

Dream, Dare, Do: Girl Guides and Girl Scouts learn ways to improve nutrition

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Dream, Dare, Do – this was the theme of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) 30th World Conference, held in Dublin, Ireland, in July 1999. It is also the maxim by which Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from around the world live. At the end of the World Conference, Irish Guides from the Council of Irish Guiding Associations were invited to present their dreams to more than 400 delegates from more than 120 countries. One of the young women's dreams was that there should be no more hunger in the world.

Girl Guides and Girl Scouts throughout the world are daring to make the dream of eradicating hunger a reality. There are groups in over 27 countries working on a total of 37 projects on food and nutrition. During the conference, representatives from many more of the 140 countries within WAGGGS were eager to speak to Mr Zohrab Malek of FAO's Food and Nutrition Division about their plans to start, or develop, their own food and nutrition projects.

A workshop addressed the issue of how non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can work more effectively with FAO, and how grassroots organizations can benefit from the Organization's knowledge, resources and expertise.

The FAO/WAGGGS partnership has been successful because it relies on the involvement and commitment of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts themselves. Young people from every part of the world have taken the concept to their own communities. Girl Guides and Girl Scouts are encouraged to participate actively in projects that assist their communities to eat more healthful, more nutritious and safer diets. The projects play a dual role in helping both the community and the girls' self-development. Girl Guides and Girl Scouts learn about food and nutrition issues themselves, and then teach what they have learned to their communities. The young women also learn about education and training techniques, leadership and life skills.

Many food and nutrition projects are considered for the FAO/WAGGGS Nutrition Award. The Uganda Girl Guides Association received the latest of these awards on World Food Day 1999, the theme of which was Youth Against Hunger.

In the following accounts the girls describe their projects and how working on them has improved their own lives.

UGANDA GIRL GUIDES ASSOCIATION – THE NUTRITION GUIDE

This project aims at improving eating habits by training peer educators on proper feeding for health and producing traditional recipe books. Training, including practical cookery lessons, will be given to Girl Guides and traditional Ugandan recipes will be practised and documented. The Association also plans to run a Guide bakery. The project has enabled the Ugandan Girl Guides to expand their international friendship by working in partnership with the Norwegian Guide and Scout Association, the Guide Association of the United Kingdom, the Girl Guides of Canada and the Forum for Women in Development. These partnerships have made the food and nutrition project possible.

Zoë Kobusingye is a Ugandan Girl Guide involved in the award winning project:

I am Zoë Kobusingye. I am 18 years old and a member of the First Young Leaders' Company of the Uganda Girl Guides Association. The First Young Leaders' Company started on the FAO nutrition project late in 1998, whereby we did lots of new things such as learning new recipes that are easy to prepare and yet nutritious. During the lessons I learned traditional recipes where the local foods are used. For example, in the western part of Uganda, Shabwe, many recipes are made from milk and are very rich in proteins. From the northern part of Uganda a main meal course of pasted meat and millet bread was made which is rich in carbohydrates, iron, protein and vitamins. Green vegetables were prepared using groundnut paste and local salt from Teso, which is in the eastern part of Uganda. I also learned about the famous *luwombo*, which is food that has been steamed without altering its nutritional values. We have compiled these and many other recipes into a small recipe book.

I also participated in this year's Thinking Day¹ celebration, where we launched our National Nutrition Guide Initiative. I taught the Brownie Flock, Junior Guides and the Rangers Unit that I run about nutrition and various local recipes. These recipes were presented to the patients of our main antenatal referral clinic in Mulago. The

¹ Thinking Day is a celebration of the joint birthdays of Lord and Lady Baden-Powell, the founders of the Scout and Guide movements.



Ugandan Girl Guides

food values in these different recipes were explained to the patients, making it clear that the foods are affordable and locally available. This project has taught me that nutrition can be improved without a lot of fuss by using our daily foods that are locally available and yet affordable. It has also taught me all about the importance of a balanced diet, well-prepared food that is both nutritious and healthy to pregnant mothers, infants and others. I hope we, as the Girl Guides, will continue to contribute towards the eradication of heart disease in Uganda.

THE GUIDE ASSOCIATION OF THE UNITED KINGDOM

The food and nutrition challenge project aims at raising awareness of food security and issues relating to health and nutrition within the community. Participation in the FAO/WAGGGS Nutrition Award was run as a competition in the United Kingdom. To qualify for a Nutrition Award medal, each Guide group should be working on, or have successfully completed, an outstanding project that addresses either food and nutrition education or food and nutrition improvement. Many units around the United Kingdom have already organized activities that involve food as part of their weekly programme.

