



SI ESPERANCE - GIRLS IN AVIATION

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Girls in Aviation

A Programme Action Project By SI Esperance, Trinidad and Tobago
Completed October 13, 2018

Presented by Leah Stewart-Rivas, SI Esperance
October 24, 2019

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Good Day everyone

I am Leah Stewart Rivas, a member of SI Esperance.

This project was conceptualized by Jayanti Lutchmedial, one of the members of SI Esperance who wanted to be a pilot

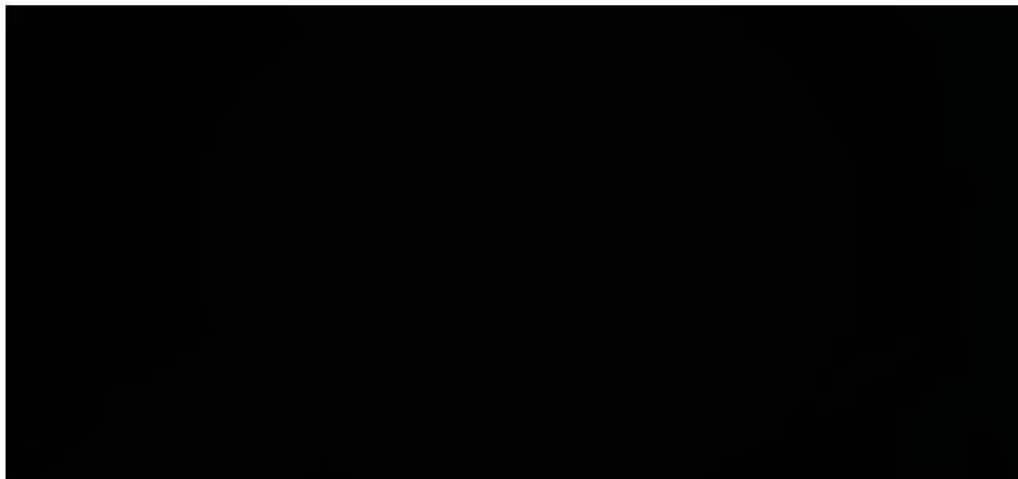
She's an attorney because becoming a pilot was not something that girls did when neither she or I did were growing up.

She came from a family of attorneys and that was the path that was paved for her.

So how do we break the stereotype –

Our project attempts to do that, and provide opportunities for girls who may be first generation high school attendees or first generation tertiary level students, or girls who want something different from the usual career choices girls are herded into....

So here is a little teaser into our project (run video 1)



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Project Context

- SI Esperance developed a 'STEM Tree' of Programme Action Projects as part of Programme Action Plans in the Proposed Club Development Plan
- Research by a member lead us to the "Women in Aviation" Website
- Aviation is not mainstream in Trinidad as a career choice for women
- University of Trinidad and Tobago (UTT) Aviation Campus were in the accreditation process
- Bristow Helicopters had a base in Trinidad

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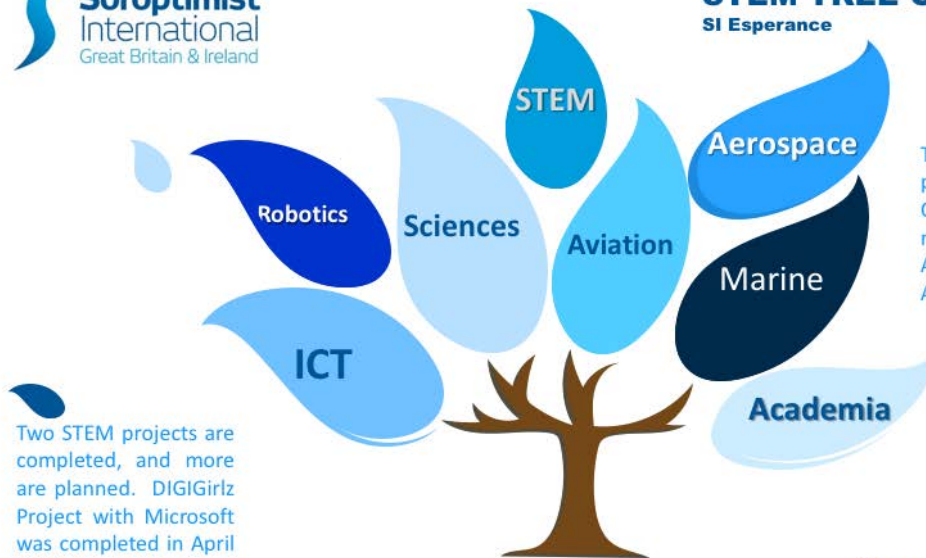
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Part of the requirements for Charter application was a development plan that included STEM projects

