



A global volunteer organization that improves the lives of women and girls through programs leading to social and economic empowerment.

SOROPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL OF THE AMERICAS, INC.®

Communicating Your Change

A. Introduction

Our research shows more than 20 million women and girls could benefit from our Dream Programs. We dream of a day when we can help every eligible woman and girl with our award-winning, life-changing programs. To increase the collective impact of our organization, we have adopted a 2021-2031 Big Goal to *Invest in the Dreams of Half a Million Women and Girls through Access to Education*. This means going from serving about 16,000 women and girls a year to serving 50,000. We can do it if we work together!

As we prepare to substantially increase the number of women and girls we serve through the Dream Programs, communicating with our community partners is a critical step. Perhaps your club has participated in [Working as One](#), has used the [Club Planning Tool](#) and has decided to make some changes in your club's focus. Perhaps your club has decided to stop supporting a local organization that you have supported for years, and want to make sure they are prepared and understand why you are making this change. You can use the following sample letters and talking points to craft your communications.

These sample materials are written for an external audience. If you are interested in learning more about our strategic direction, visit [our website](#).

B. Sample Letter to Partners

Dear Partner,

Soroptimist International of Anytown is so grateful to have worked with you on [insert project here]. Together, we have accomplished great things for our community and our Soroptimist club is proud of the impact we have made.

Soroptimist is part of a global community that is answering the call of the United Nations to accelerate women's economic empowerment—a key strategy to end global poverty. Although we are proud of our work, our organization has agreed to focus on investing in the dreams of women and girls through access to education. Global agencies agree that a quality education, more than any other intervention, holds the greatest potential to economically empower the lives of women and girls.

Through our Live Your Dream: Education and Training Awards®, Soroptimist is committed to serving women who have primary financial responsibility for their families and who face obstacles to living their dreams such as poverty, violence, sexual exploitation, homelessness, teen pregnancy, and illness. We provide them access to formal education through schooling or training via cash awards and additional support. Through

our Dream, It Be It: Career Support for Girls®, Soroptimist helps girls who face obstacles such as poverty, violence, unstable home lives, teen pregnancy, and foster care. We provide them education through a curriculum delivered in conferences or small group mentoring sessions focused on goal setting, overcoming barriers, and more.

As a result of our organization's plans to focus on these programs, our club is changing the way we work in Anytown, USA. This means a change to our partnership on [insert here]. We plan to

- Finish this year together as planned
- Work together to find a suitable partner

Soroptimist International of Anytown looks forward to continuing to serve women and girls in our community and contributing to our organization's local and global impact. Thank you so much for your ongoing support, and for the meaningful work you provide within our community.

Sincerely,

President,
Soroptimist International of Anytown, USA

C. Sample Letter to Supporters

Dear Supporter,

Soroptimist International of Anytown is so grateful for the support you have provided to our club over the past years. We are proud of the impact we have made together for women and girls in Anytown, USA.

We are part of a global community that is answering the call of the United Nations to accelerate women's economic empowerment—a key strategy to end global poverty. Our organization has agreed to focus on investing in the dreams of women and girls by providing access to education. Global agencies agree that a quality education, more than any other intervention, holds the greatest potential to economically empower the lives of women and girls. For that reason, we are [insert change here.]

Through our Live Your Dream: Education and Training Awards®, Soroptimist is committed to serving women who have primary financial responsibility for their families and who face obstacles to living their dreams such as poverty, violence, sexual exploitation, homelessness, teen pregnancy, and illness. We provide them access to formal education via cash awards and additional support. Through our Dream, It Be It: Career Support for Girls®, Soroptimist helps girls who face obstacles such as poverty, violence, unstable home lives, teen pregnancy, and foster care. We provide education through a curriculum delivered in conferences or small group mentoring sessions focused on goal setting, overcoming barriers, and more.

As a result of our organization's plans to focus on Soroptimist programs, our club chose to reinvest our resources in these programs. I know your support for [insert project here] was important to you. And, we hope that you will be equally inspired to join us in our new efforts to serve more women and girls through our Soroptimist Live Your Dream Awards and Dream It, Be It.

We know YOU are trying to make a difference in our community through your generous support of agencies

working in Anytown. We want to talk with you about how you can continue to make a positive difference by partnering with us on our future plans. I will call you next week to see if we can set up a time to meet.

