meetings. They placed an advertisement in the local paper and contacted Albertson's Food and Drug, a large local store, to ask if they might place a recycle bin outside the store. They asked their local Paint and Glass Company to build a plexi-glass container and agreed to give them a credit line on the bin for a discount! Posters and signs were made with signs crediting the Recycle Company, Jackson's Paint and Glass as well as Soroptimist International and Children of Peace. Tear-off slips attached to the bin gave a contact name for women to learn more about SI. Recycling has grown in Jackson; more funds are being raised for the Children of Peace project and name recognition and branding is in the public eye 365 days a year!

### **Soroptimist International of Europe SI Union of Lithuania**

#### ***Environment ~ our urgent concern***

- The Union of Lithuania members determined to clean up and beautify their environment and many members personally dug, built, and engaged in clean up operations. The whole process was managed by the Klaipeda Club and other clubs initiated a wide variety of different actions. Flowering bulbs were planted, nesting boxes built to encourage birds and new trees planted. School children helped out with some of the work and Clubs Siauliai, Vilnius 1 and Silute all played their part.

### **Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland SI Solihull & District, Midland Arden, England**

#### ***The Empilweni Vegetable Growers Project***

- During a visit to South Africa to the Club's proposed Friendship Link in Johannesburg a Solihull member had met Agrippa Thabede who was teaching gardening to the women of the community using borrowed tools and land on the premises of a school in the Township of Diepsloot. The fresh organically produced food grown by the women was sold to the community at affordable prices providing them with much needed nourishment. The Club fund raised to provide for tools, a secure storage hut for the tools and towards a half acre of land for development. Subsequently the project has flourished.
- So successful has the project become that this year a large commercial company 'Pick and Pay' has taken an interest and intends to provide all necessary equipment for it to continue and prosper. Given such a happy ending the Club has decided to look for and support a different South African project where finances are not so readily available.

### **Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific: SI Pine Rivers, South Queensland, Australia**

#### ***Weed Busting Project***

- This is an ongoing project and the club works in conjunction with another community group - Pine Rivers Bush Regeneration Network Group at John Oxley Reserve, Murrumba Downs to eliminate weeds and unhelpful vegetation like lantana. This allows the native grasses and other plants to regenerate in the area. For the Saturday of Service, the club planned a weed-busting session and was glad to note their plants were doing well - grown into small, healthy trees well over a metre tall. It was discovered during this weed-busting session that one of the trees was a rare species - Alchornea Liicifia (Native Holly) which the Bush Regeneration Group workers thought was extinct in this area. This plant has now been added to the Registered List of identified species of this area with a note that it had been found in the Soroptimist Pine Rivers Project Area. Many other Regenerated indigenous plants have appeared since the Weed-Busting Project

## International Goodwill and Understanding 2005-2006

### **Soroptimist International of the Americas**

#### **SI North County Inland, California USA** *Women having a Voice ~ Peacemaker Documentary Series*

- Sun and Moon Vision Production, (SMVP), first came to the attention of the Club when they requested a donation for their Peacemaker Series.
- The members learned that the mission of SMVP is to nurture a humanitarian vision through the creation and distribution of film, documentary and media arts, with a specific focus on women and children. The organisation was founded and established as woman-led and run as a non-profit organisation. Their first film in the Woman Peacemaker series traced the personal stories of peacemaking, courage and hope of four women and prompted the club to assist by donating money and sponsoring SMVP's first fund raising event; ~ a production of the Vagina Monologues. One Club member directed the show bringing together women from eight different performing arts driven backgrounds while another co-ordinated the food and also performed. The event raised over \$2000 and garnered for them other venues in which to present their films and lots of PR.

### **Soroptimist International of Europe**

#### **SI Kigali, Rwanda and SI Union of Luxembourg** *Peace Marathon*

- Arising originally from an idea of SI Luxembourg member Bettina Scholl-Sabatini, a Peace Marathon was organised and run in Kigali in May 2005 as part of the Federation President's 'Women Building Peace' two year programme. The arrangements involved the Rwandan Union in considerable negotiation with the public authorities. Extensive media coverage gave the event a high profile.
- The marathon was supported by many European Federation Clubs especially those of Finland and Iceland who took part personally or sponsored runners as did members of other Federations.
- The occasion also afforded an opportunity to meet with Rwandan sisters and learn about their projects.
- Many local children took part wearing tee shirts printed with the Soroptimist logo and each one received money sufficient for one year of schooling. Other funds raised were given to the San Marco Foundation which promotes job training for local women.
- A repeat of the event was held in May 2006.

