



Fall 2018 – Online Supplement

Transformation: A View from Spruce Street

By Elizabeth M. Lucas, SIA Executive Director & CEO

To look forward, let's take a moment to look back at our 2018 Convention—Stars Dreams and Wishes. It gives us a good understanding of where we are going, the social change we want to make and the one step we can take to realize our Big Goal of Increase Collective Impact.

2018 Convention Yokohama, Japan

Convention is all about coming together. While we may come from different countries, speak different languages or take part in different customs, we all look to the same sky.

Nearly 3,000 members came together to celebrate our stars, to explore our dreams, and to make our wishes for the future.

Live Your Dream Awards

We celebrated our *Live Your Dream Award* recipients. Thanks to the generosity of the Torrid Foundation and their quest to help women and change lives, each of our three recipients was given a \$25,000 cash award. In addition, the Torrid Foundation sponsored their trips to Yokohama and their wardrobes. Our recipients were Shamayel from the United States, Ana Caren from Mexico and Lucia from Canada.

Watch their presentations here: <https://www.soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/whats-new/45th-biennial-convention.html>

SIA Wishes for our Future

I spoke to the attendees about Our Wishes for the Future—about creating our future and being the organization we want to be. That is why we focus on increasing our collective impact across our SIA— so that together our clubs and regions can make a large scale social change ... and become an accelerating, unstoppable train. When every club offers our brand-unifying Dream Programs throughout our 21 countries and territories, we fulfill our brand promise and gain global recognition.

When we grow the impact of our Dream Programs, it is like helping to accelerate a train that is already moving and making it unstoppable. Every club that offers our Dream Programs helps our organization achieve more—more impact, more global recognition, more social change. You see, for Soroptimist to be the organization we want to be, we must choose our priorities carefully to create our successful future—of being better known for economically empowering more women and girls who face obstacles such as poverty, violence and teen pregnancy through our brand-unifying Dream Programs. This is how we fulfill our brand promise, gain global recognition and become that unstoppable train.

My full presentation can be found here: <https://soroptimist.imgix.net/05-for-members/whats-new/convention/creating-our-future-english.pptx>

Workshops explored identifying SIA's strengths and opportunities because the more we can tell a unified story of the impact of our programs, the more we will grow our public recognition. The more public recognition we have, the more we will be able to attract additional members and supporters. This requires us to tell ONE story, not 1,300 different stories for each of our clubs.

We asked two questions in our workshops: "What are we doing so well that, if we did more, we could have greater impact?" and "What opportunities are there to extend our reach?" Member feedback has been crucial to shaping our Big Goal of Increased Collective Impact and feedback such as this will continue to be crucial in shaping our next Big Goal for 2021- 2031—to invest in the dreams of half a million women and girls through access to education.

Giving to Support our Future

Past SIA Board Member and Governor Diane Thompson is determined to encourage more people to do more to help our organization reach its full potential. She says, "I know it is something we can do if we dream BIG."

To achieve our new dream, our next big goal—to realistically start to prepare our organization to reach 500,000 women and girls over a 10-year period, we will have to invest heavily in our organization. We will not be able to do it with the tools and resources we have now.

Diane prompted, "Who here remembers our keynote address from humanitarian and entrepreneur Dan Pallota at our last convention? Dan really helped us stretch our thinking by encouraging us to invest in SIA's mission, rather than the mission of other organizations to help our communities and the world. His philanthropic work—which has garnered world-wide attention —shows that in order for charitable organizations to increase their impact on the world, they need to first increase their investment in themselves."

We have the opportunity to change the lives of countless women and girls around the world. We have amazing programs that are measurable, and proven to make significant life-changing impact on the women and girls they serve. We only need to mobilize behind those programs. We only need to work together. We need to mobilize around OUR organization. Our programs. And we need to tell our story to the world.

That is what our next Big Goal will help us do!

(Remember that our Dream Programs focus on education for one reason: Evidence shows that a quality education—*more than anything else*—holds the greatest potential to transform the lives of women and girls. No matter where we're from, our Dream Programs address a common need around the world *and* in each of our communities. They can be tailored to fit your club's interests *and* a particular issue in your community. Quite simply and quite literally, our Dream Programs make dreams come true.)

Let's give to invest in our organization (to reach for the stars) and prepare it to make the dreams come true for 500,000 women and girls."

