

March 2018



How often do we hear that Programme Action is our reason for being, the main drive of our organisation, something with which we should all get involved?

All these things are true, but one thing we often fall short of achieving is reporting our work, shouting about it from the highest hilltop, sharing it with other Soroptimists and above all recording it on our database so that others can see what is happening.

Many people never look at the database and so that is why we are trying to highlight some of the project work that is going on in our Federation.



There may be ideas that can be used for our own projects or perhaps, through friendship links we can support the work that others are doing. Our lives are now so busy that few of us have the time to wade through lots of papers and articles, but I hope that by highlighting some of the other countries in our Federation we may get a feel for the different types of project work that goes on.

It is so true that one size does not fit all. What is needed in India may not be required in the Caribbean, and problems in the UK are so different from problems in Africa. Different countries, different needs, but so long as we Educate, Empower and Enable women and girls through our actions I am sure we all want to hear about them.

March is an important month with [International Women's Day](#) and the [CSW](#) in New York - I am sure there will be lots of reports, blogs and tweets to look at. Please visit the website and read about all the work of our amazing organisation – in other words - YOU!

Barbara Dixon
Programme Director



FOCUS ON THE CARIBBEAN - APD RAYNER REES

Let us find out what has been happening in the beautiful Caribbean Islands.

In **Barbados** *SI Jamestown* supports the empowerment of girls with confidence-building exercises of public speaking. In *SI Barbados* they aim to improve access to economic empowerment and sustainable opportunities for the employment of women with a particular focus on young women between 18-25, a great way of recruiting young Soroptimists.

St Vincent and the Grenadines continues to offer scholarship programmes and the work on human trafficking through education. March is Endometriosis month - they are busy planning for this and continue to run comfort stations.

The clubs in **Trinidad and Tobago** are very busy. *SI Port of Spain* is taking part in a 'Solidarity Walk and Rally' on Saturday 10 March in commemoration of [International Women's Day](#) and are hoping that 10,000 people will join in. *SI Chaguanus* embarked on an Environment Project entitled "Waking Up to a Better Tomorrow" with a video to raise awareness on deforestation. This video and plants formed a package that is being donated to schools throughout the country. *SI San Fernando* is assisting in a week of celebration for International Women's Day with a series of activities bringing stakeholders together to discuss the issues affecting women at all levels of society and are focused on the UN theme for [IWD 2018 "Time is now"](#). *SI Tobago* intends to revisit an old project to celebrate their 10th Anniversary - a garden at the entrance of the Speyside High School will have many improvements. They are also developing a project 'I love myself' which will establish a programme for women and girls, which will help, raise self-esteem. *SI St. Augustine* is also focusing on International Women's Day with a presentation detailing their contributions to the public and wider society. The club will also talk about [World Water Day](#) in presentations to school children focusing on careers in the water industry. *SI Newton* is renovating a library for 4-6 year olds, complete with a knowledge tree, floor mats and bean bags. For International Women's Day 2018 they will focus on child protection workshops for parents and preteens.

Turks and Caicos

Some areas in South Caicos were destroyed by Hurricane Irma. The islands are recovering and it did not prevent Betty from attending the conference in Cardiff!

SI Provo has embarked on numerous programmes with emphasis on girls. Two skills based programmes dealing with practical skills and social skills were introduced to two schools. The girls are encouraged to be persistent, stay focused and on task. Both initiatives aim to educate and empower the girls preparing them with lifelong skills.



SI Barbados



SI Chaguanus



Turks and Caicos



Hurricane Irma

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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY - APD NISHA GHOSH

THE TIME IS NOW

YES - Indeed this 8 March [International Women's Day](#) - 2018, women across the planet are urged to seize the moment – build on the momentum that has brought gender parity centre stage. The time is now to not give up the few steps taken back, recover the slips that may have been disheartening and surge ahead with a new energy.

Yes, the time is now - this year's IWD theme is *Time is Now: Rural and urban activists transforming women's lives*. People around the world are mobilizing for a future that is more equal. IWD 2018 will also draw attention to the rights and activism of rural women, who make up over a quarter of the world population and majority of the 43 per cent of women in the global agricultural labour force.

