

Communications and Activism

**A quick guide to
advocacy and media**



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The Media Advisory

A media advisory is used to send newsworthy information to the media. However, in comparison the Press Release, a media advisory is much more specific. Media advisories alert the media of an event that will take place and act as a kind of invitation for journalists to attend.

The purpose of a media advisory is to invite members of the media to attend your event, with the goal of having the event, or the information released during the event, covered by the news media.

A media advisory's job is to tell journalists the Who?, What?, When?, Where?, and Why?, and any additional details relevant to them. For example you may want to include information regarding where parking will be available, if recording will be allowed, and where they can pick up materials and press passes. As the information is specific to the media, Media Advisories are often not released to the public.

MEDIA ADVISORY:

Leading Women's and Reproductive Rights Organizations Urge PM and G8 to Address Family Planning and Abortion Care at Summit

**Press Conference to be held Tuesday, June 22 at National Press Theatre;
9:00 am**

Leading Canadian women's and reproductive rights organizations will hold a press conference Tuesday calling on Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the G8 to address family planning and abortion care in the G8 maternal and child health initiative. Following the press conference, the speakers will deliver a letter signed by nearly 100 International organizations from the G8 and other countries to Prime Minister Harper.

Speakers:

- **Vicki Saporta**, President and CEO of the National Abortion Federation Canada,
- **Katherine McDonald**, Executive Director, Action Canada for Population and Development (ACPD),
- **Claire Tremblay**, Coordinator, Ad Hoc Coalition for Women's Equality and Human Rights,
- **Nathalie Parent**, Coordinator, Fédération du Québec pour le planning des naissances (FQPN),
- **Kate McInturff**, Executive Director, Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action (FAFIA)

National Press Theatre : 1st floor of the National Press Building
607-150 Wellington St., Ottawa, ON

For more information please contact Claire
Tremblay, 613-234-8252 ext.103

The Press Release

The goal of the Press Release is to get the media to mention your event, statement, or campaign to the public, write about the issue you are raising and encourage attendance to the event or participation in the campaign. The press release can be used to generate a feature story or column on your topic, or announce a press conference, event or campaign launch.

Answer these questions in your release: WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN, WHY... Who Wins, Who Loses and Who Cares?

What to include in your Press Release:

- **Headline/Title:** Needs to grab attention and interest while summarizing the story.
- **LOCATION - Dateline:** Where you are writing from (in capital letters) followed by a dash and the release date.
- **Introduction:** This paragraph needs to be both informative and interesting. Answer the questions who, what, where, when and why, clearly and concisely.
- **Body:** These following paragraphs can provide further background, explanations and statistics, however again this information must be presented concisely. This is where you can answer, who wins, who loses, who cares?
- **Boilerplate:** This is a short about section, a brief background on the organization, (see the sample to read what CFUW National uses for it's boilerplate).
- **Close:** After the boilerplate you need to indicate that the press release has ended. This is done with the symbol –30–.
- **Contact Person:** You must include a contact for the media to follow up with if they have any additional questions, would like more background on the subject, or someone to interview. Include a phone number and email for this contact person.

Helpful Tips:

Check out online tips for writing media releases

Create a news "hook"

Make it skim-worthy

Use bullet points and bolded words

Make sure you get in all five of the Ws

Proof read carefully!

Budget Leaves Women Out

OTTAWA, March 4, 2010 – “Thursday’s budget offers very little support for women. In fact it has really left women behind,” says Susan Russell, Executive Director of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW). Ms. Russell concluded, “On the issues that would lift women out of economic recession and poverty this budget is shamefully silent.”

The budget, which has been described as satisfactory by the business community can only be given a failing grade by women because it fails to consider the gender bias inherent in the stimulus spending. This bias was revealed in a study conducted by Queen’s Professor, Kathleen Lahey this week. The study showed that women have only received about 7 to 22 per cent of federal infrastructure spending, as the spending has been focused in physical infrastructure projects where women are underrepresented in employment. Increased spending in social infrastructure and mandated employment equity in projects funded by the stimulus would begin to reverse this bias. Canada cannot begin to recover economically if half of its population is left behind.

Much-needed childcare spaces were not included in the budget. While increasing the child tax benefit for single parents may help some families, many women find it difficult to access quality childcare and when they do, it is a serious financial burden that limits their ability to participate in the workforce. The government has again missed out on an opportunity to provide economic stimulus though providing the social infrastructure of childcare that would benefit and employ women across the country.