FY16/17 Financial Report

An overview of SIA's process for financial review and oversight, FY16/17 financial results and our financial strategy to serve even more women and girls was presented. The full presentation can be found here: <https://soroptimist.imgix.net/05-for-members/whats-new/convention/finance-presentation.pptx>

Club and Region Recognition

We were inspired by our clubs' "best of the best" achievements through our Soroptimists Celebrating Success Awards. Their accomplishments support the four pillars of SIA's strategic plan: fundraising, membership, program and public awareness. See the award recipients here:

<https://www.soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/whats-new/convention-recap.html>

The Shaping the Future awards recognize region efforts to support SIA's big goal of increasing our collective impact to shape our Soroptimist future, and our regions' efforts awed us. They celebrate the outstanding work of our regions and provide an opportunity to share best practices. You'll find the award winners here: <https://www.soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/whats-new/convention-recap.html>

And we honored the achievements of our clubs and regions with our MemberSHIP Awards. These awards were designed in 2015 to assist and motivate clubs in recruiting and retaining members, and building new clubs so our organization can grow stronger. It was a direct result of feedback you gave us about the challenges you were experiencing in recruiting and retaining members.

The campaign period ran from Sept 1, 2015 to May 31, 2018. During that time, SIA gained nearly 10,000 new members! In the last year alone, 43 clubs were chartered or reinstated—more than double the clubs added during the same period in the previous year! You can find all the results posted here:

<https://www.soroptimist.org/for-clubs-and-members/for-clubs/member-recruitment-tools/diamond-campaign/diamond-campaign-resources.html#resource-group-2633>.

SIA Governance

As you know, the Board of Directors is SIA's governing body. The Board works on all members' behalf to shape the mission, strategy, and operations of your federation.

Making sure SIA's governance is efficient and fair, plays an important role in helping SIA's work run smoothly. When operations run smoothly, we can all focus more energy and resources on our mission—improving the lives of more women and girls through program leading to social and economic empowerment.

Club delegates had the opportunity to hear about and provide their view on two governance topics:

The first topic—federation-wide voting. Electronic voting was unanimously approved by your Board of Directors in November of 2017. That means starting in February of 2020, we will move from a system of mailed paper ballots to one with electronic or online voting. Online ballots will eliminate the difficulties in mail delivery of paper ballots, creating a much more timely and efficient election process. Clubs will receive more information about electronic balloting starting in March 2019. We will also conduct a “practice” online ballot in October 2019. This will ensure all clubs are comfortable with the process before conducting our first official ballot in February 2020. For more information about online voting effective February 2020 go here: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/soroptimist-media/05-for-members/whats-new/convention/2018-convention-governance-briefing.pdf>.

The second topic—to review and recommend whether all clubs should be voting for all Board members, rather just the clubs in a given electoral area. The Board asked for club delegate feedback as to whether we should change our election structure to give all clubs in good standing a voice in the election of all SIA Directors. There was no vote, just an opportunity to gather input for the Board's consideration.

Soroptimist International

Soroptimist International President Mariet Verhoef-Cohen spoke to our challenges as a federated organization focused on improving the lives of women and girls, “Women make up 51% of the world population and (yet) nowhere in the world are women given full human or equal rights. The lack of recognition of women as equals leads to abuse, to pay gaps, to unemployment, to constraints by gender stereotypes. ...”

And she spoke to SI's challenges to build and strengthen five key areas of work: Advocacy, Communication, SI Convention, Strategic Leadership and the President's Appeal. “To be able to achieve this ... an inevitable but appropriate action was the increase of the (SI) dues—the first increase in 21 years by the equivalent of £2, effective for SI's fiscal year 2019 (and collected from SIA members in July 2019).”

Learn more about the SI President's Appeal here: www.soroptimistinternational.org/members-area/si-residents-appeal/ and about SI's July 2019 quadrennial convention in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia here: www.soroptimistinternational.org/?s=2019+Convention

In Closing

As your club year gets underway, support your organization as we continue our transformation to work as one and be the organization members say they want to be. Let's be that unstoppable train, with the common story of the social change we are making. Be sure to share how your club is adding to our

collective impact through your Dream Program participation by posting to SIA President Elizabeth’s new hashtag campaign on social media: #SpotlightSoroptimist.

And please—weigh in, let me know how you feel. I want to hear from you: elizabeth@soroptimist.org.