

# Frequently Asked Questions



SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS, INC. ®

*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.

## Program Goal:

Through education and access to role models, girls will be empowered to pursue their career goals and reach their full potential.

## Objectives:

1. Increase the number of girls who feel prepared to pursue their career goals.
2. Increase the number of girls who feel comfortable creating achievable goals.
3. Increase the number of girls who have tools to overcome obstacles to success.
4. Increase the number of girls who understand the importance of resilience.
5. Increase the number of girls who can connect personal values with possible careers.
6. Increase the number of girls who feel more confident about their future success.
7. Increase the number of girls who have professional role models.

## Project Resources:

SIA offers a wealth of resources to support participation in *Dream It, Be It*.

[Planning Toolkit](#) || Step-by-step instructions for how to begin your local project

[Curriculum Guide](#) || Guidance for understanding how to effectively use the research-based curriculum

[Evaluation Guide](#) || Learn how to capture your project's impact in a meaningful, measurable way

The [Dream It, Be It](#) section of the SIA website hosts many additional resources to help make your project a success!

If you have other questions not answered below, the region *Dream It, Be It* chairs, program chairs and the program staff at SIA headquarters are always here to help. Soroptimist clubs can find their region's *Dream It, Be It* and program chairs on the [leadership directory](#), and all clubs and organizations hosting a project can contact the program department at [program@soroptimist.org](mailto:program@soroptimist.org).

### General Questions

#### **Why do we have this program for girls?**

The SIA board of directors identified the need for SIA programs to provide sustainable, measurable change in the lives of women and girls to grow our collective impact. For more than ten years, the Violet Richardson Award was SIA's program for girls. The program's goal was to encourage girls to be life-long volunteers. The board decided there was more SIA could do to ensure girls were socially and economically empowered. Clubs wishing to continue to offer the Violet Richardson Award in their communities may do so, but SIA will no longer support the program at the region or federation level.

#### **Why was career support selected as the focus of the program?**

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 face myriad barriers to living their dreams. However, girls and experts overwhelmingly agreed that girls need access to mentors and trusted adults who can share knowledge and information about how they can pursue their dreams. This was the perfect intersection of the needs of girls and what Soroptimist is able to provide. To learn more about how adolescent girls interpret challenges and opportunities in their future and why career support is needed, read "[If She Can Dream It: Providing Role Models and Mentors for 21st Century Girl Empowerment](#)".

#### **What is secondary school? Why not just use ages?**

Schooling and the age of girls in school varies in different countries. Secondary school is a term used by the United Nations and refers to schooling that follows elementary and middle school and precedes higher education or vocational training. Typically, girls in secondary school are aged 14 to 18 but this varies by Soroptimist country.

#### **Is the program just for girls in secondary school – what about young women or boys?**

The research directed us to focus on girls in secondary school. The program materials are designed for that population. Furthermore, the mission of SIA is to provide women and girls with access to the education and training they need to achieve economic empowerment. Our focus is on the special needs of women and girls.

#### **Why does the program focus on girls in secondary school and not younger girls?**

SIA is focusing on girls in secondary school because they are the same cohort of girls focused on through the Violet Richardson Awards, and there was a desire to keep working with the same age group. From experience with the Violet Richardson Awards, SIA is better equipped to work with adolescent girls than a younger age group. SIA wanted to develop a way to engage more meaningfully with adolescent girls and have a larger impact in their lives. SIA recognizes that in the broader global landscape, much attention and resources are given to younger girls and their primary education. These efforts are very valuable, but SIA understands there are more restrictions and challenges in working with younger girls and also wanted to fulfill a different need. There are not as many resources focused on adolescent girls, yet there is great need among that

population. In developing this program, adolescent girls were surveyed and experts on adolescent girls provided additional context, so *Dream It, Be It* has been informed by those specific needs. SIA chose to focus *Dream It, Be It* on career support because that fulfilled a need identified by adolescent girls and was a topic Soroptimists are prepared to discuss.

### **Can we print and sell our own products with the *Dream It, Be It* logo?**

The club is welcome to create products with the *Dream It, Be It* logo to give away. However, they cannot sell these items for any reason, including fundraising.

### **Does this program provide financial support for girls to pursue their career goals?**

At this time, the program is based on providing the *Dream It, Be It* curriculum in a small group mentoring or conference setting. It is through use of the curriculum that the goal and objectives of the program will be realized.

### **What are SIA's expectations for club participation in *Dream It, Be It*?**

SIA understands initiating a new project is a large undertaking. Consider starting small with just a few sessions of the curriculum that can grow into a larger *Dream It, Be It* program. It is perfectly acceptable to host small group mentoring sessions with 5-10 girls or a one-day conference with 25-30 girls. SIA wants to ensure the program goal and objectives are met, which can be done largely through meaningful relationships between members and participants.

Clubs must use at least one session of the curriculum to be considered participating.

SIA does not expect participating clubs to implement a *Dream It, Be It* project more than once in a club year. Clubs may implement a project as frequently as is possible for the club.

SIA expects participating clubs to report their project via the [Online Reporting Form](#). Clubs must complete the form within one month of their project, or by June 30th at the latest, to be considered participating.

### **What recognition is offered?**

Girls who complete *Dream It, Be It* may be given a Certificate of Participation. Girls may also wish to list their *Dream It, Be It* participation on their resume.

SIA clubs that engage with *Dream It, Be It* will receive recognition of participation from SIA headquarters.

