

# WAGGGS' Initiative on the Prevention of Adolescent Pregnancy

## Campaigning at the national level

WAGGGS' adolescent pregnancy advocacy campaign is a worldwide initiative. There are many ways in which you can support the campaign at a national level. You could:

- Send out a press release to relevant media contacts after the global launch (December/January 2001)
- Raise the issue wherever possible, at your own events or at events organized by other groups
- Organize events and seminars led by your young members on the issue, inviting other young people, the media and interested organizations
- Raise awareness of the issue and how it can be addressed by the Government, local schools, health services, communities and other youth organizations
- Write letters to decision-making bodies to ensure that they address the issue of adolescent pregnancy
- Join in partnership with organizations which are also concerned with the prevention of adolescent pregnancy
- Organize a round table on the issue, inviting key speakers, including young people, and media

The following pages contain advice and ideas to help you do all these things. Later on, you will find some advice on campaigning locally.

**Please tell Charlotte Collett-White, Head of Communications at the World Bureau, of what you are planning to do on this initiative.**

### Working with the World Health Organization

The World Health Organization supports the WAGGGS initiative, and will provide some technical expertise.

The WHO's involvement is a tremendous help to the campaign. It gives us great credibility and authority to talk on this issue.



The World Health Organization supports the WAGGGS initiative, and will provide technical expertise throughout.



## What will your messages be?

As well as talking about the issue of teenage pregnancy, and our campaign objectives, this campaign will give you opportunities to talk about WAGGGS and your National Organization. When you go to a meeting or talk to the media, think about which of our messages you want to promote:

- Adolescent pregnancy – the problem and its solutions
- The importance of non-formal education for girls and young women
- The work of your organization, and of WAGGGS worldwide.

*Refer to the Position Paper on Adolescent Pregnancies (WB 3093, February 2000) for key messages about the campaign.*



## Launching the Campaign

Start as you mean to go on. Launch the campaign with a high profile event and a splash of media coverage. The launch is a perfect opportunity to convey your messages to your target audiences, including the media.

The World Bureau sent out a press release to media worldwide in January 2001. You can take advantage of the raised awareness this will generate to announce the launch of your national campaign. A draft press release is enclosed with this pack which you can adapt to suit your own needs and give advance notice of your launch event.

Your launch should highlight the key messages of your campaign:

- The issue of adolescent pregnancy
- The work of your organization: this is a vital opportunity to establish your position as part of the world's largest movement for girls and young women
- Key campaign objectives

When planning your launch, give journalists enough time to research the issue and prepare their story. Give them plenty of information – including the statistics enclosed in this pack and information specific to your country. Offer interviews with key people, such as the head of your organization, local leaders, Girl Guides/Girl Scouts themselves, and representatives of any organizations you are working with on this campaign.

Following the launch, you can keep up the momentum with a series of campaign actions, designed to achieve your objectives but also to keep the spotlight on you.

The launch is a perfect opportunity to convey your messages to your target audiences, including the media.



## Public opinion

Public opinion is a vital tool in any campaign. Public pressure can bring about changes in policy and services locally and nationally.

In some countries many people see pregnant teenagers as irresponsible or stupid. In some countries, early marriage and motherhood are seen as normal. Both of these views need to be challenged. You can stimulate debate, and help people understand that very young mothers are at risk, physically, educationally and socially, and that their children are too.

You can inform and influence public opinion in a number of ways. Public meetings and posters are good ways of reaching people at a local level. The best way of taking your message to the widest audience is to use the media: newspapers and magazines, radio and television, and the internet. The media can help bring about major changes in public opinion.

## Lobbying the Government

'Lobbying' means seeking to influence those who make the laws. It is a key part of an advocacy campaign. If we are aiming for political change, we have to engage in politics. The WAGGGS Policy and Guidelines on Relationship to Society contain advice on working with Government Ministries.

