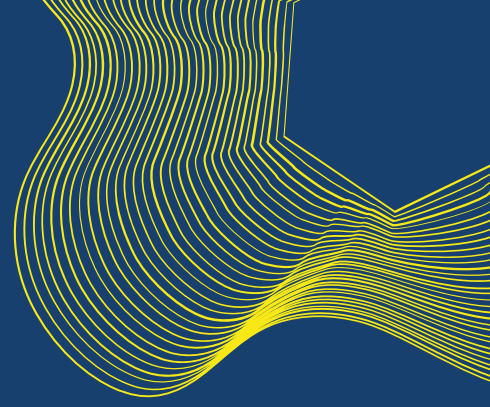


CASE STUDIES

Freedom From Fear Fund

Table of Contents



01

Introduction

02

Relevance of the Fund

03

Objectives of the Fund

04

**Awardee Profiles:
SAOL Project**

05

**Awardee Profiles:
Barnardos**

06

**Awardee Profiles:
Meath Travellers
Workshops**

07

Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

The Freedom From Fear Fund was a €100,000, 6-month fund created by Rethink Ireland in partnership with the National Women's Council of Ireland, with support from Deloitte Ireland, Kinzen, the Drouillard Family Fund (via The Community Foundation of Ireland), SmartSimple, a private donor, and the Department of Rural and Community Development (via the Dormant Accounts Fund).

The overarching aim of this fund was to address the issue of **gender-based violence** from both a **preventative and protective lens**. To do so, it supported three fantastic organisations that:

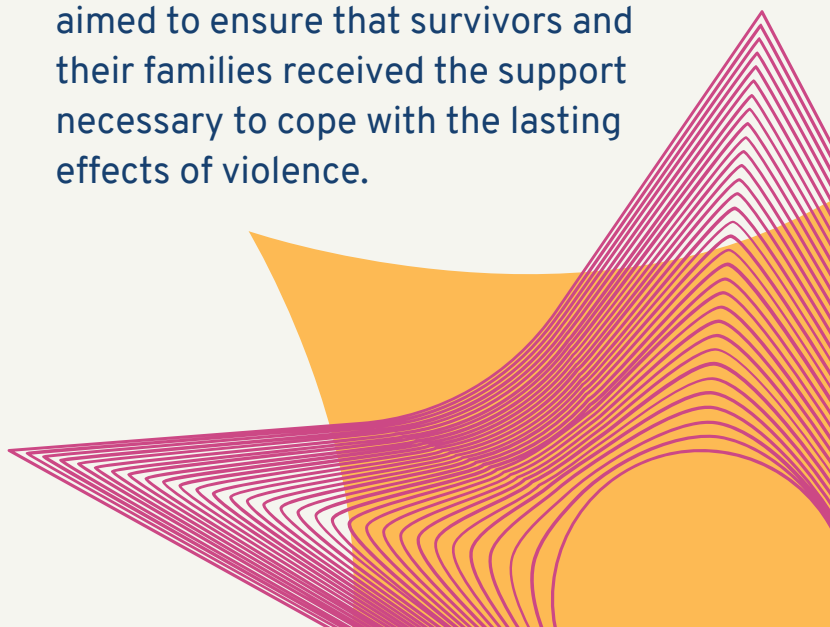
- **Addressed the deep-rooted cultural causes of gender-based violence** in Ireland (preventative approaches);
- **Supported survivors and their families/supporters**, by increasing the capacity of service providers to respond effectively to the needs of women and girls affected by violence (protective approaches).

