

 MEMBERS LOGIN

Soroptimist



International

Federation of the

South West Pacific



Another month of social Isolation with Covid-19. I do hope all of you are finding productive activities to keep you busy during the social isolation required as a result of this pandemic. I hear stories of jigsaws and craft activities preparatory to collections, rug making or emergency toiletry packs for domestic violence victims. After the first couple of weeks of social isolation some of our members are enjoying this opportunity to be productive and provide items for their future donations. A number of significant events have happened since the April eSpan.

The Soroptimist clubs, of which there are 106, in Africa voted overwhelmingly (95/106) in March to have an African Federation. International President Sharon Fisher welcomed and celebrated the birth of the fifth Soroptimist Federation, to be known as SIAF. The African clubs will now proceed with the election of officers and form a Federation. As Mary Muia the SIFA Federation Task Force Chair, a member of the Kenyan Union reported that as almost 60% of Africa's population in 2019 was aged less than 25 years, this makes Africa the world's youngest continent and Africa's growing youth population offers enormous potential. Watch this space! Another significant international announcement was that Maureen Maguire, a member of SI Portadown in Northern Ireland was selected by SIGBI clubs to be Soroptimist International President Elect 2020-2021 and she takes up this position from 1st July 2020. Maureen was SI President of SIGBI in 2011/2012 and attended the Kuala Lumpur convention last year.

Another significant piece of news reported in the New York times on the 2 May was that Female Genital Mutilation had been outlawed in Sudan, a victory for women in the Sudan.

SISWP sent its last tranche of money for the Women Water and Leadership President's Appeal to SI HQ recently making a total donation from **SISWP of \$45,986.88 AUD during 2017-2019**. We are hoping that Past International President Mariet may have some left over money from the other W,W,L projects to help out the Indonesia Makmar project particularly the craft training (weaving etc) activity which has been delayed due to the corona virus pandemic. However clubs please consider

further donations to the Makmar Appeal. Isla Winarto's reports on the Makmar project are extensive and most informative. Indonesia has not been spared from the corona virus pandemic affecting all our countries and has suffered tsunamis and earthquakes as well. [DONATE HERE](#)

Another project needing funds to finish and equip the facility is our Federation Project Sanctuary Shelter. The shelter has been built, a fence has yet to be erected and the shelter has to be furnished with beds, linen, computer for record purposes etc. Details of the items required can be obtained from the SISWP website. [READ MORE HERE](#)

As I write this message on the 12th May, we are celebrating International Nurses Day, a very significant day that commemorates the birth of Florence Nightingale. Without our nurses and doctors, many citizens affected with coronavirus would not have survived.

May in Australia is Domestic Violence (DV) Prevention month so lots of activities were scheduled to raise the issue and work towards decreasing and assisting those who experience DV. Sadly the social isolation of families and working from home requirements during the pandemic have not helped those women who live with DV and have actually resulted in an increase in DV.

Catherine Evans

Programme Director

Advocacy Work

What are priorities in your country? What are clubs doing in advocacy?

Advocating on behalf of women is a core Soroptimist function, and this month the programme team is pleased to once again be able to report on Soroptimist Advocacy work.

In Australia there are 6 Women's Alliance Groups, (the Alliances) who represent over 180 women's organisations. They bring forward the views, voices and issues of Australian women and, in particular, women from marginalised and disadvantaged groups. The Alliances take the lead in ensuring that the voices of as many women as possible are heard, especially those who in the past have found it difficult to engage in advocacy and decision making." Soroptimist International Australia is a member of the Alliances. These Alliances Engage actively with the Australian Government on policy issues as part of a better more informed and representative dialogue between women and government. Recently Soroptimist International Australia contributed to a Joint NGO Submission on behalf of the Australian NGO Coalition. Australia's Human Rights Scorecard: Australia's 2020 United Nations UPR NGO Coalition Report. This report will be presented to the UN in November 2020. Soroptimist International Australia are a signatory to this report, it is suggested that Australian [Soroptimists should read this report.](#)

#ausUPR

AUSTRALIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS SCORE CARD

AUSTRALIA'S 3RD UNIVERSAL PERIODIC REVIEW

Joint NGO Submission on behalf of the Australian NGO Coalition

Tell us what your club is doing to Advocate on behalf of women. Send us the information or complete a Advocacy Programme Report

UN SDG Work



Disease outbreaks affect women and men differently, and pandemics make existing inequalities for [women and girls](#) and discrimination of other marginalized groups such as persons with disabilities and those in extreme poverty, worse. This needs to be considered, given the different impacts surrounding detection and access to treatment for women and men.

