



Developing event-based HIV campaigns

As we progress into diversifying our prevention activities across TL, one of the ways to reinforce our HIV messages are in events that attract many people of different ages and backgrounds. Such events offer opportunities for communities to:

- Understand the basic facts about HIV and STIs
- Recognise that HIV and STIs are present in the community
- Learn about how to reduce risks and vulnerability
- Have access to HIV testing services, STI testing and treatment, male and female condoms etc
- Realise that action is important in preventing HIV and STIs and supporting PLHIVs and their families.

TL have been involved in a lot of campaigns so it is nothing new to a lot of sites- It's good that we are actually building on that experience. One thing that we need to continue reminding ourselves is that in order that a campaign is effective, it must be targeted and that the main message is prompting members of the community to take action. Generic messages such as "Be happy- enjoy a safe festival" does not mean anything and does not give clear advise on what action to take.

Another point is that campaigns must be strategic and is hooked to the overall aim of TL's overall plan. It is not a stand-alone, one off activity. This means that after the campaign, prevention activities that reinforce positive behaviours continue at the site level.

As will be noted in ***How to develop communication campaigns***, messages are developed with the group we are targeting, not in the air-conditioned rooms of our offices. While we are able to give ideas on the messages and the different communication methods, this ultimately must be endorsed by the group we are targeting.

This brief specifically highlights the development of communication messages and methods. All sites have conducted site assessments, so there is enough information available that can help inform an effective campaign.



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Designing messages and ways to disseminate

One of the reasons for developing a campaign is to promote the demand for information, services and skills development. The way this is carried out is very important in making sure that we succeed in getting the attention of audience so their attitudes and behaviours can be influenced.

Therefore we must make sure that messages attract the target audience and that it encourages them to take action. Focus group discussions and talking to members of the target audience will help you make decisions about messages that you need to develop to help meet their needs.

What is a message?

A message is a short phrase or sentence that presents an idea in a simple way. It is a brief saying or slogan that is repeated to friends, colleagues and other interested people using different communication methods. A GOOD MESSAGE IS SHORT AND TO THE POINT. For example “Have a break, have a kit-kat’, ‘Be safe, Be a winner-use a condom’, ‘ Know your HIV status...its cool as..’

Remember that messages/slogans used in different communication methods help push members of the target group from one stage in the **behaviour change process** to the next. The assessment done during the Assessment and Planning phase will help identify where people are at in the different stages of the behaviour change process.

Also remember to find out whether the target group is already receiving messages. If they are, what are they? Are they practicing the behaviour that message is trying to promote? This is important because it helps relook at how we can use existing messages (or come up with new ones) or look at other needs that have not been addressed.

Activities for developing messages

1. Write down all the messages the target audience already receive about HIV and STIs. Find out where these are available from and in what form(TV spot, radio, poster etc)
2. Ask target audience what they think of the existing messages and if they have any ideas for making them better and where they saw and heard them
3. Use this feedback from your audience to decide if you can use or change the existing messages, Ask yourself:
 - (i) How have these messages been use?
 - (ii) Do the messages match our campaign objectives?
 - (iii) Were these messages effective?(based on feedback from target audience)
 - (iv) Can you get permission to change or use these messages? (if it's appropriate for your campaign)



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Note: remember that no campaigns can cover all messages, so the need to be very specific about which risk or vulnerability factor you want to address.

Here are seven tips in developing a message for a campaign

TIP	Example
1. A message explains the benefit/result of making the behaviour change	If you use condoms, you wont get HIV If you wash your hands, you wont get cholera
2. A message gives information/facts that will support the benefits of making a change	Smoking causes bad breath
3. Make the messages clear and simple	Condoms are cool- use one
4. Make sure the main points of the message stand out	Get condoms TODAY
5. Do not use too many ideas in a message	Regular use of condoms prevents the spread of STIs to you, your wife and your unborn children. They also prevent HIV
6. Create a feeling that matches with the information you are giving them	Love each other enough to condoms everytime
7. Find reliable/respected people or organisations to help deliver message	As a professional rugby player, my health and my partners health is important to me. Use condom always.



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How to communicate to your target audience?

The way to communicate to target audiences depend primary on them, the group that we are trying to target in the campaign. In trying to determine the best way to reach them, the following questions will be useful to ask:

1. Do they listen to the radio? What radio station do they listen to? What time of the day/evening do they listen to the radio? What is their favourite radio program?
2. Do they watch TV? What is their favourite TV program?
3. Do they read? What about newspapers?
4. Do they enjoy watching dramas and skits? What about DVDs?

In a campaign, its really important that you get the right mix of communication methods for reaching your primary target audience as well as influencing your secondary target audience. For example, your target audience might not have access to a radio during a festival, but you can organise talk show before the festival talking about the campaign and the kind of services that will be available to people during the campaign.

Some of the communication methods you can use during the campaign are:

1. Interpersonal communication- the BEST!!
 - Peer outreach
 - Individual counselling such as pre and post counselling
 - Information dissemination from a booth
 - Accompanied referrels
2. Mass media
 - TV/Radio spots
 - Talkback shows before and during the campaign
 - Newspaper coverage of the campaign(before, during and after campaign)
 - Theatre/Drama
3. Small media(reinforcements)
 - Posters/pamphlets/flyers



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- Banners
- DVDS
- Promotional materials- t-shirts, caps, water bottles, wristbands, posters, banners etc



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TLs Minimum Standard in developing a campaign targeting Events

1. Evidence based campaigns with clear objectives

All campaigns must be evidence-based with clear objectives. This means that activities are guided by the findings of site assessments. Where possible Project Officer and Regional Coordinators conduct search and familiarise themselves with related research findings conducted by other programs/organisations for their provinces and districts.

2. Use of a 'mix' of communication methods

All campaigns should work towards having the following minimum set of activities:

- (i) Peer education outreach- where peer educators are available, outreach has to be included as part of the campaign activity. If not, specific peer support type of activities such as giving out information, distribute condoms etc can be identified. Outreach is structured with working people working in pairs to a maximum of 2 hours over any outreach period. A duty roster can be developed for the entire day stating who is conducting peer education outreach on what time and where
- (ii) Booth to display and distribute information/condoms-the booth is the centre of the campaign, this is where all information and promotional items will be displayed and distributed. This is also the spot where all campaign activities will be coordinated from
- (iii) Communication material and promotion items- such materials/items are useful in reinforcing the main message of the campaign. It will be useful to think of specific materials and items that can be printed and distributed specifically for the campaign. If not, the project can also explore sourcing material from else where, as long as it related to the objectives of the campaign. Posters, banners, t-shirts, caps, wristbands, water bottles , lanyards etc are some examples that can be used. Remember that any kind of materials must be pilot-tested first with the target audience before it's distributed

Remember when planning for a campaign, plan for activities BEFORE, DURING and AFTER the campaign. This helps ensures that the campaign is linked to the bigger TL response and there is a sense of continuity after the campaign.