

Message Development

Advocacy Communication Strategy



Messages versus Slogans

- **Women's rights are human rights!**
- **Nguvu mpya, kasi mpya...!**
- **Kazi iendelee...**
- **No change!**
- **Ag'ende...! Ajjagg'enda!**
- **Water for Life!**
- **Abstian, Be Faithful, Use Condom – ABC**
- **What is the difference between a message and a slogan?**

Advocacy message

- Simple and easily understood
- Culturally and socially appropriate
- Technically correct
- Brief
- Relevant
- Practical
- Positive

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- **Clarity** – clearly conveyed information to assure / ensure the audience's understanding and to limit the chances of misunderstanding or inappropriate action
- **Consistency** – clarify meanings, don't change message or terminologies
- **Main point** – should be stressed, repeated and never hidden within less strategically important information

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- Tone and Appeal – should be reassuring, alarming, challenging, or straightforward, depending upon the desired impact and the target audience. Messages should also be truthful and, honest and as complete as possible
- **Credibility** – source of information / spokesperson should be believable and trustworthy

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- **Public need** – to break through the ‘information clutter’ of society, messages should be based on what the target audience perceives as most important to them, what they know and not what is most important or interesting to the originating agency
- Prior to final production, messages should be **pre-tested** with target audience (e.g. with channel ‘gatekeepers’) to assure public understanding and other intended response

Message development exercise

1. Develop appropriate advocacy messages for the various target audiences you have identified.

[at least a message for: primary, secondary and opposition targets, allies and constituents, respectively]

2. Which media in your view would be more effective in communicating that message to that particular target audience? Why?

Effective Communication

- **Encoding** - process of translating mental thoughts into a code or language that can be understood by others; and
- **Message** – output of encoding – message contains more than meets the eye
- **Decoding** – receiver’s version of encoding – receiver creates meaning of message
- **Feedback loop** – receiver’s response of the message
- **Effective** – common understanding between sender and receiver

Communication Strategy

A communication strategy is a working tool for:

- Accessing relevant information
- Promoting dialogue with stakeholders
- Facilitating transparency and accountability
- Maintaining and strengthening public support
- Monitoring progress and evaluations

Developing a Communication Strategy

5 basic steps in 5 phases:

- **Analysis**
- **Planning and programming**
- **Message development**
- **Implementation, monitoring pre-testing and revision and assessment**
- **Evaluation**

[See handout]

Why advocacy communication strategy?

- While policies and other operational mechanisms will normally lay down what sort of information is relevant, it is the communication strategy that defines how this information is to be obtained and from which sources.

Communication and Power

- No communication is neutral – the capacity to communicate and be heard is determined by power relationships that need to be analyzed
- Being unable to communicate is both a cause and effect of inequitable power relationships

Advocacy Communication Strategy exercise:

1. Use the guide given to develop a preliminary communication strategy for your advocacy work (advocacy / policy issue).
2. What are the key means of communication you have identified?
3. What are their advantages and disadvantages? (limit to two points each)