

# District 25 Stands Up to Violence Against Women

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The following details the events and initiatives that the Zonta clubs of District 25 are doing to support the Zonta Says NO campaign and standing up to violence against women.

## **District level project**

The district project for District 25 is prevention of sexual abuse of adolescent girls and women. Zonta clubs are advocating by creating awareness of the laws available to women and organizing protests and edutainment programs that highlight these issues.

In Sri Lanka, District 25 signed a memorandum with the national child protection association of the country with a commitment to organize programs to prevent of child abuse in many cities of the island. Sri Lanka Zonta Clubs are also focusing on visiting schools to share an edutainment program for children on how they could protect themselves from abduction, sexual abuse and harassment, etc. The clubs are also focusing on measures to sensitize the government on important issues such as the improvement of the legal system dealing with rape cases on an urgent basis and making sure the punishment for rape and sexual harassment is meted out to the culprits.

The District highlighted Zonta Says No in all countries in the District through the media on the Day of the Girl Child, UN Day and Yellow Rose Day. Newspaper articles and TV programs were also distributed in the languages of Sinhala, Tamil and English in Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh.



## **BANGLADESH** **INDIA** **SRI LANKA**

### **BANGLADESH**

#### **Bangladesh marches against violence against women**

The clubs in Bangladesh joined a march against violence against women. They also collected 1000 signatures towards this cause.

### **INDIA**

#### **Zonta Club of Bombay III projects report on legal advocacy and awareness**

After a series of horrifying rape incidents in New Delhi, a public notice dated 25 December 2012 was sent out by the Honorable Justice (Retired) J S Verma and Honorable Justice Smt. Leila Seth, inviting suggestions on amendments to criminal law relating to safety and security of women. A letter from the Club was written to Justice Verma with the views, ideas and suggestions of our members. A copy of this letter was sent to the ZI President Lynn McKenzie, who forwarded the letter to ZI UN Committee and Advocacy Committee Chairmen. District 25 Governor Marlene Abeyewardene's message condemning the act and urging prompt action for safety of women of South Asia was also sent to Justice Verma's Committee along with a letter from our Zonta President, which was covered in detail in her Presidential e- newsletter.

Members also participated in a discussion on "Crime against Women" organized by Blavatsky Lodge Theosophical Society, Mumbai.

The Zonta Club of Bombay III was invited as the Guest of Honour at Anjuman-I-Islam Primary Girls School's Annual Function on 20 February, where the theme was "Empowerment of Women" and "The Girl Child". Past Club President & current District 25 Lt. Governor spoke about Zonta's contribution towards the cause and also about violence against women.



**Dr. Nayreen Daruwalla receives a donation for SNEHA, a Network for Women of South Asian origin and their families.**

### **Zonta Club of Madras**

The Zonta Club of Madras conducted several meetings with respect to Zonta Says No among different categories of audiences.

## **SRI LANKA**

### **Say No to Violence projects organized by Zonta Club of Colombo I**

Zonta club of Colombo I focused on group discussions with mothers in the slum areas of the city and created awareness on how to protect children. A panel discussion was also held in the local media on the dangers and misuse of mobile phones, emails and the internet by adolescent girls. The purpose of this discussion was to alert parents to instances where teenage girls could be misled into relationships, which could lead to sexual abuse.

A seminar to discuss prevention of gender-based violence was organized in a community center in Colombo to coincide with International Women's Day on 8 March 2013. The audience was comprised of men from a disadvantaged area of the city as well as women. Police from this area, as well as professional experts, participated in the seminar. They highlighted the reasons for domestic violence in Sri Lanka. The males in the

audience were focused on, and advised to campaign against violence against women. A similar program was also organized by the Golden Z Club of Colombo I.

### **Project carried out by Zonta Club of Colombo II on Say No to Violence**

Zonta club of Colombo II carried out the following programs during the 16 Days of Activism period starting 25 November 2012:

1. Conducted an advocacy program for the senior police officers in Colombo to bring awareness to laws relevant to acts of violence against women.
2. On Zonta International Day, an email campaign was launched that focused on the UNiTE to Say NO to Violence Against Women campaign. The emails were sent in the three official languages of Sri Lanka, (English, Sinhala and Tamil) through Direct Solutions to their database of more than 2,000 individuals. Thereupon, these messages were sent out on the 25th of every month.
3. Posts were made on the Zonta Club of Colombo II Facebook page in the three official languages of Sri Lanka, focusing on "Say No, UNiTE to End Violence against Women"
4. On 18 November 2012, awareness was created among an audience of 400 people who participated in a fundraiser fashion show held to raise funds for setting up a Mother-Baby Unit for the care of premature babies. Orange ribbons were distributed to the entire audience to create awareness of the Zonta Says NO Campaign. Each member of the audience was also reminded of the program by the presenter who gave many references to "UNiTE to Say No to Violence against Women" campaign.
5. The radio channel, Real Radio, ran clips and online messages every half hour as a message from Zonta Club of Colombo II.

### **Projects organized by Zonta Club of Colombo III**

Zonta club of Colombo III had a discussion on legislative awareness with a program for young girls at university level. There were three panelists who spoke on the problems faced by university students, including sexual issues. This panel was followed by a question and answer session.



Zonta clubs in Sri Lanka participated in a march against violence against women organized last November 2012 by the UN office in Colombo. Participants carried banners and wore orange ribbons. This march was followed by a meeting where men spoke on stopping violence women. This was a great success.

### **Projects organized by Kandy Club.**

A seminar was organized in Kandy in October 2012 by the Zonta Club of Kandy to a mixed audience of males and females with the idea of convincing the male participants how wrong it was to perpetrate violence against women.