### **What are clubs required to submit regarding their participation in *Dream It, Be It*?**

SIA expects participating clubs to report their project via the [Online Reporting Form](#). Clubs must complete the form within one month of their project, or by June 30th at the latest, to be considered participating. Only one report is required per project. If a club hosts a succession of small group mentoring sessions or collaborates with other clubs, there is room to note that on the singular report.

### **Our club isn't capable of taking on such a large project right now; what else can we do to support *Dream It, Be It*?**

All clubs will be encouraged to plan a future local project to support *Dream It, Be It*. But SIA recognizes that this is a large undertaking for some clubs. Some suggestions for these clubs to consider:

- Begin long-term planning to see if future participation can be possible.
- Consider what the club is already involved in – are each of these projects supporting the SIA big goal of investing in the dreams of half a million women and girls through access to education? Perhaps there are projects where the club could divest its resources and instead apply them to *Dream It, Be It*.
- Start small – with just a small group of girls in a mentoring atmosphere.
- Donate to Club Giving and the Laurel Society to support the growth of *Dream It, Be It*.
- Identify partners in the community that would be interested in supporting *Dream It, Be It*.
- Recruit new members specifically interested in working with girls.
- Partner with a nearby club to support their project or host a project together.

## Planning Questions

### **If our club already has a girl project, should we change it?**

Clubs are encouraged to explore options for adapting their existing projects to be in line with the goal and objectives of *Dream It, Be It*. The big goal of SIA is to invest in the dreams of half a million women and girls through access to education by 2031. We can only achieve this goal if we are all working on similar projects in order to be able to measure and report on our impact as a global organization. Clubs are encouraged to consider ways to adapt their existing projects to be in line with the goal, objectives, and curriculum for *Dream It, Be It*.

### **What if a similar project already exists in our community?**

During the community assessment, you may have identified similar projects. Meet with the organizations implementing those projects to explore the possibility of a partnership. *Dream It, Be It* may be a good complement to existing programs. You may also be able to identify a subset of the population being served by the existing project that you could target to provide additional education and skill-building.

### **What should our club budget for our local-level project?**

Budgeting will be determined by the plan for the club's local-level project and costs in the local community. In each of the curriculum sessions, there is a list of supplies that will be needed. In addition, consider rental fees of a site location, transportation needs for the girls, snacks and/or meals, and giveaways for girls. This program may be of interest to businesses and organizations in your community that want to support girls. Work with local businesses to get financial support or in-kind donations to support your *Dream It, Be It* project.

### Do we need background checks to work with girls?

Different countries, states and provinces have different rules governing work with young people. Clubs must investigate the laws in their communities to make sure they are in compliance. Additionally, all clubs must be in compliance with SIA's procedures for working with youth, detailed [here](#).

### Our club has never done a project like this before. What other resources are available to help us with this new program?

For clubs that have never worked with girls before, *Dream It, Be It* can seem like a large undertaking. SIA has worked to provide clubs with all the information they need to participate, including:

- [Planning Toolkit](#) || Step-by-step instructions for how to begin your local project
- [Curriculum Guide](#) || Guidance for understanding how to effectively use the research-based curriculum
- [Evaluation Guide](#) || Learn how to capture your project's impact in a meaningful, measurable way

In addition, there are a number of other tools available, such as [Ten Tips for a Successful Project](#) and [Tips for Facilitating Groups](#). After reviewing these materials, if you still have concerns, [contact your region Dream It, Be It chair](#) for more assistance. Many Soroptimist clubs around the world have experience working with girls, and they can be an asset as you plan your local-level *Dream It, Be It* project. Region chairs can assist you with making these connections.

## Curriculum Questions

### Some of the curriculum would not be appropriate for our community. Can we change it?

The curriculum was created to be flexible and adaptable. We recommend you review the curriculum and work with your Girls Advisory Group to adapt the exercises, examples, and resources to fit your community's needs. Any adaptation should still aim to meet the learning objectives for each session, as well as the goal and objectives of *Dream It, Be It*.

### Can we do a hybrid program that includes a one-day conference and small group mentoring? Or are we restricted to only one?

Clubs that wish to do more can create a hybrid program that includes a conference followed by small group mentoring to explore the concepts and ideas further. Again, the goal will be to ensure your local-level project is meeting the goal and objectives of the program.

### Can we use the curriculum for younger girls?

The curriculum was specifically designed for girls in secondary school. Some of the concepts may not be appropriate for younger girls.

### Who will be the facilitators of the curriculum?

The curriculum was created with step-by-step instructions so that club members would be able to facilitate each session if they choose to do so. Clubs may also consider inviting other community members, such as counselors, educators, or businesswomen, to facilitate sessions. When choosing facilitators, consider club members or community members who have:

- previous experience working with teens.
- some comfort and/or experience leading group discussions.
- good listening skills.
- an upbeat, positive attitude to get adolescent girls excited to participate.
- the ability to be open and honest to help adolescent girls develop trust.

Refer to the [Tips for Facilitating Groups](#) for more information on *Dream It, Be It* curriculum facilitation.

### What if a participant brings up an issue our club feels unprepared to respond to?

Many adolescent girls deal with unhealthy relationships, eating disorders and other body image issues, cyber bullying, cutting, estranged families, drug and alcohol abuse, etc. Participants may mention some of these issues in the course of *Dream It, Be It*. It is not necessary for your club to know how to address each of these issues. If an issue does arise, club members should respond in a compassionate and respectful manner, and then refer the participant to a trained professional, such as a school guidance counselor, school social worker, or a counselor or therapist at a local community organization. Club members are not expected to know how to deal with any issue an adolescent girl may face. Club members should be prepared to connect girls with available resources and others who are trained to respond to such issues.