

Welcome to the August edition of Soroptimist Programme Action News (SPAN).

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International

Federation of the

South West Pacific

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Extended Programme of Service Meeting on Saturday 22 August 2020

On behalf of the Federation Programme team, I would like to thank all National Representatives, Region Programme/UN Liaison and others who responded to the POS detailed questionnaire. Your feedback will be shared and discussed at the Extended POS meeting including your requests for training support, tools/ helpful tips especially on advocacy, project management, fund-raising and sponsorship. Please register for the [webinar via this link](#). The meeting is open to Region Programme/UN Liaisons and National Representative, the region extended programme team members and club programme reports are invited as silent observers.

“Soroptimists Influence Policy” Advocacy Webinar on 6 September 2020

We are overjoyed to share with you this rare opportunity to listen and speak to leaders in advocacy from the Asia and the Pacific region. We have confirmed an SI UN Representative, a UN Regional Director from Asia-Pacific and a Director of a Funding agency from Fiji. Come prepared to share your hopes, concerns, interests and burning questions regarding how you will be able to influence policies and effectively advocate for transformative action at local, national and international level. This Webinar will be open to all Soroptimists across the world, so do register quickly to reserve your spot, [register here by following this link](#).

Special Focus: International Youth Day 2020-Youth Engagement for Global Action.

Do you know that half of the global population is under 30 years of age and only 2% of all National Parliamentarians are under 30 years of age?

The United Nations is concerned that this is an example of a missed opportunity by governments and many large organisations to be inclusive. Fortunately, SISWP has created new membership categories to attract members, engage and partner with young people in universities, colleges and schools as well as co-create programmes that will help implement the SDGs. We are Inclusive and Embrace the Leaders of Tomorrow!

We know that Soroptimist clubs have excellent programmes to empower and build the capacity of our youth. This is the time to redouble your efforts, adapt and expand your programmes using social media and available online platforms that young people use. You will reach a much wider audience and achieve great transformational impact.

We are all experiencing COVID-19 pandemic “new normal”. Do not let these restrictions deter us from our Soroptimist goals. Reach out and collaborate with technical partners who know how to make podcasts, run webinars, produce inspiring short videos, organise live streaming of motivational storytelling sessions that will all help our young people heal and prosper.

Mental health issues among our young people is a serious problem worldwide as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the opportunity for Soroptimist clubs to offer young people membership and a supportive nurturing social network that is safe, transformative, exciting, creative and fulfilling.

Read this World Bank blog [YouthOnCOVID19: Young peoples resilience is the boost we need right now](#).

Special Focus: UN World Indigenous People Day 2020.

With most countries recording highest ever unemployment rates, especially among indigenous young people and women, the need for capacity building and workplace readiness programmes run by SI Clubs is crucial and invaluable. You have proven best practice projects that turn job

seekers into job creators. Let us help ensure that our young indigenous women are financial secure and economically independent. Read more at the [UN Women statement on the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples](#)

With the Spirit of Soroptimist Service,

Anusha Santhirasthipam

Federation Immediate Past President (2020-2022)

Interim 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.

Programme Zone Coordinator 1 - Anne Allen

Advocacy comes in many sizes, it is “*written or spoken interaction with whoever has the power to bring about change*”. Not every act of advocacy requires a huge amount of detailed research, sometimes it is about identifying a local problem that needs a voice raised to bring it to the attention of the people who can do something about it.

Take for example an example provided by **SI Rockingham**.

The Club became aware of the poor state of repairs in a local park though some young Mums who had visited the Park and mentioned it to a member. The matter was discussed at a Club meeting and it was decided that the Local Council should be approached. A letter was written pointing out the poor state of repairs of many of the items in the Park and asking if there was a maintenance schedule and if this Park was listed on it. As a result of the direct approach, the maintenance Manager for the local council visited the site himself and agreed that the Park was in need of some urgent repairs and raised the maintenance priority for the Park resulting in immediate repairs being carried out and future improvements being planned.

