



Soroptimist International of Europe

ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017



CONTENT

1	Foreword	3
2	About Soroptimist International of Europe	5
3	Where We Are	6
4	Our projects	7
5	Best Practice Awards	9
6	Funds	11
7	Scholarship	12
8	Mentoring	13
9	SIE Peace Prize	14
10	Contact	back

FOREWORD

from the SIE Immediate Past President and Current President

Dear Soroptimists and friends,

It is our great pleasure to present the Soroptimist International of Europe (SIE) Annual Report 2016-2017 to our members and supporters. We are so proud of all that has been achieved and want to share our success stories with you.

From October 2016 to October 2017, our members raised close to €6 million! This allowed our organisation to plan and carry out 4,462 projects. We are especially proud of the abundance of projects focusing on education, in line with the theme “Soroptimists Invest in Education” of the 2015-2017 biennium. The key to the empowerment and success of women lies in education, and we believe that this is the best investment that can be made! The second half of this biennium also saw an increase in both scholarships and mentoring programmes. We couldn't be prouder as a big part of being a Soroptimist is sharing knowledge and experience as well as enabling others to realise their dreams.

Soroptimists across the Federation have worked hard to implement projects that empower women. For example, a vocational training and employment support centre for women was established in Turkey which provided trainings and consulting services to help women secure employment in their area. In rural Uganda, reusable sanitary products, as well as sexual health education, were distributed to over 3000 girls so that they did not have to miss any more school. Through club initiatives and the My Book Buddy cooperation, Soroptimists financed libraries and provided wider access to books in many countries of the Federation.



These local actions create a ripple effect because when the lives of women and girls improve, their communities benefit as well.

Besides education and empowering women, our commitment to transforming the lives and the status of women and girls encompasses the areas of violence against women, health & food security and sustainability. From October 2017 SIE adopted a new biennium theme, “We Stand Up for Women”. Here the focus is on securing women’s and girls’ rights and defending them against all forms of violence. This theme has also inspired a number of exciting projects.

We would like to thank each and every one of our members and all the external organisations and persons that contributed to our projects. Strength is in numbers, and as evidenced in this Annual Report, our numbers keep going up! We cannot wait to see how many women we can help. With the hard work and dedication of all Soroptimists, the sky’s the limit!

In Soroptimist friendship,



Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis
SIE President 2015-2017

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Maria Elisabetta de Franciscis".



Renata Trottmann Probst
SIE President 2017-2019

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Renata Trottmann Probst".

ABOUT

Soroptimist International of Europe

Soroptimists educate, empower and enable women and girls to improve their lives. Soroptimist International of Europe (SIE) is a network of almost 34,000 professional women who work together at the local, national and international levels to achieve this aim. SIE currently has 1256 clubs, operating across 62 countries in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and the Caribbean. It is the largest of the four Federations making up Soroptimist International which counts over 74,000 women as members.

Our ambition is to transform the lives and status of women and girls through education, empowerment and enabling opportunities. We want to see women and girls achieve their individual and collective potential, realise their aspirations, and have an equal voice in creating strong, peaceful communities worldwide. As Soroptimists, we strive for the advancement of women's status, high ethical standards, equality, development and peace, and the promotion of international goodwill and understanding.

One of the ways we achieve this is through advocacy. Soroptimist International of Europe holds general consultative status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and participatory status at the Council of Europe and the European Women's Lobby. SIE also participates in the work of OSCE through its permanent representatives. This allows SIE to advocate at the international level and lobby for the ratification and implementation of treaties concerning women and demand that priority issues for women receive their rightful place on the sustainable development agenda.

