



**Quadrennial Project 2007-2011**  
**Soroptimist Club Protocol**

In partnership with



Hope & Homes for Children

## Contents

The SI Club Protocol contains information about Soroptimist International's 2007 – 2011 Quadrennial Project, *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future*, a partnership with the charity Hope and Homes for Children. The Protocol describes the Project and how it links with Soroptimist mission and objects. It gives ideas for ways in which Soroptimist clubs can raise funds for the Project, and to gain publicity for your Soroptimist Club and for Soroptimist International.

Please visit the dedicated *Project Sierra* website [www.projectSierra.org](http://www.projectSierra.org). The website contains information about the Quadrennial Project and materials that will help clubs to become aware, involved and to raise funds. It will be regularly updated with materials from Soroptimists and from SI's project partner, Hope and Homes for Children.

Over the Quadrennium [www.projectSierra.org](http://www.projectSierra.org) will be the main source of up-to-date information about *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future*. The website links to Soroptimist International's website [www.soroptimistinternational.org](http://www.soroptimistinternational.org) which will include a summary of the latest news from the Project.

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## 1. Project Sierra: A Family and A Future

**Project Partners:** Soroptimist International and Hope and Homes for Children

**Project Summary:** The principal aim of *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future* is to provide a caring secure family home for vulnerable children in Sierra Leone, West Africa, giving them a firm foundation in life.

*Project Sierra* is made up of three programme elements. Together these give a full package of support for the most vulnerable children, mothers and carers in one of the world's poorest countries.

Through *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future*, Soroptimist International (SI) will enable family units to become self sufficient, and children to grow up in a safe family environment. It will improve the life chances of young women, and improve their ability to care for their own children and other children in their care, helping to prevent child abandonment.

SI's international partner, Hope and Homes for Children, has worked in Sierra Leone since 1996, and in other countries of Africa and in Central and Eastern Europe. (See page 8 for more about Hope and Homes for Children).

While the focus of the project is on Sierra Leone, its overall impact will be much greater as it will provide a best practice model that can be replicated in other countries with similar problems.

*Project Sierra: A Family and A Future* will:

- Improve the health and life chances of thousands of women and children living in extreme poverty
- Promote stability and self-reliance in post-conflict society by integrating the most vulnerable children and young women into a stable family and community life
- Provide education, training and small business support to enable families to become self-sufficient and face their futures with confidence
- Build the capacity of local childcare professionals and create models of excellence

**Project Time Period:** August 2007 – August 2011

**Project Location:** *Project Sierra's* programme work is centred in five areas of Sierra Leone, West Africa, covering rural and urban areas. These are: Freetown; Bo; Kamakwie (including Tambakha); Makeni and Mattru.

Sierra Leone is one of the world's poorest countries, and ranks 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest on the UN's Human Development Index (2005). Its recent history has been overshadowed by a bloody ten-year civil war, which resulted in the death of 50,000 people and the displacement of half of the country's population (over 2 million people). Tens of thousands of children were orphaned or separated from their families by death, abduction or displacement. Girls were often held captive for sex and domestic labour, whilst boys were forced to fight as child soldiers.

The conflict ended in 2002 and the country is safe, but faces the challenge of reconstruction. Communities, mostly impoverished and traumatised, are trying to rebuild their social and physical infrastructure. Many households are now headed by lone women and children. Extreme poverty and weak infrastructure limit access to vital services such as health, social care, water and sanitation for much of the population.

For more information about Sierra Leone, see the Country Profile at page 21.

**Project Components:** The three main components of *Project Sierra* are:

### **1. Integrated Child and Family Support**

Locations: Bo, Mattru, Makeni, Kamakwie, Tambakha- working with 200 families, approximately 1,000 beneficiaries at any one time. (Bo and Mattru: 80 families. Makeni, Tambakha and Kamakwie: 120 families.)

This project targets the most vulnerable children and their families within individual communities. The aim is to strengthen families that are at risk of breakdown due to extreme poverty, illness or death of a parent. Children are at risk of abandonment or exploitation. Beneficiaries are identified by working with local community leaders and organisations. The support for each family is individually tailored to that family's needs.

#### **Support is given in five areas:**

##### **Living conditions**

The project aims to ensure that each family has appropriate and secure living conditions and access to local services. Support ranges from repairing houses to making sure that families have access to a safe, clean water supply.

##### **Family and social relationships**

The project aims to ensure that every child lives in a strong, family unit with healthy attachments to siblings, adult carers and relatives and is integrated into their community.

##### **Physical and psychological health**

The project aims to ensure that families live in a healthy environment, have access to medical services, counselling and an understanding of health education issues.

##### **Education**

The project aims to ensure that children have access to education or training that is appropriate to their needs and ability. Support ranges from paying schools fees to providing uniforms and equipment.

##### **Household economy**

The project aims to ensure that families are able to provide for their basic needs so that they are able to be an active part of their community. Support ranges from microcredit to small business support, including access to farming resources to help them grow their own food or generate income from animals or cash crops.

The overall aim of this project is to work with an individual family to enable them become self-sufficient. As one family leaves the programme a new family will join.

## **2. Vulnerable children living alone - Street Children**

Location: Freetown – the Project can work with up to 50 children at any one time.

