Communication for Advocacy

9th Annual Sweetpotato for Profit and Health Initiative Meeting

Nairobi Kenya - 25 September 2018

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For impact at scale

Effective Communication **crucial** and **strategic**
- Awareness creation/information to public
- Influence
- Persuade
- Educate
- Call for action/behavior change

Biofortification

Upscaling Impact
Stimulating Action

Inform
Think

Engage
Feel

Inspire
Act
Capturing hearts & minds

Emotional + Rational
WE NEED TO BE RATIONAL AND EMOTIONAL

Rational because...
- Statistics and research make people believe you
- People take action based if they believe the information.
- Facts provide a common ground of understanding.

Emotional because...
- Humans (vs. other species) respond to stories with strong emotional hooks.
- Emotion helps elevate your message and its value.
- ...and creates sympathy and credibility for the messenger.
• Clear, simple, concise messages. Demystify biofortification – avoid jargon and technical terms. Use simple and easy to understand language for target audience

• Succinct, e.g., average sound bite is five seconds, print quotations = 25 words

• Know your audience, understand what moves them and connect with them – avoid ‘one size fits all’ approach – contextualize the message to audience and respect their priorities

• Demystify myths, attitudes and beliefs to gain cultural acceptance – key to adoption. Is biofortification GMO? Eating sweet foods, including sweetpotato, causes diabetes etc.
• Evidence based advocacy. Does biofortification work? What can we use to stimulate action – pictures, statistics, stories, highlight the problem VAD/understand the problem.

• Specify the ‘ask’ – what you are asking for, from your end audience

• Delivered with passion

• How do you measure progress – based on your goals and objectives. Mini ‘log-frame’

• Involve everyone – technical specialists, partners
• Succinct, e.g., average sound bite is five seconds, print quotations = 25 words

• Delivered with passion

• No jargon / use language your audience understands

• Talk about the benefits, not the process

• Vivid example that paints a picture: analogies, stories and metaphors

• Specify the ‘ask’ – what you are asking for, from your end audience
Advocacy strategy: Framework

- **Communities**
  - Community mobilisation
  - Coalition building

- **Media**
  - Media advocacy
  - Conference speaking

- **Policy**
  - Lobbying
  - Public forums

- **Awareness**
  - Awareness campaigns
  - Community education
  - Influencer education

- **Influencers**
  - Policy-maker education

- **Decision Makers**
THE KEY MESSAGES TRIANGLE

Present the content or/Situation
Example: Over 220 million women in developing counties want to delay or avoid pregnancy but are not using modern methods of contraception

State the opportunity and solution
Example: Increasing access to family planning information and services can help reduce the number of unintended pregnancies as well as maternal and newborn deaths, leading to healthier families and community

Make a call-to-action/ask
Example: There is an urgent need for governments to provide more women with greater access to family programs and services.
Use your tools more than words
Develop a range of advocacy materials

• factsheet folders
• Flyers
• Leaflets
• Pull-up banners
• Videos
• Blog articles
• Posters
• Success stories
• Branding e.g. t-shirts, pens
• Behaviour change communication

All available https://cipotato.org/bnfb/
Role of Media

Partnering with media is a cost-effective in advocacy efforts. Train them on the topic and provide well-researched and interesting stories and facts;

- Shaping public opinion and attitudes
- Determining the public discourse
- Influencing public policy
- Give a voice to those who often find their voices marginalized
- Medium public communicates to policy makers

Source: CSSUN-Kenya
• Facebook, Twitter, youtube are growing as key communication channels – visibility, connecting/attracting media, policy makers

• Blogs are mainly used by 13–45 year olds

• More professionals are using LinkedIn

• Political campaigns are also using Facebook and Twitter, as party leaders attempt to reach youth

However, Cluttered environment – requires creativity
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<th>Platform</th>
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• COMMAND ATTENTION- Attract and hold the audience’s attention. Make it memorable. Does the message stand out?

• CLARIFY THE MESSAGE- Ensure the message is clear and easily understood. Less is more! Is the message simple and direct?

• COMMUNICATE A BENEFIT- Stress the advantages of adopting the new behaviour being promoted. Is it clear what benefit the audience receives if they take the action?

• CONSISTENCY COUNTS- Repeat the same message consistently to avoid confusion and enhance the impact of the message. Are all messages consistent? Can the message be conveyed across different media?

• CREATE TRUST - The credibility of the message is important. Without trust and credibility, the message will go unheeded. Is the message credible? What source will make the message most credible?

• CATER TO THE HEAD AND HEART - People are swayed by both facts and emotions. Use both to maximize the persuasiveness of the message. Does the message use emotion, as well as logic and facts?

• CALL TO ACTION - Include a clear call to action. Tell the audience precisely what they should do. Does the message clearly communicate what the audience should do?

Source: Healthcompass
The Building Nutritious Food Baskets: Scaling up Biofortified Crops for Nutrition Security seeks to reduce hidden hunger by catalyzing sustainable investment for the production and utilization of biofortified crops (Orange-fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP); vitamin A (yellow) cassava, vitamin A (orange) maize and high iron/zinc beans) at scale. The project is implemented in Nigeria and Tanzania, to demonstrate how biofortified crops can be scaled up through a multi-crop ("food basket") approach. BNFB draws on complementary expertise for scaling up through a partnership between CGIAR centers and programs, regional organizations and other public and private sector agencies to create a movement that will eventually reach the target populations. BNFB’s hypothesis is that scaling up is dependent on supportive policy environment, strong institutional capacities and availability of proven technologies.