MINUTES OF THE FEDERATION PROGRAMME ACTION COMMITTEE MEETING
BT CONVENTION CENTRE, ACC LIVERPOOL
THURSDAY 25 OCTOBER 2018

PRESENT:

Barbara Dixon  Federation Programme Director
Susan Biggs     Federation President
Sue Williams    Federation President Elect
Margaret Clark  Federation APD Advocacy
Rayner Rees     Federation APD Economic Empowerment
Yvonne Gibbon   Incoming APD Education
Naina Shah      Federation APD Environmental Sustainability
Rita Beaumont   Federation APD Food Security and Health
Nisha Ghosh     Federation APD Violence and Conflict Resolution
Bhaswati Biswas Federation Friendship Link Coordinator
Zakia Sultana Shahid  FPAC Bangladesh
Andrea Farmer   FPAC Barbados
Martha Pufong   FPAC Cameroon
Glenys Hunt     FPAC England
Hannah Davies   FPAC Gambia
Gloria Payne Banfield FPAC Grenada
Naina Shah      FPAC India
Jeanne Foster Robinson FPAC Jamaica
Khadija Mdala   FPAC Malawi
Linda Borg Vassallo FPAC Malta
Dora Ramsamy    FPAC Mauritius
Goma Devi Bastola FPAC Nepal (Proxy)
Cordelia Barber FPAC Nigeria
Rita Allen       FPAC Northern Ireland
Parveen Rizvi   FPAC Pakistan
Irene Walker     FPAC Republic of Ireland
Prue Watson      FPAC Scotland (Proxy)
Angelika Maurel FPAC Seychelles
Natalie Dixon-Baker  FPAC Sierra Leone
Yatisha Ramdarie FPAC South Africa
Neelanthi Fernando FPAC Sri Lanka
Ikarmola La Borde FPAC St Vincent and the Grenadines
Bebe Ajodha      FPAC Trinidad and Tobago
Rachel Marshall Taylor FPAC Turks and Caicos
Kay Richmond     FPAC UK and Wales
Constance Mutunhu FPAC Zimbabwe (Proxy)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Judith Lewis  Director of Finance
Gina Coad     Federation Executive Officer

FPAC Minutes 2016 –November 2016
1. **WELCOME**
Barbara Dixon, Federation Programme Director, welcomed attendees to the FPAC meeting. Barbara has now served 3 years as Programme Director, and is standing down to take on the role of SIGBI Vice President. She will be succeeded by Dr Kay Richmond, who she welcomed to the meeting. Yvonne Gibbon and Carol Infanti were also present, who would be taking over the roles of APD Education and APD Economic Empowerment respectively. Barbara thanked Rayner Rees for her work over the past few years as she steps down as APD Economic Empowerment.

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

3. **MINUTES OF THE FEDERATION PROGRAMME ACTION MEETING, 26 November 2017 (Circulated)**
There were no amendments to the 2017 FPAC Minutes and they were signed as a true record.

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

5. **ACCEPTANCE OF APD/FLC REPORTS**
All reports had been circulated and were accepted.

5. **THE SOROPTIMIST ALPHABET, BARBARA DIXON**
SIGBI Programme Director set out to explain some of the terms used by Soroptimist International. She said SI is spreading itself too thinly, and should focus on a few key areas to support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Some projects being undertaken by Clubs are not relevant to the SDGs.

When Barbara became a Member, over 25 years ago, SI supported the 3 A’s (Awareness, Advocacy, and Action). Although we no longer use this terminology, the principles are still relevant to the work of Soroptimist International, and we should still be applying the 3 A’s to our project work. It is important to raise awareness of the issues facing women and girls, and to advocate for change.

Barbara reiterated the importance of completing Programme Report Forms as it is only by using what the Clubs report that the information can be extracted to maintain our ECOSOC status. Sometimes, Directors are asked to produce a report in 24 hours, and it is only because the information is stored on the database that this can be achieved.

