

BEST PRACTICE AWARDS

20
24



FRESH THOUGHTS



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MESSAGE FROM RUTH HEALEY

PRESIDENT



How wonderful to be able to introduce a booklet dedicated to our Best Practice Award finalists!

I and the Board have been bowled over by the number of clubs entering their projects for review; over 100 projects have been received as the result of changing the award process to be one of application.

I would like to extend many congratulations and thanks not only to those that have made the final nine but to all the others that have taken the time and effort to enter the awards. The applications received truly demonstrated the breadth and depth of projects being undertaken by Soroptimists throughout the Soroptimist International Great Britain & Ireland Federation.

These awards ably demonstrate that together we are stronger, together we make a difference and together we transform the lives of women and girls throughout our communities.

Thank you to all involved!

ABOUT THE BEST PRACTICE AWARDS



**LINDSAY
GREEN**

Programme Director

The team continued to use the previous appraisal criteria to make their final selections.

These are that projects:

- Have clear SMART objectives - specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time bound;
- Have been researched and an action plan put in place - including reviewing and evaluation;
- Respond to an identified need, focussing on women and girls;
- Involve club members and are inclusive of other clubs/friendship links/organisations where appropriate;
- Outcomes were of benefit to the recipients;
- Outcomes promoted Soroptimist aims and objectives;
- Could be replicated by other members.

Members report their project work, which we call their Programme Action on our HUB. They use the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals and inform other members of what they did and why.

In 2024 we adopted a few new approaches to our Best Practice Awards.

Members were invited to apply for an award, this included Associates, Clubs, Regions and National Associations, rather than the programme team trawling through all the reports submitted over a year.

We called for Service Projects that made members proud. They could be long or short term, large or small, simple or complicated.

105 project applications from 66 Clubs, 2 regions and 1 Associate member.

9 shortlisted applications got the chance to present to conference and to put up a display about their projects and are featuring in this booklet.

The Conference Delegates got the chance to vote on their Favourite Project.

The Categories this year were chosen to be in line with the Conference theme in Edinburgh of EDUCATE, EMPOWER and ENABLE, rather than using the SDGs. These were allocated after the finalists were chosen.

The projects not meeting the final shortlist will be featured during Programme meetings and Newsletters over the next year.

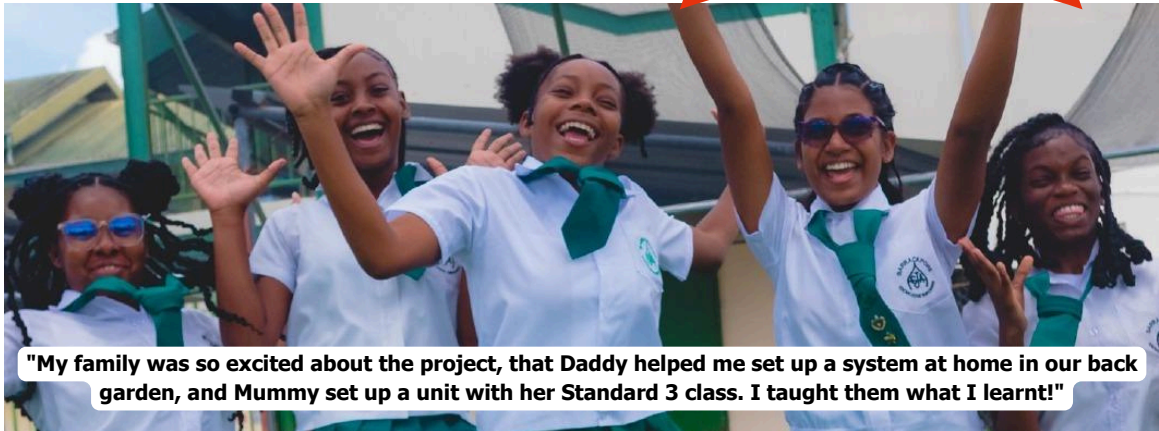
We trust that other Clubs will be able to learn from and, perhaps, adopt information gleaned for their own projects.

