

August 2018



This month we will be concentrating on the [International Day of Peace](#) and some more clubs outside the UK.

It is fascinating to see what work goes on in other countries, their enthusiasm and dedication has to be applauded.

The International Day of Peace has long been an established date in Soroptimist Diaries - how will you be celebrating?



I know that several will be congregating at the Soroptimist plot in the [National Memorial Arboretum](#), celebrating 100 years of some women in the UK getting the vote and promoting Peace across the world. I do hope that your club will join them. If you have been to the NMA before you know what a wonderful place it is and if not you really should.

The Midlands clubs do an excellent job of maintaining this special place and recent replanting has restored some of its former glory. What better way of promoting Soroptimism than by a mass gathering at the plot.

We are also into the final run up to [Conference](#), most of the presenters have now confirmed and the Programme Team are busy selecting



clubs for best practice awards - I do hope you will be there to see what wonderful work is being done across our Federation.

Barbara Dixon
Programme Director



FOCUS ON MALTA AND UGANDA

Rita Beaumont - APD Food Security & Healthcare

Despite being the single club on the island, **SI Malta** has an active programme history. Two diverse examples of projects are supporting Breast Cancer Research and raising awareness of the need to Stop Violence Against Women. Supporting Breast Cancer Research involved both club members and delegates at the Federation Conference held on the island in November 2016 demonstrating the power of collaboration.

Those of us who attended conference will always remember The Pink by the Pool event which was organised by the club. Delegates joined together to show solidarity with women across the world living in countries where breast cancer diagnosis and treatment is not high on the agenda of their governments.

In addition to raising awareness, a bucket collection raised £1,500 that was presented to President of the Republic and forwarded to the university on the island to support ongoing research; the sharing of findings across the research community benefits women worldwide.



When focusing on Violence Against Women the club were trying to raise awareness of the need to stop violence against women where it is used in conflict areas as a weapon of war as well as advocating for women who experience violence in other situations e.g. domestic violence. As a result of a public forum held to discuss the topic, a resolution was signed by members present and presented to local MEPs. It was subsequently presented to the EU Parliament as part of a Plenary Report calling for a resolution to be adopted to combat violence against women, laying out several proposals to protect women across the EU Member states and beyond.



In **Uganda** there are three clubs and below we focus on projects by two of these. **SI Lira** choose to focus on promoting Safe Reproductive Health and **SI Tororo** on the need to improve Sanitation Awareness

SI Lira's project is ongoing and addresses Education and Reproductive Health. This project promotes reproductive health by providing; sanitary pads, adolescent counselling, and promotion of good menstrual hygiene by providing information about a range of materials and their safe use; in addition it includes Adult Literacy for women to support reproductive issues facing the girls. Whilst Universal Primary Education is promoted by the Government of Uganda, the enrolment and retention of girls is low.

One of the major reasons cited is lack of reproductive health support and education for the girls from impoverished households; the lack of sanitary protection and education lead to embarrassment and, sadly, some mistook adolescent body changes as sickness. The project involves identification of the girls requiring help at three local schools through the school senior women teachers. Products including pads, knickers, buckets and soap have been provided and an education programme introduced. This project is ongoing, but the immediate results demonstrate increased number of adolescent girls attending school (150 in the three schools have been supported) with improved confidence and academic performance as well as a raised awareness by the girls of their reproductive health leading to positive adolescent life outcomes.

Quote from a beneficiary "If it were not for the project of my best sister, I would have dropped out of school already. I used to miss school every month when it's time for my period. During this time of my period, I did not even have soap to wash my clothes".

SI Tororo choose to improve Sanitation Awareness in a very practical way. The project reduced the litter around the public toilets at the local trading centre by cleaning and picking up the rubbish in the area to promote a healthy environment. They organised the local community by contacting area local councils, purchasing cleaning equipment including gloves, brooms, polythene bags and rakes; they hired a wheel barrow for collecting the rubbish. They also made sure soap and water were available. Having cleaned up the area the local council have pledged to maintain the clean-up activity: definitely a job well done!



