

From Soroptimist International's website:

**THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT'S APPEAL 2017 – 2019,
SUPPORTS PROJECTS THAT EDUCATE, EMPOWER AND
ENABLE WOMEN AND GIRLS, ENSURING THEY HAVE THE
CAPACITY, EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION NEEDED TO
MANAGE WATER RESOURCES AND GAIN CAREERS IN WATER-
RELATED PROFESSIONS.**

Water is Life

Safe, accessible water is crucial to preserving life. Water fuels our bodies, cleans our homes and clothes, drives industry, generates energy and irrigates the crops which feed the population. Growth in the world's population and industrialisation, together with climate change and demographic shifts, all lead to an increased demand for water. Annually, four billion people experience severe water scarcity . Additionally, 663 million people lack ready access to improved sources of drinking water (World Water Development Report 2016). Women and girls are disproportionately affected – instead of earning an income or attending school, they are forced to be the primary water carriers for their families.

By uniting the four Soroptimist Federations, 'Women, Water and Leadership' seeks to reach the goal of raising £350,000, over two years, empowering at least 500 women to be self-supporting and to enable and educate at least 100 women to move into leadership.

WATER AND WOMEN

It is increasingly accepted that women should play an important role in water management. Women are experts, agents of change, and perform an important role in achieving equitable access to water for all, and for all uses. Despite positive steps taken in past decades, the potential contributions of women in water development remain largely untapped, inhibiting women's economic empowerment. Of the millions of paid water-related jobs worldwide, currently less than 17% of the positions are filled by women. Their expertise, if harnessed through education and empowerment, could position women as effective leaders.

What can Soroptimists do to support the Appeal?

Soroptimists are invited to support Women, Water & Leadership, once again joining with the SI membership around the world for a common goal. Clubs or members can make a donation through their own Federation or you might hold a fundraiser, and use social media and websites to create awareness.

At least five projects will be supported on five continents that educate, empower and enable women and girls to lead in water, and embrace the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and the targets set out in SDG 6: Water and sanitation, SDG 4: Education, and SDG 5: Gender Equality. The President's Appeal will promote the inclusion of women in water resource governance as experts and leaders during all phases of the projects. Women will be equally involved in decision-making throughout the entire project cycle – from education and capacity building, through to design, implementation and monitoring.

The President's Appeal seeks to reach the goal of raising £350,000, over two years, and to have improved, sustainable, accessible and affordable water products and services on five continents. The projects will empower at least 500 women to be

self-supporting through



The first project to be supported is 'Improving access to agricultural information, clean energy and water to achieve better food security for 500 women farmers in Kenya, Africa'. Five hundred women farmers in the Nakuru, Kilifi, Kisumu and Machakos counties, require education and vocational training to manage their farms effectively and to ensure food security, particularly as the water supply in their areas is scarce.

Through training and capacity building, the women will be exposed to better and modern farming structures, helping them move on from subsistence farming – growing crops and raising livestock sufficient only for one's own use – to commercial farming, and will be supported throughout the transition. The President's Appeal will afford women the opportunity to be empowered to improve the food security of their families and their community, whilst contributing to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7, on the challenges of poverty, food security; access to water; gender equality and environment worldwide.

To find out more about the Women, Water and Leadership and how to donate please contact Chair of the International President's Appeal Hafdís Karlsdóttir hafdis@in.is