

SIGBI Limited

Annual Report 2013

*From vision to action,
Soroptimists educating to lead*



CONTENTS

Page 1	Cover Sheet
Page 2	Contents Page
Page 3	Foreword
Page 4	Board of Directors
Page 5	Communications
Page 6	Finance
Page 7	Membership
Page 8	Organisational Development
Page 9	Programme
Page 10	Directors Without Portfolio
Page 11	Programme Team
Page 12	APD Economic Empowerment
Page 13	APD Environmental Sustainability
Page 14	APD Food Security and Healthcare
Page 15	APD Learning Opportunities
Page 16	APD Violence and Conflict Resolution
Page 17	The BIG Project
Page 18	Friendship Link Co-ordinator
Page 19-21	SIGBI Charitable Funds
Page 22	Company Details



Foreword by Pat Black

SIGBI President 2012-2013

Congratulations to all members throughout the Federation of Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland who have been working to fulfil the Vision of Soroptimism:

“Soroptimist International is a vibrant, dynamic organisation for today’s professional and business women. We are committed to a world where women and girls together achieve their individual and collective potential, realise aspirations and have an equal voice in creating strong and peaceful communities worldwide”.

By turning this Vision into Action in many different ways through educating, empowering and enabling women and girls Soroptimists are supporting thousands to fulfil their potential and change lives and those of their families for the better.

In each of the 30 countries which make up our Federation individual Soroptimists have contributed to projects, activities and events in each of the focus areas: economic empowerment, environmental sustainability, food security and health care, learning opportunities, violence and conflict resolution as they affect the lives of women and girls. Examples of each of these are found in this report.

This year SIGBI held a Day of Action focused on the Birthing in the Gambia Project; many clubs used this opportunity to raise awareness of the vulnerability of mothers giving birth in unhygienic conditions as well as raising funds to support our Federation project in partnership with MCAI.

As I have travelled around the Federation I have met inspirational women and heard inspirational stories of change to individual lives and to communities. Members are proud of the service they give to their community whether it is providing a much needed water supply, a school, an opportunity to feed a family, helping to save the lives of a mother and baby, or speaking out against violence.

Gandhi said “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others”. How true!

Often to an individual member it can feel that you are making only a very small contribution. We must remember that working together and in partnership with others the impact can be enormous so thank you to all our partner organisations and members for their Friendship Links around the world.

In every Club, Region, Country, National Association and Network within this Federation women provide leadership to assist their sister Soroptimists to become involved at local, national and international levels. The Federation has reviewed how this can be taken forward to ensure our organisation is fit for purpose in the 21st century. Through the Building the Future of SIGBI framework, proposals have been made for increasing membership, changes in internal organisation and above all, improved communications embracing the fast developing technologies.

The achievement of recognition through Special Consultative Status by the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations for our Federation this year means that as we look to the future we know that the work which we do is truly valued. Soroptimists are proud to do what we say we will: we turn our **Vision into Action**.

SIGBI LIMITED BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Pat Black



Margaret Oldroyd



Jenny Vince



Maureen Maguire



Jane Slatter



Constance Mutunhu



Ann Hodgson



Sue Biggs



Bozena Benton



Chinwe Ezenwa-Mbah



Sue Williams

Communications

The Communications Committee has worked hard to support the Federation theme “**From vision to action, Soroptimists educating to lead**”. A key strategic objective has been to raise the profile of SIGBI by increasing the public’s awareness of our work and achievements. By raising our profile we will attract new members and partners, enabling us all to achieve more together.

Clubs across the Federation have gained publicity from campaigns and events using “special days” such as International Women’s Day to attract interest in who we are and what we do. Soroptimists have been raising their profile using all available forms of media; TV, Radio, Newspapers, Magazines, Websites and Social Media (particularly Facebook and Twitter). The “Stop the Traffick” campaign against human trafficking certainly got us noticed at the SIGBI Conference in Belfast! The new corporate identity is appearing on promotional items throughout the Federation and it is wonderful to see clubs taking this opportunity to use this as a tool to raise their profile, particularly at external events.

SIGBI HQ is in the UK and we have been more active in writing to British politicians on behalf of the membership this year. We have also had some success with being acknowledged as an important NGO representing women. We have made less impact from news items sent to the British media from SIGBI HQ, but we will persist with all efforts.

Between April 2012 and March 2013 we have had 130,000 visits to the SIGBI Website. This shows that the new website has created a 300% increase in activity compared to the old website and we expect numbers to increase more with the use of Social Media to draw views to look at more detailed information of SIGBI projects and campaigns. There have been 32 new club websites since April 2012 and clubs inform us that prospective new members most often contact them through their websites these days.

The Soroptimist News is a valuable internal communications platform; it provides inspiration for clubs to plan for the future and is a show-case of our work. It is available electronically as well as in paper copy, making it easy to share our achievements with non-Soroptimists too. In the February 2013 issue, we were able to demonstrate how the new SIGBI Template adverts look and how easy it is to tailor them for use locally.

