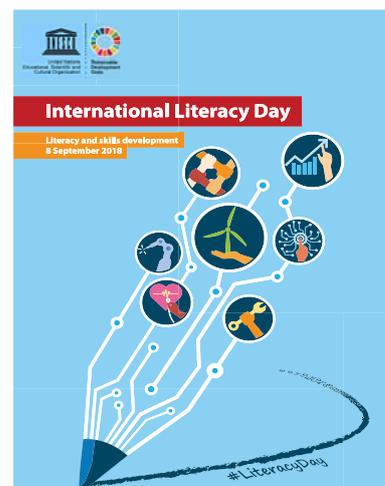


September 2018



Since 1967, [International Literacy Day](#) (8th September) has taken place annually around the world to remind everyone of the vital importance of literacy as a matter of dignity and human rights. This year's theme is 'Literacy and skills development'.



I know many clubs around our Federation are working on literacy projects and perhaps you'll hear of some of those at the Liverpool conference.

And on the subject of the conference, a gentle reminder that registration closes on 30th September. If you are planning on going, but haven't got round to booking yet, don't forget that the deadline is getting close.



There is a brilliant line up of speakers, including Helen Pankhurst, Terry Waite and Sir Ranulph Fiennes, plus we'll be showcasing some of the amazing Soroptimist project work that is undertaken.

And if you want to add on a couple of days afterwards, Liverpool is one of the most dynamic cities in Britain, visit the conference website for all the [information on the conference](#) and for [things to do in Liverpool](#).

Barbara Dixon
Programme Director



FOCUS ON CAMEROON, THE GAMBIA, NIGERIA AND SIERRA LEONE

Naina Shah - APD Environmental Sustainability

Soroptimists in three West African countries have done exemplary work to improve the lives of women and girls in their communities.

SI Nigeria were invited to partner with General of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP). Soroptimists will henceforth include them in their programmes and projects as official partners. In their advocating role the Soroptimists connected with the Judge of the Human and People's Rights in Nigeria and pledged to work on women's right advocacies.

Meanwhile, **SI Enugu** of Nigeria extended relief and material supplies to a sixteen years old girl who gave birth to triplets. Counselling and moral support was abundant. Similarly, to mark World Health Day, **SI Ikeja** donated useful medical supplies to Randle General Hospital, Surulere, Lagos.

In Cameroon, **SI Yaounde** partnered with Women Impacting Values for Development to fight gender inequality fight early marriage and FGM. They organized an interesting and an impacting White Ribbon Campaign. The aim to educate men/boys, to fight against gender-based violence and stop all forms of violence against women and girls. Education in STEM subjects are high on the SI Yaounde's Programme Action. They have encouraged girls to take up the STEM subjects and ensure that they enter into the work space so far taboo for them.

Since the outbreak in Sierra Leone of the Ebola epidemic in 2015, families have been destroyed and health workers such as doctors, nurses, and ambulance drivers have lost their lives to it. With support from their Friendship Link Clubs (SI Gravesend and SI Nottingham), **SI Freetown** works for Ebola orphans. They began with 36 orphans in Bo Town, Southern Sierra Leone and Freetown in the Western District. It is currently supporting a total of 25 pupils at both primary and secondary school levels. In another outreach to 25 Ebola survivors, skill training in beads and fabric jewellery making was provided. They also organised, a three-month intensive session, a Creative & Practical Arts course.



One of the looming issues in this country is sexual and gender-based violence. Amid its many challenges is the lack of knowledge of their rights amongst women and girls. The club in collaboration with the police sensitization of issues surrounding sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), through national radio is proving helpful. Messages of how to report, access to medical support, and legal aid, counselling support, community resilience processes etc. are reinforced to create community awareness.



SI Freetown carrier bags from newspapers

Joint effort of the Soroptimists and the government will impact effective implementation of women's programmes in these countries. Their objective of assisting women groups to educate them on how to be self-reliant and thereby play important role in their homes as mothers and contribute in nation building.

Programme Team

EDUCATION

Barbara Dixon, Programme Director



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Education is the process of facilitating learning or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, beliefs and habits. Educational methods can take place in formal or informal settings and include storytelling, discussion, teaching, training and directed research, often under the guidance of educators, but many pupils can be self-taught.

Education began in prehistory, as adults trained the young in the knowledge and skills deemed necessary in their society. In pre-literate societies, this was achieved orally and through imitation. Story-telling passed knowledge, values, and skills from one generation to the next.

Simple tasks, for us, can be monumental tasks for others. Women and girls have long been considered not worthy of education and hence do not know how to make the best use of their limited resources and cannot truly know what their rights are. It is essential that we all work hard to redress this imbalance.

SIGBI's own [Diamond Education Grant](#) scheme allows women to either further their education or retrain with the help of small grants. Many clubs throughout the Federation work on educational and supporting projects. It is nationally and internationally recognised that there is a shortage of girls choosing [STEM](#) subjects as degrees and a growing body of evidence about barriers to subsequent careers.

SI Woking created a challenge to inspire and encourage girls to overcome these barriers. This project is educational, empowering and enabling.

The project involves contacting schools and encouraging them to accept the challenge: finding inspirational women in different STEM roles to act as judges, liaising with the university re the Presentation Evening and actively seeking sponsorship from local businesses.



Seven Teams presenting different projects to the judges at an inspirational presentation evening, which included the award ceremony, in the presence of the High Sheriff of Surrey, the Vice Principal and Dean of Science Royal Holloway and an address from Anita Wu - Civil Engineer.

SI Chester decided to support a local charity, [Classrooms in the Clouds](#) (CITC), who work to build schools and improve education in Nepal. The money raised will be spent on:

- Intensive Teacher Training Programme for eight female teachers and a Mentor
- Sponsorship of two Peripatetic Female Support Teachers for two years
- Teacher/Student Resources including reusable Menstrual Health Kits



SI Pune Metro East have long been involved in a project called Girls moving forward.

In partnership with DEEPGRIHA: ...they care for young girls from marginalized populations to enable them to develop into competent and confident individuals. SI PME interacts with the girls there once a month. In this community outreach project, essential life skills are imparted to young girls ensuring their empowerment, giving them opportunities and enabling them into informed individuals.



This is an ongoing award-winning project which involves 12 modules imparting life skills to girls from the lower economic strata of society, most of who were first generation learners. These modules were conducted by members of club or other qualified professionals. The young girls gained immense self-confidence while learning different new skills. There was a marked difference in their personalities - their timid and reserved natures had been replaced by confidence and almost no inhibitions.

Education is the key to success - and the only way out of the poverty trap. It is essential we all pull together to give all women and girls this basic but absolutely fundamental right.



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Days of interest in September

5th International Day of Charity	8th International Literacy Day	9th National Dementia Carers Day (UK)
21st International Day of Peace	26th National Fitness Day (UK)	