A far bigger issue has been, and is being addressed in Australia in relation to Social Housing and was instigated by **SI Brisbane Waters**. This club identified as one of their issues the need to increase availability in Australia of Social Housing. They sent letters to their local State and Federal parliamentarians outlining their concern about this matter and urging that the matter be addressed. They shared this important work with SI Australia resulting in their draft letter, being circulated to Clubs around Australia as a template for them to advocate and add their voices to a community groundswell on this most important issue. The letter provides a one page summary that:

- Identifies who Soroptimists are
- The problem they are writing about i.e. lack of funding for Social housing
- The importance of Social Housing

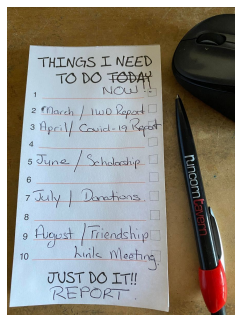
- Acknowledging that some announcements have been made to increase funding, but that it falls short of the need
- Ending by stressing the importance of Social Housing

Using this information from SI Brisbane as a starting point and adding local data is a great way for Soroptimist Clubs to work together on increasing their voice, about this and of course other critical issues.

As Rhonda McCormack, Programme/ UN Liaison SI Brisbane Waters says “One thing we can do in lockdown is write letters.”

Share your advocacy work with your Zone programme coordinator (and add it to the database), so that we can share in future eSPAN's some of your great examples.

Programme Reporting Database



Programme Zone Coordinator 2 - Dixie Brown

During this Covid 19 period have you been reporting?

Already seven and a half months of 2020 have passed.

How many reports have you submitted?

Have you been Advocating (writing letters), forwarding

Donations and perhaps carrying out Activities which

sometimes may be virtual? Maybe you have helped

with education expenses by providing Scholarships or

providing equipment.

Remember to report using Covid 19 in the title.

Congratulations to the **Region of Tasmania** which only has 6 clubs but has had 19 reports published and 1 waiting for approval.

Zone 2 have been active with 28 published reports since 1 January 2020 and another 2 are waiting for approval.

Zone 2 **challenges** other Zones to match and hopefully increase the number of reports published before the September eSPAN is published. The published number of reports may not portray the total number of reports submitted.

Happy writing and submitting of reports. Encourage members to suggest titles and submit a report.

Clubs which have not submitted reports.

- 28 clubs in zone 1
- 22 clubs in zone 2
- 19 clubs in zone 3
- 28 clubs in zone 4

There are many clubs which have not submitted any reports to the database for 2020. It is now mid August and by December each club will have to start to compile their annual reports.

NOTE: To compile your annual report you need to have submitted your clubs projects, donations, scholarships, activities and advocacy work to the database each in a separate report.

Please don't leave your reporting until November, as this places extreme pressure on your zone coordinators to be able to review the reports.

Progressive reporting to the database makes it easier on the club reporter as well as the zone coordinators

International Youth Day - 12 August



SWP Membership Convenor Yvonne Simpson

The Soroptimist School Club project demonstrates the intersection between Programme and Membership. The potential Westland High School Soroptimist School Club is expected to be officially registered in October. A student led project on gender inclusiveness has been completed and the students propose a project to support senior students with anxiety.

Soroptimists providing youth engagement, to enable youth to contribute to their fullest potential.

[READ MORE](#)

Soroptimists addressing the SDG's

Asst Programme Director Sylvia Heyword

The [United Nations Literacy Day](#), which will be celebrated on the 8th of September.

Established by UNESCO in 1966 the issue of literacy is a key component for the future of international communities. Ensuring that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults achieve literacy and numeracy is one of the ten targets for SDG 4: Education. Pre COVID-19, projections showed that more than 200 million children would be out of school, and only 60 per cent of young people would be completing upper secondary education in 2030.

COVID-19 has disrupted our childrens' education across the world, making the gap in literacy skills that existed pre COVID-19 even bigger.

As COVID-19 spread across the world, many countries temporary closed schools, impacting more than 91 per cent of students worldwide.

Read the full report by Sylvia, learn about literacy projects by SI Lautoka, ACT & Monaro and Singapore Orchid. Remember if your club has been working on Literacy projects this year to report these to the database, and use September 8th to showcase these projects on your clubs facebook page.

READ MORE



The excited children receiving the story books donated by the joint SI Lautoka and ACT & Monaro project.

Programme Zone Coordinator 4 - Cesarina Gigante

For information on the work that SI representatives are undertaking at the UN offices visit SI website [At the UN](#).

SDGs

[Sustainable Development Goals Report 2020](#)-The annual [report](#) provides an overview of the world's implementation efforts to date, highlighting areas of progress and areas where more action needs to be taken to ensure no one is left behind. In the report, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has called for: *"Renewed ambition, mobilisation, leadership and collective action, not just to beat COVID-19 but to recover better, together"*

COVID-19

Following on from last months information on COVID- 19 [A Healthy and Green COVID-19 recovery](#)- SI's Advisor to Advocacy, Linda Witong, introduces the World Health Organisation's Manifesto for a Healthy and Green COVID-19 Recovery.