Using the vision of SIGBI with STEM as an initiative, the project was conceptualized

STEM TREE OF PA Projects

SI Esperance



The scope for STEM projects is expansive. One project can spawn many other projects. Eg: Aviation can lead to Aerospace projects.

Two STEM projects are completed, and more are planned. DIGIGirlz Project with Microsoft was completed in April 2019

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Project Goals and Objectives

- Influence career choices for girls in the non traditional field of aviation – break the gender stereotype, as it is usually a male dominated field
- Seek out girls in rural areas – break the cultural stereotype
- Establish partnerships with stakeholders – lower cost, local accredited options
- Increase the visibility of Soroptimists as –
 - Role models for potential members
 - Role models for young women
 - And Marketing SIGBI as an organization focussing on women and girls
- Project supports SDG 5 – Gender Equality

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Traditionally girls in rural areas have few options for careers due to gender bias (more likely to enter education, administrative, wife and mother)

Some of our members are retired educators and we contacted schools in our area of operations and through their relationships. The teachers then invited the girls many of whom lived in rural areas and they wrote a short essay on why they should be chosen for the project participation.

There was full cooperation from all the students, teachers, schools, UTT and Bristow. UTT and Bristow all gave us ideas on how to make the day worthwhile.

No cost for the girls to attend.

UTT and Bristow covered the cost of refreshments

We had a small fundraiser in the month prior and some monies along with donations from benefactors covered the transportation and other costs.

Members and their families donated the standee, members bought polos and pins themselves

Education is not always a vehicle to a career

Soroptimists as role models; they share their experiences and can help girls make better career choices