A PREVENTATIVE APPROACH

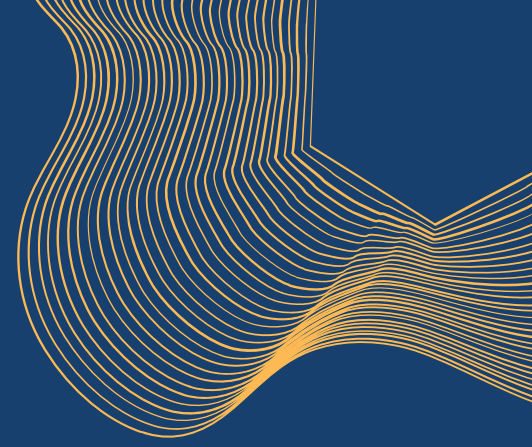
The Freedom From Fear Fund aimed to prevent gender-based violence by **addressing the cultural norms of gender inequality** in Irish society. Through **educational programmes**, it targeted the underlying attitudes and behaviours that contribute to this violence. Awardees worked with key stakeholders to tackle these root causes, aiming to prevent violence before it occurs.

A PROTECTIVE APPROACH

The fund also focused on **improving access to timely, quality, and trauma-informed services** for survivors of gender-based violence and their families. This protective strand supported comprehensive care that addressed both immediate and wider needs. By prioritising inclusivity and accessibility, the fund aimed to ensure that survivors and their families received the support necessary to cope with the lasting effects of violence.



MEET THE AWARDEES



SAOL Project
Davina Project

Barnardos
Empower Kids

Meath Travellers Workshops
Signposts for Positive
Change

Each of the above awardees were granted **€25,000**. It should be noted that the Freedom From Fear Fund was only open to **current Rethink Ireland awardees**.

In light of this, these awardees received one-to-one consultancy support and access to Rethink Ireland's Accelerator Programme (a suite of capacity-building workshops) as part of the Non- Financial Support package in their other respective funds.

Awardee	HQ Location	Cash Grant
SAOL Project	Dublin	€25,000
Barnardos	Dublin	€25,000
Meath Travellers Workshops	Meath	€25,000

RELEVANCE OF THE FUND

The World Health Organization (WHO) describes violence against women as a **"devastatingly pervasive" issue** on a global scale (WHO, 2021). According to WHO and its partners, **one in three women** globally have faced **physical or sexual violence**, predominantly from an intimate partner, a statistic that has remained stable since 2011 (ibid). Furthermore, the latest EU-wide survey on violence against women indicates that **50% of all women have experienced sexual harassment** (EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014).

In Ireland, the prevalence of domestic, sexual, and gender-based violence (DSGBV) is alarmingly high (The House of the Oireachtas, 2023). The Programme for Government, *Our Shared Future* (2020), recognises "an **epidemic of domestic, sexual and gender-based violence**. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a further increase in domestic violence cases, along with several highly publicised violent assaults on women, prompting a national discussion about the effectiveness of Ireland's current approach to addressing DSGBV (Safe Ireland, 2020).

The Freedom From Fear Fund was heavily informed by the above trends, policies, and publications relating to gender-based violence, both on a national and international level. It was designed to **tackle a highly pressing - and politicised - issue** in Ireland, with the aim of safeguarding vulnerable children and adults. It was in line with the government's current **'Zero-Tolerance' DSGBV policy**, which places a huge emphasis on meeting the needs of the girls and women of Ireland. In light of this, the three awardees' work is playing an invaluable role in realising the goals set out in the above policy, working to foster an environment in Ireland where **women are seen, heard, respected, and protected**.

41%

Of Irish women know
someone who has
experienced intimate
partner violence

>40%

Of women who
experience violence
seek help of any kind

50%

Of all women have been
sexually harassed

1 IN 3

Women have faced
physical or sexual
harassment

OBJECTIVES OF THE FUND



The Freedom From Fear Fund employed a **two-pronged approach** to address the issue of GBV in Ireland by focusing on both **preventive** and **protective measures**.

The table below briefly illustrates how each project's contract goals aimed to meet the overall objectives of the fund. The impact achieved from the projects will be further explored in their respective case studies.

