Guidelines and Tips on
IEC Material Production and Distribution for Maximum Impact

These guidelines and tips are intended for Uganda Trachoma Project
Implementers and their partners

Introduction
Health promotion and health education activities rely on a variety of well
designed and effective IEC materials to help ensure success and create the
desired impact. From experience, certain fundamentals pertaining to the
development and distribution of IEC materials are obvious. Every brochure,
poster, job aid, flier, radio spot, TV advert or any other piece of IEC material is
the product of a decision, supported by research, to deal with a specific health
concern, and to be well received and persuasive among a specific audience.
The success and impact of IEC materials depends largely on the understanding
of the target audience.

Prior to distribution of IEC materials

• Suitable communication strategies should be identified prior to the design of
materials to achieve the highest impact on the target population using up-to-
date scientific data. Materials can include a combination of mass media,
printed materials, and outdoor advertisements.

• IEC materials have to be developed through evidence-based research and
situation analysis of the population and the disease in order to determine
target audiences, appropriate health prevention messages, and strategies of
distributing the materials.

• Unified images, branding strategies, and incorporated messages serve as
the best approaches to create unity between the various communication
activities. They allow the target audiences to build up knowledge,
understanding, and protective action over time.

• The campaign should maintain credibility and trust, by providing practical,
up-to-date and accurate information, implemented and reinforced in
coordination with authorized sources such as government spokespersons,
international health authorities, health care professionals, and community-
based institutions.

• The campaign should establish and maintain appropriate level of risk
perception, for example, balancing reality that Trachoma remains a public
health concern and that people, through responsible actions, can control the
spread of this disease and prevent blindness.
• Working with target audience members throughout the development of IEC materials, is critical and helps ensure that IEC materials meet the needs of the intended target audience.

• Producing the most appropriate IEC material should be based on whom the IEC material is intended for i.e. knowledge and understanding of the target audience

• Based on whom the IEC material is intended for there is need to develop a creative brief which spells out various aspects of how the IEC material should be developed including the language, tone, emotions etc.

• Prototype IEC materials should be developed and pretested with the target audience

• Assess the pretest results and based on the feedback from the target audience make revisions to the IEC materials before producing them for distribution. Ensure all aspects are considered including messages, language and the visuals, tone and colour scheme appeal to the target audience

IEC Material Distribution guidelines

This section highlights some of multiple channels you can use to disseminate information about Trachoma, to reinforce what people already know, and to contribute to changing attitudes and behaviors. For an IEC campaign to be effective choosing the appropriate channels of distribution is vital. Having a comprehensive distribution plan makes it easier to monitor and evaluate the usefulness of IEC materials and measure impact on audiences.

Instructions and suggestions for distribution should be supplied along with the materials prior to dissemination to give partners a better sense of their target audiences, their habits, and their daily routines. An effective means of disseminating IEC materials is characterized by:

• Involving the audience in a range of emotional experiences to motivate them to change and communicating benefits that will motivate the audience to adopt the new behavior.

• Creating trust and confidence between information providers and the audience and delivering the message in a consistent, appropriate, relevant manner.
• Understanding who the target audiences are. Each group has different levels of literacy and may have different behavior patterns and service needs. IEC materials are designed for specific populations, therefore, should be distributed only to those targeted populations.

• Audiences likely to be targeted for Trachoma material distribution include head of households (Men & Women), Community leaders, Village Health Workers (VHTs), health care providers at the health facilities, teachers at schools and religious leaders

• Taking into account the cost associated with each one of the IEC materials, it is important to target the different channels of communication with the appropriate type of materials to ensure maximum impact e.g.
  - Materials for home use: brochures, fliers
  - Materials for health center use: posters, job aids, brochures
  - Materials for community display: posters, stickers,
  - Materials for Use in schools: Job aids, posters, brochures
  - Materials for mass media: TV and radio spots, articles in newspapers, billboards, sms

• Distribution activities should always keep these tips in mind to avoid wastage and ensure maximum IEC impact.

Health workers Involvement in distribution of IEC materials

• Training health workers involved in the distribution of the IEC material is essential to provide the audience with the correct and proper messages they need to know, since health workers are the primary source of information.

• Communication with the audience is essential. Health workers and volunteers should not just hand over the flyer/brochure, but should go through the information contained in the material carefully. IEC materials distribution should preferably be carried out by a health worker to influence behavior change.

• Health workers should be trained to speak loudly and clearly, and use familiar words to ensure that those listening understand what is being said. They should also be trained to encourage the audience to ask questions. IEC materials designed for health workers should be handed to them during their training for maximum impact.

Community Leaders and VHTs in distribution of IEC materials

• Training community leaders including teachers, VHT, religious leaders involved in the distribution of the IEC material is essential to provide the
audience with the correct and proper messages they need to know, since these are the key contacts for the audience within communities. It is also important to avoid having distribution events that attract large crowds since such events do not allow and opportunities for dialogue and exchange with target audiences.

• Integrate distribution of IEC materials with the design of activities aimed at mobilizing communities through networks that have a particularly strong presence in rural areas. This can be done through: interpersonal channels, mass media channels, and community-based channels.

• Multimedia campaigns are most effective when mass media and popular traditional channels like community gatherings, Community meetings are used in combination with distributing IEC materials, along with person-to-person interactions, reaching more people in the community. IEC distribution should be timed to align the airing of mass media adverts.

• Getting the audience involved encourages them to carefully read the brochure, communicate with their health providers and educators, and share information with friends and family.

• People learn new behaviors best when they can put into practice what they are learning and when they feel they are learning behaviors that are beneficial and useful to them (e.g. hand-washing with soap and water before eating and after using toilet facilities protects against diarrhea and other intestinal infections. Personal hygiene keeps oneself clean and well-groomed. In addition to its social implications, personal hygiene plays an important role in preventing both the spreading and contracting of disease. By observing basic rules of good personal hygiene, it is possible to lower the risk of developing certain infections. Face washing protects them and their children from flies sitting on their face and spreading eye infection that can lead to Trachoma. Keeping the surroundings clean and using toilets for defecating can prevent a number of infections including trachoma, diarrhoea, hepatitis.

• New behaviors are also adopted when people receive feedback and are rewarded for doing well, especially when they are taking initiatives to protect themselves, their families, and their communities.

• Develop linkages and collaborations with different local authorities and groups who can help in distributing the materials to the right audiences.

Timing and locations
• **The timing** of the campaign helps determine its effectiveness in targeting the right audience. Take advantage of local holidays and festivals to disseminate messages for inaugural events, making sure to address the right audience and channels for distribution (e.g. disseminating materials targeted for women at markets at times when women are shopping for food).

• Posters and wall charts should be displayed in public areas so that the individuals can see and read clearly. Related topics and items should be displayed on or with the appropriate and corresponding posters in order to ensure clarity and continuity and to avoid ambiguity and confusion (pairing of relevant IEC materials).

• **Location** of IEC material distribution, where the target audiences are found, and what public or private events they attend are essential. This depends upon the extent of access the audience has to a specific location, time, space, etc. Situational analysis prior to distribution provides this data.

• In Uganda, places that can be used to distribute Trachoma IEC materials include local markets, schools, groceries, health centers, drug shops and pharmacies.