

Earth Day – 22 April

Project Brief

Connecting climate change with gender equality is a challenge. While the issue of climate has become politicized in recent years, it has always unequally affected women and girls, truly making it a women's rights issue. Addressing the climate crisis is an opportunity to address gender norms and change them as we build a better world for women and girls.

This Earth Day, we are taking a “Step Forward for Equality.” This campaign will focus on awareness and education, highlighting the links between gender equality and climate justice. While climate justice has been a challenge to embrace, Zontians have always been first to understand how women are disproportionately affected by climate crises. By focusing on gender-equality in climate policies and taking local actions, we know that we will be taking a *step* in the right direction.

The campaign will use the symbol of the footprint. This symbolizes:

- The carbon footprint we leave on the planet.
- The process of understanding how climate justice takes steps and cannot be solved overnight

The connection that every step toward climate justice or every step toward gender equity correlates with a step forward for the other issue.

2026 Theme: Step Forward for Equality

Goals:

1. Raise awareness on the impact that climate change has on gender.
2. Educate simple actions to take that take action for both gender equality and climate justice.
3. Showcase stories of Zontians taking climate action around the world and their plans to continue to take steps forward.
4. Increase amplification of like-minded organizations through an endorsed statement.

Planned Actions

1. Step Forward Activity

Through this physical activity, members will gain an understanding of how climate change affects everyone across the globe. Climate related questions will be asked one at a time and members will be asked to “take a step forward if” that event has occurred in their lifetime.

2. Pairing Gender Equality with Climate Justice

Just as our shoes are a pair, so are the issues of gender equality and climate justice. Using a template included in the toolkit, members will be asked to draw or write about why gender equality is important to them on the right shoe (gender RIGHTS). On the left shoe, members will be asked to color or write about what impact they want to make on the globe to secure climate justice (what will be LEFT?).

3. International Statement

International will release a written statement on Earth Day endorsed by like-minded organizations and partners. Possible video to accompany statement.

Campaign Timeline

January

Announcement sent to leadership

February

Teasers and examples of actions to take announced to full membership. Toolkit for campaign posted on website and shared in emails to all members.

March

Awareness posts on social media and in member newsletters, promoting “start taking steps today.” Clubs and members start submitting footprints to HQ via social media, Dropbox or email.

April

Club/member actions shared along with campaign promotion via stand-alone emails membership newsletter and social media. Email with statement and video is released to members on 22 April (Earth Day).

May

Share results, goals and notable messages.