

CAMPAIGN AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Organisation	Creative Medialab Partnership between Creative Input Ltd. & Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College
Trigger	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already working with Wycombe District Council when opportunity to work with the Domestic Violence Unit was presented.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To raise awareness of domestic abuse as an issue affecting one in five (currently one in four) women from all social classes.
Tools/techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class project, with professional input from photographers, advertising professionals and actors. • Feedback from interested parties and the general public used to judge and amend work. • Presented a range of posters to stakeholders for feedback; Creative Medialab made the final decision.
Enablers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The freshness and creativity of designs from students. • Professionals were willing to provide free support. • The issue generated support from the general public.
Tensions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little money is available for public service campaigns. • An increase in reported abuse stretches agencies. • Professional groups do not like being on posters.
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The poster attracted 8,000 signatures. • 50% of people returned a postcard for International Day Against Violence towards women. • The campaign won an International Design Award '<i>Ideas that Matter</i>', Sappi.
Lessons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The work improved with the input of industry. • A simple brief helps students produce a creative and effective campaign. • Work undertaken by students is fully researched; not just another campaign.

Synopsis

This case concerns a poster campaign against domestic abuse designed to raise awareness of a much under-reported crime affecting one in four women from all social backgrounds. Creative Medialab, a partnership between Creative Input Limited and Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, worked initially with a brief from Wycombe Women's Aid. The posters created, are both hard hitting and provocative and are testament to the potential quality and creativity of students' designs. The campaign, which won an International Award for '*Ideas that Matter*', Sappi, provided students with valuable experience working with professional designers and Women's Aid. It also gave a financially pressed public sector and voluntary organisation access to professional advertising services at a cost it could afford.

Background to the Campaign Against Domestic Violence

The design consultants Creative Input Ltd and Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, set up a joint venture called Creative Medialab, the principle aims of which are to get students work out onto the streets and produce public service advertising campaigns that will lead to an awareness of social issues and effect change in social attitudes. Hale and Jenns, (1999) state that:

“By combining the creative energy and talent of students, advertising agency expertise and leading edge technology, Creative Medialab aims to produce effective, affordable advertising solutions”.

Creative Medialab presents a portfolio of campaigns that deal with issues such as healthy eating, recycling, the dangers of fireworks, electoral registration, school bullying and most recently, domestic abuse. Domestic abuse may be physical (i.e. threatening or carrying out violent acts), emotional (i.e. undermining of one's confidence and independence) or financial (i.e. the control and withholding of money). Whilst not classified as a criminal offence, mental and financial abuse may be equally as devastating. Domestic abuse currently affects one in four women and is Britain's biggest hidden crime, with research showing that women are hit on average 35 times before they contact the police (Horley, 1991).

This case study focuses upon a poster campaign against domestic abuse, undertaken by students in the second year of their degrees. In 1993, whilst working with Wycombe District Council, the College was asked whether it might like to meet with the Domestic Violence Unit to discuss working together. A brief was later provided by Wycombe Women's Aid. The brief itself was extremely simple: 'one in five women are affected' and 'domestic abuse affects all women, regardless of social class'. A single-page briefing document was provided for the first stage, which stated that the aim should be to improve the general public's awareness of domestic abuse. The second stage aimed to show understanding for women who are abused and the third stage practical steps that could be taken by abused women.

It was anticipated that the campaign would increase the reporting of domestic violence by 10% to 15%. In order to capture any changes, the Council conducted a survey to establish baseline figures using a Domestic Violence Monitor.

This case is based on interviews with Andy Hale, Creative Input and Dave Morris, Senior Lecturer in Advertising, Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College. A tour of the College's facilities was undertaken and copies of posters and documentation provided.

Design Process

Briefing Session

Students met with Women's Aid to discuss the issue of domestic abuse and the aims of the campaign. They were shocked to find that one in five women across all social classes suffered domestic abuse. Its relevance to groups such the elderly and children was also discussed, along with deeper issues about power. After this meeting, the students were apparently 'all fired up'.

