

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

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Soroptimist



International

Federation of the

South West Pacific

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Looking back, looking forward

Well, 2020 is nearly over and we have certainly been told in many different ways what an unexpected and unusual year it has been. It is a time when many clubs, with their annual report, take stock of what they have achieved. For many, it has been an empowering time as they mastered online meetings and created different ways to support their communities. Clubs have responded to challenges restricting movement and interaction and found ways to spread comfort and confidence. The undisputed international nature of the spread of COVID-19 and its impact across many fields has reminded us that we are, in so many ways, and across so many cultures, one humanity.

It has reinforced really that our organisation is International and needs to look outwards as well as look inwards. It is very easy to focus on our local or regional needs and forget that we need to be aware of the bigger picture as Soroptimists. That word, "International" is in our Federation name for a reason and we have a responsibility to look outwards to see the needs of others and to advocate at our level towards the advocacy at the United Nations level.

Clubs are looking forwards also as they plan for next year. What is under discussion? Is it a decision about projects? Is it a focus on speakers? Is it a challenge to try something different or is it more of the same? Does it include fun training about Soroptimism? Is it pondering how to attract younger members? Does it include an evaluation of last year? There are many options and while each club responds around its local community let us remember that the theme "Educate to Lead" still exists in 2021. Let us recall also that under our Federation's Strategic Plan we have undertaken to focus on health and food security, sustainable employment and economic empowerment, the elimination of violence and environmental sustainability and climate change. In your planning also please consider International Women's Day, World Environment Day, the International Day of the Girl, Membership Month, and of course the 16 Days of Activism concluding on 10 December with International Human Rights Day.

Happy planning and may you return after our Christmas break with renewed optimism and drive.

Di Lockwood



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.

Inspirational Women Speak at SI Bayside 23rd Women's Voices Event



The theme this year Survival, focused on the resilience and ongoing support of Queenslanders to ensure they have survived as a state and been able to effectively manage the COVID-19 pandemic. The key note address was given by Dr. Jeannette Young, Queensland's Chief Health Officer. Following Dr. Young's speech, a panel of local women were interviewed by Madina Mohmood (Law graduate and Queensland Young Achiever of the Year 2019) and invited to share their experiences of survival during the pandemic this year.

The panelists reflected on the challenges facing vulnerable members of the community whom they support and the audience was informed how they could make a difference in the lives of others. Key messages included; financial support to the Arts community, increased mental health support for young people and affordable housing in the local area.

[READ MORE](#)

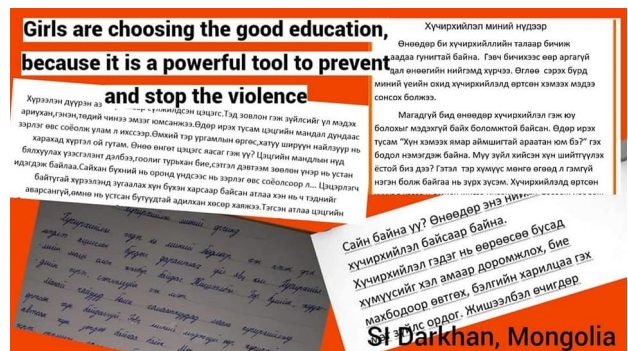


The Programme team are pleased to see that Clubs are reporting their Activities for the 16 Days of Activism to raise awareness of violence against women, through social media, marching, orangeing your local communities, and holding events. Many of you recognised the surge in domestic violence and abuse rates during COVID-19 caused by lock-downs.

SI Darkhan

On the last day of the campaign titled “Orange the World “against the violence. SI Darkhan Soroptimists closed the campaign with the essays of the 9th-grade girls on “Violence – by my eyes”. One thing that our girls have pointed out is that Girls should be well educated because this is a powerful TOOL to be strong to prevent and stop the violence.

Educate young women and men to empower them to make informed choices.



SI Rockingham Inc

If at first you don't succeed, try, try again!

Last year the SI Rockingham contacted their local councils of Rockingham and Kwinana and requested that they participate in our 16 Days of Activitism turning the Sky Orange by turning on landmark lights orange. The Councils claimed that they were unable to undertake this activity but that they might consider it next year. The Club followed up this year by letter reminding the Councils of their promise and asked them to consider if they would undertake this activity in 2020. They had hoped that the local councils would turn the lights orange to raise awareness in the local community. **Yeah!** They were successful with one of the Councils who turned the tower lights of the Council building orange on the 25th November 2020.



SI Karratha & Districts Inc

16 Days of Activism organised the movie 'I Am Woman' at



the Karratha International Hotel. They were limited by numbers due to COVID19.

