

NEW PROJECT/PROGRAMME
 CONTINUING PROJECT/PROGRAMME X
 FUNDRAISING

The core purpose of Soroptimist International is to advance human rights and the status of women. In order to do this, clubs undertake service projects in their communities that improve the lives of women and girls. In order to track the success in achieving the core purpose, SI clubs are asked to submit programme focus reports on their successful club projects. Once completed, forward to:

Union and/or Federation Coordinator **Human Rights Coordinator SI Belgium and SI/E**

Part I. Identification

Date April 2005 Club Name **ANTWERPEN** Union/Region BELGIUM

Club contact Name: Mireille Dom Email mireille.dom@hotmail.com

Project Title: **EDUCATION FOR EX-CHILD SOLDIERS IN UGANDA**

Project Partnerships: _____

Target Group: **Children who managed to escape from the rebel armies**

Part II:

Programme of Service Area* (Check the box/boxes that best describes your project): *Details overleaf.

X Human Rights/Status of Women: **Education:** **Economic and Social Development:**
Health: **Environment:** **International Goodwill and Understanding:**

Describe your project

(1) What you did, (2) Why you did it, (3) How you did it, (4) Results and recommendations

(1) In July 2000 the organization "Sponsoring Kinderen Oeganda" (children of Uganda) was established upon the initiative of Els De Temmerman, author of the book "*Meisjes van Aboke*" (Girls of Aboke). Its aim is to send the formerly abducted children of Uganda back to school. The organization presently sends 845 former child soldiers to school for € 50 000 per trimester.

Since 1994 over 20 000 children have been abducted by the "Lord's Resistance Army". Boys and girls over five years of age are kidnapped from their houses and schools. They are taken to camps of rebel forces to receive a military training. Afterwards they are sent to fight for the rebel army as cheap child soldiers.

Many children have gunshot wounds, are crippled, carry stabbing wounds and suffer from venereal diseases and aids. Far worse than these are their mental scars; feelings of guilt and anger against a world that was unable to protect them.

Children who manage to escape from the rebel armies are put up in the refugee centres of Gulu, where they receive trauma-counselling. Many of them cannot or do not dare to return to their former homes. Some fear reprisals from the rebels. Others have lost their families.

Education is the best road to integration. This way, the children can rebuild their self-image. The vzw "Sponsoring Kinderen Oeganda" collects money to send these children to school. <http://www.childsoldiers.net>

(2) For the celebration of the 75th anniversary of SI Club Antwerpen we wanted to make a special effort to support effectively different organizations (9 in total) which are committed to the softening of the life of needy people in society, in Antwerpen and abroad.

Choices were made for projects that would not only help financially but also in a more practical way as help with clothes, food, education, healthcare, toys, household tools.

(3) Several activities to collect funds were organised (theatre, concerts, selling of products, auction of peace dolls made by artists, etc.)

(4) A contribution of **480 €** was made to finance one year school for two students, a boy and a girl. From the girl we receive an yearly letter with her school results and her prospects for further study.

Project Costs: Estimated number of Hours Spent: the club members organised a number of activities (theatre, concert, selling chocolates, lanyards, decorated notebooks, auction of peace dolls made by artists, etc); in two years time, nearly 26.000 € were available for the 9 chosen projects.