

## December 2016

December marks the end of the calendar year, but for many it starts a period of renewed enthusiasm for Programme Action as they return from Conference having been inspired by keynote speakers and encouraged by the projects that were presented from all over the Federation.

From Advocacy projects to lapel spoons we saw some of the amazing work being done under all the programme areas, it is very difficult to select winners for Programme awards as there are so many worthy contestants, my congratulations to all nominees and for those that did not win an award please keep trying- and don't forget we need to see the work on the SIGBI database for it to be considered.

I was dismayed to hear that some people are still putting information on the old SI database PLEASE ensure that all work is put on our own database and not the old one.



Malta was a super Conference- it certainly highlighted past President Margaret's theme of Engineering the future- with a female engineer and a female astronaut we learned that there are no limits if only you try. We also learnt the importance of introducing Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) subjects to girls at an early stage in school perhaps prompting more of them to consider careers in these subjects- once more convincing us that Education is the key to the future.

The Pink by the Pool event was fun- most people entered into it with enthusiasm and ingenuity- from fluorescent pink tutus topped by Welsh hats to Geisha umbrellas in pink it looked as if a flock of flamingo's had landed by the pool of the Hilton in St Julien's Bay, and as an added bonus over 1000€ was raised for breast Cancer – Awareness, Advocacy and Action teamed with fun and friendship all in one event!

One of the beauties of meeting so many other Soroptimists at Conference is the ability to exchange ideas and share best practice. This is something that I would like to see extended in year to come giving dedicated time to this aspect of our work. We have long been promoting working in partnerships and with friendship links. For some this has worked, but for others it has not and it would be great if we could improve working together.

We should always consider the effect our project work has on communities, especially if we are working abroad, distant from the delivery of the project. By working with others who are "on the ground" the effect can be monitored and we can be sure that we are delivering what is needed without damaging local economies.



It was fantastic to hear that we have also raised over £30,000 for the Meru project in 9 months – I am sure we will reach our original target.

Working with Child.org and CIFFORD we are monitoring the projects and have been advised that some small changes will have to be made from the original plan. As yet no changes have been discussed but we hope to meet up with the partners soon. We all know that plans have to change to meet circumstances so we will keep everyone informed of progress.

As many of us head up to the Christmas festivities it is a time also to reflect on our blessings and to consider those less fortunate- I know as Soroptimists we do this most of the time, but as Christmas is synonymous with giving how will we extend that in our work.

I have heard of many clubs participating in Christmas Fayres, baking, sewing and crafting to raise money for their charities. Some clubs decorate trees in local churches and have a donations box, others make a special donations to food and toy banks. Whatever you do at this time of year I am sure it will have the benefit of achieving your goals and also bringing festive cheer and relief to the recipients.

May I wish you all a Merry Christmas, or Happy Holiday and a peaceful, prosperous, Healthy and of course Programme Productive New Year

Barbara Dixon  
Programme Director