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Soroptimist International



South East Asia Pacific

ACN 147 990 627



# SPAN

## Soroptimist Programme Action News

**Welcome** to the May 2026 edition of the Programme Action News

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### FROM OUR PROGRAMME CONVENOR



Thank you for being part of this incredible journey. Next month, please make your 2026-2028 **Programme Convenor Pauline Glover** welcome, along with the new people in the whole federation team. We welcome to Programme Team - Sylvia Heywood, Nurgul Aldanysh, Lyn Stewart, and Sue Price. The revised zone arrangements and new team with contact details will be out shortly.

**In this edition**, read about Best Practice Awards, Brilliant Futures Fund, Programme Annual Report(s), Public Speaking Competition, UNESCAP81, World Environment Day / Month toolkit, SISEAP Impacts, and hidden gems in the hotlinks.

Our 2024-2026 biennium was celebrated in Kota Kinabalu with the photos of 3 days of reporting, showcasing best practice awards, excellent conference speakers, and engaging workshops along with lots of eating, singing and dancing. We also played in the mud for mangrove planting, a early Environment Day celebration.

This biennium we have new dynamic women joining Programme whose biographies are in their section below, while we **farewell Dr Sharadha Narayanan, Dato Mohd Nooraini Yasin, Robyn Cain and Anne Allen**. I will also be leaving this team after a smooth changeover. I cherish the time we have spent together despite the constant deadlines, members requests, and being the complaints department. I have been warmly welcomed by 12 of our regions and by their clubs. Their projects are so vibrant on-the-ground from a report in a database. Together, we have learned so much and nurtured innovation locally, regionally and internationally. SISEAP can be so proud of the doors that have been opened to us.

We congratulate **the best practice award** winners and those highly commended (see below and the SISEAP website). The number and calibre of entries were high so the criteria were strict. 7 judges were involved with an observer. Judges are not allowed to assess their own club and one judge was sensitive about her whole country, to avoid any perceived conflict of interest. The new **Programme Team will**

**hold a webinar** to help clubs with their BPA nominations, to answer criteria to enable possible receipt of award. The process is being refined so it will become easier to apply and judge.

It became apparent that clubs don't really recognise the **4 ways to donate** (1) Our Brilliant Future Fund (2) SISEAP Disaster Fun (3) the SI Global Foundation Fund, and now (4) the new SISEAP Legacy Fund.- so we can survive and thrive. We already know our women in our clubs provide the **best return on investment**. (See below) See the BFF section below.

We welcome the opportunity to nurture new countries into SISEAP but that is the role of membership to charter in due course. The Public Speaking Competition was warmly welcomed. Federation wide programme advocacy and tools are shown [HERE](#).

Late April, Soroptimists actively participated **Women Deliver** with 6000 international women. Blog [HERE](#) In April, in Colombia, The transitioning away from **fossil fuels summit** was positive. **Mary Robinson** discussed that we pay for fossil fuel 3 times, the legal system make decisions accountable through ICJ and locally, and civil society can implement 3 just transitions. [HERE](#)

During April, **UNESCAP82** was relocated to Bangkok and I was privileged to attend. The theme was **Society for all Ages** to deal with Past and Future of our region, demographic changes where 60% are under 25 years of age and 20% are older than 65 years, focussing on **discrimination by gender, geography or generation**. [HERE](#) The reflected the need for silver economy, care for golden citizens, pathways for youth active participation, and intergenerational solidarity. Some media sprout generational wars - this is not so, as many bridges link across education, traditional wisdom, technology and compassion. See more in the UN section below. Soroptimist case studies also demonstrate this. A joint communique is drafted for approval by 4 women's groups there (Zonta, Business and Professional women, ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs and Soroptimist). full report soon.

Thank you for your wise advice and dedication over the past 4 years, and for

ongoing friendships across the federation. You have left an indelible mark on my life. May you have many more adventures with your clubs and your creative compassionate sisters.

