

## CISV PUBLIC RELATIONS GUIDE

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## CISV – WHO WE ARE

We are a global community of dedicated volunteers creating opportunities for all ages to experience the excitement and enrichment of cultural diversity through our educational programmes. We are founded on our belief that peace is possible through friendship - and that the real difference can be made by starting with children.

## 1. Plan your Public Relations

To be effective, public relations requires some time, effort and planning. When your Chapter committee develops its annual plan for the year ahead, it is important to be thinking about how you will promote your activities and to whom. Getting and maintaining a high profile in your community will help you in recruiting new members, keeping existing members motivated and with your fundraising activities.

Planning for your public relations needs to be incorporated into your general planning for each year. That way, press releases and other communications can be sent out well in advance and you have plenty of time to research the best form of publicising for particular events or activities. There will always be occasions when you need to communicate unexpected news but you still need to have a plan in place about how you will communicate and who will do the communicating.

## 2. Select someone (or some people) to be responsible

Just as with every other job that needs to be done on a regular basis, it is better to have someone, or some people, who will take responsibility for communications. It allows them to build expertise and contacts, which will mean that they become more effective.

The key responsibilities of your PR person or committee are:

- Setting PR goals for the year, in line with your Chapter's plans for the year (for example, a goal could be to develop a short communications/PR plan for every event or and activity planned over the year)
- Familiarising themselves with CISV publicity and branding resources
- Creating awareness of Chapter activities among members, media and the general public

- Advising the Chapter on how to make events and activities more attractive to the media
- Helping to create a positive public image that will encourage membership development and assist with fundraising

### **3. Communicate your news**

Every Chapter of CISV has news stories to share: members' achievements, innovations and accolades, activities, public events and new partnerships.

Every positive news story is an opportunity to build reputation and raise profile.

So, the first and most important piece of guidance is 'think NEWS!'

Be constantly on the lookout for news opportunities and get to know who to contact to make the most of them.

Keep who we are, what we do and why we do it central to all your communications

### **4. Know your audience**

Ask yourself who's likely to be interested. Depending on the nature of your news, it may be relevant to one or more of these audiences:

- Local community
- Local business community
- Civic leaders
- Potential members and their families
- Potential volunteers
- Community organisations
- All CISV members
- Particular categories of CISV members
- CISV stakeholders (people who are not members but have a direct interest in the organization, e.g. alumni, local politicians, local community groups).

### **5. Methods of communication**

There are many channels you can take advantage of, depending on whether your target audience is internal or external.

## internal

- **Friends** –use the CISV Friends website for messages. This will become an even better communication tool when it has its new social networking features. Available to all registered members.
- **submit to the IO update**, which is sent out to all NAs each week.
- **submit to the fundraising and marketing update**, **once we have got it up and running!**
- **maintain a news section** on your website (and keep it up to date)
- **submit a write up of your news to the Development Officer** for possible inclusion in CISV News/Annual Review/Mosaic magazine

## external

When you are thinking about your external audiences, remember to consider where you are most likely to reach them and, for instance, what newspapers and /or radio stations they are likely to read or listen to.

- **press releases – to local, national and specialist media and local e-media.** Make sure the first paragraph includes Who, Where, What, When and Why. This first paragraph can also be used as a short ‘reminder’ press release to be sent out after the longer press release. Always include a short quote and give the name and brief details of the person you are quoting. Do not forget to add notes for the editor, they give the editor useful background information. Add a photograph if possible.

Try to keep the press release to one page; if you do send more than one page, do not forget to number the pages. Send out your press release at least a week before the event you wish to publicise (see **timing**, below), followed by a shorter ‘reminder’ a day or two before the event. Think about whom you wish to reach and do some homework on where to send your press release. Your local community newspaper would be ideal for a press release about a fundraising event but if you want to reach your local business community a specialist business journal may target them better.

A template press release that can be adapted for your Chapter and for any event is contained within this guide under Resources on page 8 and is also available to be downloaded from [www.resources.cisv.org](http://www.resources.cisv.org) . Don’t forget to consider any local e-based media, particularly when you want to get your message over to a younger audience.

- **letters to the Editor-** to local and national media. The letters page is one of the most read sections of the newspaper, so a letter from you can reach many people. You could use the letter to call for new members or to gain support for your work, to highlight a special event or to thank the local community after a fundraising drive (always thank them in some way).

If you have been unable to organise an event around a designated National or International Day, a letter to your local paper noting the day and its relevance to

CISV could offer useful awareness raising. A template letter to the editor is available in [www.resources.cisv.org](http://www.resources.cisv.org) and is included in this guide on page 9.