The project will target the most vulnerable children who are living on the streets of Freetown. Support will focus on children between the ages of 6 and 12, with the aim of reunifying them with their family, extended family or wider community.

The project will help these children return home. However, reintegration into family and community life can be difficult and requires ongoing guidance and support.

When they join the project the children are individually counselled, given access to healthcare and provided with nutritious meals. Emergency placements are available when deemed necessary.

Meanwhile, the project will work with the family and community to mediate the child's safe return and assess whether the family requires extra support. Once the reunification has taken place, social workers monitor each child's progress and care.

## **3. Young Mothers**

Location: Bo, Freetown and Makeni

This project targets vulnerable single young mothers who are living alone. The scheme aims to reintegrate these young mothers with their families or to empower them to be independent, active members of their community.

The young mothers include girls who were trafficked into sex slavery during the conflict, or who have been sexually exploited. During the conflict, girls and young women were held captive as “bush wives” by rebel fighters living in the forests. Many were kidnapped, while some other children whose families had been killed, or who were separated from their parents when fleeing from attacks on their homes, went to live with the fighters, seeing it as the only way they might get food, shelter and protection.

Social disintegration following years of conflict has contributed to a further increase in teenage pregnancy. Many of those who become pregnant feel they have no choice but to abandon their babies. Extreme poverty and social stigma make these very young mothers vulnerable to further sexual abuse, including trafficking, and increased risk of sexually transmitted diseases.

The young mothers in the programme receive education and life-skills training that will improve their own and their children's nutrition and health prospects. The young mothers will attend local schools or learn a trade or craft in the community or in the programme's own training centres. The programme will provide day nursery care for the babies. ‘Saturday classes’ within the programme enable the young mothers to learn and spend

time together. They learn practical homecare, healthcare, nutrition and life skills. The group activities and learning build their confidence and esteem.

The programme includes access to primary health care for the mothers, babies and children. Healthcare, and preventative health education and awareness are essential to reducing Sierra Leone's exceptionally high maternal and infant mortality rate (see statistics at page 12) and the spread of HIV/AIDS. Awareness of HIV/AIDS and the dangers of unprotected sex is low.

**Project Delivery:** Hope and Homes for Children undertakes its programmes in Sierra Leone with its local partner, HANCI-SL (Help a Needy Child in Sierra Leone), employing only Sierra Leonean staff. By involving a local NGO, *Project Sierra* will have a true understanding of the culture of the communities with which it works and increase its impact. It will also help to develop national expertise and experience, and build the capacity of childcare professionals.

Hope and Homes for Children monitors and audits the progress of all their projects through:

- Quarterly reports produced by all partners/overseas offices which include detailed information on each aspect of the project, staffing issues, child protection and health issues, and collaboration with other funding partners/bodies.
- Regular updates over the phone and email
- Regular visits by HHC international headquarters staff and others to the projects. Visits include meeting families in each area covered by the programme. Staff members produce a comprehensive report of the visit and their findings
- Country Directors and key staff from all HHC country teams meet together at least every two years for joint training and development

Hope and Homes for Children will be reporting regularly to Soroptimist International on progress with *Project Sierra*. Soroptimist members will be updated via the website, The International Soroptimist magazine, SI and Federation Liaisons.

**Project Financial Target:** Soroptimist International's fundraising target is to raise GBP £1 million sterling(USD \$2 million) for *Project Sierra* over the four years of the Quadrennium.

**Long Term Impact:** *Project Sierra* will treat the individual circumstances of each of its direct beneficiaries, and is aimed ultimately at achieving long term independence and stability. The duration and specific content of support in each case therefore will vary according to individuals' needs and circumstances.

Based on Hope and Homes for Children's current pilot programmes in Sierra Leone, and assumptions as to the average duration of intensive intervention, SI's target of GBP £1 million (USD \$2 million ) means that *Project Sierra* will invest *directly and comprehensively* in the current needs and the future life chances of 3,400 individuals (children and adults). This includes: 2,708 individual children and adults in the vulnerable family support programme; 488 young mothers and babies; 204 vulnerable, lone children.

The impact of *Project Sierra* is far greater than these individuals however. Every young mother assisted means a small family unit which is stronger and involved in the community.

Every child helped within a family will bring benefit to other children and family members within the household. Every family assisted to independence means another community being knit together after years of conflict and division. Every individual child helped to leave the street and return home means more stable communities and cities.

Involving a local organisation like HANCI-SL will increase the impact of *Project Sierra*, as it will be developed with a true understanding of the culture of the communities with which it works. It will increase the expertise and capacity of child protection and childcare professionals in Sierra Leone, making the project truly sustainable in the long term. Knowledge gained from *Project Sierra* will inform Hope and Homes for Children's work elsewhere in Africa and Central and Eastern Europe. Also, by pooling knowledge and expertise with other international children's charities and agencies, and by influencing governments, it will contribute to introducing best practice and building professional capacity in other countries where it is most needed.

**Website:** The *Project Sierra* website [www.projectSierra.org](http://www.projectSierra.org) contains information about the Quadrennial Project and materials to help clubs to become aware and involved in the project, and to raise funds. The website will be regularly maintained by SI's project partner and will include material from Soroptimists. Over the Quadrennium it will be the main source of up-to-date information, including reporting progress and Soroptimist successes.