**Dr**

**Donnell**

**Davis,**

**Programme**

**Convenor**

**2024-2026**

[programme.donnell@siseap.org](mailto:programme.donnell@siseap.org)

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL  
SOUTH EAST ASIA PACIFIC

PROGRAMME  
ANNUAL REPORTS 2026



SOROPTIMISTS  
EMPOWER CHANGE

The 2024-2026 Biennium Programm Team, have released their Programme Report for 2025. Looking at the report it is clear that many hands have contributed to to a year of inspiring programme work. Your volunteer hours contributed to 4.5M AUD worth of Volunteer hours. Click on image to download report



# SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL SOUTH EAST ASIA PACIFIC ANNUAL REPORT

— 2025

[www.siseap.org](http://www.siseap.org)

President Joanne Yeoh and the Directors are pleased to announce the launch of the Company Annual Report for 2025.

The report showcases the impact and transparency of the members commitment to positive social change through advocacy and project actions and provides a detailed look at our operational and financial performance over the past twelve months

Share this with members, other NGO's, Government representatives and partners.

Click on image to download a pdf version of the report

## PROGRAMME TEAM New Members



### **SYLVIA HEYWOOD**

I have had the privilege of serving over the past four years as Programme Convenor for Soroptimist International of Aotearoa New Zealand, following my earlier role as SISWP Federation Assistant Programme Convenor 1 from 2020–2022 within Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific. These roles have given me the opportunity to work alongside dedicated Soroptimists across our region who are passionate about improving the lives of women and girls.

My professional background is in adult education leadership, quality assurance, and learner support within NZQA-accredited tertiary education organisations in New Zealand, where I later served as Principal. Education has always been central to my work and values, particularly creating opportunities that help people build confidence, skills, and independence.

Through Soroptimist International North Shore, I am also actively involved in community sewing and upcycling initiatives that promote sustainability, reduce textile waste, and empower women and young people through practical learning opportunities.

What I am most proud of is helping create programmes and projects that make a tangible difference in people's lives. Whether through mentoring, education, advocacy, or community initiatives, I find great satisfaction in seeing women gain confidence, connection, and a sense of possibility.

I would like members to know me as approachable, collaborative, creative, and service-focused. My passion lies in combining education, sustainability, and community action to

create practical opportunities that empower others and strengthen our communities.



### **SUE PRICE**

Hello, my name is Sue Price. I live in the South of New Zealand with my husband Alistair who is a farmer. I have a background in teaching, health promotion, adult literacy and refugee support. I recently retired from my job as General Manager Migration at New Zealand Red Cross where I managed the organisation's refugee programmes. I joined Soroptimists in 2020. I have enjoyed the camaraderie and opportunities to engage in meaningful projects that come with belonging to Soroptimists. Now that I have more time, I look forward to connecting with people from around the region and discovering the breadth of projects that clubs are involved in.

### **LYN STEWART**

After 40 plus years of Nursing I retired in 2022. During the last 10 years of my career I was the Charge Nurse Manager of the Eye Clinic at Wellington Hospital. This was a very busy and challenging position.

I have been a Soroptimist since 2008 when I joined SI Wellington and transferred to SI Kapiti Coast when we moved up here. I have served as both Club and the Central Region of NZ President and have held various other roles within both Clubs. I am also a current Trustee for the Betty Loughhead Scholarship Trust. I have been involved in the NZ Programme Team plus also Membership.



My interests include family, reading, walking, movies, theatre and the Arts. I currently volunteer at the Art Gallery at Parliament in Wellington.

I am excited to commence this new role as part of the Federation Programme team and look forward to this new experience.



