



The International Soroptimist – March 2009 edition

Project Sierra: a Family and a Future – recent news from SI's Quadrennial Project

Our Quadrennial Project partner, Hope and Homes for Children, summarised challenges, progress and impact of the first year of the Project Sierra: a Family and a Future partnership in their recent first Annual Report to SI. It is heart-warming to read of what you have helped achieve already, so do read the report (available from the website). For example:

- Improved maternal and child health - the number of children in the Freetown programmes needing medical attention dropped by over 65%!
- All school age children on the integrated child and family support programme attended school. Most had been unable to do so previously. They thrived on this opportunity – 70% in the Bo project centre had above-average school grades and only 10% needed remedial support!
- Reconciliation workshop for children living alone and their estranged families gave children a voice to recommend ways of developing the programme; radio programmes challenged the stigma faced by teenage mothers and their children, and in some cases helped bring about reconciliation with the young mother's wider family.
- Collaboration with other NGOs and relevant government authorities, included counselling and workshops on HIV/AIDs awareness and development of life skills for children living alone; an advocacy campaign to enrol young women into education; and implementing child protection policies.

In another important recent paper (also available from the website) HHC explain the ACTIVE Family Support model, which is the way of working that they have developed and use in all of their African country programmes. "It allows us to target the children in most need, to tailor our support to them as individuals, to work with them so that they are able to experience a fulfilling family life and be fully part of their local communities. It also allows us to better measure and evaluates our actions, so that we can be sure we are using our resources in the most effective way possible."

As I write, I am excitedly preparing to go on the first Project Sierra Study Tour. Eight Soroptimists (two chosen by each of our four Federations) will visit Sierra Leone for a week in early February. This will be a wonderful opportunity and privilege to share with international Soroptimists, as we meet women and their children being

supported on these programmes, and the staff teams, to hear them and to witness how they face the many challenges in their lives.

We will share our experiences with you in the next edition of TIS, but also do check now on the SI and Project Sierra websites for photos and news from the Study Tour!

Alison Sutherland
SI Quadrennial Project Liaison 2007-11
project.liaison@soroptimistinternational.org
March 2009