



D I G I T A L

CAMPAIGN MANUAL

CALLED TO ACCOUNT, EUROPEAN ACTION ON COUNTDOWN 2015



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1. Why a CALLED TO ACCOUNT, EUROPEAN ACTION ON COUNTDOWN 2015

Ten years ago, at the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo, 179 governments agreed on a document called the Cairo Programme of Action.

The conference and the Programme of Action are widely recognized as landmarks in the field of population and development. Population and Development had been on the international agenda for many years but the ICPD placed reproductive health and rights at the heart of the development agenda. Moreover, the Programme of Action contains a comprehensive plan to provide reproductive health care for all and clearly states how this could be done, financially and otherwise.

Many new elements were integrated in the Programme of Action, such as the reproductive health needs of young people, the fight against harmful practices and the prevention of HIV/Aids.

The ICPD Programme of Action was based upon many years of experience of many organisations, and most importantly it works where it has been implemented. New partnerships, innovative methods, and rights based approaches have been developed. The Programme of Action turned out to be achievable, practical and economical, and could save countless lives.

Five years after the ICPD, in 1999, an international forum assessed the progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action. One of the conclusions was that the financial promises made in Cairo by the governments of the world had not been fulfilled.

In 2004, on the tenth anniversary of the Programme of Action, this is still true. 530.000 women die every year from complications from pregnancy and child-birth. We know how to prevent the vast majority of maternal mortality cases, the expertise is there to provide reproductive health care for everyone, the world has the means to inform and educate young people on sexuality and reproduction. But the money to do so has not been forthcoming.

The Programme of Action states that 21,7 billion dollars are needed to provide reproductive health care worldwide in 2015. One third of that money is supposed to be paid by the industrialized countries, two thirds by the developing countries in need of better reproductive health care. The industrialized countries have not fulfilled their promises.

This campaign is designed to make visible that the Cairo 'bill' needs to be paid in order to save women's lives.

But there are more promises made in Cairo than financial commitments alone. Governments promised to adjust their laws and regulations to the standards of the Programme of Action. Many countries did so but a lot remains to be done in the area of giving everybody access to appropriate reproductive health care services and in the area of securing the reproductive rights of individuals.

This campaign is also designed to gain media attention for the contents of the Programme of Action, to encourage policy makers to implement the Programme of Action, to inform the general public about reproductive rights and health issues and to show that there is massive public support for the implementation of the Programme of Action.

1. Goals and budgets of the Programme of Action

ICPD Programme of Action

1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), Cairo

The Cairo Programme of Action, signed by 179 nations, drew together initiatives in population, education, health, environment and poverty reduction through people-centred development. This set a new direction for the international community and all governments, replacing the 1974 World Population Plan of Action.

ICPD established the brand new concept of 'reproductive health', as follows:

'Reproductive health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity, in all matters relating to the reproductive system and to its functions and processes. Reproductive health therefore implies that people are able to have a satisfying and safe sex life and that they have the capability to reproduce and the freedom to decide if, when and how often to do so. Implicit in this last condition are the right of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of family planning of their choice, as well as other methods of their choice for regulation of fertility which are not against the law, and the right of access to appropriate health-care services that will enable women to go safely through pregnancy and childbirth and provide couples with the best chance of having a healthy infant.' (Paragraph 7.2)

The 'reproductive health package' was designed to meet that goal, and consists of family planning, sex education, safe motherhood and protection against sexually transmitted infections including HIV/Aids.

The Cairo Programme of Action said that '...all countries should reduce mortality.. and seek to make primary health care, including reproductive health care, available universally by the end of the current decade.' (Paragraph 8.5)

There were new goals on infant and maternal mortality, with reproductive health services acknowledged to make a significant positive contribution.

The infant and under-5 mortality rates were to be cut by one third by 2000, with a long-term aim of below 50 infant deaths per 1,000 births by 2005 and 60 deaths for the under-5s. (Paragraph 8.16)

Maternal mortality was to be halved from 1990 levels by the year 2000 and a further one half by 2015. (Paragraph 8.21)

Adolescents

The language on adolescents was stronger than ever before. The Cairo Programme of Action highlighted the critical need to address adolescent sexual and reproductive health with the aim of reaching a substantial reduction in all adolescent pregnancies.

'In particular, information and services should be made available to adolescents to help them understand their sexuality and protect them from unwanted pregnancies, sexually transmitted diseases and subsequent risk of infertility. This should be combined with the education of young men to respect women's self-determination and to share responsibility with women in matters of sexuality and reproduction'. (Paragraph 7.41)

Unsafe Abortion

As in 1984, it was stated that abortion should not be promoted as a method of family planning, and the dangers of unsafe abortion were spelt out. Acknowledgement was also made of post-abortion complications.

'..All governments... are urged to strengthen their commitment to women's health, to deal with the health impact of unsafe abortion as a major public health concern and to reduce the recourse to abortion through expanded and improved family planning services... In all cases women should have access to quality services for the management of complications arising from abortion.' (Paragraph 8.25)

Note: Unsafe abortion was defined as a procedure for terminating pregnancy either by a person lacking necessary skills, or in an environment lacking minimum medical standards, or both. (World Health Organisation).

Budget

ICPD also set out the budget for basic reproductive health and population programmes. It was agreed that \$17 billion a year was needed in 2000, rising to \$18.5 billion in 2005, \$20.5 billion in 2010 and \$21.7 billion in 2015. It was suggested one third should come from the donor nations and two thirds from developing countries.

1999 ICPD+5

United Nations General Assembly 21st special session:

Re-iterated that ICPD had 'marked the beginning of a new era in population and development' and had been a 'landmark agreement'.

The conference observed that there had been some positive results since ICPD, including:

- *Increased use of family planning*
- *Increased accessibility to contraception*
- *Increased quality of care in reproductive health provision*
- *An increase in comprehensive reproductive health services*

All of these elements had resulted in more couples and individuals choosing the number and spacing of their children.

BUT

It observed that some countries and regions had only seen limited progress, and, in some cases, setbacks. The downsides were categorised as:

- *continued discrimination against women and girls*
- *HIV/Aids increasing mortality levels*
- *Maternal mortality remaining unacceptably high*
- *Adolescents remaining vulnerable to reproductive and sexual health risks.*

In response to that, the five-year review of ICPD reaffirmed the goal for nations to commit themselves to the goal of universal access to reproductive health by the year 2015. The financial targets were also reaffirmed, but it was recognised that neither the donor countries nor the developing countries were meeting their financial promises.

A call was made for governments to intensify efforts to raise funds for the Cairo Programme of Action.

Usefull websites:

▶ www.unfpa.org

▶ www.eurongos.org, working group on media and advocacy. An overview of the international discussions on reproductive rights and health named: The Road To Global Reproductive Health.

2. What does the campaign contain?

This campaign is especially designed to make it possible for many different organisations to join. Big or small, rich or poor, everybody can do something under the umbrella of the Countdown 2015 campaign.

One of the important elements of the campaign is based upon the fact that the vast majority of the public worldwide support reproductive health and rights. This support needs to be made visible to media and governments.