SI line up their Programme Work with the UN Goals, and in 2000 the Programme Areas of the Assistant Programme Directors (APDs) were amended to mirror the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It was then decided that SI would concentrate on Education. SI chose the theme “Educate to Lead” and SIGBI’s sub-theme was “Educate, Empower and Enable” (3 E’s).

In 2015, having made progress with the MDGs, the UN developed the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – 17 goals that apply to every country with 169 targets in order to meet those goals. Barbara suggested that SIGBI concentrate on just a few of the goals, to which we can make a real difference.

Barbara then played a video which explained the Sustainable Development Goals, which can be viewed below. This introduces the concept of the 5 P’s - People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace*, Partnerships (*Charitable status does not allow SIGBI to use “Peace” so we have replaced this with “Prevention”).
We need to decide which of the SDGs we should work on to make greatest impact.

*See Barbara Dixon’s Presentation*
*Watch video on Sustainable Development Goals*

### 6. UN CENTRES AND SI REPS, MARGARET CLARK, HAFDIS KARLSDOTTIR AND PANEL

Margaret Clark invited questions about the UN and the SI Reps which would be answered by her panel of experts, comprising International Director of Advocacy, Bev Bucur, International Assistant Advocacy for the International President’s Appeal, Hafdis Karlsdottir and Pat Black, International Link, plus Barbara Dixon, SIGBI Programme Director.

The purpose was to familiarize the delegates with the United Nations and the activities that go on at each centre. The United Nations is where decisions are made that really do change the world. One of the prime messages from the United Nations is about working together to make a difference.

There are 193 United Nations Member States, and the UN was founded in 1945 after the Second World War to get nations together to protect human rights and deliver human aid. There are several sub-organisations which are relevant to SI: ECOSOC, UNESCO, CSW and CEDAW. NGOs can hold a government to account if they feel they are violating human rights in some way, by writing a Shadow Report that will be taken seriously by the relevant organization.

SI has representatives at the UN Centres in Rome, Nairobi, Vienna, Paris, Geneva, New York and Bangkok. All the Centres work on different areas – New York: Gender Equality, Vienna: Human Rights, Geneva: CEDAW, Nairobi: Environment, Paris: UNESCO (Education, Science and Culture), Rome: FAO (Food and Agricultural Organisation) and Bangkok: issues in Asia. SI has one rep who has just been placed in Bangkok, who is currently working on climate change and sustainable development.

Hafdis Karlsdottir gave a presentation on the Soroptimist International President’s Appeal, Women Water and Leadership, and how this contributes towards our impact on the SDGs. SI is responsible for our International exposure and makes our voice heard at an international level. The President’s Appeal works towards SDG 4 Education, 5 Gender Equality and 6 Water for All. In many countries securing water is a daily fight for survival, and it is mainly women and girls that are responsible for providing water for households. According to the World Health Organisation, every pound invested in providing clean drinking water is returned fourfold, as women can earn instead of providing water.

The SI President’s Appeal aims to raise £350,000 over two years, which will support five projects on five continents, and will empower at least 500 women to be self-supporting through implementing water projects. Currently, three projects on three continents are being supported, in Bulgaria (Europe), Kenya (Africa) and Malaysia (Asia). In each case, the local Soroptimist Club is facilitating the project. The fourth project has been selected but is also in Asia, as it is to support SI South West Pacific’s appeal following the earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia.

After the first year, the SI President’s Appeal has already raised £160,000 – nearly half the total goal.

*See Hafdis Karlsdottir presentation*
7. **ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT, RAYNER REES**

Rayner started by asking “What are the barriers to women’s economic empowerment?” and gave delegates two minutes to jot down as many as they could think of. Answers included education, middle-men taking women’s wages leaving them with very little, lack of male support, lack of safe surroundings, social and cultural limitations, discrimination, lack of knowledge/skills and women doing unpaid work.

