



**KING EDWARD VII
SCHOOL**

Our Sixth Form Girls working with the Women of Soroptimist International Sheffield



Several KES staff and ex-staff are members of SI Sheffield, the local Club of Soroptimist International. The Soroptimists are an international women's organisation with a focus on transforming the lives of women and girls, locally, nationally and globally, through education, empowerment and enabling initiatives. Soroptimists make a difference to the lives of more than half a million women and girls in the world every year.

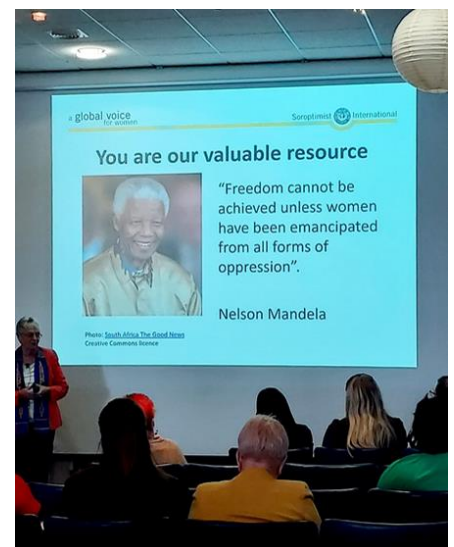
The women of SI Sheffield have worked with King Edward VII School for a number of years and have developed a very productive relationship with the Year 12 and 13 girls and staff. Our Post 16 girls have been involved in activities such as providing support for women in the local refuges and raising awareness on feminist issues, as well as the award-winning Toilet Twinning Project. They have led school assemblies, organised and managed fundraising events and developed the Club's social media pages.



Some of the KES girls involved in Soroptimist projects with their certificates

In September this year they were involved in the planning and delivery of a city-wide conference, "Voices of Women". This event brought together many local organisations working with vulnerable and abused women and their children. The overall aim of the day was to share information, identify gaps in service and facilitate a greater understanding of organisations supporting women in Sheffield.

The conference was held at Tupton Hall on 22nd September 2022. A KES Y13 student, Sam Hunnam, acted as the reporter. Not only did she provide a report which was published on the Soroptimist International website, she also learnt a lot herself and supported the initiative further by setting up a social media page through which all the participating organisations are now communicating. Please read her account of the event on the next page.



VOW! Voices of Women Conference



Sam Hunnam, Y13
Student Reporter

After raising money for CEASE at King Edward VII with Soroptimists in July, I was invited to report on the Soroptimists' conference at Tapton Hall, where women's organisations from around Sheffield and South Yorkshire gathered to showcase the important work they are doing, and find ways of working together.

More than a dozen organisations were represented and showcased their work and hopes for the future.

IDAS (Independent Domestic Abuse Services), one of the leading domestic abuse charities in Yorkshire, made 22,000 calls last year, to women from all backgrounds. They have specialist teams for LGBT, young people, the elderly and disabled victims etc. They provide safe zones for 6-18 months to help victims get back on their feet, and rebuild confidence. IDAS works closely with CEASE/REMEDI, another domestic abuse charity that specialises in education, mentoring and intervention at a young age to stop domestic abuse at its root cause. They not only educate those at risk of being abused, but also intervene when necessary to educate those displaying signs of coercive and controlling behaviour themselves.

Also represented at the Conference was DACT, the City Council's Domestic Abuse Coordination Team, who work with many agencies in the city to prevent violence against women. They tackle systemic misogyny, liaise with the police and work to build back trust in social services. Sheffield Women's Aid provides accommodation and support for women, children and even pets escaping domestic abuse. YWCA Yorkshire in Sheffield provides supported accommodation for 16-25 year old women by tailoring plans to each individual young woman, using programmes like Escape the TRAP for example, to help teens in abusive relationships. Women in these situations are often referred to counselling charities, like Saffron, SRASAC (Sheffield Rape and Sexual Abuse Centre) or VIDA Sheffield.

Together Women is a charity which helps those in the criminal justice system, in Sheffield, Leeds, Bradford and Hull. They help women once released with dependency, social inclusion, housing, and family issues, to help break the cycle of reoffending, and to try to stop the break down of families when the mothers are incarcerated.

A charity which helps mothers in particular is Mums-In-Need, a small grassroots charity which was set up by a domestic abuse survivor herself. It provides practical help to mothers who have escaped domestic abuse and also supports them with legal and financial advice.

In the UK, there are an estimated 136,000 men, women and children trapped by the slavery and human trafficking industry. In 2021, 12,727 victims were rescued by the police, and this is where Snowdrop come in. The Snowdrop Project is dedicated to “empowering survivors of human trafficking” by providing safe houses after they have been rescued to ensure they do not fall back into the hands of potential traffickers. Incredibly Snowdrop volunteers have recently raised just over £31,000 for the charity, by climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, all for the victims of slavery. The Conference ended with all the participating organisations vowing to keep in touch and working together. I was very impressed with the passion of all the speakers and their determination to improve the lives of women and children who have suffered at the hands of abusers. I am proud to have been able to support them by building a social media site through which they can keep in touch and work together in future.