MINUTES OF THE FEDERATION PROGRAMME ACTION COMMITTEE
MEETING
PENTHOUSE SUITE, EUROPA HOTEL, BELFAST
THURSDAY 25th OCTOBER, 2012

PRESENT:
Sue Biggs Federation Programme Director
Hilary Ratcliffe International Programme Director
Maureen Maguire Federation President
Pat Black Federation President Elect
Talat Pasha APD, Economic Empowerment (& FPAC Pakistan)
Ruth Dodd APD, Environmental Sustainability
Barbara Dixon APD, Food Security and Healthcare
Janet Hodgson APD, Learning Opportunities
Jackie Paling APD, Violence and Conflict Resolution
Pat Shore Friendship Link Co-ordinator
Rita Allen SIGBI Project Liaison
Anguilla Anita Brooks
Bangladesh Jahan Gulshan
Barbados Bonita Wharton
Beatrice Prom The Gambia
Matilda Mathias India
Jeanne Foster-Robinson Jamaica
Lusungi Dzinkambani Malawi
Lina Borg Vassallo Malta
Sophie Desvaux Mauritius
Dipa Khakurel Nepal
Nneka Chris-Asoluka Nigeria
Maura Maginn Northern Ireland
Tess Hogan Republic of Ireland
Naomi Lawrence Scotland
Shobha Hajarnis Seychelles
Fatmata Wurie Jalloh Sierra Leone
Sally Currin South Africa
Nelcia Primus St Vincent and Grenadines
Heather John Trinidad and Tobago
Jan Hemlin UK and England
Kay Richmond Wales
Numpumelelo Mlotshwa Zimbabwe

IN ATTENDANCE:
Gina Coad Executive Officer
Jenny Vince Director of Finance

APOLOGIES:
Cameroon
Grenada
Sri Lanka
Turks & Caicos
1. **WELCOME**
   Norma Evans, Conference Chairman, and Theresa Nixon, Chief Steward, introduced themselves and gave some information about the forthcoming Conference.

   Sue Biggs, Federation Federation Programme Director, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. **ROLL CALL**
   A Roll Call was taken of those present.

3. **MINUTES OF THE FEDERATION PROGRAMME ACTION MEETING, 27 October 2011 (Circulated)**
   The Minutes of the Federation Programme Action Committee Meeting held on 27 October 2011 were signed as a true record, without amendment.

4. **MATTERS ARISING**
   There were no matters arising.

5. **FEDERATION PRESIDENT MAUREEN MAGUIRE**
   Federation President Maureen addressed the meeting and started by saying that her report had already been circulated, so she just wanted to highlight some observations that she had made during her year as Federation President.

   Maureen reminded delegates that Programme Action is the life-blood of Soroptimism, and that the work done by Clubs, Regions, National Associations and Networks is the reason that SI has consultative status at the UN. Before Maureen travelled to each country, National Association, Network or UK Region during her Presidential Visits, she always looked up the relevant Programme Report Forms, and she was disappointed by the lack of Programme Reporting. She urged any delegate who had difficulties in completing the forms to speak to any of the APDs during the course of the day to ensure they were able to submit their reports in future. Programme Awards can only be given to projects that are on the database, which is another reason to ensure reports are submitted.

   Maureen thanked Susan Biggs and the APDs for their time and commitment to their roles.

6. **FEDERATION PRESIDENT ELECT, PAT BLACK**
   Federation President Elect Pat said that she is committed to Programme Action because she wants to make a difference to the lives of women and girls, as she was sure all the PAC representatives present are as well. She said that Goal 1, as agreed at the SI Board 2011, was the most important of the two Goals, and the “key to the future”. SI Goals are achieved by Soroptimists through three streams, Awareness, Advocacy and Action. Today, Pat wanted to concentrate on the Action stream, as this differentiates Soroptimist International from all other organisations.

   SI is signed up to the UN Millenium Development Goals, and one of the reasons for this is that there are 61 million primary aged children currently out of school, 32 million of which are girls. The UN recently launched a new initiative, Global Education First, and SI needs to ensure that everyone involved with the UN knows about the work that members are doing to change the lives of women and girls.

   SI’s Vision needs to be turned into Action, which is Pat’s theme for the coming year. Pat asked the FPAC representatives to consider how they (and the members they represent) are going to turn the SI Vision into Action. How are the FPAC representatives going to lead their clubs and members in this?
Pat set a two-part challenge for the delegates:

1) encourage every member in their area to educate themselves in some way which makes a difference in their own lives.
2) Encourage every member in their area to provide the opportunity for another women or girl to receive education such that their life is changed for the better.