Sincerely,

President or Club Contact,
Soroptimist International of Anytown, USA

D. Talking Points

There is a possibility your past partners and supporters might have additional questions about why you are making this change. Use the sample questions below to formulate your answer. If a question comes up that isn't listed below, contact program@soroptimist.org and we will help you formulate the right answer. Of course, each answer will need to be customized for each unique situation.

Why are you doing this now? Every organization grows and evolves. For Soroptimist, our research has told us two things: that our Dream Programs create real change in the lives of women and girls, and there are 20 million women and girls in the countries in which we operate who need access to those programs. The only way to serve those women and girls is to change the way we work to focus on these programs.

After [x] years, the community relies on our partnership to make [insert project here] happen. What are we going to do? Who will support [insert project here] if you stop? We are committed to working together to find new avenues of support for [insert project here]. We are happy to work with you to identify new community partners and new financial supporters. We recognize the importance of [insert project here] to our community and we want to help it continue to operate. We have no doubt that if we work together, we can find the right partners to support [Insert project here].

Can you still do [insert support here] for another year so the project can continue? We have enough resources to support [insert project/organization here] for [x] more months. We wanted to give you as much notice as possible and schedule time for us to work together to find new partners. After that, we have plans in place to increase the number of women and girls we serve in our community through our Live Your Dream Awards® and Dream It, Be It® programs.

How about you scale back your support, but still contribute to [insert project/organization here] in some way? We are happy to help in any way we can with finding new partners and supporters. We have committed our resources to helping more women and girls in our community through our Dream Programs. And, those programs will be our main focus going forward.

What about the need we have in the community for [insert project here]? Of course, the needs of the people in our community are numerous and we want to be a good community partner. But, our organization also has a mission, a focus and programs we have researched, designed and developed. And we know that the women and girls who benefit from our Dream Programs go on to make a big difference in their communities. We follow up with our beneficiaries years after they participate and we find that they have increased their standard of living, become role models for their children and are able to follow their dreams. In fact, many of our recipients go into helping professions such as nursing, teaching or social work so they can help others as well. This creates a ripple effect which helps make our community a better place. That's not to say that other needs aren't important—we are only saying that our organization focuses on providing access to education leading to economic empowerment for women and girls who face obstacles to their success.

You talk about “global impact” but we have people in need right here at [insert community here]. Why don’t they deserve your help? We know there are people in our community who need our help. That is why Soroptimist helps women and girls in our local community while also supporting our organization’s global impact. We are ramping up the number of women and girls we reach through our Dream Programs both locally and globally.

If your focus is women and girls’ economic empowerment through education, why can’t you continue supporting [insert project here]? We help women and girls by [insert perceived connection to mission.] Why must it be through your Dream Programs specifically? We recognize the support women and girls receive through your project/organization is important for their success. But, we have committed our resources to doing more for women and girls through our Dream Programs. Our organization has identified there are 20 million women and girls who could benefit from our programs. In addition, we follow up with the women and girls we serve and we know our Dream Programs offer them a way to access education and reach their full potential. We are investing in our Dream Programs specifically because we know they work in helping women and girls to transform their lives.

Can the Dream Programs provide support to our organization in some way? Our partnership with SI/Anytown is important to us.

(If a partnership is possible) Our partnership with you is important to us too. We are happy to partner with you to reach more women and girls through our Dream Programs. We can offer our Live Your Dream Award® to the women you serve who are eligible. Or, we would love to work with the girls you serve to offer our Dream It, Be It project®. (Clubs: the SIA website has resources for raising awareness about the [Live Your Dream Awards](#) and [Dream It, Be It](#). You can share these resources with community partners so they can recruit women and girls in their organization who stand to benefit from the Dream Programs.)

(If a partnership is not possible) Our partnership has been very important to us too. And we are sorry that it can’t continue. Of course, we are still a part of this community and are happy to help out in any way we can. We are committed to working together to find new avenues of support for [insert project here]. But we wanted you to be aware that we are putting most of our resources into serving more women and girls through our Dream Programs.

Is [insert issue here] no longer a topic that SI/Anytown cares about? Of course it is! The interests and concerns of our members are very wide ranging. But, as a group of volunteers, we can’t always address every issue we care about. And, we are happy our Dream Programs address numerous issues affecting women and girls. For example, a majority of the women who receive the Live Your Dream Awards® have been victims of violence. This prevents them from having to return to a violent situation. Our Dream It, Be It Program® gives girls the skills they need to avoid obstacles while pursuing their dreams.