

SIGBI Programme Director's Blog October 2017

Last month I started by sending thoughts and prayers to Nepal and Sierra Leone, this month I extend those wishes to the Caribbean as Hurricane Irma devastated the islands.



We have heard from most of our members in the islands and I am glad to say they have not suffered personal injury, but they have reported on the damage and need for assistance to rebuild their countries and their lives.

Once again the Emergency relief fund has been used to respond to this request.

We cannot control the weather but we are seeing, increasingly, the effect of climate change. Many will appreciate that some of this is due to a natural global cycle, but we are not helping.

Environmental issues are often towards the bottom of our list when considering projects as there are so many other problems we need to address regarding women's equality and yet it is often the women who suffer most from natural disasters, left homeless and vulnerable they are easy prey to Traffickers.

This first week in October many clubs will be engaging in the Ant-Trafficking Survey and we anticipate the preliminary results at Conference.

Many of you will now be preparing for Conference and I look forward to seeing many old friends and making some new ones. I know the Conference team has been working diligently to ensure that things run well and that you have an enjoyable and stimulating few days.

The annual Conference marks the end of one SIGBI year and the start of another as new Presidents are installed to take us forward on the next part of our journey. It may be a little premature but I would like to thank all those who have served in the role of President- at whatever level, and wish the incoming Presidents all the best for their year.

We are facing times of change and the work involved in achieving those changes can be tiring, frustrating and difficult. I am sure we all offer our support as we progress.

On a personal level it promises to be a busy lead up to Conference, with preparations for the next CSW, one Regional presentation and two club presentations all on Programme Action of course!

One of the nice things about being a Soroptimist is the friendship and warmth of reception you receive when visiting other clubs and Regions, sometimes even in other Countries.

Over the years I have attended meetings in Singapore, Cyprus and Greece – the welcome is always the same.

We used to be known as a Friendship Organisation many years ago and although that title is seldom used now it is still one of the overriding features of our Organisation, second only to our programme work.

We have many challenges in our Soroptimist work but we also have them in our personal lives as well and it is the friendship of our Soroptimist sisters that often eases the burden and sees us through.

Long may it continue.

Barbara Dixon
Programme Director.