**Study Tours:** At least two Study Tours will be arranged during the Project term, facilitated by our partner Hope and Homes for Children. Details of the Study Tours will be announced by the Federation offices, and on the web-site. Soroptimists taking part in a Study Tour will be expected to use their experience to promote the project to Soroptimists and others within their Federation.

The Project can only host Soroptimists visiting on a scheduled SI Study Tour. The Project works with very vulnerable young people whose privacy and dignity require respect, and it is not resourced to host multiple visits. Soroptimists should not plan visits to the Project or SI's partner organisation without first securing advice and approval from Soroptimist International and our partner Hope and Homes for Children, by contacting SI International Project Liaison.

## 2. Hope and Homes for Children

Hope and Homes for Children (HHC) was established in 1994 in response to the suffering of children during the Balkans conflict.

Already, HHC has helped secure the lives and future livelihoods of thousands of orphaned and vulnerable children in 12 countries - Albania, Belarus, Bosnia, Eritrea, Kosovo, Moldova/Transdnistria, Romania, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan and Ukraine.

HHC works to provide a family and a future for children across Africa and Central and Eastern Europe by:

- Bringing about radical change in childcare provision in Central and Eastern Europe, through establishing family-based alternatives for children currently confined in institutions, and by working to prevent child abandonment in the first place.
- Facilitating the widespread provision of high quality support for children and families affected by HIV/AIDS, extreme poverty or conflict in Africa.

HHC achieves this through:

- Improving the life chances and opportunities of vulnerable children by promoting and supporting family-based care in local communities
- Increasing the capacity of governments and childcare practitioners to make long term, sustainable changes in policy and practice which focus on the needs and rights of children
- Influencing national policy for child and family protection, in accordance with principles and practice that reflect the highest international standards
- Increasing its capacity to train others in its niche areas of expertise, in order to hasten the pace of change and to transform the lives of many thousands more children.

Central to everything HHC does is the belief that children should grow up within the love of a family and the security of a home.

HHC uses local resources wherever possible, so as to empower local people to help themselves.

HHC has worked in Sierra Leone since 1995 in cooperation with its local partner Help a Needy Child in Sierra Leone (HANCI-SL).

HHC is committed to developing strong relationships with those with whom it works, so as to encourage high quality in the services and protection it provides.

HHC is a registered charity within the United Kingdom. Its head office is situated in Salisbury, England.

### 3. Links to Soroptimist International Mission and Programme

#### *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future:*

- Supports Soroptimist International’s mission to strive for the advancement of the status of women and promote human rights for all
- Integrates all six of SI’s Programme areas, to provide resources for the healthy development of very vulnerable young people
- Is a practical example of SI’s commitment to take action to implement
  - SI’s Position Statements –available for download at [www.soroptimistinternational.org](http://www.soroptimistinternational.org)
  - UN Millennium Development Goals - see page 10 and [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)
  - UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – the full text of the Convention is available for download at [www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org)

#### a) SI Programme Focus

The Quadrennial Project directly contributes to SI’s recent and current Programme Focus Goals in all programme areas:

- Human Rights and Status of Women
- Education
- Health
- Economic and Social Development
- Environment
- International Goodwill and Understanding

For details of SI’s Programme Focus 2007–2011, go to Soroptimist International’s website, [www.soroptimistinternational.org](http://www.soroptimistinternational.org)

#### b) SI Position Statements

*Project Sierra: A Family and A Future* links to many of Soroptimist International’s Position Statements. By supporting *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future*, you are acting on these issues and on the SI Position Statements. Use the SI Quadrennial Project as an example in your advocacy, action and awareness raising.

The full text of the SI Position Statements can be found at [www.soroptimistinternational.org](http://www.soroptimistinternational.org)

c) **Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)**

*Project Sierra: A Family and A Future* contributes to SI's work to help achieve the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

**MDG1: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.** *By 2015, to reduce by half the 1990 rates of poverty and malnutrition.*

Poverty is defined as income of under \$2USD per day.  
Extreme poverty is defined as having an income of under \$1USD

*In Sierra Leone:*

Persons living on below \$2 per day 1990 – 57%; 2005 – 70%

Under 5s malnutrition: 1990 - 28.7%; 2001 - 27%

Population below minimum level of dietary consumption: 1990 - 46%; 2001 - 50%

***Project Sierra will help towards achieving this MDG by:***

- Supplementary feeding for children
- Nutrition education for young mothers
- Nutrition support to vulnerable families
- Nutrition support through day care programmes
- Skills training and apprenticeship
- Education
- Small business support
- Education on financial management
- Start up grants
- Agriculture support

**MDG 2: to achieve universal primary education.** *By 2015 to ensure that all girls and boys complete a full course of primary education.*

*In Sierra Leone:*

Over 30% of children do not go to school.

***Project Sierra will:***

- ensure that all primary school children within the programme are able to attend school;
- support very poor communities to improve facilities and access to schooling, so that all children and particularly girls, have equal access to education;
- in addition enable young people to continue their education through school or vocational training;
- support young mothers to complete primary education;
- provide start up classes to enable children to re-enter mainstream education

**MDG 3: to promote gender equality and empower women.** *To eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary schooling, preferably by 2005 and at all levels by 2015*

*In Sierra Leone:*

Adult literacy is under 30%.

76% of women and 60% of men have never been to school.