We rely on all Soroptimists to inform the world about our successes and achievements and it is through the efforts of individuals that we are taking the Soroptimist **vision** and turning it into **action** and showing that Soroptimists are indeed “**Educating to Lead**”.



Jane Slatter
Director

This report covers the accounts for year beginning 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013.

The net profit shown for the year is £79,751 in sterling and the total members' funds (including reserves) stands at £905,951. The results are certainly better than last year's and the organisation continues to have a strong financial base.

There has been a steady increase in income from investments. Complimentary to this, there has been a sharp increase in unrealised investment income to £33,344 pounds as compared to an unrealised loss of £8,229 pounds in the year ending March 2012. The trend may continue into the next year if we do not move the investments as per the recommendation from our advisors. Our investments continue to be placed for the long term.

There was a marked improvement in expenditure due to a combination of factors; a continued close monitoring by the Executive Officer who now presents to the Board each quarter, the level of expenditure for each Director as compared with the budgeted figure and prudence on the part of the Directors themselves.

The Federation Management Board, supported by the Finance Committee, is responsible for the financial affairs of the General Fund as well as the three charity accounts within SIGBI. These are as follows:

- SIGBI Benevolent Fund
- Emergency Relief Fund
- Diamond Education Fund

Beever and Struthers are the current auditors having been appointed by Tender in the last financial year. Their term expires after audit of March 2015.

The Finance Committee will explore ways of sourcing sponsorship for the Conference and with the support, input and suggestions of the Finance Committee, we will continue to utilize funds to help take the organisation to the next level.

Constance Mutunhu
Director



Membership

In light of the vacant position, the Board tasked Sue Williams, Director Without Portfolio, to carry out a 'watching brief' over Membership for the Federation year 2012-2013.

Clubs continue to recruit new members and four new clubs have been chartered this year. Despite such efforts membership figures have fallen again this year and total membership of SIGBI is now below 9,000 members.

Steps are being taken to stabilise membership numbers and reverse this trend. The introduction of "light touch" management within clubs and the piloting of 'Associate' membership is being monitored as to the impact on membership figures.

The Building the Future of SIGBI initiative provides tools to support recruitment and retention and is available for clubs to download from the Members' Only area of the SIGBI website www.sigbi.org

The Easy Stages Guides are also useful for providing guidance on a range of membership issues.

More new members are being recruited via Club, Region, National Association, Network and Federation websites. To encourage more clubs to set up a website the cost has been reduced this year. On-going support is available from staff within SIGBI HQ.

A revamped "Membership Matters" newsletter has been created this year, full of information and fun on all matters relating to membership. The sharing of ideas and initiatives is important and clubs are encouraged to do this via this newsletter and Soroptimist News.

A Regional Grant of £250.00 has been distributed for a third year to support clubs with membership issues and an evaluation of this initiative will take place to inform the future.

Three Memorial Fund recipients have been selected to attend Conference this year. They will be mentored by Federation Councillors to ensure they make the most of their first attendance at a SIGBI Conference. On the Friday night the recipients will have an opportunity to network and meet together, with their mentors, over a meal.

Membership numbers remains a burning issue, but together we can make a difference as Soroptimists educating to lead.



Sue Williams
Director Without Portfolio

I would like to begin my report by extending a warm welcome to the four new clubs chartered since 2012 and they are:

SI Kodaikanal (India)	Chartered September 2012
SI Masaka (Uganda)	Chartered September 2012
SI Enugu Coal City (Nigeria)	Chartered February 2013
SI Dhanmondi (Bangladesh)	Chartered February 2013

This good news is supported by the 12 on-going extension projects, which ensures we will continue to create new clubs going into 2014. The projects are located all around the Federation: one in Zambia, two in the Caribbean, one in India, one in Nigeria, one in South Africa, one in Mauritius, two in Uganda and three in the UK (with a possibility of two others).

As Director of Operational Development, I have also supported the Taskforce responsible for establishing an African Federation, by helping them with a strategic report and plan that outlines how this will happen, which has been accepted by SIGBI and SIE and reported to the SI Board.

This year much of my time has been devoted to the development of a membership statement and looking at different forms of membership and different types of clubs. The membership statement paints a picture of what members can expect to find and get from a Club, Region, National Association, Network and Federation. It is aspirational but is also achieved by some Clubs, Regions and National Associations. It is a standard for us all to use and, most importantly, tells members what they should expect of the organisation and tells us what we should be providing for members—visit the “Join Us” page of the SIGBI Website to read it — www.sigbi.org

Since the launch of the membership statement, the focus has been on the Light Touch Operational Framework and Associate Membership. The Light Touch Operational Framework is simply a different way of operating a Soroptimist club. Consultation is now completed on this work and we are in the process of going through the feedback received ready for a final paper to the Federation Management Board later in the year. It is important to remember that it is a different way of working as a Soroptimist club, not a new type of club.

