



From: Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis, SIE President
To: Governors
Union Presidents
Single Club Presidents

Caserta, October 14th 2015

Dear Soroptimist,

“Soroptimist Invest in Education”

First and foremost, I wish each and every one of you an excellent beginning of activities for the Soroptimist year which started on October 1st.

For many of us, whether Presidents, Governors or board members, this day represents the beginning of a new biennium but also for some other officers, the end of an intense two-year dedicated to our Mission and Vision.

I therefore wish to reach out to all Club's and Union's Presidents and Officers and thank each for the time, passion and personal sacrifice of family and work in order to “serve” our organization and improve the lives of women and girls in our local communities and throughout the world.

For many of us, and it is my case, October 1st is the day we assume the offices of responsibility. The beauty of democracy, the beauty of our organizational model is that every two years we have an ideal and tangible relay of officers who - building on the predecessor's achievements - bring new professional skills and renewed enthusiasm to the Organization itself.

I am looking forward to working with you on the biennium theme **“Soroptimist Invest in Education”**. The strategic objective is to enable women to achieve equality and freedom from social, economic and cultural constraints by promoting education. Our aim is to empower women and girls to realise their dreams. To this end, I invite you to come up with a sustainable project that focuses on some aspect of education.

Programme: Soroptimist Projects across our Federation

Clearly, you will want your interpretation of this theme to best reflect the reality and needs of your local area, and the range of possible activities is vast. You may choose to address traditional schooling or lifelong educational programmes, illiteracy issues or girls' lack of interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). Education is also the only tool to eradicate and prevent Violence against women. Concretely, this may take several forms, from 'adopting' a school, mentoring young adults, to 'adopting' a shelter, helping young women to build back their lives and regain confidence, or as the issue is so topical, to 'adopt' a migration centre and help women who had to leave their countries. The attached one-pager document will give you projects examples.



Leadership: News from the SIE Board

The first Board Meeting of this biennium was held in Frankfurt (Sept 26-27). These two days were dedicated to the elaboration of our Business Plan. Organised by Triangles, I can assure you the new Board is ready and eager to respond to your needs and concerns and to accompany in the development of our future.

Communications

You and your predecessors gave us a vote of confidence to address the membership survey results and develop a communication and branding campaign for the benefits of the Clubs. In addition, there will be a specific effort by the Board and the staff at SIEHQ to reduce the burden of bureaucracy and to increase the role of communication. This will hopefully facilitate your work. It is in this spirit, as facilitators and to respond to your needs, that we shall address the Clubs through a second brief survey, which seeks to understand their detailed needs and concerns in many areas, including on scholarships.

Advocacy: lobbying governments for the protection of women migrants

I would like to join our Advocacy team, led by VP Sigrid AG and the representatives to the European institutions (Council of Europe, European Women's Lobby and OSCE), to encourage you to write to the relevant ministry in your country. Our Federation, as a member of the European Lobby supports the initiative of the main Women's organisations.

A draft letter is attached in English. You may wish to translate it prior to sending it out. Together we are a Global Voice for Women – and make an impact!

SIE Governors' Meeting

Sofia in Bulgaria, is confirmed as the host city for our next Governors' Meeting on the 8-10 July 2016. To respond to an increasing number of requests, please note that an additional number of Silent Observers will be welcomed, on a first come, first served basis. More information will soon be shared with you!

Growing our Association: SIE 62 Countries and 1253 Clubs

I wish to thank my immediate predecessor Ulla Madsen for having spread the Organization in three new countries. My first formal engagement will be to bring the Charter to Club Kuwait on 22-24 October (the 62nd country and 1253rd Club!!!). I hope to see many of you on the occasion of warmly welcoming our new sisters to our unique organization. I will also have the privilege to represent our Federation to the SIGBI annual Conference and be part of their changing of insignia.

I am very humbled by the responsibility of representing all of you and yet excited

Warm regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Elisabetta'.

Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis
SIE President