



DREAM IT ★ BE IT

CAREER SUPPORT

★ {for girls}

# Club Planning Toolkit



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# Club Planning Toolkit

## A SOROPTIMIST RESOURCE FOR CLUBS & MEMBERS

### Welcome to Dream It, Be It: Career Support for Girls!

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#### I. Introduction

***Dream It, Be It Goal:** Through education and access to role models, girls will be empowered to pursue their career goals and reach their full potential.*

Welcome to the new Soroptimist global program for girls – [Dream It, Be It: Career Support for Girls](#). Dream It, Be It targets girls in secondary school who face obstacles to their future success. It provides girls with access to professional role models, career education and resources to live their dreams. The topics covered include career opportunities, setting and achieving goals, overcoming obstacles to success and how to move forward after setbacks or failures.

[Soroptimist conducted research around the world](#) to discover what girls need and what Soroptimists could do to address those needs. We received 412 survey responses from girls in 22 countries, conducted 50 focus groups with girls in seven countries, consulted secondary research and interviewed experts working with girls.

We found girls faced myriad barriers to living their dreams. However, girls and experts agreed that girls need access to mentors and trusted adults who can share their knowledge and guidance. This was the perfect intersection of the needs of girls and what Soroptimist is able to provide.

Secondary school is defined as schooling that follows elementary and middle school and is followed by higher education or vocational training. Typically, girls in secondary school are aged 14 to 18 but this varies by Soroptimist country.

## Career Support:

Help and assistance, including financial, to pursue an occupation that will offer opportunities for long-term success. Although we don't think all girls will know what they want to do for the rest of their lives, the skills they learn in Dream It, Be It will help them regardless of the career they choose to pursue or when they choose to pursue it.

[Read the full research paper.](#)

This tool kit provides all the information your club needs to make this happen. And, as always, you are not alone. Your region Dream It, Be It chairs, program chairs and the program staff at SIAHQ are always there to help. Together, we will build Dream It, Be It into a worldwide-recognized program to empower girls to reach their full potential and live their dreams.

## Soroptimist Dream Programs

Dream It, Be It joins Soroptimists' long-running program [Live Your Dream: Education and Training Awards for Women](#). As the Live Your Dream Awards is SIA's cornerstone program for assisting women, Dream It, Be It is the primary way SIA assists girls.

These Dream Programs of Soroptimist provide significant assistance to women and girls so that they may have access to the education and training they

need to reach their full potential and live their dreams. Soroptimist is committed to investing in programs that demonstrate a sustainable, measurable change for women and girls. For more information about our impact, [visit our website](#).

## II. Club Planning Process

### Step 1

Hold planning meetings with your club to gauge interest and form a planning committee

### Step 2

- Conduct a community assessment (see Section III)
- Plan for your club's participation in Dream It, Be It
- Select a model: small group mentoring sessions or a conference
- If you're already working with girls, plan ways to adapt your project to support the goal of Dream It, Be It
- Create an advisory group of girls to support your club's project development
- Finalize dates, partners and locations
- Identify speakers, supporters and sponsors

Form a club committee made up of passionate, dedicated members to drive the planning, implementation and evaluation of your Dream It, Be It project.

### Step 3

- Determine what, if any, background checks are required by your community partner(s) to work with youth (US and Canada only)
- All members working on site with girl participants must complete required background checks and the SIA online training ([Read the SIA Guidelines](#))

#### Step 4

- Review the [Dream It, Be It Club Project Guide](#) which helps clubs manage their Dream It, Be It project and to understand and effectively use the curriculum
- Review the [Dream It, Be It curriculum](#) with your club planning committee
- Adapt the curriculum sessions based on culture and life experiences of participants
- Work closely with an advisory group of girls to gain input and feedback from girls themselves to fit the curriculum to your specific audience

#### Step 5

- Review the [other Dream It, Be It resources](#) including:
  - Dream It, Be It Frequently Asked Questions
  - Dream It, Be It Background Check Frequently Asked Questions
  - Ten Tips for a Successful Project
  - Tips for Facilitating Groups
  - Sample Letter to Parents
  - Parental Consent Form
  - Participant Recruitment Flyer

#### Step 6

Review the Dream It, Be It Evaluation Guide, as well as the evaluation tool located on the SIA website

#### Step 7

Hold your Dream It, Be It Project!

#### Step 8

Use the [Club Transmittal Form](#) to report your progress to your Dream It, Be It Region Chair

#### Step 9

Go to the SIA website to input your club's Dream It, Be It evaluation information into the SIA evaluation tool by June 1 of each year

### III. Conducting a Community Assessment

At the beginning stages of the [research and design process for Dream It, Be It](#), SIA conducted research and a global needs assessment in its 19 countries and territories. The program focus of career support was selected primarily because it was a need of girls around the world. But the specific needs and services available differ from one location to the next. Now it is your turn to conduct local research and a community assessment.

