



SOROPTIMIST
Best for Women

Improving the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment.

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS

Soroptimist Dream Programs and UN Sustainable Development Goals

“Women’s economic empowerment is at the heart of the 2030 Agenda. We will not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals if there is no accelerated action to empower women economically. We know that women’s participation in all spheres of life, including in the economy, is essential to sustainable and durable peace and to the realization of human rights.”
UN Secretary-General António Guterres, March 2017

Accelerating economic empowerment for our target population of disadvantaged women and girls – the focus of Soroptimist International of the America’s Dream Programs – is rooted in the agenda for women’s equality outlined by the United Nations. Central to this agenda is the Convention to End All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (1981), the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), and most recently, the Sustainable Development Goals (2016).

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by world leaders in September 2015 at an historic UN Summit, officially came into force on January 1, 2016. Over the next 15 years, all UN countries are expected to mobilize efforts to address these new SDGs to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

Of the 17 goals and 169 targets, the Dream Programs directly support five goals and 12 targets. We share our progress on the targets with Soroptimist International who compiles all federations’ support of the SDGs and provides an outcomes and output report to the United Nations.



Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Indicators:

- By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than \$1.25 a day
- By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Indicators

- 4.3 By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university
- 4.4 By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship
- 4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
- 4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Indicators

- 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation
- 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life

Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Indicators

8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value

8.6 By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training

Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

Indicators

10.1 By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 percent of the population at a rate higher than the national average

10.2 By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

Soroptimist Dream Programs

Live Your Dream: Education and Training Awards and Dream It, Be It: Career Support for Girls empower and promote the economic inclusion of disadvantaged women and girls through access to education and training. Our Dream Programs provide women and girls with the resources and education they need to become leaders and participate fully in political, economic and public life. With the support and resources from our Dream Programs, we are helping women and girls access decent work and achieve full and productive employment when they enter the work force.

Our Dream programs target disadvantaged women and girls – those living in poverty and facing additional obstacles to their success like violence, caring for dependents, physical or mental illness, substance abuse, or a lack of access to education or training. By focusing on disadvantaged women and girls in our 20 countries and territories, we are addressing those who are most vulnerable to poverty, violence and exploitation.

In all 20 of our countries and territories, clubs are supporting the educational goals of women and girls through our Dream Programs. We have 11 developing countries: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines and Venezuela. We also operate in nine developed countries and territories: Canada, Chile, Guam, Japan, Korea, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, Taiwan, and the United States.

Providing our target population of disadvantaged women and girls with access to quality education is the cornerstone of our Dream Programs – whether it is formal education or technical and vocational training. We want to ensure that these women and girls have the education and information they need to accelerate their economic empowerment. The Live Your Dream Award – a cash award rather than a scholarship – provides women with the autonomy to decide what expenses to cover to support her education. The award accelerates their economic empowerment by helping women find better paying jobs and increasing their standard of living. For girls, our Dream It, Be It Program puts them on the right track to take action to live empowered lives free from poverty, violence and exploitation.

Dream Programs – Metrics Supporting the SDGs

Live Your Dream Awards

- Each year, we give funding to more than 1,300 disadvantaged women to support their education and career goals.
- Each year, we provide more than \$2 million to support the education and career goals of disadvantaged women.
- Applicants from Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay, the Philippines and Panama have reported incomes of less than \$1.25 a day.
- 70% of recipients reported living in poverty on their application.
- 82% of recipients report having more than one barrier to their success including poverty, violence, homelessness, substance abuse and mental or physical illnesses.
- 76% of recipients who complete their education have higher paid employment within three years.
- 82% of recipients who complete their education increase the standard of living for themselves and their dependents within three years.
- Nearly 60% of the recipients have reported suffering some form of violence.
- Within one year of receiving the Live Your Dream Award, 98% of recipients report living in a safe environment.
- 95% of recipients complete or are continuing their education after three years.
- 97% of recipients report an increased self-esteem.

Dream It Be It

- Since its inception in 2015, more than 20,000 girls have participated in Dream It, Be It.
- 90% of girls feel more confident about their future success.
- 87% of girls feel more prepared to pursue their future career goals.

- 80% of have tools to overcome obstacles to their success.
- 75% of girls have new tools to overcome setbacks.
- 78% of girls know women who want to support their professional aspirations.
- 87% of girls were introduced to professional role models
- 86% of girls created achievable goals for their future

WE CAN – AND SHOULD – DO MORE.

There is no denying our work is incredible. We are helping thousands of women and girls to achieve economic empowerment. Our Dream Programs are creating measurable, sustainable and positive change in the lives of women and girls. But are we doing enough? Can we do more?

In FY16/17, we conducted a data project and found there are 20 million women and girls living in our 20 countries and territories that would benefit from our Dream Programs. We will not be able to help all of these women and girls with incremental increases each year. We need to be **bold**. We need to be *brave*. We need to unify our work around the Dream Programs to increase our collective impact – not only to help more women and girls but also be known for the change we are making for these women and girls – and for the world.

Need help making the change? Contact program@soroptimist.org.

Sources of data:

- Five year averages of Live Your Dream Award recipient survey data
- FY16/17 Live Your Dream Award outputs
- Three year study of the applications of region and SIAHQ Live Your Dream Award recipients
- One year of Dream It, Be It data