After the movie, they organised a candlelight walk to Walgu Park where their three purple chairs are located plus the plaque giving the telephone number of the emergency domestic violence. They held one minute of silence to remember those victims of domestic violence and a guest speaker from the Police department, the Salvation Army. One of our members read two poems.

Awardee Soroptimist Membership

There are over 60 Clubs that have awarded Scholarships, did you know that recipients of Soroptimist support and scholarships, who are not currently Soroptimists, are eligible to join a SISWP club as Soroptimists in the category of "Awardee Soroptimist" for 2021- 2022 upon successful application by the Soroptimist club, which provided the Soroptimist scholarship or support.

"Soroptimist scholarships or support" refers to financial grants that have been given to women to further their education, or grants to relieve financial hardships or participants who have benefitted from participation in Soroptimist projects that were designed and delivered to meet the Soroptimist mission.

Clubs provide the programme report number as part of the application. Here is the opportunity to truly empower recipients to become Soroptimists. The fee is \$AUD15 for Australian members.

Applications are to be sent to the SISWP Membership Convenor, Yvonne Simpson swpmembership2020@siswp.org .

Programme Reporting Database

A global voice for women

SWP Programme Database



HAVING PROBLEMS with the DATABASE?

Anyone having problems with the report database please contact Di Lockwood, Programme Director.

Di's email is swpprogramme2020@siswp.org

Please do not ring HQ

Annual Reports

The reporting period for 2020 is from 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020

Reports not on the database by 31 December will not be included in the 2020 Club Annual report but will appear the following year.

The Programme Team will be approving **only** reports on the database by 31 December 2020. They will be working on these for the next month and clubs can produce their Annual Report only after 1 February 2021.

Advocacy clarifications. (Anne Allen, Programme Zone Coordinator 1)

Many of us will be glad to see the back of 2020. However, many of us have learned new skills and many Clubs have been holding online virtual meetings. Successful traditional fundraising activities have had to be cancelled, and projects adjusted to accommodate restrictions on group gatherings. Clubs have embraced Advocacy to raise awareness of inequities around us via communication (social media) with our online community by posting, commenting, and interacting with one another.

The Programme Team have recently been asked to clarify what is Club advocacy compared with an individual's support of an issue. Advocacy is defined in the Programme Database as:

“The act of speaking on the behalf of or in support of another person, place, or thing. Advocacy is an activity by an individual or group which aims to influence decisions within political, economic, and social systems and institutions.”

The data base goes on to list some of the activities that can be recorded as advocacy and these include Club members:

- signing a petition
- taking part in a march or vigil
- writing letters
- organising a public seminar on a topic
- making a written submission or meeting government officials or politicians.

The database is the main source of information that Soroptimist International uses to quantify our actions (being a voice for change) in the lives of women and girls. It is therefore important to provide enough detail to substantiate your Club's advocacy work. Ensure you include the change you are looking for and record the SDG target, hours spent on research, discussion and action, even if undertaken by one person.

Club Minutes should be a cross reference document that shows that Club members considered a matter and agreed on an action.

Examples:

It might be that members agreed to take part in a march against domestic violence. While not all members might be able to attend the march if those attending are representing the Club - that is Advocacy.

Club members might discuss a petition that is being circulated and originated from another organisation. After discussion it might be agreed that members sign the petition.

Thank you to all the Clubs who have already submitted their Advocacy work into the database for 2020. The

Programme team looks forward to seeing many other examples of your Club's Advocacy and being able to share some of those in future eSPAN's.

Programme Database Snapshot

Clubs are busy submitting their reports for the work they have performed over the past 12 months. A search of the database on all reports approved for the period 1 January to 30 November, provides us with the following snapshot.

| | Zone 1 | Zone 2 | Zone 3 | Zone 4 | Grand Total |
|---------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------------|
| Projects Total | 6 | 9 | 15 | 12 | 42 |
| Project Costs | 27406 | 23028 | 13638 | 21893 | 85965 |
| Advocacy Total | 8 | 8 | 15 | 8 | 39 |
| Advocacy Hrs | 238 | 212 | 255 | 222 | 927 |
| Scholarships Amount spent | 21162 | 36596 | 25533 | 3000 | 86291 |
| Donations | 12492 | 5394 | 38260 | 21765 | 77911 |

This snapshot shows just how much Soroptimists value the **Educate, Empower and Enable** component of the work we do and deliver on.