Studies have shown that rural women's lives and livelihoods are threatened by climate change events, environmental degradation, militarisation, ethnic and religious discrimination and economic policies that make small scale subsistence farming unsustainable. Women displaced from their lands are more likely to end up in low paid, unregulated work and are especially at risk of being trafficked.

Women are affected more severely and are more at risk from natural disasters and extreme weather events, including during post-disaster response efforts. Their exclusion from decision-making and limited access to and control over resources impedes their rights. It is therefore important to articulate rural and indigenous women's critical role and capacity in the nurturing of a sustainable ecological system. While we are reminded of the [SDG](#) mantra, 'Leave no one behind', deep-seated gender inequalities and discrimination are the scourge that rural women face so far worse than rural men or urban women.

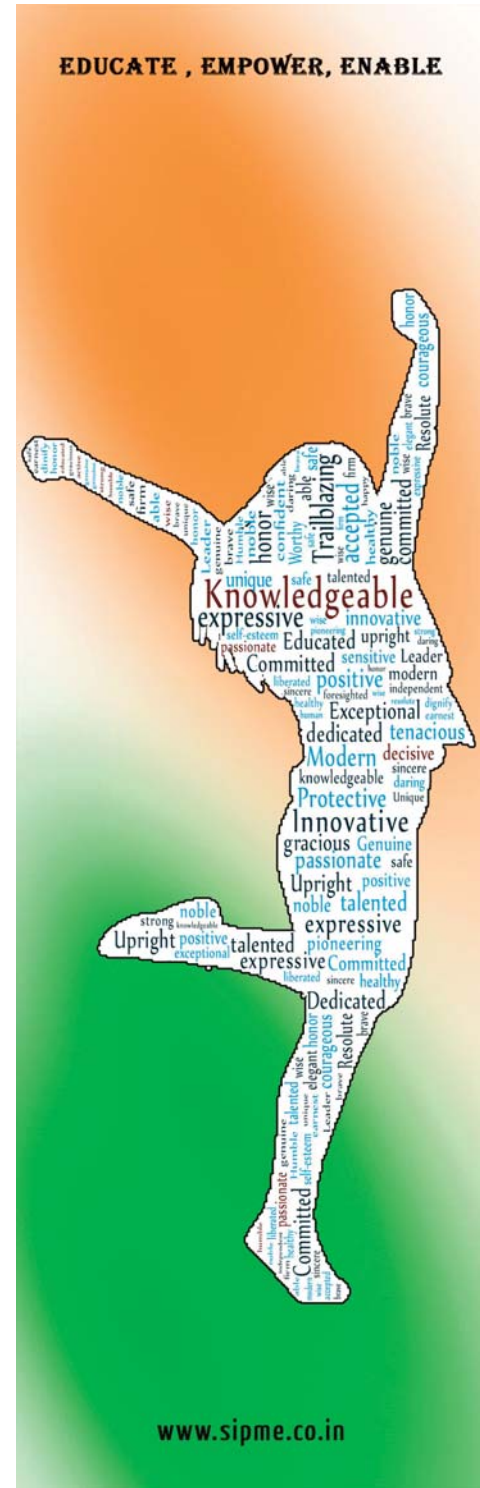


This year's theme will also be resonated as the priority theme at the [CSW 62](#) in New York. Rural women and their organizations represent an enormous potential, and they are on the move to claim their rights and improve their livelihoods and wellbeing.

Each IWD gives us a pause moment to look back at how the day began to be marked first in 1909 in New York. Years later, post the advent of Soviet Russia 1917, 8 March was settled as a day for the celebration of International Women's Day, and it was a holiday for women workers!

It was formally adopted in 1975 by the United Nations. Down the years the challenges the struggles and the turmoil the International Women's Day has faced, have strengthened the resolve of women, and women-centric organizations. But as [Gloria Steinem](#), feminist and activist and one of the pioneers of modern-day feminism, said once, *"The story of women's struggle for equality belongs to no single feminist nor to any one organization but to the collective efforts of all who care about human rights."*

So, Soroptimists, seize the moment - leave no one behind - make the difference in the lives of women and girls, for the TIME IS NOW.



Days of interest in March
Ovarian Cancer Month ~ 2nd World Book Day ~ 8th International Women's Day ~ 12th - 23rd CSW Fortnight
14th - 20th UK Nutrition & Hydration Week ~ 22nd World Water Day