### **NURGUL ALDANYSH**

Nurgul Aldanysh is a Mongolia-based conference interpreter, language professional, and former lecture at the University of the Humanities. She specializes in multilingual communication and international cooperation, with a strong commitment to advancing women's leadership and empowering women and girls through education, mentorship, and global engagement. Her work takes a needs-based, interdisciplinary, and holistic approach to environmental and social development. She promotes good practices that strengthen sustainable livelihoods, generate household income, and enhance community resilience through innovative, locally grounded solutions.

**ADVOCACY WORK**



### World Environment Day, SISEAP Environment Month

**Soroptimist International Theme: Women Leading Green Futures** Climate change affects everyone, but not equally. Women and girls are often among the most impacted, while also being powerful drivers of change. For World Environment Day, Soroptimist International will showcase how women and girls are leading environmental action through education, advocacy and community-based initiatives.

**Key message:** When women lead on sustainability, communities become stronger, more resilient and more sustainable.

**UN Environment Program (UNEP) World Environment Day 2026: A Global Call for Climate Action**

World Environment Day 2026 will rally the world around the urgency of climate action. With rising temperatures, collapsing ecosystems, and disruptive weather extremes, humanity stands at a tipping point. But we are not powerless.

The 2026 theme underscores that climate action is not just about reducing carbon emissions—it is about rethinking the systems that power our economies and repairing our relationship with the climate. By doing so, we can secure a safer, healthier, and more just future for all.

**The toolkit is now available on Trello board. Remember to check trello board regularly as items will be added as they become available.**

[Download pdf version of Toolkit Here](#)

## SISEAP TRELLO BOARD

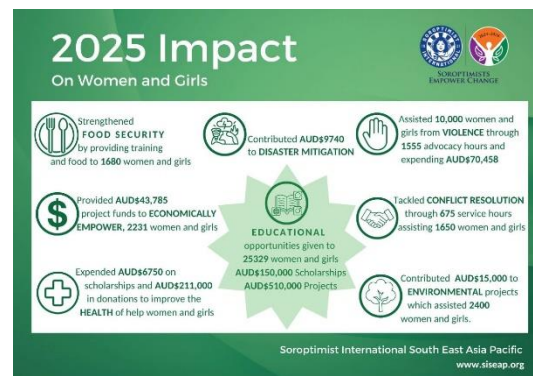
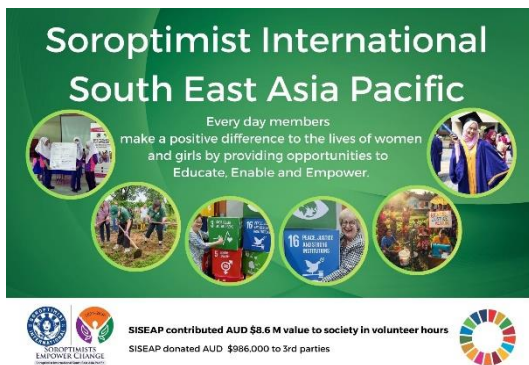


### SI EUROPE Webinar

Women Leading Green Futures, a webinar to mark World Environment Day Climate change concerns us all, yet its effects are far from evenly distributed. Women and girls are among those most vulnerable to its impacts, and they are also among the most engaged drivers of the ecological transition. To mark World Environment Day, Soroptimist International of Europe is hosting a webinar dedicated to the SI 2026 theme, under the Strategic Pillar of Environmental Sustainability: Women Leading Green Futures.

On the programme: • Inspiring project examples from across our international network • A keynote by [Pascale Muylaert](#), SI Representative to the United Nations in Geneva, on advocacy and the practical use of reporting • Insights into how your projects and reports contribute to stronger Soroptimist advocacy at SI and UN level . Registration [HERE](#)

## SISEAP IMPACT FOR 2025



**2026 SISEAP Impact Cards** - Every project started, every scholarship awarded, and every donation made across our 13 countries tells a story of transformation. These **2026 SISEAP Impact Cards** are you essential toolkit for showcasing the life-changing work we do for women and girls.