In our region [COVID-19: UN chief outlines path to sustainable, inclusive recovery in](#)

Southeast Asia-António Guterres has Stated 'Tackling inequality, bridging the digital divide, greening the economy, and upholding human rights and good governance will be critical for Southeast Asia to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic'.

Further information from the UN on COVID -19 can be [found here](#)

[Five things you should know about disposable masks and plastic pollution](#)

The fight against plastic pollution is being hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, as the use of disposable masks, gloves and other protective equipment soars, but UN agencies and partners insist that, if effective measures are put into place, the amount of plastics discarded every year can be significantly cut, or even eliminated.

[Did you know?](#)

- More than 86% of indigenous peoples globally work in the informal economy, compared to 66% for their non-indigenous counterparts
- Indigenous peoples are nearly three times as likely to be living in extreme poverty compared to their non-indigenous counterparts.
- Globally, 47% of all indigenous peoples in employment have no education, compared to 17% of their non-indigenous counterparts. This gap is even wider for women.

UN Days

For a full list please go to [UN Days Document on website](#) (didn't know how to insert link).

August

9 August [International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples](#) ([A/RES/49/214](#))

12 August [International Youth Day](#) ([A/RES/54/120](#))

19 August [World Humanitarian Day](#) ([A/RES/63/139](#))

September

8 September [International Literacy Day](#) (UNESCO [14 C/Resolution 1.441](#))

18 September [International Equal Pay Day](#) ([A/RES/74/142](#))

21 September [International Day of Peace](#) ([A/RES/36/67](#)) ([A/RES/55/282](#))

26 September [International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons](#) ([A/RES/68/32](#))

SANCTUARY: Shelter for Women

Project Liaison Theresa Lyford

The Sanctuary Shelter for Women is in its final stages as a Federation Project. We are now so close to the end of this project that the reality is, it is getting quite exciting! President Suman and Project Manager Maria had a successful meeting with the Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation Honourable Meresaini Vuniwaqa at Waterfront Hotel in Lautoka. Present were our SISWP President Suman Lal, NR Tasneen Ali, Maria Doton and some Club members.

Read the full report on the SISWP website.

[READ MORE](#)

Please continue your support of this Federation Project, lets hand over a HOME, complete with furnishings ready for the women and children.

[DONATE NOW](#)

President Suman Lal, Project Manager Dr Maria Dolton, Fijian National Representative Tasneem Ali, Veena Sharma and the Fijian Hon Minister for Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation Ms Mereseini Vuniwaga (sitting at the head of the table). Discussing the Sanctuary Shelter for Women project and the MOU for skills training.



Fijian Hon Minister for Minister for Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation Ms Mereseini Vuniwaga visiting the Sanctuary Shelter for Women home along with Soroptimists.



The Road to Equality

SI PRESIDENT'S APPEAL 2019 - 2021

SISWP Road to Equality Liaison Nora Lam

What's new along The Road to Equality? We are still in the midst of managing our lives with the threat of Covid-19. Soroptimist activism in the Federation of South West Pacific is still ongoing. Please forward your PFRs to the SISWP Programme reporting database, and also remember to report the the [Road to Equality Database](#) on what you are doing in relation to this threat. Even activities can be reported to SI as the UN WANTS & NEEDS TO KNOW.

Read the full report from Nora, information such as the upcoming webinar "Exploring the Road to Equality", 20 August 2020 presented by SI President Sharon Fisher. The Soroptimist Lab, and more

READ MORE

'EXPLORING THE SOROPTIMIST ROAD TO EQUALITY'

20 August 2020

Time: 10:00 am PDT / 6:00 pm BST / 7:00 pm CEST

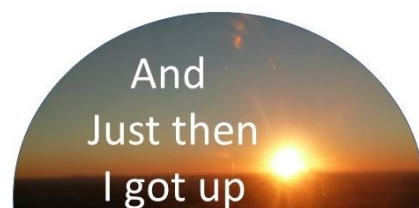
With SI President Sharon Fisher,
and PA Co-ordinators Olga Sidenko and Ayushi Kundu

WEBINAR REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

Around the Federation

SI Bayside - SI Bayside Women's Voices 2020

Stories of Survival Request - Can you help!