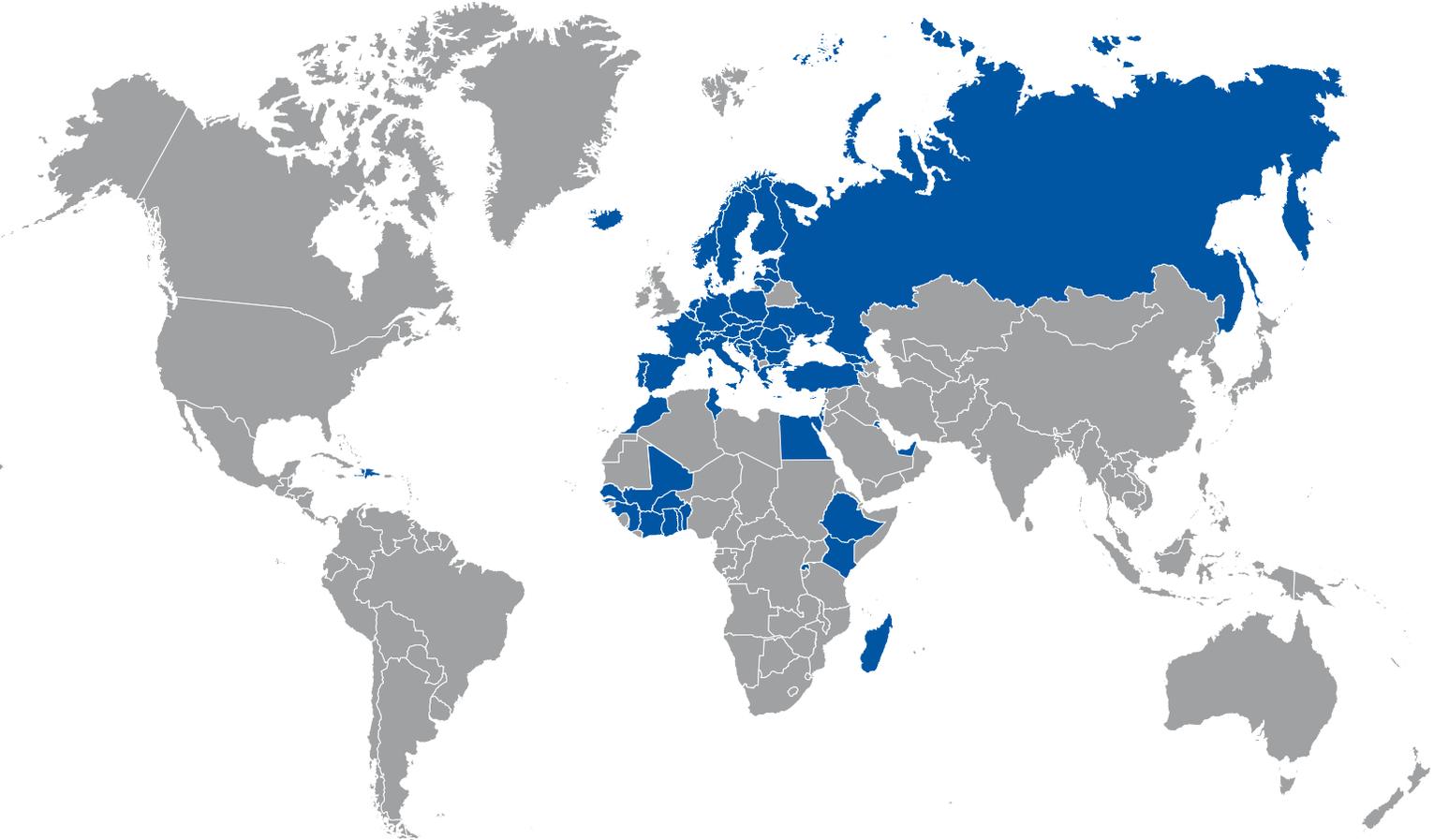
Our members include women of all ages, representing a wide range of professions. As such, we are a platform to share our knowledge and experience. We want to ensure that all women and girls have the opportunity to become leaders in their communities, and we will continue to lobby for them at all levels of society.