SI ESPERANCE

SUSTAINABLE HARVEST PROGRAMME

Started in 2023-Ongoing

WINNER



"My family was so excited about the project, that Daddy helped me set up a system at home in our back garden, and Mummy set up a unit with her Standard 3 class. I taught them what I learnt!"

In Partnership with The Digicel Foundation; Shell Trinidad Ltd; Trinidad & Tobago Association of Energy Engineers; ASJA Girls' College Barrackpore.

SI Esperance has supported ASJA Girls' College through several prior projects. ASJA Girls' College is a school with a population of 458 students located in a rural, low-income community which is based in a flood-prone region in southern Trinidad. Traditionally based on agriculture and farming livelihood, the region is also subject to the challenges of food and energy security, with education being one of the major tools for residents to rise out of poverty.

The project created a self-sustaining "Sustainable Harvest Programme" that benefited both students and the surrounding community. The project developed a working farm which utilizes solar power, hydroponics and conventional agriculture. The students were taught about agriculture and provided fresh produce to the school's cafeteria, school feeding programme and wider community.

The project included site preparation, crop selection, garden development and management, harvesting and sales. The solar panels used to power the pumps of the hydroponics system were procured and the systems were installed by experts who offered training, with hands-on participation by the girls. The girls were involved in the physical set-up, planting and maintenance of crops. The girls now see agriculture as a viable career option and better understand its entrepreneurial benefits. The garden which once yielded 48 lettuce and kale now yields some 500 crops, comprising a variety of six crops. Sales of produce have moved from \$115 to \$1000. Interest and enrolment in agriculture have doubled. Staff and students have received the requisite training to operate and maintain the system which the community is keen to replicate.

The Club created an awareness of new techniques; advocated for improved systems; and acted to educate, empower and enable students and the community to aspire to a better future.

This project directly impacted 458 girls and 27 staff members.

However, the awareness created and educational reach has extended to its immediate community and nationwide. There was excellent coverage on TV, in the newspapers and on their Facebook Page, their videos were impactful, and have generated great interest in the subject.

SI SOUTH KOLKATA

CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS, VACCINATION AND SCREENING

Date of project 20/01/2024



Outside Partners - Cancer Foundation of India, Chittaranjan National Cancer Institute, Institute of Psychological and Education, Calcutta Social Project Research. The event was attended by other organisations such as Rotary, Lions, Inner Wheel as well as SI Calcutta, SI Dundee and SI Barnstaple.

South Kolkata strongly felt the need to spread awareness of Cervical Cancer, the only cancer that is totally preventable with Immunisation of HPV and is curable if detected in the early stages.

Cancer Foundation of India (CFI) was approached for a joint programme. Sutapa Biswas founder and ex Director CFI addressed more than 100 women and girls. Her presentation made the session extremely lucid and informative. Pap smear test for women and HPV Vaccination for girls 9 - 14 years of age were advised.

SI South Kolkata decided to also create awareness about good genital hygiene, the risk of early marriage and sexual activity as well as enabling women to continue with an active life, maintaining their physical and emotional well-being. It is important for them to identify the initial symptoms and tackle them.

Tremendous awareness was generated. SI South Kolkata decided to sponsor the vaccination of five under-privileged girls, and undertake screening tests for underprivileged women (30 - 60 years) after another follow-up.

SI South Kolkata feels happy that the Club have been able to serve underprivileged women and girls of their community by bringing this awareness home to them through expert talk. Furthermore, such sessions convinced women to engage in an HPV screening camp, organized for them.

Issues addressed were the Sustainable Development Goal 3 - Good Health and Wellbeing.