Research on Associate Membership has also commenced and a very small pilot started. This is a larger piece of work that needs to be thought through carefully so progress was always going to be slower. Work on this will continue well into 2014, but you will get to hear more about it in future communications from the Federation Management Board.

All of this work has involved desktop research externally as well as internal consultation, and I thank everyone for their help in taking this forward.

As well as supporting potential new clubs, members of the Organisational Development Committee have assisted in a re-write of the “How to open a new Soroptimist Club” Guide, the review of Easy Stages Guides and the work on different types of membership and different forms of club.

Last year, we established a Leadership Development Committee. The Committee has developed a leadership model for SIGBI and been working on development materials that will underpin the model as well as looking at how the materials can be delivered to members. Alongside this work, they have created a fresh template for the Easy Stages Guides and are assisting the Organisational Development and Membership Committees in the review of the existing Guides. The first of these is now available in the members’ area of the SIGBI website. Overall, it remains an objective of the committee that any member wishing to take a leadership role in SIGBI will feel supported by the Organisation — you will get to hear more of this work over the next 18 months.

From vision to action, Soroptimists educating to lead

Ann Hodgson
Director

Programme

Without Programme Action Soroptimist International would be just another organisation competing in the market place for members. It is Programme that makes us unique and it is Programme that we should celebrate at every opportunity. In this my second report as your Federation Programme Director I would like to “shout” about several projects from around our Federation.

<u>Objective</u>	<u>Number of pro-jects</u>	<u>Women/Girls helped</u>	<u>Money Raised</u>
Environmental Sustainability	67	9757	\$43,390
Economic Em-powerment	144	39,427	\$146,477
Food Security and Health	410	179,134	\$221,850
Learning oppor-tunities	417	120,002	\$534,222
Violence & Con-flict resolution	297	1,077,853	\$52,704
Goal 2 Total	340	97,218	\$295,370
Goal 2 objective 1	159		
Goal 2 objective 2	181		
Grand Totals	1675	1,523,391	\$1,294,013

My report will concentrate upon Goal 2 Objective 1 which works to strengthen and increase SI’s presence as an advocate at all levels. 159 reports have been placed upon the database during the last year from 47 Clubs, Regions and National Associations. Soroptimists have certainly been busy lobbying on several issues including FGM, trafficking and violence against women. SI Northern Ireland is to be congratulated on their meeting with the First Minister and Deputy First Minister to discuss Northern Ireland’s stance on human sex trafficking. The Ministers used the findings from this meeting to institute an inquiry into sex trafficking into Northern Ireland by the Justice Minister.

Other clubs in the UK have lobbied about NHS reforms and also lobbied Governments on proposed legislation, not only at Westminster but in the devolved Parliaments.

Six overseas clubs in the Federation have involved themselves in lobbying activity including SI Bombay Chembur who worked to raise awareness of the need for adult literacy programmes and SI Chennai and SI Bangalore who worked on anti-smoking campaigns.

Three Programme Resolutions passed at Conferences in Brighton and Belfast have received support from several clubs.

In the time period of this report the Federation President has written four letters to Ministers about violence against women, the attempted murder of Malala and the plight of girls’ education in the Asian sub-continent. There have also been three press releases on the same issues.



Sue Biggs
Director

Directors Without Portfolio

Three new Directors Without Portfolio (DWP), Bozena Benton, Chinwe Ezenwa-Mbah and Sue Williams took up their posts in October 2012 and wasted no time in learning from the outgoing DWPs whilst setting out a demanding programme for 2012-2013.

The DWPs continue to seek the views of Federation Councillors before each Federation Management Board meeting and prepare a report for the Board representing any issues which are current at that time.

In addition the DWPs support Councillors with any issues they may be facing in Regions, National Associations, Networks or Countries. Each DWP has been assigned specific tasks to support the development of SIGBI.

Bozena Benton has been given the task of designing a programme of induction for Federation Councillors which will be used for the first time in October 2013. This represents a substantial investment in the development of Federation Councillors to meet the needs of the role of conduit between clubs and the FMB and demonstrates the importance that FMB place on this pivotal role. An additional task has been allocated for Bozena to work with Federation Councillors to monitor their performance in terms of engagement with consultations and as active members of Federation Committees.

Chinwe Ezenwa-Mbah has been working very hard as a member of the African Federation Task Force, preparing for the creation of an African Federation. This has involved negotiating with SI and SIE, as well as working closely with SIGBI. She has worked with a team of Soroptimists to establish a draft constitution which can be approved by SI; looked at the need for secretariat support, considered how to manage the African Federation's finances through a bank account, to be supported by SI and helped to plan a conference in Pretoria, South Africa.

Sue Williams has been producing the Femail newsletter, which is the link communication between the FMB and Federation Councillors, emphasising the matters which are of importance to Councillors. This is produced after each FMB meeting and distributed in a timely manner. Sue was also tasked with keeping a watching brief on membership issues, in the absence of a Director of Membership. This has involved keeping in touch with clubs and supporting membership initiatives throughout the Federation. She has also produced the newly named membership newsletter known as "Membership Matters".



