

Cluster Group

England, Malta, Northern Ireland,
Republic of Ireland,
Scotland and Wales

Liz Dominey, Chair UKPAC

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Women inspiring action,
transforming lives 

I am Liz Dominey – chair UKPAC

When this cluster group met thought Soroptimists have kept going in spite of all problems this year

Responded to challenges and found different ways working during pandemic.

Decided to highlight projects in these countries.

Not exclusive to clubs mentioned but illustrate innovation, determination and ?better ways working now and ?in future

Building back better for Clubs and Members

Taking the positives from a negative situation

GLENYS HUNT - ENGLAND

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Although there are many negative aspects to lockdown, and the pandemic generally, there are some positives to have come out of the situation, and it is these we need to build on , as individuals, clubs and as an organisation.

Different ways of working

- Using technology more, and to better effect
- Enhancing friendship connections
- Concentrating on service and advocacy
- Paying more attention to caring for others



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Most clubs and groups are now holding virtual meetings. Such meetings are more convenient – no travelling needed, no need for members to go out in the cold and dark, and it may be an incentive for those lacking IT skills to learn. It is cheaper too – no room hire or travel costs.

Technology aids meetings with other clubs, even internationally, with friendship links, or others. Clubs can share speakers and events e.g. Chester club had Ayushi Kundu speaking from India on the SI project the Road to Equality and members from a number of clubs joined.

Because they are spending more time at home, many members are sewing and knitting various items, such as PPE, trauma teddies, so carrying out service. Service can be carried out virtually, such as teaching language skills to migrants, or cookery skills. There is also more time to promote advocacy, to research subjects, to write to MPs and sign petitions.

Members are making more effort to contact others by telephone, or arranging to meet in small groups – usually in a garden. Some are doing projects such as 'From me to you' - members writing anonymously to cancer patients in hospital or to lonely residents in care homes. Just to let them know someone cares and is thinking about them.

Meeting and fund-raising innovation

- Cookery demonstrations
- Fitness and yoga sessions
- Communal meals
- Quiz nights
- On-line disco



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Clubs have been more creative, and there have been more innovative meetings and fund-raising events

Health and wellbeing talks, including cooking for health

Fitness classes and Yoga, laughing yoga

Quiz nights

Shared meals

My favourite so far, Dancing –Northern England region held a fund-raising Northern Soul evening, which raised over £1000.

All can be just social, or used for fund-raising.

Let's hope this creative streak continues long after the pandemic has been forgotten.



Lina Borg Vassallo – Soroptimist Malta Club

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PAC Malta - Refuge in a Grove

'Creating a Space' supporting SDG3 – Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing

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Creating a Space' supporting SDG3 – Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing

25 trees for our 25th Anniversary

- Continuing our ongoing support for the clients of Dar Merhba Bik
- Who? – For women and children – victims of domestic violence
- What? – Sustainable project with yearly benefits
- Why? – Safe space; gives purpose through nurturing and harvesting olives

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Continuing our ongoing support for the clients of Dar Merhba Bik

Who? – For women and children – victims of domestic violence

What? – Sustainable project with yearly benefits

Why? – Safe space; gives purpose through nurturing and harvesting olives

Advocating today for tomorrow

- Picnic benches and tables installation
- Recreational area setup
- Garden maintenance
- Watering of trees
- Well cleaning for water harvesting
- Olives to be picked yearly
- Olive oil to be pressed and sold
- Source of income for shelter

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Picnic benches and tables installation

Recreational area setup

Garden maintenance

Watering of trees

Well cleaning for water harvesting

Olives to be picked yearly

Olive oil to be pressed and sold

Source of income for shelter

Benefits of the grove in the words of Ms Pavia

- From therapeutic sessions to fun activities
- Picnics and walks within compound perimeter
- Safe outdoor space during pandemic lock down
- Supporting women and children, victims of domestic violence



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From therapeutic sessions to fun activities
Picnics and walks within compound perimeter
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SI Northern Ireland

Rita Allen

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Northern Ireland. Rita Allen

Issues leading to providing on-line demonstrations

- Due to lockdown the Foodbank began supplying ready prepared boxes of foods.
- There was a need to continue the classes to tackle poverty and unhealthy eating.
- Clients were often socially isolated and lacking in confidence.
- Beverly tailored her demonstrations to utilise the ingredients in the boxes.

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SI Lisburn has been supporting the Lisburn Foodbank since 2012

This project is a partnership between the club and the Foodbank.

In 2017 it was noticed that some clients were unwilling to take certain items as they didn't know how to cook them.

The project aimed to address limited cooking skills, poor family nutrition, poor money management, and low self esteem.

Beverly, who was President of the Club at the time, actively researched how they could be helped and,

with the Foodbank , an action plan was put in place, to establish a cookery school. She underwent training to meet Trussel Trust standards and the Club raised £1000 to purchase equipment. The classes were well received and numbers grew as word spread.