These cards aren't just statistics; they are proof of the "Soroptimist Difference." Whether it's a local community project or a regional scholarship program, these visuals capture the heart of our mission.

## How to use your Impact Cards:

- **Social Media:** Post them on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to boost our digital presence.
- **Events:** Print them as high-quality handouts for meetings and recruitment drives.
- **Presentations:** Drop them into your slide decks to give your reports a professional, visual edge.

Download the images by clicking on the image.



# BEST PRACTICE AWARDS



## SISEAP Best Practice Awards

Thank you to all the clubs who nominated one of their projects. There were 34 nominations. The scope and quality of the nominations was well received. It is our pleasure to announce the winners and we congratulate them on their efforts.

### Objective 1: Education

Highly Commended: **SI Beenleigh/Logan** - 2025 Federation Public Speaking Competition- Empowered Voices, Sustainable Choices

Highly Commended: **SI Damansara** - Annual Spelling Bee Competition

Winner: **SI Griffith** -Enable Empower - Turning Theory into Action

### Objective 2: Elimination of Violence

Highly Commended: **SI Bangsar**- 16 Days of Activism - Preventing Online Violence and Creating Safer Online Spaces

Highly Commended: **SI Brisbane**- Upstream Advocacy Governance Innovation for Systemic Impact

Winner: **SI Adelaide**- Home Essentials for Ninko, Aboriginal Branch Of Women's Safety Services

### Objective 3: Economic Empowerment

Highly Commended: **SI Brisbane**- Advancing Women's Economic Infrastructure Through Early Childhood Education and Care Reform

Winner: **SI Joondalup**-Remote Op-Shop Project

### Objective 4: Food Security

**SI Adelaide**- Mary Magdalene Annual Dinner

### Objective 5: Health

**SI NZ**- Heal the Teal: Reduce the Impact of Ovarian Cancer on NZ Women

### Objective 6: Environmental Sustainability/Water and Sanitation

Highly Commended: **SI Bayside**- Soropti-Swap 2025

Highly Commended: **SI Hobart**- Promoting a clean, healthy, sustainable Tasmania

Winner: **SI North Shore**- Sewn Up: Sustainable Sewing for Skills, Confidence & Textile Waste Reduction

## Objective 7: Conflict Resolution

SI Iskander Puteri- SIIP Dignity & Inclusion through Community Celebrations Programme

[Visit the website article for all the news and images](#)



**Federation                  Public                  Speaking                  Competition                  2026**

**Please indicate your Countries/Regions participation using the following form [HERE](#) by the 31st May 2026.**

Clubs are invited to consider participating in the public speaking competition for girls in 2026 through their Country/Region Representative.

Public speaking is more than just delivering words—it's about owning your voice, sharing your perspective, and stepping confidently into spaces where ideas matter. For girls, the ability to speak publicly isn't just a skill; it's a catalyst for empowerment, leadership, and self-expression. In a world where female voices have often been sidelined or underestimated, teaching girls the art of effective communication helps them challenge stereotypes, advocate for themselves and others, and inspire change.

Countries/Regions (Australia) are encouraged to hold heats to determine finalists who will represent them in the Federation level of the competition. A maximum of two finalists

for each category are permitted from each country in the Federation. Australia is permitted two finalists, per category per Region.

### **Theme**

"The Power of My Voice" encourages young people to explore how individuals and communities can make informed, ethical, and bold decisions that support a more sustainable and equitable future. It also gives Soroptimists the opportunity to hear for themselves the thoughts and aspirations of these leaders of the future. The finals this year will coincide with the International Day of the Girl Child Sunday the 11th October.

The competition invites girls from 12 years to 19 years (age as at 31 December 2026) to participate. There are two categories: Category 1: 12-15 years, Category 2:16-19 years. The theme this year is '**The Power of My Voice**' with the following topics:

**Category 1:** Describe one change that would help make life fairer for girls — and explain why this change benefits your community

**Category 2:** Why a girl's opinion matters in creating change for the future.

Information can be found on the Federation Website [HERE](#) for Counties/Regions/Clubs.

