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FUNDING ADVICE NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends

As we start a new year full of exciting possibilities and Thinking Day is just around the corner, let's pick up is where we left off in the last newsletter - that "*good fundraising goes hand-in-hand with good public relations*". Some of you have mentioned that this is an area that you have difficulty with because although your Association may organise excellent fundraising events, you find it difficult to use these events to generate media publicity about Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting in your local communities and country. And no doubt good publicity will help further your future efforts to increase financial contributions as potential funders are more likely to choose to support organisations that have a strong public image of competency and professionalism.

So how do we go about raising public awareness of the work /projects of your Association and Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting in general? This issue of the Europe Region WAGGGS Funding newsletter aims to briefly explain how to go about generating local media coverage in your local communities - try it for your upcoming Thinking Day event!

So let's begin...

Generating Local Media Coverage

We know that the media always want good local stories, or a local angle on a national story. But how do we know if we have a good story that they will cover? You may have a good story without even realising it. Here are some guidelines to help you.

Step 1 Identify and Prepare your Resources

Successful publicity requires good preparation of your resources. So start by identifying and preparing your resources. What are your resources? Examples could include:

1. a local person who was helped by your Association and is a lively interviewee
2. a Girl Guide or Girl Scout (and her family or Group) that gives a human face to recent statistics
3. a success story or project eg the opening of a new children's centre funded by your Association

Step 2 Decide on your key message

Agree on your *key message* that you want to communicate through the media. Examples of key messages include:

1. One in eight young people in your country is disabled (and link this to how the GG/GS programme helps young people with disabilities to participate more fully in their communities)
2. HIV / AIDS is the most serious epidemic humankind has ever faced (and what role GG/GS is playing in building awareness and educating girls and young women about this problem)
3. Homelessness reaches record levels in your region/country (and how GG/GS has helped homeless young people)
4. One in one hundred senior citizens are using the internet (and how GG/GS have helped etc)
5. Only a quarter of young adults say they are currently learning (and the role GG/GS plays in giving more young people the opportunity to learn)

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Step 3 Decide what type of story you have

There are different types of 'local story'. Each one should be offered to the appropriate section of the press or broadcast media. The main categories are news, features and listings.

1. News

A news item is *time-sensitive* ie. linked to a specific date. It is usually a one-off event or a new piece of information. Examples of news items may include a forthcoming fundraising event or new research findings with relevance to your local community, the opening of a new facility, the participation or endorsement by a celebrity of a local event or a local problem affecting your members/young people in your community.

Some examples

Cha Cha for Charity - local Guides learn to cha cha at a tea dance to raise funds for Help the Aged Senior Citizens/Parents learn to use Internet/SMS from local Guides/daughters
Serious oil spill threatens wild birds on the coast and the Guides are helping to save them

2. Features

Features come in all shapes and sizes and cover all subjects. A 'human interest' feature is a personal story, one girl's experience, a triumph over tragedy - anything that revolves around an experience that people can relate to. 'Opinion pieces' are features which provide an analysis, a survey based on in-depth research, and a look at the background to current statistics.

Some examples

Conservation in Country X - local issues, local solutions.
A personal view - dispelling the myths about disabled people in outdoor activities/camping
Profile of Person X - a person helped by your Association
Refugees in Country X - an in-depth update with statistics, personal testimonies, and good quotes from local Guides who have helped them to integrate.

3. Events Listing / Diary

When you want to promote a forthcoming event, try to make sure that it is listed in the "Diary of Events" sections of all local papers.

Contact local radio stations as they often cover events if they know about it in advance or can publicise an event to the local community. They are much less likely to cover events retrospectively so make sure they know about the event *in advance* so they can send a reporter down on the day.

4. Advertising Contra Deal

This is a commercial transaction whereby the local media run a story on your Association or members because your Association pays for advertising space in the newspaper or broadcasting airtime to advertise itself or request something from the public. This is separate from editorial coverage and is not normally the major part of non-profit voluntary organisations' local media relations.

5. Photos

Are there good quality photos available or will there be a photo opportunity for the press?
Photographs can make all the difference, especially in local newspapers. A story is much more likely to be printed with a good photo. Even just a lively photo with a caption is a good coverage.

Run a Photo Competition in your Association (perhaps you could get a film or camera company to sponsor prizes). Or get to know a local photographer with news experience and build up a bank of good pictures. Good visuals are central to successful television coverage too so think about a good picture opportunity if you're targeting television and brief the crew when they come to your event.



Which media to approach

It is important that someone in your Association starts to become familiar with the local media - not necessarily the main national newspapers and magazines but also the free press (those distributed in the neighbourhood, metro stations, supermarkets, cinemas, etc) as well as radio and TV stations.