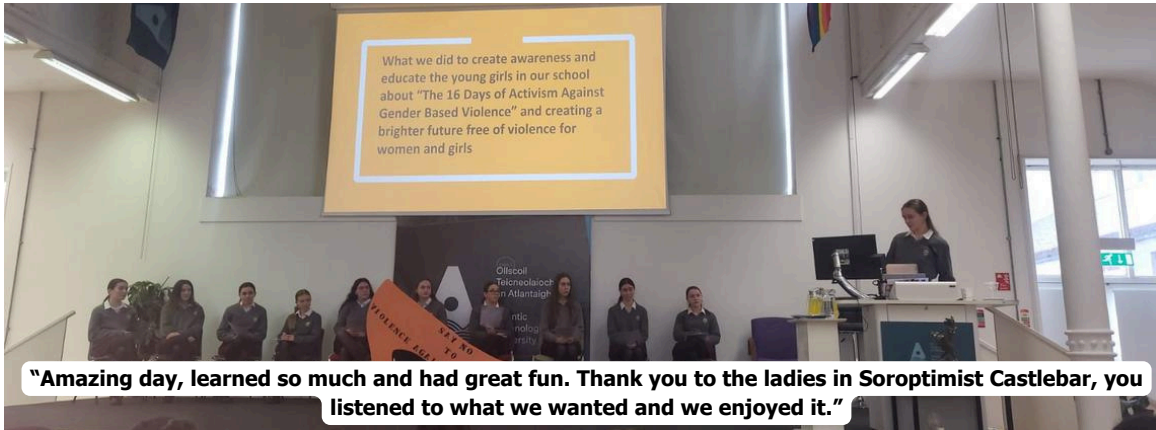
Five mothers agreed to have their adolescent daughters vaccinated with the HPV vaccine.

58 out of 74 registrations actually had their HPV screening done at the camp and five girls (9-14yrs) got the first dose of HPV vaccination.

SI CASTLEBAR

EMPOWER GIRLS - GIRLS CONFERENCE

Date of project 21/03/2024.



"Amazing day, learned so much and had great fun. Thank you to the ladies in Soroptimist Castlebar, you listened to what we wanted and we enjoyed it."

Partnered with St Josephs School Castlebar.

SI Castlebar have run this Transition Year Conference for five years.

Working with 10 young women from the school, the girls picked their own theme "there is always a Rainbow", chose and arranged activities and speakers for the full day conference, which was held for their peers.

Recognising the need to empower and educate from an early stage, the Club decided to pick this project to help the younger generation grow and prosper. Members had the skills and time and wanted to support these young women in what is an enriching activity for both Club members and the students.

All members of the Club were engaged with the Project. The Club formed a working group with the students themselves, ensuring they were involved in the conference from the outset, helping them build skills in organisation, time management, stakeholder engagement, and public speaking.

The Planning involved Five Team Training Days and one Review Day, as well as the creation of posters and promotion of the conference with students and class representatives. In addition, the Planning Team members were also interviewed to speak on local radio

The highly successful conference was attended by almost 100 young girls.

Amazing speakers from the Chief Medical Officer of Ireland, a future Olympic Boxer, an International Basketball player, Business women and Social Media Leader with over 200,000 followers, and a Life Coach. A Self Defence class and a Zumba lesson were also included.

The Sustainable Development Goals that were covered were 5 Gender Equality and 17 Partnerships for the Goals.



SI KING'S LYNN

PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION FOR YEAR 6 PUPILS

Date of project 25/06/2024

WINNER



SI King's Lynn held its annual Public Speaking competition for Year 6 pupils for primary schools in King's Lynn and the surrounding area. It gives a chance for the students to showcase their public speaking skills - without this project there would be no opportunities locally like this for younger school pupils.

This is an ongoing annual competition, which started in 2006, this year being their thirteenth competition. The Club started the competition as there was a Public Speaking competition for the Senior Schools run by the local Rotary Club but there was no such provision for the Primary Schools. The winner's shield is named to honour a past deceased SI member who was involved with a local primary School.

Primary schools in King's Lynn and surrounding area were invited to participate and 9 teams entered. At a Club meeting, the questions were set and based on the Sustainable Development Goals the 5 P's.



The school selects one topic and a team of three speak for five minutes on their chosen subject. There was a panel of three judges who had a marking schedule, judging content, time keeping and presentation skills. The competition is currently held in one of the three High schools on a rotation basis and one judge is either the Head or Head of English from the hosting school. The Borough Mayor is invited and presents the winner's shield and medals.