**Project Sierra will:**

- ensure that all children and young people within the programme attend school, or appropriate vocational (skills) training
- advise and encourage girls and young women to achieve their potential in education, by advancement to higher education or skills / vocational training of their choice. Support young women who choose to follow traditionally male dominated trades or professions.
- provide literacy and numeracy education for young mothers and other adult women within the programme

*Project Sierra* will also develop the skills and learning among its staff and volunteer workers.

**MDG 4: to reduce child mortality.** *To reduce by two thirds the mortality rate among children under-five by 2015:*

Sierra Leone has the highest mortality rate of under-five year olds in the world.  
Mortality of under-fives is 283 per 1000 live births (28.3%) (UNDP 2006)  
Infant mortality as a percentage of live births: 16.5% (2004)

**Project Sierra will help to achieve this MDG by:**

- providing improved access to medical facilities, medicines and treatment for all children and families within the programme, and to other vulnerable children within the host communities
- monitoring the health of the very young children within the programme
- educating mothers on health, nutrition and care of their babies and young children
- improving the living conditions of young children living in extreme poverty

**MDG 5: to improve maternal health.** *To reduce maternal mortality by three fourths by 2015*

Sierra Leone has the highest maternal mortality rate in the world.  
1,800 per 100,000 women die of childbirth related causes (2005)

**Project Sierra will improve maternal health by:**

- health and independent living education
- access to medical care
- nutrition support
- education on reproductive health
- HIV/AIDS education

**MDG 6: to combat HIV / AIDS, malaria and other diseases.** *To halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS and the incidence of malaria and other major diseases by 2015*

*In Sierra Leone:*

Life expectancy is 41 years (2005)

HIV/AIDS prevalence: 1.6% ages 15-49 (UNDP 2005); 7.5% females aged 15 – 24 years have HIV/AIDS (2005)

Tuberculosis: 847 per 100,000 population (2004)

Malaria prevalence in under-5 year olds is 47% of that population. Under 7% use bed-nets.

**Project Sierra will help towards achieving this MDG by:**

- providing health education, including on sexual health and HIV/AIDs education, to young women in the programme
- providing health education to carers and young people in its family and community outreach and consultation programmes
- working in partnership with providers of specialist health and preventive health services
- providing access to health care, including immunizations and registration for primary health care

**MDG 7: ensure environmental sustainability**

*Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of environmental resources. Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water. Significantly improve the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers by 2020*

*In Sierra Leone*

Population undernourished: 50% (2001-3)

Population without sustainable access to improved water source: 43% (2004)

Population without sustainable access to improved sanitation: 61% (2004)

**Project Sierra will help towards achieving this MDG by:**

- advice and support to families for subsistence and farming; and providing farm resources to promote self-reliance
- helping women living in poverty to become economically active, so that they are better able to care for the children in their family
- improving the living conditions of women and children living in extreme poverty in city and rural areas

**MDG 8: Develop a global partnership for development.** This goal has a number of measures that focus on improving the economic position and sustainability of developing countries, through poverty reduction, good governance, debt sustainability and development. It includes - developing decent and productive work for youth; making available information technologies

*In Sierra Leone* GNI per capita: 1990 - \$200; 2002 - \$140

**Project Sierra will help towards achieving this MDG by:**

- education to improve employment opportunities
- skills training and assisting young women into employment or self-employment
- strengthening national professional child protection / social welfare capacity

**For information on the UN Millennium Goals go to [www.un.org/millenniumgoals](http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals)**

For information on Sierra Leone relevant to the MDGs go to:

The State of the World's Children (UNICEF 2007) and UNICEF country reports at [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

UNDP Human Development Report and Index 2006: [www.hdr.undp.org](http://www.hdr.undp.org)

## 4. Soroptimist Involvement and Fundraising

*Project Sierra* will raise awareness of the effects of conflict and poverty on the lives of the most vulnerable children in the world's poorest countries, and it will raise funds to give a caring home and hope for the future to such children in Sierra Leone.

Use *Project Sierra* materials to raise your own awareness and other people's. Use them to support your Advocacy of the Project and of issues that it touches. In addition to this Club Protocol, there is a project brochure and DVD (available from your Federation) and other information and materials on the Project and SI websites.

When organising any activity or event for *Project Sierra*, ensure that persons taking part are given information about *Project Sierra*, Soroptimist International and our partner Hope and Homes for Children.

Clubs should report on their work including fundraising in support of *Project Sierra*. Please use the SI **Programme Focus Report Form** so that Federation and International Programme officers and SI's UN representatives are briefed on Soroptimist Awareness, Advocacy and Action on *Project Sierra*. Contact your Federation or Programme representatives for the Programme Focus Report Form.

Also send details of your **Project Sierra** activities and fundraising to your Federation Quadrennial Project Liaison, and SI Quadrennial Project Liaison. Reports and photographs from Clubs will be added to the website [www.projectSierra.org](http://www.projectSierra.org) during the Quadrennium, to celebrate your successes, share ideas and show how Soroptimists around the world are supporting *Project Sierra* in their local area.

### **Awareness and Fundraising Projects**

Below are some ideas to help Soroptimist Clubs raise funds for *Project Sierra*, and raise awareness. For more ideas, go to the website, [www.projectSierra.org](http://www.projectSierra.org), which also has materials and downloads for clubs to use in their fundraising, advocacy and awareness events for the project.