In order to be able to benefit from each others campaigns, European NGO's active in the field of reproductive rights and health decided to literally present a giant bill to their governments on the 1st of July 2004. The bill (three meters by three meters) will have the same format in each country, though the 'amount due' will specifically reflect the difference between the 1994 commitment and funds released to date for the recipient government.

Around the presentation of the bill, many different events will take place, (eg. news conferences, seminars, lectures and petitions) all nationally designed and implemented.

A declaration of support for the Programme of Action will be disseminated in July 2004. This declaration can be signed by celebrities, and by the general public.

The signatures will be presented to the UN General Assembly on the 14th of October 2004, the day the UN commemorates the tenth anniversary of the ICPD.

Also on the 14th of October 2004, a candle light event will be held in as many cities as possible. This candle light event will be designed to commemorate the

530.000 women dying every year from the complications of pregnancy and childbirth.

All three events, the presentation of the bill, the declaration of support and the candle light event are open for every organisation supporting the Programme of Action, to join. Joining this campaign can contribute to the visibility of your organisation in the media and among policy makers and politicians. It can also show your government that there is support for the improvement of reproductive health and rights, domestically and internationally. The effect of your activities can and will be multiplied by the activities of others. A hundred people participating in a candle light event is not news. A hundred people in thirty capitals around the world will get media attention.

Within the campaign an ad has been developed that can be used in different forms, for free advertising space, posters and leaflets.

If you would like to produce a Cairo bill for your government please contact Tony Kerridge at MSI:

▶ Tony.Kerridge@stopes.org.uk

If you want more information on the ad campaign, please contact

Cristiana Scoppa at Aidos: ▶ c.scoppa@aidos.it

The following chapters provide a guide to step by step implementation of the campaign.

Usefull websites:

▶ www.countdown2015.org, information on the global campaign.



3. Where are we at?

In order to join the campaign to support the implementation of the Programme of Action it is necessary to find out where your country stands on this issue. What has and what has not yet been realized with regards to the Programme of Action.

If there is a UNFPA office in your country, they are most likely evaluating the performance of your government in this area every few years so they can be a valuable resource.

Also, many governments made their own report at the occasion of Cairo+5 and in many countries NGO's made a shadow report.

PAI will produce a score card and a report on the implementation of the Programme of Action that will also contain useful information to find out where your country stands.

Some of the Millennium Development Goals contain elements of the Programme of Action and in the country reports on the MDGs the same should be true.

IPPF produces country profiles with regards to reproductive health and in UNFPA's annual State of the World Population report you can find the latest

data on selected indicators related to the Programme of Action.

These materials can all be used for the preparation of a brainstorming session within your organisation to answer the following questions:

What are the main gaps in implementing the Programme of Action domestically and internationally?

Is government prioritising the implementation of the Programme of Action?

It is important to discuss these issues at length within your organisation, all relevant staff should be updated on the facts and the current state of affairs. Staff that is not going to be involved directly in the campaign also need to be informed. Campaigning is a state of mind and the first step to get that state of mind is to generate enthusiasm for it within your own organisation. Also, all staff needs to be able to answer questions on the issues at stake.

If you have established the main gaps you need to classify them:

- Gaps in laws and regulations
- Financial constraints
- Issues surrounding access to reproductive health
- Issues of public debate

You now have a list of the most important issues on reproductive health and rights in your country.

On all issues you will need a fact sheet that explains the problem, shows what the government and others are doing to solve it and what you would like to propose in order to achieve even more.

Usefull websites:

- ▶ www.popact.org
- ▶ www.ippf.org
- ▶ www.un.org (for the MDG's),
- ▶ www.unfpa.org



4. Who can we involve?

Reproductive health and rights affect each individual in the world and are on the agenda of many organisations. The ICPD consensus is a very broad global consensus. In addition to organisations that are working exclusively on reproductive health and rights there are many other organisations that address the issues indirectly. This campaign can be used to reconfirm the commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action from different angles and to renew or to build coalitions. What you need is a list of all NGO's that are active in relevant areas, such as health, women's rights, development and human rights. For many of them, the ICPD consensus is not the first issue on their agenda but they might be interested in joining in a national campaign in one way or another. The key to successful cooperation is to create the space in which every group can do their own thing,

to give credit where credit is due and to respect differences. You do not have to agree a hundred percent on everything in order to be able to carry out a common campaign. For a successful campaign, partners need to be involved from the beginning, in order to secure equity among the partners and to give everybody a chance to contribute.

Once you have identified possible partners you can carry out conversations with a few of them in order to find out whether they are interested.

When you have three or more organisations that want to join the campaign you can call a meeting with all possible partners where you can present your plans and get feedback. Successful cooperation means equity among partners, even if there are huge differences in size and shape. No organisation is too small or too poor to join in the support for the Programme of Action. Organisations might want to include advocacy for the Programme of Action in their other activities or areas of attention. They also might want to join the campaign by doing what they are always doing but with an emphasis on reproductive rights. That should all be possible.

Reproductive health and rights can be approached from many different angles. For some, this might be a health issue, for others it is a matter of human rights. Differences in approaches and differences of opinion should be a reason for (informal) discussions and ongoing debate but differences should not get in the way of campaigning together on concrete goals that everybody agrees upon. Everybody benefits from a common umbrella, a campaign can be a series of very different events (such as meetings, actions, press conferences, seminars, contests etc.) carried out by different organisations but under a common name.

The Countdown 2015 is a good example of a global campaign. Three core partners developed the campaign but worldwide, hundreds of organisations can join. Every organisation that shares the values and wants to generate support for reproductive health and rights can join. The logo can be used by every group who wants to join, and so can other materials. A group of European NGO's joined the Countdown 2015 campaign with their own Called to Account, European Action on Countdown 2015, using the same materials and sharing the campaign website. This is economically effective but more important, it is likely that every group gets more attention for being part of a global campaign than they would have been able to generate for a national activity.

Cooperation often fails when groups or individuals feel left out on important decisions, or when they feel that some groups profit more from the cooperation than others do (getting more press attention, being at the forefront all the time). If you decide to develop a common campaign, a secretariat can make sure that everybody has the same information, and has a chance to participate equally in the decision making.

Usefull websites:

► www.countdown2015.org, information on all national and international activities under the Countdown 2015 umbrella.



5. What do the media know and do?

Media are an important tool in order to generate support for the ICPD goals among policy makers and the general public alike. Research shows that in many countries the general public supports reproductive health and rights but they are not very well informed. The media can and do influence public opinion and public opinion in turn influences policy makers. Therefore, one of the most important goals of every campaign should be to generate media attention for the issues. Media attention is also very important for the visibility of your organisation; one of the determining factors for sustainability in the long run.

Media coverage does not come automatically, most of what you see in the papers, on tv or hear on the radio is the result of time and energy invested into building media contacts, providing reliable information and having a communication strategy.

To develop a communication strategy you have to answer two main questions:

1. What is our message
2. What is our audience

1. Your message should be short, use common language, and be clear. The Called to Account, European Action on Countdown 2015 uses as their overall message: The ICPD programme of Action is achievable, practical, economical, and under funded. In interviews and background materials you can explain what you mean by these key words. Most of us need to practice before being able to do interviews. As professionals, we tend to use too much expert language that makes no sense to journalists or the general public, this puts the interviewer in the position of having to 'translate' for us. It helps if you keep an uninformed person that is close to you in mind while practicing. Explain to your vegetable seller what you are doing, or to your grandmother. Most journalists are not very well informed on our issues but they are not very good at asking questions either; they do not want to look stupid. So do not assume that they know what you are talking about, explain things. Keep it simple, we want to get the big picture through, not the details.