The additional funding for ending violence against Aboriginal Women must be allocated to the Sisters in Spirit Initiative. The CFUW calls on the government to allocate this funding to the Sisters in Spirit immediately.

Finance Minister Flaherty predicted that his budget would create a, “... a Canada in which our children and grandchildren will surpass us.” Yet without a strategy to end the poverty experienced by almost 1 child in 6 in Canada this will not happen. Without spending in key areas like childcare and a national housing strategy, women’s economic inequality will continue. This budget has failed to invest in women and to take on the work of building a prosperous and inclusive future for all Canadians.

CFUW is a non-partisan, voluntary, self-funded, non-governmental organization of about 10,000 women university graduates in 118 Clubs across Canada. CFUW works to improve the status of women and girls, education, peace, and human rights. CFUW holds special consultative status at the United Nations and serves on the Sectoral Committee on Education of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO. CFUW is the largest of 79 national affiliates of the International Federation of University Women (IFUW).

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Contact: Susan Russell, Executive Director,
Canadian Federation of University Women
613 234 8252



Facebook

Facebook is a free social networking website used by over 200 million people globally. In order to connect with people on Facebook, you sign up to create a profile, “friend” other people (yes, the noun just became a verb) and they have to “accept” you as a friend. Once you are connected, you can begin networking: see their activity, who else they’re friends with, comment back on their updates, etc. Some cool features of Facebook include the ability to post websites, images, and video right on your page so that your friends can see them.

Why Facebook?

- Facebook allows you to connect with large networks of people, and is a great way to share information such as news articles and photos as well as share information through the creation of Groups and Events.

Once you have set up your Facebook Profile, you can join and create Groups and Events. The Group is great for creating a local club Group where you can share ideas, interesting news stories, have online discussions between meetings and recruit new members. Groups (and individuals) can create Events, that provide information on an upcoming event you are planning. It is an easy way to promote an upcoming event. Both events and groups are searchable, allowing you to connect with people and clubs online.



Twitter is a free tool that allows you to share updates online. It is used by over 4.3 million people around the world. The essence of Twitter is short, 140 character “tweets” (updates) very similar to status updates in Facebook. Unlike Facebook, where you can only talk to “friends” who’ve accepted you, you can “follow” anyone on Twitter in order to see their updates.

A good way to use Twitter successfully is to set expectations for what your followers can expect from you – ie, should they expect updates on club meetings, upcoming guest speakers, and/or reminders about events? This helps people use the information you give them effectively.

Twitter is also helpful for getting messages out to influential people in your community including the media. Most columnists have twitter and tweeting about an upcoming event or campaign opens another avenue for communication.



Blogs

A blog is a frequently updated online journal where the newest information appears on top. After the blog has been created, you'll only need to log in, type your post, click a button, and presto! your blog is updated with your latest and greatest creation. This is because in a blog, the way the site looks and how the pages are organized is handled independently from the content. Once you have selected a **template**, you'll only need to think of what you want to say and the blog software takes care everything else, including keeping track of all the previously content you created.

Blog (noun) - a journal or diary that is on the Internet - *Andrew Sullivan has the most popular blog on the Internet.*

Blogger (noun) - a person who keeps a blog - *Bloggers are revolutionizing the way news is shared.*

Blog (verb) - to write a blog - *I am going to blog before breakfast this morning.*

Blogging (verb) - the action of writing a blog - *Blogging is my way of sharing my passions with the world.*

Blogs can also function as a club website as they are very easy to set up (We like Wordpress, go to www.wordpress.com) As well multiple administrators can be given access to post on the blog. Your communications chair could be in charge of the main blog page, but your CFUW liaison could be in charge of updating a page with mailing and other information from National Office. This can help divide up the work of maintaining an up-to-date and interesting webpage.

Consistency is important to build a readership.



Sample Blog Post

Child Care Rally & Women's Choice (May Update)

June 10, 2010

May was a busy month!

National Office took part in two rallies, the first for Affordable, Quality Childcare on Mother's Day weekend organized by the Ad-Hoc Coalition for Women's Equality and Human Rights. Although it was a rainy Saturday, we were joined by CUPE local 2204 (Child Care Workers,) the local chapter of ACORN Canada, families and Child Care supporters. Member of Parliament, Olivia Chow gave a great speech about her Child Care bill that is before the House of Commons and wished all of the Mothers and Child Care Workers a Happy Mother's Day!

