



## WAGGGS POSITION STATEMENT The Right to Food

**The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) believes it is unacceptable for hunger and malnutrition to continue in a world that has the knowledge and resources to provide adequate food for all. As the voice of girls and young women WAGGGS has identified the Right to Food as a priority issue on which to take a stand and speak out.**

WAGGGS provides millions of girls and young women with non-formal education, giving them the opportunity to develop self-esteem, confidence and life skills. Working with Member Organizations in 144 countries, our vision is to build a better world through advocacy and action. We aim not only to speak out on behalf of girls and young women everywhere, but also to empower young women to speak out for themselves.

### Food and Nutrition Globally

- Today 854 million people across the world are hungry and every day more than 16,000 children die from hunger-related causes - one child every five seconds.<sup>i</sup> Some 200 million girls and boys under the age of five suffer from acute or chronic malnutrition, with poor nutrition and calorie deficiencies causing nearly one in three people to die prematurely or have disabilities.<sup>ii</sup>
- Seven in every ten of the world's hungry are girls and women. Hunger manifests itself in many ways other than starvation and famine. Most poor people who battle hunger deal with chronic under-nourishment resulting in stunted growth, weakness and heightened susceptibility to illness.
- Hunger also reduces school attendance more for girls than for boys. Today, 115 million children do not go to primary school; three-fifth of them girls. Hungry girls start school later, if at all, learn less or do not finish, resulting in lower earnings and increased risk of future hunger.
- Every year, vitamin and mineral deficiencies cause one million children to die before the age of five, 50,000 women to die during or soon after childbirth and \$6 billion in lost work performance.<sup>iii</sup> Anaemia is the single most prevalent cause of micronutrient malnutrition affecting more than two billion people, which leads to a lack of energy, lower productivity and a reduction in the body's ability to fight disease.<sup>iv</sup>
- Good nutrition is not only about quantity of food, but also its quality. The nutritional value of food must be enhanced with micronutrients. Supplementary feeding programmes, food fortification, school feeding; food-for-work and nutrition education and consumer awareness programmes are the types of targeted programmes most commonly used to improve nutrition.
- Every day 8,000 people die from AIDS. In Africa, there are 11 million AIDS orphans. Most of them never learned how their mothers grew and prepared food.
- HIV/AIDS affects girls' and women's nutrition and food security. It reduces their ability to feed and care for themselves. This can lead to malnutrition, which can accelerate the development of AIDS. It is especially important for girls and women living with HIV/AIDS to eat healthy, well-balanced diets. Good diets prevent weight loss and help girls and women to stay healthy longer.

i State of Food Insecurity in the World 2006, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) 2006

ii World Health Organization 2000

iii Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition 2006

iv UNICEF 2006



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WAGGGS calls on the international community and national governments to ensure that all people, including girls and young women, are free from hunger, have access to adequate and safe food and are supported in making healthy food choices by:

- **Alleviating** the constraints faced by women in accessing food and ensuring gender-responsive interventions to improve household food security and nutrition
- **Involving** girls and young women in planning and the provision of programmes that affect their food security
- **Ensuring** that girls and women have the knowledge, skills, opportunities and resources to produce their own food or to earn income to buy it
- **Taking** steps through nutritional education, information and food labelling to promote balanced diets and healthy eating habits
- **Strengthening** action on counteracting obesity, including regulating nutritional labelling, education on healthy diet choices and ensuring access to, and availability of, healthier food for children
- **Providing** support for, and access to, physical activities in the local community, and in schools

#### WAGGGS urges Member Organizations to:

- **Support** Girl Guides and Girl Scouts to get involved in the fight against hunger and malnutrition and provide materials and badges to motivate members
- **Encourage** groups that are working on food and nutrition projects to apply for the FAO-WAGGGS Nutrition Medal
- **Work** in partnership with other Member Organizations, NGOs and UN agencies to support food and nutrition projects
- **Lobby** the international community to fulfil its promises to reduce, by half, the number of those who suffer from hunger, by 2015

#### How WAGGGS is addressing the Right to Food:

- WAGGGS works with a number of international partners on food and nutrition. It carries out projects related to FAO's "Feeding Minds Fighting Hunger" initiative.
- WAGGGS works closely with the International Alliance Against Hunger, a voluntary association of alliances in developing and developed countries, working towards eradicating hunger and poverty.
- Every October, the FAO-WAGGGS Nutrition Medal is awarded to Girl Guides and Girl Scouts working on food issues in their communities. So far, more than sixteen Member Organizations have received the medal for outstanding work. For example in Chile, Kenya and Pakistan, projects have improved the awareness of and access to healthy foods in poorer communities.
- In cooperation with FAO, WAGGGS published *'The Right to Food – A Window on the World'* cartoon book and activity guide. The book, which is illustrated by young people for young people, contains cartoon stories addressing food topics in eight countries around the world.
- The theme for WAGGGS' World Thinking Day 2005 was about food. Girl Guides and Girl Scouts were encouraged to find out more about food topics related to a specific country and about nutrition in general. Activities aimed at raising awareness on the right to food and the importance of a balanced diet. At least 70 countries took part; for example, the Danish Guide and Scout Association produced a brochure on healthy eating featuring different countries from around the world.
- The WAGGGS theme Building World Citizenship (1997-2002) involved more than 27 Member Organizations that carried out 45 food and nutrition projects.
- WAGGGS published another position statement on healthy food choices that focuses on healthy eating and eating disorders.



girls worldwide say

“make healthy food choices”

World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts  
Association mondiale des Guides et des Eclaireuses  
Asociación Mundial de las Guías Scouts

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#### CASE STUDY

##### Joining Forces against Hunger

WAGGGS has joined forces with FAO to educate girls and young women around the world about the basic right to be free from hunger and malnutrition and to motivate them to become actively involved in the fight against hunger. By providing practical tools such as a cartoon story book and activity guide '*The Right to Food: A Window on the World*' we prepare and encourage girls and young women and their leaders to work together with us in the global fight against hunger.

Both books present right to food issues in a simple, understandable and attractive style to capture the attention of girls and young women. The story book includes eight individual stories, each of which highlights selected right to food issues in eight countries: Brazil, Canada, India, Indonesia, Italy, Jordan, Sierra Leone and Uganda. The illustrations for each story were drawn by young artists, art students and Girl Guides/Girl Scouts through national contests, organized in eight countries. The teacher's guide provides additional information and learning material about the right to food, simple teaching tools, games and activities.

**“We recognize that the nutritional well-being of all people is a pre-condition for the development of societies and that it should be a key objective of progress in human development. It must be at the centre of our socio-economic development plans and strategies.”**

*World Declaration on Nutrition, 1992*