Rayner then conducted a quiz, which revealed the following:

- **SDG 1** – shifting 9.5% of global military spending to agriculture and infrastructure in poor communities could eliminate extreme poverty and hunger by 2030.
- **SDG 2** – in Malawi female headed households are more than twice as likely as male headed households to reduce the number of meals they eat when reporting climate shocks.
- **SDG 3** – Cardiovascular disease is responsible for the most deaths in women.
- **SDG 4** – For every dollar spent on girls’ education, five dollars is returned in improved economy.
- **SDG 5** – Disasters such as floods, drought and storms kill more women than men.
- **SDG 6** – Involving women in water projects can increase the effectiveness of the project by 6-7 times.
- **SDG 7** – In Brazil 59% of rural women with access to electricity are more likely to complete primary education.
- **SDG 8** – Women spend 19% of their time each day in unpaid labour.
- **SDG 9** – In developing countries 16% fewer women use the internet than men.
- **SDG 10** – fewer than 10% of land owners are globally women. Closing the gender gap could reduce the number of hungry people by over 15%.
- **SDG 11** – in Kenya and Nicaragua one third of women headed households in cities suffer from insecure housing and poor access to clean water.
- **SDG 12** – in some countries women make up 85% or more of the pesticide applicators, often working whilst pregnant or breastfeeding.
- **SDG 13** – in the USA, the death rate from extreme heat is 2.6 times greater for men than for women.
- **SDG 14** – in Vietnam, 80% of the aqua workforce is women.
- **SDG 15** – 30% of the world’s plant and animal species could go extinct if the global temperature rises by 2.5 degrees.
- **SDG 17** – more partnerships are needed with local governments.

See Rayner Rees’ presentation

8. **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN, NISHA GHOSH**

Nisha stated that Partnerships are needed between governments, businesses and the media to change the cultural norms that contribute to gender inequality. Change in the law are not always effective, because culture remains hostile. Melinda Gates said “Women and girls are not just ON the agenda, they ARE the agenda”. Full equality by 2030 is not possible if half the population continue to be denied their human rights. Gender equality is the reason that the MDGs (Millennium Development Goals) were converted into the SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals).

SDG 5 (Gender Equality) is a stand-alone goal, which demonstrates how important it is within the 2030 agenda, and it is a pre-requisite of all the other SDGs.

Soroptimist International, in their Where we Stand statements, states that Violence Against Women is a human rights issue. In the past year, SIGBI have raised 363 reports on Elimination of Violence and 50 reports on Peace Promotion. SI Grange over Sands advocated for a ban on landmines, SI Bilston and
District advocated against force marriage, SI Bingley distributed “Loves Me, Loves Me Not” bookmarks, SI Richmond and Dales raised awareness of FGM, SI Poole’s Purple Teardrop Campaign raised awareness about human trafficking, and of course UKPAC’s Modern Day Slavery survey. Several Clubs have also supported survivors of abuse in various ways.

See Nisha Ghosh’s presentation

9. CLUSTER GROUPS
The delegates had an opportunity to work with the APDs, and silent observers were asked to consider which of the SDGs applied to SIGBI’s charity status and which should not form part of SIGBI’s programme work.

10. ENVIRONMENT, NAINA SHAH
Naina continued the theme of the SI President’s Appeal – working with water. SI Madurai helped a group of students in the US to win an all-America competition on making safe drinking water in developing countries. The students came up with the idea of using rice husk, which is usually wasted, to purify the water. In addition, many Clubs continue to support WaterAid.

Following on from the last SI President’s Appeal “See solar, cook solar”, Clubs continue to fund solar lamps in area where they are needed. Renewable energy is very technical and expensive – energy is used in order to save energy so care is needed with these projects.

More than 1 billion people still do not have access to fresh water. In addition, a major cause of death and mental illness is breathing in smoke from wood-burning stoves.

