



## Tool 9.10 Designing a communication strategy

### Overview

*This tool provides a checklist for designing a communication strategy.*

ECPAT International offers guidelines on designing an effective communication strategy. Although offered in the context of communicating information about child sex tourism, these guidelines offer valuable advice for designing a communication strategy regarding trafficking in persons.

### Plan your communication strategy

- Evaluate the context
  - What is the problem?
- Identify the needs
  - When you have knowledge of the problem, identify and prioritize needs for action
- Assess your capacities
  - Make a list of the resources you have:
    - Financial resources (funds you have and fund-raising capacity)
    - Human resources (special skills, experience, relevant contacts)
    - Partners (local, national, international, Government, private sector)
    - Technical resources (material, equipment, documents)
    - Location (time and place are importance factors in determining action)
    - Relationship with donors
  - By matching the needs and your resources, you can identify your priorities
- Set specific goals
  - Within the framework of preventing trafficking in persons, your specific objective/s should be identified
  - Once you have set your objectives, plan how to reach them with strategic planning of the communication:
    - Objective
    - Audience
    - Message
    - Media

## Select your audience

- Several target groups
 

Different target audiences have different specifications which need to be targeted differently
- Understand your target group
 

You need to know your target group in order to reach it in the most effective way. Understand how the group functions, how it is organized, etc.
- Cooperate with/involve your target group
 

Work with your target group—messages can be better accepted when they are transmitted by peers

## Your message

- Awareness-raising
 

Provide basic information on the issue so that your audience:

  - Is aware that the problem exists
  - Acquires general knowledge about the issue
  - Finds some relevance to itself; your audience should understand how the issue relates to them
  - Knows what is being done, and what can be done to prevent it

To define your message, put your audience first; information should be designed for them

The message must be clear, precise and relevant to your audience
- Stimulate your audience to act
 

Your message should not present an insurmountable problem; rather, your message should:

  - Present the role and responsibilities of your audience target group
  - Suggest answers to their question—what can we do?
  - Make practical recommendations

Appropriate media should be selected for appropriate messages
- Lobbying
 

Your message must be based on reliable facts and should target a specific problem. If you do not present positive and clear propositions, your message is useless and your credibility is lost

The way your message is perceived depends on how it is conveyed—consider your audience

## Media

The choice of medium must be adapted to the goal you have set, the message, the audience and your resources.

- Direct communication
  - Direct personal contact with your audience can be time-consuming and limited in terms of scope, but can also be effective to address the problem
- Use of mass media: newspapers, radio, television and the Internet reach a large audience
  - Facts that the mass media release themselves
    - Interviews, reports on your activities, videos produced on the issue, documentation circulated on the web. Your message should be carefully prepared to be sharp and straightforward. Real examples and case studies stimulate interest
  - Presentation of your own material
    - You can present material you have produced to the media. Always have some material printed, displayed or ready to be screened so as not to miss an opportunity to raise the issue
    - You could prepare information packs for journalists, containing carefully selected relevant information about the issue, your organization and a press release (your message to the press)

## Produce your own material

Producing your own material can let you control the message, format the message and the information you want to convey, decide how it will have the most impact on your target audience and decide how to reach your target group.

- Print media
  - Print media are most frequently used; they offer a range of materials, allow detailed accurate information and imply more active participation of your audience as they have to read the text
  - Long text is not always read by everyone: combine a short striking message with longer detailed text
  - Print media can be in the form of leaflets, brochures, posters, billboards, advertisement pages, inserts, reports, drawings, stickers, luggage-tags, comics, knob-hangers etc.
- Visual media (all visual media require careful ethical use; obtain consent before using images of people)
  - Video is a flexible medium for messages but is costly, passive in terms of audience and requires an efficient channel of distribution (or it may be seen by very few people). Videos can be screened through various channels of communication and in different places; television, cinema, on flights, on means of transportation such as buses and boats, in public places, airports, hospitals, agencies, exhibitions, hotel lounges, etc.
  - Photos can support a message but cannot be used on their own without explanation
- Other communication media to consider are drama, music, movies, petitions and new technologies such as the Internet and e-mail

- Diversify

Combine several media formats to increase the chances of reaching your audience. Repetition and continuity will support the effort and help the audience memorize and understand the message

## Pilot

Communication strategies must consider the variables and the communication must be tested. Testing can be small-scale, as long as it is representative of the target audience and the conditions of dissemination of the message

- Test the message: what is being said?

Does your audience understand the message properly? Do they remember it? Do they agree? Do they feel concerned? What reaction does it produce from them? Is this what you expected?

- Test the medium: is it relevant to them?

- Test the channel: is it the best way to reach them?

Review your communication strategy on the basis of feedback and comments to match it as closely as possible to your audience requirements and re-test it until you are satisfied.

## Monitoring/evaluation

- Monitoring is based on guidelines you set out leading to your objective and must be included in your strategy from the outset. It takes place throughout the campaign and will be repeated after a certain time

- Evaluation is planned before the campaign starts. There are two types of evaluation that should be combined:

**Qualitative:** assess what people know about trafficking, how they perceive it and what they feel about it. This could be done through questionnaires handed out to representative groups

**Quantitative:** set quantifiable indicators of your audience, of your objectives (i.e. percentage of the potential target reached, percentage of the population, number of airings, number of pamphlets distributed).



*Source:* The above strategy has been derived from ECPAT International's guidelines *Designing a Communication Strategy: the Achievements of ECPAT Italy's Campaign*, available at:

[www.ecpat.net/eng/CSEC/good\\_practices/index.asp](http://www.ecpat.net/eng/CSEC/good_practices/index.asp)