The new initiative has the potential to build on these activities and to enable girls to become aware of the importance of issues related to food and nutrition worldwide. In April 1998, the FAO/WAGGGS Award was publicized in the United Kingdom's *Guiding* magazine and a promotional

flyer was circulated. One issue of the magazine included 19 pages of activities relating to food and nutrition, as well as the information that launched the competition officially. Participation badges and certificates were prepared and given to everyone taking part in the initiative.

Katherine Blair is a Brownie (young Girl Guide) with the United Kingdom Guides, and she is working on one of the food and nutrition projects:

For the health and nutrition theme we did the Brownie logo out of coloured rice, a collage using food wrappers. We also visited an old people's day centre, did a survey on their diet, planted strawberries and made marzipan fruits for Mothers' Day. We visited a supermarket and looked for fat-free goods.

With other Brownies, I went to our World Camp at Foxlease for the final judging. We had a great day meeting Guides from other countries and joining in some of the activities. The winners were a Rainbow Pack and a Guide Pack, but over all it was fun!

THE GIRL GUIDES ASSOCIATION OF NEW ZEALAND

"Wipeout" was the name given to the Girl Guides Association of New Zealand's challenge to all sections, timed to coincide with World Food Day on 16 October 1997. The project explored methods of safe food handling, including preparation, reheating and storage of various types of food. The project, carried out by Guides aged from five to 18 years, looked at the consequences of unsafe handling, including unwashed hands, unclean work areas and equipment.

Experiences ranged from preparing safe nourishing food to growing bacteria from washed and unwashed hands under the guidance of a pathologist. The project received the FAO/WAGGGS Award medal in 1998.

Sarah-Jane (aged 14) and Kelly (aged 11) are both Girl Guides in New Zealand and have both worked on the Wipeout project:

For the nutrition programme, Guides New Zealand chose the topic of safe food handling. The challenge was called "Wipeout". We do not really have many people who do not have food, but food storage can be a problem. Our Unit enjoyed working on this challenge. We were able to visit a home and pulled everything out of the refrigerator. We then put it all back in, making sure that it was safe. We did not know before that raw meat and cooked meat should not be stored in the fridge on the same shelf. We learned to wash tea-towels after every use, rather than leaving them for three or four days. We also looked on the Internet to find out about food poisoning.

We visited a fast food restaurant that sells chicken and chips. We had to put on white hats over our hair and we went into the kitchen. We found out that they have strict rules about washing hands and how long the food can be kept after it is cooked. Often it has to be dumped if there are not many customers. A lot of care is taken when handling food, such as wearing gloves. This was a great challenge which we enjoyed and learned heaps from.

GIRL SCOUTS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Girl Scouts in the United States have integrated food, nutrition, agriculture, health and fitness into all of their Girl Scout programmes at all age levels.

Randi is a Girl Scout who has just started at university. She is the Chairperson of the Senior Girl Scout Planning Board and has earned the Gold Award (the highest recognition for Girl Scouts in the United States). Randi attended the In the Pink: Breast Cancer Awareness Leadership Institute, which dealt with issues of nutrition and breast cancer in women:

Breast cancer is one of those topics that few people choose to discuss, and almost as few discuss the benefits of healthy eating in relation to their daily life and future health. Recently, I enjoyed the opportunity to participate in the In the Pink: Breast Cancer Awareness Leadership Institute offered by the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in partnership with San Jacinto Girl Scout Council. As well as discussing the need for five to nine fruits and vegetables a day, the nutritionist explained that simply organizing your eating and making a conscious effort to include a variety of foods in your diet will make a difference in your overall health.

Since attending In the Pink, I have readily recognized the important role that a balanced diet plays in maintaining the high-energy level that my busy lifestyle demands. I also feel empowered to share information with my peers regarding new links found

between nutrition and cancer prevention. While some of the tips may appear trivial to healthy individuals, the difference good nutrition can make becomes impressive when current cancer patients encourage others to make every possible effort to prevent cancer.

FEDERAÇÃO DAS BANDEIRANTES DO BRASIL

The Recycling Food project took place in Barrio Belem Velho, where the majority of the inhabitants are marginalized, unemployed and economically deprived. The project comprised a group of ten women (mothers and housewives) who were trained through practical courses in nutrition and "alternative nutrition" – recycling food that is normally discarded as waste. Following the training, they acted as trainers themselves within the community. A leaflet was produced containing recipes and alternative cooking methods.

The Federação das Bandeirantes do Brasil received the FAO/WAGGGS Nutrition Award for their Using Food Wisely project.