FUND OBJECTIVES	AWARDEE	CONTRACT GOALS
PREVENTATIVE APPROACH: To address the deep-rooted cultural causes of gender-based violence in Ireland.	Barnardos Meath Travellers Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver a series of hybrid co-created workshops to raise awareness of the impact of domestic violence on children and what support and responses are needed• Deliver on the promotional plan for the campaign, to include an in-person launch event.• Design a poster campaign aimed to raise awareness about the issue of domestic violence for primary school students, secondary school students, and adults.• Produce 4 video podcast episodes covering different areas of abuse to raise awareness about the issue of domestic violence.• Run a radio ad on LMFM to highlight this work.• Hold 6 workshops of 12-15 participants each to address 1) destigmatisation of gender-based violence 2) providing skills and confidence-building in relation to seeking support with GBV
PROTECTIVE APPROACH: To support survivors and their families/supporters, by increasing the capacity of service providers to respond effectively to the needs of women and girls affected by violence.	SAOL Project Barnardos	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Deliver 3 one-day training sessions in the use of the DAVINA Model to a total of 60 service providers to increase their capacity to respond to women experiencing the dual issues of addiction and domestic violence.• Design and implement a system to measure the effectiveness and value of the training.• Measure outcomes of the training on a) service providers' increased understanding of the impact of domestic violence on women with addiction; b) service providers' awareness of measures needed to support women with domestic violence and substance use; and c) services follow through on the implementation of the programme.• A 15% increase in the referrals to TLC Kidz Programme as a result of the survivor informed public campaign.

Awardee
Profiles

SAOL PROJECT

DAVINA Project



The PROBLEM

According to 2020 CSO data, 287,116 women in Ireland are eligible for addiction support services, with 16.8% (48,185) also experiencing domestic abuse. However, addiction and domestic violence services are ill- equipped to address these dual issues.

The SOLUTION

The DAVINA Project addresses this gap by offering **1-on-1 support** for women to **heal from domestic violence, manage mental health, and substance use**. They developed a **psychoeducational training programme to train service providers** to better support women facing both challenges.



The IMPACT

By October 2024, **53 service providers** received the full training programme in the **use of the DAVINA Model**. The participants included:

- **frontline addiction workers**
- **refuge staff**
- **social workers**
- **community Gardaí.**

The SAOL Project also ran **three awareness-raising sessions**. The first was led by student social workers. The second was facilitated by youth and community volunteers. The final session was held at a community-based drug project. In total, **62 participants attended** these informative workshops.



IMPACT MEASUREMENT

A key component of this project was **Impact Measurement**. The DAVINA Project measured the outcome of the training on the following three areas:

1

Service providers' increased understanding of the impact of domestic violence on women with addiction

2

Service providers' awareness of measures needed to support women with domestic violence and substance use

3

Services follow through on the implementation of the programme.

The feedback was gathered in three ways:

1. Live feedback from trainees during and at the end of training
2. Service provider' impressions of trainees engagement and reflection during training
3. Post training evaluation surveys.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

All respondents of the post training surveys agreed that they have a **better understanding of the intersectionality** between domestic violence and substance use and **felt more skilled** in their work. The top ranked learning experiences by value were:

1

I have a better understanding of how DSGBV and substance use can be experienced by women at the same time & have an impact on the other

2

I have a better understanding of the unique vulnerabilities and experiences of women who use substances and experience DSGBV

3

I am better able to recognise warning signs of a woman experiencing domestic violence

With the above impact data, the DAVINA Project launched an **evaluation report** into the experiences of women with addictions trying to access support from their organisation. To do so, they sought feedback from both external stakeholders who participated in their training and with the women who have engaged with the project. This report was published in November 2024.

Awardee
Profiles

BARNARDOS

Empower Kids



The PROBLEM



Children in Ireland are profoundly affected by domestic violence, even if they do not directly witness it. Domestic violence and child maltreatment often co-occur, creating a harmful environment that threatens children's well-being. In 2022, Women's Aid recorded 5,412 disclosures of child abuse in the context of domestic violence. Children's voices are often silenced in these situations, leaving their needs unmet and trauma unaddressed.

The SOLUTION

Empower Kids, active since 2020, is a project that **amplifies the voices of children** affected by domestic violence, **influencing responses** and **public perceptions** of gender-based violence. Barnardos used this funding to **co-create a public awareness campaign** with children who have lived through domestic violence, ensuring their perspectives shaped the campaign's content and strategy. This was achieved by delivering co-designed workshops to ensure that the **childrens' perspectives** were at the **centre of the campaign**.

