



Ministry of State  
for Family and Population



Save the Children

# MEDIA GUIDELINES

For Young Participants

## TALKING TO JOURNALISTS



# CAIRO, EGYPT

21<sup>ST</sup> - 24<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER '09

## Some things to think about

Today, newspapers, radio and TV programmes can be accessed anywhere in the world. So when you talk to a journalist your story may reach further than you can imagine. Before you talk to journalists, ask yourself:

- What you want to say? Think about the two or three MAIN POINTS you want to make,
- How would your friends and family react if your story is published?
- Are there people you need to protect when telling your story?
- Are there people who might want to harm you if they see your story?
- How would you feel if your story appeared in the media in a few years time/ was still be read many years from now.

## What to do before any interview?

- Only give an interview to a journalist or allow him/her to take pictures of you with the permission of either your accompanying adult or the media contact person from the organising agencies.
- Make sure you know WHO you are talking to. Ask the reporter his/her name and who they work for and get a business card off them, as you may need or want to follow up on your story.
- Do not give reporters your personal contact details. Ask them to contact you through an adult (parent/ teacher/youth worker, etc).
- Try to understand what the journalist expects from you; what is the story about: You, an issue, a situation, others..?; Try and think about the type of questions you are likely to be asked, and think carefully about the points you want to make or the messages you want to communicate. Make sure the journalist focus on what you want to focus on.
- Ask journalists how the interview is going to be used, who the expected audience will be (young people, parents, politicians, etc.), and

when it will be broadcast. Then you can try to talk about things that are likely to interest them.

- Discuss with an accompanying adult or the media contact person from the organising agencies and tell the journalist:
  - what you are prepared to talk about;
  - what you are NOT prepared to talk about;
  - what YOU want to say;
  - remember you do not have to answer any or part of the questions that are being asked.
  - whether you want an appropriate adult to be with you for the interview.
  
- If the journalist does not agree to your terms, do not take part in the interview.
  
- Remember to collect business cards from any journalist who speaks to you – they might be useful later.

## What are your rights while being interviewed?

- If you are asked for an interview about a sensitive issue (for example, about your life or your family, about sexual matters, a crime, or war), you can simply say you are not prepared to or that you find the subject matter uncomfortable to talk about.
  
- It is important to ensure that your full identity is not revealed. You MUST obtain an assurance from the journalist, in the presence of, or through, an adult you trust that your identity will be protected.
  
- If you don't want your picture to be published, you can either say NO to being photographed, or seek an assurance that you cannot be identified from any picture that does appear.
  
- You are NOT obliged to answer any or all of the journalist's questions and to withdraw from the interview at any point. If you feel uneasy during the interview, you can always say that you do not want to continue or you feel uncomfortable on that topic.

## Tips for a successful encounter with the media

- Dress comfortably.
- Go to the toilet before you go on stage, Radio or TV studio.
- Make sure a glass of water has been provided for you, but only take SIPs of the water when you need to. It helps you when you feel nervous.
- If provided, use the microphone. Try not to move away from it and keep your voice level constant.
- Take along some simple notes to remind you of the key messages / topics / quotes. You can also make notes about things that are said or questions that are asked. It can help you answer questions later.
- Try to work out what questions journalists are likely to ask YOU, and have some short, simple answers ready. If it is a Radio/TV interview you can ask what questions the reporter will begin with.
- If you are to be a main speaker in a Conference, prepare a short speech in advance which makes all the main points you want to communicate. Copies of your speech may be given to journalists.
- When the interview starts, put a smile in your voice, take a deep breath and try to RELAX.
- Be friendly in your responses and put a smile into your voice — think of it as a conversation with all the listeners.
- Try to avoid long, complicated answers as well as abbreviations.
- You know what you want to say, so be confident.
- Show other guests respect; watch them with interest when they are speaking.

- Always be polite, but stand up for yourself if someone tries to put you down or get a laugh at your expense. Speak your mind, but be careful about what you say. Say things like 'I think you have got that wrong' or 'I don't agree', or just describe truthfully what happened to you / your key messages / story.
- When the interview is over you can ask the reporter for some tips about how it went. You can also remind him/her of the parts you thought were important.
- Remember this is another opportunity to get your message across to a wider audience.

**All the best!**