### **Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland**

#### **SI Cardiff and Wales South Region** *Visions of Peace Art Competition*

- When Kofi Annan, Secretary General of the UN called for a 24 hour cease fire around the world to mark the International Day of Peace, the Federation of Great Britain and Ireland asked Clubs to mark the event by taking part in a Visions of Peace Art Competition to teach children about the UN and its campaigns for peace ~ very best examples of artwork were to be included in a special publication.
- Eleven Clubs in South Wales including Cardiff members circulated the information in a leaflet to after-school clubs, youth clubs, primary secondary and special schools and Guides and Brownies in their area inviting entries. There was a superb response with approximately 1000 entries.
- Winners were presented with prizes at the Temple of Peace in Cardiff which houses the UN Association in Wales. The colourful book was published and sold at the Federation Conference in the autumn of 2005 and the proceeds were for Project Independence an International Soroptimist project raising the status of women in war torn countries.

### **Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific**

#### **SI Townsville and sister clubs** *Weekend with Sobbhana Medical Mission*

- Fourteen Australian and New Zealand Soroptimists joined with paediatrician Reiko Aikara, her doctor daughter and her whole clinic staff, doctors from Singapore and members from Thailand and Malaysia to spend two days with the Sobbhana Medical Mission in Cambodia.
- Every second weekend Sobbhana takes a team of volunteer doctors, dentists, nurses and other personnel out to remote rural villages in Cambodia to work to improve the health of these highly disadvantaged people. For one weekend the Soroptimists became part of the Team. They contributed US\$5000 for future medical supplies for the Missions.
- The doctors and nurses worked as part of the diagnostic team with adults and children. 1400 patients were seen on the first day and 1200 on the second! Dentists could extract but not fill children's teeth without electricity and medical supplies.

## Summary of International Best Practice Choices for 2005-2006

Programme Area	Soroptimist International of the Americas	Soroptimist International of Europe	Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland	Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific
Human Rights/ Status of Women	<b>SI Kasuga and SI Fukuoka-Minami, Japan</b> <i>Prevention of Trafficking</i>	<b>SI Bruck/Mur, Austria</b> <i>A Better World for Albanian Women and Children</i>	<b>SI Perth, Scotland North</b> <i>The SAVVY Project in partnership with Mercy Ships International</i>	<b>SI Fremantle, Western Australia</b> <i>Women's Refuge Legal Referral Service</i>
Education	<b>SI Asahikawa, Japan</b> <i>JFC Scholarship Programme ~ Paguasa Project</i>	<b>SI Ivrea e Canavese, Italy</b> <i>Immigrants ~ Active Citizens</i>	<b>SI East Grinstead, Grinstead, South East England</b> <i>The Ghana Education Project (GEP) ~ Nkwanta</i>	<b>SI Hong Kong</b> <i>Chi Shui Soroptimist Elementary School of Hope</i>
Economic and Social Development	<b>SI Hamamatsu, Japan</b> <i>Supporting Independence of Women and Girls in Tanzania</i>	<b>SI Winterthur, Switzerland</b> <i>Start Up Training for Business Women in Market Economy Conditions</i>	<b>SI Columbo, Sri Lanka</b> <i>Tsunami Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction</i>	<b>SI Bangsar, Malaysia</b> <b>Friendship Link: SI Kyoto-Toka, Japan</b> <i>Goat Rearing Project</i>
Health	<b>SI Norwalk, California USA</b> <i>Breast Self Examination Cards</i>	<b>SI Tenere-Niamey, Niger, Africa</b> <i>Improve Nutrition for Women and Children</i>	<b>SI Ile-Ife, Nigeria</b> <i>Mentoring Girls, and Work and Peace</i>	<b>SI Helena, Western Australia</b> <i>Healthy Mother, Healthy Baby</i>
Environment	<b>SI Jackson, Wyoming, USA</b> <i>Cash for Kids – Recycle project</i>	<b>SI Union of Lithuania</b> <i>Environment ~ our urgent concern</i>	<b>SI Solihull &amp; District, Midland Arden, England</b> <i>The Empilweni Vegetable Growers Project</i>	<b>SI Pine Rivers, South Queensland, Australia</b> <i>Weed Busting Project</i>
International Goodwill and Understanding	<b>SI North County Inland, California, USA</b> <i>Women having a Voice ~ Peacemaker Documentary Series</i>	<b>SI Kigali, Rwanda</b> <i>Peace Marathon</i>	<b>SI Cardiff and Wales South Region</b> <i>Visions of Peace Art Competition</i>	<b>SI Townsville and sister clubs</b> <i>Weekend with Sobhana Medical Mission</i>

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