# Soroptimist International of Europe



2018

# Who are Soroptimists?

Soroptimists are professional women who are actively engaged in their communities, who have a global vision of the world and of women's issues, and who are in touch with local challenges for women, their conditions and their rights.

#### What are the key focus areas Soroptimists work in?

- 1. Education
- 2. Women's Empowerment
- 3. Elimination of Violence Against Women
- 4. Health and Food Security
- 5. Sustainability

#### What are Soroptimist Clubs?

Soroptimists are organised into Clubs in their cities/towns/villages, each having approximately 30 members. All projects you will read about here are the work of one or several Clubs. Soroptimist Clubs have been around since 1921.

#### What are Soroptimist Unions?

When a country has more than 7 Clubs and at least 150 members it forms what's called a Union. There are 24 Soroptimist Unions across Europe, the Middle East, Africa & the Caribbean.

# How many members and Clubs are there in Europe, the Middle East and Africa?

Currently, over 34,000 women are members of the 1,257 Soroptimist Clubs in this region! (Or 1,258 if you start the next one?)

#### How do Soroptimists advocate for women's rights?

Soroptimist International of Europe holds special consultative status at the United Nations' ECOSOC and participatory status at the Council of Europe and the European Women's Lobby.

# We are a real 'global voice for women'!





# Soroptimists Stand Up for Women!

Dear friends.

This brochure will present you outstanding projects singled out for their relevance, impact, successful implementation, and long-term viability. All have as their foremost purpose the concrete and lasting improvement of the lives of women and girls.

This year, we have decided to celebrate projects in our five areas of focus: Education, Economic Empowerment, Elimination of Violence against Women, Health & Food Security and Sustainability and added a prize to name the "Project of the Year".

These 6 projects that you will discover are only 6 of the 93 projects we were delighted to receive as submissions for the Best Practice Awards. The latter are just a small selection of the thousands of projects implemented by Unions and Clubs throughout the Federation. Nevertheless, today we celebrate the best of the best!

Under the headline We Stand up for Women-our current biennium theme, Soroptimists have proven that they are, more than ever, engaged in continuing to empower and educate women and girls to fully leverage their potential to address global challenges!

The beauty of our organization also lays in the diversity of professions in the different chapters. By bringing together outstanding women with very different knowledge-sometimes up to 30 different professions, it lines up the dream curricula! When such competences and skills are put together into a project, it truly creates an incredibly dynamic energy and thus the most impactful projects.

Soroptimist projects are about Competences, Passion, Engagement and Friendship. I trust you will enjoy reading this brochure! I wish to extend my sincere and heartfelt congratulations to all of the winners and thank them for their remarkable commitment. Bravo!

Last but not least, my gratitude also goes to the Chair of the Jury, Ingeborg Dietz as well as the highly esteemed jurors for their dedication and for the quality of their deliberations.

Renata Trottmann Probst, SIE President 2017-2019

#### A deserved recognition for exemplary projects !

How often do we hear Soroptimist members talking passionately about their projects and the amazing experiences they have had helping women? Indeed, there is a lot being done in local communities and this brochure that we are presenting you offers an invaluable tool to help Unions and Clubs bring these projects into the limelight.

It is important to remember that Soroptimists' responsibility goes way beyond what they achieve in their local communities. They are uniquely placed to provide a realistic assessment of daily changes in society and act as a sort of "barometer" for women's rights in the countries where they live.

The United Nations granted our organisation General Consultative Status at ECOSOC and participatory status at the Council of Europe. Such privileged status brings with it obligations and a responsibility for our organisation to provide them with evidence that demonstrates what we are actually doing to improve the lives of women and girls.

Going through the reading of 93 projects submitted felt like travelling and this journey brought me that much closer to some of the realities faced by women. I have discovered life stories, crossed countries and continents, I have learned about different cultures, habits and lifestyles; ultimately I have been inspired by women! These are valuable lessons of life and remind us all about the fundamental reasons we became Soroptimists!