If every member of SI GBI can offer an educational opportunity to 100 women and girls, by October 2013 Soroptimists will have improved the lives of over 1 million women and girls throughout the world.

Pat spoke about Malala Yousafzai, the young Pakistani girl who was shot by the Taliban for believing that she had a right to an education. She said that Soroptimists should be fighting for that right, for Malala and all the other girls who do have a right to an education.

ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME DIRECTORS REVIEW OF REPORTS 2011-2012

Sue Biggs said that she and the APDs had read all the reports on the reporting database, and also thanked the FPAC delegates for their reports, which had also been read. She said that the annual reports were wonderful and contained a lot of information about projects, but a lot of these projects did not have corresponding reports on the online database. Sue hoped that delegates had found the annual report format easier to complete this year, as it aims to capture the highlights of projects that fulfill the 3E’s “Educate, Empower, Enable”.

Sue asked each APD in turn to introduce themselves and summarise the annual reports from around the Federation, so that delegates could understand the breadth of work that is being done to Educate, Empower, Enable, within the Educate to Lead theme.

Janet Hodgson, APD Learning Opportunities

Janet had looked through at least 800 reports that came under this programme area. She congratulated SI Northern Ireland and SI Republic of Ireland for their public-speaking competitions, and said that a lot more clubs were now picking up on this, as an excellent project that falls within the Educate to Lead theme. She also congratulated SI Northern Ireland for their “Mums for Mums” project and for talking to Ministers about education for girls.

Janet recommended that the FPAC representatives search the database, because it was full of good ideas for projects that Clubs can undertake. Worthy of note is that so many Clubs celebrate the International Day of Literacy, and World Book Day. Projects reported by Clubs also include: Story Sacks, donating books to schools, awards to girls for community work, going into school to help with reading and writing, providing scholarships and providing meals.

Barbara Dixon, APD Food Security and Healthcare

300 reports were on the database in this programme area, and there is a phenomenal amount of work going on. Barbara urged that reports on the database should include photographs wherever possible so that if a project is worthy of including on a PowerPoint at Conference, or the SIGBI Website, photographs are available to use.

Clubs are continuing to work with their friendship links, other NGOs and giving mutual support to Clubs throughout the Federation. The need greatly varies from country to country within the Federation – in the UK obesity is a problem, whereas in some countries people are struggling against starvation. As regards Health, Regions in the UK will often select one aspect of health that they are particularly
interested in and concentrate all their efforts on that area, but in other parts of the Federation they are struggling to provide even basic healthcare.

There are projects within Food Security and Healthcare that are within the Educate to Lead theme: training in nursing and agriculture, for example. Barbara thanked Clubs for all their hard work, and acknowledged that there was usually a lot more involved in a project than might first appear on a Programme Report Form – for example SI Midland Arden reported a project where they are working with Cambodian Children’s Dream, providing wells for villages in Cambodia. In fact, it later transpired that there was much more to the project than that. The Region were also sending teams to work in improverished villages to educate and provide medical assistance as well.

Ruth Dodd, APD Environmental Sustainability
The changes to the database in September 2011 have made it difficult to locate environmental projects, and the theme Educate to Lead means that projects which used to be listed under Environment are now being listed under Learning Opportunities (eg building toilets in schools) or Food Security and Healthcare (eg WaterAid), so Ruth has read all the reports (over 1,700) on the database to identify those that also fit into Environmental Sustainability.

Many UK clubs have continued to support WaterAid, and Ruth congratulated Clubs that had contributed to the Big Dig appeal which was to provide clean water and sanitation in Malawi. Clean water affects women and girls because if the girls are not having to spend most of their day collecting water, they are able to go to school. Clubs raised just over £5,900, which will be doubled by the UK Government, so the total contributed by SI was £11,800, and this was all done in a short time-frame.

Again, many of the country annual reports had mentioned projects that have not been reported on the database, so Ruth mentioned some of these: SI Anguilla continue to lobby Government and the Food Industry on recycling; SI Dhaka and SI Chittagong are working in partnership with local NGOs in southern Bangladesh, an area severely affected by climate change, on a programme for women and girls on how to face climate induced issues; SI Barbados Jamestown has installed piped water in the homes of three deserving people; SI Port of Spain participated in a discussion “Going green - the school’s role”.

Talat Pasha, APD Economic Empowerment
220 reports had been received in this programme area. It was inspiring to read the reports, and it was difficult to decide which of those projects being done in the Federation should be mentioned.

