

Soroptimist International

Best Practice International Recognition 2004 – 2005

**Chosen by the Federation Programme Directors/Liaisons
and honoured by Soroptimist International;
these are Projects that reflect
Internationalism
and the
Goals and Objectives of the
2003 - 2007 Programme Focus.**

**We congratulate the Clubs and the members for their
awareness, advocacy and action.**

Lois Sagel
SI Programme Director

Margaret Alderson
SI Assistant Programme Director

Human rights/ Status of women 2004 – 2005

SI of the Americas

SI Eastwood City, Philippines

Public Awareness Campaign: Anti-Violence against Women and their Children Act of 2004

- Whilst this landmark legislation had far reaching provisions that encompass physical, emotional and mental violence as well as financial deprivation, there was no specific provision for the general information of citizens, particularly women. SI Eastwood City's Public Awareness Campaign's objectives were to publish a primer as a resource for women professionals or as a reference tool for general guidance; to help raise public awareness about the new law; to provide at least 5000 women with the primer and to help victims in immediately benefiting from the protective rights accorded by the Act.
- The members provided the direction, book contents, funding and project supervision and commissioned a Harvard lawyer to write the primer. It was scheduled to be launched in March 2005 to coincide with International Women's Day and a Forum which it is hoped will attract 1000 women. A series of workshops are planned from June to December 2005.

SI of Europe

SI Chisinau, Moldova in co-operation with the Union of Norway

Trafficking in Women:Counteraction and Prevention - an International Conference

- Moldova, one of the poorest countries in Europe, plagued by poverty, a huge rate of unemployment, corruption and a flagrant violation of human rights. Women looking for jobs abroad expose themselves to the danger of illegal immigration and Moldova has become the foremost country in Europe as a country of origin of trafficked women. The Conference attracted high level speakers from international organizations, universities and the media and Soroptimists from 12 European countries and the USA. The Conference culminated in an appeal to governments and a call to action to reduce the demand for prostitution in countries of destination and for effective measures to reduce poverty and increased prosecution of traffickers.

SI of Great Britain and Ireland

SI Rugby, England

Rugby Rosa

- Rugby Survivors of Rape and Sexual Abuse was started by 7 women as a self help group to enable victims to become survivors. Helpful available literature was hard to come by and when Rugby club members heard of this they agreed to raise funds and to help design and market a book to help victims become survivors. They made use of local knowledge and contacts with a web designer, arranged publicity in all local newspapers, worked with a PR company to gain national publicity and with W H Smith, a national news retailer, and Amazon to sell the book and to provide it to schools and libraries.
- The proceeds from a jumble and bric-a-brac sale helped, - as did a banquet at the President's home followed by a fireworks display and an Auction of Promises, - anything from cleaning the car to icing cakes. Thousands of pounds have already been raised and the efforts are on-going.

SI of the South West Pacific

Region of New South Wales, Australia

Beijing Plus 10 Process

- This Regional project involved the SI clubs of Canberra, Goulburn, Hornsby, Lightning Ridge and Sydney whose Regional representatives worked as members of the Steering Committee convened by the Centre for Refugee Research at the University of New South Wales and the Australian National Council of Refugee Women to prepare for the important Asia-Pacific meeting in Bangkok, Thailand as part of the ten year review of the Beijing Platform for Action. Kits were prepared to help communities of rural women to organize Caravans or grass roots meetings to gauge the opinions of women throughout Australia on the twelve critical areas of concern.
- As with all projects featured in this leaflet more detailed reports are available. For this particular project a CD is available.

Education 2004 – 2005

SI of the Americas

SI Portland, USA

ROOT, Reaching Out, One at a Time

- For over ten years the members of SI Portland have been sponsoring and mentoring college students with personal attention and small amounts of cash to encourage them to stay on in school. The club has three teams of two Soroptimists to one student; - currently another is in the pipeline. They meet regularly at the beginning of the semester to buy books and bus passes for the students, sometimes visiting a museum or an art gallery. The members are always on the alert for hints about how things are going in the students' lives and how they can help. In February members held a special brunch with hampers for the girls. Whilst sometimes communications are frustrating, their college counsellor confirmed that both present and past ROOT students have found the club's mentoring helpful and the girls are truly appreciative.