The rally also featured the talent of the women of CUPE 2204 who, with the Raging Grannies, led the protesters in singing satirical Children's songs written by Claire Tremblay of the Coalition (see one below).

Later in the month National Office attended the pro-choice presence at the annual Anti-Choice Rally on Parliament Hill. While this event was more serious, it was important to show our support for accessible, legal and safe abortion and above all the right for women to choose.

Check out photos from the rallies [here](#).



8 Steps to Successful Advocacy

Here are some guidelines to help you plan for a successful Advocacy Campaign!

1. Research

This is the most important step. You need to understand the issue, what is at stake, who is involved, who could be involved, the history of the issue and the context it is situated in. **CFUW Policy** is full of great information and ideas that can be very helpful in your research.

2. Objectives

Be SMART about your objectives:

Specific: Are they clearly defined and comprehensible?

Measurable: Can each objective be measured in the evaluation?

Achievable: Considering other factors (e.g. budget and timescale) are they achievable?

Realistic: Are you being realistic given the resources you have?

Time: When do you want to achieve the set objectives?

3. Identify your Audience

Who are you trying to convince? Who is the public you are trying to reach out to?

4. Identify Stakeholders and Allies

Who can you work with, who should be at the table. Find groups and people to help you make your message louder, and to share the work. Identifying stakeholders will also help you identify who the message must be directed to, groups who have a stake in the issue may be able to help you, or they may pose a challenge. Identifying them will help you shape your strategy accordingly.



5. Key Messages

What are the main points you want to get across? Outlining some key messages, (simplified and concise) is important. How can you use these messages to achieve your objectives? Focus on your audience, and try to use a variety of media to reach out to new people.

6. Strategy

This is how you connect the previous 5 points into an overall plan. Working through these steps you will have determined what you need to do and several ways to do it, and who you are talking to. Putting these things into a chronological plan with a strategy to grow momentum and achieve the objectives, is how you will create your strategy.

7. Tactics

Tactics are the actions you take; they can include meetings with and phone calls to legislators, letter writing, art shows, film screenings, community meetings, media coverage, marches, rallies, press conferences and petition drives. Don't rule anything out, but be sure to use tactics strategically and in an order that makes sense. Weaving in use of the media tools discussed in this booklet can be used to organize a tactic or become a tactic in it's own right.

8. Evaluation

Take stock of what you did that worked, what you need to improve on and what you wouldn't do again! Taking a bit of time to debrief the event will help you do better next time, or if it is an ongoing campaign, readjust your messaging, tactics or strategy to be more successful as you move on.

Tips for a Successful Meeting with your Legislator

1. Take a bit of time before your meeting to familiarize yourself with the legislator, get to know a bit about their background and personal life.
2. Thank them for meeting with you.
3. Introduce CFUW and how it serves the community.
4. Present the issue you're concerned about.
5. Tell them what you want them to do, but do not attack them, try to work with them.
6. Give them the political news from your area.
7. Leave with your issue briefs for them to reference after the meeting.
8. Thank them again.
9. Exchange Business Cards.
10. Call CFUW National Office before your meeting.

Points to Keep in Mind

They want to like you.

You might not always get to meet with the head honcho, but take any meeting you can get. Lower level legislators and even staff can be very influential.

Be prepared to be told it's not their jurisdiction, that they'll think about it, etc. Find a way to involve them in the issue.

Community, community, community! Remember to stress how this is an important issue to the community.

Worksheet #1: Setting Media Goals

To get serious about media, you need a plan developed in consultation with your club. Schedule an informal brainstorming session to help determine priorities and tactics. Get everyone thinking in terms of creative media outreach, both to traditional media and online.