Heats and sending of finalist information to Federation is to be completed by the **8th September 2026**.

**PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION INFORMATION**

**FEDERATION PROJECTS**



## Brilliant Futures Fund

Our Federation Project, the **Brilliant Futures Fund** (2021–2026), is at the heart of our mission to **educate, empower, and enable**.

Investing in this fund is a direct investment in the collective power of Soroptimists to fundamentally improve the lives of women and girls across the South East Asia Pacific region

[DONATE HERE](#)

From digital literacy for refugees to maternal health and vocational training, this fund transforms lives across our 13 member countries. Your support ensures we can continue funding grassroots projects that provide real, lasting change. Every donation helps a woman gain independence or a girl access the education she deserves. Let's work together to build brilliant futures—please donate today!

### Round 12 is now closed

Federation Project Liaison Christine Johnstone's Brilliant Futures Fund, presentation to the Federation Meeting held at the recent Conference of Clubs, the presentation featured the impactful work undertaken by the winner over the past 4 years. Download and share with your members at a club meeting. It comes complete with speaker notes.

[Download and view the BFF Presentation 2026](#)

[READ HOW BFF PROJECTS HAVE CHANGED LIVES](#)

## PROJECTS & APPEALS

Learn more about the projects and appeals and to make a Donation please click on the image. SISEAP values and encourages you to support our projects and appeals, your donation DOES make a huge difference to the lives of women and girls.



## FROM SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL



*Blog by Marie-Christine Gries, Soroptimist International Representatives at UNESCO.*

### **Menopause as a Social Taboo**

Menopause remains largely unspoken and stigmatised, associated with aging and loss of femininity. This taboo fuels silence at home and especially in the workplace. Taboos and stereotypes have tremendous power and a remarkable ability to survive. Read [HERE](#)



[SISEAP EVENTS HERE](#)

## AROUND THE FEDERATION



In a time when global conversations are filled with uncertainty, disruption, and debate, there is another story unfolding — quieter, but no less significant.

Across Asia Pacific, women are not waiting for perfect conditions, policy shifts, or global consensus.

They are building solutions.

At the recent Soroptimist International South East Asia Pacific (SISEAP) Conference of Clubs 2026 in Kota Kinabalu, delegates from 13 countries came together — not simply to meet, but to share what is already being done on the ground.

The gathering was further strengthened by the presence of global leadership, including Renata Trottmann, President of Soroptimist International, and Immediate Past President Siew Yong Gnanalingam, the organisation's first Asian President. Their presence reflected a quiet but important shift — that Asia Pacific is no longer just participating in global conversations on women's empowerment, but increasingly shaping them.

What emerged from the conference was clear.

This is not an organisation of ideas alone.

It is an organisation of action.

In Mongolia, members from Soroptimist International Darkhan have been working to restore degraded land — turning dry, barren areas into green, usable spaces again.

In Australia and Papua New Guinea, clubs are collaborating with communities to build flood-resistant organic gardens — practical responses to climate realities that many are still only discussing.

In New Zealand, members are tackling the impact of fast fashion, raising awareness and shifting behaviour in ways that are both local and deeply relevant globally.

At the international level, Soroptimist International continues to engage at platforms such as the Commission on the Status of Women in New York — ensuring that the lived realities of women are not lost in policy conversations.

Closer to home in Sabah, community-led initiatives are also taking shape. On Gaya Island, a project led by Meraki Daat has transformed plastic waste into eco-bricks used to build walking pathways — a simple but powerful example of how local innovation can address global challenges.

During the conference, delegates also took part in a mangrove sapling planting initiative, contributing directly to environmental restoration efforts along the coast — a reminder that meaningful conversations must ultimately translate into tangible action.

