Soroptimist International
Great Britain & Ireland



SI Winchester sponsors a local girls' rugby club

Annual Report 1 April 2025 - 31 March 2026

Soroptimist International Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) Ltd

STANDING UP
for Women and Girls



Foreword by Gillie O'Rourke

Chairman of the Board 2025-2027

It is with great pleasure that I present the Soroptimist International Great Britian and Ireland (SIGBI) Annual Report for the year to 31 March 2026.

During the period of this report we chartered 3 new clubs across the Federation, one of which was in a new country, St Lucia, and we have several others in the pipeline. We are also reviewing our membership options to increase member numbers whilst retaining those we have through a variety of means.

In October 2025 we held our annual Conference which was well attended by members from across the Federation. One highlight of this event was the Programme Action speed dating session at which members could engage with Clubs and others learning about projects.

Our members continue to carry out amazing projects across the Federation all of which fulfil our charitable aims. I am very proud to stand alongside these women and to witness the impact their work has.

The contract with our PR company was changed drastically, is more proactive and now focusses on the work carried out by members whilst aligning to various UN Days. This has resulted (since November) in 6 press releases all of which have been extremely well received and have raised our profile nationally. We have a programme established to further promote SIGBI on the national stage.

During the year, a small working group of professionals with strategic development experience pulled together a 10-year plan for the Federation. This will be reviewed and updated regularly by the SIGBI Board to ensure sound financial and resource planning.

The Board has also agreed to replace our existing website with a new, improved website which will go live in the autumn of 2026.

There have also been changes at the Soroptimist International level and the Federation Presidents are now automatically voting main board Directors which gives a great opportunity for cross Federation working.

At Conference we said farewell to several Directors and to the President, Ruth Healey, whilst welcoming new Directors as well as myself as President. My thanks go to all departing Directors as well as to members and the office staff for their support and hard work over the year. As a membership organisation the aim of the new Board is to engage with members across a variety of areas whilst, at the same time, providing a skills based leadership.

SIGBI Ltd Trustees 2025-2026

Gillie O'Rourke, President
Kate Belinis DL, President Elect
Chris Corless, Finance Director
Giselle Davies, Governance Director (April – November 2025)
Louise Parry, Governance Director (from November 2025)
Lindsay Green, Programme Director
Sandy Taylor, Membership Director (from 14 March 2025)
Deborah Kingsley, PR, Marketing and Communications Director (until December 2025 then vacant)



Programme Action Overview 2025-2026

Lindsay Green, Director of Programme

This is a snap shot of the Programme Action activities submitted by Soroptimist International clubs across Great Britain, Ireland, and internationally for the 2025–2026 annual report period. The data captures a remarkable breadth of community impact, spanning domestic violence prevention, health activities, education, environmental action, economic empowerment, and international development.

Clubs from locations as diverse as Trinidad and Tobago, Bangladesh, India, and South Kolkata, to communities across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have contributed projects touching the lives of thousands of individuals. The collective volunteer effort, financial contributions, and community partnerships reflect the enduring mission of SIGBI and its members to transform the lives of women and girls.

Our donations are not always monetary in value, and we classify it all as Gifting and this includes for example, items knitted for prem babies, food to food banks and special gift bags to women and their children in Refuges, as well as Microfinance & Lend with Care schemes.

Last year we awarded Best Practice Awards around the three A's Advocacy, Awareness and Action. Standards of entry were extremely high and it was difficult to choose the overall winners. SI Esperance, Trinidad won the Delegates choice award with Think Before You Click. This project was reported in the national press and shared at a parallel event at the Commission on the Status of Women in March. A booklet with all the entries and winners has been produced so that clubs can demonstrate the breadth of our work.

At the Birmingham conference we ran plenary and workshop sessions, giving members more opportunities to hear about our programme work across the Federation, plus external speakers, as well as Membership, Governance and Finance ideas and advice.