Clubs have organized Microfinance to help women set up their own businesses, workshops to educate women and girls on life-skills and producing items that can be sold. SI Nottingham’s “Rabbit project” provides rabbits for Moroccan widows that can then be used for food or breeding for sale to provide an income. Other club projects include “mock interviews”, vocational training, starter kits for women leaving refuges. SI Karachi Central in partnership with SI Bridgend are providing training to rural women in kitchen gardening, and providing them with free tools and seeds. SI Grange over Sands have achieved FairTrade status for their town. Congratulations to all clubs for their excellent projects.

Jackie Paling – APD Violence and Conflict Resolution
Most clubs have supported initiatives under this objective during the past year. Over 300 reports have been submitted.

Many clubs continue to help their local Domestic Violence Refuges in a variety of ways, from fundraising to the provision of essential items, but Jackie urged delegates to “think outside the box”, as two clubs have done. SI Kingston upon Hull produced a booklet called “Take Control, Leave Violence Behind” to
help abused women and SI Ipswich got women in their local refuge to write about their experiences as a form of therapy, and the resultant book, “Every Six Seconds”, is currently for sale in local branches of a national book chain.

The biggest increase in work by Clubs in the past 12 months has been in the field of Human Trafficking, and in particular in raising awareness of the issue. SI Preston held a “Human Trafficking in Britain” seminar, inviting organisations with vested interest in the topic to attend. Other conferences and workshops have been held by SI Cardiff, SI Stourbridge and SI The Fylde. In India, especially amongst the illiterate community trafficking and abuse of girls is rampant. SI Calcutta organized three street plays using a professional group of artists to raise awareness of the issue for National Girl Child Abuse Day. Many Clubs in the UK have supported SI Poole’s “Purple Teardrop Campaign” including the petition to ban Sex for Sale advertising in UK newspapers.

Work is also being done on relationship behaviour. SI Yeovil, Sherborne and Districts’ “Loves Me, Loves Me Not” bookmarks have been printed and distributed in their thousands and although this has mainly been in the UK bookmarks could be used elsewhere in the Federation.

International days have been a great platform for raising awareness, and the profile of Soroptimism. Many Clubs took part in “Join me on the Bridge” on International Women’s Day in partnership with Women for Women International. Anti-slavery Day is now a recognized day under UK legislation and Clubs in the UK used it to raise awareness of Human Trafficking. The period between the Day for Elimination of Violence against Women is 25th November to Human Rights Day on 10th December has been designated as 16 Days of Activism.

A special thank you goes to SI Bilston and SI Lichfield who successfully got Clubs to respond to the UK Home Office’s consultation on the “Criminalisation of Forced Marriage” document, resulting in changes to the law. Clubs in Scotland have also helped to get a bill passed in the Scottish Parliament, and Clubs in Northern Ireland have been talking to ministers in the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Two uplifting projects worthy of mention are from SI Arusha, who helped a mother of 8 children, whose husband had left some years earlier and who had suffered mental and physical abuse from her brother in law who also confiscated her land. SI Arusha raised funds and built Happiness a new house. They also sought legal help and were able to retrieve her land and gave her advice on how she could make a living. The second project is by SI Bombay West who organized a wedding for two visually-impaired and destitute couples. Jackie thanked Clubs for all the work that they had done under this objective.

**Sue Biggs, Federation Programme Director**

Sue reminded delegates that there is now a SMART Guide to Programme Action available on the members area of the SIGBI Website, and asked them to use this, and also advised them that there is now a Programme Action leaflet available, one of which they would receive in their conference pack. She encouraged them to purchase leaflets whilst at conference to give to prospective members in their own countries.

As there were a few minutes to spare, Susan invited questions from the floor. Kate Moore, SI Newcastle and District, said that following the shooting of Malala Yousafzai a second girl in Pakistan had had her life threatened by the Taliban, and asked what action Soroptimists were going to take.

Pat Black responded to the question, by stating that a Resolution of Urgency was to be brought to the General Meeting condemning the shooting of young girls for wanting a “basic human right” – education. The United Nations in 2013 on the Commission of the Status of Women will have violence against
women as their main theme, and in the UK Non-Governmental Organisations are joining together to lobby the UK Government to ensure that something is done at the Commission on the Status of Women because we cannot, as women, tolerate the lack of safe access by young girls to education. She called upon the delegates present to lobby their own Governments, and invited any ideas for action that could be taken.

8. **FRIENDSHIP LINK COORDINATOR, PAT SHORE**

Pat Shore, outgoing Federation Friendship Link Coordinator, gave a presentation on friendship links, including the benefits of developing friendship links, examples of joint Projects that had been undertaken in 2012 between friendship link clubs, and details of new friendship links formed in the past year.