2. Who do you want to reach? Different audiences use and trust different media. Young people are reached differently than politicians, women are reached differently than health personnel. For instance, one of the activities within the Countdown 2015 is a Global Round Table (London, August 30 – September 2, 2004). This conference is meant to bring together experts on reproductive health, scientists and activists in an attempt to measure the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, to invent new strategies and to consider what works and what does not. The media subcommittee of this event decided to concentrate on media that provide background information, on journalists that are experts in health issues and not on general news media.

Despite all the new wonderful electronic tools some of us have access to, personal contacts remain the key to successful media relationships. Journalists need to know and trust your organisation. Building successful media contacts depends

on whether you understand their needs and provide useful information and services to journalists. Answering their phone calls promptly for instance, because journalists work on deadlines all the time.

Usefull websites:

Generating media attention is key to the success of any campaign, two short and very practical guides show you how to do it:

▶ *Go to guide 'Dealing with Media'*

▶ *Go to guide 'Advanced Dealing with Media'*

▶ www.ccmc.org, for an extensive guide on strategic communication. (Guide: Strategic communications for nonprofits)

▶ www.countdown2015.org, there is set of fact sheets that you can download and use in press packages. Countdown folders can be obtained by sending an email to Joke van Kampen (To better communications), ▶ joke@xs4all.nl



6. How can we involve celebrities?

Celebrities that give their name, time and commitment to our issues do add value to the campaign. Celebrities gain media attention easily and if they are trusted role models they can help to convince the general public of the importance of reproductive health and rights. To involve them is time consuming and takes investment. Also there is always a risk that the media attention goes to the celebrity instead of to the campaign and the issues.

The crucial aspect is to find a way in which your interest and theirs converge. Celebrities can have a genuine interest in the issues but also might want to improve their status by showing the public that they care.

If you have a list of celebrities that you want to approach ask yourself to whom these celebrities speak: to men and women alike? To young people? Are they already involved in other campaigns and if yes, are these goals compatible with yours? Check the reputation of the celebrity you have in mind in your own environment, do people like this person? Find out if they have said or done anything in relation to our issues in the past.

Celebrities are often protected by agents or managers. The best way to approach them is through someone who knows them personally.

Many celebrities will want to cooperate with you but they will want to do things that they like, that do not interfere with their career, that give them exposure and that make them look good. So if you develop a way to cooperate you should look at activities for them that combines a maximum of (media)exposure with a minimum of time investment from their side. It is also important to look at what a celebrity can add to your work apart from media attention. Does he or she work at a tv station? Maybe they can help get tv coverage for your event. Involved in art? Music? Maybe they can help to involve other artists in the campaign or write a song about your issues, or help to find a band that is willing to play for free at your event.

Celebrities need to be briefed thoroughly, they cannot be expected to know the issues and they will get all the questions if they show up anywhere in the campaign. They need to feel safe and be informed on difficult or potentially controversial questions or issues.

Once you have reached agreement with a celebrity about their involvement it is good idea to assign one person in your organisation to maintain regular contact. Organisations sometimes call their celebrities if they can use them at a public event and forget about them till the next time. That is not very much appreciated, most celebrities who want to be involved, also want to be kept informed, have regular contact and briefings.

Celebrities do not usually request to be paid for their time, but they do expect that their expenses be paid, including travel and accommodations.

Try to find out what activities the celebrities are interested in doing that can be combined with their other work. Or with their personal life. Aidos, the Italian campaign partner worked with an actress who explicitly involved her own experiences with motherhood in the work for a safe motherhood campaign in Italy, getting great media attention (which is always the case if celebrities are willing to go personal).

The German World Population Foundation and UNFPA have Alfred Biolek as their good will ambassador. Biolek is probably the most famous tv presenter in Germany and he has access to high level media circles. He participates in public events and has a special section on their website. Biolek was invited to participate in a big tv show in which celebrities play a game and spend the money they win on charities. This is a very popular show and apart from the game there is time to explain the issues, and to show short films about projects. This brought the issues home to many people in Germany that are hard to reach otherwise. He visited projects in Kenya and had a tv station covering the trip.

Usefull websites:

► www.facetoface.org, Face to Face international is an international campaign that works with many good will ambassadors. UNFPA and European NGO's partner up to work with these ambassadors. There is a lot of information on their website on work with celebrities.



7. How to involve the business community?

Most NGO's are quite new to involving the business community in their work. Companies are not charities but that does not mean that they do not want to contribute to what they see as a good cause. Nowadays responsible entrepreneurship is seen as important and many companies have an outspoken policy

on supporting all sorts of causes. Also, the executive that has seen it all and done it all who now wants to do something for humanity with his/her time or money is not unusual. The trick is to find these people.

As with celebrities, the key to success here is to find common ground. How can you cooperate in a way that both partners will benefit?

A general rule is that companies that support an event want to be seen doing so. So you will have to credit them in a visible way.

If you think of approaching a company to see whether they are interested in a partnership find out what the company policy on charities is. Also find out if this company has a reasonable reputation with regards to general issues (such as labour policy). You do not want a partnership with a company that uses child labour or is infamous for pollution.

Local businesses can be as important as multinationals for our purposes. They might not have as much money but they decide quicker and can often help you in kind (with printing materials, with drinks at the events etc.). Generally speaking, companies are organised along hierarchical lines, and business people think that way. It is a good idea to ask the president of your organisation to make the first contacts.

Everywhere in the world there are clubs like Rotary and Lions that are doing projects. They have regular meetings where they invite people to speak. It is a good start to ask your local clubs whether you can come and give a presentation on your work. Make sure that you come out of that meeting with the business cards of all the members so that you can follow up.

Reproductive health and rights also affects employees of every company in the world, especially women. Many companies have learned that it is in their best interest if they pay attention to the reproductive health of their staff. NGO's can offer to help develop a company specific reproductive health policy.

In an Asian country, sport shoes are being produced in a free trade zone. The employees are almost exclusively young women and the labour conditions are not very good. A local NGO approached the company, after having heard that these women suffer from sexual harassment and a lack of reproductive health information and services. After long talks and negotiations the company management agreed to do a pilot with a nurse visiting the company during working hours. Three years later, the factory has a reproductive health clinic where the women can get information and services free of charge. For the organising NGO it is not always easy to balance their activities. In addition to reproductive health issues, they are frequently presented with issues of employees not being paid for overtime, bad and dangerous labour conditions and harassment or bullying by bosses. But for the women involved, just being able to get contraceptives and information improved their situation substantially.

In Cambodia, a coalition of reproductive health and rights NGO's, wanting to reach young people decided to do a campaign on Valentine's day to raise awareness about HIV/Aids prevention. They approached all flower shops (and many individual flower sellers) and a condom company. The flower shops agreed to add a condom to all flowers sold

on Valentine's day and the condom company donated the condoms. The NGO's made colourful packages of the condoms and added informational material. The flower shops expected the bouquets to be popular because of the added present, which turned out to be true. For the condom company this was a useful marketing operation and the NGO's were able to provide information to a segment of the public they normally did not reach.