SI of Europe

SI Vladimir, Russia and SI Erlangen, Germany

Scholarships for Gifted Children

- Ines Schafer, an author member of SI Erlangen wrote a detective story, - *The Stone Margrave* which was then translated into the Russian language by the President of SI Vladimir, Naina Akimova.
- The author, the translator and the publishing house all waived their fees.
- All of the benefits from the sale of the book are being used for scholarships and the support of talented children from under-privileged families in Vladimir to give them a chance to continue their education at local art schools. They will also be assisted to buy instruments and materials.

SI Great Britain and Ireland

SI Colombo, Sri Lanka

Thimbirigawewa Community Development Project

- For sheer longevity not many projects can better that of SI Colombo. Started over twenty years ago as a pre-school project designed to meet the needs of impoverished mothers to provide some relief from child care and an opportunity to earn a supplementary income, the club has built and now administers the premises, pays an honorarium to two teachers, provides equipment and school uniforms and has set up health and nutrition camps in this village and in a neighbouring one.
- Now, three Community Centres have been built and the club acknowledges the very generous help they have received from other clubs especially SI Hamamatsu, Japan.
- On recent visits members have coached teachers on child-centred pre-school activities and a new method of alphabet teaching; effected building repairs; and attended a New Year concert with gifts for the children. They have also arranged training courses for the Head teacher and helped her to build her own home whilst at the same time harnessing and sustaining water resources. Planned for the future, - provision of electricity for the school followed by video, dvd

SI of the South West Pacific

SI Damansara, Malaysia

Reading Programme at a Vocational Training Opportunity Centre

- This project was carried out in direct response to SI's vision to strive for the advancement of women and the strategic goal of giving under privileged young women access to quality education and training opportunities in technology and non-traditional occupations. The Vocational Training Opportunity Centre takes in 70 girls from all over Malaysia. Their accommodation is provided by the YWCA with classes in computers, kindergarten teaching, sewing, culinary and hospitality skills. The girls are mainly school drop outs and thus in need of both language and reading skills. The club is involved in purchasing books for the programme and in monitoring their progress. Voluntary facilitators also help the programme which has been further extended to include another two orphanages with funding from JP Morgan.

Economic and Social Development 2004 – 2005

SI of the Americas

SI Brasilia Logo Norte, Brazil

Fairy Hands

- 'House Shelter' is a multi disciplinary protection programme for women and teenage victims of violence and their children. The club chose to become involved in contributing towards the professional training of these sheltered women and the women identified preferred training as hairdressers and beauty parlour assistants. Given, however that the women had to be under police protection secretly for 24 hours per day the facilities necessarily had to be provided within the Shelter. Whilst the Sheltered Programme provided the space the club fund-raised in their community to provide the furniture and fittings and *Fairy Hands* was the result, named by the women. The classroom was scheduled to open in February 2005.
- The club has a goal, - to extend the classroom further and to provide other forms of training such as dressmaking.

SI of Europe

SI Nike-Katowice, Poland

Women in the Mining Industry

- Katowice is the capital of Silesia, the Polish centre of mining and the metallurgic industry. In the last fifteen years many women, particularly middle aged and older have lost their jobs. In response the club has set up an *Academy of Gender Studies* at which 158 women participated and *Leadership Studies* with an emphasis on legal and economic literacy which attracted 28 participants. It is intended to introduce the project to other towns and to include advisory services on legal and economic questions as well as mentoring. The club may get support from the World Bank and the European Network for Social Inclusion.
- On International Women's Day members organised a Conference for more than 500 women from 95 women's organisations and was honoured with an award by the government for an exemplary initiative.

