Why Women and Girls?

* Two-Thirds of the 880 million illiterate adults are women.
* Of the more than 110 million children not in school, approximately 60 percent are girls.
* By age 18, girls have received an average of 4.4 years less education than boys.
* In some countries in sub-Saharan Africa, adolescent girls have HIV rates up to five times higher than boys.
* Pregnancies and childbirth-related health problems take the lives of nearly 146,000 teenage girls each year.
* These are just a few examples where girls and women are outrageously treated. These numbers are unacceptable. We continue to strive for better conditions and fair treatment for girls and women throughout the world.

Gender discrimination often begins at a young age—in some cases even before birth—and girl children are devalued and discriminated against throughout the world.

In many cultures, girls are considered to have little or no value, and therefore poor

families often opt not to educate their female children. Without an education, women are less likely to find sustaining work at a living wage, and are more likely to remain

poor throughout their lifetimes.

Because of the prevalence of gender discrimination, harmful practices such

as female genital mutilation, female infanticide and pre-natal sex selection are still widespread. Additionally, the devaluation of women leads to girls

and women being sold into human bondage and sexual slavery. Women also

experience discrimination in food allocation and lack of access to health care, which results in lower survival rates. And women around the world experience sexual abuse and domestic violence on a daily basis.

By initiating club projects that benefit women and girls, and by honoring women who help women and girls, Soroptimist clubs and members improve

the status of women and girls. Soroptimist projects and programs aid

women economically, and empower them to make positive changes in their lives and their communities