8. Where are the volunteers?

Volunteers have always been the back bone of social movements and most NGO's work with volunteers in one way or another. Crucial in recruiting volunteers, and moreover, keeping them, is to ensure that they too benefit from the activities they do for the organisation. Working with volunteers requires a policy and an ongoing investment. In the area of reproductive health and rights, many NGO's work with peer education (young people educating young people). In many developing countries, young people love to be trained to be a peer educator, they receive training, they are with other young people, they are doing something useful and they gain skills. For other than peer education programs, it is useful to look in different directions in order to recruit volunteers. Nursing schools for instance. These students can be expected to be interested in the issues. Not all nursing schools pay sufficient attention to reproductive health so apart from getting volunteers for your organisation you also contribute to better equipped nurses in the future by educating them on the issues. The same is true for medical students. Women's organisations can also be a good source of volunteers, the traditional ones included.

In order to make it work there should be a clear structure within your organisation with regards to volunteers and there should be a group of them. Two volunteers among 5 staff people easily feel lost and left out. Volunteers also need a place within the decision making process and should be permitted to develop their own activities and initiatives. One of the crucial factors is that volunteers are able to do something they enjoy doing, this is an effective form of non-monetary compensation. Do not expect volunteers to only do the work that the staff does not like to do, stuffing envelopes for a full day is not a very rewarding activity, not even for a volunteer.

Try to take advantage of the skills and contacts volunteers have.

Someone who is good at speaking in public might be able to develop a presentation and find opportunities to give that presentation. A good writer among the volunteers can be involved in developing materials, a skilled amateur photographer can make photographs of your programs and projects.

It is important to create a structure to 'coach' volunteers, to keep them going, to help them develop new activities and to facilitate their work.

Let volunteers know that you value their work, organising a social function every now and then is a way to do so, and so are small presents around Christmas or whatever appropriate opportunity.

In Turkey, the FPA has a group of students who work as volunteers for the organisation. One of the staff members is assigned to facilitate the group. By its very nature, the students volunteers are a fluid group: members come and go, school deadlines conflict with organisational deadlines, and typically students move out of the area upon completing their studies. But there is always a group because the issues are dynamic and as one person leaves, another will join. The group meets every week, as friends more than as a formal meeting. They discuss everything they want to, including their own worries and ideas on sexual and reproductive health issues. They prepare and carry out an activity every month. On World Aids Day they distributed condoms in shopping malls, accompanied by a music group. They go to schools to give sex education to high school students. The organisation makes sure that they have the materials they need to carry out activities, that they receive training and lectures and that activities are being monitored and evaluated.

On the occasion of the Day of 6 Billion (the day the UN marked the birth of the sixth billionth world citizen) a group of volunteers from the Netherlands based World Population Foundation spent all day on trains, handing out so-called birth biscuits to the travellers (birth biscuits are the traditional biscuits that are served in the Netherlands when a baby has been born). Along with the biscuits went leaflets on population issues and handing out the biscuits turned out a good way to start a conversation with travellers and among travellers. The group with the plates of biscuits made a good photo opportunity and a tv station turned up to cover the action. Thus a small group of people made a great impact, just by doing something new. The staff of WPF joined in the volunteer activity and all had great fun.



9. What event is appropriate?

NGO's often organise events that are boring, not well thought through and therefore not very successful in terms of gaining media attention.

An event needs a reason, and the anniversary of the organisation or your annual report coming out is not sufficient. The reason for an event needs to be framed in a way that the media can see it as news and that the audience has reason to expect that the event is going to be useful and enjoyable. Three people behind a table, giving a presentation does not serve those needs. For the Call to Account, European Action on Countdown 2015, we need to think outside of the box.

The news for the media is that: Ten years ago, Western governments pledged to help finance a plan to bring about sexual and reproductive health and rights for all by 2015.

Almost without exception, those governments have failed to keep to their promise.

The plan agreed is achievable, practical and economical, and could save countless lives. All that is preventing its realisation is a lack of funding. Within the campaign, figures are provided to show how much money is lacking and where it should come from. With ten more years to go to realise the ICPD Programme of Action, no more delays can be tolerated. Every minute a woman dies from complications related to pregnancy and childbirth, 99% of them in developing countries, the vast majority preventable if reproductive health and rights are sufficiently recognised.

If you develop an event ask the following questions: who do we want to reach? (policy makers, general public, young people especially). What can we do to catch the eye of the audience we want and the media.

The media will come out if you have: an unprecedented number of people, or controversy or a creative, new, unexpected and sharply focussed activity.

On Sunday 25th of April 2004 the March for Women's lives was held in Washington DC, USA. The March was a demonstration in protest of the US government policies on reproductive rights, especially on abortion both domestically and internationally. The March was covered by the media worldwide which was no wonder because, for one, there were a million participants.

But one day before, another, much smaller event was also getting a lot of media attention, at least in the US. The organisation Catholics for a Free Choice (CFC) organised a protest in front of the Vatican embassy to protest the policies of the Catholic Church on sexuality and reproduction. Maybe a hundred people surrounded by camera crews and journalists. Why? These people are catholic, opposing the teachings of the Church, that is controversy. They were protesting in front of the Vatican embassy, a well chosen target. They were putting flowers on the doorstep of the embassy which made a nice picture and they had managed to bring out the anti choice groups who brought their materials, controversy again. A few good speakers completed an event that got a lot of attention, that was not too much trouble to organise and took only an hour of people's time to join.

Events are excellent opportunities to show the world that our causes are being supported by the vast majority of the general public, which is the case in most countries of the world. You do not necessarily have to do that by bringing out thousands of people. It can also be done by showing facts and figures, having celebrities at your event and by reaching out to the public with a small group of people. An organisation like Greenpeace knows this very well; more than once, five men in a little boat has been enough to mobilize the world media.

The story we have to tell is more complex but there are ways to tell it.

Giving roses to women passing on a market on Mothers day with information on Maternal Mortality worked in Nairobi, painting murals by well known artists worked in Lisbon, an all night vigil in front of the Nepalese embassy (in protest against the abortion law in Nepal that had put a 16 year old girl in jail for 20 years after having had an abortion, following rape) worked all over Europe.



10. How do we find the money?

Many NGO's in reproductive health and rights get funded to do projects and programmes in service delivery. Money to do advocacy and media work is scarce. If you want to join the campaign it is likely that you will have to find money on top of your regular budget. In general there are two ways to do this:

- Raising money from the general public, little by little.
- Finding one or a few donors who want to sponsor your campaign.

Fundraising from the general public is time consuming but has the advantage that you create support in the process. It can be done in many different ways. Many NGO's ask for a donation from the general public on their website and in their newsletters or other publications. Another way to do this is to organize a sponsored event.

Dance4Life is an international campaign to involve young people in the fight against HIV/Aids in South Africa and the Netherlands. The structure is that an huge dance event will be held simultaneously in Cape Town and Amsterdam, connected by satellite and covered by media. Young people buy tickets for this event and they have to find sponsors to cover the costs of the ticket. The money that comes out of the dance event goes to HIV/Aids projects. By finding sponsors young people have to know what the theme of the evening is, and what projects are going to be funded out of the entrance fees.