It has been an honour for me to be the Chair of the 2018 Jury and I would like to thank the members of the Jury for their hard work, guidance and constructive sharing of experiences in taking up this challenge of selecting and rewarding "Ia crème de la crème"!

I congratulate all the winners of the Best Practice Awards 2018 and applaud all the members for their admirable achievements! Thank you very much for your tireless support in promoting the Soroptimist mission as well as in empowering women and girls at all levels in society.

Keep making a difference to ensure that We Stand Up for Women!

Ingeborg Dietz Programme Director 2017-2019



#### 2018 Jury

Ingeborg Dietz Chair of the 2018 Jury and Programme Director

Elizabeth Otieno Nyadwe Vice-President Advocacy

Inge Withof Assistant Programme Director

**Bettina Hahne** Representative to the Council of Europe

**Renate Smith-Kubat** Representative to the European Women's Lobby

# **PROJECT OF THE YEAR**

"Valgt det..." a performance about human trafficking – the slavery of modern times

#### Union of Norway

According to the UN, human trafficking is now the second largest illegal economy in the world, surpassed only by arms deals. Women and children are targeted victims of a market controlled by supply and demand. Changing the attitudes, in particular those of potential customers and young people, is necessary to prevent human trafficking. Drawing on this, the **Soroptimists from the Union of Norway come into the picture**.

The Soroptimists made a contract with actresses **Beathe Frostad** and **Astrid Elise Sæterøy** to launch a storytelling theatre on human trafficking to inform, engage and create debate on human trafficking, in particular among young people. Through meticulous research, in which they interviewed the police, rescue systems and victims, they have put together very personal stories and mixed them with hard facts to put on a heart breaking performance about real life characters–with all their hopes and dreams.

All of this is woven into a tapestry of human trafficking in Norway today. This is happening all over the country and is connected to poverty,

war and dreams of a better life. The main focus is to give to the victims of trafficking a face, tell their horrifying stories and to create a national debate. The Soroptimist Union of Norway marketed the premiere, in particular to young people and key people in organisations that could assist with the distribution. During the Soroptimist year 2016/2017 there were **37 performances** with approximately **2,500 viewers. 32 of these performances** were organised by Soroptimist clubs and the Union.

The initiative was applauded by the Ministry of Justice and Public Security that supported the project.















Menneskehandel er vår tids slaveri. Det er kynisk utnyttelse av sårbare og fattige mennesker til blant annet prostitusjon og tvangsarbeid.

#### MER ENN 45 MILLIONER LEVER I MODERNE SLAVERI. (\*)

Kvinner og barn er mest utsatt. Mange havner i prostitusjon. Menneskehandel skjer over hele landet. Menneskehandel er en stor illegal økonomi. Bare våpenhandel er større.

\*) Global Slavery Index

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF EL





# PROJECT OF THE YEAR Union of Norway "VALGT DET..."



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Torsdag 22. mars 2018 kl. 18.00 Inngang 100 kr Billetter kan torhåndskjøpes på Vipps 508473

> Arr.: Lillehammer Socoptimistiklubb Folo: www.stoptheitaeffik.org. Socoptimist International (SI), 115 Mars 2010 Logi: Narigaret Sule Karisen



"VALCT DET..." Et fortellerteater om menneskehandel Istradet av skuespilerne Beathe Frastad og Astrid Else Sateray Anndag 20. mars 2017 kl. 18.00 Hakalese til Seatrumskirka; Helga Den Fagres gate 10.

Voksen, 200 kr Student: 100 kr Kafé til inntekt for A21 BEST PRACTICE AWARDS 20132



# EDUCATION

# Increase access to learning opportunities

Soroptimists educate women and girls to lead

TOP PROJECT A student and a solar lamp for better school results in the village of Poura, Burkina Faso Soroptimists from Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

#### RUNNERS-UP:

1. Braises – an educational, philosophical and citizen project

Soroptimists from Les Deux Sources, Belgium Awareness campaign on gender equality in education (including a campaign against traditional values that imply forced marriages).