- **articles** - some periodicals welcome longer contributions, such as magazines that focus upon education. Check the number of words they require and make sure that the article you submit focuses on their area of interest.
- **'news' section on your website** (keep it up to date) - make sure it is easy to find; include past press releases and contact details for someone who can speak to the media.
- **fact sheets** – on CISV International and your Chapter. Have these available to send out to the local media, prospective members, and prospective individual and corporate supporters. The CISV International Fact Sheet and a Fact Sheet that can be tailored for your Chapter are available on [www.resources.cisv.org](http://www.resources.cisv.org) . A copy of a Fact Sheet that can be tailored to your Chapter is contained within this guide under Resources on page 7. Have the Fact Sheets available to download from your website.
- **recorded announcements** - consider creating a 15-30 second public service recording about a forthcoming event and sending it to local radio stations. They often broadcast these announcements as a service to the community.
- **Blogs/facebook/twitter** – are all great ways of getting your news out there.
- **Posters and fliers** -giving brief details of your news; place them where the people you want to communicate with are likely to go.

## 6. Newsworthy activities and events

Journalists and broadcasters are interested in news stories not because they are important to the people who put them out, but solely because they judge what will be both new and interesting to their readers, viewers or listeners.

The following activities and events may interest the media:

- Activities or projects that meet a community need or illustrate a larger news trend
- Activities linked to designated National and International Days
- A notable or prominent speaker at a meeting or event
- A local VIP (i.e. Mayor) launching a fundraising drive
- Presentation by a CISV member on their experiences of participating in a programme.
- Anniversaries of the Chapter
- An exhibition or display about your activities

Also, when trying to attract the attention of the media you need to:

- Think **superlatives**. Is your story about the first, the biggest, the youngest, the fastest, the highest?
- Think **'So what?'**. What does this news mean to your audience? The person in the street doesn't care that your Chapter got a grant; but it does care that it benefits young people from your town/city - tell them how.
- Think **human interest**. Is there an individual human story to be told? Add a personal touch, feature one person's achievement.
- Think **newsworthy connections**. For example, plan and publicise a local activity around World Peace Day on September 21.
- Think **picture potential**. In a newspaper a good picture can turn a small story into a big one. A visit from a local VIP provides a good photo opportunity and almost certainly guarantees some press coverage. Note: When inviting press, please be aware of risk management and child protection issues. Individual children should not be named or photographed unless written parental permission is sought and given. Group photographs should be covered by the 'pre camp' agreements signed by parents and guardians. If in doubt, seek advice from the IO.

## 7. Timing

To make the most of news opportunities it's important to take timing into account.

Some news is time-critical. For example, publicity for a public event has to go out early enough to attract an audience, and a VIP visit will only interest radio and TV if it's announced far enough in advance for them to arrange coverage.

Other news, particularly for internal and stakeholder audiences, still has value after the event, for example, news of how much money a fundraising event raised. **Remember, if you could not get the press to cover an event, it is always worth sending another press release after it has happened saying how the event went along with a photo.**

Some news media, such as many specialist periodicals, have long lead times so need to have their stories well ahead of the publication date. Announcing an event after it has happened to a specialist periodical may actually be the best option because you can send them a picture of it to publish.

## 8. Working with the media

Understanding and working with your local media will help you to communicate CISV's message successfully.

Identify your target media - consider inviting a local journalist to speak to your Chapter about how to work with the media.

Put together a contact list with names, phone and fax numbers and email addresses of journalists, editors or news directors along with a note of their special interests. Keep this contact list updated regularly.

Contact journalists and give them your contact details and a CISV fact sheet along with a few topics that your Chapter would be happy to comment upon (for instance, inter cultural relations) if an associated story arises. In this way journalists get to know your name and may come to you for quotes.

## 9. Keep a record

Keep copies of all press releases that you send out - post them on your website. Also keep copies of all articles about CISV that appear in the media (make a note of the date and which publication they appeared in). Should you be lucky enough to gain radio or TV coverage, record it or gain a record of it and make sure the disc is named and dated for future reference. This is a really good way of seeing how effective your public relations efforts are and makes a useful reference tool for your Chapter.

## 10. Evaluate

Evaluation should not be time-consuming - especially if you are keeping records (see above). The key information that you need to get from an evaluation exercise is:

Which events/activities attracted most media coverage?

From which section of the media did you receive most interest?

Did a particular method of communication prove more successful? With which audience?

Importantly, you should act upon your evaluation and amend your plans/activities accordingly.

## 11. Keeping the look

To maintain consistency, at all times and in all forms of communication, the CISV brand guidelines should always be followed. The guidelines can be downloaded from: <http://resources.cisv.org/branding>. If you have a query on branding that you do not feel is covered by the guidelines, contact the Development Officer at the IO on [denise.farrar@cisv.org](mailto:denise.farrar@cisv.org)

## 12. Developing membership through PR

Public relations is an important way to attract new members to CISV as it raises your profile and reaches more people. It also helps to keep existing members interested and active in

your Chapter. It can also help attract donors or possible partner organizations for activities such as Mosaic and IPP.