You will need to identify all possible outlets for your story, from mainstream local media to the free press. Remember, no outlet is too small - often TV guides or freesheets circulated in residential areas are more widely read than "big" national newspapers.

How do you get to know the media?

Check if members of your Association have some media contacts already. Any personal contacts with journalists (from previous coverage, family, friends or just a friendly phone call) can be the fastest way to a story.

Alternatively, look through the local papers to identify the name(s) of the right journalists for your type of story. This is quite easy if you look at the name of the writer of stories with similar themes to yours. Take note of the section and the writer and make contact to see if they would be interested to run your story in the same section.

If this is not possible, then you have to "cold-call" the paper or radio station (this may seem quite intimidating but remember, they depend on the public ie. YOU for stories to sell to people like YOU, the public). Just ask for the most relevant person - the news editor, the features editor, environment correspondent or even the picture editor for photos.

If you have the time, you may wish to look up a Media Guide or database in your local library which may list all the local media in your country. If they don't have one, you should contact the National Press Association or the Media Society and ask them to send you a list of all their members.

Perhaps the most organised way to do this is to make a list of all appropriate media to contact for your story in order of preference and then work your way through the list with your story idea.

Timing of your Story

It is usually important to establish a time frame for your story - especially if it is to build up awareness for an upcoming event. However, bear in mind that copy deadlines (especially for monthly publications) can be surprisingly early - so get in touch with the media *as early as possible* and make a note of the different deadlines for different media.

Radio stations and TV tend to be the most flexible but they are also more competitive in terms of coverage.

Don't be Afraid to Make that Call

Cold-calling can be quite intimidating but remember that editors always appreciate a regular source of ideas or information. Before you call, make some notes of what you want to say and ask. Start by calling the paper, radio or TV station to find out which department or journalist deals with your type of story.

The first time you call, ask whether it is a good time, or if it would be better for you to call another time. Once you have their attention, ask about their deadlines - when do they go to press and when would they like to be contacted. It is also useful to ask what kind of stories they are interested in - and LISTEN!



Make sure you get their direct phone numbers if they have one as well as a fax number and e-mail so that you can immediately fax them your press release or info document.

If you come across a journalist who is responsive, it might be worth making a file. Then each time you call them, make a note of when you called and what was discussed so that you can remind the journalist what was discussed before. This helps to build a relationship. You can also cultivate a relationship by inviting them to any events your Association organises - people are more likely to remember you if you meet face to face. Journalists appreciate a regular source of ideas and information and they will not hesitate to approach you when they need a story or just a quote.

If you know a journalist personally, you should always call them first and offer your story or ask their advice about how to go about placing it.

Some Tips for the Beginner

If your Association has relatively little experience in the local media, here are some tips.

1. *Be Creative*

Think of ways your Association can provide a local angle on national issues. Or perhaps, a member/Group of your Association is doing something innovative and unusual. If it's something that intrigues you, then it's likely that other local people will be interested too.

2. *Be Accessible*

It is important when you have a story to run in the local media that you are accessible. Always give your contact numbers including that of your home or mobile number. Don't be alarmed by this - you will only be contacted at home in exceptional circumstances. Journalists do not generally work strict office hours and sometimes they need to contact you outside regular office hours.

3. *Be Persistent*

If your story gets pulled at the last minute or is reduced to a tiny paragraph on an inside page, don't take it personally. It doesn't mean your story is not newsworthy. Editors have to juggle many stories at a time and agendas keep changing as stories get overtaken by events and sometimes, dropped. So if your story does not succeed at first, and it is not time-sensitive, contact the person again and try to find a new angle or slot.

4. *Establish your Expertise*

This is a more long-term approach. As you go about making contact with the media, you can establish yourself as a reliable source of information on youth issues, especially those concerning girls and young women. If you are considered knowledgeable on your issue, you will likely be considered the "expert" on whom they will want to consult again and again.

If you have done some research on a local issue, let the media know as there is often interest in surveys and reports.

If a big story breaks (nationally or locally) on an issue that is within your Association's area of work, the most knowledgeable member of your Association in that area should call the press to offer a quote or an interview immediately.

A Final Word of Advice

In true Guiding spirit, Keep up the effort! Don't forget that you are not going to get every story you suggest to the media covered but don't despair. Persistence pays off.



Conclusion

I hope this newsletter has helped you understand the different ways and means you can use to generate some media publicity for your Association and Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting in your country at both the local and national level.

It can only be to our benefit to work with each other and to learn from one another's perspectives, mistakes and successes. So do share your experiences in fundraising or indicate other areas of funding that would be of interest to you. All comments, enquiries or suggestions are welcome and should be sent to:

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Wishing you a successful Thinking Day and an exciting month ahead!