The standard of presentation remained extremely high, with N. Wootton Academy winning again. Everyone who participated received a certificate. Previously, the winning teams were presented with a cheque but Club members discussed this and recommended that the individual child should be rewarded for their hard work, so Gift Vouchers were presented to each member of the winning teams.

SI King's Lynn have now established a good working relationship with one of the multi academy trusts and all six of its primary schools enter. Everyone who took part appeared to have enjoyed themselves and the level of confidence displayed is remarkable. Feedback from the schools is welcomed, so this year the start time was changed so that the evening finished earlier.

SI CHENNAI DOWNTOWN

AASHRAYA - SHORT STAY HOME FOR WOMEN IN DISTRESS

Project Commenced in 2004



Aashraya, a half-way home for destitute women, comes under the aegis of the Andhra Mahila Sabha. When the Club took on the project, the building was in need of repairs and there was a woeful lack of funds.

SI Chennai Downtown helped to renovate the building - the rooms, the toilets and the garden. Club members visit Ashraya regularly and help with administration, health care and support for the residents. Club members contribute a monthly sum of 5000 rupees to help with Staff salaries.

Members liaise with the local police station to direct women to this shelter and print posters and place them in strategic locations in the area to increase awareness among the community.

A woman who is abused physically or mentally by her husband or family can stay at this home for up to five years. She is encouraged to study further or undertake work training in order to support herself independently.

SI Chennai Downtown conducts workshops on soap and candle making, basket weaving and yoga from time to time. Young children can stay with their mothers.

Sustainable Development Goals - SDG 16 - Peace - Peace, justice and strong institutions and SDG 3 - People - Ensure healthy lives, SDG 5 - People - Gender equality.

Approximately 50 to 60 people are helped per month; about several hundred over the years.

"I came in fear but found a home here."

"I feel motivated to try harder."

"Thanks to Aashraya I got the courage to support my children to live life the way they do."

"We reassure everyone that we're in the same boat and you need to think of this as your home and be courteous to each other."

"I feel brave enough to approach people and speak up."

SI BARBADOS

"JUST BE KIND"- ANTI-BULLYING PROJECT IN SCHOOLS

13/02/24 end date 8/4/2024



Partner Sandy Lane Charitable Trust

School-related violence, including bullying, is widespread across all countries and is known to have multiple negative impacts on health and well-being, intruding on the learning process and on learning outcomes. Bullying can also include cyberbullying. The Club contacted various High Schools for the participation of two students per school to bring awareness of this topic and to hear solutions from the youth themselves. Four students from two schools took part. Brief three minute videos were made with the students and uploaded on the Club's YouTube Channel. Students also wore T-shirts with the 'Just Be Kind' logo as they spoke on the topic.

The project was researched and found to be an urgent one, according to the statistics worldwide for bullying and the resulting adverse effects include suicide, suicide ideation and impacts health. This project responded to the need of girls in schools with the increasing incidents of face to face bullying and cyber bullying. The students were briefed before as to what they thought of the topic and what was required

The project involved asking the students three questions on face to face and cyber bullying in schools. These can be seen in the videos on the clubs YouTube Channel and on Club's Social Media pages <https://www.youtube.com/@SIBarbados>.

The Sandy Lane Charitable Trust granted the Club \$3,800 bb to assist with the videos and T-Shirt purchases. The project involved Club members as they were asked to give feedback on the logo and the three questions to be asked for the three minute videos.

Lives should be improved as the videos are always available on the Club's YouTube Channel and the schools involved proposed to share with the students. Students speaking to students can have a positive domino effect as issues and solutions were reported by the students themselves. Students who took part gained the self-confidence to speak up and out about the topic. This can be emulated by other students.

Sustainable Development Goals: SDG 3 People - Ensure healthy lives and SDG 16 Peace - Peace, justice and strong institutions. What was the most important outcome? Students were able to speak about bullying and ways to combat same. Youths speaking to the youths.

SI CANTERBURY

CHAT AND COFFEE WITH MIGRANT WOMEN

05/05/2023

WINNER



Partner Kran - Kent Refugee Action Network.

