



CAPTURING THE VOICES OF YOUNG GIRLS

WAGGGS would like to start proactively using the voices of girls and young women under the age of 18 years more in its external communication, programme reporting or fundraising work.

As the only global Movement geared entirely to every girl and any girl, it is really important in our communication work that we reflect the voices and personal experiences of those who represent the younger section of our Movement.

It is the most powerful way for us to demonstrate the need and impact of our work for girls and young women around the world and can be an empowering opportunity for the young person as it gives them a platform to have their voices heard.

We can use these stories across a range of platforms - traditional and social media, fundraising reports and proposals, programme evaluations and marketing and communication materials - to help build awareness of our Movement, engage different audiences in the variety and depth of the work we do, and help us raise more money to support it.

This document outlines the different ways you can capture the voices of young girls and some practical steps for finding the right stories and ensuring that it is a positive, empowering experience for those taking part.

THE VOICES OF YOUNG GIRLS:

There are lots of different ways we can capture the voices of young girls that require a different level of engagement and commitment from the individual involved. Here are some common examples:

- A quote from a young girl on a campaign or programme they are involved in.
- Images of a young girl/s taking part in WAGGGS activities that could be used as a photo gallery or to accompany a young person's quote or story. To accompany any photo you always need basic details; name, age and location.
- A longer written case study, with more detail about why and how the young person is involved in WAGGGS, their personal motivation for doing so and what their life is like to reflect the different cultural issues young girls face across the world.
- An interview with a journalist, so her story can be used by the media to raise awareness of WAGGGS work

IDENTIFYING THE RIGHT STORY:

One of the most important steps when working with young people to tell their stories, whether that be just capturing a quote or doing a full interview with a journalist, is to identify the right young person.

- Be clear about the story you want to tell so that you can identify a young person who has relevant experience of that issue
- You may need to speak to a few different young people until you find the right one.
- If you are doing a longer case study it is important the young person is able to tell their story in a clear, engaging way so be mindful of how confident they are when talking to you and how easily they are able to express themselves.
- The most powerful stories are those where young girls have personal experience of the issues they are campaigning on. They can say, 'this happened to me, so I am doing this...'
- Don't be afraid to ask a young person about their own personal experiences. These often make for the most powerful stories.
- As well as asking about their involvement with WAGGGS, it is also important to ask about their daily life, family, school, what they enjoy etc. That way you can build up a picture of the young girl as a whole, which will make the story about why they are involved with WAGGGS much more engaging.
- In some instances a young person may be happy to tell their story but not be identified. There are creative ways to protect anonymity. (See below)

PREPARING FOR AN INTERVIEW:

There are some basic steps you can follow to help prepare a young person who is going to be interviewed by a journalist or another external person:

- Take time to run through a practice interview beforehand and ensure they are aware of any difficult questions or any personal issues they are not happy to talk about.
- Make sure the interview takes place in an environment they feel comfortable in and gives them privacy.
- Think about who is conducting the interview. If a woman is talking about her experience of gender based violence or lives in a patriarchal culture they are more likely to open up if talking to another woman.
- Be clear with the interviewee beforehand if there are any questions a young person does not want to talk about as this will affect the kind of story the journalist gets.
- Be clear about whether the young person should be anonymous. Again make sure the interviewee is aware of that as it affects how they will be able to tell their story.
- Always sit in on the interview so you are aware of what the young person is being asked and that they are not being pushed to talk about anything they are uncomfortable with.
- Always make time to talk the interview through with the young person after it has taken place, how they felt it went and any further support they need.
- Always ensure that the Chief Commissioner or International Commissioner has authorised for the interview before it takes place.

INFORMED CONSENT:

- A signed consent form (see consent release form) from the child and their parent / guardian should be secured in circumstances that ensure neither was coerced in any way and both understand the implications of the release.
- It must be properly explained how and where their story / image / video is going to be used.
- Be explicit about this and seek informed consent especially for a more in-depth story and/or a series of photos or film footage of particular individuals.
- If we use a child's image, name, age and their words, in our marketing/communication materials, we need to have a consent form signed by their parent or guardian. A young person under 18 should never be interviewed or photographed individually without the parent / guardian giving their explicit consent.
- If you know you are attending a particular Girl Guiding session to gather stories and images, it is important you speak to the leader of that session in advance so they can identify some young girls who are happy to speak to you and informed consent can be secured from their parents beforehand.
- If a young person changes their mind about having their image / story shared, WAGGGS will delete all of the content from their systems and comms channels and not use it again. But it is important that the parent / guardian understand when giving consent that although WAGGGS will not use the story / image anymore if requested, if it is already in the public domain we don't have the authority to take content down from external sites.
- When you are taking pictures of young people in a group setting – eg. A Stop the Violence session – but they are not being photographed individually you do not need to secure individual consent. A trusted adult, eg the guide leader running the session, should be able to give consent on behalf of the group.
- If there is time to interview someone, there is time to ask for consent.

TO PROTECT ANNONIMITY:

If a child or young person wants to tell their story but not reveal their identity if they are talking about a particularly high risk issue (eg experience of sexual violence, HIV) it is best practice to not to use the three identifiers below as they make it easier for someone to be traced;

- First and last name together
- place (e.g. school, town)
- image together as they allow a child to be traced.

In all cases, whether or how a subject's identity should be protected is a judgement that must be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The decision should always be made in what is the best interests of the child.

PHOTOS THAT REVEAL YET CONCEAL:

Sometimes it can be appropriate to protect the identity of a young person who wants to tell their story but does not want to be identified.

We can take photos creatively resulting in powerful and effective images. Examples are shown.¹