There have been 33 new friendship links in total, 21 between SIGBI Clubs, 6 with clubs in SI Europe, 2 with clubs in SI South West Pacific and 4 with clubs in SI Americas. Two of the new countries in SIGBI, SI Arusha, Tanzania and SI Kathmandu, Nepal had formed a link this year.

Pat wished Nisha Ghosh every success as she takes over the role, and Sue Biggs thanked Pat for all her hard work over the past few years.

9. **SIGBI PROJECT LIAISON, RITA ALLEN**

Rita started by saying that two of the Trustees of the 3E Project: Health care, would be talking at the conference about the Project, so she would not say much about it at this meeting. She wanted to take this opportunity to talk about how SIGBI have arrived at the current position and the future of the Project.

In 2010, all members of SIGBI were able to vote on the theme for SI’s future Programme Work and members voted overwhelmingly for Education and Leadership for Women and Girls. All SIGBI projects must now meet the criteria Educate, Empower, Enable and the 3E Project: Healthcare/MCAI was chosen as meeting these criteria.

MCAI (Maternal and Child Health Advocacy International) was founded in 1995 in response to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and later expanded into other countries. They also responded to natural disasters and armed conflict. They work with in-country partners and the Government to assess what is required, to ensure sustainability, and then they work to train doctors, traditional birth attendants, village birth attendants and organizing transport and equipment. They concentrate on emergency situations and in 2006 they focused on improving maternal health and strengthening emergency care. They work in partnership with other organisations, such as UNICEF and WHO.

There are materials available to help clubs with their fundraising, in the form of the films which will be shown during MCAI’s talk at conference; case studies, leaflets and PowerPoint presentations. These are available via the SIGBI Website. The 3E Project page is under Our Charities.

Rita asked that Programme Reports on the database were labelled “3E/MCAI” so that she can easily identify them. She reminded the delegates that she is currently recruiting Ambassadors to help her spread the work about this Project, and although she has a few, not all Regions and National Associations are as yet represented, so urged delegates to appoint an Ambassador for their Region and National Association as soon as possible.

She also reminded delegates that 20th July 2013 had been designated as a day of action for MCAI. It is hoped that this will become an annual event.
Rita then asked each table of FPAC representatives to spend 5 minutes to come up with fundraising ideas for this project. One idea per table was shared, and these included:

a) Ask a lot of people to contribute a small amount of money, especially in poorer countries, so that a lot of people are being involved, which would raise awareness
b) Old to New Sale, food sales, coffee mornings, hold seminars where the registration fees go to MCAI
c) Sponsored sports events at schools
d) Flyers to give to expectant mothers at antenatal clinics and doctors and a contribution requested
e) Rally sponsored by the newspapers
f) Whose Baby? Competition

10. WORKSHOP ACTIVITY WITH FOLLOW UP DISCUSSION
Sue Biggs introduced the session. Programme Action is the centre of the SI Organisation, and Sue asked delegates to think about Programme Action in their Club as a form of transport, with the club members as passengers. Who is the driver and do the passengers know where they are going? Is the project economic or wasteful? What form of transport is it? Think about SMART ways of working, and ensuring that the 3 Es (Educate, Empower, Enable) are met.

15 minutes were allowed for discussion, after which some delegates spoke about their projects..

SI Bonaberi-Douala said that her Club used to have many projects, but had decided that they should have one long-term project, so they started an adult education programme for women. This has been a very successful project, with the women taking and passing national exams, and has raised the profile of the Club enormously.

SI Bournemouth described their former Programme Action as “an old bangor”, with only 4-5 people on the programme action committee trying to get it going, with projects that did not last. The club reviewed the way things were done, and Programme Action is now a train, driven by the Programme Action Officer, with each Project representing a carriage and 4-5 people on each carriage at any one time. If you needed, because of work or family commitments, you could step off the train and back on again at a later date, and you could walk up and down the train between projects if you wished.

Some Clubs in Nigeria were described as minibuses, sometimes being derailed, or the driver not having the proper licence (i.e., sometimes the objective of the project was missed) but there were also positives in that they could change route easily so if they need to re-direct their efforts for some reason they can do so.