Bozena Benton, Chinwe Ezenwa-Mbah and Sue Williams
Directors Without Portfolio

Programme Team



Talat Pasha
Assistant Programme Director, Economic Empowerment



Laura Redhead
Assistant Programme Director, Environmental Sustainability



Barbara Dixon
Assistant Programme Director, Food Security and Healthcare



Janet Hodgson
Assistant Programme Director, Learning Opportunities



Jackie Paling
Assistant Programme Director, Violence and Conflict Resolution

From vision to action, Soroptimists educating to lead

Economic Empowerment

The diverse and very interesting projects submitted this year are inspiring and result oriented. In some projects, women are given an opportunity to increase their confidence and some give them a chance to increase their income through training. Each project helps to empower women at different levels.

“Mock Interviews” by SI Milford Haven is a project whereby girls and women are taught how to appear in job interviews. This not only raises their confidence but also equips them with a higher level of confidence. SI Hamilton in their project ‘Dress for success’ contributed clothes to young women who wanted to appear for interviews. The idea was to provide quality clothes and accessories so they could go to these interviews with confidence.

SI Chennai is going on with its very effective ‘City Shandy’ project which provides the women with stalls to market their goods. This is a very good project and yields positive results.

Another very inspiring project has been submitted by SI Heswall and District. The project is titled “Tomorrow’s Women Wirral” (TWW). The club works for the reduction in women receiving custodial sentences and reoffending rate. It provides a safe and all female environment where vulnerable women can have access to information and counseling along with training in different courses. The project stands out as it has a lot of partnerships and sponsors and hence gives an opportunity to Soroptimists to forge links with other organisations.

SI Crieff has been working on a project titled “Soroptimist Cup for Personal Achievement”. They work with the local girl’s high school and help in getting students to apply for the Trophy and attend subsequent interviews. This helps the girls to build on their confidence and self esteem and also learn about Soroptimists.

“Public Speaking Competition” by SI Ballymena is a project undertaken to allow students to complete in public speaking competitions and get awards. It also helps to prepare our leaders of tomorrow.

“Moroccan Widow Rabbit Project” by SI Nottingham provides rabbits to widows in Morocco to alleviate their poverty. The rabbits if bred and sold provide much needed cash and can also be used as food for the family.

The love and labour that goes into each of these projects is amazing, The far reaching benefits of the projects and women helped not only near the lead clubs but also thousands of miles away. That is indeed very heart warming.



Talat Pasha
Assistant Programme Director

Environmental Sustainability

Over the year 67 reports have been entered onto the SI database for the objective “Address the specific needs of women and girls by improving environmental sustainability and mitigating effects of climate change and disasters”. The projects have raised much needed funds, including over \$1,100 for Water Aid to provide access to cleaner water and better sanitation in developing countries; buying rice for families to grow in Sierra Leone and conducting litter picks and beach cleans in various locations throughout the UK.

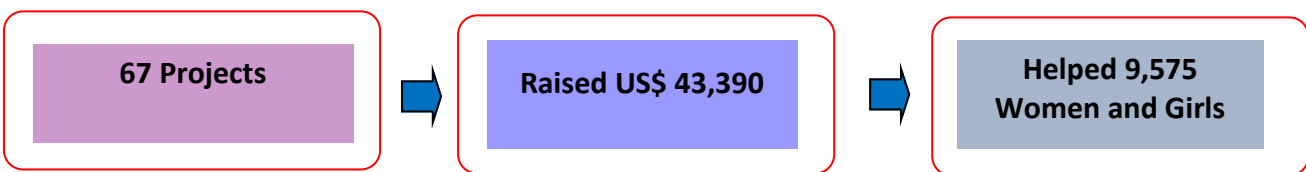
Given the effects of climate change and other man made influences on our world there has been an increase in the number of projects which have supported women and girls in the aftermath of natural disasters. 5 clubs in the UK (Leyland, Grange over Sands, King Lynn, Poole and Garstang) have provided aqua boxes and shelter boxes with Rotary International. These boxes provide accommodation and basic tools to enable families to recover from disasters and enable girls to return to school. Projects have also been undertaken to support victims of the floods in Pakistan and the UK, the 2011 Tsunami in Japan and the Chernobyl disaster, as well as providing much needed winter clothing for babies overseas.

Following our international theme of “Educate to Lead” it has been positive to see clubs in the UK and India undertaking projects focussed on educating women and girls about the environment and its future sustainability. Topics covered in these projects have included global warming, climate change, the decline of the honeybee, sustainable development, organic farming, local food production, provision of clean water and sanitation.

Pune Metro East club undertook two education projects – the first was to make children, particularly girls, aware about organic farming. Due to bad agricultural practices and drought conditions, the farmers in India are selling their lands and families are moving away from farmlands. The project is to encourage them to stay, use sustainable ways to revive the land and help them develop “eco- friendly” methods to help the environment.

