



Fall 2016 – Online Supplement

Transformation: A View from Spruce Street – Only Together

By Elizabeth M. Lucas, SIA Executive Director & CEO

For almost 100 years, we have been steadfast in our support of women and girls as SIA has grown and reached other parts of the world. We have focused on helping countless women and girls on their journeys toward self-determination and success.

But your SIA Board is not thinking only of today. They are looking ahead to address what you, the members, say you want SIA to become. It's time we concentrate on OUR organization's hopes and dreams—for more members and more resources—to help us achieve high quality programmatic impact with an outcomes focus leading to greater stature and recognition. We must do this to remain a vital organization for decades to come—still making dreams for women and girls come true.

We have to believe. We have to trust. We have to build a new castle.

Believe—believe in the greater impact our system of clubs, districts, regions, SIA board, headquarters and region staff will have if we are united in *cohesive* action.

Trust —trust in your leaders who are stewards, guiding our system to be greater than it is today.

Build a new castle—embrace Shaping our Future for Increased Collective Impact.

In just five years, it will be 2021 and Soroptimist will celebrate its 100th birthday. Today, 95 years since our organization began, we are looking to our future and making plans to ensure our transformative work for women and girls continues for another 100 years.

It is easy for leadership to stick with things that made them successful in the past—those things that enabled us to reach so many women and girls over the past 95 years. But, one of the core responsibilities of leadership is to understand when we need to change. We never change for the sake of change. We change when we think change will make us better. Stronger. More successful.

And, that is what we are doing ... changing to increase our collective impact so we become known for socially and economically empowering women and girls through access to education.

Our SIA Board of Directors is committed to including us in building these plans for change. Let's not forget—members, leaders, and staff in our 20 countries and territories are all part of our team—as we define what we want to do and how we want to do it in our next century.

Strengthening our organization will require organization-wide focus on providing measurable and sustainable programs that align with our direction and are driven by our core value that women and girls deserve to lead full and productive lives through access to education. This focus will help us to be well known for our impact, attract women eager to join our organization, and appeal to a diverse set of donors.

We have built the groundwork for this with our current Big Goal of increased collective impact. Our Big Goal of increased collective impact is a reflection of the hopes and the dreams we want SIA to achieve by 2021.

To take us into our second century, our next Big Goal will need to be audacious, brave and daring. It needs to be BOLD. Our next Big Goal will not only need to provide focus and direction, it should inspire and engage all of our members, supporters and donors. And it should be measurable.

More than 600 clubs participated in our first planning exercise, conducted in the last months of 2015. Clubs indicated a preference for the concepts of invest in dreams and access to education resources. Sixty-three percent of our clubs selected: *Invest in the dreams of women and girls through access to education* as their first or second choice.

Our clubs said this next Big Goal reflects:

- The service clubs deliver today, and
- The service clubs want to do in the future.

To achieve our next century's Big Goal, clubs said we needed to:

- Focus on our membership experience,
- Increase the impact of our Dream Programs,
- Improve our public awareness, and
- Increase outside funding for our programs,

Our entire organization will need to focus on these priorities. Clubs can't do it alone. Regions can't do it alone. Our headquarters can't do it alone. Our Board of Directors can't do it alone. Only together, as one organization, can we build, support and realize our next Big Goal.

That's why we are asking your club to participate in our next Big Goal survey where we discuss and identify what we will have to do to make our next Big Goal a reality and how many women and girls we think we can reach. Be sure your clubs submits their feedback no later than December 30, 2016. The survey was sent to your club president in September.

We are counting on you to exercise your club's voice in Shaping Our Soroptimist Future.

The writer Robin Sharma once said, "Change is hard at first, messy in the middle and gorgeous at the end." If we change the way we look at things, the way things look will change as well.

Let us know how this change to make us better is going. Contact siahq@soroptimist.org with your thoughts. We are listening and using your feedback to move our organization into its second century.