

Report Kirsten Fritsche AD02/28

First of all thanks to the members of the Area Board, Vice Area director Katja Kamphans, Vice Area Director Petra Lohse and Treasurer Monika Maiworm Baatz for their support and cooperation. We share the workload and experience real team work.

The first year of my Biennium as Area Director 02/28 was dominated by the pandemic. Most of the time personal meetings were not possible. All Zontian in my area needed to learn how to use other channels for communication and discussion, like online video conferences. Almost all Clubs established online Club meetings. 5 Clubs (Frankfurt2, Gießen, Ludwigshafen, Trier, Wiesbaden) even conducted online charity events (readings, theater, concert). The Motto “recognize new opportunities”, our Governor Annemarie Loosli-Locher had chosen for this Binnium, really pointed us the way.

All Clubs in my Area were as active as possible and very committed to fulfill Zonta’s mission and goals. During Club visits the Biunnum goals are explained and discussed. As club meetings are now again possible as personal meetings, I am convinced that the impact will increase.

The **education programs** of ZI are well known in the area and Clubs are highly motivated to identify talents and support their application. From my area 4 applications for the YWPA ’21 award and 1 application for the JMK ’20 scholarship were submitted. For the JMK ’21 scholarship we even expect 3 applications. I am very pleased about 1 application from the JLU Gießen for the AE fellowship ’21, as this was the first application out of area 02/28 since years. German awardees established the Alumnae network ZAC (Zonta Awardees connected). They want to strengthen the relationship among awardees as well as between awardees and Zontians and foster the connection and identification of the awardees with Zonta. We will support this and stay in contact.

Despite the pandemic the contribution of the Clubs to the “Zonta says no” campaign 2020 was overwhelming. 23 out of 26 Clubs participated in “Orange your City” activities and achieved a strong reporting not just in the local but also regional press as well as online media. The good coordination of the **Advocacy** activities within Germany by the Union of German Zonta Clubs was very helpful and layed the foundation, that Zonta is recognized as organization advocating women rights in Germany. Besides “Orange your City”, a second campaign started – “women in politics” to encourage women to participate in elections and to engage actively in politics to achieve finally a balanced relationship between women and men in parliaments. Several Clubs from area02/28 posted on Instagram and one Club organized a panel discussion. All activities consider, that Zonta is a non-party organization.

Sonja Hartmann, ZC Darmstadt, took over the responsibility as advocacy representative of the area, to support Clubs to address and deal with Advocacy topics addressed by the Advocacy District chair, Anita Schnetzer-Spranger, as well as by the German Union of Zonta Clubs.

Due to the pandemic the number of **charity events** was significantly reduced compared to previous years. As already mentioned above 5 Clubs conducted online charity events with mixed success. Two Clubs (Bad Nauheim and Neustadt an der Weinstraße) could realize at least charity activities with reduced personal contact (second hand clothes, meal vouchers for needy people). Together with the Foundation Ambassador, Vilborg Asmus-Reuter, we are working to raise awareness in every club that club donations to ZI are essential.

The flooding in Germany was and is a disaster in Germany. The two ZCs in Koblenz are organizing support for people affected in the sense of Zonta, especially for women and children. During these difficult times it was especially in the region of Koblenz a specific experience to be a part of a global organization with a strong team spirit like Zonta. The area appreciates the sympathy from Zontians all over the world. Special thanks are going to District 31 and the president of ZC Taichung II for their generous donation.

In area 02/28 we observe a fluctuating number of members. From June 2019 to June 2020 the number of members increased from 725 to 743, but until June 2021 it dropped again to 720. The increase of members will be our focus in 2021/22. Not just the number of members is our concern, but also the age. We observe severe difficulties, if clubs start too late to increase their attractiveness for young people. **Membership** will be our main topic during the upcoming area meeting in September. The area will support Clubs to become more familiar with Instagram, as especially young people are using this platform for information. With financial support from the District we produced a graphic movie, showing the ambition of Zonta. The premiere will be during the area conference. After that it can be used on websites, in social media and during events. It is planned to have a long version covering all aspects of Zonta and four short versions for posts in social media. To become more attractive for young women, some Clubs of the area started to offer a junior membership up to the age of 30 according to the example of ZI. During the last area conference it was decided to reduce the membership fee for the area by 50% for young members up to 30 and a corresponding request was also submitted to the district.

For the second half of the biennium 2020/22 all members expect to enjoy more personal contacts again, but the skills in online media achieved during the past months will also be used in future to overcome distances.

Kirsten Fritsche
Area Director Area 02/28 – Biennium 2020/2022