Please remit donations for *Project Sierra* to your Federation office promptly! State clearly that the donation is for the Quadrennial Project, *Project Sierra*.

### **Concert Evening**

Organise a concert given by a female choir, a local school choir, or pupils of local music teachers. Go to see the choir, tell them about the Project and ask them to promote it. A school or local choir may use this as an opportunity for its students to learn about issues linked to the project, or music from Africa and to select material for the concert. Publicise the concert, and *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future*, in your town or local area. The project website and this Club Protocol have resources that will help you prepare your publicity.

## **Sponsored Events**

Clubs can organise or take part in many kinds of sponsored event, to support *Project Sierra* – ask work colleagues, friends or family to sponsor members to walk, swim, slim or do other activities – or find a volunteer to undertake the activity and help them to get sponsors.

A Club could arrange a sponsored activity that is of real benefit to everyone in the local community. This way you will give service to the local community, as well as to *Project Sierra*. For example, picking rubbish, or cleaning up a local amenity that has become an eyesore, such as a roadside, a river bank or recreational area. Identify a local need – something that local residents and agencies want improving! Ask people in the locality, including local businesses, to sponsor you to do the task well. Make a difference by doing a job that would not otherwise get done. Get publicity for your efforts, and publicise *Project Sierra* as well.

## **Cards and Project Sierra Gifts**

Soroptimists could give a donation to *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future* as a gift for birthday, anniversary or at holiday times.

Clubs may design cards specially for this and you can include in your card a message that:

“A donation has been given to *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future*, a joint project between Soroptimist International and Hope and Homes for Children, to support orphaned, abandoned and vulnerable children and to improve the life chances of very young mothers and their babies in Sierra Leone, West Africa.”

Promote the project and your Soroptimist club, by including your club’s name and the *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future* logo and web-site address [www.projectSierra.org](http://www.projectSierra.org) in the card.

## **Energy Savers**

Most communities in Sierra Leone have no electricity supply, as is the case in many other countries. Many schoolchildren do their homework by the light of a small kerosene lamp, or by moonlight. Most families do not have running water in their homes - water for washing, cooking and drinking is from a communal tap, water well, or stand-pipes that may be open for just a few hours a day - or less. Fetching and carrying water is almost exclusively done by children and women – often walking long distances under the hot sun or at night. Water often contains impurities, and water-borne diseases are common.

Do you live in a place where electricity and water are taken for granted? Can you reduce waste, or save energy?

Hold an event that raises awareness of the way of life for many children in the poorest countries of the world, and also makes people in your locality think about how they use resources.

Have a sponsored “switch-off”. Challenge club members to do this, and others in the community such as a school, or workplace. For example, a parent could sponsor a child to switch off lights, or organise domestic recycling for one month. Invite children to take the

lead in changing the way energy is used or wasted in the home or school. Local companies or club members' workplaces can also try this.

You may be able to calculate financial savings from being more careful about how energy is used – invite people to donate to *Project Sierra* the estimated monthly or annual saving they will make.

Have fines or penalties for leaving things switched on – i.e. tap flowing while brushing your teeth, or leaving lights switched on when not needed.

## **A Recycling or Re-Use Event**

Ask Club members to bring items that they would otherwise throw away – e.g. glass bottles and jars; egg boxes; plant pots. Members taking items pay a small donation to the Project.

Encourage people to have a clear out, and have a Car Boot or Garage Sale with the items. Hold a Plant Sale, with plants donated by members, neighbours and others.

## **Book and Film Review**

Ask Club members to read books from the *Project Sierra* resource list, which will be updated on the Project website during the Quadrennium. Organise a social or 'book club' gathering to discuss the book. Link your discussions to the Project to raise awareness. Serve refreshments and invite participants to pay for these to raise funds for the project.

Clubs may want to recommend a particular book to a local book club or library, and host a social meeting to discuss it. Watch a film from our Resource list, and discuss it afterwards.

If a Club knows of relevant resources which are not already on the *Project Sierra* resource list or website, please send details to your Federation Liaison or SI Project Liaison. Your ideas can be added to the website for other clubs to enjoy.

## **Project Sierra Dinner**

For an enjoyable way to raise awareness about the Project and the country, host a *Project Sierra* dinner or a party for as few or as many people as you think will work best.

Serve Sierra Leonean food dishes. We can give you the recipes for some of Sierra Leone's loveliest dishes: groundnut stew, peppered chicken, plantain chips, jollof rice and banana bread. Serve home made ginger beer, and finish your meal with fresh tropical fruits of Sierra Leone. Some recipes are given below; also at <http://www.sierra-leone.org/recipes.html>, and on the *Project Sierra* website.

Charge your guests a 'ticket price' to attend. Take time to reflect on issues faced by young people like those who *Project Sierra* is supporting, and the opportunities that their contribution will give to a child.

You could have a more intimate dinner for a few. It's not just about how much money you raise, it's about having some fun and a creating a chance to let people know about the Project you're supporting – they might become interested in helping you in other events.