Women represent 70 percent of the health and social sector workforce globally and special attention should be given to how their work environment may expose them to discrimination, as

well as thinking about their sexual and reproductive health and psychosocial needs as frontline health workers. (<https://www.unfpa.org/resources/covid-19-gender-lens>).

In many parts of the world seasonal migrant workers, and first nations people are at most risk. Living conditions, foreign languages, lack of visas, decreased work opportunities, lack of running water, unsafe hygiene conditions and overcrowding place these people at a higher risk to catching Covid-19. There is ample opportunity for Soroptimists to raise awareness, to advocate, to provide that voice for people at risk in our countries to ensure they have access to information, health screening, and testing.



COVID-19 DISRUPTING SDG 5.3: ELIMINATING FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION

TECHNICAL NOTE | APRIL 2020

KEY MESSAGES

- Based on previous experience in responding to humanitarian crises including outbreaks, the COVID-19 pandemic will compound existing gender inequalities and **increase the risk of gender-based violence (GBV)**. The protection and promotion of the rights of girls and women should be prioritized ([UNFPA, March 2020](#)). UNFPA and UNICEF are committed to preventing, mitigating and responding to GBV in emergencies ([GBV Guidelines](#)).
- Where movement is restricted and people are confined, priority should be given to **ensuring access to prevention, protection and care services, including psychosocial support, and adapting community-based surveillance systems** for girls and women at risk of and affected by female genital mutilation, especially in hard-to-reach areas.
- Female genital mutilation risk mitigation and response should be **integrated in GBV and child protection COVID-19 preparedness and response plans**.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, meeting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including the **elimination of female genital mutilation by 2030, will be disrupted, and an estimated two million additional cases of female genital mutilation will need to be averted.** ([UNFPA, April 2020](#))

2 MILLION GIRLS

MAY NOT BE PROTECTED



Programme Database

Due to security breaches on the 9th of April, it has been decided to move the programme database to a new hosting provider and server. This work is currently underway and it is hoped that the Programme Database website will be functioning very shortly. National Representatives, Regions, and Clubs will be informed of the new website address and login details via email. The links on the website will be updated to the new site. The programme team is eagerly awaiting the relaunch of the website, as we know that many clubs have lots of reports awaiting submission, especially around the wonderful work clubs have been doing in regards to Covid-19.

COVID 19 Club's Response

Once the programme database is live on the new hosting site, you will be able to report on the work clubs, regions, and countries have been doing to assist their communities. When reporting please do the following:

- Use the words COVID19 in the title.
- When reporting reports against SDG 3 and Target 3D.

These two small steps will greatly enhance how SISWP can report on the valued work that you do.

Widows rights



Across the developing world widows remain one of the most heavily stigmatized, abused and impoverished demographics. The life of a widow is often one devoid of justice, one where institutions fail to provide adequate protections and the rule of law has no bearing. Despite decades of progress in the field of women's rights and international development, patriarchal cultural stigmas and discriminatory practices remain especially prominent obstacles faced by widows across the world. These abuses often occur in violation of both local statutory laws and international human rights laws. In cases where women have the knowledge to pursue their claims in the local legal system, complicated bureaucratic processes, distant courts, and legal fees all act as significant barriers. (www.globalfundforwidows.org). United Nations Development Programme's Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor argued that as many as four billion people globally are excluded from the rule of law. They found that for many in the developing world, informal customary laws and religious institutions take precedence over – often completely superseding – established statutory laws. What to do about educating women in their legal right. The Global Fund for Widows has developed a "Community Paralegal Certification Program". bringing legal empowerment to the local level by focusing on one of the most marginalized and legally illiterate groups in the developing world, widows and female heads of household. **What does this do:** The Community Paralegal program provides a broad overview of

legal principles, the primary focus will be on areas on the law most essential for widows. The primary goal of the program is to directly address structural sources of culture and behaviour that propagate discrimination and inequality. They are then charged with disseminating such information to five (5) community members such as siblings, parents, relatives, including village elders, men and boys. This obligation ensures the experiential growth of the project amongst the most vulnerable demographic. [Read the full white paper here.](#) Perhaps this information could be of assistance to possible project implementation in some of our Federation countries.