SI Great Britain and Ireland

SI Barrow-in-Furness, England

Fair Trade and Trade Justice

- As the world notes the many imbalances between rich and poor more and more clubs are becoming actively engaged in advocating for and promoting issues of Fair Trade. SI Barrow in Furness is one such club. There, the members have been pro-actively lobbying their Local Borough Council for their town to be made a Fair Trade town.
- They have lobbied their Member of Parliament and the Government; written to their local evening newspaper supporting the measure; promoted Fair Trade produce including donating a large hamper of Fair Trade goods to the Mayor's fundraising evening. They have become patrons of the *Lone Mums* course at the local College of Further Education and donated a Fair Trade hamper together with a certificate to the most outstanding student. Their efforts will continue.

SI of the South West Pacific

SI Rakiraki, Fiji

Poverty Alleviation project PAP (Continuing Project)

- Through negotiation, lobbying and partnership with government authorities SI Rakiraki has been instrumental in securing homes for women and their families who were living in extreme poverty for the past five years.
- This year the club received \$25,000 from the Social Welfare Department to build five homes for the destitute and homeless under the PAP programme. The homes are approved by the Health authorities and then the club seeks quotations from three hardware companies and awards the contract to a contractor who completes the plan.
- These homes provide a means to escape from poverty, poor living conditions, and natural disasters. Soroptimists have made a real difference.

Environment 2004 – 2005

SI of the Americas

SI Santa Rosa, USA

The Fernando Lores Clean Water Project

- When one of SI Santa Rosa's members brought back pictures about the struggle for survival of the native women and children living in remote villages along the Amazon, in Peru, the members embarked on a project to bring them potable drinking water. The river which once served the region with a clean source of water had become polluted by industrial waste disposed of by mining companies who have exploited the resources of the area and the resulting toxicity is threatening the lives of women and children. Working with a non-profit organisation and its engineers the club has selected thirty villages to benefit from low maintenance water collection systems. Soroptimists are collaborating with Rotary and Kiwanis clubs to raise the necessary funds to begin the installations and to teach the villagers how to maintain the purification units. The members intend to raise greater public awareness of the plight of the villagers and to hold fundraisers to provide further installations.

SI of Europe

SI Ringsted, Denmark

Planting Trees, - Nature Guide for Children and Adults

- Way back in 1989 the club initiated a local committee comprised of Soroptimists and other citizens of the community, called *Plant a Tree*. The aim was to make the town of Ringsted greener. During the years many trees have been planted until finally the club got together with a farmer to produce a book, *Tree Stories*. The book will raise awareness of the importance of trees as symbols for life. 'Without trees no oxygen and consequently no life'; 'Trees hold drinking water clean and fresh'; and 'Look at your town from the side of the trees'. It is essentially a guide from tree to tree and tells historical and cultural stories about every tree. Many sponsors supported the idea which enabled it to be printed and it is now sold in hotels, tourist offices and bookshops.

SI Great Britain and Ireland

SI Stockport, England

Carrier Bags to Stylish hats

- For some considerable time the club had been collecting polythene carrier bags for recycling. When the number reached 8000 it was time to do something with them and the idea of making hats was born. Several stylish hats were made and featured in the local newspaper.
- *Hatworks*, a local unique hat museum invited the club to exhibit their hats. A further dozen were designed and the club's press officer invited prominent women in the area to model the creations. They included the Mayoress and other dignitaries and a representative of the Stockport Environment and Economic Development Services. The latter lent posters to the club to back up their exhibition and asked for a special hat to be made to be worn whenever the Department Head gave talks. The hats have been mounted on models and labelled with the SI Stockport logo whilst the whole exhibition features the programme work of the club. Publicity leaflets draw attention to waste disposal facilities.

SI of the South West Pacific

SI Benalla, Australia

Toxic Waste Dump

- The government of the State of Victoria informed farmers that their farmland and homes were to be a possible site for a hazardous waste disposal facility, classified Class B, to be encased in concrete and for transportation to the site. As the town lies in a flood plain, subject to floods, it was realised that the concrete would break down and the waste would be swept downstream.
- The club supported their members who were directly involved; they painted banners, attended rallies and meetings, wrote edited submissions to the government and held fund raisers. Their Friendship Link, **SI Harrowgate**, SIGBI donated a raffle prize to help the proceeds. And the club achieved what it set out to do by **Awareness, Advocacy and Action**.