The club’s second project was to hold a seminar entitled “Women and Climate Change” and invite three climate change experts to engage with the general public to better educate them about impacts of climate change on society.

Finally I would like to encourage all clubs to think all their excellent project work and whether there is an environmental objective hidden within that could be reported to help us further achieve this objective.



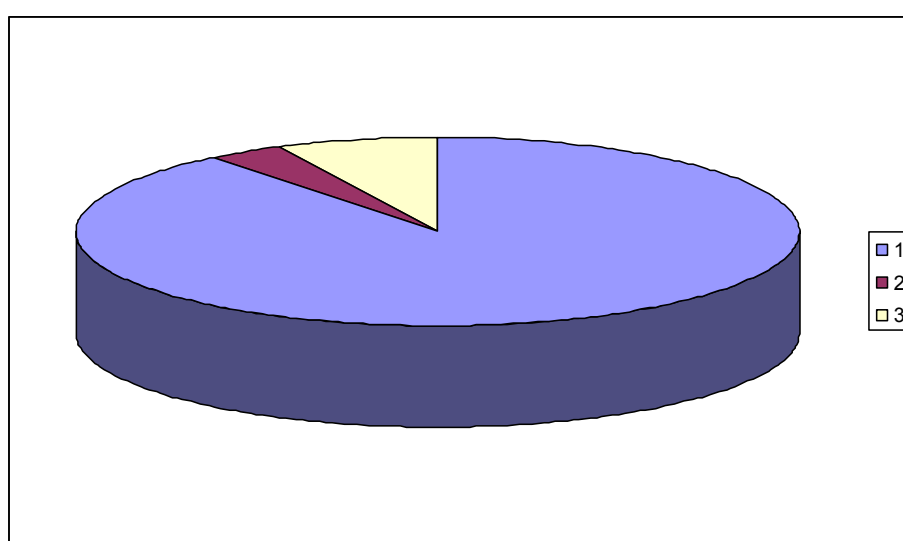
Laura Redhead
Assistant Programme Director

Health alone is a diverse subject, but add to that food security and the impact one has on the other and the amount of potential work is vast. Education underpins the whole concept as it is only by raising awareness and education that many health problems and inequalities can be overcome.

This is reflected in the number of programme focus report forms completed in this area with a total of 238 entries under Health and Food Security. 140 were filed under Health, with 98 under Food Security.

A total of US\$238,351 has been raised over the year with US\$220,554 for Health and US\$43,395 for Food related projects.

A total of 11968 non Soroptimists were helped by programme activities during the year and the chart below shows the distributed of those assisted: 201 city-wide projects (1) , 8 country-wide projects (2) and 16 nation-wide projects (3) :



Projects range from occupying seats on Primary Care Trusts and Health Boards to funding nurse training. Workshops on various women's diseases have been organised in India and Pakistan. Several clubs in Wales are working with Friendship Links and other partnerships to promote Health and education in developing countries. SI Bombay combines Health and Food Security with their project on providing food for HIV victims.

Currently members are also working on ovarian cancer awareness according to the motion passed in Brighton and supporting the MCAI 3E's project—Birthing in the Gambia (BIG project).

Food security issues range from provision of non-perishable foods for local refugees to funding farming projects in Africa and Cambodia, providing afternoon teas for stroke and Alzheimer's victims to sustaining Bee projects and promoting Fairtrade.

Several clubs responded to the Tsunami in Japan by raising funds to provide health care and food for the victims. World Food Day also provides a platform for awareness and advocacy as well as fundraising for many of the projects that clubs supports.

With so many programme forms on the subject it is impossible to highlight all the work that is being carried out by our members so I must end this report with the utmost praise for everyone working in this area and a plea for others to read the database to realise just how much is being done.

Barbara Dixon
Assistant Programme Director

Learning Opportunities

There have been a diverse and very interesting number of projects. I am pleased to see that service projects feature more than pure fundraising. There are many projects which help young women to increase their personal confidence. These include public speaking competitions, singing, poetry reading, dance competitions and Eisteddfods. Members continue to sponsor individual girls to stay in school and to help their families as well. Projects about preschool classes are increasing and SI Port Louis of Mauritius is one club that has reported on this, Focus number 25966.

The club realised that there was no early education structure in the vicinity of Richelieu and Petite Riviere. Children were left at home until they were 5 and able to go to Primary School. The Flamboyant Education centre has an intake of 30 children aged 3-5 who will be better prepared for primary schooling.

The club secured land and funding for construction. Built and equipped the centre, recruited staff and sought all permits to operate. They liaised with parents and they registered children. The Centre has been fully operational since March.