Development

The students, who worked on the brief as a class project, were divided into groups of between three and five people, under the guise of being a mini advertising agency. Advertisers aim to ensure that the message is understood, without misinterpretation and results in a desired outcome, in this case the raising of awareness. The designs were therefore subjected to critique from London advertising agencies, which had agreed to collaborate with the project free of charge. Feedback was also gained from a group of 100 interested parties. This showed that the receiver often interprets the message differently from what was intended by the sender and/or may have misinterpreted the brief. It was found, for instance, that students had to field a range of different concepts and sometimes picked up on issues considered less relevant to people involved in tackling domestic violence.

Choosing the Designs

Work in progress was numbered and put on view so that people could pass comment. Designs that 'passed' were developed further and 'failed' designs simply rejected. The process helped to generate new ideas and the 'scattergun' approach allowed interested parties to offer feedback on a greater range of designs.

The designs were chosen for their simplicity and relevance to the brief. This had stated that the public should be made aware that: 'one in five women are affected' and 'domestic abuse affects all women, regardless of social class'. Thus, the chosen designs state that one in five women are abused by their partners. In order to counter misconceptions that domestic violence is only suffered by working class women, pictures of policewomen, nurses and teachers show that domestic abuse is a crime that cuts across all social classes (see figures 1, 2 and 3).



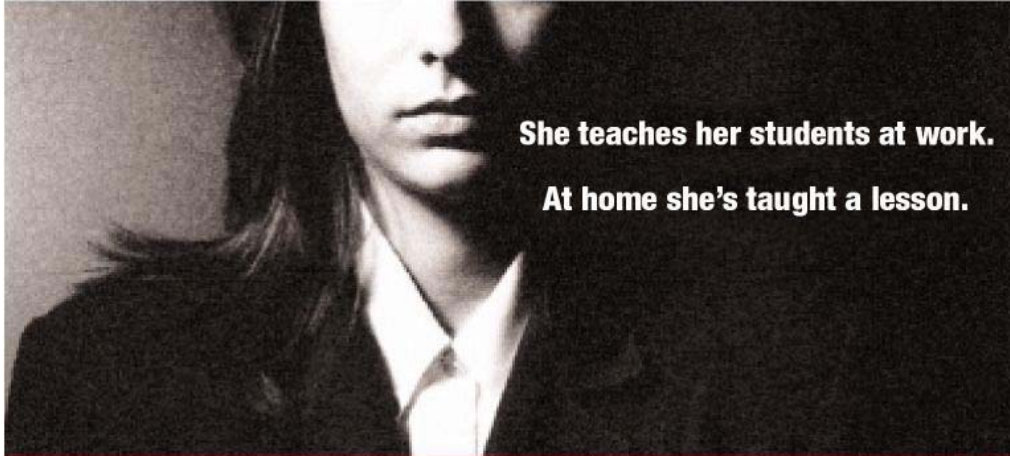
**She deals with
domestic violence every day.
Her own.**

1 in 5 women are abused by their partners. Call the Samaritans and ask for Wycombe Women's Aid.




**She sees a lot of domestic violence.
Every time she goes home.**

1 in 5 women are abused by their partners. Call the Samaritans and ask for Wycombe Women's Aid.



**She teaches her students at work.
At home she's taught a lesson.**

1 in 5 women are abused by their partners. Call the Samaritans and ask for Wycombe Women's Aid.



The next stage of the campaign aimed to demonstrate to abused women that they were understood by support agencies. The designs show that women with violent partners can never do anything right in the eyes of their partners. This is illustrated by an image of a women using make-up to cover up a back eye and the statement: "Too much make-up, you're a slut. Too little, you're a slob" (see figures 4, 5 and 6).



**Too much make-up,
you're a slut.**

Too little, you're a slob.