You will need to develop a good understanding of the politics in your country and region. What real opportunities are there for change? Who may be sympathetic to your aims and who is not? Who controls the budgets for public services? When are the crucial decisions made? Whenever you make demands, you need to know that they are realistic – for example there is no point in issuing a demand for more money for health services the week after budgets have been set for the year.

You need to identify the politicians you need to influence, and get to know them. Write to introduce yourself, and ask for a meeting. Find out about any formal opportunities for lobbying them. See the advice in the WAGGGS Policy and Guidelines on Relationship to Society about forging relationships with Government departments.

Politicians will get a better understanding of an issue if they see it with their own eyes. So invite them to visit projects that work with young mothers, to learn for themselves how early childbirth can threaten girls' health and damage their educational and social opportunities. And invite them to visit some of your Association's activities, to learn about the opportunities you offer to your members.

Remember that politicians are very concerned about public opinion. They owe their jobs to it. So let your targets know that you will publicise any good that they do to your members and to the media.



Public opinion is a vital tool in any campaign. Public pressure can bring about changes in policy and services locally and nationally.



There is often a wide gap between what politicians say and what they do. If a politician makes a sympathetic statement, you must hold them to it. Keep a note of what they said and remind them at every opportunity. Quote them in your press releases and letters. They will find it much harder to wriggle out of doing something if you are constantly reminding people of what they said.

## Letter-writing

Writing letters is one of the simplest and most effective methods of campaigning. In a letter you can put across your point of view in a clear and considered way, and you can ask for a response. The reader will have to reply to the points you raise, in writing. You can then hold them to their word.

Later in these pages you will find some tips for letter-writing for groups. These hold just as true for letters that you write on behalf of your organization.

Consider sending an 'open letter'. This means that as well as sending it to your target, you send a copy to the newspapers. They may well cover the story.

Your letter may carry more weight if it comes from an alliance of organizations. Ask other organizations working on the same issue if they would like to write a joint letter.

As well as writing to key decision-makers, write to other people, such as religious leaders, educationalists, or celebrities. Ask if they support your campaign. If they do, plan how to use them further.

## Petition

A petition is a good way of demonstrating the strength of popular concern on an issue. Petitions also provide a good way of contacting people, particularly on the street and at public events. They can also be newsworthy. But to be effective, you must get lots of signatures. Don't launch a petition unless your organization is prepared to put a lot of work into getting it signed.

If your Association has a website, you could ask people to sign your petition electronically. Ask your members and supporters to email all their 'online' contacts asking them to spread the word. Encourage other organizations to put links from their websites, and to email their contacts too.



Writing letters is one of the simplest and most effective methods of campaigning.



## Networking

The more people are behind a campaign, the more influence it will have. By networking with other organizations, institutions and individuals, you will not only spread the word about adolescent pregnancy, but also build people's awareness and understanding of Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting.

Included in this pack is a list of other organizations working in the area of sexual and reproductive health, and girls' and women's rights. You will almost certainly find other organizations working locally.

The WAGGGS Policy and Guidelines on Relationship to Society contains advice on Networking.

## Events

An event can provide an opportunity to bring key players together and get information and campaign demands into the open. Over the life of your campaign, you could hold a series of events to mark new stages in the campaign, or to introduce new people and new ideas into the debate. As well as campaigning events, you could hold social events to build relationships with your contacts, thank people who have helped the campaign, or to honour and gain recognition for the activities of Girl Guides/Girl Scouts in your country.

Events can take many different forms. The following are just some possibilities.

- A Conference, where experts give papers
- Seminars, for practitioners to discuss ideas and ways of working
- Public meetings, to raise awareness and encourage people to support the campaign
- A Rally, to demonstrate the strength of popular support and demand action
- A reception or party, help people feel involved in the campaign and build their enthusiasm
- An Exhibition of photography, paintings or posters
- A Preview of a video or television programme about the campaign

### Before holding your event:

- Plan carefully. Think about the event's aims: is it for general awareness-raising, to influence a particular group, or to encourage people to take action themselves?
- Choose a venue which will feel welcoming to the people you want to come.
- Advertise the event. Send a press release to the local media. Think about how to reach the people you want to come. Distribute fliers or posters in local community centres, and send invitations to local colleges or health centres, for example.