Members are taking part in Talking Newspapers, reading to people with impaired sight and helping to improve the lives of women and girls who have disabilities. Vocational training and skills training is featured and many clubs are continuing with Skirting Science. Young carers, Brownies and Girl Guides are helped along with women in prison. I am delighted that members still support the International Day of Literacy, World Book Day and Book Aid International. Book sacks, libraries and helping women and girls with English as a second language are all included in the projects.

Many clubs are helping young women who missed out on a more formal education and one club that is doing this is SI Bonaberi. The members decided to set up an Adult Literacy Programme school for young women who were illiterate. The women are taught to read and write and there is a national certificate to achieve at the end of the course. There are also sporting activities, sanitation lessons and awareness training. The club sponsor this themselves and club members are involved in running the classes and it is proposed that the women will be taught skills to enable them to find employment.

Malala Yousafzai the young Pakistani girl who just wants an education has also been supported by members across the Federation. Members have "stood" for Malala, held vigils and also stood outside the Pakistani consulate. Education is the key stone that makes us humans. It is so rewarding to see that Soroptimists around the world are doing their bit to help women and girls achieve their potential via learning opportunities.



Janet Hodgson
Assistant Programme Director

Violence and Conflict Resolution

A total of 297 reports were submitted, a sum of \$52,704 raised, and 1,077,853 women and girls have benefitted. Clubs continue to work on this objective, mainly through lobbying, raising awareness, giving practical support and fundraising.

Clubs have lobbied on various issues concerning violence against women, including trafficking, FGM, forced marriage and domestic abuse. Examples of work include: SI Bilston and SI Lichfield got Clubs to sign on to the UK Government's consultation document on forced marriage. In June 2012, forced marriage became illegal in England and Wales.

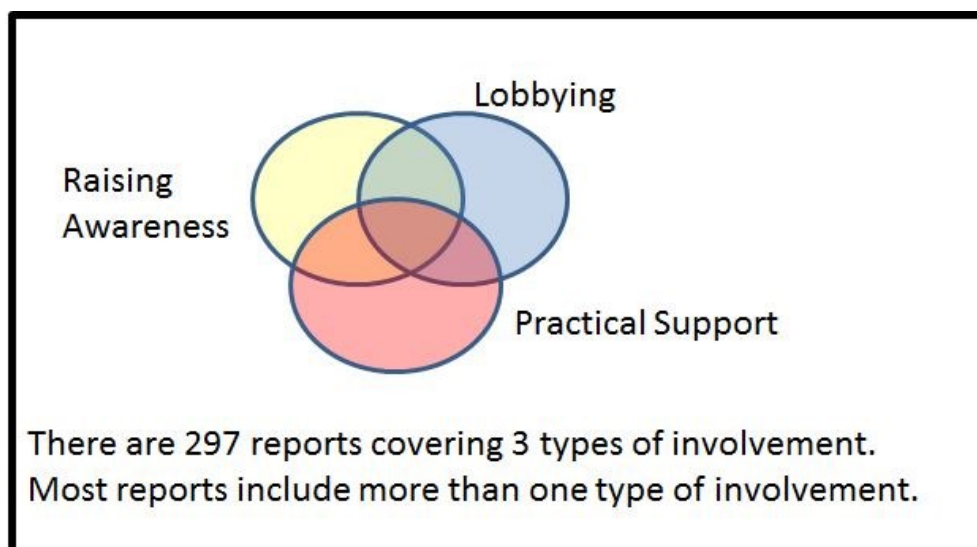
Clubs in SI Northern Ireland have been raising awareness of and lobbying on trafficking. A number of Soroptimist representatives met Government Ministers in the Northern Ireland Assembly and apprised them of the need to inform the general public and educate young people about the dangers of trafficking. They presented a petition calling on the Northern Ireland Assembly to introduce legislation to make "sex for sale" and escort service advertising illegal. Soroptimist delegates at the 2012 SIGBI Federation Conference in Belfast took part in a protest rally against trafficking.

Clubs continue to collect signatures for the Purple Teardrop Campaign to ban "Sex for Sale" advertising. SI Tenby were very concerned about the issue of Female Genital Mutilation and wrote over 3000 letters to all members of the UK Government, Religious Leaders, Chief Constables and to women's and men's organisations. They also mounted exhibitions at several public events, and gave presentations.

One third of the projects were concerned with raising awareness of violence against women in general. Clubs have held conferences, workshops, and other events. They have also used UN "Special Days", such as International Women's Day to advertise the work we do, through events such as "Join me on The Bridge", and having stalls and displays in town centres, supermarkets and other venues.

Clubs have been increasingly working on human trafficking initiatives, particularly on trafficking for sexual exploitation. They have been able to use resources devised by the Purple Teardrop Campaign. SI Yorkshire Region's Anti-slavery Group has held a variety of awareness raising events in different parts of the Region, They were also invited to take part in a BBC film (to be aired at some time in the future).

Practical support for their local women's refuges, rape crisis centres and hostels for trafficking victims is provided by Clubs. They have generously given toiletries, clothing, toys, household items and furniture, and provided other services.