Programme Team Reports

Bringing to you the programme report by Zone 3 Coordinator Joanne Yeoh. Joanne leaves the



programme team and is moving to assist the Membership Team. Joanne sends her message " Thank you to the clubs and regions in Zone 3 for your project and advocacy reports demonstrating that Soroptimists do great work empowering women and girls to reach their potential. Echoing Diane Mariechild. "A Soroptimist is the full circle. Within her is the power to create, nurture and transform".

[Read Joanne's report here.](#)

Gender Equality

Global Overview

143 out of 195
countries

guarantee equality between women and
men in their constitutions as of 2014



**YET, DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN
PERSISTS IN MANY AREAS, DIRECTLY AND
INDIRECTLY, THROUGH:**



laws and policies



gender-based stereotypes



social norms and practices

Gender equality before the law does not necessarily mean that women
in practice have equal opportunities

SANCTUARY: Shelter for Women

What an amazing site to see a house where previously there was only vacant land. Ladies you have made this a reality! Now we need to add the icing on the cake, lets make this sanctuary really a safe place for women and children to shelter after disasters or fleeing Domestic Violence. A strong fence is required, along with furnishings to make it really inviting. Recently the house has received a porch, washing area, and outside kitchen. The Fijian Government is supplying and fitting the fence and gate, a security necessity, then the **Kitchen cabinets, fittings, and furniture which is still required will be installed.**

The practical [competition certificate](#) and [engineers report](#) are available here for your perusal.

Has your club donated to this project? Have you personally donated to this project? Think of all the money you have saved whilst in isolation, not buying delicious takeaway coffees, how about using some of this money to complete this project and make a difference to the lives of the women and children who will use the home. You can donate by clicking on the button.

DONATE NOW



Centennial Celebrations 2021

The Centennial Celebration committee which includes Programme and Membership have been meeting regularly. These meetings are focusing on our key messages, branding, website and social media presence and most importantly projects/activities for clubs ensuring that there will be programme opportunities for clubs to participate in, the projects undertaken in unison across the Federation countries or in partnership with Friendship links (in our Federation or other Federations) will ensure that there will be maximum publicity benefit which will increase public awareness of SISWP, who we are, what we do and the difference we make to the lives of women and girls.



Soroptimist Reflections will be one of the ongoing campaigns throughout the year, it is planned to release a story a week, therefore we need 52 stories. This project is being led by Jane Zimmerman, we know you all have some great stories to tell, your time as Federation President, funny antidotes about Federation Conferences, where you were on a planning team for a conference, did you implement and manage a federation

project, did you get to visit federation projects, what caused you to become a Soroptimist, young, old, poignant, sad, funny, thought-provoking, reflective, these are all reflections of our Soroptimist story we need you to share your reflective lens with us and we need to get started NOW, so that we have them ready for release in 2021. [Contact Jane](#)

Around the Federation

SI Bangsar - Do their part.

While we are complying with the Movement Control Order in Malaysia by staying at home, we at SI Bangsar, did our part to ease difficulties faced by the health care workers. The health care professionals are facing an unprecedented workload and vulnerable to infection. We must give these health care frontliners all the support they need to do their jobs and be safe.



Drinks donation to General Hospital KL - Members of SI Bangsar were informed that the KL General Hospital was seeking donations of any kind of food for the frontliners who are working with the Covid-19 patients. Very swiftly, we had an online meeting voted to donate RM1,000 worth of packet drinks to them. A distributor of packet drinks was engaged to deliver 300 cartons of Milo drinks to the hospital on 31st March 2020. Hopefully this will help them when they don't have time for meals or to quench their thirst while working hard to protect us.

