Promoting Your Story: Effectively Communicating Successful GLOBE Implementation

This document provides suggestions for ways to effectively communicate information about the GLOBE Program. In order to cultivate increased recognition of GLOBE as the world's preeminent hands-on science and education program, and to ensure the growth and sustainability of the GLOBE program in your region, capturing the interest of the local media is of vital importance. In addition to anticipated benefits, such as support from local scientists and civic leaders, your efforts to increase the visibility of GLOBE in your region may yield surprising results as well. Potential partners and sources of funding comprise the untapped support network that we all strive to reach.

When devising a plan for your media effort, ask yourself the following questions.

- Who are your stakeholders? Once you have identified your stakeholders, you can begin to develop a plan specifically addressing their needs and interests.
- What do you want them to know about GLOBE and why? Align GLOBE's strengths with their vision, mission, objectives and goals.
- What impressions do you want your stakeholders to have? Be sure to convey the importance and excitement of this worldwide effort.
- What communications media do they see or prefer the most? Consider collaborations, networking, TV, radio, newsletters, posters, word of mouth, special events, brochures, community newsletters, etc.
- What media is most practical for you to use in terms of access and affordability? This will vary from community to community. Contact as many media outlets as possible.

Creating a Media Contact List

Check your local phone book or the Internet for a list of newspapers, magazines, television and radio stations in your area. Call local newspapers, television and radio stations to obtain fax number and phone number for the person who regularly covers education, technology, environment and scientific issues. Compile your list and update it regularly, adding new names as you meet new people. Try to develop a working relationship with media professionals in your area. If they know about GLOBE in advance, this will ensure they fully understand the history, goals and issues when they write a story about your project or event.

Writing a Press Release: Inviting the Media to Report your Story or Event

A press release is often the first encounter a media outlet will have with your GLOBE story or event. While you want to be thorough and include all information and underlying data, you also need to be succinct. The first paragraph should include the "five W's" -- who, what, where, when, and why. Don't forget, your first goal is to interest them to attend your event. If you have a high-profile person who will attract media, include his or her name in this first paragraph.

The next paragraphs should include an expansion on the purpose of the event, and some history of what led up to it. Include some brief background material on any special people who will be in attendance. The release should include a quote from a GLOBE spokesperson, such as a Country Coordinator, or a GLOBE teacher or student. This will very often be the quote used in the print media, so make it count. Finally, include a brief description of GLOBE, which can be found on the GLOBE Web site. Go to www.globe.gov and click on “About GLOBE” at the bottom of the page.

The form of the press release can vary. There are, however, a few elements common to all press releases. At the top of the page, on letterhead stationary whenever possible, center and type "PRESS RELEASE.” Next list the current date, the date the information is to be released, and name, phone number and email of the media person to whom you are sending the press release. End with "# # #" centered and typed at the bottom of the release. (See example of a Press Release, attached.)

The GLOBE Program encourages you to send a press release to the media each time the following GLOBE activities occur: signing of bilateral agreement to join GLOBE, student measurement milestones, Train-the-Trainer workshops, regional GLOBE games, awards ceremonies/presentations, students chosen from your area to represent your country and participate in the GLOBE Learning Expedition and virtual participation via Web chats.

Timing the release is important. If your event is planned well in advance, it is good to mail it or fax it at least a week ahead to ensure its inclusion on calendars. All press releases should be followed by a phone call to ensure that the information reaches the appropriate contact.

Writing the Story Yourself: How to Submit a Finished Piece to the GLOBE Web Site or to Your Local Media

The GLOBE Web site is constantly looking to publish stories about people and projects that shine. These are our "Stars," the front-page features on our Web site that spark our imagination and inspire us with news of GLOBE at work in the world. If you have a story about an event or achievement that you would like to share with the entire worldwide GLOBE community, please send it to the GPO Desk Officer for your region, or fax it to 1-303-497-2638.

Local newsletters, scientific journals, and other venues also solicit written manuscripts. Crafting copy for articles or the GLOBE Web site needn't be a chore. With the right tools and tactics it can be fun!

A basic point to grasp in working with the GPO and with the news media is that reporters are in the business of providing news stories and are constantly in need of a fresh supply. Therefore, your story fills a need and in order to promote your work and to build and strengthen the image of GLOBE in your schools and in your communities, you need only to make your story as newsworthy as possible. Be focused and accurate. The reader should be able to grasp the essence of the story after finishing the first paragraph, known as the lead.

For the GLOBE Web site, GLOBE is particularly interested in hearing stories that are of interest to our student audience. Students doing GLOBE offer a wealth of opportunities for stories, and can be inspiring to students elsewhere. Consider topics such as these:

- How students help research scientists understand the Earth.
- How student research impacts the community.
- How GLOBE, an international science and education program, connects our students to the rest of the world.

The GLOBE Web site also welcomes news about workshops, meetings and the growth and development of the program in general. We are always looking for stories about:

- how a professional development workshop promotes technology in schools.
- how the involvement of local scientists and partners benefits the community.

Successful stories include one or more of the following points:

Timeliness: Information should be released as soon as possible.
Proximity: Your story should indicate immediate impact on the local community.
Human Interest: Your story should have general appeal and convey interesting information about local students, educators, scientists, etc.
Impact: Relate how the event affects the community in the present or future.

Quotations: Quotes make a story come alive. Be sure to gather the words of students or others who can offer insight or anecdotes.