Jackie Paling
Assistant Programme Director

The BIG Project—Birthing in the Gambia

The BIG Project

Birthing In the Gambia



The BIG Project (formerly 3E Project: Healthcare) is a partnership between Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) and the international medical charity Maternal and Childhealth Advocacy International (MCAI) – and its partner Advanced Life Support Group (ALSG). This is a three year fundraising challenge which will save the lives of countless critically ill women, babies and children in the Gambia.



MCAI | Maternal & Childhealth
Advocacy International

Soroptimists have now raised the £10,000 needed to refurbish a ward at Brikama Hospital.

The renovations ensure that levels of hygiene are high which protects patients from infection. Furthermore, the provision of a clean and modern environment empowers health workers to take pride in their work, and encourages them to stay in the poorest regions where they are needed most and overall provide a better quality of care.

Without adequate levels of hygiene preventing infection is a nearly impossible task. Cleaning is often taken for granted but done properly can drastically reduce the rate of infection. The BIG Project: Healthcare educates cleaning staff to meet the required levels of hygiene which enables health workers to do their job well and patients to recover fully.



President Pat Black's tagline seems perfect for the way Friendship Links of clubs have moved on. On to the action, especially in the area of education Friendship Link clubs have come together to educate with a capital E. In the process of educating comes empowering and enabling. Every girl on this good earth needs a chance to use her natural gifts and live a life of dignity.

Two newsletters have been published Jan 2013 and May 2013. The latter issue was a revamped - more news, more visual proofs of friendship abounding and common vision being realised through common action. Very positive feedback has come in which is encouraging. There is room for more innovation.

January to March was the time for Friendship Link Register Forms to come in. This annual exercise resulted in only 156 Clubs returning filled in Forms. I am giving serious thought on how to encourage Clubs return forms and in the last newsletter I have asked members to come up with ideas.

Therefore based on less than half of the clubs in the Federation, information on links, joint projects and the general health of clubs has been collated. The following observations have been made.

Clubs in the UK tend to have more links with other clubs in England and Ireland. These result in better interaction and some joint activity – not necessarily just on programme action. AACM countries are not necessarily supported by their Friendship Link clubs, however there are some cases where part capitation fee is paid by their link clubs.

Joint Programme Action is on the rise. Several clubs asked for ideas which I have given. Some of the support is given through monetary donations, or in material form. In the UK some clubs meet to do joint projects -e.g. knitting blankets, walking for charity and raising awareness. Overseas links are sometimes kept going through an annual visit to view the project in Africa, Asia or elsewhere.

Clubs do not necessarily have Friendship Link Officers. Links are maintained by the member who may have initiated it mostly through a visit. One club has 3 members managing a link each.

Several clubs have asked to revive their links that may have become dormant over the years. I am constantly writing to the Friendship Link Coordinators of other Federations for current emails etc. there have been some successful revivals and other are being processed.

From Oct 2012 to May 2013 21 new Links have been formalised, 8 of which were in April 2013. Through interaction with Friendship Link Coordinators some links have been revived. Some clubs have asked about how many Links should a club have. I don't have a clear answer – that my advice would be- as many as your Friendship Link person or the club can handle. Consider that SI Bangalore has 21 links and SI Ballymena and SI Brecon have one each. New Clubs like SI Kathmandu, SI Dhanmondi even Madurai (now 3 years old) haven't really understood what Friendship Links are all about and the Easy Stage guidance doesn't seem to be understood. I feel more one to one guidance may be needed here and I have had the opportunity to guide SI Kodaikanal and they are raring to go.

I would like to work on a few documents for Friendship Link in the near future:

What makes a good Friendship Link Correspondent

What you can do with a Grant of Friendship

The work of the Coordinator has been extremely challenging – especially working from a distance. I have enjoyed writing each and every of over 450 mails- each customized to answer pointed questions-that I have sent out in these last 4 months. The responses assure me that its worth all the effort.

Nisha Ghosh
Friendship Link Co-ordinator



SIGBI Charitable Funds

Benevolent Fund—Charity Number: 211840

The Annual General Meeting of the Benevolent Fund of SIGBI was held on Saturday 3rd November 2012 at 63 Bayswater Road.

Jan Doyle was elected as Honorary Secretary in place of Pauline Pearsall who has completed her term of office. Pauline was thanked for her excellent work over the past five years.

During the year there were also two meetings of the Investment Group which received reports from the Financial Advisor and made decisions regarding the sale of investments.

Due to the reduced levy and a further year in which no substantial legacies were received, it was necessary to realise investments in order to provide a sufficient cash balance to meet current and anticipated demands on the Fund. If the Fund were to continue to make grants as at present, and no further boost to capital is received, then despite the fact that the Fund has capital of just over £500,000, this would be exhausted in 8-9 years. This would be a disaster for our existing beneficiaries and would mean no further claims could be entertained.