This is not the full extent of the years work, with many clubs still reporting and the Zone Coordinators busily reviewing the reports already submitted. Clubs leaving their reporting to the last month does place an extreme burden on the Zone Coordinators to review all the reports in a timely fashion so that clubs can prepare their annual reports.

Keep up the great work, and continue to report on all club work.

SWP Federation Project Nominations Now Open

Nominations are now open for clubs to submit either an ongoing project or a new project for nomination as a Federation Project. Nominations close on the 31st of January 2021. The nominations will be reviewed and nominations worthy of being a Federation Project will be sent to clubs for voting, announcement of the successful project will be made at the IBM in May 2021. Please complete the online nomination form by [clicking here](#).

The project should commence as soon as 1 June 2021 and conclude by April 2022.



The International President's Appeal 2019-2021 "The Road to Equality" supports projects that educate, empower and enable women and girls, to ensure no one is left behind in achieving gender equality and raise awareness on human rights challenges that prevent women and girls from reaching their full potential.

If your Club has not yet donated please send your contributions to [Click Here](#)

UN SDG Work

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATION SDG 4

Did you know:

91% Enrolment in primary education in developing countries has reached 91 percent.

57 million primary-aged children remain out of school, more than half of them in sub-Saharan Africa.

In developing countries, one in four girls is not in school.

About half of all out-of-school children of primary school age live in conflict-affected areas.

103 million youth worldwide lack basic literacy skills, and more than 60 percent of them are women.

6 out of 10 children and adolescents are not achieving a minimum level of proficiency in reading and math.

Education info graphic [Click here](#)

SI at the UN

Geneva

Women in leadership positions – a shocking reality

As part of our series of blogs examining the twelve critical areas for gender equality presented twenty-five years ago in the Beijing Platform for Action, SI UN Representative in Geneva, Berthe De Vos, considers the topic of Women in Leadership.

Read More

READ MORE

UN Days (full list available on website)

December 2020

18 December - [International Migrants Day](#)

20 December - [International Human Solidarity Day](#)

January 2021

24 January - [International Day of Education](#)

27 January - [International Day of Commemoration in Memory of the Victims of the Holocaust](#)

Around the Federation

SI Mackay



SI Mackay partnered with Kutta Mulla Gorinna Alternate Learning School, Mackay Sewing and Craft Centre and volunteers Thelma Dunning, Dolores and Jenny Gardner to provide more than sewing tutorage.

The club wanted to help disadvantaged children at the



school to integrate their learning experience by working and interacting with them to help improve the children's confidence whilst learning how to sew.

The club donated three sewing machines and one overlocker to the school and worked with the Principal and staff to coordinate a weekly workshop with the students. The students made sewing bags for the needy whilst receiving instruction and having fun with club members and volunteers who guided the students through their sewing tasks to create bags to give back to the community.

As a result the students' confidence grew and they produced 81 bags which were given to St Vincent's de Paul Family Support.

SI Brisbane Water

SI Brisbane Water has developed and funded a program which aims to empower young women.

In 2020, in partnership with the University of Newcastle, a fully researched seven session program "ASPIRE" has been developed to offer to schools.



SI Brisbane Water persuaded the University of Newcastle to include the "Aspire" program as a research project for third year Social Work students. The SIBW President, along with the Student Support Officer from one of the participating schools, acted as mentors for the seven students during the semester long assignment.

The "ASPIRE" Program, targets girls in years 9 and 10 who may come from low socio-economic backgrounds, have low self-esteem, have experienced hardship and/or may be disengaged from learning. The program is made up of seven 90-minute sessions addressing issues of mindfulness, goal setting, career skills, healthy relationships and self-esteem and is now a fully developed, fully researched program with sessions focusing on both therapeutic and practical skills. The club now has a fully packaged program to offer to schools in 2021, along with funding to implement it. [READ MORE](#)

SI Murray Bridge



SI Murray Bridge brought a "fire and ice" magic show to 100 children in Murray Bridge.

Children from seven schools were entertained by the wonders of science.

The aim to introduce young children to make the connection between science and their daily lives and to hopefully spark their interest in STEM subjects through the wonders of the displays and activities using liquid nitrogen, fire and other chemical wonders.

SciWorld provide science outreach programs and ran the show. The club wanted to help introduce children to

think about STEM in an exciting, fun new way. The show was fast-paced and exciting and had the children enthralled. After the show they had the opportunity to make various gadgets which they took home. The club received letters of thanks from various teachers.

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Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific ACN 147 990 627

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This email was sent to all Soroptimist International of the South West Pacific Clubs

Our mailing address is:

Soroptimist International South West Pacific
PO Box 1400
STRAWBERRY HILLS, NSW 2012
Australia

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