

*Saturday May 18th saw **SIM's Day of Reflection** which was held at the Fortina Spa Hotel courtesy of Lina – thank you for organising the venue Lina and for the lovely lunch afterwards! 11 members attended - an excellent turn out and all who came asked for the event to be repeated – a sure sign of its success and relevance to us!*

The morning began with the reading of the **new Objectives** which the club has agreed to adopt to reflect the new Mission and Vision of SIGBI and President Marion gave everyone a book mark style card of the Objectives to keep. The candle ceremony, read by Anne, focussed our minds as everyone lit a candle to reflect their various roles in the club – it reminded us that we all have a voice and a real part to play in developing SI Malta in the future.

Mary then spoke to us about the **SIGBI Conference 2016**, which is being held in Malta and answered questions from members. She said that we need to embrace this event wholeheartedly as it will be hard work but an excellent opportunity to promote our club and our country and to show what we can do together! Marion also explained that she felt that over the next 3 years every member should try to go to conference and that to assist them with this, the club has agreed to give up to 5 members annually €500 each to help cover their costs.

We also discussed the need for every member to pay for their place in 2016 and Mary suggested that we could begin a savings scheme so that the approximate cost of €200 could easily be saved between now and then.

The BBQ- set for June 14th - was then discussed and also the possibility of an extra fundraising event for club funds, to be held in August sometime. Any ideas please let Mary know!

Dot then led a session - '**Soroptimism in 21st Century**' - focussing on a proposal by SIGBI to change the style and format of club management and meetings so that there is more flexibility.

After a brief explanation, when the key was 'FLEXIBILITY,' groups discussed their views and reported back. The main views were in total agreement with most of the changes suggested. These are:

a small Executive who conduct their Business online/telephone as far as possible. –the suggestion is Secretary, treasurer and PA Chair. Club members felt we should include the President and possibly the Federation Councillor.

Fewer Business meetings and more **Members meetings**(A SUGGESTED NAME FOR OUR MEETINGS IN FUTURE) – more 'do'; less 'talk' -Marion said this was how she perceived the club running during the coming year –monthly there would be one specific meeting for any necessary business and one meeting where we work together - eg in June, a meeting to finalise the BBQ and vote on necessary ballots and then the BBQ itself would be the second activity meeting.

President Marion spoke of a variety of activity in the monthly activities- maybe coffee meetings for a more social event; or service activities such as at Dar Mehrba Bik or INSPIRE. Other months there would be activities for fundraising.



In this new model the emphasis is on being together purposefully and so we all need to be involved as much as possible. Those present said that it is difficult when members who plan things do not get the support from members and that we all have a responsibility to be attend functions and be supportive.

The suggestion in the model is that we do not need to keep formal minutes but club members felt that this was important and should be continued in our way of working. We do think that a bi-monthly newsletter such as this should be considered as an information tool and also a website if possible.



During the PAC section of the seminar we met with Simon (ZTK) and Ramenda who explained how their projects with young people in Cottonera had benefitted from our support. ZTK is a group of schools – Primary, Secondary and a Learning Support Centre whereby students and families can receive Counselling, Social/family worker support and careers advice. It was really worthwhile listening to them and being able to imagine how these young people benefit from the activities provided for them. The Youth Project aims to give the youngsters experiences to help them achieve their dreams by involving them in activity, helping them learn to express themselves, enhance creativity, have fun and it complements their academic experience.

Sonia and Catherine of Apogg, Girls 15+ spoke of the project which aims to help girls to be more employable by empowering them with skills, and self-esteem activity. They have found that 1-1 working has been most successful and explained how it is necessary to work with younger girls (11-13+) as they need to change the cultural belief that not working is the norm. The project is aiming to give a ground-base for building a life for themselves which is different from that of previous generations – as Sina said – there is a need to break the cycle of ‘what was good enough for my father and grandfather is good enough for me’ culture.

She spoke of places such as Qwara and St Paul’s Bay becoming social problem areas for families now especially as both parents are out of the house and the children are becoming ‘latch key kids.’ At the end of these talks promissory notes of financial support were presented to both groups for their continued work.

Sina then spoke to her paper concerning **Policies & Procedures** for donations to be given to organisations and individuals by the club. It is our policy not to pay money out directly to people but we will pay invoices and pay directly to shops/ businesses

for services to individuals. This very clear document was endorsed by all members. It was also felt strongly that we needed some clear mechanism to link our accounts so that we can support all who ask and keep the ‘cost centre’ topped up.

Sina also spoke to the paper she had been asked to prepare by the Executive concerning ‘An Expression of Interest by prospective Members’- this was welcomed but produced much comment and discussion as it was felt there ought to be a more stringent way forward before women actually became members. Everyone agreed that if members brought forward names of prospective members, these should be considered by the club before the person was invited to club meetings and they should not be rushed into joining. It was felt that the Membership Officer should consider the detail of the proposal with some other members and produce a definite Time based Procedure based on the document Sina presented.

Lina then led a **PAC Slot ‘Defining Programme Action’** beginning by asking the question – what is a volunteer?

A volunteer

- *Commits time whilst learning new skills*
- *Is unpaid and is a cost effective human resource*
- *Develops an active civil society and enriches democracy*
- *Provides for others in an expression of faith, belief and sensitivity.*

She emphasised that PAC is the core of all that we represent as Soroptimists. She spoke of the long term theme –EDUCATE TO LEAD and said that we will tackle 3 themes – Health, Environment and Increasing Women’s Participation in Management and Decision Making, in the coming years. She asked for suggestions as to the order we could do this. It was felt that because of the Accuvein project and the launch of the health initiative in July that it would be a natural progression for us. Please keep making suggestions about what you think we should do – Lina and her team would like to know your thoughts so that we all engage with the Programme Focus.