

Steps for implementing a media campaign for the opening of the Terraces

1. Out of the 19 delegates coming to the opening from your country, identify 5 or 6 who have an interesting background and who would be comfortable and articulate when speaking to the press. Write a one-paragraph biography on each of them. Hold a copy for your files and send copies of the brief biographical statements to the Office of Public Information, as they may be extremely helpful for our Office as well.
2. Identify your target media. Choose specific newspapers, magazines, radio and television programs. Become familiar with their content and style. What sort of stories do they cover? What is their audience? Call their advertising department and ask for the profile and demographics of their readers or listeners. Identify specific editors, producers or reporters. Keep an eye out for journalists who are interested, personally, in the kinds of news you have to offer. Journalists are individuals like everyone else, and they have interests and sympathies, which become obvious if you read their columns or listen to their programs regularly.
3. Find out about their deadlines and give them enough notice to run your story. Deadlines can make the difference. Do they have a daily deadline? At what time? Is it a weekly deadline? Which day is the busiest? You should time your phone call so that it does not interfere with a deadline. For monthly or quarterly publications, find out when they start commissioning stories for the next edition.
4. Research the requirements and understand the needs of different kinds of media. The way we present the story will vary according to the type of media – is it print or broadcast? Is it news or feature? Is it a specialty media – religion, travel, tourism, architecture or design? Here are some general notes to keep in mind about each kind of media:

NEWSPAPERS

In big newspapers each different section, such as Arts, Lifestyle, Health, etc., may have a “section editor”. Even in the front part of a newspaper, the news and the features will have different editors. So you need to think about whether a story you are offering is a news story or a feature story. On smaller papers, there may be a news editor and features editor, but no section editors. On an even smaller paper, there is an editor and some journalists. Smaller local newspapers are sometimes grateful when articles are presented “ready-made”.

RADIO

Again, news broadcasts are separate from feature programs. Be aware that most programs operate completely independently of each other, so when you pitch a story to radio, you need to be very specific. If you are not sure who the right person is, ask for a staff list. If you are phoning, do not give your story to the front desk receptionist. Tell him or her the general nature of the story and ask to which program you should be put through. Think about sound effects to illustrate your story. World music and classical music stations may be interested in the live audio feed from the opening event.

TELEVISION

It is important to recognize that for a television news department, the opening of the Terraces will generally be considered a “soft” story – the kind that is often used to wrap up the newscast with a one or two-minute segment. For television it is critical to know what lively visuals you can offer: the delegates from your country leaving their homes or gathering at the airport, or returning from Israel after the event, stock footage of the

Gardens and Terraces, and footage of the inaugural events themselves. More information about stock footage and live feed of the event will be provided as it becomes available.

Documentaries and specialty programs will give the journalist more of an opportunity to delve into the story. Most channels commission programs from independent television companies, so you should pitch the story to these production companies as well as to the television channel itself.

SPECIALIST PRESS

There is a magazine or a Web site for every imaginable interest group. Be creative about ways to interest the specialist press in the story of the Terraces. Target media include travel and tourism, gardening, architecture, classical and world music, ecological, religious and interfaith, ethnic or minority press, mind-body-spirit magazines, women's magazines, and youth publications.

5. Set specific and achievable goals for contacting target media. Identify human resources to form part of your media outreach team. Organize your work, not only for access now, but also for future use. Create a contact list of your target media, with the contact name, email, fax, phone number, and, if possible, information about their audience. Keep a record of your contact with them: when you called or sent a press release, what response you got, and notes for follow-up.
6. Draft a press release targeted to each publication or program. Include points of interest to that particular media. Keep it to a page or a page and a half.

What is the most interesting aspect of your story? This is your opening paragraph, the 'angle' of the press release. Your first sentence, especially, should contain no more than 25 words. When you have found the angle or lead in your story, make it strong, and follow your main point through in the rest of the press release. Each release should contain only one story with relevant background information.

The press release should be typed, single spaced, with blank space at the top and bottom to make it easy to read. Contact names and phone numbers should be listed at the bottom.

Avoid using Bahá'í jargon. Try these alternatives:

"manifestation of God"	prophet, founder
"most great peace"	(do not use)
"Local Spiritual Assembly"	Local Bahá'í Council
"Universal House of Justice"	international governing body
"The Guardian"	(do not use)
"ABM"	Bahá'í administrative advisor
"Counsellor"	senior Bahá'í official
seeker/contact	friend, acquaintance
non-Bahá'í	(do not use)

When you have finished writing your press release, try to leave it aside for a while and reread it with fresh eyes to check for mistakes in spelling or grammar. Ask yourself if it is still a good story. Show it to a non-Bahá'í friend to see if it is also interesting to them. Try telling it to a friend on the telephone.

7. Call the reporter, editor or producer that you have selected. Often you may have 30 seconds or less to capture their attention, so think carefully ahead of time what you will say. Prepare for your phone call and make some bullet points of things you want to mention during the call. Rehearse out loud if necessary. Then relax. Remind yourself that, when it comes to the Bahá'í Faith, you are the expert. You have a story to tell – and it is interesting. The journalist is a professional, you are a professional, and you are about to start a working relationship with them, sharing information. Here is a sample call:

“Hello – is that xxx? (give them time to realize you are talking to them on the phone). My name is X, I'm phoning from the media relations office of the ABC Bahá'í Community. I have a press release I'd like to send to you.”

Here comes the pitch:

“We're opening a massive public garden in the city of Haifa in Israel in a couple of weeks. The gardens are a series of terraces running from the base to the peak of Mount Carmel, and it has taken ten years to complete this project. Several representatives from our community will be attending the opening, together with Bahá'ís from more than 180 countries, and after that it will be open to the public and to tourists...”

“I have a press release I'd like to send you; and I'm ringing to see what the best method is to get it to you – do you prefer email, or should I fax it to you?” “And....” (Here is where you sell your local story): “the people who've been invited to attend the opening are all available for interviews, some of them are very interesting people. I'll attach some details about what they do here if you like. I'll give you a call tomorrow to see if you're interested, in case there is anything else you need.”

8. Fax or email your press release and do a follow-up call within a day or two: “Hi, it's X from the Bahá'í Information Office. I sent you a press release a couple of days ago about Z, and just wanted to see if you needed any more information. Is this a good time to call?” (do not ask: “Are you going to do the story?” Journalists hate pressure.) If the journalist wants more information you can offer the full press kit or refer them to the on-line kit at www.bahaiworldnews.org/terraces.
9. If a journalist expresses an interest in attending the opening, you may share the attached information about **Press Accreditation**:

Attachment