



PRESS RELEASE

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Schools mark International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women

November 25th is the 'International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women'. Violence against women and girls is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in our world today. The Department of Equality has, once again this year, worked with the Department of Education in order to raise awareness of this issue with school pupils.

Today's event has been built upon last year's very successful celebration of International Day of Elimination of Violence against Women organised at Bayside which also included representatives from Westside and the Gibraltar College. This morning students from Bayside School, Westside School and the Gibraltar College together with their teachers gathered at the Victoria Stadium to create a heart, the symbol of love, as a means of promoting a positive message and locked arms in solidarity to collectively represent their rejection of domestic abuse.

Present at this event were the Minister for Equality, the Hon. Samantha Sacramento, and Minister for Education, the Hon John Cortes. Both Ministers were delighted with the students' efforts and thanked the students for their commitment to repudiating violence in all its forms.

This symbolic representation is the culmination of work at the three educational institutions over the past weeks on the subject and their education on issues of domestic abuse, in addition, and in preparation, students have carried out various initiatives including art work, displays, role-play activities and whole school assemblies. The aim of these initiatives, together with PSHE lessons, has been to raise the students' awareness of domestic abuse and the importance of respectful communication within relationships.

In addition to the work done on the subject at the comprehensive schools and the college, this year a total of twelve local schools have participated in ways that are sensitive and age-appropriate. Primary and middle schools have worked on a range of initiatives ranging from whole school assemblies, art projects, posters, songs, drama and PSHE lessons around the theme of 'Respect and Healthy Relationships'.

Minister for Education, Dr John Cortes said, "Education is much more than academic attainment, the Department of Education also has a role in educating children on real social issues that may



affect them. We generally do this through PSHE. Domestic abuse is clearly an important issue and we are now developing a strategic approach to this learning as part of the strategy being developed by the Ministry for Equality. By working together we will achieve more effective results. I would like to thank the teachers and staff from the Department of Education and Department of Equality and all the students for all their fantastic work in putting this event together. Education on the subject is not just about today's even; today is the result of a lot of work that has been undertaken on the subject and that we will continue to develop."

Minister for Equality, the Hon. Samantha Sacramento MP, said: "Working against domestic abuse is an important part of my Gender Equality portfolio. The work that we are doing with the Department of Education from part of our national strategy of prevention through education and awareness. Our primary objectives are prevention through education, by teaching that such behaviour is unacceptable and by empowering individuals from an early age to stand up to abuse. Our co-ordinated approach with the Department of Education, as well with our other stakeholders are yielding very positive results. It is important to continue to raise awareness about this issue and it is important to work collectively to end all forms of violence, particularly violence against girls and women. I would like to thank my team at the Ministry of Equality and all the professionals and students at the Department of Education who have worked so hard to make the events this week and those leading up to it a success."