

June 2018



Since January 2018 over 7,000 Report Forms have been entered onto the database, over 2,000 on Education, 1,400 on VAW, 1,000 on Eco-

conomic Empowerment, 200 on Food Security, 1,800 on Health, 400 under Environment, 110 under Peace Promotion and 62 under Disaster Mitigation.

It can be difficult to determine whether a project is in the right place and I know many members wish they could tick more than one box and we are looking at ways to simplify this.

In addition, the database is due for an update and we are still juggling with our current system and the SDGs, so we will be looking at a clearer definition of Education, Empowerment and Enablement and linking our existing system with a UN classification for their 17 SDGs.



The FPAC Study Day in Liverpool will be dedicated to these changes and will strongly emphasise the need for communication from Club up to UN and UN down to Club, passing all stages in between. Communication is the key to understanding and to implementation.

The FPAC team hope to Educate delegates, Empowering them to communicate their learning and Enabling Clubs to get their PFRFs in the right place! A large play on words but I hope sufficient to stimulate an interest in attendance.

In the meantime carry on the good work and keep entering those forms.

**Barbara Dixon**  
Programme Director



### COMMONWEALTH HEADS OF GOVERNMENT MEETING Rita Beaumont - APD - Food Security & Healthcare

During an amazing week in April, I was honoured to be our representative in London at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM18). It brought together representatives from 53 nations of the Commonwealth, not only

Heads of State and Ministers but also from diverse parts of civil society to join in the important conversations.



The week began by participation in the three-day Women's Forum; this was one of four forums running in parallel: the others being The Youth, The Business Forum and The Peoples Forum.

The focus of the Women's Forum was An Empowered Future for Women and Girls. Each day had a distinctive theme:

- Day 1 Leadership and Empowerment
- Day 2 The Road to Empowerment
- Day 3 Empowerment in the Community

High on the agenda were all aspects of Violence Against Women & Girls including child and forced marriage, FGM, physical, mental and sexual abuse; eradication of child and forced labour, all kinds of child exploitation, human trafficking, sexual and reproductive health and rights, a subject never discussed at a previous CHOGM. The impact of climate change, including the direct effect on food security, sanitation, life and livelihoods were debated. A common thread woven through all conversations was the essential part education plays in empowering women to expedite change.

Each session included a keynote presentation by a subject specialist followed by a moderated expert panel who each gave a short statement followed by a question and answer session; the high quality speakers from across the commonwealth challenged strongly-held views and governmental policies, challenging us to advocate for change in policies and practices

Key Outcomes for us as Soroptimists

- Actions to mitigate climate change: it was acknowledged the impacts of climate change could push an additional 100 million people into poverty by 2030. The Heads of the Commonwealth adopted The Blue Charter taking action to safeguard the oceans for future generations.
- Effective measures to eradicate forced labour, human trafficking and the elimination of child exploitation and labour.
- Continued support for the work of WHO and international efforts to tackle a wide range of serious health challenges and the socio-economic impact on individuals and families.
- Actions to encourage the opportunity for at least 12 years of quality education and learning for all girls and boys by 2030

Read more by visiting [www.chogm18.org.uk](http://www.chogm18.org.uk)



The week provided me with an opportunity to add the Soroptimist voice to the conversations and outcomes.

It enabled me to make contacts, represent us at two receptions, one hosted by Secretary General of the Commonwealth and one by the Foreign Secretary, and the honour of attending the official opening by The Queen at Buckingham Palace.

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**EMPOWERING WOMEN**

**Rayner Rees - APD - Economic Empowerment**



There are many definitions of empowerment and the Oxford dictionary defines it as: 'Authority or power given to someone to do something. The process of becoming stronger and more confident, especially in controlling one's life and claiming one's rights'.

Robert Adams, an American spiritual teacher, defines it as 'the capacity of individuals, groups and/or communities to take control of their circumstances, exercise power and achieve their own goals.'

Many trailblazing women have made statements about empowerment; here are a few:

**Hillary Clinton:**

*"To all the little girls who are watching, never doubt that you are valuable and powerful and deserving of every chance and opportunity in the world to pursue and achieve your own dreams."*

*"When there are no ceilings, the sky's the limit. So let us keep going."*

*"Human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights, once and for all."*

**Malala Yousafzai:**

*"I raise up my voice not so I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard...we cannot succeed when half of us are held back."*

**Margaret Thatcher:**

*"If you want something said, ask a man; if you want something done, ask a woman."*

**Michelle Obama:**

*"There is no limit to what we, as women, can accomplish."*

**Beyoncé:**

*"We have to step up as women and take the lead."*

As Soroptimists, we understand that empowerment occurs through improvement of conditions, standards, events, and a global perspective of life. There can be no empowerment for women without gender equality which has its own sustainable development goal (SDG 5).

Every club in our Federation is active in supporting women and girls; I cannot list them all but here a few...

**SI Kenilworth** enabled new mothers in Blantyre Hospital to earn money and so support their other family members by providing funds for knitting materials to make garments for their premature babies and to sell.

**SI Castlebar** hold an annual fashion show which this year raised funds for local women's support service.

**SI Cheshire North Wales and Wirral Region** support residents of a homeless hostel to grow their own produce, develop and maintain their garden and paint a mural which increased self-esteem and improved mental well-being.

**SI Bombay North** held a very successful function attended by about 520 women. The Programme focussed on developing confidence and how to bring about a positive and effective change in society.

**SI Cardiff & District** held a craft afternoon where ideas and skills were shared with guests.

**SI Barbados** held an event 'Sister Put Your Best Foot Forward' designed to educate and empower women with the tools necessary to navigate the job search process and successfully enter or re-enter the working world.

**SI Chelmsford & District** provided funds for the Rosie May Foundation's Pink Tuk Tuk campaign, which aims to provide women in Sri Lanka with safe public transport, by training women from single parent families to be tuk tuk drivers, and providing highly visible pink tuk-tuks, and drivers with income.



Kofi Annan

**Days of interest in June**

- 5<sup>th</sup>** Environment Day
- 12<sup>th</sup>** World Day Against Child Labour
- 15<sup>th</sup>** World Elder Abuse Awareness Day
- 20<sup>th</sup>** World Refugee Day