Photos: A photo is an excellent way of putting a face on your story. Be sure to include them in your article. Also be sure to send a **Photo Release Form**, found as an attachment to this article and also available on the GLOBE Web site. Click on the Partners Tab on the top tab bar, then scroll down and under Regional Communication, click on the GLOBE Stars link. You will locate the Photo Release Form on this page. You can also go directly to
http://www.globe.gov/fsl/STARS/Init.opl?lang=en&nav=1

The GLOBE Program Office and many news outlets cannot publish photos on a Web site or in print without the express permission of those in the photographs. Photos of individual children require the signature permission of parents or guardians. Permission for groups of school children can be signed by teachers. If you want to include photos with your story on the GLOBE Web site (and we highly encourage you to do so!) please make copies of the photo release form (attached to this document), have them signed and fax them to The GLOBE Program Office (GPO) at 303-497-2638.
Send your Stars to the following email addresses for your region:

Africa: africa@globe.gov
Asia and the Pacific: asia-pacific@globe.gov
Europe and Eurasia: europe@globe.gov
Latin America and the Caribbean: latinamerica-caribbean@globe.gov
The Near East: neareast@globe.gov
North America: Canada: canada@globe.gov The United States: united-states@globe.gov

Speaking to the Press: Choosing your Words

Preparation

The key to communicating effectively to the media and the public is preparation. Before the interview, whether for print or broadcast, ask the reporter to give you examples of the questions he/she will ask. Write out what you want the public and opinion leaders to know. Design your message to be delivered in short and simple responses. Your goal at this stage of the message development process is to phrase your answers in quotable sentences that communicate your message. Next, practice saying these points so that they seem to flow naturally, succinctly and crisply.

For each major message, supplement and support with specifics to fit your situation.

- First, write a general statement.
- Add supporting data, statistics or other factual information.
- Add personal or local examples; anecdotal information.

Delivery
For radio interviews, you want to pay attention to your voice tone and inflection. Radio listeners can't see you, so use inflection in your voice to add variety and meaning to your comments. Be aware of your overall pace. Your message will lose its impact if you talk too fast or too slow.

Be mindful of your body language and appearance for television interviews. Maintain eye contact with the person conducting the interview. To emphasize a point use pauses, or change to a louder or softer voice. Broadcast interviews are usually taped interviews, which will be edited and aired later. Therefore, if you make a major mistake during an interview, one that alters the meaning of your message, pause, restate the word or phrase correctly, and continue. Or tell the reporter you need to correct something you said earlier. There is no need to apologize, just continue on at a relaxed steady pace.

One of the greatest threats to success in your local media effort is saying more than is necessary to the media. A basic rule to remember is to never say anything "off the record." If you don't want to have it aired or seen in print, then you should not discuss it at all. Be honest if you do not know the answer to a question. Your credibility is crucial and you do not want to jeopardize it. Be brief in your answers, keeping it short and simple; you'll look and sound better if you get right to the point. Speak convincingly. Don't be afraid to pause. Every time you open your mouth, look and sound as if you really care.

General Rule for Every Phase of Working with the Media

In every phase of dealing with the media, make sure you identify the GLOBE Program. Being quoted in the press won't help increase support, funding or provide visibility for your involvement in the GLOBE Program if readers and viewers are not aware that you are a Partner. Identifying yourself as a Partner gives credibility to your press release, editorial and feature story. It also helps to educate the public and opinion leaders about the GLOBE Program.

Always keep in mind in your media efforts that Earth science education, research, and funding can all benefit from the influence that media visibility can bring. Your media efforts must, therefore, have a two-fold approach: reaching opinion leaders and educating the public.

If you need help identifying a good story, writing a press release or giving a media interview, contact GPO Communications Coordinator Jan Heiderer at janet@globe.gov

(On Letterhead Stationery, if possible)

PRESS RELEASE

Date:
For Immediate Release (or For Release on --/--/2007)
To: Name or Tile of Person and Publication
From: Your name, title, phone number, email

LOCAL STUDENTS ASSIST WORLD SCIENTISTS COLLECT SCIENTIFIC DATA

Students at *(NAME of School)* today took scientific measures of the Earth systems and will share their observations with other students and scientists around the world. *(NAME of School)* students join an international network of students worldwide taking scientific measurements of the Earth. More than100 countries participate in the GLOBE Program, an international environmental science research and hands-on education program that unites students, teachers, and scientists in study and research about the dynamics of Earth's environment. GLOBE has reached over one million primary and secondary students in more than 20,000 schools around the world.

GLOBE students in *(name of school*) take research-quality environmental measurements, use these data in their own research and make them available to scientists around the world. "Unlike traditional school science programs, teachers and students at *(name of school)* participate in actual science investigations led by scientists. Through participation in the program, students have many opportunities to interact with scientists and contribute their data to actual scientific research," said *(Name of a source such as partner).*

Investigation areas in which students collect data include atmosphere, hydrology, soil, land cover/biology, global positioning systems, and seasons. Today, the students collected data in (name area/s of measurements). "The GLOBE Program provides (*name of school*) students with many stimulating investigative opportunities to explore the environment and enables them to contribute data to research that would otherwise be unavailable," added *(same source as above).*

A study by SRI International, a California (U.S.A.) firm with a world-renowned expertise in education evaluation, found that the GLOBE Program is successfully impacting student knowledge and skills in classrooms around the world. "GLOBE is an excellent example of substantive educational use of the Internet," according to Dr. Barbara Means of SRI's Center for Technology in Learning. "There is evidence of enhanced science and mathematics learning in classrooms where GLOBE is being implemented." The evaluations by SRI also found the GLOBE Program is adaptable to a wide range of grade levels and contexts, and compatibility with inquiry and collaborative learning models.

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