2020 has been a tough year for everyone! Nevertheless, we have witnessed amazing stories of people who have survived these difficult times and, in some respects, we have seen the best of humanity as we have all pulled together to deal with the

One more Time

issues faced.

Preparations are currently underway for our annual *Women's Voices in October*, and our theme for this year is '**Survival**'. Soroptimist International Bayside is seeking Stories of Survival to share with those in attendance on the evening.

Therefore, we are asking individuals, businesses, clubs, or companies, to send us their uplifting stories of survival during the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent regulations put in place to stop the virus spreading. The stories do not need to be from SI members, though, of course, they can be. If you are aware of an interesting story of survival from your local community, please send us the story. We are keen to gather stories from across the world.

Please forward your story of survival to our email address sibayside@siswp.org no later than September 18. Stories should be no longer than 300 words and may be accompanied by photos or links to websites or videos if desired.

Thanking you. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Catherine Heiner , Publicity Officer

SI Bayside Inc. Women's Voices Sub-Committee



Have you heard about the C100 Tree Planting campaign to celebrate the strength and endurance of Soroptimist International as we celebrate 100 years of a global voice for women in 2021. SI Brisbane are ahead of the game, In 1992 (then) councillor Jim Wilding helped SI Brisbane to locate a park that Soroptimist International Brisbane club could call its own. 100 trees were planted to beautify the park on the corner of Beckett Road and Ustinov Crescent, McDowell and a plaque acknowledging Soroptimist attached to one of the park benches. Members regularly visited the park to nurture the trees, and hold picnics. In 1998, with the help of Councillor Wilding and his wife a further 98 trees were planted.

Today the trees have grown and a much bigger sign signifies Soroptimist Retreat. SI Brisbane member Elia had a seat built the size of a table and this is still there and painted green. It is not far from that sign.

SI Brisbane is looking forward to participating in the C100 Tree Planting campaign in 2021



S I Petaling Jaya Hungerbusters project has moved to the next level. Whilst there is still a fundamental, but reduced need for food support; there is also a need for **education and life skills**. We delivered a basic First Aid presentation led by an RN, who graciously donated her time. We developed a basic slide show, which can be used although we opted for printed handouts. We also presented each participant with a small First Aid kit. The response and participation of the Maymar refugee women (and 1 man!) was heartwarming and very positive. We all left with something more than what we arrived with! That is after all the joy and reward of service.

Soroptimist International News

Soroptimist Lab

Women, Water and Leadership



"Through the 'Women, Water & Leadership' projects described in the following chapters, we create the conditions and environment for women and girls to participate fully, and to develop sustainable, long-term solutions. Women and their communities gain better access to clean water and sanitation, and to improved food security".. I am delighted that we have implemented

Do you want to be connected!. At the recent Soroptimist International Board meeting, President Sharon Fisher announced the **Soroptimist Lab**.

The Soroptimist International LAB was officially launched during SI's first ever digital Annual General Meeting, held on Wednesday 29 July. The SI LAB is an inspired new online platform established for Soroptimists, where you can learn about SI's global advocacy work at the United Nations, the SI President Appeal, Road to Equality and much much more. Become a member of the SI LAB and you can discuss, contribute, collaborate, and connect with Soroptimists from all around the world.

[To view the video click here](#)

We invite all Soroptimists to join our global online communication platform.

To join the Soroptimist Lab please visit <https://www.mightynetworks.com>
Choose: Sign in (Right upper corner)
Our network is: SoroptimistLAB

See you soon, in THE SOROPTIMIST LAB!

Soroptimists and the United Nations

Soroptimist International works with the United Nations in partnership in fulfilling the 17 Sustainable Development Goals set by the UN.

Soroptimist International has General Consultative Status with ECOSOC and its agencies. This gives Soroptimist International power to raise agent items, advise and advocate for policy change.

Soroptimist International's General Consultative Status with ECOSOC gives us official links with [UNESCO](#), [ILO](#), [UNIDO](#), [FAO](#).

Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific has Special Consultative Status (Category 2) with ECOSOC. Soroptimist International has permanent volunteer Representatives at the New York, Geneva, Vienna, Paris, Rome or Nairobi and Region centre of Bangkok. Read their reports on the Soroptimist International

[READ MORE](#)

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swpasstprogrammedirector12020@siswp.org

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