In Sabah, the work of Sabah Energy Corporation reflects a similar commitment — advancing cleaner energy solutions while ensuring communities have reliable access to power, recognising that energy is not just infrastructure, but dignity, opportunity, and resilience.

And in Malaysia, young women took the stage to speak about artificial intelligence — not from a place of fear, but from awareness. They spoke about how to use it responsibly, how to protect themselves from scams, and how to make it a tool that supports, rather than replaces, human judgement.

These are not isolated efforts.

Blog by

Hanaa Wong Abdullah



**SI Lautoka's IWD Oratory**

SI Lautoka had a highly successful oratory program this year, with 35 schools participating. The theme 'Give to Gain' aligned with the United Nations theme. The primary school had two categories: Urban primary had 13 participants, while Rural primary had 12 participants. The high school category had 10 participants.

It was heartening to see 8 male participants this year, as encouraging male participation in gender equality advocacy is important. According to club President Sarita Kumar, great importance is placed on including males in such programs. She added that, apart from the male participants, some schools had male teachers training them. "We also ensured that we had male judges in the judging panels to achieve the goal of the oratory. The best part is that we had a member of Parliament, Mr Rinesh Sharma, gracing the occasion to motivate the students."

The President also stressed that the club hopes to see more male participants advocating the cause next year. She informed that the International Women's Day Oratory is an annual program which is highly popular with schools in Lautoka.

Meanwhile, the winning orators were as follows: Urban primary – winner: Shay Kumar (Lautoka Central), 1st runner-up: Dipvani Reddy (Gandhi Bhawan), 2nd runner-up: Shanaya Saara (Lautoka Muslim). Rural Primary- winner Unaisi Tukula (Lovu Sangam), 1st runner up Natash Jasmine Falekehifau (Drasa Primary), 2nd runner up Nishika Vedanshi (Gurukul Primary). High School – winner Sailosi Bale (Lautoka Andhra Sangam College), 1st runner up Lavanya Pal (Natabua High), 2nd runner up Anabia Mumtaz (Central College). Winners in all categories received a trophy, certificate, medal, and \$100, while the second-place orators received a trophy, certificate, medal, and \$75. The third-place winners received \$50 with their certificate, medal and trophy.

## PROGRAMME REPORTING DATABASE

You have read earlier in this newsletter of the incredible impact provided by Soroptimists from our 13 countries. SISEAP is only able to provide these incredible statistics and stories because members take the time to report. The Programme team wishes that all Members are encouraged to record their club's Projects, Advocacy, Scholarships, Donations and Actions to the SISEAP Programme Reporting Database. When we work and report together we are stronger. Your reporting has contributed to SISEAP Impact action statements.

## DID YOU KNOW?

**Programme**

**Members**




**Page**

Have you explored the updated Programme Members website page? All the information you will need is contained here.

*Click the image below to access the page*

### Quick Links

There are now dedicated articles to assist members in all aspects of programme. Use the quick links to quickly jump to the page.

<b>Programme Reporting Database</b>		<b>Programme Downloads</b>		<b>Brilliant Futures Fund</b>		<b>CSW Information</b>	
<b>Programme Committee</b>		<b>Best Practice Awards</b>		<b>Goals &amp; Objectives</b>			

SISEAP will be publishing a quarterly calendar, to view important dates for action and events, which can be viewed [HERE](#). The calendar is viewable from the front page of the SISEAP website, under the EVENTS tab.



**SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL**  
**GLOBAL VOICE NEWSLETTER**  
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[website](#) and log in using your member login. Go to the 'Members Area' in yellow at the top left of screen. Or if you are already logged in, [click this link](#). Here you can access all previous copies of archived eSPAN Newsletters.

Copy for the June 2026 eSPAN edition is required by **Friday 1st June 2026**. Please email your submissions to [programme.donnell@siseap.org](mailto:programme.donnell@siseap.org) **until further notice**. Thank you.



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