#### THÉATARE - CHE ARTIESTACT THÉATARE - CHE ARTIESTACT BRAASES SAMEDI 18 FÉVRIER 2017 20H15 PRIX : 20E CENTRE CULTUREL D'EGHEZEE RUE DE LA GARE, 3 - 5310 EGHEZEE

#### 2. Scholarships for girls in Dhaka, Bangladesh

Soroptimists from Berlin Charlottenburg, Germany Creation of scholarship to enable girls in Bangladesh to access better education and limit girl school dropouts.

#### 3. Tutti

Soroptimists from Chernihiv, Ukraine Support of musically talented girls by providing them with musical instruments - orphans and girls who study at the Chernihiv Music School.



# **EDUCATION**

#### TOP PROJECT

# A student and a solar lamp for better school results in the village of Poura, Burkina Faso

## Club of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Advancing education and literacy for girls in rural Africa is the focal point of this project. Young women make up two-thirds of the global illiterate<sup>1</sup> population. About 29 million live in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>2</sup> and face a life in poverty. Hence, it is crucial to ensure that girls get a basic education. The Soroptimists from Ouagadougou understood the issue and decided to act! They support primary school children, their families and communities to create and strengthen a reading culture while reducing the gender gap.

The main social problem to be solved is improving the study conditions of girls in rural areas where electricity is not widely available. The project involved **7 primary schools (4,200 students, 50% girls) and 2 high schools (1,600 students, 43% girls)**. Most villages do not have electricity. The burden of difficulties is more serious for girls because after school they must complete domestic chores and once free for homework, it is already dark; no more light to read and learn. Girls are deprived of the possibility to study unlike boys who can be focused on their education.

To carry out this project, the Soroptimists made several trips to the commune of Poura, in collaboration with municipal and educational authorities. With their expertise and on-theground knowledge, they mobilized funds thanks to **Soroptimists from Bad Ragaz, Switzerland** and the **Roswitha Ott Fund**. The Soroptimists organized the delivery of lamps in the 7 villages for the education of girls (and boys).

After the first donation, the results of the end-ofyear exams were spectacular in Poura. Success rates reached 99% in primary school, 56% in secondary school and 75% before entering high school, demonstrating that rural children can succeed if they are given a minimum of good study conditions. The Soroptimists from Ouagadougou are determined to keep shining a light on girls' education in rural Burkina Faso!

1.https://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/worldswomen.html 2. http://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/literacy

#### **PROJECT ACHIEVED BY:**

- SENSITISING FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF GIRLS' EDUCATION
- RAISING FUNDS AND PARTNERING WITH ANOTHER SIE CLUB / FUNDS

WOMEN & GIRLS REACHED: 500 FUNDS RAISED FOR THE PROJECT:

• 17,300 €







# 2 WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

# Increase economic empowerment

Soroptimists empower women to find employment



KAT18 Soroptimists from Köln-Römerturm, Germany

#### RUNNERS-UP:

1. Soroptimist Prize "Talents de femmes" Soroptimists from the Union of France This Prize rewards the talents and creativity of women, highlighting their desire to undertake and increase their network of contacts.



2. Women's alphabet

Soroptimists from Cosenza, Italy Raise awareness on female professional skills by organizing meetings with students to present examples of women who became leaders in their field.

3. Women's empowerment after the earthquake Soroptimists from the Union of Italy After the earthquake in 2016, the Italian Union worked on a project to support female entrepreneurship through concrete, prompt and direct financial interventions.

# WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

# TOP PROJECT

## **KAT18**

# Club of Köln-Römerturm, Germany

The Soroptimists from Köln-Römerturm, in collaboration with the Soroptimist Club of Köln, worked together to promote artistic and cultural processes with the aim of improving the living conditions of women artists within KUNSTHAUS KAT18.

