Designing a Trachoma Communications Strategy

Everyday, communications strategies and communication messages unfold all around us. Though we may not realize it, the billboards, radio spots, jingles, sms, advertisements all over the internet, daily newspapers, television, are all striving to distinguish one item or idea from another. In this age of unparalleled choice, communications is committed above all to changing behaviors and attitudes.

Designing an effective communications strategy requires a two-way dialogue, where we listen (what does our audience want?), design and implement audience-informed strategies and gather feedback to assess the impact of the strategy. A communication strategy is dynamic in nature and takes shape based on the audience preferences. Below is a guide one can follow for designing a Trachoma communication strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1. Situational Analysis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Purpose (Trachoma Situation that the program is trying to improve)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Key Issue (Behavior change that needs to take place to reduce the incidence of Trachoma)</td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Context (SWOT that affect the Trachoma situation in country)</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Gaps in information on Trachoma available to the program planners and to the audience that may limit the program’s ability to develop sound strategy. (these gaps will be addressed through research in preparation for executing the strategy)</td>
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<td>E. Formative Research (New information that will address)</td>
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## II. Communication Strategy

### Audiences

(Primary, Secondary and/or influencing audiences) Defining and profiling your target audience is key to developing an effective communication strategy. Create a profile for each of your target audience that includes details such as:

- **Demographics** – race, gender, ethnicity, age, education, religion.
- **Geographical Location** – local, national, international, remote, urban, rural.
- **Attitudes** – how do they perceive the issue, how proactive they are? What would it take to get them to take action?
- **Media habits** – what media do they have access to, use and like?
- **Culture** – what is their cultural background, what languages do they speak or read?

### Objectives

Objectives are specific and should be measureable. For example,

- To ensure 50% or 75% of the target audience are aware how to face washing and environmental improvements will reduce Trachoma (eye) infections in the first phase of the campaign

### Strategic Approach

Strategic approach is the path or direction chosen to achieve the set objectives

### Key Messages

Key messages must be simple, believable, easy to understand and must be actionable! It should not be something the target audience find
extremely difficult follow or adopt. Key messages must also spell out clearly the benefits of the desired action.

### Channels and Tools
Channels and tools are communication vehicles you use to get your message to the target audience. Examples may include:

- Interpersonal Communication
- Health care providers
- Press releases
- Articles in the press
- Success Stories
- Press Conferences,
- Mass media (*Radio spots, radio programs, television spots, live interviews, press adverts*)

### III. Management Considerations

#### Partner Roles and responsibilities
Who are the partners in country and what are they current doing in the area of Trachoma. How can our program complement their activity? What are the synergies?

#### Timeline for Strategy Implementation
Every Communication strategy needs to be implemented at the appropriate time to ensure the desired impact. It is therefore important to prepare an activity table with clearly define time lines for implementation.

#### Budget
All activities planned for in the communication strategy must be budgeted for. Plan and prioritize activities based on available resources to maximize impact.

### IV. Evaluation – Tracking Progress and Evaluating Impact
List out indicators for tracking progress of the communication strategy... How will you determine the success of communication strategy