#### The goals of the community assessment are to:

- Determine available support services for girls, and whether or not they include career support.
- Determine the needs of girls in your community and how Dream It, Be It can address these needs.
- Identify potential community partners for the project and begin to develop relationships with these potential partners. Partners may be able to

Possible partners will be schools, government offices, Girl Scouts or Girl Guides, girls clubs, YMCA, YWCA, other non profits, universities, and girl's crisis centers/homes.

help identify girls who can benefit from the project or possibly assist with the project by acting as speakers or mentors.

- Explore local businesses that may be able to provide financial or material support. Ensure you are not replicating the good work of other organizations.
- Build support for your project as you begin to engage stakeholders.

**To help guide the assessment, ask questions such as:**

- What organizations or agencies are already working with girls?
- Are local agencies, schools or organizations providing career support for girls?
- What type of girls do these programs target? Are any girls excluded?
- What other groups, businesses or types of individuals would be interested in supporting Dream It, Be It?
- Do schools have college and/or career counselors? What kind of support do they provide?

A great place to start your community assessment is with your own members. Ask members if they have connections with local organizations working with girls and/or local schools. Have them reach out to these connections to find answers to the above questions. These connections will likely be able to point you in the direction of even more potential partners or sources of information.

Keep track of contacts made during the community assessment. Even if you do not choose to work with some of the organizations, schools or businesses you identified, you may need them at later stages in the project as resources or supporters for girls participating in Dream It, Be It.

### **IV. Partnering with Girls\***

As you begin to plan your club’s Dream It, Be It project, it is important to include girls in the planning process. As with any project, getting the input of the population you are seeking to help is vital. This is especially true with girls who often struggle to have their voices heard. To do this, create a partnership with girls by forming a Girls Advisory Group to help plan, implement and evaluate your project. This partnership means that both groups – Soroptimists and girls – should have the opportunity to make suggestions and decisions regarding Dream It, Be It.

#### **Why Should We Partner with Girls?**

When girls are actively involved in the planning of projects for them, the project is more likely to be a success. Take advantage of the expertise girls can offer. Letting girls have the authority to make decisions about Dream It, Be It helps to develop important skills such as leadership, planning and teamwork. Also, being a part of a partnership can build a sense of belonging and the feeling of being needed and valued. This in turn helps girls build self-esteem and confidence.

#### **How to Build a Girls Advisory Group**

Your advisory group should be reflective of the girls you are hoping to reach through Dream It, Be It. For example, if you are planning to work with a particular school in your community, girls for your group should be selected from the student body. They can also help recruit program participants and help conduct follow up with their peers.

Include a girl on the club’s planning committee. The Girls Advisory Group can select their representative.



There are a number of different ways to find girls to participate. Clubs can partner with schools or community organizations, reach out to sports teams or religious centers or even contact past Violet Richardson Award recipients. During your community assessment, you probably identified a number of organizations working with girls.

In the future, your best candidates will come from past Dream It, Be It participants.

### **Tips for Working with Girls:**

Working with girls may be new to your club. Use the following tips when working with girls to ensure a good relationship:

- Ask girls for their opinions and seriously consider and value their input. If their ideas cannot be implemented, explain why.
- Soroptimists are initiating the program, but important decision-making should be shared with girls.
- Give girls challenging, responsible roles, as well as the training and support they need to succeed in those roles.
- Treat girls as individuals and assure them you are interested in their unique opinions. Don't assume one girl represents the views of all girls.
- Don't move too fast. Remember it takes time to develop trust and rapport with girls.
- Schedule meetings when girls can attend and in a location that is accessible to them.
- Remember girls will have other interests and responsibilities. Don't overwhelm them with responsibility and understand if they have to say no.
- Don't expect more from the girls than you would from another adult or hold them to a stricter standard.
- Remember that your role in a partnership with girls is not to parent. We want to give girls different ways to relate to adults.
- Make sure the girls have parental permission to participate in the project.
- Don't talk down to girls – encourage them with patient love and support.

\*When working with girls, it is [necessary for Soroptimists to get background checks](#) based on the rules of your state. This is required by our insurance company to protect SIA from liability that can arise from working with young people.

We asked Soroptimists working with girls what was one thing they wished they had known about girls but had to learn during their project:

- “I learned to understand and expect cultural, generational, socio-economic differences between the girls and Soroptimists.” — **Ana Neal, SI/Garden Grove, CA**
- “I learned that girls go through stages of complete confidence to absolute despair and that the mentorship relationship is so critical for girls and their families – especially in the teen years.” — **Susan Hollandsworth, SI/Ashland, OR**
- “I learned that girls’ intelligence and feelings are intense.” — **Elissa Wilson, SI/Evanston, WY**
- “We found highly motivated young women with an enthusiasm for helping others. Teens are sometimes portrayed as self-centered but we found the more they were involved in the community, the more they wanted to contribute.” — **Carole Celler, SI/Upper Montgomery County, MD**
- “I learned how incredibly multi-faceted the problems and challenges young women are facing and the complexity of helping them in a modern world.” — **Monica Dixon, SI/Sequim, WA**
- “I wish I had known how starved for attention the girls would be. I expected disinterest and a view that we were just old ladies. Instead, they were very responsible and happy to spend time with us.” — **Dorothy Pierce, SI/Centre County, PA**

## V. Selecting a Model: Small Group Mentoring or a One-Day Conference

The [Dream It, Be It curriculum](#) provides information to help girls understand and reach their career goals. Clubs can select one of two models by which this information can be delivered – through small group mentoring sessions or a one day conference. The decision will be driven by the outcomes of the community assessment, what clubs are interested in and what the club is already doing. Both models will involve similar work and preparation.