The more people are behind a campaign, the more influence it will have.



- Decide on a format and allocate times to each activity. Include a warm-up activity to get people thinking. On the day appoint a timekeeper to make sure no one overruns their given slot.
- Check the venue. Make sure you have all the resources and facilities you need. Put up banners or posters to personalise the space and make key messages clear to everyone who attends. Put up an exhibition about your work for people to look at while they wait for the meeting to start. Make sure that there are only enough seats for the number you expect: if there are lots of empty seats people will think the turn-out is low.
- Make it easy for people to get more involved in the campaign, and to keep in touch. Put a flier on every chair with details of what they can do. Collect people's names and addresses so that you can contact them again.

## Publicity Materials

You may need some publicity materials to back up your campaign, such as leaflets, to convey simple messages to the public, fliers to promote events, posters for display in public spaces across the country, and perhaps a more detailed briefing or report with more detail on the issue and your objectives.

Use statistics and quotations from this pack, as well as national ones.

Design your materials carefully to give the campaign a strong visual identity. Consider producing templates to help local groups produce their own materials.

## Using the Media

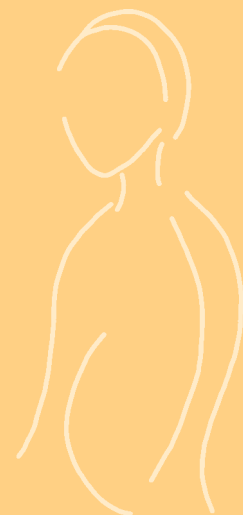
Getting media coverage is easier than you might think. Journalists are always looking for interesting stories. You can help them by thinking through the 'angles' that make your campaign newsworthy.

The *Media Relations Kit* contains lots of advice and information about working with the media.

## Making News

Enclosed with this pack is a standard press release about the launch of the WAGGGS campaign. Adapt it for your own use. Give the story a national slant by including national statistics, information about some of your activities, and quotes from national leaders/Girl Guides/Girl Scouts.

You can write a press release whenever you have a news story to give the media. The Media Relations Kit contains tips on writing a good press release.



Getting media coverage is easier than you might think.



Journalists need a good reason why they should cover a story now. Many journalists receive hundreds of releases every week. So make sure yours stand out from the crowd. Each one should tell a new and newsworthy story.

The launch of your campaign is in itself a good news event. You can create other news stories. Below are some suggestions, as well as a list of international events which you could use to make a story topical. Keep an ear open for locally relevant conferences, publications, visits by dignitaries, or anything else that could be a 'hook' to hang a story on.

### ***News stories:***

- Hold an event
- Announce the results of a survey or opinion poll
- Publish some new research
- Announce the winners of a competition
- Host a visit from a VIP
- Milestones in the progress of your campaign, eg '10,000 people have now signed the petition...'
- Carry out a one-off activity

### ***Hooks:***

A 'hook' is an existing event or situation which is already taking place, and which can be used to also promote the WAGGGS Sensitvie issue.

National Girl Guide/Girl Scout events  
WAGGGS Regional Conferences  
WAGGGS World Conference

<b>8 March</b>	United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace
<b>7 April</b>	World Health Day
<b>15 May</b>	International Day of Families
<b>11 July</b>	World Population Day
<b>8 September</b>	International Literacy Day
<b>17 October</b>	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
<b>20 November</b>	Universal Children's Day
<b>1 December</b>	World AIDS Day
<b>5 December</b>	International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development
<b>10 December</b>	Human Rights Day

**September 2001** - UN Special Session on the achievement of the goals of the World Summit for Children

### ***Photo calls***

Offering a good photograph will greatly increase the chances of getting your event covered in the papers, and will make the story more interesting for readers too. Pictures of children and young people are always popular so think about how you could use your members: could they present a letter or petition to a politician, or pose with posters they have designed?