In November 2025 SIGBI won a National Association of Women's Organisations (NAWO) award in for their work on VAWG (violence against women and Girls). The 2025-2026 report demonstrates the work of our clubs and this is as diverse as it is impactful.

But it is the voices of beneficiaries –that speak most clearly to why this work matters and this can be found in our reports, our media releases and the stories that Soroptimists tell that bring our work to life.

What unites all these activities is the core Soroptimist mission: to educate, empower, and enable women and girls to reach their full potential. With members standing up for all women and girls, the report represents not merely projects completed, but lives changed, voices amplified, and futures transformed.

Key Statistics at a Glance

Total reports recorded	1572
Clubs Reporting 177	
Total Funds Raised / Donated (recorded)	£458,947
Estimated Direct Beneficiaries	167,858
Volunteer Hours Logged	93,181

These figures are all up on last year

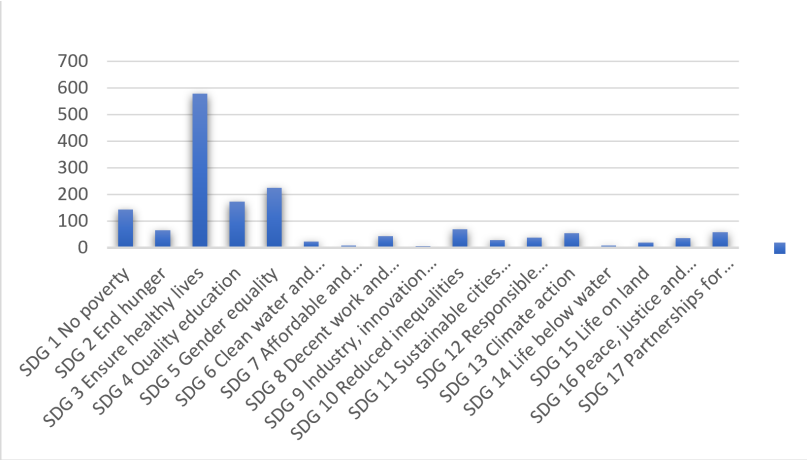
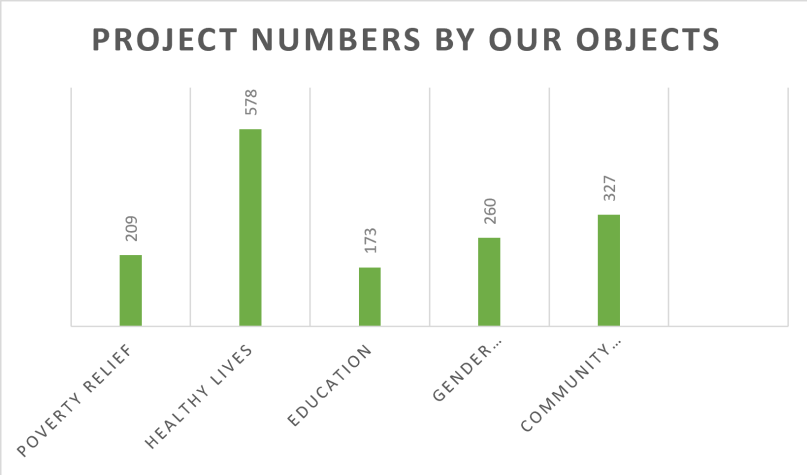


Table 1 Projects by Sustainable development Goals SDG's



Our achievements towards the UN Sustainable Developments Goals (SDGs)

Community Development and being a good Citizen

Debra Joseph

Clubs undertook over 70 projects in this area with members contributing 2677 volunteer hours and raising £8,044.

Activities included:

- Raising awareness of litter and plastic pollution with accompanying activities,
- Planting of trees, flowering shrubs and medicinal plants.
- Coastal restoration that involved planting of sea grape and coconut trees.
- Being part of the Great British Clean 2025 and the Big River Clean.
- Donation of saplings.
- Purchasing of blister pack boxes for recycling purposes.
- Combating pollution.