With the onset of lockdown the Foodbank changed by handing out ready prepared boxes rather than clients choosing their own food.

Food was wasted if clients didn't know how to cook it. With lack of face to face contact, the need to be more creative became apparent.

Beverley worked with the Foodbank staff to produce videos of cookery demonstrations using the contents of the boxes.

The videos were posted on Facebook and recipes were made available from the Foodbank and via email, text and What's App.

OUTCOME

- Clients cookery skills and their knowledge of nutrition were improved.
- Foodbank staff noted increased socialisation and communication between clients.
- Clients began selecting a wider range of foods and more vegetables.
- Clients shared photos of foods they'd made at home.
- The project is being showcased at the [One World Festival](#)



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Can't Cook – Will Cook!

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The outcome of this project has been very rewarding. Clients increased their knowledge of cookery skills and nutrition.

There was increased socialisation and communication between clients.

There was improved trust of the Foodbank staff resulting in a better uptake of services.

Following lockdown clients chose a wider range of foods and more vegetables.

Clients shared photos of meals they'd made at home.

48 clients accessed the teaching and there were over 6000 views on Facebook.

CLIENT STATEMENTS

- 48 clients accessed the teaching and there were 6000 Facebook views.
- "Without the school I would never have learned to cook and I've now made some friends.
- "I've now started to learn English." (a client from Eastern Europe).
- "I never imagined that I could end up making these meals for my family."



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Client statements.

"Without the school I would never have learned to cook and I've now made some friends".

"I've now started to learn English" — this was a client from Eastern Europe

"I never imagined that I could end up making these meals for my family."

This project has enabled women to begin to achieve their potential and their lives are being transformed through education, empowerment and opportunity.

This project has increased the profile of SI Lisburn in the community and SI Lisburn has been successful in showcasing the project in the One World Festival being organised by the Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies showing the partnership working on World Poverty Day.

PA/ROI

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

SI Ennis led the Bee Plus in schools



Choosing to refuse plastic and developing wild flower gardens

Finding alternatives to cling film ...SI Dublin led.

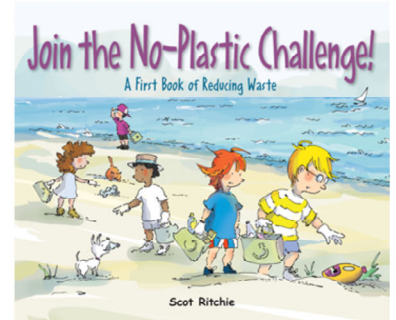
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Our new national project is an environmental protection matrix across our 15 clubs. Enhancing bio-diversity with wild flower gardens & encouraging pollinators is led by SI Nth. Kildare. SI Ennis worked closely with schools on Bee Plus, where small pots of honey were given to participating schools. It built understanding of the value of bio diversity.

Learning from each other

- SI Liverpool & SI Ballinasloe shared an idea on Twitter
- PA RoI liked the NO Plastic July concept
- Our current national project is on climate protection
- Living better using less.



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The No Plastic July idea shared by SI Liverpool & Ballinasloe fitted our new national project very well. Beach cleaning in partnership with local Girl Guides and finding alternatives to clingfilm (bees wax wrapping) were some of the activities done by SI Bandon and SI Dublin

Participation & Engagement

- Local partnerships with Girl Guides
- National partnerships with government agencies
- Communicate, communicate,
- Having fun while building back better
- Celebrate every step forward
- Finding champions & support them
- Welcome debate & respond promptly

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Devolving decision making to clubs helped us find champions for the project. Each club chooses an aspect of environmental protection about which their members are enthusiastic. Supporting those champions is a key task for club leaders and national executive.

Having fun while we deliver the improvements to our local environment is a critical success factor. Educating ourselves about the distance our food has travelled, helps our decision to buy local. Recycling clothes is always good for soroptimists but some environmentalists would prefer if we

repaired and reused our clothes.

Working closely with our communications team to share our activity, helps attract new members. Having local and national partnerships maximises our organizational profile.

Climate ambassadors platform

- Food.. ?? your food miles
- Fashion...recycling
- Biodiversity...our health depends on it...SI Nth. Kildare are leading on this
- We can do it because the consequences of no change are sad.



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Brenda Kay

Scotland



Soroptimist International Glasgow City

Tomorrow's Women Glasgow

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- Tomorrow's Women Glasgow (TWG) is an innovative multi-agency centre in Glasgow supporting women who are involved with the Criminal Justice System, aiming to tackle their complex needs and to prevent further offending behaviour.



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Tomorrow's Women Glasgow is an innovative Multi Agency centre in Glasgow, working with women with complex needs who are involved in the Criminal Justice system.




