



STAND UP  
for something  
great...

SHUT UP  
to give  
young  
women  
a voice!

## Why a silent-a-thon?

A **silent-a-thon** is a simple but effective way of raising awareness, support and funds for women in developing countries who do not share the same rights as us, in particular the right to freedom of speech.

The **silent-a-thon** is held in the week around International Women's Day (March 8th). Although it runs only for a day, it gives students a window into living without freedom of speech, as some women endure their whole lives simply for being female. An event such as this is equally important for boys and girls as it stimulates discussion of gender attitudes in the community. By staying silent, you can give young women in developing countries a voice!

## How to run a silent-a-thon

### What to do before the event:

#### 1. FORM YOUR GROUP

Find a group of students who are willing to stay silent in aid of IWDA projects. Hold a meeting to let other students know about the **silent-a-thon** and what they might expect by participating.

You may want to nominate student coordinators for each year level and find a teacher who you can plan with. This teacher can also give support and encourage other staff members to become involved in the program.

#### 2. SET GOALS

It is important to decide from the outset what the goals of your group are. It is your decision the length of time you will remain silent. Participants may choose to have a full day, morning, afternoon or lunch of silence.

#### 3. SET A DATE AROUND INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

When setting a date for the event, check with your school what other activities and events are on in that time. Set a date that allows you enough time to get organised - this includes finding sponsors and working out all the details of the day.

#### 4. SEND LETTERS

If you accept the challenge to hold a **silent-a-thon**, you will receive an info pack that includes sample letters to send to your school and business communities, explaining the 'how and why' of the **silent-a-thon**.



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## 5. FIND SPONSORS

To make your **silent-a-thon** as great as possible, seek sponsorship from local businesses and also individuals. Ask them to sponsor you for each hour that you remain silent. You could also introduce a 'speaking tax' where you fine yourselves or each other for any words spoken by mistake. Sponsors can donate prizes to be auctioned or raffled off after the event to raise additional money.

## 6. ARRANGE SPEAKERS OR PERFORMERS

Decide if you would like to have a guest speaker come and talk to those in the event or whether you would like to organise a performer to provide entertainment for the students. IWDA would be very happy to assist you in finding a speaker for your event, who will be available in the month leading up to International Women's Day. You may wish to organise something for the day you hold the silent-a-thon.

## 7. BE VISIBLE

Make sure that everyone at school knows what is going to happen during the **silent-a-thon** and why you are holding it. Distribute flyers to other students and teachers.

# What to do during the event:

## 8. HAVE A 'BASE AREA'

Remaining silent all day could feel quite lonely. Make sure that there is a place where people can go if feeling stressed at all or needing some slight relief. A 'silent lunch' could be organised by approaching local businesses for food donations, which would keep everyone happy!

## 9. SPEAKING CARDS

IWDA will provide you with the copies of speaking cards and stickers, which let people know why you are remaining silent. These can be passed to people to explain what you are doing without having to speak. Simply photocopy these cards to create copies for everyone.

## 10. USE YOUR COMMON SENSE

Although you will have speaking cards, if a situation arises where you must speak, please do so. Just use your common sense.

## 11. RECORD THE EVENT

Take heaps of pictures and gather stories to send in to IWDA so that we can know what happened during your **silent-a-thon**. We would love to put stories and pictures of your successful **silent-a-thon** on our website or in our newsletter, and we encourage you to do the same in your school or local newspaper! We will send you a form for you to give permission to us to use your photos.



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## **What to do after the event:**

### **12. ORGANISE A 'BREAKING THE SILENCE' EVENT**

After not having spoken for a number of hours, a 'Breaking the Silence' event means everyone can say all that they have been wanting to over the last day! It offers a chance for everyone to talk about their experiences, compare stories and have heaps of fun. There are many different ways in which you could organise a 'Breaking the Silence' event such as a film night, inviting a band to play at your school, a charity concert or other such events. Perhaps you could video one another talking about your experience and send it in to IWDA.

### **13. COLLECT YOUR SPONSORSHIP MONEY**

Start collecting money from those who have sponsored you as soon as you have finished. Give yourself around a week to collect the money. IWDA will provide tax-deductible receipts that may be issued to sponsors. Please contact IWDA to arrange collection of the funds within a week of your event.

### **14. REMEMBER YOUR THANK YOUs!**

Remember to thank the people that have sponsored you, and any individuals or businesses that have donated money or gifts to help with fundraising. IWDA will provide sample letters you can send to thank sponsors. A nice way to thank businesses or individuals who have donated money or gifts is to present them with a certificate of appreciation.

### **15. HAVE AN 'AFTER-MEETING'**

Organise an 'after-meeting' to discuss the event with everyone. Find out what people thought went well and what didn't go so well. Let IWDA know about your silent-a-thon and any associated events, and we can pass your ideas on to other schools!

**Funds raised will go towards IWDA projects that support women and their families in the Asia-Pacific region.**