Many schools, universities and companies organise fund raising for charities on a regular basis. It makes sense to approach for instance a medical faculty and to try to combine a project in which the students get information on international reproductive rights and health with a fund raising activity, organised by the students. In many countries sponsored games are organised.

In the US fundraising dinners work; selling expensive tickets to a dinner where among other things a speaker explains the work of the host organisation.

Fundraising from one or a few donors is easier for the organisation but there are not many donors who want to sponsor media campaigns. The campaign Called to Account, European Action on Countdown 2015 has been funded by the European Union. Within the EU structure there are special budget lines for advocacy and awareness raising but the process of submitting proposals and getting them approved is complicated and time consuming.

Outraged by the decision taken by the Bush Administration to defund UNFPA Lois Abraham, a lawyer from New Mexico (USA), and Jane Roberts, a retired French teacher from California initiated a grassroots movement that came to be called 34 Million Friends of UNFPA. Working from their homes, they sent e-mails to friends, clubs and associations urging people to donate one dollar or more to help bridge the gap in funding. Their

ultimate goal is to find '34 Million Friends' to help UNFPA continue its work as the largest international provider of maternal health care and family planning. The money they raised for UNFPA is now close to US \$ 200.000, almost all in very small amounts. They also have a database of thousands of people that are supporting the case.

Usefull websites:

▶ www.grassrootsfundraising.org/, one of many websites with tips on fundraising for nonprofits.

Also, most international donors have their own websites where you can find guidelines for grant proposals.

11. How to organize the bill event

The bill event will take place on the 1st of July 2004 in as many capitals as possible. On that day, NGO's will present the bill to Western governments. The bill contains what is promised at the ICPD and what is not paid yet. The action aims at urging Western Governments to keep up their promises and to contribute to the provision of reproductive health and rights to all by 2015, one of the key goals of the Programme of Action.

The giant bills are being produced centrally in the UK.

The event itself is different in every country: In the UK a press conference is followed by a reception for parliamentarians. In Italy the NGO community at large will gather in front of the parliament to confront the government. In Germany the giant bill will be presented to the parliament, followed by a discussion with politicians. In the Netherlands a public event, with music and mural painting will be combined with a press conference and a meeting where the bill will be presented to politicians.

Usefull websites:

▶ www.countdown2015.org, in the European section extensive information on the bill event can be found.

If you want to join the bill event please contact Tony Kerridge at Marie Stopes International: ▶ Tony.Kerridge@stopes.org.uk

12. How to organize the Declaration of Support

The Declaration of Support reads:

CALL TO ACCOUNT; EUROPEAN ACTION ON COUNTDOWN 2015

DECLARATION OF SUPPORT

- *Every minute a woman dies from complications of pregnancy and childbirth.*
- *More than one third of all pregnancies are unwanted. Each year some 20 million unsafe abortions are performed, killing nearly 78.000 women and disabling hundreds of thousands more.*
- *Early marriage and childbirth threatens the health of young women. Pregnancy related complications are a leading cause of death for women aged 15-19.*
- *More than 40 million people live with HIV/Aids. Half of them are women and children. Each year three million people die of Aids and five million are newly infected.*

Ten years ago, Western governments pledged to help finance a plan to bring about sexual and reproductive health and rights for all by 2015.

Almost without exception, those governments have failed to keep to their promise.

The plan agreed is achievable, practical and economical, and could save countless lives.

All that is preventing its realisation is a lack of funding.

I call upon the governments of the World to fulfil their obligations as promised and to contribute to the prevention of countless needless deaths.

Name

Nationality

This declaration of support (signed by celebrities and the general public) will be presented to the UN General Assembly on the 14th of October 2004, the day the UN General Assembly commemorates the tenth anniversary of the ICPD.

The declaration of support can be found on the Countdown 2015 website and signed there. The partners in the campaign also put them on their own website in order to get the signatures of their own audiences.

Participating NGO's will take the Declaration of Support to every public event, meeting, conference etc. where the issues are discussed to gather signatures.

Every country will have 25 celebrities sign the Declaration of Support. The names of the celebrities can be seen on the web page where the public can sign.

Asking for signatures is an excellent way of getting in contact with people and to start conversations. Asking people to sign at markets or events often leads to

new volunteers or people visiting your website afterwards. It is also a good way of getting a feeling of the worries and ideas of the general public. This is information upon which you can plan further interventions and campaigns. The Programme of Action is not a household name for the majority of the people, so getting signatures for the Declaration of Support will take some explanation but once people know about (the lack of) reproductive health and rights, the majority supports it.



13. How to get free advertisement space

Within the Called to Account, European Action on Countdown 2015, artwork has been prepared that can be used by all partners if they have advertisement space.



Most NGO's do not have the money to buy advertisement space in national media but there are possibilities to get those spaces for free. Many newspapers and magazines have their advertisement organised by a specialised company. These are the companies that you have to identify and approach. For these companies there are different reasons to become a partner in the campaign by providing free advertisement space. Like other companies they want to look good and support public causes.

Some NGO's experienced that the more commercial media are even easier to approach than the less commercial ones, since the commercial ones feel the need to do something to improve their reputation. The bigger they are the more likely it is they would want to do something, small newspapers and magazines

rely on the money coming out of advertisement so it is harder for them to give it for free. In many countries, the advertisement market is more or less collapsing for the printed media, newspapers might want to give you space just to fill up. Once you have made a first contact, you have to prepare the artwork for the advertisement in pdf or hard copy. Send it around, also to the ones that were somewhat reluctant to join. The artwork might change their mind, especially when it is very good. It can also help if there is a well known celebrity in the ad. At this point it is also important to inform your contacts at the editorial staff. Be prepared to adjust the artwork to different formats. Many countries either have an organisation of advertisement companies that do ad campaigns for good causes or an organisation that provides media space for charities. It is worth looking into these structures and see if you can cooperate with them. When the campaign is finished you should send a 'thank you' letter to all involved, you might want to go back to the same companies later.

It pays to look at unusual spaces if you are looking for free advertisement. In German trains there is a little leaflet on every chair that tells the route of the train, where it stops, at what time and what connections there are. The German World Population Foundation (DSW) managed to have a free advertisement on the cover of these leaflet for some weeks.

The artwork for the ads can be obtained by contacting Cristiana Scoppa at Aidos:
▶ c.scoppa@aidos.it



14. How to organize a candle light event?

The candle light event within the Called to Account, European Action on Countdown 2015 is targeting maternal mortality. Every minute a woman dies from the complications of pregnancy or childbirth, 99% of them in developing countries, most of them preventable. 530.000 women die every year. With the candle light event we want to gain (media) attention to these facts and to the solution: We know what is needed to save countless lives, there is a plan that is achievable, practical and economical but under funded.

For a candle light event you need a (if possible busy) public space (and a license to use it in most cases) and a group of people who want to join. You can decide to have a few speakers at the event and to spread information materials to the public. You have to inform the media in time, a candle light event makes a nice photograph, especially if you manage to get some celebrities at the event as well.