The Paris Agreement concerns climate change and emissions, and is due to start in 2020. The long-term goal is to keep the increase in global temperature within 2 degrees. Each participating country must monitor and regularly report on consumption.

Clubs this year have been working towards banning single-use plastic, and introducing more trees to the environment.

See Naina Shah’s presentation

There was some discussion by delegates following Naina’s presentation on whether it is better to support WaterAid or send donations directly to Clubs in the areas you want to help, or even to donate directly to the SI President’s Appeal.

President Sue Biggs commented that often donations to WaterAid are match-funded, and that they would direct money to a particular cause if requested by the Club making the donation. Glenys Hunt also said that Toilet Twinning was a good cause and could also raise good publicity for Soroptimists, particularly if a whole town is twinned.

Chinwe Ezenwa-Mbah asked if SIGBI could do more in Nigeria regarding water, and Hafdis said that there is an application form that can be completed to apply for funds from the SI President’s Appeal.

11. MODERN DAY SLAVERY, KAY RICHMOND
Kay said that 3,700 responses to the survey had been made online, plus a large number of paper responses. Most people get their information about human trafficking and modern day slavery from TV,
Radio and newspapers (including online newspapers), but very few from Social Media, so this form of media should not be relied upon to deliver the message.

63% of those who responded thought that Human Trafficking/Slavery does not occur. 60% were aware of the different types of slavery and exploitation but 44% thought it did not happen in their own communities. Only 25-30% thought they could spot someone caught up in slavery and trafficking. 47% would report this to police. Only 15% could name the modern day slavery helpline, Unseen.

A booklet has been compiled by UKPAC on how to spot the signs of trafficking in the UK and what to do about it, and this is available on the UKPAC Website – www.sigbi.org/ukpac.

A forthcoming report, Global Compact, will apply to all UN Countries, so Kay asked delegates to look out for the publication of that report.

A training pack has been produced, containing presentations that can be used for Soroptimists to go and talk to other Soroptimists and the public about slavery and trafficking. This is available on a website (https://iasctoolkit.nottingham.ac.uk) and Kay urged FPAC Chairmen to log in to the site and use the material.

A question was raised from the floor which indicated that young girls need to be educated on the potential dangers of being trafficked, as often they are too eager to attempt to find a better life abroad and will believe what they are told.

See Kay Richmond’s presentation

12. **CARIBBEAN MODERN DAY SLAVERY SURVEY – BEBE AJODHA**
The Modern Day Slavery Survey was adapted by Bebe Ajodha, SI San Fernando, for use in Trinidad & Tobago, to determine the public’s perception of human trafficking in the Caribbean. UKPAC will use the survey results to compare UK perception with that of the Caribbean, which will help to shape future awareness raising campaigns relating to human trafficking and slavery.

The number of responses was small, only 12 responses, all from Soroptimists, but the correlation between the results of the UKPAC survey and the Caribbean survey are striking.

See Caribbean Modern Day Slavery Survey Presentation

13. **HEATH, RITA BEAUMONT**
Rita said that to be healthy, one has to have a healthy lifestyle and a healthy environment. The World Health Assembly met in May 2018 and a new 5-year strategic plan was agreed. Over the past 70 years, great strides have been made regarding health – 25 years have been added to global life expectancy and huge inroads have been made into eradicating deadly diseases, but there is still a long way to go. Less than half the people in the world today get all the health services they need, and often they have to pay for their healthcare, throwing them into poverty. 30 million people die every year before they are 70.

Earlier this year, Rita had represented SIGBI at the Commonwealth Heads of Governments meeting in London. She attended the Women’s Forum, and sexual health and rights was high on the agenda. Some of the key issues discussed were: body integrity and sexual safety, freedom from all forms of sexual violence, a right to make informed and sensible choices about reproduction, rights to contraceptive advice, freedom
from contracting sexually transmitted diseases, prevention of and care for infertility, access to safe motherhood and rights of disabled women.