33,716
professional
women

1256
clubs

62
countries

WHERE WE ARE



62
countries

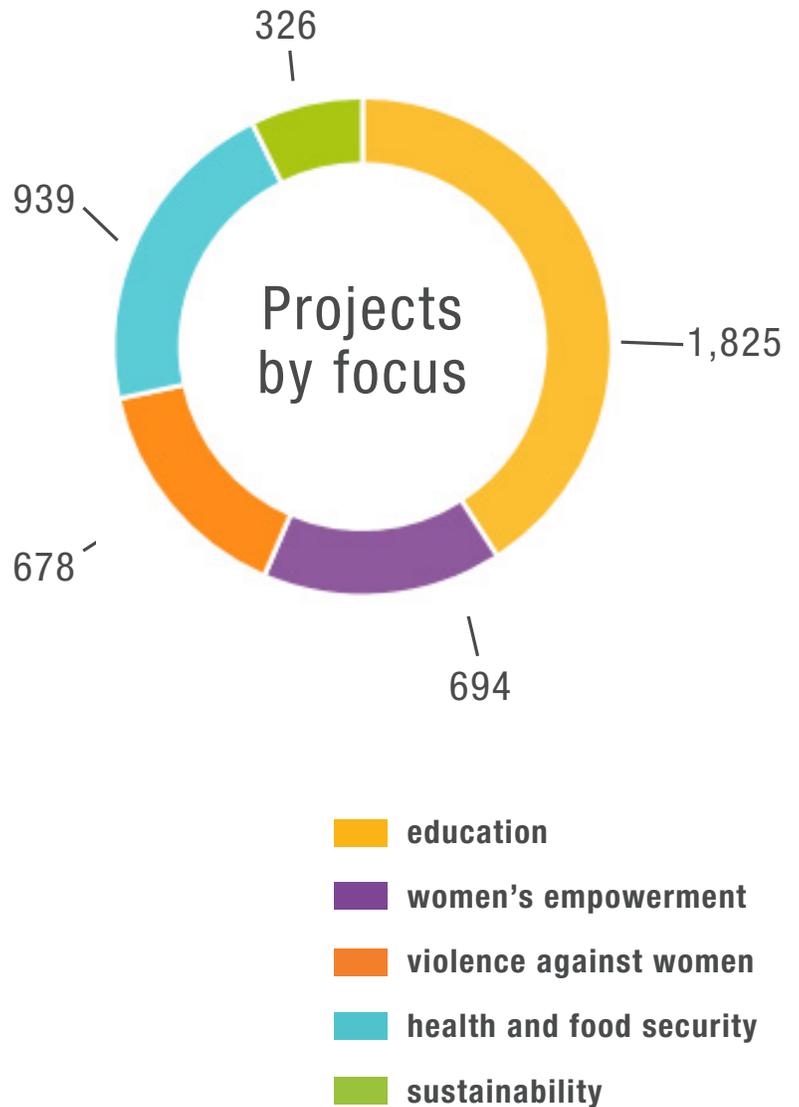
24
unions

85
single clubs

- Europe 61
- Africa 22
- The Caribbean 2

OUR PROJECTS

Single Clubs and Unions implement projects that focus on five main areas.



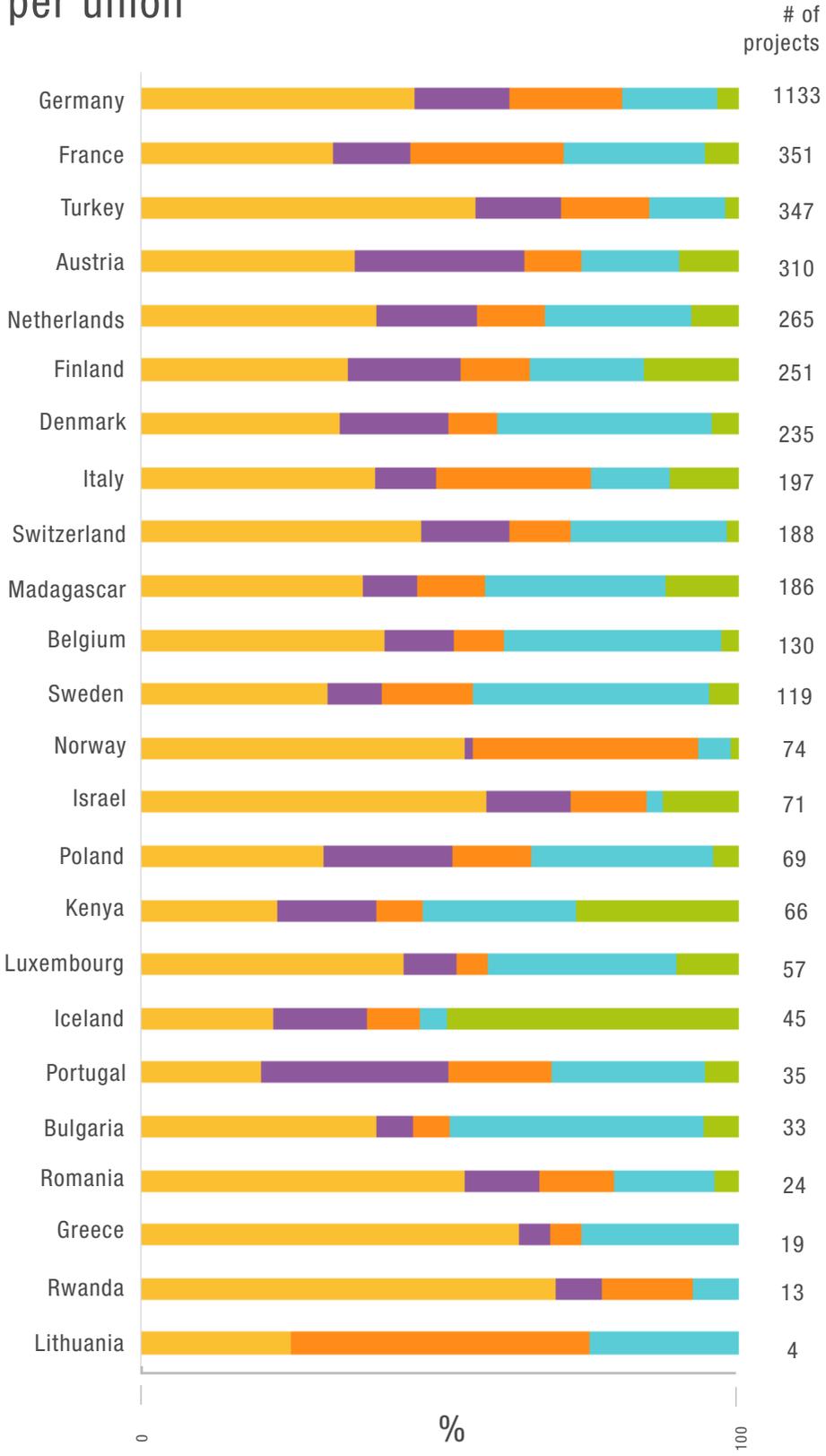
From October 2016 to October 2017 SIE members raised