Climate committee members wrote five (5) blogs on varying topics for publishing. The climate website was developed and populated with climate cards containing pertinent information on climate change.



Education

Shukla Chattopadhya

In 2025–2026, SIGBI clubs demonstrated a strong commitment to SDG 4 – Quality Education through 129 projects delivered across the Federation. These initiatives reached 4,273 beneficiaries and were supported by 3,886 volunteer hours, reflecting the dedication of Soroptimist members to expanding access to learning and opportunity.

Projects addressed a wide spectrum of educational needs including literacy promotion, educational resources, mentoring, digital inclusion, skills development, scholarships, community education and lifelong learning. Many initiatives focused on women and girls, recognising education as a key driver of empowerment, confidence and economic independence.

The impact of these projects extended beyond the classroom. By strengthening learning environments and building capacity within communities, clubs contributed to greater social inclusion, improved opportunities and sustainable development. The work also supported wider SDG outcomes, particularly gender equality, reduced inequalities and stronger, more resilient communities.

The collective achievements recorded under SDG 4 demonstrate the continuing commitment of SIGBI members to transforming lives through education. Every project, whether large or small, contributed to the vision of ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all.



Health

Eleanor Evans

Members contributed 31,288 volunteer hours, raising £175,327.77 and benefitting 20,418 women and girls.

Clubs around the world worked on many projects to improve the health and wellbeing of women and girls.

- Focus on cervical cancer – raising awareness of the importance of screening and vaccination, campaigning to increase uptake and offering free access to tests. Creation of social media resources for clubs to use for the campaign.
- Creation of business cards tackling health issues that impact women for clubs to use – covering menopause, autism, endometriosis, ovarian and breast cancer.
- Events giving free access to dentists, eye tests, screening and blood tests at health camps in the Caribbean and in Asia.
- Events and campaigns to increase awareness of health conditions that impact women including endometriosis, heart health, breast and ovarian cancer, autism.
- Writing supportive letters to those living with cancer.
- Fundraising for breast cancer, ovarian cancer, dementia and mental health charities.



Poverty Relief

Ayushi Bose

205 projects have been reported with members contributing 11,865 volunteer hours. £59,890 has been raised

Our work as Soroptimists can go a very long way to end poverty, because lifting women out of poverty strengthens entire families and communities and creates long-term, sustainable change. Some notable work done by Soroptimists in the past year to end poverty in its varied forms are below:

- Food poverty – Clubs have partnered with food banks to provide food supplies to needy families in their communities. club has also started research of food banks in its local area to ensure consistency in its supply and accessibility to the entire community.

- Period poverty – Starter baskets with period products were distributed in local libraries and town councils to ensure patchy availability of free period products was not an obstacle for menstruating women to achieve adequate health provisions. Pad roll dispensers were installed by another club in partnership with local healthcare services.



Human Rights

Meenakshi Ray

No. of Projects- 477 Volunteer Hours-24,593

- Clubs across the Federation marked 16 days of Activism in November/ December 2025 to raise awareness regarding gender-based violence, domestic abuse and modern day slavery.
- Several UK clubs brought out booklets with information to help domestic violence victims.
- Several SI clubs sent donations in cash and kind through agencies providing relief to people affected by the war in Ukraine
- Several UK clubs supported refugees and asylum seekers through gifts, social gatherings and training programmes.
- In UK, several clubs participated in conducting a survey on rail travel and safety for women.
- International Day of Peace was marked on 21st September 2025 by clubs throughout the Federation.



