

# KITES FOR GIRLS' RIGHTS

Creative Action Toolkit Guide



**creative action**  
I N S T I T U T E

## INTRODUCTION

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*“Throw your dreams into space like a kite, and you do not know what it will bring back: a new life, a new friend, a new love, a new country.”*

- Anais Nin

The exact date and origin of kites are unknown, but it is believed they were first flown in China over two thousand years ago. Since then, kites have captured the creative imagination of cultures all over the world. In addition to being fun, kite flying serves many purposes. It is an inclusive activity that brings communities together and promotes positive social connections and celebration. The beauty and artistry of kites uplift our spirit when we see them soaring in the sky. It is an educational process to learn how to construct a kite from local or recycled materials.

Kites can also be used to disseminate social messages in a powerful way. In this Creative Action Toolkit, we will share instructions for how to make a beautiful kite that includes inspiring messages to promote girls’ rights. We will also provide some guidance for coordinating a kite festival in your town or village to raise awareness and community support for the issue you want to highlight! We hope that Kites for Girls’ Rights will be fun and creative social action you can coordinate to spark the imagination, uplift the spirit, bring communities together and inspire positive change for girls and women!



*Kite festival in India*

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## GOALS FOR USE OF THIS TOOLKIT

- Develop capacity to design and construct kites with social themes
- Bring communities and stakeholders together for an inclusive multi-generational event
- Build awareness about a social issue connected with girls' rights
- Promote powerful messages in a compelling and visual way to inspire action

## MATERIALS YOU WILL NEED

- Heavy-duty plastic bag (*you can use garbage or recycled plastic bag - just make sure it does not have holes*)
- Roll of strong tape
- Two thin hardwood sticks (or dowels, at least as long as your plastic bag.
- Roll of fine nylon knitting yarn or some other light but strong synthetic thread, such as a fishing line
- Piece of wood or cardboard for the winder
- Paper, such as gift wrapping paper, rice paper, writing paper, magazines or newspaper
- Ruler
- Scissors
- Black or colored markers
- Small wood saw, carving knife or machete

## ACTION STEPS

### PHASE 1: MAKE YOUR KITE<sup>1</sup>

#### 1. Gather your materials and tools



#### 2. Sketch your kite outline



<sup>1</sup> <https://livewellforless.sainsburys.co.uk/step-by-step-guide-to-making-a-kite/>

- Lay your plastic bag or paper smoothly down on a flat surface, with the opening at the bottom.
- Mark three dots on the bag: Dot One in the very top-left corner (closed end), Dot Two on the left edge 100cm down from the first dot, and Dot Three should be 25cm down from the top and 50cm in from the left edge.
- Using the ruler, draw a straight line from Dot One across to Dot Three, then back down and across to Dot Two. The dots should form an uneven triangle.
- Flip the bag over, and on the reverse side trace over the original pen line to create a matching triangle shape.
- Carefully cut along the top and left hand edge of the bag.
- Open it out to form a large flat sheet which will now have a recognizable diamond kite shape marked out.

### 3. Cut out your kite



Take the scissors and carefully cut out your diamond. Don't throw away the leftover pieces of the plastic bag!

#### 4. Build your kite structure



- Take the wooden stick and lay it down the center of your kite shape, from the top of the diamond to the bottom.
- *Grown-ups only:* Saw the stick so it is exactly the length of the kite. Cut a roughly 5cm piece of tape to affix each end of the dowel to the plastic. Tape along the length of the wood and fold the tape over a little at the top and bottom to firmly secure it.
- Take the second stick and lay it from the left to right corners of the kite shape, to form a 't' with the first piece. Saw and tape exactly as you did before.

#### 5. Attach your line



- Turn the kite over and (using the end of the scissors) poke a small hole in the plastic where the two sticks cross.
- Thread one end of your line through the hole and firmly tie it to both pieces of wood.
- Add some tape to the middle over the knot to make sure it is firmly in place.
- Tie the other end of the line to a small wooden block or piece of board that you can hold comfortably.
- To make a handle, use a strip of cardboard long enough to hold with both hands and slice a slit in the middle on both sides. Stick the end of the thread in one of the slits so that it doesn't move as you wind the thread around.

## 6. Make a tail



- From the remaining pieces of the plastic bag, fashion a long, narrow tail for your kite. The tail should be around 5cm wide and about twice as long as your kite. Remember you can write or draw messages on it!
- You might need to tape pieces together and use a second bag if you don't have enough left over.
- Tie the tail to the bottom of the longer length of stick, just above where it is taped to the plastic.

### Other Kite Design Options

In Guatemala, there is a strong tradition of collectively making and displaying gigantic kites in honor of Day of the Dead, a community celebration that honors the ancestors.



Here are some additional instruction manuals for inspiration:

[Gigantic Kites](#)

[Guatemalan Community School Arts Project](#)

[Other Kite Design Ideas](#)

## PHASE 2: ADD SOCIAL MESSAGES

### **1. Pick a topic or social issue**

We want to promote the rights of girls to a good education, to being safe in their communities, to being able to access health services, to good sexual and reproductive health, to their economic independence and security and to being active citizens in society. There might be an issue you are already working on such as ending early childhood marriages or stopping the practice of FGM. You might want to promote the importance and value of a girl's right to go to school.

