

# Messages and Media: Educating and Persuading

Brian Kagoro

# Why Media Advocacy?

- Media advocacy is important to:
  - get on the political agenda;
  - make your issue visible and credible in policy debate;
  - inform the public about your issue and proposed solution;
  - recruit allies;
  - change public attitudes and behavior;
  - influence decision makers and opinion leaders;
  - shape policies, programs and the conduct of public and private agencies;
  - raise money for your cause

# A media advocacy plan spells out:

- What message you want to convey.
- Who you want to reach with the message.
- How you will reach this audience.
- How you will utilize each type of media.
- How this will boost your overall advocacy effort.
- How you will time your media effort to complement your other strategies.
- How you will measure success.

# Basic principles of message development.

- Know your audience.
- Know your political environment and moment (controversies, big issues, fears, and what is considered left, right and center).
- Keep your message simple and brief.
- Use real life stories and quotes.
- Use precise, powerful language and active verbs.
- Use clear facts and numbers creatively.
- Adapt the message to the medium.
- Allow your audience to reach their own conclusions.
- Encourage audiences to take action.
- Present a possible solution.

# Potential Audiences

<b>Local and National</b>	<b>Internationals</b>
Decision makers	Bi-laterals and Multi-laterals (WB etc)
Opinion leaders	Donors
Donors	NGO's
Journalists	Corporations
NGO's	UN Agencies
Researchers/professionals	
Trade unions	
Private sectors	
The Public	

# Messages that reach Citizens

- Homourous
- Use Popular Expression
- Adaptation of popular songs/poems etc
- Brief and witty
- Reference to a popular person/group/celebrity
- Appeal to children

# Framing Your Message

- Start with your advocacy campaign's **core message**;
- Tailor the message to reach distinct audiences;

**A “core” message is** one or two brief, direct statements that reflect:

- your analysis of the issue;
- the causes of the issue;
- who is responsible for solving the issue;
- your proposed solution;
- the actions you ask others to take in support of the solution.

# To **frame** the issue:

- translate individual stories into larger social and political problems;
- assign primary responsibility for the problem;
- present a clear solution;
- spell out your proposals;
- develop images that highlight your values.



# Framing Message for Different Audiences

Audience	Concern	Message	Medium
Decision Makers			Radio TV Newspapers Briefs
Donors			(all the above) International media International journals
Journalists			Local and international prints
Civil society groups			TV, Radio, Newspapers List serve Conferences and workshops Issues and briefs
General Public			Pamphlets/posters Radio/TV Face to face
Opinion leaders			Conference and workshops TV/Radio etc

# Message Delivery

*Message delivery involves careful attention to:*

- how the information will be transmitted --the medium;
- who or what will convey the message --the messenger.

*Choices about delivery differ depending on the audience, the country, the community and the message*

# Message Delivery

- **Person-to-Person**
  - • One-on-one
  - • Lobbying visits
  - • Group or community meetings
  - • Seminars, workshops and conferences
  - • Public hearings
  - • Protests and public demonstrations

# Message Delivery

- **Print**

- • Newspapers and magazines
- • Journals, bulletins, newsletters, updates
- • Posters, leaflets, fliers, action alerts, pamphlets, bumper stickers
- • Reports, studies
- • Letters to decision makers

# Message Delivery

- **Electronic**

- • Radio
- • Television
- • Videos and films
- • Internet

## **Drama and folk art forms**

- • Street theater
- • Songs, music and poems
- • Dance

# Message Delivery

- **For each audience, ask:**
  - What are the audience's primary sources of information? Who or what do they listen to? What do they read? What do they watch? What appeals to them?
  - What are the audience's characteristics (age, gender, class, employment, race, etc)? Where do they live? Work? What languages do they speak? Do they read? Do they buy newspapers? Do they have access to television and the internet? Do they listen to radio?
  - What are their political views? Their jokes? Expressions? Religious and cultural sensitivities? Are there differences based on race, age, gender and

# The message

## **Advocacy messages are more effective if they are:**

- ***Simple and clear:*** Long-winded (rambling and boring) messages will get you nowhere. The public is fed every day a massive dose of information, a lot of it exciting to their sensibilities;
- ***Topical:*** Issues that are current and interesting attract the attention of the public, policy-makers and the editors. As an advocate, you can make an issue topical by framing it in a relevant way, organising events to have it in the spotlight, sharing information with partners, liaising with the media people, etc;
- ***Humane:*** Humanise the problem by including stories of real people to achieve a greater impact on the public and policy-makers. Mere statistics are never adequate;
- ***Well targeted:*** Make sure your message reaches your intended audience. This will depend on language, availability of funds, the media used, the reach of the media amongst the target audience.

# Exercise

*Using the issue chosen earlier:*

- *Try and identify who your target audience is likely to be (both primary targets e.g. policy-makers/institutions and secondary targets-people whose support you need to gain attention and succeed);*
- *How will you reach the audience (which media will you use and why)?*
- *Give examples of messages you would develop for the audiences in “slogan” form.*
- *What media activities may be required to communicate the message?*