SPEAK TO SOMEONE YOU CAN REASON WITH CALL THE SAMARITANS AND ASK FOR WOMEN'S AID 0800 500 300



**Fight back,
you're challenging him.**

**Defend yourself, and you're
trying to make him feel guilty.**

SPEAK TO SOMEONE YOU CAN REASON WITH CALL THE SAMARITANS AND ASK FOR WOMEN'S AID 0800 500 300



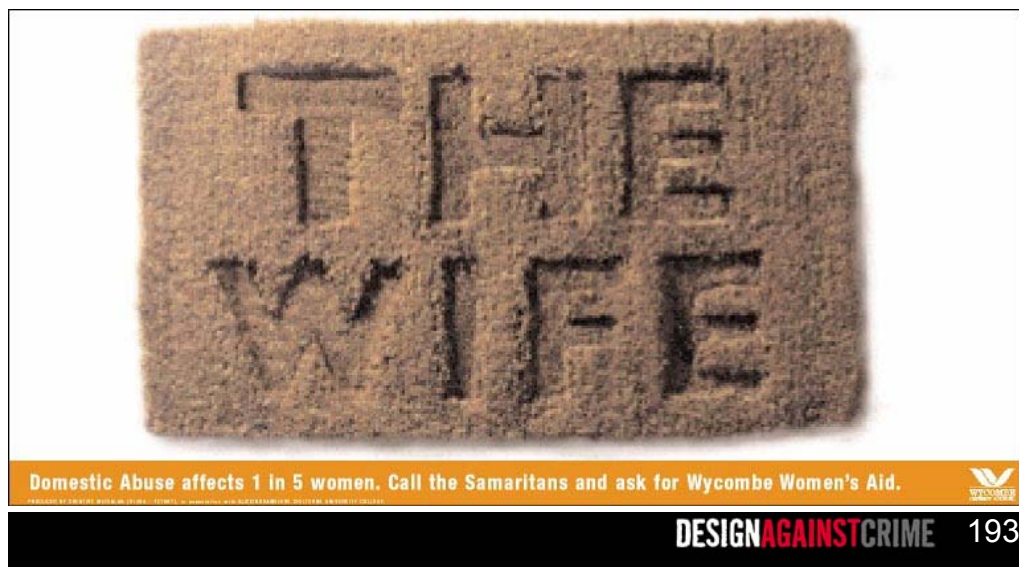
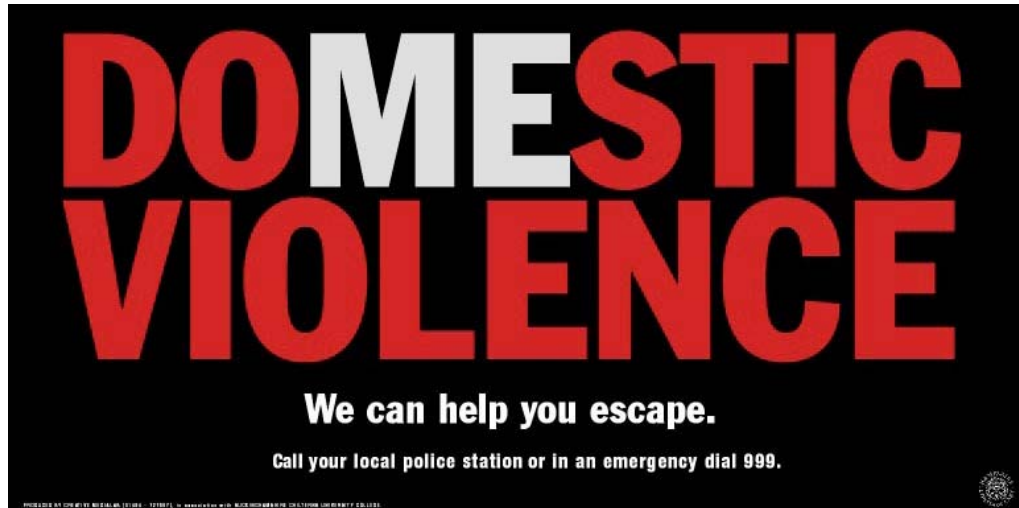
**Wear a negligee,
you look like a whore.**

**Go to bed in pyjamas,
you're seeing someone else.**

SPEAK TO SOMEONE YOU CAN REASON WITH CALL THE SAMARITANS AND ASK FOR WOMEN'S AID 0800 500 300

The designers acknowledge that such designs are uncomfortable, almost intrusive.