Decide with the girls what specific issue you want to work on so that you can develop clear messages to decorate your kites!



*Kites for AIDS awareness*

## 2. Develop your message

You want the kites to have an impact. It is important to learn how to deliver your message in visual and compelling ways. You can use the following questions to guide you:

- Start by thinking about the big picture. Why is this issue important? Who does it affect and how? The more people, the more far-reaching the better.
- How do the public or community members currently think about this issue?
- What do you want your public to know or understand about this issue? Are there commonly held beliefs that you want to challenge or change?
- What are your goals? What do you want to achieve?
- What do you hope others will do? What is the call to action? Be specific!
- What is the most compelling evidence you have to support your message? Is there a statistic or story that captures the seriousness of the issue?
- Can you make it memorable? Short messages in clear and concise language is easier to remember (and fit on a kite!).
- Are there visual images, photographs or symbols that can illustrate your message to help make it stick?

Come up with short and clear messages to include on your kites.

Have your students collect or draw visual images to illustrate the message.

Design your kite first on the paper in the shape you are going to use.



*Kite with environmental message*

### Add your message to the kite<sup>2</sup>

Give the kite-maker a piece of paper to use for sketching ideas. Make the designs BIG, bold and bright so that they can be seen against the sky!

### Try collage<sup>3</sup>

- Attach craft or natural materials like ribbons, feathers or pictures. The more variety of materials, the more interesting the kite will be!
- Cut out big bright pictures and paste them onto your kite. Make sure you don't overlap the cut outs or paste too many of them as it might damage the kite. Again, if your kite is made of cellophane(think and light colored paper like stained polythene) material, you can collage over it either using regular magazine cut-outs or other colorful bits of translucent paper to give it a stained-glass look.
- Other ideas are to use finger or vegetable painting (i.e use carved out potatoes and other vegetables that have been dipped into paint.)
- Add your message!
- If you want to paint, use acrylic or water-based paint on the kite sails. make sure you allow enough time for the colors to dry – at least 1 hour.



*Kite messages about physical and emotional health*

<sup>2</sup> <http://kitesonaroll.com/kite-decorating-tips/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.thehindu.com/features/kids/make-your-kites-creative/article2787446.ece>

### **PHASE 3: FLY YOUR KITE**

There are a few simple steps to fly a kite. Of course the most important factors when flying a kite are having a wide open space and a windy day!

- Work out the direction the wind is traveling. The kite will fly with greater success if you run against the wind.
- For little children, keep the kite string short, perhaps 3-4 meters in length. It will make flying the kite much easier to get off the ground and keep in the air.
- Having another person hold up the kite and release it as the person begins running is a great way to give the kite instant height and catch the wind sooner.
- Run against the wind until your kite gets enough height. If it is a particularly windy day then you should be able to keep the kite up in the air by lightly pulling on the string.



*Kite Festival in Kenya*

## **PHASE 4: ORGANIZE A KITE FESTIVAL**

Pick an area that is as open as possible without nearby buildings, trees or other obstructions. Try to ensure that the space has some wind as well! Get permission to host a community event for the date you want.

- Pull together your coordinating team.
- Sort out your budget. What resources do you have? What do you need?
- Get the message out! Make flyers, radio announcements, go door-to-door, use a megaphone in the streets, make a FB event page, whatever you need to spread the word. Make sure to tell your local press and TV stations to come out and cover the event.
- Invite decision makers and power holders about the issue you are promoting.
- Will you have food vendors or ask people to bring their own for a picnic?
- Invite groups like St. John or Red cross to have a booth - just in case there are any accidents.
- Consider if you want to include other elements of entertainment such as music or theater skits.
- Have a kite contest! Possible criteria could be: Most Beautiful Kite. Most Unusual Kite. Highest Flying Kite. Longest Flying Kite. Largest Kite. Smallest Kite. Longest Tail. Others? Invite local community members, chiefs, teachers or business owners to be on a panel of judges. Offer simple prizes or certificates. Ask local businesses for donations!
- Have a kite parade! Line everyone up, play music or drums, have everyone hold onto their kites (not flying them) and march the group around the kite field. Colorful hats and costumes can add to the atmosphere!
- Have the girls present their kites before they fly them to share a story about what the kite and the issue means for them.
- Make sure you have a compelling speaker to MC the event, talk about the issue and inspire the community to take action. Be sure you have clear talking points and specific demands to achieve your goals!
- You might find an exhibit space where people can hang them as an art installation. This could also be a space for those who want to make more than one kite - for them to put up and showcase their work and social justice message.



*Displaying social messages at kite festival in India*

## SCALE IMPACT

Invite multiple schools or organizations in the region to participate in the kite festival or contest, around the theme you have chosen.

Make it an annual tradition. Choose a different theme every year.

Write about it and tell your story! Publish an article or blog that can include an infographic report of the issues shared on the kites and why they are important.

Promote your issue and the event on your local radio - before and after.

Get a volunteer who can help with live social media. Share events on Twitter and Facebook as they happen. Take lots of photographs and short videos!

Please share your photos, videos, testimonies, pledges and action stories with us at Creative Action Institute! We would love to share your beautiful kites with the world.



*Children's kites about education in South Africa*