November 25 to December 10: 16 Days of Soroptimist Activism against Gender-Based Violence



Violence against women is a scourge of humanity that needs to be fought by constant awareness-raising campaigns. Who is better suited and more credible than Soroptimists to lobby for freedom from violence? Laws are fine, but if nobody cares for them, they are ignored. We, Soroptimists, belonging to civil society, definitely care and we fight for those laws to be known and to be fully implemented.

How to do it? Here are three examples. Other ideas are very welcome:

- Remind all members to be vigilant about acts of violence against women and educate themselves and others about this.
- Contact the Gender Equality Officer of your town and tell her that you are concerned about gender-based violence and what the municipality is doing to combat it and how you can support her. And then do support her! You could for example organize a public debate with her or ask how Soroptimists could support her work.
- Make your own awareness-raising campaign like other clubs have done before you: print little cards with the help-line phone number (in some countries there are phone numbers victims of violence can call – they are usually not very well know and the Soroptimists could help spread this number) and put them into public toilets, into doctors' waiting rooms, and into administrative offices. You can also use stickers, posters or bags where cut bread is being sold in. By the way, men should read them just as well as women.

November 25th is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and the start of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. The 16 Days of Activism end on **December 10th, International Human Rights Day**. Though it might be too late to become active this year, why not take the 16 Days of Activism to give lobbying for Violence against Women a deep thought in your club?

With a very hands-on outcome we hope!

Bettina Hahne, SIE representative to the Council of Europe