**KUNSTHAUS KAT18** is an art space with studios located in Cologne where mentally disabled artists work. Exchanges and cooperation with other artists and cultural institutions are an integral part of the structure. Regular projects, exhibitions, public discussions, readings and theatre performances take place there.

The two Clubs in Köln collaborated to finance the completion of an apartment to be used by non-disabled "artists in residence" who work together with disabled artists for a workshop.

The outcome of the workshop was quite positive: a 6-week exhibition with intermittent performances by disabled artists in the well-known **Museum Kolumba** in Cologne! The exhibition had such tremendous success that it will also be presented this year at the **Museum Kampa** in Prague, Czech Republic and the **Soroptimists from Prague** will join the project! The project articulates two main objectives:

- Support the inclusion of disabled female artists in the art society and their empowerment through their self-development,
- Confront people with the impressive pieces of art made by these women to reduce their inhibition threshold on the one hand and support the appreciation for their artistic work on the other hand.

As a result of the excellent collaboration, the Soroptimists from Köln-Römerturm and Köln want to build up a long-lasting partnership with **KUNSTHAUS KAT18** and the **Museum Kolumba** by financing further workshops and arranging new exhibitions. The project received massive media coverage on the internet and in newspapers.



#### **PROJECT ACHIEVED BY:**

- FUNDRAISING
- ORGANISING DIFFERENT EVENTS
- BELONGING TO THE JURY FOR THE ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE
  WOMEN AND GIRLS REACHED: 9
  FUNDS RAISED BY CLUBS: 4,500 €

FUNDS RAISED BY CLUBS: 4,500 € READ MORE:

- WWW.KUNSTHAUSKAT18.DE/ PROJEKTE
- WWW.KOLUMBA.DE





# **3** VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

# Eliminate violence against women and girls

Soroptimists fight violence against women and girls

TOP PROJECT Say No to Violence Against Women Soroptimists from the Union of Belgium

#### RUNNERS-UP:

#### 1. The sound of silence

Soroptimists from Içel / Mersin, Turkey To sensitise the public about violence against women, the club produced a short film about all types of violence that women face and shared it through social media.

2. Englightening campaign agaisnt human trafficking at schools in Romania Soroptimists from Aalen / Ostwürttemberg, Germany In collaboration with Soroptimists from Romania, the club is actively involved in a campaign agaisnt trafficiking/ prostitution and education for girls.

# 3. Minors and inmates: protection of minors' rights

Soroptimists from the Union of Italy Creation of spaces in Italian prisons to facilitate meetings between prisoners and their children to protect the rights of minors.





# VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

TOP PROJECT

## **SAY NO TO VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN** Union of Belgium

Violence against women and girls is one of the most pervasive human rights violations & a global epidemic. Every year from 25 November to 10 December, a global campaign rooted in the women's movement mobilizes people worldwide: the so-called "oranging" season, also known as the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence.

This year, the 54 Clubs of the Soroptimist Union of Belgium have been highly involved in the campaign. As part of a leading women's organisation, Soroptimist International of Belgium used this position wisely and planned several ways to publicise this important campaign in line with the United Nations Secretary General's call to "Orange the world", which uses the colour to symbolise a brighter future without violence.

1. Say "yes" to the UN's call to act and work to end violence against women and girls in Belgium;

2. Stimulate 54 Belgian clubs to work together and even work with other partners such as **Zonta**, local press and local authorities to have more impact on the civil society;

3. Increase the global visibility of the Soroptimist movement in Belgium.

The outcome and impact of this national action have been very encouraging. Indeed the Soroptimists have managed to spread their message throughout the whole country: around **100,000 people** saw their self-designed banners, received mass media coverage and even **the town hall of Brussels** was coloured in orange. Their influence also reached an iconic building (quite a male-dominated bastion), the Ghelamco Arena (a stadium in Ghent, Belgium that hosts football matches), that promoted their message visible to all the people and cars passing by the highway. Finally, they organized a symposium in Ghent—a cooperation between Soroptimist and Zonta—with very important keynote speakers.