Donation of PPE to ASPAC - ASPAC (Assisi Palliative Care Bhd) is an NGO who provide support and care to terminally ill patients. The health workers visit terminally ill patients from home to home and they are equally exposed to all the risks of being infected by the virus. They called up for help for donations of PPE so that the staff can continue to provide care for the needy during this time. This was possible due to Rm1,500 cash donations were raised among members of SI Bangsar to help supply PPE to ASPAC.

Due to supply shortage, these PPE items (coverall gowns and shoe covers) were delivered in batches but fully delivered on 22nd April 2020.

This is our way to say Thank You to our health workers

Report by Sim Chan



SI Nelson - Soroptimister Hero Relay for Life.

The Nelson club, with some Waimea members, entered the Nelson Cancer Society's Relay for Life which was to be held for 16 hours from 4pm on 21st March until 8am the following morning. A member of the team has to be walking/running on the track for the whole time. Gavin Ward, Megan's husband decided he would join our team and was going to run the whole time – he also was generating very good sponsorship money together with one of our members, Sandy Stephens.



Unfortunately, due to the Covid 19 crisis the event was postponed a week before and donors could ask for their money back. Gavin decided that as he had been sponsored so generously he still needed to run for 16 hours. So that's what he did, with some support from our clubs. During the hours of 6am till 10pm he ran an impressive 106km – 2 and ½ marathons! Well done Gavin! Sandy also did some walking trips up to the Centre of NZ for her sponsors.

Our clubs had raised \$3,748.95 in sponsorship which donors were happy to leave in the Nelson Cancer Society's Funds – Gavin's sponsors contributing \$1,967.87 and Sandy's \$515.07 and we were 6th on the teams list for contributions at that point. It was a shame that we all couldn't walk as we would have raised much more money in the week leading up to the event.

Kind regards

Joy Oakly

SI Nelson Correspondence Sec



Multi-Sensory Time

SI Albany -

The sensory project started with an idea, when one of our members Rosalind, a retired Occupational Therapist, wanted to follow up on an idea for a multi- sensory experience to enrich the lives of dementia patients. She approached Hawthorn House in Albany (Alzheimer's day care centre) and received their enthusiastic agreement to be involved in the project. The Albany Soroptimists were also approached, and were keen to be involved. After much searching a professional photographer was located to do the filming. It was decided to concentrate on farming activities, as this is a farming area and many of the people attending Hawthorn House are ex-farmers. The shearing shed was the first subject. The farmer gave us some raw wool. Club members took the film and wool to Hawthorn House for its first trial. It covered sight and sound with the DVD and touch and smell using the wool. It was received enthusiastically. The new sensory project committee realised that to make it work effectively they needed to have all the sensory material in one place so that everything required for the experience was at hand. The kit was born.

The committee worked really hard locating and trialling the various elements needed to produce a box containing everything necessary. They are very proud of the final result, which is attractive, practical and professional.

At this time they produced the next DVD, The Dairy. Another kit was created.

With the assistance of the City of Albany, the club obtained a grant through the Brandenburg project which helped with the costs of filming. They had a deadline for the project's official launch organised by one of our members who worked for the council.

The filming of the third DVD was underway. This covered leisure activities at the sea and river.

The official launch was in August 2019 at Hawthorn House with the Mayor in attendance.

The club could see that this project was worthwhile and beneficial it was therefore decided that the Multi Sensory Kits project needed to be taken to the next step. The club decided to proceed with registering the product to protect the intellectual property. The Albany Business Centre assisted with this. One member of our committee is familiar with the business side and is liaising with the centre and applied for a grant from the Department of Communities through the Age Friendly and Dementia Friendly Communities Grants Programme. The \$15,000 grant was successful and the money was received in March 2020.

Of course, since March, the project group has had to conduct all meetings via Google Meet, they have not been able to do filming for new kit themes or have the capacity to visit aged care facilities to promote the product and consult relating to further kit themes. But, it has been busy working on a Trademark application, producing filming Agreements (with free legal advice from Jeremy Perier of McCullough Robertson Lawyers) and on new Graphics and production of the kits. For more

details on how your club can utilize the work SI Albany has done, please contact SI Albany sialbany@siswp.org.



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