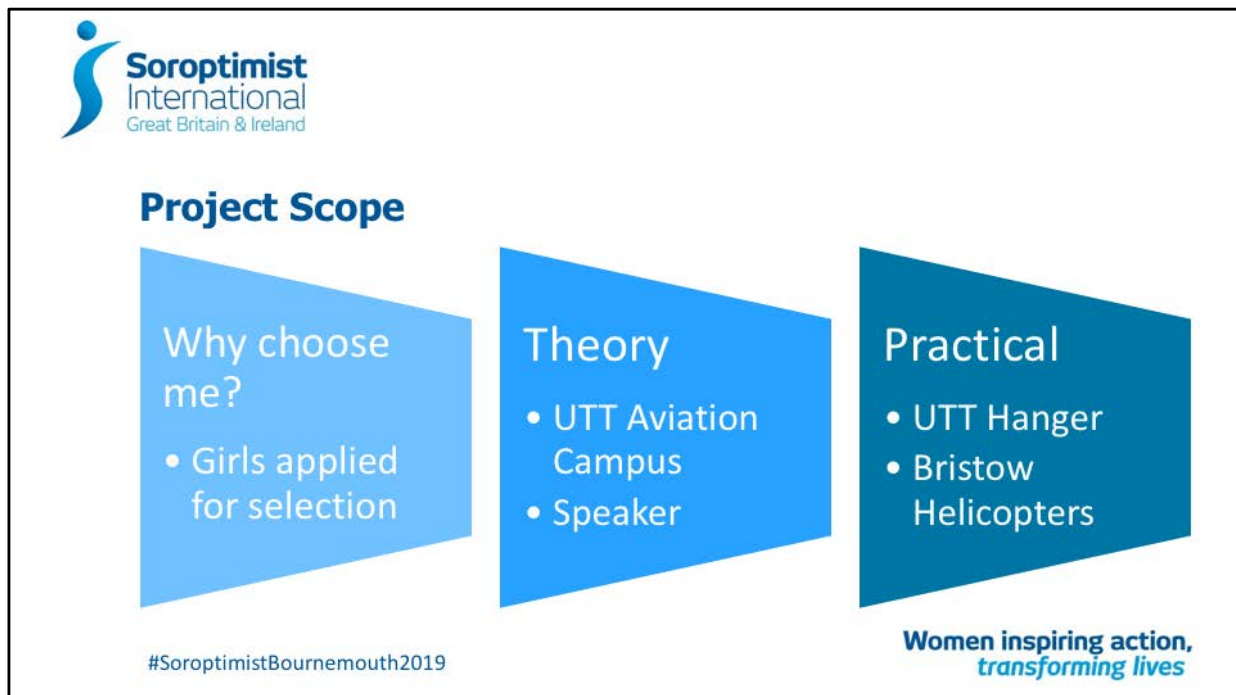
Women in Aviation International

- International Organization
- www.wai.org
- Headlined October 13, 2018 as Girls in Aviation Day
- Girls in Aviation became the jumping off point for the project and October 11, 2018 was also headlined as International Day of the Girl Child

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Note worthy... The girls in the schools had to prepare a letter on... "Why choose me" to attend the program

A speaker was proposed

Theory and practical aspects

We used all our personal connections, friends and family

Such as

UTT Director (Jayanti's Uncle)

Bristow visit (Cheryl's brother is a former Bristow Captain)

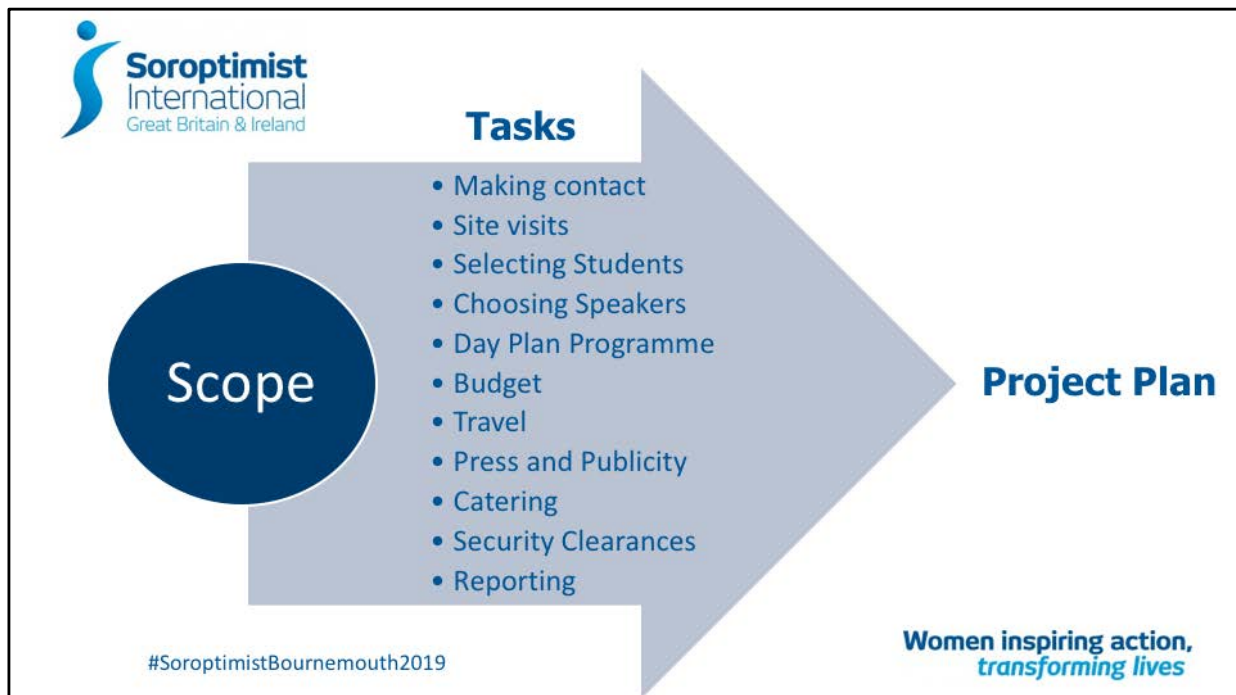
Speaker 1st female aircraft captain (Patricia personally knew Wendy Yawching)