WOMEN AND GIRLS REACHED: • 10,000-100,000

FUNDS RAISED BY UNION: • 3,500 €



#### PROJECT ACHIEVED BY:

- ILLUMINATING CIVIL BUILDING
- HANGING UP BANNERS
- DISTRIBUTING FLYERS
- ORGANISING PRESS CONFERENCES





# 4 HEALTH & FOOD SECURITY

# Ensure women & girls have access to the highest attainable standard of health care

Soroptimists help provide access to better health and living conditions for women and girls

# TOP PROJECT

You are not Alone Soroptimists from Ruse, Bulgaria

#### **RUNNERS-UP:**

#### 1. Endometriosis

Soroptimists from the Union of France Lobby with public institutions to support the research to combat endometriosis, and raise awareness of, and recognise this difficult-to-diagnose disease.

# 2. Educational and psychological support for parents of children with health problems

Soroptimists from Moscow, Russia Provide comprehensive assistance and suppor to patients with cystic fibrosis and their families, and facilitate their social adaptation into society.

#### 3. Therapy Garden

Soroptimists from Karsiyaka / Izmir, Turkey The club constructed a "flower and plant garden" for the therapy of patients undergoing a treatment at the Psychiatry Clinic of the State Hospital.





# **HEALTH & FOOD SECURITY**

## TOP PROJECT

#### YOU ARE NOT ALONE

## Club of Ruse, Bulgaria

Breast cancer is a global issue. It is the second most common cancer in women. The Soroptimists from Ruse have detected that breast cancer is particularly dominant in their city, since the number of women affected is much higher than average, due to an environmental hazard in the previous decades.

The good news is that most women can survive breast cancer if it is found and treated early. A mammogram—the screening test for breast cancer—can help find breast cancer early when it is easier to treat.

The challenge is that a great number of women are afraid to seek early diagnosis and need to be informed about the way to do it. In addition, the Soroptimists from Ruse observed that within their community, breast cancer survivors are left alone to tackle the post-operative depression, thus they have decided to act in order to **raise awareness** about breast cancer.

**Bulgarian Soroptimists from the clubs Sofia II Boyana and Varna** participated in the project, and the Municipality of Ruse, the University of Ruse, Kensol Ltd., Live Club Canto, Leonardo da Vinci First Private School and the district of

#### PROJECT ACHIEVED BY:

December 2017 in their region.

 PARTNERING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY AND WOMEN

Vazrazhdane also supported the project. They

ioined their efforts and organized a series

of actions and events from June 2015 to

- AWARENESS RAISING VIA SOCIAL MEDIA
- DISTRIBUTING FLYERS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

WOMEN AND GIRLS REACHED: 1,000

FUNDS RAISED BY CLUBS: 20,000 €





# Non-exhaustive list of activities:

- ROUND TABLE WITH MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, LOCAL GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES, DOCTORS, PSYCHOLOGISTS, WOMEN FROM THE TARGET GROUP;
- SETUP OF A GROUP FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT OF BREAST CANCER SURVIVORS AND ORGANISE THEIR MONTHLY MEETINGS;
- DESIGN AND PUBLICATION OF A BROCHURE ON PREVENTION AND MYTHS ABOUT BREAST CANCER;
- PREPARING PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS WITH THE SIE LOGO TO RAISE FUNDS AT THE GOVERNORS' MEETING IN SOFIA JULY, 2016;
- FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO YORDANKA TSONEVA—A BREAST CANCER SURVIVOR—FOR HER RECONSTRUCTION OPERATION;
- ORGANISATION OF A LARGE CHARITY QUIZ IN THE CITY OF RUSE TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THE PURCHASE OF A SPECIALIZED APPARATUS FOR LYMPH DRAINAGE.