The IMPACT

59

Children participated in the co-creation of the campaign

People were reached by the campaign on social media

32K

842K

Listeners were reached by Barnardos' radio campaign

Empower Kids launched the national campaign ***Kids Vs Domestic Violence*** to raise awareness of domestic violence's impact on children. Central to the campaign was **empowering children** by making them **feel seen and heard**. **Fifty-nine children** participated in co-created workshops, ensuring their voices shaped the campaign's content and execution. The Ombudsman for Children also attended these workshops. This approach followed the **Lundy Model**, which emphasises giving children space, voice, audience, and influence.

The theme and visuals of the campaign were heavily influenced by the perspectives of the children who participated in the Empower Kids workshops. The overarching theme was that children and young people are **fighting to be heard**. **Fighting to be acknowledged** by the media. **Fighting to be understood** by the public. This underpinned the entire campaign, as seen in the poster below.

The campaign was launched in June and featured across social media channels and radio stations nationwide. Their posts on social media reached a combined audience of **32,510 people**, with **1,574 people actively engaging** directly with it (via likes, comments and shares). Additionally, their radio campaign reached **842,000 listeners** nationwide.

Alongside the publicity aspect of the campaign, there was a strong emphasis placed on **advocacy**. The children participating in the Empower Kids project were presented with a **toolkit**, including **five prepaid postcards**. These were intended to be sent to key figures at the governmental level in an effort to **enact policy change**. It was also designed to encourage children and young people to **communicate their own message in their own words**. According to the project leads, this has had a huge impact on the children's healing journey, allowing them to feel seen and heard. This is the **real impact** of the *Kids Vs Domestic Violence* campaign.



Building on the momentum from this campaign, the Empower Kids Project hosted a national-level event in Dublin in November. There were **15 key policy-makers and political figures** in attendance, along with **28 young people** who participated in the project, and **8 mothers**. While this was intended to occur during the fund's timeline, the project leads decided that the event would have a far greater impact in November, coinciding with the **"16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence"** (November 25th - December 10th).



Key outcomes included:

- An Garda Síochána pledged to take action on implementing **training for Gardai** on childhood domestic violence and abuse – informed by children.
- **Children** will join the **National Advisory Group** supporting the **3rd National Strategy** on Domestic, Sexual, and Gender-Based Violence.
- **Training** will be established for **teachers** on childhood domestic violence and abuse so that they can **identify potential risks**, make appropriate **preventative interventions** and referrals.

TLC KIDZ PROGRAMME


The TLC Kidz Project was established to **raise awareness** of the impact of domestic violence on children, to **provide a coordinated inter-agency response**, to **upskill professionals** and to **support children in their recovery**. At the core of this project is an evidence informed 12-week, psycho- educational, group programme for children (5 – 18 years) and their mothers recovering from domestic abuse. The programme helps children **heal from the impact of domestic abuse**, and helps mothers in **understanding their child's experiences** and support their recovery.

Over the course of the fund, Barnardos aimed to **increase referrals** for the programme by **15%** as a result of the awareness campaign. However, there has not been an increase in either the number of service users or referrals to the TLC Kidz programme. Referrals to the programme naturally fluctuate – particularly over the summer as referral rates from inter-agencies decline. Therefore, attaching any correlation from the campaign to a perceived change in referral rates during the Fund has proven to be difficult.

Awardee
Profiles

MEATH TRAVELLERS WORKSHOPS

Signposts for Positive Change

A young woman with long, straight brown hair and light-colored eyes is looking directly at the camera. She is holding a dark brown rectangular sign in front of her chest with both hands. The sign has white handwritten text that reads "It's time to talk about it".

It's time
to talk
about it

The PROBLEM

According to The Irish Times, Traveller women are 30 times more likely than settled women to suffer domestic violence. Although they only make up 0.5% of the Irish population, Traveller women represent 15% of people being supported by gender-based violence services.

