



Our Union Program

Clean Water from Woman to Woman with Solvatten

This is the problem we want to address

Water is essential for all life. Yet more than two billion people lack access to clean water. The shortage of clean water is one of the world's most serious crises, bringing both disease and death. According to WHO, at least two million people die every year from diseases linked to water scarcity or contaminated water. In Africa, nearly 40 percent of the population lacks access to clean water. More than half of all child deaths worldwide can be related to malnutrition, lack of clean water, and poor sanitation.

In countries where clean water is scarce, women and girls are primarily responsible for providing water for their families. To collect water, they often have to walk long and hazardous distances. Managing water supplies takes considerable time and limits girls' opportunities for education and women's ability to work and contribute to their families' livelihoods.

Vision

Access to Solvatten, with its ability to purify water, not only improves family health but also increases opportunities for education for women and girls. It enables them to participate actively in society and contribute to their family's income. Through our work, we provide these women with improved opportunities and enhanced status.

Goals

- To raise SEK 200,000 per year from our clubs, as well as from individual donors and companies.
- To send at least two pallets, equivalent to 144 Solvatten units, each year to our approved recipients in Africa. This provides 700–1,000 people with clean water every day for at least seven years.
- To encourage Solvatten recipients to engage collectively in addressing local water-related challenges and to explore how they themselves can influence the water situation in the long term.



- To actively spread knowledge about our program and its positive impact in developing countries through at least ten presentations in various forums, such as club meetings, union meetings, and digital program leader meetings.
- To, through our program, increase awareness of Soroptimists' commitment to girls and women.
- In this way, to contribute to several of the goals of the United Nations Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. Our program can also contribute to progress toward the vision of gender equality between women and men outlined in the Beijing Platform for Action.

Why Solvatten is Our Tool

Inventor and entrepreneur Petra Wadström developed the first Solvatten prototype in 2003. The purpose was to use the power of the sun to purify water. The container holds ten liters of water, and after just a few hours in the sun, the water is purified and heated to approximately 70°C (158°F). Given the long lifespan of a Solvatten unit (at least seven years), this is a long-term, cost-effective, and sustainable solution in countries where sunlight is abundant but clean water is scarce.

Users have reported immediate health benefits: diarrhea disappears, eye diseases decline, child mortality decreases, and less firewood and other fuel are needed to boil water for cooking.

We Soroptimists purchased and delivered our first Solvatten units in 2012. Birgitta Hansson, Union President from 2012 to 2014, selected Solvatten as her project. The work then continued as a Union Program, focusing on finding recipients and new users. To date, we have raised more than SEK 3 million and delivered close to 3,000 Solvatten units to carefully selected recipients.

Solvatten is manufactured in Sweden by Solvatten AB. The easy-to-use water purification system is distributed through aid organizations such as UNHCR, Plan International, and others. Companies also purchase Solvatten units as part of their environmental initiatives through the Solvatten Foundation, which also operates in the United States.

Funds Raised

Fundraising is conducted continuously through donations from clubs, companies, and private individuals. The funds are held in a separate account, distinct from the Sweden Union's other bank accounts. Activities are currently focused mainly in Africa and may be expanded to additional countries following a comprehensive analysis of the potential to achieve the desired results.



Program Group and Reference Group

A Program Group of eight members has been active since 2012. The group meets at least twice a year and holds digital meetings between these occasions. A Reference Group also assists in spreading knowledge about the program.

Responsibilities of the Program Group

- Maintain financial oversight of collected funds, all of which are used exclusively for the purchase and delivery of Solvatten units.
- Budget for administrative costs, with funding provided by the Union.
- Identify and make decisions regarding projects and the allocation of incoming funds according to the following criteria:
 - Clear project plans that align with the program's vision.
 - Reliable partners in recipient countries.
 - Assurance that conditions for training and follow-up are in place.
- Draft agreements when a project has been approved. The agreement must specify the target group, the local project manager, training for recipient women, and follow-up procedures.
- Together with Solvatten AB, undertake all administrative measures relating to transportation, customs clearance, import duties, and related matters.
- Maintain ongoing communication with the Reference Group, the Union Board, and the Union's Program Leaders:
 - Through meeting minutes from Program Group meetings.
 - Through digital meetings.
- Keep information about the program up to date on the Sweden Union website.
- Contribute materials to the Union newsletter.
- Provide informational materials about the Solvatten Program in both Swedish and English.
- Actively use every opportunity to raise funds and spread awareness of the program, for example at Union meetings, club meetings, international Soroptimist congresses, United Nations days, social gatherings, and through other NGO organizations.

Responsibilities of the Reference Group

- Review Program Group minutes and other information.
- Inspire and encourage clubs to support and work for the program.
- Maintain dialogue with the Program Group to ensure that ideas and feedback from clubs are considered and used to make the program even more successful.

The Program Group

30 May 2026