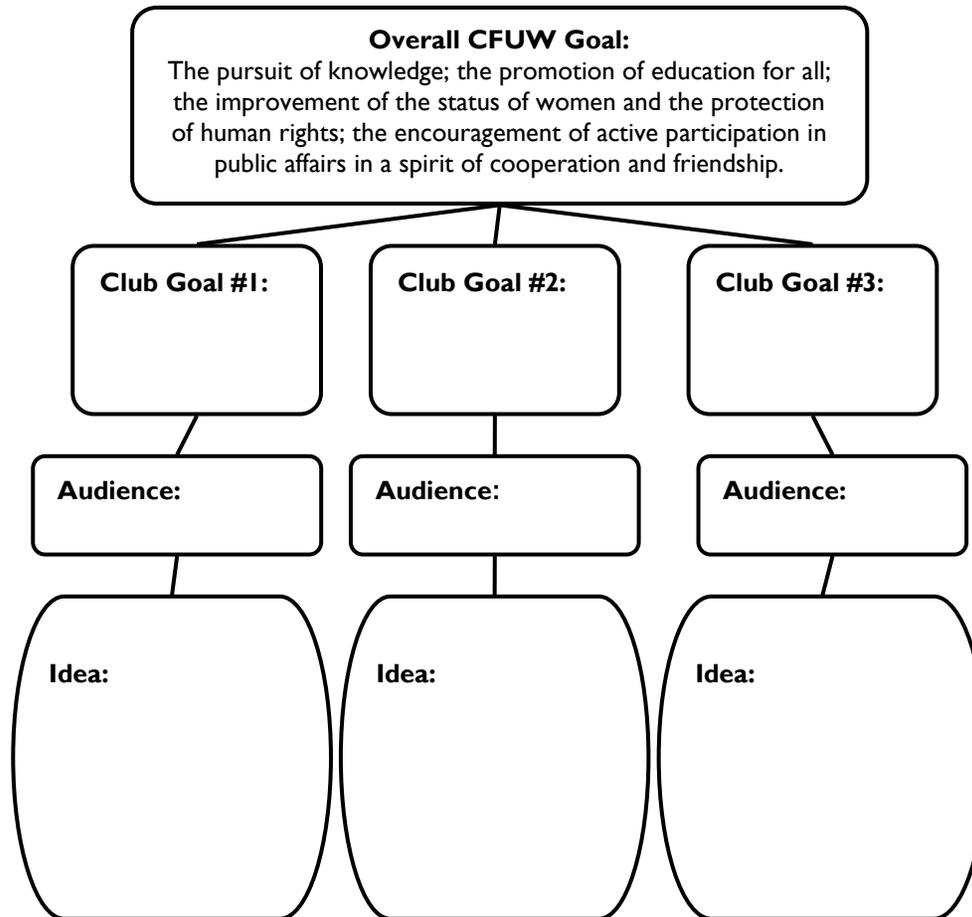
Some questions to help guide your discussion could include:

- We have been in this community for several years but are still a “best kept secret.” What can we do to get people talking about us?
- We are interested in attracting new members from a diversity of backgrounds. What is the best way to reach them?
- Our annual fundraising dinner has been the same five years running. What new community event can we try out this year to expand our circle?
- We would like to increase the number of stories about our organization in the local media. Which media would be friendliest to our ideas?

Crazy ideas are fine, and even encouraged; allow everyone to talk, but ensure that time isn't spent analyzing or criticizing other's ideas. The point here is just to get as much energy and thought out as possible; you'll sort through it later.

After the meeting, look over the list of ideas that were generated. Think about who your audience is (potential members, politicians, community leaders?) and what it is you wish to convey. Then, take some of the best ideas and talk about them with people outside CFUW, or with CFUW members who weren't able to make it to the brainstorming session. Be as open-minded as possible, and ask how each idea sounds and what challenges you might face if you pursue it. Note down responses that seem pertinent to you, and assemble these to bring to your next club meeting.

You now have the beginning of your very own media strategy: you've defined some goals, you know who you're talking to (your audience) and you've thought about some ways to reach those goals. The following worksheet may provide a helpful way to visualize the progress you've made so far.



Worksheet #2: The Path to Going Online

These questions will help you determine what barriers may exist for your club to pursue an online or social media presence, and how you can overcome them.

1) Technology Infrastructure

Do you have access to a computer that is able to access the Internet?

Does somebody in your club have access to a digital camera to take pictures?

2) Volunteer Resources

In what way is your club currently participating online? Is there a web presence that already exists that you can build on?

Does anyone at the club WANT to do it? Are they interested and eager and willing to take on that responsibly?

What kinds of support or training can you access to improve your online skills? Are there friends or family who could help you get the basics down?

What barriers do you regularly encounter that keep you from participating online? How can you overcome them?