Video taping (Cheryl's friend's husband)

Photos (Friend of the club)

Schools and principals (members had contacts in the schools in rural areas)

Everything seemed right for the project



The scope of the project begun with a brainstorming session of a group of members who formed a committee

A number of ideas were discussed and a couple versions of the scope and project plan developed

We settled on one plan and developed all the aspects to implement. It took three weeks from idea conception to implementation

WHY choose me?

- Students wrote a short 'application' on why they should be chosen to participate in the day's activities.... Here's what they had to say....
- "3% of women are pilots worldwide. I want to be one of them"
- "I attended the MTEST Aviation Junior Camp when I was 12, I was the only girl in the camp – I always wanted to be a pilot"
- "aviation is a field that has always been marketed and taken by men; we need to be encouraged to be incorporated in this area"
- "working in aviation is my dream job"

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All the girls who attended the day's activities had to write up "an application" on why they should be chosen

SI Esperance – Area of Operation

The area of operation of the club is in the southern rural part of the island.

Girls in these areas are usually 1st generation secondary students and 1st generation tertiary students

Their exposures are sometimes limited as they are in areas where cultural norms and gender bias take priority over hopes and dreams.

So we started the journey in the southland....

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SI Esperance focuses its work in the rural areas of South Trinidad. Low density population, poor infrastructure,

We started the journey in Palmiste, near the village of Esperance.

After picking up all the girls, the first stop was at the UTT campus in Couva

The second stop was the Bristow at the Piarco International Airport

UTT Aviation Campus – Careers in Aviation



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The introductions and welcome by the President of the UTT and the operations Director, gave the girls full scope into the careers offered at the UTT. Students currently enrolled also give their perspectives on the choices they made.

UTT Aviation Campus Curriculum

- Education entry level requirements
- Courses and Duration
- Career options in Trinidad and abroad
- Professional career path



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They received good insight on how to make subject choices for the GCE equivalent exams

Wendy Yawching Ret. Captain, Commercial Aircraft

- First Female Pilot and Capitan with the local Trinidad and Tobago Airline
- Her Passion, Her Dream
- Stay Focused and Work Hard
- IT IS POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE YOUR GOAL



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Speaker with a passion

Wendy Yawching gave a most inspirational talk on her journey to become a pilot. Overcoming hurdles and on the job challenges, including discrimination and how high performance and focus helped her break stereotypes and pave the way for female pilots in Trinidad and Tobago



**University of
Trinidad and
Tobago
Aviation Campus
- Students and
Soroptimists**



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What a great morning, which ended with a tour of the hanger and training aircraft, as well as an opportunity to speak with students who were enrolled in the program – all girls.

Bristow Helicopters

- Service Provider for Offshore Oil and Gas Production Company BPTT
- Located at the Piarco International Airport
- Aircraft Hanger, Maintenance Shop, Admin Offices

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Bristow Caribbean has been based in Trinidad and Tobago for over 40 years, transporting employees of Amoco now BP to offshore oil and gas producing platforms located in deep water.

Experiencing the Role of a Pilot and First Officer

- Girls met pilots, and other staff at Bristow
- Learnt the risks of flying over deep water
- Sitting in the cockpit of aircraft in service – getting a 'feel' of the career



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Role of Engineering and Maintenance Ground Support

- Careers in Helicopter Aviation
- Support roles are just as critical as flying



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Spoke to Engineering, Electrical and Instrumentation, Mechanical Ground support

Met HSE Advisors on the role in oil and gas personnel transport

Met Documentation specialists to ensure all regulatory requirements are met

Saw the airtraffic control tower and got some insight into the operations (albeit from afar)

Learnt that aviation is not just about flying planes



Bristow Caribbean Limited



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Careers in Aviation

- Pilot
- First Officer
- Engineering Maintenance
- Electrical and Instrumentation
- Logistics
- Aviation HSE
- Documentation Specialists
- Air traffic controller
- Spares and Inventory
- Cargo Management
- Training Captains
- Avionics
- Lecturer

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After the Project.....

