

THEME 2021-2022

**PINK FIRST**

By

**IIW President Elect – Ebe Panitteri Martines**

Dear Friends,

Inner Wheel was officially born in 1924 – and its centennial anniversary is rapidly approaching – thanks to the initiative of a group of ladies who met at the Turkish Baths in Manchester and gave start to one of the most important volunteering Organisations in the world.

Since that inaugural date, IW has been tirelessly working in favour of needy human beings, mainly girls, young and old women.

The UN's 4<sup>th</sup> World Conference on women held in Beijing, China, in 1995 has brought steps forward in some areas of women's and girls' lives but poverty, discrimination and violence are still strongly present in their lives.

The UN 2030 Agenda clearly states that gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls is the catalyst for the achievement of all sustainable development goals.

The Under Secretary General and UN Women Executive Director Phumzile Mlambo Ngcuka declared that "One half is an equal share and only equal is enough".

**Women helping women, then, is the orientation of my IIW's Presidential Theme 2021-2022 "PINK FIRST".**

I'd like to share with you some ideas on how we, Inner Wheel members, can give our valuable contribution to achieve more just and equal societies.

There will be four areas of attention:

- Health;
- Education;
- Opportunity;
- Empowerment.

Health focus will be centered mainly on extending healthy life expectancy and ending gender-based violence.

Education focus can leverage on inclusiveness and quality education: improving female literacy rate expands their employment outcomes, decreases the number of early marriages and improves their health and well-being. Another field of action will be harnessing new technologies for digital gender equality and enhancing Science Technology Electronics Mathematics (STEM) studies for women.

Opportunity will focus on:

- increasing women participation in labour force, helping them to get a job or starting a business;
- recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work by providing public services, infrastructures and social protection policies as nationally appropriate;
- asking for wage equality;
- striving for ending of occupational segregation.

Women empowerment can be done through:

- Ensuring women's participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life
- Encouraging women to take decisions on their own health care, own earnings and investments;
- Improving financial inclusion and economic awareness;
- Supporting women movements and leadership.

I trust in all and each of us to give our contribution to the promotion of women' rights, to help women reach gender equality and to fill the gap, through True Friendship, encouraging the ideals of Personal Service and fostering International Understanding.

Thank you for your contribution.

In Inner Wheel and personal friendship

Ebe Panitteri Martines