Marcelino Silveira is a Ranger with the Guaianás in the Dr David Gusmão District of the Federação das Bandeirantes do Brasil. Marcelino participated in the Recycling Food project:

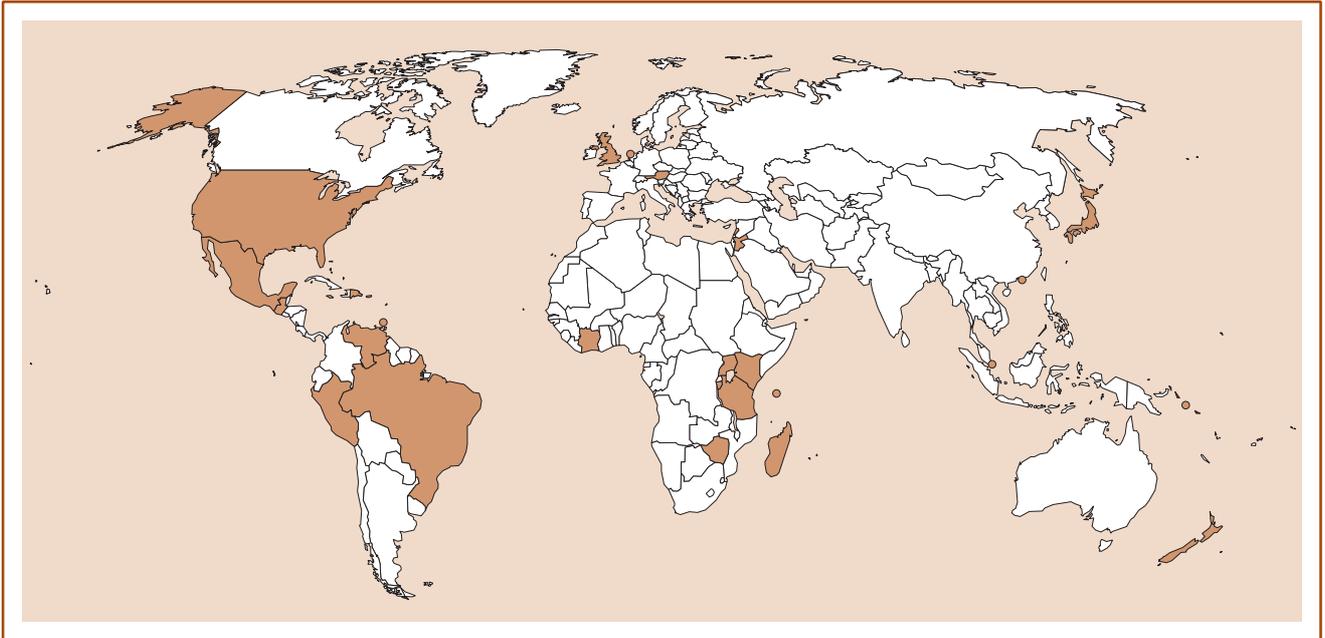
The community service carried out in an underprivileged community in the city of Porto Alegre was extremely important for the progress and development of my Group. It was also fundamental for my own personal growth. During the activities, I realized how it was important to work with a community and to teach the mothers food recycling techniques. The women showed interest in learning the skills and agreed that it is vital to know how to feed their children by means of fully utilizing fruit, greens and vegetables as well as peels, stems and leaves where vitamins are concentrated – so necessary for their development. I felt very happy when we completed our project in this community, because the children stopped us and asked when we would return. I think they understood that our work with their mothers was very important for their health and growth.

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA GIRL GUIDES ASSOCIATION

The Tanzanian Girl Guides' project aims at reviving the health of malnourished children, preventing deaths of children from malnutrition and sensitizing mothers to the importance of using available products for nutritious food. The Association renovated and equipped the ward's kitchen, trained mothers on how to prepare nutritious foods and taught mothers about the preservation of farm products.

Tausi Abdallah is a Ranger in Kibasila Street Ranger Company and is working on the project:

In community development work we decided to combine Tanzanites, Viangaza packs, Guide companies, young leaders, Rangers and Cadets. This makes a group of 34 members called 16 Kibasila Street Guide group.



WAGGGS' food and nutrition projects around the world

Our group learned about the theme Building World Citizenship from the *WAGGGS World Bureau* magazine. Of the six topics (education, environment, peace, health, food and nutrition, and culture and heritage), our group selected the topic on food and nutrition since we are aware that some of the children in our country, aged five to ten years, die every year owing to malnutrition. In order to eradicate malnutrition, my group decided to find its source and causes and solutions to be taken to prevent it. Fortunately, we came up with the idea of making nutritious porridge and distributing it to the children who are suffering from malnutrition. These children came from three main districts of Dar es Salaam region – Ilala, Kinondoni and Temeke.