3) Goals

What might our club do better? What strategies or tools might help with this? Are those online tools?

How would you finish this statement, "What this club really needs is ..."

What "next steps" are available for relationships forged online? How will they help you meet your club's goals? For example, can you hold a "meetup" for your online readers?

Do you have clear goals for your foray into the web?

4) Audience

Are your prospective members already engaged online? Where are they? What information or communication request/wish do you most often hear from members? How will these new online tools help fulfill that request?



Resources

Instructional

The Basics of Twitter

www.crowinfo.com/downloads/twitter_beginners.pdf

This is a great guide to the basics of Twitter and will help your club get the most out of tweeting. It offers easy-to-understand information on what Twitter is, how it works, things to think about, and goal-setting for Twitter use.

Webmonkey: www.webmonkey.com

An online resource for websites. Slightly more advanced for people who would like to learn how to use HTML code to build in colours, links, and other features in their websites.

Free Online Tools

Google Sites: www.google.com/sites

A free, user friendly tool for building your own basic website. You will need to sign up for a free Gmail account to log in. You can build the site, control who accesses it, link to video and many other features.

Wordpress: www.wordpress.com

A free blog publishing tool. WordPress is an Open Source project, which means there are hundreds of people all over the world working on it. (Wordpress Beginner: www.wpbeginner.com - This guide will help you build a more advanced website using Wordpress.)

Add your Website to Google: www.google.com/addurl

Add your site to Google so people can find it easily when they search.

Stock XCHNG: www.sxc.hu

A site with over 350,000 stock photos that you can use for free.

Wikipedia: www.wikipedia.com

Search for most cities in Canada and the article will list the local media outlets as well as providing links to their websites.

Flickr: www.flickr.com

A free photo sharing website that you can use to store and share your photos. Also contains a “creative commons” group of photos you can use on websites and blogs.

Last thoughts on Media...

Traditional Media:

Always, local media is looking for a **local hook** to a story. Keep this in mind when you are writing press releases or suggesting a story via phone or e-mail. Make the local angle readily visible so that the reporter will quickly see what you're getting at.

Give the media **advance notice** of your upcoming event. If you leave it until the last minute, they may not be able to accommodate your request for publicity. If they are made aware of an event well in advance, ideally two weeks or more, there is a better chance that the media can do something for you.

Calendars of upcoming events, submissions for which are needed at least two weeks prior to the day of the event, are generally **free** and available only to non-profit groups and are a good way to get the word out. In addition, some events will be selected for additional coverage, perhaps photos and/or a story.

A **picture** says a thousand words, and requests for photography at community events are always a good idea. Although the media generally does their best to accommodate those requests, because of limited photo space, they have to be selective about what they cover and only the best photos make it into the paper.

Please ensure any press releases are easily legible, and that they include **the five Ws: who, what, where** (exact address, street name and number, nearest intersection and postal code), **when and why**. Please keep it **brief**. If it's something that the press is interested in, they'll follow up with a phone call or e-mail and the item will be written by a staff member.

The media generally prefers to have requests and press releases **in writing**. It's a great starting point for the reporter who may be assigned your story.

Make sure there is a **contact person** and daytime phone number listed on every release, and that that person is available to take calls. If that number is not to be published, indicate clearly which number is for media contacts and which is the number for the public to call.



New Media

Be consistent about updating your webpage, Twitter feed, or Facebook page. Whether it's only once a week or twice a day, it should be dependable if you want to retain readers.

Remember that people's attention span online can be very short. If you present them with an intimidating wall of text in dense jargon, they will likely move on. Keep your writing style **natural and engaging**.

Let your **layout** help your writing: write clear, meaningful headings and sub-headings, use bulleted lists, highlight keywords and don't be afraid of white space.

Give something to your audience. When you're writing about a recent club meeting, for example, include photos and links to the websites of your guest speakers. You can re-post advocacy materials you get from National Office. Whatever you do, make sure the content is relevant, concise, and interesting.

Expect feedback. This is the beauty of new media. If your writing is good and strikes the right tone, you can expect readers to really engage with what you're saying.

Be findable. The first thing that a reporter or prospective member will do is Google your club – do you have a website that is informative, attractive and recently updated? An easily accessible online presence is the first thing many people look for, and having it will give your club a polished, professional appearance.

Notes

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