The Trustees have therefore resolved to request that the levy be returned to £2 per member in Great Britain and Ireland and Jenny Vince, Honorary Treasurer to the Fund, will be proposing this at Conference in October.

During the year the Fund provided financial assistance to 33 women (the same number as in the previous year); most of these received a regular quarterly grant plus help with telephone and TV and an extra gift at Christmas. In six cases a one-off payment, generally between £500 and £3000, to help with a special need was more appropriate. Typically, these are for home improvements, replacement of essential equipment or pressing debts that are causing great distress. The total amount paid out in grants was £96,000. The capital limit for claimants remains at £23,250 and the income limit £13,000, both reviewed annually.

The Trustees take every opportunity to publicise the Fund, and to encourage applications. Age is not a consideration – younger members may be in need due to loss of job or family problems. Hopefully, short-term assistance may be all that is needed in these cases. At the other end of the spectrum we have a few very elderly members who will depend on our help for the rest of their lives. It is up to all Soroptimists to look out for fellow-members who may be in difficulty, and to refer them to their Regional Representative who will deal with each application in complete confidence.



Susan Bruce
Chairman

Diamond Education Grant —Charity Number: 1139668

The purpose of this Fund (set up as a registered charity in 1977 as the Golden Jubilee Fellowship) is to make grants to help women to advance their education. The Fund Trustees concentrate on assisting recipients to update their skills, particularly after an unemployment break, or to acquire new skills, thereby improving their opportunities for employment and promotion. Applicants do not have to be Soroptimists (and usually are not), the only requirement is that they are female and resident in one of the countries of our Federation.

122 applications for help were made to the Fund in 2012-2013, mainly from the United Kingdom, but also from Bangladesh, Mauritius, Nigeria, Republic of Ireland, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe. Assistance was sought for courses as diverse as furniture upholstery to an MSc in primate conservation.

Grants totally £8,000 have been awarded to 16 applications (as opposed to 17 last year), with the Committee concentrating on those applicants where the grants would make a real difference and where the prospects for a successful outcome were good.

An awardee from 2012 Leanne Ross (pictured) applied for help in funding a Diploma in Sign Language Interpreting —

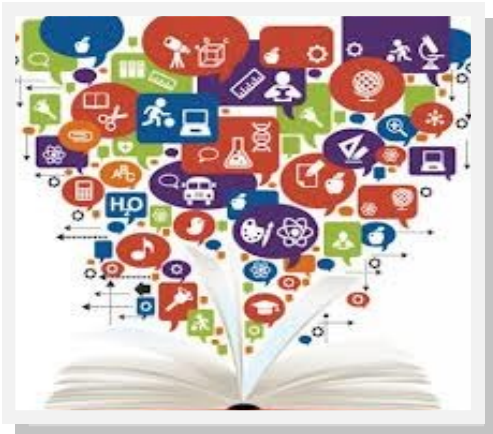
“A career in interpreting would allow me to support my family and choose my working hours, so my work/life balance would be better. She was awarded £750 towards her costs of £7,750.



A blind 33 year old applied for funding in the current year to buy specialised equipment to help her to continue with a Masters degree in creating writing -

“I can’t continue to the second year of my course without getting the new equipment as I will have to run my own workshops and I won’t be able to without a Braille display”. The Fund gave her a grant of £500 towards the cost of £6,200.

The extent to which the Fund can assist these and other applicants is severely limited by the size of its capital base which stands at just over £100K at 31.03.13. This is before the 2013 grants are paid out and so every year the Fund is being eroded. Much more needs to be done to put the Fund’s long term future on a secure footing and a major drive for legacies is planned.



Cherry Cadwallader
Secretary

Emergency Relief Fund — Charity Number: 211231

The Emergency Relief Fund was initially registered as a Charity in 1963, having emerged from work done in post conflict Europe. The Fund is used to help those people in immediate need of relief due to disasters throughout the world and is primarily relief only, for example, for food, shelter and immediate medical aid.

Individual members, Clubs, Regions, National Associations, Networks and Countries can recommend that funds are provided for particular situations. The Trustees then consider the appropriateness of the recommendation and, where applicable, the amount of the grant.

Any grants are always carefully placed in the areas of great need and where they can be administered through a tried and tested partner or by Soroptimists themselves.

One disbursement was made in 2012-2013 as illustrated below:

£1,000

Save the Children

Sierra Leone

The Emergency Relief Fund relies on Clubs and Members to maintain a sufficient level of funds. Please bear the Emergency Relief Fund in mind when considering donations for the future.



Jenny Vince
Chairman

COMPANY DETAILS:



Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) Limited

Company Number: 07058666

Headquarters

2nd Floor

Beckwith House

1 Wellington Road North

SK4 1AF

Tel: 0161 480 7686

Fax: 0161 477 6152

Email: hq@sigbi.org

Website: www.sigbi.org

Twitter: [@sigbi1](https://twitter.com/sigbi1)

Facebook: facebook.com/soroptimistsigbi