Health 2004 – 2005

SI of the Americas

SI Stuart, Florida, USA

Partnership with Light of the World Charities

- At the request of club members who felt strongly that they should assist women in their own Western Hemisphere, the club's International Relations Committee selected Central America's Honduras, the second poorest country in the hemisphere, to be the recipient of an appropriate project. They chose to work with the Light of the World Charities who were seeking assistance with the construction of St Benedict's, a medical facility for the poor and sick to be free of charge. Club research which included visits to hospitals, viewing slides and videos, and examining the financial strategy of the LOTW was undertaken. Their research revealed a need for a birthing unit and in the event \$6.700 was allocated for not one but two birthing units plus the provision of medical equipment. This will be an on-going commitment by the club.

SI of Europe

SI Zilina, Slovakia

Bring Peace to their Hearts

- Twenty children between the ages of three and eighteen who have been subject to sexual abuse and/or are malnourished live in a home in Zilina. The children have either been left there by their parents or removed from their care because of sexual abuse. Each year the club organises a summer camp for these children and for another twenty children from poor families. All expenses for the camp as well as the school materials for the next school year are provided by the club. The aims are to prevent drug and tobacco use, to protect the children from further sexual abuse, to improve their nutrition and to teach them healthy lifestyles and ensure access to regular health care. The camp is also an opportunity for the children to learn about ecological problems and social behaviour.

SI of Great Britain and Ireland

SI West Bombay, India

Nutritious Food for Cancer patients and Handicapped Children

- The club began a nutritious lunch programme for out-station poor patients and their helpers who travel in for treatment for cancer at the Tata Cancer Hospital and have no place to stay. Members not only provide the 1200 Rs for the lunch but also act as personal servers. Ninety poor children were also invited to the feast; they thoroughly enjoyed both the food and the company and look forward to another occasion. This is in addition to the lunches that the club has long provided to children with a physical handicap. Results have been an improvement in health, and development of personality in a friendly atmosphere with good fun.

SI of the South West Pacific

Region of North Queensland, Australia

Rape Crisis Kits

- Seven Clubs have taken part in this initiative: SI's Burdekin, Cairns, Mackay, Townsville, Townsville Breakwater, Townsville Focus after Five, and Tropical Tablelands.
- It grew in response to the needs of women who have suffered sexual assault with an opportunity to regain their dignity following medical examinations.
- The objectives of the RCK programme are to work in collaboration with health and welfare agencies to recognise and respond to the immediate basic needs of a woman following sexual assault, enable the woman to leave the examination area with dignity, and to provide helpful information about community services.
- The clubs have purchased and provided clean essential clothing and personal items, and have packaged and despatched the kits. The project will also improve nutrition and access to healthcare and promote the awareness of combating HIV/AIDS.

International Goodwill and Understanding 2004 – 2005

SI of the Americas

SI Newport Harbor, USA

Project Independence: Women Survivors of War

- From the outset of the Quadrennial project the club began a campaign to continuously keep it in the eye through Advocacy and Fund raising.
- Members have participated in a variety of ways to advocate and fundraise by presenting programmes around the Desert Coast Region area to Soroptimist and non-Soroptimists; - their local businesses, church groups and the NGO community. A Southern California Forum was organised with Zainab Salbi, founder of the project partner *Women for Women International*, as a speaker. With help from local shelters for homeless women and victims of domestic violence, - who understood and wanted to offer support, the club co-ordinated international sales of Project Independence cards and pins. They gained publicity in the local paper and created several unique fundraising schemes including sale of jewellery, a silent auction and the sale of a war cake book.

SI of Europe

SI Apeldoorn, the Netherlands and the Antilles and Suriname

City of Hope and Peace Dolls

- 'City of Hope' is near a large slum area of Lusaka, Zambia. It consists of an orphanage, a Community school and a Skills Training Centre for girls. Every day before returning home nearly 700 girls are given a meal. The school had no kitchen and the meals had to be cooked over an outdoor wood fire. The club raised the money for building and furnishing a kitchen whilst the girls helped by making paintings and drawings that were sold all over the world. Last year the club began to appeal to artists and designers to create 'Peace Dolls' and they published the best ones on their web site. An internet auction and a sponsor who pays for each click on the web site raised funds for the *Mother and Child Hospital* in Nairobi. The web site has more than 100 peace messages.