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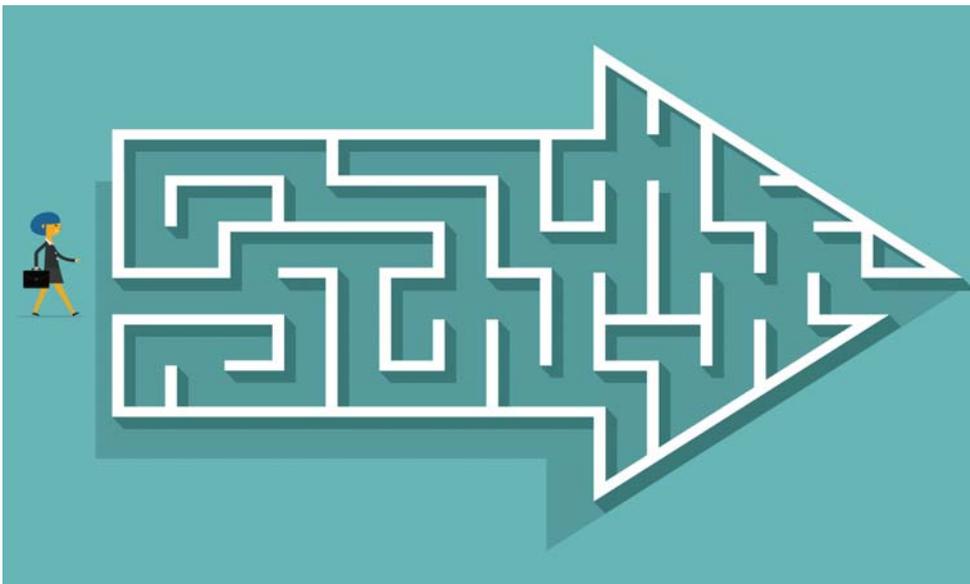
Each year, on 21st September, the [International Day of Peace](#) is observed around the world. This year's theme: 'The Right to Peace - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70' celebrates the 70th anniversary of the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) which, in the words of the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, recognises the inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human race. This landmark document recognises that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person, elements of which build on the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.



Reuters

As we know, 'Peace Process' involves all of us, and there are many things we can do as women to enhance it. The groundbreaking [UN Security Council Resolution 1325](#), reaffirms the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building. For example, it recognises the participation of women as a critical component of successful peacekeeping mission – leading to greater credibility of the forces, more effective protection efforts, higher reporting of gender-based crimes and lower incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers. Despite this, only 3% of UN military peacekeepers are women.

Further, gender parity is not universal in our political parties. Since political parties are among the most important institutions affecting women's political participation, the role of women in political parties must be encouraged particularly at the national level. Women can also become involved in other areas by joining civil society organisations, trade unions, non-governmental organisations, and the media.



In many countries the rights of women are enshrined in law, and there are no formal legal barriers to women's political participation in election processes. In practice, however, there are often formidable obstacles to women's active participation in politics. The hurdles to be overcome can be particularly daunting for women considering running for office, and may be overwhelming for women in post-conflict countries.

Women are also encouraged to continue to become aware of current social and moral issues plaguing our world today and let their voices be heard. One example is [The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons](#) (TTPNW) adopted on 7th July 2017 by the United Nations, winning with a vote of 122 to one.

This monumental achievement echoes that the whole world together is getting closer on tackling such a big issue. However, a lot still needs to be done as countries like the UK, US, France, Russia and China are still opposed to the treaty.

That the whole of humanity is not in agreement on a delicate issue as this one reaffirms the fact that we all need to work for peace from the different angles of the society.



Days of interest in August

1st World Breastfeeding Week **12th** International Youth Day **19th** World Humanitarian Day