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## **RECIPES**

### **Groundnut Stew**

#### **Ingredients**

2lb(1kg) chicken / meat / fish  
½ lb (250g) salt beef or pork (optional)  
fresh tomatoes  
3-onions/ 1-clove garlic  
2 aubergine (egg plant) and okra  
1 oz tomato paste  
½ lb (250g) roasted groundnuts (peanuts) made into paste (or use smooth peanut butter - 2  
tablespoons, adding more for a stronger flavour or thicker sauce)  
salt, pepper, thyme to taste  
3 pints (2 litres) water if African chicken or stewing meat is used  
1 pint(600 cl) cooking oil

#### **Methods**

1. If using salt beef or pork, cut into pieces and soak to remove extra salt
2. Wash and cut up chicken into pieces. Boil (with salt beef or pork if used) for about 30 minutes with a few onions sliced or crushed garlic
3. Remove from stock and fry till golden brown
4. Fry onions, tomatoes and pepper
5. Dilute groundnut paste with water and pour the mixture over the chicken (or meat or fish) and check the seasonings; leave to simmer for ¾ hour till chicken / meat / fish is tender
6. Prepare and boil separately okra and aubergine, and add just before serving
7. Serve with a dish of boiled rice

**Note: If fish is used, scale and wash in salt lime water. Cut into portions. Season and fry.  
Serves—6-8 persons**

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### **Jollof Rice**

#### **Ingredients**

4 cups rice	enough water to cook the rice
1 small chicken (frying)	¼ lb (125g) salt beef and pork – optional
1/4lb (125g) fresh tomatoes	¼ lb (125g) beef
2 onions large	Sprig of thyme
2 small tins tomato puree	1 pt (¾ l.) of groundnut oil
	Salt and pepper to taste

#### **Method**

1. Soak the salt pork and beef for about 1-2 hours to remove some salt
2. Prepare the chicken and beef and cut into neat pieces
3. Cut up salt pork and beef and put into a saucepan with fresh beef and add some water. Cook till tender

4. Season chicken and fry in hot groundnut oil, Remove. Fry tender salt beef, pork and fresh beef. Remove
5. Prepare vegetables by grinding, add to hot oil and make gravy. Add tomato puree, thyme cut up finely, fried beef and chicken and a little liquid Simmer for about fifteen minutes to blend all the flavours
6. Remove some pieces of chicken and beef and reserve in a warm dish for “dressing” at a later stage
7. Wash rice and drain. Add enough water to the prepared stew and boil
8. Put in the rice, add salt to taste. Stir, cover with lid. Boil again briskly for five minutes and reduce the heat. Watch frequently and stir occasionally
9. When most of the water has been absorbed, check the grains. If hard, sprinkle a little water and cover the lid tightly again. Continue this process till the grains are soft
10. Leave over a very low heat till ready to serve
11. Serve in a meat dish or tureen with rice served out first and then garnish and dress with the chicken and meat already cooked with the rice, and the extras which were kept in the dish.
12. Serve with green boiled vegetables e.g. string beans, cabbage or choe-choe

**Serves---6-8 persons**

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Ginger Beer**

#### **Ingredients**

1lb (500g) root ginger  
 2 limes (or lemon if lime not available)  
 Sugar to taste  
 Cloves  
 Water to cover ginger

#### **Method**

1. Scrub ginger, scrape off the skin and wash
2. Slice, pound or crush ginger
3. Boil with lime and enough water to completely cover ginger for half an hour
4. Leave to infuse for half an hour and strain
5. Sweeten to taste
6. Bottle up and add a few cloves in each bottle
7. Serve chilled

\*\*\*\*\*

### **Tropical Fruit Dessert**

Serve a selection of fresh tropical fruits – or make a fruit salad. Use any of the following:

- |             |                    |
|-------------|--------------------|
| - mango     | - papaya (paw-paw) |
| - orange    | - water melon      |
| - banana    | - guava            |
| - pineapple |                    |

## 5. Publicity and PR

The *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future* logo can be downloaded from the website [www.projectSierra.org](http://www.projectSierra.org) for use by Clubs when preparing materials for events or publicity, or to use on letters, press releases etc. The website also includes publicity and PR tips, guidance and other downloads to help you when organising events to promote the project.

**Holding an Event?** Give it a short, appealing title! Send a Media Invitation in the form of a Press Release seven to ten days before the event. Keep the text short. Highlight the aspects of the event that will encourage the press to attend or report on it.

If there is no response to your invitation, send a Press Release the day after the event, reporting on it. Don't wait longer. Include a few good quality thumbnail size low resolution photographs to journalists.

**After your event:** Report it using the Programme Focus Report Form and send details, including copies of press coverage, to your Federation Quadrennial Project Liaison so that your *Project Sierra* successes can be shared with Soroptimists worldwide.

### Sample Invitation or Sponsorship Letter to Individual or Organisation

Dear [name of person]

#### *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future*

Please [help us] OR [join us in helping] to improve the lives of thousands of vulnerable women and children in Sierra Leone by  
*attending the [concert / demonstration / film preview / name of event ] that we are holding on [day/month/year] at [venue] with admission cost of xxx....*  
*sponsoring our concert etc....*  
*taking part with us in our sponsored walk/ swim / run etc....*  
*being one of the performers at our concert / play etc....*

Soroptimists all over the world are raising money for *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future*. That money will enable our Project partner, the United Kingdom based international charity Hope and Homes for Children, to improve the life chances of young women in Sierra Leone and their ability to care for their own and other children in their care. This allows the family to become self-sufficient and the children to grow up in a safe environment.