5,876,094 €

and carried out

4,462 projects.

Projects per union



BEST PRACTICE AWARDS

SIE Unions and Clubs have implemented thousands of projects that focus on our key areas: education, women's empowerment, violence against women, health and food security, and sustainability. Each year, SIE grants Best Practice Awards to top projects.

2017 Project of the Year Award

Opening of the Suzanne Noël reception centre for female victims of violence

Club of Cognac (France)

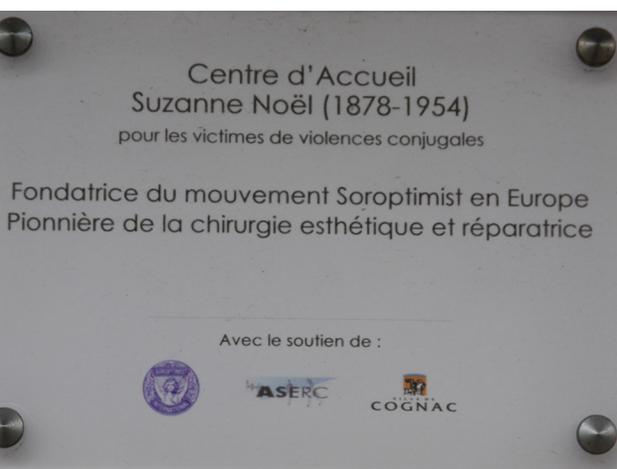
In the spring of 2013, the Soroptimists of Club Cognac noted the lack of local support for the victims of spousal violence in their town. The women were forced to seek refuge 45 kilometres away in the town of Angoulême. Soroptimists decided to do something about it. They persuaded the ASERC (Socio-Educational Association of the Cognac region) to form a partnership with the Club, and undertook to provide some of the centre's long term funding.

Funds raised:

9,200 €

Number of beneficiaries:

60



Soroptimists Invest in education

Each Biennium, SIE adopts a new theme on which to concentrate their efforts. During the 2015-2017 Biennium, the spotlight was on education.



Educate to Lead Award

Vocational Training & Employment Support Centre for Women

Club of Etiler (Turkey)

A famous historic district at the heart of Istanbul, Fatih has one of the lowest women's employment rates in the city. Due to a lack of skills and education, most of these unemployed women have never entered the professional world.

Funds raised:

70,000 €

Number of beneficiaries:

500



EDUCATION Top Project

AFRIpads Foundation

Club of De Bilt-Bilthoven (Netherlands)

In rural areas of Uganda, irregular school attendance and eventual school drop-out is common among girls who reach the age of puberty. Sanitary towels are rare and toilets are often inadequate, which has a direct impact on girls' school performance.

Soroptimist from the Club De Bilt-Bilthoven decided to partner with the AFRIpads Foundation to provide sanitary napkins to girls.

Funds raised:

15,419 €

Number of beneficiaries:

3,083

FUNDS

SIE has established funds to allocate resources to specific areas of work.

