

a global voice
for women

Soroptimist



International

Federation of the South West Pacific

Sydney Inc

Soroptimist International (SI), a worldwide service organization for women in management and the professions, is a global voice for women through Awareness, Advocacy and Action.

Through International Goodwill and Understanding, and Friendship, Soroptimists strive for: advancement of the status of women, high ethical standards, human rights for all, equality, development and peace.

Founded in 1921, the organisation is now active in more than **120 countries** with **over 90,000 members** working through **local, national and international service projects**.

The name 'Soroptimist' was coined from the Latin 'soror' meaning sister, and 'optima' meaning best. 'Soroptimist' is perhaps best interpreted as 'the best for women'.

Soroptimist International has four Federations:

- Americas (SIA)
- Europe (SIE)
- Great Britain & Ireland (SIGBI)
- South West Pacific (SISWP)

Soroptimist International is structured into local clubs working and supporting local community projects. To find out where your nearest club is in NSW go to

<http://www.siswp.org/clubs/nsw.html>

Soroptimist International is proud of its links with the United Nations (UN), and has Affiliation or Consultative Status with nine UN agencies, including the World Health Organisation, the UN Environment Programme, the UN International Children's Fund and the UN High Commission of Refugees.

Soroptimist International's delegations to major UN meetings and forums advocate for policies and actions which support our aims and objects and reflect agreed position statements on the issues under discussion.

Like to find out more about the work of Soroptimist International and SI Sydney Club?

Read on for some information about the service projects we are involved with!



SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

- Every four years Soroptimist International launches a major international project in partnership with a charity, NGO or United Nations agency. Each project is designed to be self-sustaining by the end of SI's four-year commitment. Soroptimist members around the world join forces to give active support to the chosen project and in doing so, have improved the lives of many thousands of women and children across the globe.

For example, SI has worked with the organization "Women for Women International" in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Rwanda. As a result, direct aid and support through the Sponsorship Program has been delivered; plus training in vocational and leadership skills through the Renewing Women's Life Skills Program. Loans to establish income-generating projects through the Microcredit Lending Program have also been an important component.

- Every year, on Human Rights Day (December 10) the President of Soroptimist International selects a project that provides direct assistance to women in extreme need.

Past projects have aided refugees in camps in Malaysia, provided protection and help for women AIDS sufferers in Uganda and the Ukraine, scholarships for girls in Mongolia and Rwanda, vocational training programmes and shelter for vulnerable women and children in Paraguay, education and nutrition for abandoned children in Vietnam, and malaria protection for pregnant women and young children in Benin, Africa.

President's Appeal, e.g. Project Punjab: Helping Girls Into School

Based in the districts of Rajanpur and Muzaffargarh in Punjab Province, Pakistan, SI has worked together with Oxfam GB, a charitable, British development, relief and campaigning organisation that works with others to find lasting solutions to poverty and suffering around the world.

In Pakistan, one in four children between the ages of five and nine do not go to school. And in rural area, boys are three times more likely than girls to receive a primary education. As a result, literacy rates for women in some areas are as low as nine percent.



- **Project Five-O** is a partnership of five international women's organizations: International Council of Women (ICW), International Federation of Business and Professional Women (IFBPW), International Federation of University Women Soroptimist International, Zonta International.

To help women in poor economic circumstances in developing countries by training them to acquire the necessary income-generating skills to alleviate poverty and improve their status:

Women are helped through the establishment of training centres teaching vocational skills, marketing, small business operations, health care, education and nutrition. Projects are aimed to become self-sustaining after five years. Projects have been established in the following countries: Argentina, Bangladesh, Benin, Brazil, India, Latvia, Madagascar, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Samoa, Senegal, South Africa, Thailand, Togo, Turkey, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

- **SI Sydney Club has two permanent projects.** One is WAGEC (the Women and Girls Emergency Centre in Surry Hills, Sydney) and PIONEERS (a Sydney home for mental and physical disabled young adults). Both projects are supported through financial funds and through presence of our members as board members at each of their board meetings.
- **SI Sydney Club** also raises funds to support young students in Sydney who are financially disadvantaged. The support takes the form of a financial scholarship for either their upcoming apprenticeship or their upcoming studies at University. Often SI Sydney Club's scholarship enables the student to remain in education – without it, their formal education would come to an end.
- **Additionally, SI Sydney Club** raises funds through special, fun projects, such as Trivia Nights and a popular, annual factory shoe outlet sale. We enjoy co-operation with other organisations in larger events, e.g. Sydney's annual City2Surf and the yearly Relay for Life – Cancer Council Project.

Would you like to find more about Soroptimist International or perhaps attend an SI Club meeting to network and explore membership?

Please email us at sydney@siswp.org to express your interest, or to find your nearest Club - we'd be delighted to hear from you.