



Safe Home, Safe Community

Barbara Harrison SI Wexford

- Breaking the Silence on Domestic Violence
- A National Association P.A. Project, Republic of Ireland

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transforming lives**

Safe Home, Safe Community is a programme on a National level to raise awareness of the effects of Domestic Violence and Abuse, thereby, promoting change in attitudes and bias, reducing the associated stigma and to highlight the support systems available for victims & their families.



Soroptimist Clubs Rep of Ireland

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The map illustrates how well our clubs are distributed throughout the country, all of whom have endorsed this project.



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Various Sustainable Development Goals underpin our work; these, with emphasis on our focus, Educate, Empower, Enable, cover many aspects of Soroptimist ideals.



Data Collected 2016 by Safe Ireland

Help Line calls	50,551
Accommodation Support	1,460
+ children	2,205
Unmet accommodation needs	3,981
Face to face support	8,549
+ children	2,602
Current population of Ireland	4,800,000

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We have strategically aligned our project with Safe Ireland, the only Social Change Agency working on Domestic Violence in Ireland.

These are statistics for one year, the latest figures available, gathered by our professional partner. We understand from them that the figures continue to climb.

We have engaged the goodwill of our established connections in our communities, especially Domestic Violence Services.

30,000 Bookmarks



Love Me ...

Signs of a loving relationship

- Makes me feel safe
- Makes me feel comfortable
- Listens to me
- Values my opinions
- Supports what I want to do in life
- Is thoughtful with me
- Always tries to understand how I feel
- Likes that I have other friends
- Makes me laugh
- Treats me
- Treats me as an equal
- Respects my family
- Understands my need for time alone or with family
- Accepts me as I am



Love Me Not ...

- Tries to control me
- Gets jealous, uses temper quickly
- Always blames me
- Is usually short-tempered
- Keeps me from seeing my friends and family
- Makes all the decisions
- Embarrasses me in front of others
- Writs me
- Makes me cry
- Makes me feel afraid
- Is always "checking up" on me
- Takes my money and other things
- Threatens to leave me if I do not do as I am told
- Demands, bullies and puts me down

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The 30,000 bookmarks, these have been the bedrock of our initiative. Similar bookmarks have been used by yourselves in your own projects. Ideas shared, gives opportunities to other clubs to continue, improve and build on programme action to support women and girls.

We all participated in the distribution of these bookmarks in schools, in public buildings and to the general public. Available here too.

Safe World Summit



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The Safe World Summit presented in Dublin by Safe Ireland, was promoted by club members and by the sponsoring of Social Studies students, who attended the conference. These attendees brought the messages learnt from this experience, to our clubs. The summit comprised world class professional speakers, survivors of domestic violence and young people's experiences and views, including conflicts arising from diverse sexual identity. Speakers also included those from media, the travellers' community, counsellors and healers.

This conference inspired & empowered our events. We have raised awareness and changed attitudes by harnessing & sustaining the power and commitment that was present in those two days and we have tried to emulate this passion for change.



Public Speaking Competition

Topic - Human Rights

"Domestic Violence is everyone's business.

Can young people influence the future to make

Ireland the safest country in the world?"

(Safe Ireland)

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The topic on screen was chosen and included in our annual National Public Speaking Competition for girls. Every club took part in this competition and 27 competitors chose this topic, once again young...



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...people addressing Domestic Violence, by informing and reducing stigma.



27 students expressed their views to over 600 people and this doesn't include the pupils hearing those speeches in school during rehearsals.



**Promoting through local
radio, SI Ballinasloe and
SI Wexford**



**Fund raising for DV Services,
charity lunch, SI Ennis**

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Club events SI Wexford, Ennis, Athlone and Drogheda



**Public meeting in hotel
SI Wexford**



**Athlone IT
presentation to
students and staff, SI
Athlone**



**White Ribbon
campaign within
school, SI Drogheda**

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Several clubs organised public meetings, events and functions in order to spread the word about the problems arising from gender based abuse. Professional men & women spoke at these gatherings; they included the employees from our Professional Partner, representatives from local services, including women's refuges, the Gardai /police force, counselling services, teachers and their students, both girls and boys. These events were publicised on main stream media, including radio and newspapers, and on various social platforms.



Once again, we have used material shared by other Soroptimists to explain our message. On the 25th of each month we promote the wearing of orange, wearing the SI badge, raising flags or any means of showing the colour orange on this day.

Bullring photo

This goes hand in hand with the UN Campaign, Orange the World. A 16 day campaign held annually from 25th November until Human Rights Day on 10th December. The Soroptimist Ireland website and Facebook...

Orange the World



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...promoted these dates, as do clubs with Facebook. Wexford even distributed orange fruit and the bookmarks, wearing their orange, in the centre of town, where Soroptimists talked to the public one to one. It was very powerful!

REVIEW

- Recognised the courage required by members to embrace a taboo topic
- Included all clubs
- Included young people throughout the project
- Used established connections, local newspaper coverage and social media to influence the general public
- Experienced excellent co-operation with the National Association Executive and all clubs

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The power experienced by the inclusion of all clubs generated enthusiasm and a communal spirit

Partnering with a professional body gave great support to our clubs to carry out their programme action.

It took courage for members to embrace this topic. The taboo nature of the issues surrounding Domestic Violence makes people afraid to be involved. They feel they may make themselves at risk from perpetrators or identified as victims. Once again the associated stigma.

The influence and views of young people was very much appreciated by both Soroptimists and the public. Furthermore the inclusion of young people's views, removes the generational vacuum surrounding discussions of this highly controversial topic.

Our message has been repeated by local newspapers. They have retold our messages. Social media played its part as did conversations continuing on 25th each month.

Alongside our project our strategic partner successfully lobbied our legislators and law makers to change the law on coercive control. Our own National President, Darina Dolan, worked tirelessly in highlighting Ireland's failure to ratify the Istanbul Convention. We are now delighted to report that Ireland finally ratified the Convention, on International Women's Day this year.



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Safe Ireland acknowledged our campaign by focusing a two page spread in their annual review, just published, and distributed throughout Ireland.

In these various ways we have influenced thousands of people, mixed gender and all ages.