- Press, Publicity and Social media write-ups
- Thank You phone calls and letters to our partners
- Follow-up with the girls on their experience for the day
- Project Committee - debrief for what went well and improvements
- Consider a plan for the next STEM project with UTT as a partner
- Enter report on SIGBI database

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Project was featured in local newspapers

B4 life

Thursday, October 18, 2018
garden.com

Soroptimists introduce girls to aviation

Thursday, October 18 marked UN's International Day of the Girl, a day aimed at highlighting and addressing the needs and challenges girls face, while promoting girls' empowerment and the fulfilment of their human rights, including access to education. The theme, 'With Her: A Skilled Girl Force' is aimed at focusing resources on creating opportunities for girls to attain skills that make them employable.

Women in Aviation International also designated Saturday, October 13 as Girls in Aviation Day to promote and encourage girls to explore careers in the field of aviation.

The Proposed Soroptimist Club Experience emerged the celebration of these two important days and hosted a Girls in Aviation event, with the kind assistance of the University of T&T Aviation Campus, retired Captain Wendy Vanech and Britrow Caribbean Limited. Twenty girls from rural areas in Trinidad attended the event and were treated to an filled day at the Campus of UTT and Britrow's operations at Piarco. Captain Vanech gave a moving and awe-inspiring motivational talk about her



Retired Captain Wendy Vanech, the first T&T Retiree Captain, encourages participants to dream limitlessly.

life and the path she forged in becoming the first female captain at Caribbean Airlines.

The girls also had the opportunity to speak with female students who are currently pursuing the BSc programme in Aircraft Maintenance and Management and met with

UTT President Professor Sarin Al-Zubaidi, who himself is a recreational pilot, with published research in the field of aviation. The tour of the campus proved to be the highlight for both the students and the Soroptimists, who had an opportunity to explore various aircraft located



The girls enjoyed the hands-on experience provided at Britrow in Piarco.

at the facility. The students spent the afternoon at Britrow Caribbean's Trinidad operations, where they learned about the commercial side of the aviation industry. Britrow is the largest industrial aviation service provider in Trinidad and its helicopter services are utilized by all major

players in Trinidad's oil and gas industry. Pilot, engineers and managerial personnel from Britrow spent the afternoon giving the girls a tour, answering questions and providing the young ladies with a wealth of information regarding careers in the aviation field.

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Outcomes

- ✓ Provide career choices and opportunities for girls in non-traditional career paths
- ✓ 19 girls experienced career choices as Commercial and Helicopter Pilots, Airtraffic Controllers, Aircraft Engineers and Aviation Support
- ✓ Established relationship with partners to deliver additional STEM programmes
 - UTT has other campuses that deliver STEM programmes in careers not traditionally held by women eg: plant process operations, marine, ICT and have offered to partner. Bristow will support additional visits.
- ✓ Increased the awareness of Soroptimism in Trinidad and Tobago
 - Soroptimists work was featured in three national newspapers and the organization's work is now recognised
- ✓ Project supports SDG 5 – Gender Equality

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What went well and we plan to do another in 2020

- Soroptimists Teamwork – A Project Committee was convened to develop the project proposal
- Club Approval to proceed
- Development of a project plan with objectives, scope, tasks, roles and responsibilities, timeline and backup plans if things went wrong
- Links within our communities were identified
- Draw on links with our personal and professional networks
- We learnt to do more with less – be more efficient in a tight economic climate
 - Girls did not have to pay, all costs were covered by a Fundraiser, and UTT and Bristow received no fee.

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Girls Just Wanna Have Fun! But it wasn't all smooth...

- Committee Members got pulled away with work demands – others stepped up to complete tasks
- Project also included visit to the air traffic control tower – too much for the day – had to cancel after we did a project timing walkthrough



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Soraya Thompson



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THANK YOU

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END.

Questions and Answers