



**WORLD ASSOCIATION
OF GIRL GUIDES
AND GIRL SCOUTS**



FREE BEING ME

The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) is working with Dove through our innovative Free Being Me partnership towards one overarching vision; a world where no-one is worried about the way they look.

Together our mission is to empower girls to reach their full potential by strengthening their body confidence and self-esteem. We want to girls everywhere to feel free to be themselves.

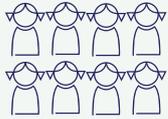


ISSUE



Around the world millions of girls and young women struggle to engage in everyday activities because of low self-esteem and body image anxiety.

DOVE SELF ESTEEM PROJECT GLOBAL RESEARCH HAS FOUND THAT:



EIGHT OUT OF TEN GIRLS

are so concerned with the way they look that they opt out of important activities; from playing sports, going to school or just offering an opinion, anxiety about their looks can keep girls from living life to the full.



SEVEN OUT OF TEN GIRLS

report putting their health at risk by not eating or not going to visit the doctor when they don't feel good about the way they look.¹



IN 2013 WAGGGS AND DOVE recognised a unique opportunity to work together to help raise a generation of girls and young women to feel more positive about their bodies. Our partnership brings together the Dove Self Esteem Project, which aims to make a real change in the way girls perceive and embrace beauty, and WAGGGS, the largest voluntary movement dedicated to girls and young women with **10 MILLION MEMBERS ACROSS 150 COUNTRIES**.

WHAT IS FREE BEING ME?

Our original programme, 'Free Being Me', takes children and young people through a 'body confidence-boosting journey of discovery'. Through fun and interactive activities they are encouraged to challenge beauty myths, recognise that confidence and self-esteem come from valuing their bodies, and plan ways to take action to engage their peers and share what they have learned.

Free Being Me has changed my life and how I behave as a young woman. I now understand who I am and what I can be. It has made me value my nature and personality, to appreciate how I was born and be proud of it without thinking of changing my body colour.

Girl Guide, Malawi

Created alongside world-leading experts in body confidence (from the Centre for Appearance Research, University of West of England and the Body Project, Oregon USA) the programme focuses on girls aged 7-10 and 11-14 years.

It has been rolled out in 120 countries and is available in 24 languages.



Our unit team ran Free Being Me with the Brownies over 3 weeks. They watched Disney's Brave and talked about her character and also discussed her image in the film against the look of an alternative, unrealistic image. They learnt and talked about airbrushing, identified their own role models, then enjoyed creating positive message stars, finishing by making videos to say "Be proud to be how you are".

2nd Rustington Brownie group, uk (7-10 years)

¹ <https://www.dove.com>

ACTION ON BODY CONFIDENCE

▶ Action on Body Confidence (ABC) was introduced in 2017 in response to feedback from girls and leaders. They said they wanted more support, not just on how to spread the message to their peers, but also on how to use their knowledge to influence decision makers.

ABC helps young people identify the body confidence issues their community faces, and gives practical guidance on how to run a 'Take Action' advocacy project to address these underlying issues and advocate for change.

By combining the education and advocacy elements of the partnership it boosts girls' body confidence and self-esteem, whilst giving them a voice and platform to influence the broader conversation about appearance related anxiety, and raise awareness of the issue to a far wider audience.



By basing the programme model on WAGGGS' educational method, we are ensuring that our global partnership approach reflects the wider Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting method and helps us realise our overall vision at WAGGGS; to support girls and young women to develop their full potential as leaders and active citizens of the world.

When the Nigerian Girl Guides ran their national ABC session, they were inspired to invite the media to call on the government to focus more on gender equality, achieving national media coverage as a result. Project Manager Lilian Damiet said:

"We want our girls to be assertive, be confident and look beyond their appearance when taking certain life's decisions or when faced with certain life's challenges."

Jess Shire, 22, a Brownie leader from the UK, ran a 'Positively Me!' fashion show as part of her ongoing advocacy and community action work on body confidence. Jess says raising the issue of body confidence is "incredibly important" and something that affected **"both adults and kids in the world we live in today"**. The fashion show models, representing people of all ages, size and backgrounds, all wore something they would not normally feel confident in. The show has been covered by the BBC in the UK and shared across social media.