Federation Scholarship Fund

awards grants totaling in excess of 100,000 € per year to young women covering needs such as university fees, vocational training, and general support during studies. In memory of our founding President, the Dr Suzanne Noel Scholarship Fund provides financial assistance to female doctors to perfect their knowledge of, and experience in, plastic and reconstructive surgery.

Disaster Relief Fund

targets the specific needs of women and girls recovering from the effects of natural disasters and armed conflicts.

SIE Action Fund

supports humanitarian projects and promotes educational programmes.

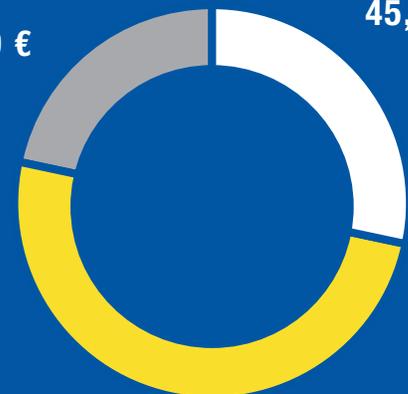
Roswitha Ott Fund

provides health care and education to children with special needs and children in need as well as financial assistance.

FUNDS RAISED FROM MEMBER FEES

**SOLIDARITY
FUND**
33,989 €

ACTION FUND
45,201 €



SCHOLARSHIP FUND
79,191 €

SCHOLARSHIP

Education empowers women and girls to realise their potential and thrive in their careers. That is why we find it imperative to support them through scholarships. Contrary to the scholarships given out through the Federation Scholarship Fund where grantees are sponsored by the SIE Federation, the funds for these are raised by Unions and Clubs themselves.

UNIONS

High school	348 scholarships	173,569 €
University	467	389,184 €
Further education	256	227,553 €
Vocational training	243	197,816 €

SINGLE CLUBS

High school	60 scholarships	5,347 €
University	12	28,410 €
Further education	88	27,620 €
Vocational training	42	29,927 €

1,516
SCHOLARSHIPS
GRANTED

1,079,406 €
SCHOLARSHIP
GRANTS AWARDED

MENTORING

In addition to the grants given out through the scholarship fund, Unions and Clubs organize various mentoring programmes that empower women to achieve their professional goals. Mentoring programmes pair up young women starting their careers with established professionals to gain insight and confidence and achieve success. In one-on-one sessions, mentors typically advise on how to deal with workplace scenarios and challenges. Most of the women taking part prove the value of these programmes as they obtain employment or even start their own business ventures shortly after.



photo : Katarzyna Blasiewicz

879
mentorships offered

176
Soroptimist mentees

703
Non-Soroptimist mentees

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF EUROPE PEACE PRIZE

For over 10 years now, we have awarded the SIE Peace Prize to visionary women for their outstanding contributions towards the establishment or maintenance of peace in their own communities. The 2017 Peace Prize was awarded to **Gégé Katana Bukuru** of the Democratic Republic of Congo for her remarkable commitment to the fight for women's rights in her war-torn country.

Gégé fights for the rights of all women – regardless of race, politics or religion – in Uvira, South Kivu.



The particularly violent rebels in this region are a constant threat, and women are regularly subjected to sexual assault, forced displacement, arbitrary arrest and torture.

In 2001, she founded the Solidarity of Women Activists for the Defence of Human Rights (SOFAD), a grassroots network of over six hundred women that fight for women's economic, socio-cultural, civil and political rights in East Africa – a region where sexual violence against women is considered by both sides of the military to be a legitimate “spoil of war”.

SOFAD provides psychosocial, intra-community, medical and legal support to survivors of rape and sexual assault. SOFAD also works towards empowerment of women through workshops that teaches and encourages women to participate in peace and political processes, run their own businesses and use communication technologies to access information.

Amnesty International has recognized and supported Maman Gégé for her dedication. In 2007, Gégé became the first woman to receive the Front Line Defenders Award for Human Rights Defenders at Risk, which provides protection for non-violent human rights defenders and uphold the rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF EUROPE

We are a worldwide network of professionally and socially diverse women.

We are a platform to serve communities, share knowledge and experience.

We educate and empower women and girls to lead.

We fight violence against women and girls.

We give women a voice by lobbying at all levels of society.

If you want to make a difference in your community, further women's issues on a wider scale, extend your professional network and make new friends outside your normal circles, we invite you to find out more about us!

soroptimisteurope.org

 [@SoroptimistInternationalofEurope](https://www.facebook.com/SoroptimistInternationalofEurope)

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