# **5** SUSTAINABILITY

# Address the specific needs of women and girls by improving environmental sustainability

Soroptimists help improve the environment and promote sustainability

TOP PROJECT

Safe and Resilient Villages - The Role of Women Soroptimists from Portugal

#### RUNNERS-UP:

- 1. Il nostro pane quotidiano Soroptimists from Verbano, Italy Promote good practices to reduce food waste by raising awareness among children and adults
- .5th June World Environment Day Event Soroptimists from Tarsus, Turkey In the frame of the World Environment Day, the club organised an awareness campaign about environmental sustainable practices.
- 3. Reforestation of Mau forest phase 2 Soroptimists from Nakuru, Kenya The club undertook to reclaim soil degredation in Mau forest to prevent negative effects that result in lack of water, affecting women and girls.





# **SUSTAINABILITY**

#### TOP PROJECT

## **SAFE AND RESILIENT VILLAGES – THE ROLE OF WOMEN** Union of Portugal

Families trapped by flames in their cars, at least 106 dead and as many injured, roads cut, villages evacuated, trees burnt: Portugal was shocked by the huge forest fires that ravaged the centre of the country in June and October 2017. More than 900 firefighters were hard at work fighting the disaster—the deadliest in Portugal's recent history.

Public means of protection were too late or incapable to avoid the tragedy, interior villages were left isolated for several hours and inhabitants, mostly women, fought flames by themselves. Women, children and the elderly were mainly confronted by destruction due to giant flames, and left alone, without adequate means of protection. Armed with this conclusion, **all the Soroptimists from Portugal** agreed that lessons must be learned from this catastrophe and they decided to take appropriate actions.

They created a **"Commission of Crises"** with Soroptimist experts from each Club in the field of environment or fire protection. They allocated means to populations in villages (essentially women, children and the elderly) to enable them to protect themselves in such circumstances, by:

- 1. Providing kits of mobile units for immediate intervention or extinction of fire;
- 2. Organizing survival and environmental awareness

trainings for women and children;

3. Communicating on how to extricate oneself from risky situations to find emergency shelter.

This national project also aimed to recover and modernize pastoral activity in context of small scale family farming, typically carried out by women, in order to increase the income of vulnerable populations and thus contributing to economic, social and environmental sustainability.

Several partners supported the project: The Associação Cultural Recreativa e Social, the Associação de Apoio às Vítimas dos Incêndios de Pedrogão Grande de Real, the Instituto Superior de Agronomia de Lisboa, City Council, the Rotary Club of Oeiras and volunteer firefighters.

By covering different areas of Portugal, the Portuguese Soroptimists advocate for women as a means of national sustainable development.



#### **PROJECT ACHIEVED BY:**

- GIVING TRAININGS
- PROMOTING AWARENESS ON SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT AND SAFETY OF POPULATIONS

WOMEN AND GIRLS REACHED: 100

FUNDS RAISED BY UNION: 5,300 €

#### MARTA DA CONCEIÇÃO 84 ANOS Sobrevivente de Nodeirinho

Marca de Concolido entres en ra pengem de autorizante en detar a una cana e possar de la tora stado. «Colle para tora tora entre a entre a marca marcada com indeas megal en estado com indeas megal megale destino de gase- como fina Consta illique que en minto para megale destino de gase- como fina Consta illique que en minto para megale destino de gase- como fina Consta illique que entre da la concomençata i daga esta que marca de començata i que - Advencer a adalem enter y antidentes - conte, para que menta gasa que como de forma començata i que donos, mana games mecen esta gasa que como de forma començata i que donos, mana games mecen esta marca autorisma vivas. Nas començas e precisar questão finada mesmo - Como de monto començato e precisar questão finada mesmo. Esta presis do que a marina en distas formas formas para queros de humans. Esta presis do que a marina de másas formas para







## SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF EUROPE

We are a worldwide network of professionally and socially diverse women. We are a platform to serve communities, share knowledge and experience. We educate and empower women and girls to lead. We fight violence against women and girls. We give women a voice by lobbying at all levels of society.

#### www.soroptimisteurope.org

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