

International Women's Day (3/8)

The 2024 theme for International Women's Day (IWD) is "Invest in women: Accelerate progress." Gender equality is one of the most effective ways to build healthy, inclusive communities where everyone can reach their full potential. It is time to act – because women's well-being is everyone's well-being.



Here are five key areas needing joint action:

- Investing in women, a human rights issue: Time is running out. Gender equality is the greatest human rights challenge, benefiting everyone.
- Ending poverty: Due to the COVID pandemic and conflicts, 75 million more people have fallen into severe poverty since 2020. Immediate action is crucial to prevent over 342 million women and girls living in poverty by 2030.
- Implementing gender-responsive financing: Conflicts and rising prices may lead 75% of countries to cut public spending by 2025, negatively impacting women and their essential services.
- Shifting to a green economy and care society: The current economic system disproportionately affects women. Advocates propose a shift to a green economy and care society to amplify women's voices.
- Supporting feminist change-makers: Despite leading efforts, feminist organizations receive only 0.13% of official development assistance.

This [International Women's Day](#) let's unite to transform challenges into opportunities and shape a better future for all!

More About IWD

The beginnings of International Women's Day can be traced back to the early twentieth century. Russian feminist suffrage groups sprang up in 1905 and gained confidence and organizing power as the feminist Women's Congress of 1908. On March 8, in 1908, women workers in the needle trades marched through New York City's Lower East Side to protest child labor, sweatshop working conditions, and demand women's suffrage. Like sparks in the rubble, activities of labour movements in Russia, North America and Europe called for women's equal participation in society.

The first IWD was March 19, 1911, in Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland when over a million women and men attended public events. On March 8, 1917, in Petrograd, women textile workers banged pots and pans eventually engulfing the whole city, demanding "Bread and Peace"—an end to World War I, to food shortages, and to czarism. The Russian/Bolshevik Revolution (1917 – 1930) actually had some very positive achievements: campaigns against anti-Semitism, for mass education and affirmative action.



"Give us bread but give us roses too."
Barbara Paleczny SSND Watercolour

The UN celebrated its first official International Women's Day on **8 March** during International Women's Year in 1975. How many of us have walked with workers on Labour Day and IWD, singing, "Give us bread but give us roses too"?

SSND has marked the day as a significant SHALOM event. Today, IWD is a day of unity, celebration, reflection, advocacy, and action and is celebrated in many countries worldwide.



Barbara Paleczny SSND, Toronto (c 1986)

Purple, green and white were the colors of the [Women's Social and Political Union](#), which led Britain's women's for the right to vote in the early 20th century.

Ultra-violet/Purple inspires hope and vision

"From exploring new technologies and the greater galaxy, to artistic expression and spiritual reflection, intuitive ultra violet lights the way to what is yet to come," Leatrice Eiseman, executive director of the Pantone Color Institute, said in a statement.

"Complex and contemplative, ultraviolet suggests the mysteries of the cosmos, the intrigue of what lies ahead, and the discoveries beyond where we are now. The vast and limitless night sky is symbolic of what is possible and continues to inspire the desire to pursue a world beyond our own."

Purple is also associated with counterculture, unconventionality, and artistic brilliance.

The significance of the color to the women's movement was crystallized in **The Color Purple** (Harcourt 1982) a ground breaking book by American author Alice Walker, which famously mapped out discriminatory practices against African-American women in the southern United States in the 1930s. Walker became the first woman of color **Pulitzer Prize** laureate when the book won the award in 1983. Television talk show host Oprah Winfrey and actor Whoopi Goldberg starred in a 1985 **film** directed by Steven Spielberg.

"If you truly pour your heart into what you believe in, even if it makes you vulnerable, amazing things can and will happen." —Emma Watson. Do not live someone else's life and someone else's idea of what womanhood is. Womanhood is you.

We pledge to keep fit, educate our masses and reach out to the needy.

- We will strive to be the enlightened women of power and source of infinite strength.
- On this day, we stand together to pledge in one voice to be the strongest in the world. This is our commitment.