You need to have a briefing before the start of the event. In some countries there

is a small but sound opposition towards reproductive rights, especially abortion. These groups might show up at your event with pictures of late term abortions and other materials. You have to discuss how to respond to these people (most effective is simply to ignore them and inform the police that they are opposing you). This might be a nuisance for you and your colleagues but it will spur media attention so you might not want to do everything possible to keep your event secret. Try to find a place that you can fill, so that there is not much room for them left, not even if they outnumber you. If your event is licensed, you are entitled to ask the police to either tell them to be quiet when your speaker is on stage or to leave.

If you want to join the candle light event you can contact Cathy Bartley at Interact Worldwide: Cathy Bartley: ▶ bartleyc@interactworldwide.org.uk



15. What is the result of our work?

The ultimate goal of the Called to Account, European Action on Countdown 2015 is to contribute to bringing about reproductive health and rights for all, by urging Western governments to live up to their promises.

The impact of the campaign should be that more people than before are aware of the (lack of) reproductive health and rights, that media are paying more attention to these issues and that politicians are aware of the support in society for the implementation of the Programme of Action.

The way to measure this sort of impact is to carefully keep track of your actions: clippings for the media, a list of the (number of) people you have reached on what occasion, reactions, website hits, telephone conversations with journalists or politicians.

It works to develop forms for every event that you can fill in directly afterwards, so that the information is accurate. An analysis of the gathered data will help you evaluate the effectiveness of your campaign.



16. How can we maintain the attention for the Programme of Action

The ICPD Programme of Action is a 20 year plan, with ten more years to go. The Programme has worked wherever it has been implemented. But implementation is obstructed by lack of funding and, in some places, political backlash. Other priorities come up within the development agenda and new policies arise.

Therefore it is important that advocacy and media work is an ongoing operation, not an one-off event. Your organisation should be in regular contact with the politicians who are deciding on these issues and with journalists who are reporting on it. For many NGO's it works if they concentrate on different issues, such as maternal mortality, young people's reproductive health, FGM, etcetera. Concentrating on one issue for some time allows you to approach the media with news on this issue, urge politicians to act on it.

An annual national update on the ICPD goals helps to keep those goals on the agenda and can attract media attention. World Population Day is another annual opportunity to pay attention to reproductive health and rights.

▶ *Go to guide 'Dealing with Advocacy'*

Usefull websites:

▶ www.arjen-van-de-merwe.nl, photo exhibition on reproductive rights.



Colofon:

Text: Joke van Kampen

Design: Susi Bikle

Photo front cover: Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung (DSW)

Published by: WPF (World Population Foundation)

Thanks to: Pam Foster, Cristiana Scoppa, Cathy Bartlay, Tony Kerridge,
Christian Resch, Odette Salden.

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EC/UNFPA INITIATIVE FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN ASIA



Dealing With Media

A Practical Guide



ComNet co-ordinated by German Foundation
for World Population (DSW)

DSW

RHI Practical Media Guide

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I. Why Bother?

The functions of media are diverse, ranging from news, discussions, and information and education to raising awareness.

NGOs can have many different reasons to deal with media. Common goals are to:

- a. Enhance the visibility of your organisation and name recognition**
- b. Inform the public about your activities**
- c. Generate public support for your activities and organisation**
- d. Increase fundraising or membership**
- e. Stimulate discussion on the issues you are dealing with**

ad.a. In the long run the visibility of your organisation is one of the more important determining factors in the sustainability of your organisation. Donors and governments think twice before defunding an organisation that is well known and popular. If you are known it is easier to mobilise your supporters.

ad.b. Media is an effective way to reach your potential clients and their environment. An article about what you are doing can give potential clients an opportunity to start a conversation with their peers, parents or partners about your work.

ad.c. Public support for what you are doing does not come automatically. You will need public support at one point in time but you have to make friends before you need them. Media attention for your work is a good tool to do exactly that.

ad.d. Increasing membership and fundraising can be built upon positive media coverage. Very big membership organisations mostly use media to expand their membership successfully.

ad.e. The issues we are dealing with are issues that each and every individual in this world will have to deal with one day or another: sexuality, life and death, children, women. Individuals form their opinions on the basis of the opinions of their peers (family, friends) and, second in line, on what they see, hear and read in the media. If you do not help them to develop informed opinions, others will, but probably not the ones you would like to see.

2. Good Media Coverage Does Not Come Automatically: It Is Hard Work

It is not true that individuals or organisations receive positive media coverage without working for it. Companies and politicians seem to know that better than NGOs.

Many of us tend to stick to our “core” business being service providing or developing IEC materials. Even more NGOs deal with media on an ad hoc basis, only to find out that they are helpless when attacked in any way.

Media work can be exhausting because it takes investments and commitments without having a lot of sound results at first. But look at organisations in your country that have a lot of positive media coverage; they most probably have a media strategy and a media plan, together with spokespersons, resources and people working on media contacts.

Investing in building up media contacts requires a consensus in your own organisation. A half day brainstorm session with the whole staff once a year is not only fun, it is also necessary to maintain the idea that media are important for your organisation. The work can be done by an appointed media person, even if he or she spends only a few hours a week on this. But it is the person who picks up the phone that needs to be aware of what to do when a journalist calls, it is the driver who has heard the most reactions to your mes-

sages on the radio and it is the director who got a phone call from the major who was irritated by what you said in the newspaper. Experts tend to find journalists not very interesting: they never know what really is going on and should better be avoided. Lots of great work and new ideas never make their way into the media, and to the general public due to this trend. But you do not have to like journalists and other media people to see that they are important tools to get the work done. Media work needs the commitment of all your colleagues.

A good way to develop consensus within your organisation is to develop a communication strategy and to build up effective media contacts:

STEP ONE

Develop a communication strategy

Critical elements of a communication strategy are:

a. your message

b. target audiences and target media

ad.a. You need to be able to tell journalists and through them the general public what your organisation stands for and does in no more than three lines. Forget our common slang, put it in words that anybody can understand. Make sure that central values (such as the right to decide and the right to choose) are part of that message.

And most important: make sure that everyone in your organisation shares those values and shares the message. Discuss these issues for as long as it takes to get everybody on the same track. Media is ruthless: a person uncomfortable with the message he or she is bringing, will get into trouble within minutes on tv and within fifteen minutes in an interview for the printed press.

ad.b. Different audiences are reached by different media. If, for instance, young people are the audience that you want to reach, find out which media they use.

More important, find out which media they trust. Soaps for instance are sometimes a very good tool to give information and to stimulate discussion, but, research shows that some soaps do not have anything to do with reality and people realize that. Bringing your message in a soap like that can have the opposite effect. The same is true for tabloid newspapers, people read them for fun, not to get real information.

Pornographic or half pornographic magazines may be very popular among men but the same men do know that the world presented in these magazines is not real. Your real message will not have any effect here.

If you have identified your target audience(s), find out for what purpose you want to reach them:

- to become clients,
- to stimulate discussions,
- to inform them on what to do in specific cases,
- to educate them on values,
- to help them develop opinions,

and choose your media accordingly.

