



The International Soroptimist – June 2008 edition

President Margaret visits Project Sierra!

It was a great privilege to visit Project Sierra in February with President Margaret and our partner Hope and Homes for Children. We saw how your support for Project Sierra will change the lives of women, girls and their families within the programmes. We were impressed by the care and dedication of the local partner HANCI's staff teams.

On every visit IP Margaret found new young friends, as small children ran to hold her hand and stay by her side. Young mothers proudly showed us skills they are learning, including literacy and numeracy. We met other teenage mothers when they came after school to the day-nursery to collect their children - very contented babies, whose nursery timetable includes two meals, outdoor and indoor play, counting, music and movement, siesta and bath-time! They told IP Margaret of their ambitions, and the confidence that they have gained from the programme.

A local journalist patiently waited while we spent time meeting young mothers in the classroom and admiring their batik and tie-dye skills they were learning. She was rewarded by a lengthy interview with Margaret, recorded on a small tape recorder, sitting in the shade of a mango tree in the compound. Local radio is the main means of mass communication, and the interview will have been broadcast widely in the following days. That evening, a group of women came to our guest house to meet Margaret, wanting to learn more about Soroptimist International and who are keen to start a Soroptimist club in Bo came to our guest house, and

We visited young mothers who are now independent of HANCI's intensive support. Some are apprenticed to local businesses; their progress is monitored by the field workers. Others now run their own small enterprises. Hawa is one, who with HANCI's help has a tiny roadside store, selling provisions such as candles, basic foods and home-made cakes. Her small stock was neatly displayed and the area was spotlessly clean despite the dust from the road. Hawa had been struggling alone with her baby, socially isolated and vulnerable, until HHC / HANCI's supported her to return to school, care for her child and become reconciled with her grandmother. She now appears motivated and confident member of her family and community.

You are giving such young women hope and a firm foundation for the future through your contributions to Project Sierra. They so appreciate it. Do keep up your good work!

Continue to check the web-site www.projectsierra.org, to keep up to date with news of Project Sierra's progress and activity, and for resources to help you promote it, including a new photo gallery from which Soroptimists may obtain high quality pictures for displays or articles to promote the project.

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June 2009