GLOBAL ADVOCACY OPPORTUNITIES

As part of our partnership, we attend and host events for body confidence and self-esteem influencers, with a focus on the following asks:

GOVERNMENTS:

- Fund and carry out research to establish a national baseline understanding of the nature, prevalence and implications of low body confidence.
- Integrate body confidence culture into school curriculum and activities. Schools have a vital role to play in supporting body confidence through incorporating it into classroom teaching and extracurricular activities.
- Support and fund non-formal education programmes that address issues of body confidence and self-esteem particularly girl and boy only spaces.
- Create/implement advertising standards that ensure that advertisements do not use airbrushing in a way that is misleading or potentially harmful.



MEDIA:

- Media (television, print and online magazines and advertisers) to stop propagating unobtainable body ideals and portray a diversity of real women and girls with a broad range of healthy body types across media channels.

CORPORATE INDUSTRY:

- Corporate and health sectors to stop producing and advertising products and services that aim to alter the appearance and that can cause danger to health such as skin lightening or weight-loss products.
- Fashion industry to stop promoting underweight models and to use models who represent a wide range of body types and appearances.

IN 2018 THE FIRST YOUNG WOMEN'S ADVOCACY FORUM (YWAF) WAS CONVENED.

This annual event selects young women from a pool of applicants who have ideas for advocacy projects to tackle the root causes of low body confidence and self-esteem. Those selected participate in skills and advocacy training, followed by an opportunity to take part in a global event. In 2018, the Forum was linked to the UN General Assembly, and 2019 to Women Deliver. Each delegate is then supported to deliver her project at home.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs):



At WAGGGS, we believe in a world where every girl can be happy and healthy without concerns about the way they look holding them back. Everything we do through **Free Being Me** is designed to achieve and help the world meet its commitment to SDG 3; Good health and wellbeing and SDG5; Gender equality.

THE DIFFERENCE IT HAS MADE:

- **Since 2013**, the partnership has engaged over 5.2 million girls and boys with body confidence and self-esteem training across 120 countries.
- **Up to 2020**, the partnership aims to engage a total of 6.5 million young people through FBM and ABC.
- 18 Member Organisations (MOs) have relationships with local Dove offices, running events and campaigns to engage decision makers at a national level.
- **The partnership also offers** Girl Guides and Girl Scouts a global platform to influence key policy makers. **Since 2013, 57 young women** have been given the opportunity to speak out at events including; The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW); UNGA and Women Deliver conference.
- **So far, a total of 57 payments** have been made from the Free Being Me fund to MOs worldwide, supporting their training and rollout of the programmes.
- **MOs from all regions** have benefitted from in-person training, including 25 national events and 5 international events.

MY FREE BEING ME JOURNEY, by Angeli, Girl Scouts of the Philippines.

She spoke about FBM as a WAGGGS delegate to the Women Deliver Conference, Denmark, May 2016.



Before I came to Copenhagen, I met up with some friends. Instead of asking me how I was, they immediately asked the question, "Why are you so dark?" As if my skin colour is the most important story in my life. In the Philippines, you will be surprised with the obsession of girls and women with whitening products, and the huge billboard advertisements. Having dark coloured skin is devastating. It is associated with being poor, ugly, lower class. This has cost girls their education.

I was 14 when I first attended a Dove self-esteem session at a national Girl Scout camp. I was able to confront insecurities and fears in my own body. The confidence that I gained helped me find that capacity to lead young people.

In the Philippines at least 600,000 girls will be reached through **Free Being Me** over the next three years. Cultural change is a big challenge to overcome but for a girl who believes in herself, ain't no mountain high enough. Imagine a world where millions of girls believe that they can make the world a better place to live, regardless of their size, race or colour - a future where girls and women can reach their full potential."

WAGGGS is the largest voluntary movement dedicated to girls and young women in the world with 10 million members across 150 countries. For more information please visit www.wagggs.org or call 00 44 207 794 1181.