### Small Group Mentoring

Small group mentoring would involve club members meeting with a small group of girls for an hour or so each month for no less than six months. One session of the curriculum would be addressed at each meeting. The number of girls participating would be driven by the number of interested girls and members. There should be no more than four girls per club member participating.

## One-Day Conference

A one-day conference is a larger group of girls coming together to learn the curriculum in one day. This would involve finding the right space to have the conference, designing the program based on the curriculum, securing speakers and making sure you can get an audience for one day. The club can reach a larger group of girls in a shorter time but will not build the same types of relationships as those in the small group mentoring. A weekend day or a school holiday is the best time for a one-day conference.

Both models will include fun, team-building activities for girls and can be repeated year after year with new groups of girls.

## VI. Building Partnerships

During the community assessment, you identified other organizations, businesses, individuals and contacts at schools that are working with girls. Once your club has chosen a model, it is time to contact potential partners. This may be the first time your club is working with girls or on the topic of career support. Partnership with schools or other organizations that share your goal of helping girls can increase the impact of your local-level project.

In addition:

- Partnerships can enable the club to reach a larger audience of girls and accomplish work it could not have done alone.
- Partnerships can make better use of resources and enable the partners to deal more effectively and thoroughly with an issue.
- Soroptimist clubs can increase the number of organizations that are aware of and working on issues affecting girls.
- A project can gain credibility by having credible groups and partners associated with it.

When talking with other groups, also identify individuals who could serve on the planning committee. Involving important stakeholders in the planning will help you achieve a successful project.

Review your community assessment, figure out what you will need for your club project and identify those businesses, organizations or schools that can be most helpful and also have something to gain from partnering with you. Reach out to them and start to build a relationship.

The two most essential qualities of a successful partnership are clearly defined expectations and ongoing communication. Work with your partners to define expectations and responsibilities. You may want to draft a written agreement to clearly outline the roles and expectations. Plan multiple opportunities for communications so all the partners stay informed. Also, be sure that what will constitute success has been agreed by all partners. All the stakeholders should have the same shared definition of success.

For more information on forming successful partnerships, see [Effective Partnerships for Soroptimist Clubs](#).



## VII. Next Steps

At this point, your club will have formed a planning committee and a Girls Advisory Group, identified community partners and selected small group mentoring or a one-day conference. The next step is to plan for the project in your community. Some issues to consider:

- Dates and times for small group mentoring or the one-day conference
- Locations
- Using the materials released by SIA, pick which modules you will use
- Identify and contact needed speakers for the modules
- Identify and order additional resources – journals, bracelets, snacks, t-shirts, etc.

### Budget

Once your plan is in place, create a budget. Identify both expenses and revenue. When creating a budget, itemize with as much detail as possible. Once an initial budget has been created, compare it to club resources. Chances are the budget is greater than the available resources. At this point, the club can examine existing financial commitments and identify changes that can be made. If not, the club must then decide how to raise funds to make up the difference.

If your club is going to discontinue participation in the Violet Richardson Award, consider using those budgeted funds for Dream It, Be It.

### Raising Funds

As fundraising requires considerable time and energy, request three to five volunteers to form a fundraising committee. There are four main ways to raise funds for a club project:

- Hold a community fundraiser
- Solicit sponsorship from local businesses
- Apply for grants
- Request donations from community and club members

**Community fundraisers** are an excellent way to raise funds and to also raise the community profile of Soroptimist. Most Soroptimist clubs have outstanding fundraisers. If your club needs new ideas, contact your region fundraising chair.

In your community assessment, you identified businesses that might be interested in supporting your project. Sponsoring a Soroptimist project provides businesses a chance to show they are committed to giving back to the community. Solicit **sponsorships** by making a request for cash and/or donations or discounts on materials and/or services. Provide a brief description of the project and offer reasons why the business should sponsor it. What will they get in return? How will the club acknowledge and publicize the sponsorship? Let them know what percentage of the budget the club is contributing and if there are other sponsors.

Another option for funding is **community grants**. Research possible grant opportunities and apply for funding.

Additionally, donations can be requested from **individual community members**. If you identified individuals in your community assessment who might be willing to financially support your project, follow up with them for a cash donation. Of course, you can also solicit donations from club members. Remember that members are already giving generously with their time and

energy. However, if the club is committed to the project and other funding sources aren't enough, members may be inclined to make a personal donation.

**Congratulations! You are now prepared to review the [Dream It, Be It Club Project Guide](#) and the [Dream It, Be It curriculum](#) and implement your project!**