Many  
journalists  
receive  
hundreds of  
releases  
every week.  
So make  
sure yours  
stand out  
from the  
crowd.



Highlight the 'photo call' at the top of your press release, and send it to Picture Editors as well as News desks. But make sure you take your own good quality photographs too, in case the professionals are too lazy to turn up!

### ***Television and Radio***

The rules for getting a story on the television or radio are the same as for newspapers, with the difference that television needs interesting pictures and radio needs sound.

Plan your activities with these in mind. If you are launching a report or new campaign demand, choose a location which will provide interesting viewing, or listening, rather than in your office. For example, a tv crew might like to film at a health or youth centre. Or invite a radio reporter to a local Girl Guides/Girl Scouts meeting, where he or she could record the girls talking or singing. Young voices make a refreshing change from the usual radio programmes of adults, so train your young members to give interviews.

Many broadcasters have slots for short programmes made by community groups. Investigate the potential of making your own television or radio programme.

### ***Use Celebrities***

Celebrities can be a great help in publicising your cause. If you can recruit a celebrity who is popular with teenage girls, this will be an enormous asset. Get your members to write to their favourite celebrities asking if they will support the campaign.

Some celebrities may be willing to lend their name to your campaign, but not to do any more. In this case, get them to agree a statement and give you a photograph, which you can send to the press.

Some may be willing to do more. You can ask them to:

- Attend a press conference. They will attract journalists and photographers who would not come otherwise.
- Visit your projects. Invite the press along to record it.
- Sign your petition and encourage their celebrity friends to do so too.
- Meet decision-makers. Some politicians may be more interested in meeting a celebrity than a group of Girl Guides/Girl Scouts. But you will need to go with them, to make sure the key points are raised.
- Mention the campaign in interviews. In fact they could make this a condition of agreeing to interviews.
- Promote the campaign to their fan-clubs.

Remember that you need to brief your celebrity carefully. Make sure he or she has memorised two or three key points.



Young voices make a refreshing change from the usual radio programmes of adults, so train your young members to give interviews.



## ***Feature Ideas***

A feature is a longer story in a newspaper or magazine or on a radio or television programme. It does not need to contain news, though if it does, or is related to a topical news story, it will help. Features are often commissioned well in advance of publication, giving journalists plenty of time to research the issue and look for interesting angles. If you have an idea for a feature, discuss it with a journalist now.

The issue of adolescent pregnancy could be explored in both a global context, and locally, looking at specific problems in your country.

Set the campaign within the wider context of your organization's work. Look at other projects and campaigns which show that your group is doing valuable on issues that affect girls and young women. Invite a journalist to visit some of the projects, or to meet some of the girls.

Some journalists may find the combination of Girl Guides/Girl Scouts and teenage sex surprising or funny. While this may be irritating, take advantage of their interest. Show them that Girl Guides/Girl Scouts are not just the well-behaved model children they might think, but real young women who are face the same decisions and challenges as their peers.

## ***Build your contacts***

Get to know the journalists you want to cover your campaign. Send them information, phone them up, and if possible, arrange an informal meeting to discuss the issues. Invite them to come and see your projects and meet your members. Once a journalist is interested, it will be much easier to get coverage of your activities. They may have good ideas about how to promote the campaign that you would never have thought of.

## ***Write letters to the press***

Writing to the letters page of a newspaper is a great way to get your views heard. The letters page is one of the most widely read sections of any paper. Sometimes writing a letter is a surer way of getting your message across than relying on a journalist to get it right.

Keep your letter short and simple. Make one strong point and say it in 150 words or less. The most widely read letters are one sentence long!

## ***And finally***

Please send tapes, videos and photocopies of all your media coverage to the World Bureau.



The issue of adolescent pregnancy could be explored in both a global context, and locally, looking at specific problems in your country.