It offers a safe women-only space to talk about their needs and to address issues that prevent them from living positive healthy lives.

The project is part-funded by the Scottish Government, and is part of a national pilot to develop community-based justice options for people who are offenders.

The core team is unique in that it includes:

* Social Work staff * Prison Officer * Consultant Psychologist *

Housing Officer *Mental Health Nurses * Access to SHINE
Mentors

What we Do

Initially, SIGC members brought monthly donations of everyday necessities such as toiletries and sanitary items to club meetings. As the relationship between TWG and our club developed the staff at the centre felt confident about approaching us for specific items which would support their work.

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As with many projects, SIGC started off with 1 aim, to donate the usual toiletries and basic necessities. But as TWG realised that we can be relied upon as a trusted partner, and our relationship grew, we were asked for specific items to support their work with the women.

We have donated a range of items, some significant, like sewing machines, some more basic, like food for their cooking classes.

But we also make sure that we help out with the 'softer' donations, to make sure the women can celebrate birthdays and Christmas.



Further Initiatives Arising Through TWG Women's Custody Suite

Through TWG our club has been approached to support women in custody. Women who are arrested in Glasgow are taken to the Women's Custody Suite at Govan Police Station and TWG offer community support. In other UK cities a variety of stress relief techniques are used to help calm the women on arrival, and Police Scotland wished to pilot these techniques but needed financial resources to pay for the materials. SIGC has now provided the necessary equipment.



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As our support of TWG has become known, we have been asked to help with other initiatives – providing equipment to help women taken into custody at the one Women's Custody Suite in Glasgow.

A request from Glasgow City's Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) is now under consideration and being developed as the women in the custody suite need underwear, sanitary towels and other personal hygiene items

Conclusion

This project proves what a multi agency approach, rather than a focus only on the criminal justice system, can achieve.

In December 2018, Glasgow's Health and Social Care Partnership (Criminal Justice and Community Justice Overview) reported the project has "consistently demonstrated a 40% reduction in re-offending".

One of the women helped by the TWG project is now employed there, in her first job, as a member of staff.

TWG achieved an award: "Achieving Better Outcomes in Partnership" from the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) in October 2019. TWG's presentation was supported by both advice and a physical presence from SIGC.

**Hello, my name's Bobbie and I represent
Wales**

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2020 – A Time To Reflect

Special Programme Action Awards (SPA)



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When the opportunity for project work seems limited and motivation needs a boost
it's time to do something different!
Region led reflection perhaps?
Hence the Special Programme Action Awards (SPAs) initiative.

What

- .Project selection challenge
- .Written presentation
- .Power point presentation for virtual AGM



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So What did it entail?

Clubs were challenged to select a project undertaken between 2010 and 2018 that was memorable to them in some way.

It may have been very successful, less successful than expected, particularly satisfying or just a bit different.

Clubs should compile a written presentation in word or similar format, including aims, outcomes, solutions, long term benefits etc within the text as well as photos and press cuttings if available.

Following adjudication, three shortlisted clubs would be asked to prepare a 10 – 15 mn power point presentation.

The winner to be shown at the virtual AGM the others at a later date.

There would also be a prize.

Why and How

- .Learn from the past
- .All members working together
- .Sharing with other clubs
- .Reflection and evaluation
- .Hints and Tips
- .Identify project choice
- .Identify focus areas
- .Adjudication criteria.



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Why would clubs want to take part?

To learn from the past, there were some great projects, let's tell the new members about them.

It could involve the whole club.

The completed project could subsequently be shared with other clubs.
and

Finally and importantly reflection on a project enables in depth evaluation which may inform future project work.

Hints and tips

It was suggested that different members could be approached to write the presentation, do the research, select the photos etc, with one facilitator to draw everything together.

They were required to explain why this particular project had been selected for the SPA awards.

There was a comprehensive list of focus areas from which they had to identify the main area and also any ancillary areas which they felt the project dealt with.

It was also made clear that their evaluation as well as the project itself would be adjudicated

Outcomes and Reflections

- .Good uptake
- .High standard
- .Adjudication and notification
- .Embracing the future



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OUTCOMES

The initiative was well supported, more than half the clubs in region took part, and the standard of presentation was excellent. It was a pleasure to read the entries. Interestingly there was little variation between the adjudicators and all three shortlisted the same clubs.

In addition to the power point presentations the feasibility of putting all entries on the website or within a book is being considered.

Looking back and evaluating previous projects, reflecting on what worked well and what could have been done differently is surely the way forward.

Reflecting on the past to build a better future together.

Build Back Better



Liz Dominey, Chair UKPAC

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Hope members have gained ideas to help Women and Girls in trouble
Using UN SDGs as guide, advocacy, action
new ways communication and fundraising
Have fun, Stand up for women everywhere, Build Back Better