- Seek opportunities for CISVers to speak about CISV at community or school events
- Let members know when Chapter activities and events receive media coverage
- Highlight the fellowship opportunities of membership
- Publicise your events, activities and meetings

## 13. Resources - Template fact sheet

Your logo

### CISV facts

- CISV *[your name]* is a Chapter of CISV International
- CISV International was founded over 50 years ago in Cincinnati USA and is a charitable, independent, non-political, volunteer organization which educates and inspires for action towards a more just and peaceful world.
- CISV provides a range of unique, educational group activities, which develop cross-cultural understanding in children, youth and adults from around the world.
- Children from the age of eleven can participate in CISV activities
- CISV has Chapters in over 60 countries worldwide, with over 60,000 members
- In 2007 8000 people participated in 200 CISV international programmes and activities worldwide; a further 2000 people took part in activities benefitting their local communities.
- CISV International is an NGO in operational relations with UNESCO and holds Participatory status with the Council of Europe
- CISV *[your name]* was founded in *[date]* and has *[number]* members
- In 2007 *[number]* local people participated in *[number]* CISV international programmes and activities
- In 2008 CISV *[your name]* will be *[give brief details of planned activities i.e. sending 10 young people to a summer village]*
- *[Any other details you think may be useful i.e. when and where you hold meetings, how often you meet]*
- CISV *[your name]* is supported locally by *[names of your sponsor/s, if any]*
- Contact *[your Chapter contact]* for more details
- See *[ your website]* and [www.cisv.org](http://www.cisv.org)

*CISV is a global community of dedicated volunteers crating opportunities for all ages to experience the excitement and enrichment of cultural diversity through our educational programmes. We are founded on our belief that peace is possible through friendship – and that the real difference can be made by starting with children.*

## 14. Resources – Template Press Release

Your logo

### press release

*Use this form to send a press release to your local news media. Add your own quote and, if possible, include a photo. Edit this release to one page and remove this text box. Do not delete the notes to editor.*

Who, What, When, Where, Why

*[for example, CISV [your name] will holding a fundraising evening at [venue] on [date] at [time]. The event is to raise money for [give reason]. Tickets are [price] and [give details of how they can be bought and from whom].*

Says CISV *[insert name of Chapter]* Secretary *[insert name]*, *[insert quote]*

Additional information *[Give more details of the event/activity and what you hope to achieve]*

-ends-

Notes to editor

- CISV *[your name]* is a Chapter of CISV International
- CISV International was founded over 50 years ago and is a charitable, independent, non-political, volunteer organization which educates and inspires for action towards a more just and peaceful world.
- CISV International is an NGO in operational relations with UNESCO and holds Participatory status with the Council of Europe
- CISV *[insert name of your Chapter]* was founded *[insert number]* years ago and has *[insert number]* local members.
- [Any other key information that backs up your press release]
- Contact *[your name and email address and telephone number]* for more details
- For more information, see *[your chapter's website address]* and [www.cisv.org](http://www.cisv.org)

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## 15. Resources – Template Letter to the Editor

Your letterhead

*This example letter gives a good idea of useful facts and figures to include in any letter to the editor.*

Dear Sir

On 21 May it is World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development *[or 2008 is the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue]*. While wars and discord continue throughout the world cross-cultural understanding has become more important than ever. That is why I joined CISV, an organization founded over 50 years ago, which is committed to building global friendship in the promotion of peace education.

CISV provides a range of unique, educational group activities, which develop cross-cultural understanding in children, youth and adults from around the world. By encouraging respect for cultural differences and the development of self-awareness, CISV empowers each participant to incorporate these values into their lives as they become global citizens and strive for a more peaceful world.

Here at CISV *[name of your Chapter]* we are helping to raise awareness of different cultures in our community and through our links with CISV in over 60 countries. *[Give some details of your Chapter, including the number of members, age range, activities you are involved with and hope to be involved with this year]*.

CISV *[name of your Chapter]* supports the World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development *[the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue]*...It highlights our belief that peace is possible through intercultural friendships and that the real difference can be made by starting with children. I would urge anyone wishing to play their part in helping to achieve a more just and peaceful world to join us at CISV. Help us as we seek to create cross-cultural respect and understanding worldwide – see our website *[your website address]* or call *[name]* on *[telephone number]* for more details.

Yours faithfully

## 16. Resources – Contacts & Comments

For further resources see [www.resources.cisv.org](http://www.resources.cisv.org), where you will find a number of useful guides and templates.

### Contacts

For further information or assistance on fundraising, marketing or PR, please contact Development Officer Denise Farrar on [denise.farrar@cisv.org](mailto:denise.farrar@cisv.org)

### Comments

If you have any comments to make about this guide or any suggestions for items that could be included, particularly PR strategies that have worked for you, please contact Development Officer Denise Farrar on [denise.farrar@cisv.org](mailto:denise.farrar@cisv.org)