SI Canterbury contacted KRAN (Kent Refugee Action Network) to help support migrant women with their spoken language skills. They have been meeting women of all ages and from different countries for the last 10 months on a weekly basis.

Part of the activity was healthy walks, eight volunteer club members were trained by the Mason Foundation; this included information on how to safeguard, and how to be walk leaders. For the chats they had a variety of 10 volunteers consisting of previous SI members, a young woman interested as well as their own club members.

The project helped connect migrant women with local women and encouraged them to come for walks at different venues (i.e. cathedral, orchard, friars gardens) and local areas as well as encouraging them to talk about different subjects. The chats were about everyday happenings like children at school, holidays, cost of living, friendships and any other subject the women wanted to talk about. Conversations were often linked to what they had learned during the English lessons. Activities included signposting the women to plan for their future financial security, connections with other community events, information courses and groups.

"Really enjoyed meeting up and looking forward to next week."

The project has worked well and the women have made fantastic progress with their language knowledge and self-confidence. Some of the women are volunteering in charity shops, others have joined courses for IT and English at College and Adult Education Centres, as well as a local craft group to help with integration. One of the women we met originally has now started her university course in London to complete her dentistry qualification and her children are settled in local schools. The women and their children came to our fundraising garden party in the summer and thoroughly enjoyed it.

In combination with their partner Mason Walk group they were awarded the Kent Mental Wellbeing Award- Highly Commended 2023.

So far 10 women have been supported on a regular basis and at the end of year party they were joined by 25 women including some from other language courses.

Sustainable Development Goals - SDG 4 - People - Quality education, SDG 3 - People - Ensure healthy lives, SDG 4 - People - Quality education, SDG 10 - Prosperity - Reduced inequalities.

26 people have benefitted from the project.

SI SHEFFIELD

ONGOING SOCIAL ACTION IN SHEFFIELD.

Ongoing.



Partnerships St John's Church (Owlerton); Sheffield City Council, Tesco supermarket, King Edward VII School and S6 Food Bank.

This built on a past project, "Healthy Hampers", started in 2019, which provided slow cookers, kitchen utensils, cool bags, recipe cards and food to women's refuges and Winn Garden. The Club continue to support Winn Gardens, an economically challenged and very diverse estate in Sheffield, which houses many asylum seekers and women escaping domestic violence.

A Club member is active as a community champion at the estate and the community pioneer spoke to Club members at one of our meetings. The cost of living crisis has exacerbated the level of poverty and deprivation experienced by the residents of Winn Gardens.

Project Aim: to tackle food and fuel poverty in one of Sheffield's most deprived estates, and educate families with regard to healthy living.

The Club have continued to provide slow cookers, the most fuel economic way of cooking, to resident families, alongside recipe cards (developed by Sixth Form Girls as part of our "Share Our Skills" project) and one of the members delivered regular cookery lessons to educate the residents on nutritious and economic meals. Members also sourced and provided cookery equipment, food, clothes and household items which were delivered on a regular basis. They also provided the funding for community events and children's parties. Members also helped with lunches during the school holidays (for children eligible for free school meals) and, with their partner Tesco, they provided back-to-school shirts for every child on the estate.

One of the members trained as a community champion and now supports the estate for at least five hours per week as a volunteer, for 50 weeks. It involves all Club members as well as external partners helping women to start a new life.

Several members collect donations and make regular deliveries, two hours a week on average. The project supported on a weekly basis at least 40 large families (i.e. more than five family members), 60 small families, as well as 60 other individuals, including men and boys.

The Sustainable Development Goals achieved were SDG 1 No poverty and SDG 3 Ensure healthy lives.

The Club is proud of this project because it empowers women to take care of themselves and children by enabling them to cook nutritious, economic and healthy meals through cookery classes.

The Project has been publicised through:

- Local digital newspaper – Sheffield Star
- School newsletters (distribution list of 4000)
- BBC Radio Sheffield
- Sheffield Telegraph
- Talk TV

SI POOLE, PURBECK & DISTRICT 'FRESH THOUGHTS' BOOKLET FOR VICTIMS FLEEING DOMESTIC ABUSE.