WAGGGS' FOOD AND NUTRITION PROJECTS WORLDWIDE

Food and nutrition are issues that affect everyone worldwide. Girl Guides and Girl Scouts throughout the world come up

with project ideas that are relevant to their own countries and their own communities. The map shows WAGGGS' food and nutrition projects around the world:

- **Asia and the Pacific:** Hong Kong, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore, Solomon Islands.
- **Europe:** Austria, United Kingdom.
- **Latin America and the Caribbean:** Aruba, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Venezuela.
- **Near East and North Africa:** Jordan, Lebanon.
- **North America:** Canada, United States.
- **Sub-Saharan Africa:** Burundi, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Nigeria, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe. ♦

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Young people from every part of the world bring ideas for improving nutrition to their own communities. Girl Guides and Girl Scouts are encouraged to participate actively in projects that assist their communities to eat more healthful, more nutritious and safer diets. The projects play a dual role in helping both the community and the girls' self-development. Girl Guides and Girl Scouts learn about food and nutrition issues themselves, and then teach what they have learned to their communities. The young women also learn about education and training techniques, leadership and life skills. Many food and nutrition projects are considered for the annual FAO/WAGGGS Nutrition Award. In this article, girls describe their projects and how working on them has improved their own lives.

Rêver, oser, agir – Les guides et les éclaireuses apprennent à améliorer la nutrition

«Rêver, oser, agir» était le thème de la 30^e Conférence mondiale de l'Association mondiale des guides et des éclaireuses (AMGE) qui s'est tenue à Dublin (Irlande) en juillet 1999. C'est la maxime qui règle la vie des guides et des éclaireuses dans le monde. Le rêve serait de faire disparaître la faim dans le monde. Les guides et les éclaireuses de 35 pays osent agir pour que ce rêve devienne une réalité.

Les jeunes du monde entier se rassemblent pour proposer des idées afin d'améliorer la nutrition dans leurs communautés d'origine. Les guides et les éclaireuses sont encouragées à participer activement à des projets qui aident leurs communautés à adopter une alimentation plus saine, plus nourrissante et plus sûre. Les projets jouent un double rôle en aidant la communauté et en contribuant au développement autonome des jeunes filles. Les guides et les éclaireuses s'informent elles-mêmes sur les questions d'alimentation et de nutrition et, à leur tour, elles peuvent en faire bénéficier leurs communautés. Les jeunes femmes acquièrent aussi des connaissances sur les techniques d'éducation et de formation, elles apprennent à assumer un rôle d'animatrice et se préparent à la vie active. De nombreux projets relatifs à l'alimentation et à la nutrition sont examinés en vue du Prix annuel FAO/AMGE de la nutrition. Dans cet article, les jeunes femmes décrivent leurs projets et expliquent comment ce travail leur permet d'améliorer leur vie.

Soñar, atreverse, actuar: las guías scouts aprenden a mejorar la nutrición

«Soñar, atreverse, actuar» fue el tema de la 30^a Conferencia Mundial de la Asociación Mundial de Guías Scouts (AMGS), que tuvo lugar en Dublin (Irlanda), en julio de 1999. Representa también el lema que rige la vida de las guías scouts en todo el mundo. Uno de los sueños es que ya no debería haber hambre en el mundo y las guías scouts de 27 países se atreven a hacer realidad el sueño de la erradicación del hambre.

Las jóvenes de todos los lugares del mundo aportan ideas para mejorar la nutrición en la propia comunidad. Se alienta a las guías scouts a participar activamente en proyectos mediante los cuales se ayuda a sus comunidades a tener regímenes alimenticios más saludables, nutritivos e inoocuos. Los proyectos tienen la doble finalidad de ayudar a la comunidad y contribuir al desarrollo personal de las jóvenes. Las guías scouts adquieren ellas mismas conocimientos acerca de las cuestiones de la alimentación y la nutrición, para luego transmitirlos a sus comunidades. Aprenden también técnicas de educación y formación, y adquieren dotes de liderazgo y conocimientos prácticos para la vida. Hay muchos proyectos relativos a la alimentación y la nutrición que se tienen en consideración para el premio anual FAO/AMGS. En este artículo, las chicas describen sus proyectos y cómo han mejorado sus vidas desde que trabajan en ellos. ♦