SI Great Britain and Ireland

SI Cardiff and District, Wales and SI Ipsae, Mauritius

Mauritius Crèche

- It began with a casual call by a Cardiff Soroptimist in 1994 trying to make contact with the Mauritius Club while on holiday. Her visit to a newly started crèche in the poor Black River area of the island developed eventually into the first Soroptimist International Working Partnership.
- Since that time the Cardiff club has formalised a link with SI Ipsae and has seen the expansion of the crèches. Cardiff members have continuously raised and donated funds to pay for the rent, staff salaries, electricity and food for the crèches; sent educational toys and clothing by freight and even included infants' high chairs in personal holiday luggage!
- This year the Ipsae club celebrated its 20th Anniversary and much as Cardiff members would have wished to attend it was not possible. Currently the crèches are running well.

SI of the South West Pacific

SI Joondalup, Western Australia

East Timor Training Programme

- The Joondalup club members extended the hand of friendship to help the vulnerable women in East Timor which has been torn by conflict, poverty and unemployment. The club raised funds by working with the City Council to run a Chamber Orchestra Festival and has undertaken to pay AUD 85 for a six month course for two women in East Timor to undertake skills training, - office skills, computer use, administration and English language skills. The money has been sent to the Alola Foundation, chaired by the First Lady Kisty Gusmao, who is willing to administer the project.
- The project has created goodwill and understanding and it is hoped that there will be more opportunities for other women and lead to greater goodwill and understanding with peoples, especially women of less fortunate countries.

Summary of International Best Practice Choices for 2004-2005

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	SI Eastwood City, Philippines <i>Public Awareness Campaign</i>	SI Chisinau, Moldova <i>Conference on Trafficking in Women</i>	SI Rugby, England <i>Rugby Rosa</i>	Region of New South Wales <i>Beijing + 10 Process</i>
Education	SI Portland, Oregon, USA <i>Reaching Out, One at a Time (ROOTS)</i>	SI Vladimir, Russia and SI Erlangen, Germany <i>Scholarships for Gifted Children</i>	SI Colombo, Sri Lanka <i>Thimbirigaswewa Community Development Project</i>	SI Damansara, Malaysia <i>Reading Programme</i>
Economic and Social Development	SI Brasilia Lago North, Brazil <i>Fairy Hands</i>	SI Nike-Katowice, Poland <i>Women in the Mining Industry</i>	SI Burrow in Furness, England <i>Fair Trade and Trade Justice</i>	SI Rakiraki, Fiji <i>Poverty Alleviation Project</i>
Health	SI Stuart, Florida, USA <i>Partnership Light of the World Charities</i>	SI Zilina, Slovakia <i>Bring Peace to their Hearts</i>	SI West Bombay, India <i>Nutritious Food for Cancer Patients</i>	Region of North Queensland <i>Rape Crisis Kits</i>
Environment	SI Santa Rosa, California, USA <i>Fernando Lores Clean Water Project</i>	SI Ringsted, Denmark <i>Planting Trees – Nature Guide</i>	SI Stockport, UK <i>Carrier Bags to Stylish Hats</i>	SI Benalla, Australia <i>Toxic waste Dump</i>
International Goodwill and Understanding	SI Newport Harbour, California, USA <i>Project Independence</i>	SI Apeldoorn/the Netherlands and the Antilles and Suriname <i>City of Hope and Peace Dolls</i>	SI Cardiff, Wales and SI Ipsae, Mauritius <i>Mauritius Crèches</i>	SI Joondalup, Western Australia <i>East Timor Training Programme</i>

Programme Team 2003-2005
 Soroptimist International Headquarters
 87 Glisson Road
 Cambridge CB1 2HG United Kingdom
www.soroptimistinternational.org