Generally spoken the following remarks on different media can be made:

a. printed press tends to be an elite medium which is very appropriate to reach out to the influential people, politicians and policy makers in your society.

b. radio tends to be a medium for a very broad audience, it is everywhere where tv has not arrived yet and it remains in many places where tv has settled in. It has an entertainment function but is also very useful for the distribution of information and serious discussions on issues. Radio is also very often interactive which does have great advantages.

c. tv tends to be mainly a medium for entertainment. Exceptions are sometimes talkshows and newsshow but even these are made more and more to entertain rather than to inform.

For our goals, no medium is too small. Research shows that issues in the media make their way up: a story in

a local newspaper or regular coverage on the local radio will sooner or later lead to the national newspapers and radio and finally (but usually last) to national tv. The same applies, by the way, to negative coverage or to misinformation. Do not make the mistake to ignore lies about your organisation or the issues you are working on in an unimportant medium; if you do not counteract, the same lie will pop up again and again at unexpected places and times.

If you have set your messages, your target audiences and your target media, it is time to look at the means and tools you can use, to develop a workplan.

STEP TWO

Build up effective media contacts

Building up media contacts depends first and foremost on building personal contacts with journalists. You can do this by:

- a.** providing them with quality information. Keep it short, most journalists are getting a lot of paper every day. They are not going to read your beautiful evaluation report. They need a fact sheet that highlights the most important findings, framed in a way that relates it to timely discussions.
- b.** answering their questions immediately. Journalists have deadlines and they will most probably call you half an hour before they pass that dead line. If the person who is answering the phone at your organisation promises to call back within a week it will be the last call you receive from that particular journalist.
- c.** not lying to journalists on whatever occasion. They will find out, and it will ruin your relationship forever.
- d.** not taking anything for granted; most journalists cover a lot of issues, they are probably not very well informed on your issues. Do not assume that they know what you mean by, for instance, talking about reproductive rights.
- e.** helping them frame your issues in a way they can convince their editors that your story is important. Keep

an eye on what is going on in the media, our issues are related to a lot of other ongoing discussions. New reports on the results of girls in schools? Call them with your story on teenage pregnancy and what that does to the girls perspectives on formal schooling, to give just one example.

STEP THREE

Define your tool and materials

a. Your work is news if you make it news. Opening a clinic is news if a locally important person is opening the clinic. A training course for women working in education is news if you show journalists that the women are learning something new. A new video film for education in youth centers or schools is news if you invite journalists to a screening with the possibility to interview young people about it afterwards. Broadening the range of contraceptives in your clinic is news, the headline being: Now more choice for women in this region.

b. Send out press releases that are short, to the point and mainly meant to keep journalists updated on your work. Do not expect them to make it into the paper every time, it is enough if they know your name after a while and if they look at your materials briefly every time you send them. Be cost effective. Most journalists do not care about glossy materials, they recognize real information when they see it.

c. Organise press briefings when you really feel that you have something that should go out to the general public. A few tips: find out what an appropriate time is for journalists to join, do it in a place that is easy to reach, make it short and give them the opportunity to make interviews with your spokespeople after the briefing. And a warning: try to stay out of buying journalists at all costs. Serve drinks and sandwiches, provide transport, but do not pay. Envelop journalism or cheque book journalism is nowhere popular, not even in the countries where it is commonly practiced. Try to find other incentives such as being a help to their career by giving them access to international conferences or important visitors

of your organisation, by giving them hints or exclusive interviews.

d. Organise some sort of event that makes a nice photograph at least once a year. It can really be anything: Handing out flowers to women on mothers day to get attention for maternal mortality, an exhibition on a poster contest on whatever among young people, a lecture from an internationally known guest, a field trip to your groups on the country side, a peer education role play, handing out condoms to taxi drivers and so on.

e. Be active. Call the staff of a talk show if you heard the anchor person say something that relates to your issues or your work, send letters to the editor if you are not able to get a journalist to make an interview. And look at others than journalists only. Columnists are important opinion leaders in many countries. Make sure they know you and your work.

f. Have good spokespersons. Most organisations will appoint their director as the most important spokesperson. This is not necessarily the most talented spokesperson but the good news is that almost anybody can learn to be an effective spokesperson in a short period of time. A media training of a day or two can teach you how to avoid the most commonly made mistakes, to communicate effectively and to deal with media in a way that benefits your work and your organisation.

g. New media, such as the Internet, are important but not as important as many people think these days. If you have to choose between a web site and a staff-member to make phone calls and to maintain personal contacts, do not hesitate to choose the person instead of the machine.

h. You may find yourselves in a situation where you have followed all above mentioned steps carefully without getting the name of your organisation properly spelt even in the local newspaper. You know that your colleagues are wondering what you are doing. You feel really disappointed. Think about this: it took most well known NGOs more than five years of hard work to generate visibility within the media. Most media will

more likely pay attention to the issues you are dealing with than to your organisation, do not bother about that, good coverage on the issues is good for your organisation as well. Organise another staff brainstorm afternoon to get ideas from all your colleagues to improve the performance of the organisation and invest.

3. Dealing With Disaster

We are dealing with controversial issues which means that most of us are also once in a while or on a regular basis dealing with hostile media.

The reasons for being hostile need to be identified:

- a. Media that is hostile towards you because they are not well enough informed**
- b. Media that is intentionally hostile to you**

ad.a. Many NGOs suffer from shyness whenever they do something that can cause discussion, such as organising sex education in schools. They try to hide what they do. That strategy will cause major difficulties (it did in fact, in many countries). The best way to do this is:

If you know you are doing something that is controversial, organise the discussion yourself. That enables you to stay in control. Put an interview in the papers, on the radio or on tv, announce what you want to do and ask for reactions. Discuss your case; there is nothing you have to hide and you will be able to get many people on your side.

If people find out what you are doing (whether it be sex education or giving contraceptives to young unmarried individuals) you will be put in a position where you have to defend yourself, not only for what you are doing but also for hiding it.

In case of real disaster, someone died while being in your care for instance, illegal activities or other bad news, most people have a natural tendency to close the curtains and to unplug the telephone. Wrong reaction.

Open your doors wide, be the first to announce what has happened, show commitment and report on what you have done to make sure this will not happen again. In other words: Control the events before they control you.

ad.b. Some media are hostile to your work and your organisation on purpose, because of their ownership, religion or bias. You are wasting your time trying to convince them, do not give them interviews or materials. Try to counteract them with positive coverage in other media.

The RHI Practical Media Guide is part of the ComNet's press activities. The "Information and Communication Network" (ComNet) is a Regional Dimension Project funded by the EC/UNFPA under the EC/UNFPA Initiative for Reproductive Health in Asia (RHI) and co-ordinated by the German Foundation for World Population (DSW). It aims at informing the international community about the activities of the RHI and helping the partners of the RHI to increase their capacity in the field of Information and Communication.

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EC/UNFPA INITIATIVE FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN ASIA

Advanced

Dealing With Media

A Practical Guide



ComNet co-ordinated by the German Foundation
for World Population (DSW)

DSW

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RHI Advanced Dealing with Media
– A Practical Guide

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1. Introduction

Media attention is an important means of reaching the general public, generating public debate and obtaining support for ideas and actions. Media attention, however, is the result of hard and committed work. There are a number of reasons as to why an NGO should seek to obtain media coverage, ranging from enhancing the visibility of the organisation, to facilitating fundraising and increasing membership.

