



SI PRESIDENT
Maureen Maguire

Soroptimist International is a global volunteer movement with a network of around 72,000 club members in 121 countries which advocates for human rights and gender equality, Soroptimists are not a stranger to dealing with issues relating to Human Trafficking.

SI PRESIDENT ELECT
Siew Yong Gnanalingam

Around the world, Soroptimist International has been involved in projects and advocacy regarding the issues related to Human Trafficking since the Quadrennial Project in Thailand in 1995-1999. This project provided education to children in seven villages in Northern Thailand that promoted self-sufficiency and diverted them from the commercial sex industry.

SI TREASURER
Kathy King

SI DIRECTOR OF ADVOCACY
Leigh Ellwood Brown

Soroptimists believe that working in partnership with civil society and state members is crucial in order to eradicate Human Slavery and mitigate its effects as it will take a multilateral approach involving all systems and interested parties to work together.

GLOBAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Deborah Thomas

Since 1999, Soroptimists have been involved in innovative partnerships addressing trafficking issues throughout the world as evidenced by thousands of Soroptimist projects on human trafficking already in existence and a standing proof of this pledge.

There are various ways which SI in partnership with various stakeholders has worked to combat human trafficking:

Soroptimists along with NGO and state partners have created a new paradigm with how we deal with trafficking by shifting the blame from the victim to the perpetrator.

Soroptimists have worked in partnership with local, regional, national, and global communities to educate the public regarding how trafficking women and girls has caused irrevocable harm – including acts of torture – by mentally and physically engaging in the heinous and devastating practice of human trafficking.

Soroptimists have also created practical solutions and projects with “on the ground” support of victims, in collaboration with NGO, academic, State and government partners as well as participation in policy development and implementation through our Educate, Enable, and Empower focus. All of this can be extremely effective in combating human trafficking by helping women and girls avoid the traps of trafficking through poverty.

SI has also joined others in advocating for laws and services to prevent, protect, prosecute and create policies which provide critical services in the form of education, health, employment, residential, childcare, transportation as prevention programs to those who are vulnerable to being trafficked as well as survivors in order to provide all of them with the necessary skills to promote confidence, self-worth and resiliency to avoid the traps of trafficking.

By taking such measures, SI has enabled hundreds of thousands of women and girls to avoid being a victim of trafficking by educating, empowering, and enabling them through Soroptimist projects.

They have raised money to rebuild women and girls lives as well as rebuild women's homes and businesses in order to provide them with sustainable businesses and a safe environment so that they can contribute towards their children's – including daughters – secondary education.

They have provided opportunities for paid workplace internships for trafficking survivors and other funding for survivors to move from shelters to independent living.

Some clubs have also focused on mainly rural or remote areas to counsel highly vulnerable children as well as provide links with the police and establish permanent contact with families.

They have partnered with other organizations to create an awareness raising campaign to share vital information regarding human trafficking with people in strategic positions, such as schools, youth centers, medical institutions and of course with parents, particularly young single mothers.

And the age of our audience is getting younger.

In 2023, in the Bay area of Norther California, Soroptimists are not only working in partnership with schools and law enforcement – both local and Federal – to educate communities, parents and educators regarding trafficking, they are also devising a curriculum for students as young as 8 years old with grade-age appropriate training.

Soroptimist organizations throughout the US and the world have also worked in partnership with other NGO's, local and Federal law enforcement, as well as organizations such as hotel and transportation entities – e.g. airlines, taxi's, or truckers – to raise awareness as well as identify new trends in order to effectively combat human trafficking.

Throughout the world SI clubs are also adjusting their messages to the needs of their communities, making partnerships at a grass roots level with local authorities, e.g. town council and the police, printing their own club's leaflets with advice on how women and girls can protect themselves and how to get help in case of need, as well as working with the mass-media to transmit and spread the anti-trafficking message.

And to reach a wider segment of the target population, clubs are also training young people to become their 'anti-trafficking messengers' in order to warn other young people about the dangers of trafficking in persons.

In our future, SI Projects, whether big or small unions and single clubs across the four Soroptimist Federations, will continue to run projects which have grown and refined from year to year.

We will continue to develop strategies and renew our methods of action for a sustainable anti-trafficking response to such current threats as pandemics or the climate crisis as these will make billions of people – especially women and girls – more vulnerable to human trafficking.

Soroptimist federations, regions, unions, and clubs worldwide will also continue to establish a variety of projects and programs aimed at :

- Changing laws and mindsets in their country,
- Developing awareness programs and large scale social media campaigns,
- Joining coalitions with other agencies and organizations,
- Developing residential programs,
- Providing scholarships or monetary awards, to assist survivors and survivor groups to further education and empowerment.

We ask all of you how we can best serve you as partners with your governments, NGO's or other organizations within civil society in order to:

Continue to educate our communities, regions, state and global audiences about what Human trafficking is in order to enable them to understand that this is not only a huge problem facing our world now – in view of the climate crisis, pandemic, the economies and ongoing conflicts this problem will only get much worse

To educate our global audience that human trafficking is not merely someone else's problem as trafficking exists in everywhere in the world- As such it is for all of us to resolve and when doing so, it is essential to do it in the right way, according to the law.

As we have seen based on the new Trafficking report, in order to know how to fight human trafficking, we must work in partnership with local communities, regions, state and a global audience to keep current with:

- New strategies that human traffickers may use, including new types of trafficking, new types of enforcement or violence which is being used, and new types of victims they are now focusing on,

We must do this by not only continuing to educate ourselves, but also by learning from our partners, our communities, regions, states and international forums what they believe are the current issues regarding human trafficking.

In order to prevent Human Trafficking, change will only happen if we work together, creating a global model regarding:

Prevention: by providing equal access to a quality education and services in the form of health, employment, residential, childcare, transportation as well as prevention programs;

Protection: by providing equal access to local judicial, police, health, and other critical services as resources and safe residences;

Prosecution: by implementation of laws with severe consequences to traffickers and perpetrators;

Partnership: by intersectional involvement of all elements of public entities and civil society working together;

Policy: through development and implementation of policies for all regarding other areas, including not diminishing these resources in times of austerity when they are needed the most.

It is also imperative that civil society be a part of the Action force in the work to eradicate Human Slavery and mitigate effects as It will take the multilateral approach involving all systems and interested parties to work together.

And finally, it is crucial that the global community recognize and enable the 50% of our population which consists of women and girls, to work as equal partners in dealing with these challenges. Without such a partnership, the legacy we will leave will be one of failure to our people including our children and our planet.

Human Trafficking is often denounced as another type of pandemic which women and girls face During the past decades it has exponentially grown, influenced by the internet, global internal and transnational population movement. But it is now more silent and hidden since the arrival of the COVID 19 pandemic.