Please contact me either by phone [number xxxx] or by email at [email address] if you want further information. You may also wish to visit our websites: [ Club – add website address]; *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future* - [www.projectSierra.org](http://www.projectSierra.org); Soroptimist International - [www.soroptimistinternational.org](http://www.soroptimistinternational.org)

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

## Sample Letters to Editor

Dear [name of Editor]

***Project SIerra: A Family and A Future***  
**Soroptimist International [name of] club**  
**[name of event] – [date] at [location]**

Our Soroptimist Club is holding [*an event – state what kind of event it will be*] to raise [*awareness about*] OR [*funds for*] our International Project to improve the lives of thousands of vulnerable women and children in Sierra Leone.

I am writing to ask if you would be good enough to publicise the [*event*] for us in your [*(paper) OR (magazine)*]; and also to publish a report on it and photographs of [attendees] OR [participants].

A Press Release giving details of the [*event*], the Project and our organisation is attached for your information. SI [name of club] will be pleased to welcome you or your staff at the [*event*]. Please contact me if I can be of assistance in advance.

Yours sincerely

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Dear [name of Editor]

***Project SIerra: A Family and A Future***  
**[type of event, date and venue]**

Our Soroptimist Club is holding a [*type of event eg concert*] to raise funds for our Project to improve the lives of thousands of vulnerable women and children in Sierra Leone.

I am writing to invite you to send a journalist and if possible photographer (or film crew) to cover the concert for us in your (paper) OR (magazine) etc. A Press Release giving details of the concert, the Project and our organisation is attached for your information.

Yours Sincerely

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## Media Invitation – Photo / Film / Radio Opportunity

***Project SIerra: A Family and A Future*** [or title of event]

**What:** [write a short sentence describing the event, that will attract media attention, such as: A show of classic / traditional etc music / dance from across the world performed by [xxxx].

**Where:** [name the venue / location of the event]

**Date and Time:** [insert time / day / date]

On [name Day / date] [name of the performers, or star performer] will play in a concert / show of [international music / dance etc] for *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future*. The show is organised by [xxxx] Soroptimist Club, part of a network of Clubs of business and professional women in over 120 countries across the world. Worldwide, Soroptimists are supporting *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future*. Funds raised from this concert will be part of Soroptimists' worldwide support to this Project which will give a secure family life and future to lone and vulnerable children and women in Sierra Leone.

**Contact:** [name, phone, email]

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## Sample Press Release

### *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future*

Soroptimist International of [name of club] is raising funds to improve the lives of thousands of vulnerable women and children in Sierra Leone. The Club is holding a concert given by x x x x x Girls School Choir and friends at [name venue, date and time].

Soroptimists from all across the world are raising over GBP £1 million [USD \$2 million] for this project which runs from August 2007 to July 2011, and is called *Project Sierra: A Family and A Future*. *Project Sierra* is located in Sierra Leone where during a bloody civil war that ended in 2002, tens of thousands of children were orphaned or separated from their families by death, abduction or displacement. Girls were often held captive for sex and domestic labour while boys were forced to fight as child soldiers.

*Project Sierra* will be supporting the return of very vulnerable, orphaned or abandoned children and young mothers into family life, providing them with education, healthcare and counselling. It will help extremely poor families towards self sufficiency and improved life opportunities, so that they are better able to care for their children.

#### NOTES FOR EDITORS

Soroptimist International is a worldwide organisation for women in management and the professions working through service projects to advance human rights and the status of women. Members are spread amongst more than 3000 clubs in 125 countries and supporting local, national and international communities through projects and activities based on Awareness, Advocacy and Action.

Hope and Homes for Children, an international charity registered in the United Kingdom is Soroptimist International's project partner.

*Project Sierra: A Family and A Future* will:

- improve the health and life chances of women and children living in extreme poverty;
- integrate the most vulnerable children and very young mothers into a stable family life;
- help families in great need to care for these children, and to become self-reliant by providing education, training and small business support.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT: [your name, phone number and email] See also: [www.projectSierra.org](http://www.projectSierra.org) and [www.soroptimistinternational.org](http://www.soroptimistinternational.org)

## 6. Sierra Leone - Country Information

### Fast facts

- **Full name:** Republic of Sierra Leone
- **Population:** 5.3 million (UN, 2005)
- **Capital:** Freetown
- **Area:** 71,740 sq km (27,699 sq miles)
- **Ethnicity:** over 14 ethnic groups, the largest being Mende (in the south) and Temne (in the north); also Limba, Kono, Fula, Madingo, Koranko, Susu, Loko, Kissi, Sherbro, Krio, Lebanese
- **Major languages:** Krio (a Creole language based on English and African languages), indigenous African languages, English (official language)
- **Independence Day:** 27 April
- **Major religions:** Islam, indigenous beliefs, Christianity
- **Life expectancy:** 41 (UN 2005); [39 years (men), 42 years (women)]
- **Climate:** Tropical country with dry and rainy seasons

The Republic of Sierra Leone is in West Africa. It is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean to the west, the Republic of Guinea to the north and east, and Liberia to the east and south.

Sierra Leone is traditionally a rural nation. Until the civil chaos of the 1990s displaced over half the population from their rural homes, most lived in small towns and villages. Since this time, many have remained in the urban centres.