The SOLUTION

As part of the Freedom From Fear Fund, Meath Travellers Workshops (MTW) sought to highlight gender-based violence through a **culturally-sensitive awareness campaign** that addressed the **acceptance of violence** and **barriers to getting help** among the Traveller community.

To do so, they organised:

- A poster campaign
- Six peer-led educational workshops
- Four podcast episodes with members of the Traveller community
- Two radio advertisements

Their campaign **targeted all age groups** and **gender categories** to ensure a whole-community approach was taken.



The IMPACT

Poster Campaign

MTW used a preventative approach to tackle the cultural causes of GBV within Ireland's Traveller community. They designed and distributed posters illustrating the issue of GBV to **23 primary schools, 114 secondary schools** in various areas, such as Navan, Trim and Kells. They also delivered the posters to **27 partner organisations**, including the National Traveller Partnership groups, the refuge service, Women's Aid and Springboard.



Workshops

MTW also organised **six tailored workshops** aimed at

- Destigmatising gender-based violence;
- Building confidence; and
- Directing participants to support services.

Ken Egan, a professional boxer, led two of the workshops for young male Travellers, emphasising that violence belongs in the boxing ring, while a separate workshop for young female Travellers focused on consent and coercion. **95 people attended** the workshop series, although it is expected that the impact has a far wider reach as the attendees represent different families in the Traveller community.



Podcasts

MTW worked with Sam Whelan-Curtin to produce four podcasts addressing the following themes:

These podcasts reached an audience of approximately **70,000 people**.



Radio Advertisements

The final component of MTW's awareness-raising campaign was a **radio advertisement** on **LMFM** to highlight the project's work. LMFM, a leading radio station in Louth and Meath, also invited the project leads to join their talk show and shared MTW's videos on social media. The advertisements and videos were rebroadcast in December, allowing for prolonged impact.



TIMELINE ADJUSTMENTS

The project leads, in consultation with Women's Refuge and Rethink Ireland, decided that their awareness campaign (radio ads, podcasts, and school posters) would have a **far greater impact** if it was released in **September** rather than in July, which was the original month planned.

WHY?

The **Traveller community** has traditionally **relocated during the summer months** which would reduce the likelihood of them being reached by the information shared during the July campaign.

GBV incidents peak in **September and December** due to **increased financial pressure** before and after the holidays, as well as the **stress of returning to routine activities** like school and work.

With these factors in mind, MTW decided to **relaunch** their successful **September awareness campaign in December**. They also **increased their counselling hours** to offer women strong wraparound support.

CONCLUSION

The Freedom From Fear Fund has made significant strides in addressing gender-based violence through its dual approach of prevention and protection. The fund's awardees have successfully begun to **shift cultural norms, challenge gender inequality, and increase awareness** of the deep-rooted causes of violence. The protective measures implemented have also **improved access to crucial, trauma-informed support services** for survivors and their families.

While there is still much work to be done, the fund has laid a **strong foundation for ongoing efforts** to combat gender-based violence and support those affected by it. The progress achieved underscores the importance of continued investment in both preventative and protective strategies to **create lasting change**.

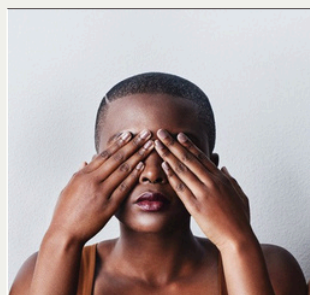
THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

We extend our deepest gratitude to our donors: Deloitte Ireland, Kinzen, the Drouillard Family Fund (via The Community Foundation of Ireland), SmartSimple, a private donor, and the Department of Rural and Community Development (via the Dormant Accounts Fund). In addition to our donors, we would also like to thank our partner, the National Women's Council.

Your commitment to this initiative has empowered our awardees to make meaningful impact and strengthened the foundation for a future free from fear. Thank you for being an integral part of this mission.



FREEDOM



FROM



FEAR



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