Although all the posters provide contact details, only the third stage of the campaign focussed directly on the practical steps women could take to cope with domestic violence.



Posters

The posters were designed to work in a range of sizes from an A4 leaflet to the popular A3 poster, through to a large roadside billboard (48 sheet) posters and can be adapted for bus or car panels. They were badged with local agency logos, help-line telephone numbers and messages, as well as Creative Medialab's name and number.

Impact

The posters were displayed in local offices in High Wycombe, although some groups of professional people did not want to display the posters. Solicitors argued that '*it could not be us*', whilst health professionals felt that the message was too negative. The design team were pleased to stimulate such debate.

The campaign was one of five European winning entries for the Sappi Award for 'Ideas that Matter'. Sappi (South African Paper and Pulp Industries) is an international producer of paper products and receives over 500 entries from all around the world for its competition. The 50,000 Euro award was spent implementing the campaign in the UK. This included an event on International Day Against Violence Towards Women, November 2000, when the design teams displayed posters in Milton Keynes Town Centre. The general public was asked to pledge support. The campaign gained 8,000 signatures and gave out 16,000 white ribbon postcards; 8,000 of which were returned to Dr Phyllis Starkey MP, at the House of Commons. The design teams were touched by the interest and openness displayed by the general public, as David Morris comments:

"As a warm up and a method of gauging what is going on locally, it was great. We left the poster up for another two weeks. You see others sign it, even two weeks later. It was an amazing, galvanising experience. The Council and Women's Aid were all fired up from dealing with the general public".

David Morris points out that children too, understood the issues:

"Some people think that children don't understand. They understand far more than they are given credit for... "

Indeed, Wycombe Women's Aid had wanted to address problems faced by children who witness domestic violence, but it was difficult to determine a clear aim, message or desired outcome, as he goes on to explain:

"We did not know what they wanted to do. There wasn't a strapline. What are we asking children to do - report their parents? Teachers would have to have special training to deal with these issues" (Dave Morris, Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College).

The main campaign was delayed until March 2001, as local agencies such as police and housing services feared being unable to cope with the potential increase in reported incidents:

"They worried that it would bring in more work and that they wouldn't be able to handle it. It potentially ups the workload for the police, NHS and housing services.

Even an increase in 10% of reported incidents could swamp them” (David Morris, Buckinghamshire Chilterns College).

Further details of the campaign against domestic violence will be published by Sappi in due course. Creative Medialab continues to work on domestic violence campaigns. Also, domestic violence has been taken up as an issue by the Chamber of Commerce, as it impacts on performance at work.

Lessons Learned

The campaign demonstrates the creativity of students and the willingness of professional designers to support a worthwhile and potentially successful campaign involving students. Wolfgang Pfari, Europe’s chief executive officer, Sappi Fine Paper commented that:

“It is very encouraging to see that there are designers that are willing to donate their time and skills for the benefit of society”.

Next time, the design team aim to apply for further funding and improve its methods of measuring the impact of a campaign. Ideally, Creative Medialab would like to see co-ordinated action to address domestic violence, orchestrated by the Women’s Aid organisations working together and perhaps funded by Government.

References, Related Cases and Further Reading

Hale, A. and Jenns, T. (1999) Creative Medialab Public Service Advertising Portfolio. Creative Medialab. ISDN 01494 721725.

Horley, S. (1991) *The Charm Syndrome*. PAPERMAC: London.

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/domesticviolence/hoagen.htm>

Sappi Competition details available on: www.sappi.com

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Classification Index

Ekblom's crime classification	misbehaviour (violence against the person).
BCS crime classification	Violence against the person.
DAC	Protecting women
Primary motivation	Social
Type of designer	Graphic
Approach	Research-based and Media.
Sector	Public and voluntary
Location	Home
Author	Caroline Davey

DAC – Domestic Violence