Sierra Leone's early history was shaped by migrations and trading patterns across the north and west of Africa. During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries the Sierra Leone coast was a major centre of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, with British slave traders dominating the trafficking of African children and adults to America. These enslaved people were particularly valued by rice plantation owners as Sierra Leone's rural economy was based on rice cultivation.

Freetown became a settlement area of freed slaves. The British government took over the Freetown area as a British Crown Colony in 1808. The rest of the country became a British colonial Protectorate in 1898. Sierra Leone gained its independence from British colonial rule in 1961, and became a one-party state in 1978.

A civil conflict engulfed the country in the 1990s, starting in 1991 in the south and east of the country, and by 1994/5 had also taken hold in the north. Government was ineffective; armed groups, rebels and soldiers caused havoc and terrorised communities with their violence. In 1997, a new democratically elected government was overthrown by soldiers who joined with the rebel group and unleashed a reign of killing, rape, terror and looting in the capital, Freetown.

During the ten-year conflict, over half of the population was displaced; families were separated as they fled, and many killed; children were held for use as soldiers and girls for sex and domestic slavery. Rape and amputation of limbs were commonplace.

Following the restoration of the legitimate government, a peace settlement was agreed and with support from the UN and West African peacekeepers, the war ended in 2002. The country has been undergoing reconstruction since then, with UN and international support,

aiming to strengthen peace and security, and build up the infrastructure and services, to address inequality, poverty and poor governance that were underlying causes of the conflict.

For statistics about Sierra Leone relevant to *Project Sierra*, see section 3c of the Club Protocol (page 10).

For more information about Sierra Leone, visit [www.sierraleone.web](http://www.sierraleone.web)

UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk) (Country Profiles)

Witness to Truth: Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission report into the causes of the conflict (2004) [www.trcsierraleone.org](http://www.trcsierraleone.org)

United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) [www.cia.gov](http://www.cia.gov) (Country Profiles)

[www.hdr.undp.org](http://www.hdr.undp.org) and [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

## 7. Resources

### a) Books

**The Devil that Danced on the Water – Aminatta Forna (2002)**

published by Harper Collins ISBN 0002570653

A memoir of childhood by the daughter of a Sierra Leonean politician executed in the 1970s.

**Ancestor Stones – Aminatta Forna (2006)**

published by Bloomsbury ISBN 0747584729

A story of the lives of four women, wives of a wealthy plantation owner.

**Old Watering Holes – Hilary Lyons (2001)**

ISBN D-95222338-4 Dudu Nsomba Publications

A missionary doctor's memoirs of over forty years in rural Sierra Leone.

**Moses, Citizens & Me – Delia Jarrett-Macauley**

**Green Oranges on Lion Mountain – Emily Joy**

ISBN 1903070295

**The Road to Freedom – by Yema Lucinda Hunter**

**Redemption Song - by Yema Lucinda Hunter**

**A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier – Ishmael Beah (2007)**

published by Fourth Estate

Ishmael Beah writes of his life as a 'child soldier' in Sierra Leone's war in the 1990s

**When Good Comes from Bad – Ishmael Beah (2000)**

[http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2000/08/00\\_beah\\_good-bad.htm](http://www.wagingpeace.org/articles/2000/08/00_beah_good-bad.htm)

**Long Journey Home – Susannah Smith Miles (2005)**

[http://www.charlestonmag.com/pop\\_archive1.html](http://www.charlestonmag.com/pop_archive1.html)

A 10 year old girl was trafficked into slavery in 1756 from Sierra Leone to South Carolina.

An account based on historical records, of what happened to her, and of the return to Sierra Leone in 2005 of her eighth generation descendant.

See also <http://www.projo.com/sharedcontent/east/priscilla/> for another account, by Paul Davis, of 'Priscilla's Homecoming'.

### Films

*Blood Diamond* (2006) – set during the recent war in Sierra Leone

*Refugee All Stars* (2004) – story of a group of young refugee musicians

*Cry Freetown* – Sorious Samora (1999) - harrowing documentary of events during the war in Freetown

*Amistad* (1997) – the revolt by Sierra Leonean slaves led by Sengbeh Pieh in 1839 fuelled anti-slavery feelings in the USA

## **b) Organisations**

Listed below are major international organisations whose work is relevant to Project Sierra. The organisation may also have a national (local) office in your country or area. If you have details of other relevant organisations that would be useful to Soroptimist clubs, do share the information with your Federation's Quadrennial Project Liaison or email to [project.liaison@soroptimistinternational.org](mailto:project.liaison@soroptimistinternational.org)

### **United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)**

3 UN Plaza  
New York  
NY 10017  
USA  
[www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

### **United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)**

East 45<sup>th</sup> Street  
15<sup>th</sup> floor  
New York  
NY 10017  
USA  
[www.unifem.org](http://www.unifem.org)

### **World Health Organisation (WHO)**

Ave Appia 20  
CH-1211 Geneva 27  
Switzerland  
[www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

### **United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)**

Case Postale 2500  
CH 1211 Geneve 2 Depot  
Switzerland  
[www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)

### **Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)**

8-14 Avenue de la Paix  
1211 Geneva 10  
Switzerland  
[www.ohchr.org](http://www.ohchr.org)

### **Human Rights Watch**

350 Fifth Avenue, 34<sup>th</sup> floor  
New York, NY 10118-3299  
[www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org)