Rita also attended a workshop at which the key speaker was a CEO of a large charity who spoke about a country she had visited in sub-saharan Africa in order to vaccinate some girls, and discovered that no advice was given to girls on sexual health. This is an area that should be addressed.

One of the major factors in communicable diseases is the lack of safe drinking water and sanitation and hygiene. Three WHO priorities are tuberculosis, hepatitis B and Malaria and these are in the 5 year targets. Cardiovascular disease is the highest killer of women and diabetes is also a high risk disease. 18 November is World Diabetes Day and the focus for the next two years is Diabetes and the Family.

Malnutrition and hunger is the number one risk to health. In 2017 there was an estimated 815 million people worldwide who were undernourished. WHO have introduced Five Keys to Safer Food, which are (1) keep clean; (2) separate raw and cooked; (3) cook thoroughly; (4) keep food at safe temperatures; and (5) use safe water and raw materials.

See Rita Beaumont’s presentation

14.  EDUCATION, BARBARA DIXON
Barbara played a UN video on education, which stated that education is a fundamental right, and key to all the SDGs as poverty, hunger, safe childbirth etc can be greatly reduced through educating women.

Education is the main focus of Soroptimists and underpins all SDGs. Millions of girls throughout the world are denied a basic education which directly impacts their lives and the lives of their children. By 2030, all pre-primary and primary education should be free to both boys and girls and vocational training should be accessible and affordable for everyone. Everyone should have basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Soroptimists should work on scholarships to enable women to return to education or retrain after raising a family, for example by supporting the Diamond Education Grant. By 2030, the supply of qualified teachers should be increased to reduce the shortfall, and Clubs can work on this.

Jeanne Robinson-Foster read out a letter from a recipient of a scholarship from SI Jamaica Mandeville, who became pregnant as a school girl, and would have had to drop out of school without the scholarship. She is now at university and progressing well towards her goal of becoming a midwife. Jeanne also referenced a school set up by SI Western Jamaica nearly 30 years ago, which not only provided education for the children, but had provided the training for the teachers at the school, who particularly wanted their thanks to be recorded at this meeting.

See Barbara Dixon’s presentation

13.  FRIENDSHIP LINKS, NISHA GHOSH
Nisha said that Zarreen Babu, former Friendship Link Coordinator had asked her to present her report on her behalf.

In the past year, 11 new friendship links were formed. Partnerships between Soroptimist Clubs enable a community of peace to be built where women and girls can achieve their own potential. SI Europe has Open Heart Open Door, which was initiated by their former Federation President
Heidi Gudrun. It is open to Soroptimists from all Federations. It is perhaps the most complete offer of friendship that is offered by this organization.

Kate Moore was the founder of the International Chatline which has been doing great service to connect Soroptimists and encourage friendship links across the world. There are meaningful conversations, thought provoking ideas, sharing and much more on this forum.

Partnerships with Clubs in other countries provide an opportunity to understand cultures through study tours, and to venture into an unknown country knowing there is a Soroptimist to greet you.

There are hundreds of Friendship Links that have supported projects in another country or another region. There are amazing stories of water systems being setup or school supplies sent or health care centre support – and even knowledge transfer – all though the links of Soroptimist clubs. Nisha demonstrated several examples of successful joint projects, which are shown in her presentation, below.

Grants of Friendship are a chance for face to face contact with Soroptimists in another country, and each Grant of Friendship can be tailored to what the host club or region can offer and what the visitor’s interests are.

Nisha finished by introducing the new Friendship Link Coordinator, Bhaswati Biswas of SI South Kolkata.

See Nisha Ghosh’s presentation

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS
Barbara Dixon thanked everyone for all their hard work during her time as Programme Director and for making Soroptimism what it is.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING
The next meeting will be held on Thursday 26 October 2019 at Bournemouth, UK.