Advocacy in the UK

Moraig Henderson

Soroptimists in UK and Ireland have continued to deliver impactful advocacy over the past year. This has included lobbying MPs on key women's health issues, promoting improved access to services, and advancing a position paper calling for mandatory Gender Impact Assessments across all levels of government. This paper has been widely shared, including at Ministerial level, and will remain a central focus of ongoing advocacy efforts. Our regular advocacy activities continue and include:

- International Women's Day: marked by all regions through a diverse programme of events which celebrate women's achievements and highlight ongoing challenges, eg equal pay and the online vilification of women.
- 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence: in collaboration with partners, Soroptimists organise events, vigils, and community outreach initiatives to raise awareness and drive action to end gender-based violence.
- Orange Cafés: Many clubs host regular "Orange Cafés" in local venues, creating informal and accessible spaces to engage the public, raise awareness, promote and advocate for the Soroptimist Movement.

Advocacy activity has increased significantly over the past year, supported by a dedicated conference workshop and webinars that have strengthened understanding of advocacy and enabled members to develop more impactful projects. A new library of advocacy guidelines and templates—available on the hub—provides practical support for clubs. As a result, SIGBI's profile continues to grow, with greater visibility and clearer communication of our mission.



Benevolent Fund - Charity No 211840



This charity recognizes that hardship can knock on any door, often when least expected, and assists current and recent past members In the UK and Ireland, who find themselves in financial difficulty.

The cost of living continues to be high, having a significant impact on members with fixed, limited incomes. Most recently, beneficiaries currently assisted by the fund have lost the winter fuel allowance, making the choice between eating and heating a difficult one. Trustees maintain contact with beneficiaries to ensure that evidence of additional hardship is recognized quickly.

The Fund is dependent on income from investment, members contributions via capitation; donations from clubs, regions; individuals, and legacies. We are immensely grateful to those who remember the Fund in their bequests. This year we have received one very generous legacy of £5,000.

During this year we have paid grants to 10 members. At the AGM we diligently review all applications; recent and longer standing, to ensure that help is given where the need is greatest. Trustees consistently work to enhance the profile of the Benevolent Fund throughout the UK and Ireland. They endeavour to keep up to date with state benefits available and direct beneficiaries to appropriate departments.

Diamond Education Grant - Charity No 1139668



The charity has five trustees, including one SIGBI Director.

Income for the year 2025-2026 was £25,458, which included donations, levies and legacies of £20,811 and investment income of £4,647.

Expenditure for the year was £15,682, which included grants of £14,590, investment management charges and other costs of £747 and Independent Examiner's fees of £345.

There were 17 grants awarded, from 123 applications received. The total amount allocated in grants was £14,590, and the average amount of each grant was £810.

One recipient told us ''The grant from the DEG made all the difference. I could not have completed my training and qualified without it. Consequently, my income is better and that benefits my children. My sincere thanks!''

Emergency Relief Fund - Charity No 211231



The Emergency Relief Fund is used to help those people in immediate need of primary relief due to either natural or manmade disasters throughout the world. Individual members may recommend that funds are provided for certain situations.

Income 2025/26

- Levies £2,021
- Gift Aid £511
- Donations and legacies £1,701
- Investment income £5,077

Donations

- British Red Cross- Hurricane Melissa - £2,000
- Sri Lanka Tropical Cyclone Ditwah - £1,000
- Hurricane Relief Fund – Hurricane Melissa Jamaica- £1,500

Company Details

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About Us

Soroptimists educate, empower and enable women and girls to improve their lives.

Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland (SIGBI) has nearly 5,000 Members in 250 Clubs operating across 20 countries in Asia, the Caribbean and Europe.

The word “Soroptimist” is a combination of the Latin words “soror” meaning Sister and “optima” meaning best - so we want the best for women. Soroptimists implement projects across the world, advocate at local, national and international levels and enable women and girls to reach their full potential.

Vision

Women and girls will achieve their individual and collective potential, realise aspirations and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide.

Mission

Soroptimists transform the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment and enabling opportunities.

Founded in 1921, Soroptimist International is a worldwide service organisation for 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, peaceful communities worldwide

STANDING UP for Women and Girls