

PROJECT OF THE MONTH

This month's winner is SI Club Prishtina, Kosovo for their project "I am not a Plastic Bag." The project fulfilled Programme Goal no. 1 "Soroptimist International will improve the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment or enabling opportunities" and objective no. 5 "address the specific needs of women and girls by improving environmental sustainability, mitigating effects of climate change and disasters."

The project is carried out with financial support from SI Prishtina's Friendship Link SI Iceland and was started in the beginning of 2012. The club Prishtina wanted to tackle the issue of the high number of plastic bags resulting in devastating effects on the environment. Therefore club Prishtina wanted to take action and contribute to a cleaner environment.

The Club members have worked hard to replace plastic bags with bags of other fabrics. They bought the material, sewed the bags and distributed them to shops and supermarkets. The club aims to expand the project into other regions of Kosovo to further contribute towards a cleaner and safer environment. Of course, the club also hopes that, in the long run, their project will serve as an inducement for government and institutions to do their big contributions towards the same goal!

PFR no. 29121 states some 200 hours have been put into the project and there are also photos documenting the club's work.

Congratulations SI Prishtina!



Register for the 20th Congress of Soroptimist International of Europe – Berlin 12 – 14 July 2013

The Congress Committee is very excited to announce that they have received 1500 registrations already for the Congress in Berlin and the deadline is 15th June. Don't miss this excellent opportunity and be part of this amazing event as well!

5 May 2013

International Day of the Midwife

Midwives play an incredibly important role in the health of mothers and children. Every day, midwives save women's lives all round the world by providing reproductive health care to women in their communities; often they outnumber physicians in rural areas. May 5 is the globally acknowledged day to recognize the invaluable work of midwives. Soroptimists among other organizations are committed to addressing maternal mortality and morbidity through better access to quality midwifery.

This year the International Day of the Midwife theme will continue to be: **The World Needs Midwives Now More than Ever!** Each year, over 287,000 women and over 3 million infants around the world die as a result of preventable pregnancy and childbirth complications. Most of these deaths would be prevented if there were enough qualified and adequately resourced midwives. It is interesting to note that an universal access to a well-educated, regulated midwifery workforce in a health system with adequate equipment and supplies could prevent up to 60% of maternal deaths. An estimated 350,000 extra midwives are required to ensure universal coverage for maternity care.

In this context, midwives who are trained to provide essential midwifery care can be the key to saving lives. Maternal mortality rates can drop significantly when treated by trained and skilled midwives. Indeed midwives make a difference in women's lives and are well respected in their communities. Often the causes of maternal death are not preventable yet treatable. Trained midwives can be a significant asset in this case.

Recognizing this fact, Soroptimist International's 2011-2012 December 10 Appeal addresses this very issue. The project called 'Birthing in the Pacific' work to increase the skills and education of health professionals and birth attendants in Papua New Guinea with the goal of reducing maternal mortality and morbidity. On SI's request, Clubs across the globe started supporting this project in 2011 and have raised US \$ 275,820 worldwide. For more information on the project and to see the impact so far, please visit:

<http://www.soroptimistinternational.org/our-projects/december-10-appeal/birthinginapacific>

And to read more about the International Day of the Midwife 2013, visit:

<http://www.internationalmidwives.org/events/idotm/international-day-midwife-2013/>

Looking beyond the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 2015, crucial actors in global health diplomacy identify midwives to be the key to achieving reductions in maternal and newborn deaths worldwide. As the deadline for the MDGs 2015 draws closer, the vision that every childbearing woman has to have access to a qualified midwife's care for herself and her newborn baby remains significant.



SOROPTIMIST PROJECT MATCHING

“EC0001 – Health is Wealth”

SI Ibarra, Ecuador, seeks to continue to fund their health service clinic which provides local women and teen mothers with ovarian cancer screenings and gynecological exams. The clinic has been in operation for eleven years with great success.

The project was developed in 2001 and was funded by a SIA club grant. At this time, the need to educate women about gynecological health was evident and the programme became an integral part of SI Ibarra's service to improve the lives of women. Through the years, the rate of ovarian cancer has increased, as has the number of adolescent mothers and the cost of gynecological testing in local clinics. Through informational meetings, women will be educated about the need for and advantage of gynecological exams. Latin American culture views gynecological exams as embarrassing, unnecessary, costly and painful.

This project will help decrease the rising percentage of ovarian cancer and viral diseases by providing women with PAP smears and consulting them about the results.



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Positive results will be referred to the local cancer clinic. Additionally, adolescent mothers will receive information, testing and counseling.

The project will continue to provide valuable gynecological health services to local women and teen mothers therefore decreasing their risk of ovarian cancer and gynecological infections.

Funds needed: € 2,525

<http://sorooptimistprojects.org/projects/ec0001-health-is-wealth>

“MG0001 – Seeds for All”

SI Union of Madagascar has established a project called “Seeds for All” to assist the small land holders – agriculturalists recognized as the pillar of the country's economy but who are the recurrent victims of climate disasters as well as economic upheaval. This project concerns multiple clubs of the Union of Madagascar. The beneficiaries are female breadwinners grouped into peasant women associations and owners of cultivable land. The project has four components:

- Technical training and extension services to beneficiaries;
- Improved seed supply adapted to agro-climatic conditions of the areas;
- Small implement supply;
- Fertilizer and agricultural inputs.

SI France has already donated towards this project.

<http://sorooptimistprojects.org/projects/mg0001-seeds-for-all>

Funding needed: € 8,663.-

21 May – World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development



This day will give Sorooptimists the opportunity to deepen our understanding of the values of cultural diversity. Cultural diversity is a driving force of development.

Intercultural Dialogue, Interreligious Dialogue, Culture and Development are among the prominent themes for 21st of May. Sorooptimists are convinced that development is inseparable from culture. Therefore it is important to advocate the integration the principles of cultural diversity and the values of cultural pluralism into all public policies, mechanisms and practices. Not only is the aim to incorporate culture into all development policies but also to support the development of the cultural sector through creative industries.

focus. Culture and Development is particularly interesting for Sorooptimists since it is asserted that “Placing culture at the heart of development policy constitutes an essential investment in the world's future and a pre-condition to successful globalization processes that take into account the principles of cultural diversity.”

FEATURED WEBSITES:

www.wedo.org

Women's Environment & Development Organization is committed to empower women as decision makers to attain gender equality and puts emphasis on women's critical role in social, economic, and political area.

www.genderprinciples.org/

Gender equality principles initiative: a tool for promoting equality in your workplace.

www.globalfundforwomen.org/

The Global Fund for Women is a publicly supported grant-making foundation with the aim of advancing human rights through the promotion of women's economic security, health, education and leadership. The Global Fund for Women provides funds to women-led organizations working towards gender equality.

www.vitalvoices.org

Vital Voices Global Partnership is a non-governmental organization whose mission is to train women leaders and social entrepreneurs around the world. Its core activities are centered on violence against women and girls, social justice and democracy, entrepreneurial and leadership training.