11. GLOBAL IMPACT REPORT ACTIVITY
Sue Biggs introduced Helen Owen and Sue Challoner, SIGBI Global Impact Report Ambassadors. Helen Owen introduced the activity, which was something which the FPAC representatives could then take out to their Regions, National Associations or Countries and their Clubs. She asked FPAC representatives who were not from the UK to take part. Each was given a card containing a “character”, and Helen and Sue would read out a series of statements. If the character on the card would say “yes” to the statement, the participant would take a step forward, but if the answer was “no” they would stay where they are. The statements were:

- My income is more than $1 a day
- I am able to access full and productive employment
- I expect to, or have, completed primary school
- I expect to, or have, completed secondary school
- I will obtain, or have, a university degree
- I can run for public office and have an equal chance of getting a seat
- I have access to clean drinking water
- I have access to proper sanitation facilities
- I can read newspapers regularly
- I am not in danger of being harassed or abused
- I can question expenditure of community funds
- I can decide whether or not to have children
- I have a regular and reliable source of my own income or access to credit
- I do not rely on the government for sustenance
- I eat at least two full and nutritious meals a day
- I have access to basic health care
- I feel a sense of security and control over my environment
- I feel safe to walk 200m at 2.00am to a friend’s house
- I am able to participate in democratic, fair and free elections where I live

Comparisons were made between the characters of the participants who had not moved forwards at all, with those who had reached the other side of the room.

Helen continued to explain how the Global Impact Report was available in three formats – a summary for those with not much time, an executive summary for those who could spare a little longer, and the full report. She encouraged delegates to read this document, as it’s a celebration of everything that has been achieved by our organisation. There is a Club Pack available on the SI Website to help clubs take action to Educate, Empower and Enable women and girls to become the leaders of tomorrow. This includes a new model called “The Life Course of the Female”, which will help clubs to match their projects to this model to fulfill the Educate to Lead theme. Helen and Sue asked that clubs check their projects to see where they fit into the model and to ensure that they do, so that SI can become a “Global Voice for Women and Girls”.

12. DATABASE

Sue Biggs said that Q14, 15 and 16 were the most important questions on the reports – Q14 asked that the Goal (1 or 2) and the objective within that Goal are selected for the project; Q15 is whether the project fits into the “Education and Leadership” theme, and if you cannot answer “Yes” to that question then the project should not be submitted; Q16 asks for some details of how the project meets the “Education and Leadership” criteria, so cannot be completed if the answer to Q15 is “No”.

Reports are approved centrally by SI, and a report form will be rejected if the answer to Q15 is “No” or there is not enough detail in Q16 on how the report meets “Education and Leadership”. The reports on the SI Database have to be “useful” to other Federations, to SIGBI, as a publicity tool and also for our UN status for the Economic and Social Council. SI have to renew their status every few years.

Therefore it is vital that reports are put on the database, as it is apparent this year that there is a huge discrepancy between the annual reports and database. Reports are also used to compile the Global Impact Report, and out of 1400 reports from SIGBI on the database in 2011 only 467 were relevant to the Global Impact Report. Therefore, clubs in SIGBI have to become SMART in their choice of projects, in order that the fit the “Education and Leadership” theme.

The titles of projects should also be a clear indication of what the project is about. They should include one of the key words “Educate”, “Enable”, “Empower” and include exactly what the project is.
Hilary Ratcliffe, International Programme Director, confirmed the importance of the quality of reports on the database and that they meet the “Education and Leadership” criteria, because when she visits UN Centres throughout the world, it is apparent how important the work being done by Soroptimists is.

**NB:** These minutes were as taken at the meeting October 2012, but since conference the reporting forms have changed, so the discussions about Q14, 15 and 16 are no longer relevant. However, despite not needing to state on the form that projects fall within “Educate to Lead”, Clubs should still only report projects that do – see the SMART Guide to PA.

13. **PROGRAMME RESOLUTIONS**
Sue Biggs explained that a change had been brought about last year to the way that Programme Resolutions were presented to conference. They are now separate from the General Meeting, and are accompanied by a two-year plan. The deadline for submission of Programme Resolutions is 31st March each year, and the Programme Team would work with the submitter of the successful Resolution to put an action plan together.

This year there were two possible Resolutions submitted, but one was later withdrawn, because the proposer did not realize the amount of work that was needed. Sue gave her assurance that the Programme Team do not leave the proposing club to do all the work, but will assist with formulating the wording of the resolution and producing the action plan.

Requests had been received from Regions/NA/Networks that the timeline for Programme Resolutions was adjusted to allow for amendments to Resolutions to be put forward. She said that the Programme Team would put this into effect ready for the next scheduled Programme Resolutions.

11. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
There was no other business.

23. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
The date of the next meeting is Thursday 31st October 2013, in the Jury’s Hotel, Gateshead.