Launched 27/10/2023



The initial aim of the project was to provide a response to questions that survivors in the refuge had about their situation. Individual members researched those areas of concern and consideration was given to developing a booklet. The front cover was designed by the Club. The content was checked by experts and trialled with our Local Authority, Citizens Advice and the DA Forum. A member produced a bid for the PCC who funded the printing and two launches supported by all members.

The booklet is changing lives by providing accurate, local information relevant to the needs of victims, allowing them to make informed decisions about their future.

A survivor has stated they wished they had this booklet when they were in an abusive relationship. It is being widely used by professionals who report that the presentation and format of the booklet makes it user friendly. In addition, the booklet is being used as a training tool within advice services to improve understanding.

The Club have regularly supported their local refuge and realised through discussions that victims had little information about what was going to happen next - particularly in relation to legal aspects of their situation. They subsequently researched what information would provide the most appropriate advice and who, in the Club, would be able to provide that knowledge and experience. The book provides practical information about online personal safety, going to court, financial assistance, housing advice and the contact details of support agencies. The overall aim of the booklet is to educate, empower and enable victims to move forward with their lives.

The Club had several thousand booklets printed and held a launch event, with guest speakers. About 60 people attended the launch and approximately 1200 booklets were distributed together with information about the Club, a feedback form and an order form. The booklet was very well received and many of the organisations have already started using it.

Sustainable Development Goals - SDG 4 - Quality education, SDG 3 - Ensure healthy lives, SDG 1 - No poverty and SDG 10 - Reduced inequalities.

The professional content of the booklet has strengthened working relationships between Soroptimists, local authorities, primary care hubs and charities providing domestic abuse services. The booklet provides ongoing opportunities to raise the profile of Soroptimism and the work we do.

"This is a very useful booklet I will certainly be referring to this with my victims."

BEST PRACTICE AWARD APPLICATIONS

66 Clubs

SI Bangalore
SI Barbados
SI Barnstable
SI Belfast
SI Bingley
SI Bootle
SI Bournemouth
SI Bray
SI Bromsgrove and Redditch
SI Buxton
SI Calcutta
SI Cannock
SI Canterbury
SI Castlebar
SI Chaguanas
SI Chennai Downtown
SI Chester
SI Crosby
SI Dewsbury and District
SI Dhaka
SI Dunfermline
SI Dungarvan
SI East Grinstead
SI Enfield and District
SI Esperance
SI Falkirk
SI Harrogate and District
SI Heswell and District
SI Ilkley
SI Jersey
SI Kenilworth and District
SI King's Lynn
SI Leamington
SI Leeds
SI Leigh and District
SI Libertas
SI Madurai
SI Mansfield
SI Medway and Maidstone
SI Milton Keynes
SI North Staffordshire
SI Nottingham
SI Peterborough
SI Plymouth
SI Poole Purbeck and District
SI Ramsbottom
SI Richmond and Dales
SI Salisbury
SI Scarborough, Malton
and District
SI Selby
SI Sheffield
SI Solihull
SI South Kolkata
SI Southport
SI St Albans
SI St Helens
SI Stockport
SI Stockton on Tees
SI Stratford on Avon
SI Sunderland
SI Taunton
SI Tynemouth
SI Wexford
SI Whitstable and District
SI Widnes
SI Winchester

2 Regions

SI Yorkshire
SI Yorkshire Against Modern Slavery
SI Northern Ireland

1 Associate Member

Jean Campbell



BEST PRACTICE AWARDS

GET READY FOR BIRMINGHAM



20
25



If you are inspired by what you have seen, why not submit your own project for a Best Practice Award?



If you or your Club is working on a great project, we want to hear about it. The deadline for applications for next year's Best Practice Awards is July 2025 and application forms can be found on The Hub. More information will be shared nearer the time.



Winners will be announced at our 2025 conference in Birmingham in November. Another great reason to come along and be part of the celebration.

Deadline for applications is July 2025.

#SoroptimistBirmingham2025



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