

April 2018



The first quarter of the year has gone and for many clubs it is a time for New Presidents and Officers.

Our Soroptimist work may take

on a new focus under the incoming teams, but many things will stay the same - the constant fight for equality for women and the struggle to allow them to be educated so that they can fully engage in society and reach their individual potential.

The recent trip to New York for the [Commission on the Status of Women](#) was inspiring, emotional and exhausting, but the [Agreed Conclusions](#) were achieved and can be read on the website. The priority theme was Rural Women.



We all have rural areas with their problems of lack of facilities, transport and interrupted power supplies.

The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) apply to all countries and we must all work together on projects that will help achieve them by 2030, with robust data to support our work.



Whatever your plans here's to a very successful year of Programme Action.

**Barbara Dixon**  
Programme Director



### WORLD HEALTH DAY 7<sup>th</sup> April 2018

**"Health is a human right. No one should get sick or die just because they cannot access the services they need."**

*Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General - World Health Organization*

Each year on 7<sup>th</sup> April World Health Day celebrates and raises global health awareness under the sponsorship of the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO). This year the theme is Universal Health Coverage: Everyone, Everywhere, with the slogan #HealthForAll. [www.who.int/healthforall](http://www.who.int/healthforall).

This year a spotlight will shine on the need for Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the advantages it can bring; access to essential quality care and financial protection not only enhances people's health and life expectancy, it also protects countries from epidemics, reduces poverty and the risk of hunger, creates jobs, drives economic growth and enhances gender equality.

Half the world's population is still unable to obtain the health services they need. If countries are to achieve the SDG target, one billion more people need to benefit from UHC by 2023.

Universal Health Coverage is about ensuring all people can get quality health services, where and when they need them, without suffering financial hardship. Health is a human right. No one should have to choose between good health and other life necessities.

Here are some facts and figures about the state of universal health coverage today:

- At least half of the world's people are currently unable to obtain essential health services.
- Almost 100 million people are being pushed into extreme poverty, forced to survive on just \$1.90 or less a day, because they have to pay for health services out of their own pockets.
- Over 800 million people (almost 12% of the world's population) spend at least 10% of their household budgets on health expenses for themselves, a sick child or other family member.

The WHO is calling on world leaders to live up to the pledges they made when they agreed the [Sustainable Development Goals](#) in 2015, and commit to concrete steps to advance the health of all people.



A 'Health in All Policies' approach, considering the health implications of decisions made across sectors is essential. Factors including education, economic status, and the physical environment profoundly affect the health and well-being of individuals and populations. Health improvement relies on people working well together. Health workers and members of the public alike should bring their different skills and experiences to their shared goals. This includes us as Soroptimists as part of our Programme Action work.

An example of the need for UHC is the WHO campaign launched in February 2018 (Report: [WHO Recommendation Intrapartum Care for a positive childbirth experience](#)) relating to access to individualised supportive care during pregnancy including labour, making childbirth a positive experience for all women. WHO have issued new recommendations to establish global care standards for healthy pregnant women and reduce unnecessary medical interventions. Every labour is unique and progresses at different rates and the recommendations address what care is needed throughout labour and immediately after for the woman and her baby. These include having a companion of choice during labour and childbirth; ensuring respectful care and good communication between women and health providers; maintaining privacy and confidentiality; and allowing women to make decisions about their pain management, labour and birth positions.

The recommendations are relevant to every country in our Federation.

# UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE: EVERYONE, EVERYWHERE

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Heavy rains in August last year left large areas of the country under water, causing deaths, displacing over 200,000 people and destroying over 45,000 homes. Focussing mostly on women and children, SI Kathmandu, worked with, amongst other organisations, Rotary, to distribute relief materials to hundreds of stricken families.



During the year the club distributed warm woollen caps and sweaters (supported by SI Poole) for newly born babies of Paropakar Maternity Hospital.



They sponsored the education and counselling of marginalised girls, produced backpacks for schools with SI logo and distributed warm wollen sweaters to over 200 needy children.

And they provided baby goats to over 50 marginalised women in order to start their own small businesses.



**FOCUS ON PAKISTAN - BARBARA DIXON**

**SI Ghandaha** spent a few hours every day to teach children in one of the slum areas and motivate the girls to continue to study. In order to deal with the lack of education opportunities for women in slum areas. They spent a few hours every day to teach the children and motivate them to continue to study, stressing how education empowers a person and how it is not simply a 'waste of time'. They identified one school without a library and initiated a Book Donation Drive among the members and friends.

**SI Karachi**, in collaboration with OWO, invited women from poor areas, who work as maids and do menial jobs, to spend an evening with them, sharing life stories and discussing how best to make it possible for them to survive and be successful. The women were given certificates on the skills they had been taught and sewing machines were distributed among those that had completed their sewing courses.



Pakistan has the highest number of out of school children in the world. Millions of children are begging on the streets or picking garbage. These children are abused sexually or are used as drug dealers. Footpath school was created to provide a good education to these street children. The children are given Rs 50 per day and a free meal. Books, uniforms and medical checkups are all free.

This is an incentive to parents to send them to school instead of forcing child labour and it has proven to be a very successful project. The students are very happy to have this opportunity for education.

But the day where the school was filled with balloons, music and cartoon characters was very special for them. *One girl said "I will remember today for the rest of my life."*

**Days of interest in April**  
**2<sup>nd</sup>** World Autism Awareness Day ~ **7<sup>th</sup>** World Health Day ~ **25<sup>th</sup>** World Malaria Day