For a general introduction into the first steps necessary for carrying out media work, please refer to “Dealing with Media – A Practical Guide” (to order a copy, please contact rhi_info@asia-initiative.org), which includes information on how to develop a media plan, how to build up effective media contacts and what tools you can use.

The following guide gives a more detailed overview on how to organise specific press activities, such as news releases, presentations and press tours.

2. News Releases and Feature Stories

A **news release** fits onto one page and is meant to inform the public about new developments within your organisation or your work. A lot more things can be regarded as news than people think, such as the opening of a new facility, your annual report with new data on reproductive health in the country, the start of a new project, the funding of a programme etc.

The news release can be designed as follows:

- a.** The title should contain the essence of the story.
- b.** The first paragraph should contain the facts that are the reason for the news story.
- c.** The second paragraph should contain the context of the news story: basic information on your organisation, other activities, former projects in this field etc.
- d.** The third paragraph should contain detailed contact information on whom to contact for interviews and a list of materials available for background information.

Be clear, short and concise. It makes sense to write a news release in a certain manner, that journalists can simply copy the first two paragraphs into their paper.

Make sure that there are enough people available to answer the phone and questions, the moment the journalists receive the news release.

A **feature story** is meant to inform the public on background information, to stimulate public debate and to present the issues in an accessible way.

A feature story can be designed as follows:

- a.** Formulate the central message of the story (for instance, “women in this country should have more choice with regards to having children”).
- b.** Identify people, who can put faces to the facts and interview them (for instance, a woman with nine children, who says that if she had had a choice, she would have had less children, and a woman, who decided to plan her family and to limit the family size).
- c.** Begin the story with these women and what they have to say on the issue. People like to read personal stories and in this way you take your readers from the personal stories to the facts.
- d.** In the following paragraphs, continue with related facts (how many children do women have on average, can everybody get contraceptives if wanted etc.).
- e.** Describe what the government and NGOs are doing with regards to the central message of the story or interview people, who can inform you on the policy in this field.
- f.** End the article by coming back to the women; what would they need to fulfil their aspirations?

A journalist, who is writing a feature story, needs sources that give information and facts on health and policy. He/she will also need people, who are willing to share concrete examples and the story of their life with them. It is always highly appreciated, if you help them find these people.

3. Interviews

Although there are several different forms of interviews, e.g. for the printed press, radio or television, some rules apply to all types of interviews:

a. Good preparation is essential.

b. Take an hour to answer the following questions:

- What is the story that you would like to tell the public? Make notes and write down the message you want to get through.
- What is the reason the journalist asked you for an interview? Think about the questions you can expect and how to go from those questions to the story you want to tell. (Example: the journalist wants to talk about the abortion law, but you want to tell the public that maternal mortality is too high in your country. Question: “do you think that the abortion law in our country needs to be revised?” Answer: “abortion is only one of the causes of maternal mortality in our country, other reasons are ... etc., and what we want to do about it is ...” etc.).
- Think about the worst questions you can expect and rehearse answers to them.

c. The interview:

- Meet the journalist in a neutral environment where you feel comfortable.
- Set a time schedule for the interview beforehand. One and half-hours is the time span, in which you can tell almost everything.
- You can ask to see the interview before it is published. However, the rule is that everything you have said can be printed or broadcast. Do not say anything, that you do not want to see in the papers.
- Try to use common language and to avoid expert or technical language (your organisation, for instance, is not dealing with reproductive health but with sex and having children).

- Be aware that you are talking to the general public, not to the journalist; he or she is only the mediator.
- Try to put faces to the facts (Example: “one of our clients has the problem that ... etc., or as a father or mother, I think that young children need good sex education ...” etc.).
- Mention the name of the organisation as much as possible. It is important that the public gets to know you.

d. After the interview:

- Listen carefully to the reaction of people in your neighbourhood.
- Ask the journalist to inform you about response from the audience (letters or phone calls that the newspaper or radio/TV station might receive).
- Act immediately if the reactions are negative, for instance by calling the radio station or sending a letter to the editor.

4. Presentations

Use selected occasions, for instance nearby conferences, to present your organisation.

A good presentation answers the following questions:

- a. What is the structure of the organisation?**
- b. What are the activities of the organisation?**
- c. What is the general attitude of the organisation towards the issues involved?**

A presentation can be designed as follows:

On the structure:

- a. Give the name of the organisation and the mission statement or the central goals of the organisation. Try to avoid technical language and expert terms.**

b. Inform on the founding date of the organisation, the founders, and the reason for setting up the organisation.

c. Present overall information on the number of employees, regional projects, number of clinics, other facilities or projects.

d. Give overall information on where your money comes from and name your international partners.

On the activities:

a. Try to describe your activities from the perspective of a client (Example: “a woman, who goes to our facility can do so from 8 until 10 in the morning. We offer the following services ...” etc.).

b. Inform on the client profile: who are they, what are their most important problems, what does the project offer to help them and how do they get to know your organisation.

c. Give names of other groups and organisations that your group co-operates with.

d. Inform on the main problems you face in your day-to-day operation.

On concepts and attitude:

a. Provide general information on your country, on issues you work with (for instance health, sex education, status of women, vulnerable groups).

b. Explain, what your organisation considers the most important problems in this field and what you think should be done about it.

c. Describe your plans for the near future.

d. Elucidate, what help you need most (money, technical assistance, public relations, political support etc.).

e. Explain, what you consider the biggest success in the work of your organisation.

Last but not least, remember that good presentations keep an eye on the formal aspects:

- a.** Visualise things: use charts, illustrations, diagrams, pictures, and/or overhead foils to capture the attention of all listeners.
- b.** Vary the intonation of your voice: modulate, emphasise, stress and accentuate.
- c.** Hand out the basic information on your organisation in form of brochures, folders, etc to the participants.
- d.** Keep your presentation short.
- e.** Practice your presentation, especially if you feel insecure about speaking in front of many people.

The impression you leave on the listeners, is the impression they get from your organisation.

5. Press Conferences

A press conference is an effective tool, if you have news that you want to tell the public.

The actual press conference takes no more than an hour, there should, however, be room for interviews with spokespeople of your organisation afterwards.

Preparation:

- a.** Find a room in a central location, that does not look embarrassingly empty when only a few people show up.
- b.** Find out, which is the best date and time for the journalists, with regards to their deadlines.
- c.** Send an invitation to all relevant media, try to identify the names of the journalists, who deal with these issues and invite them personally.
- d.** Compile a background information kit (including statistics, facts, contact details etc).
- e.** Make phone calls the day before the press conference to ask whether the journalists intend to come.

f. Prepare, what you want to say and discuss with your colleagues, who will say what.

The press conference:

a. Register the participants, collect their business cards and make sure you have all the necessary data to contact them again.

b. A rather effective form is to have one spokesperson, who welcomes the participants, introduces the organisation and briefly mentions the reason for being there. The second speaker can go into the real news item, while the third person gives background information.

c. After the three speakers, there should be time for questions. Radio journalists might want to talk to one of the spokespeople afterwards, the printed press might ask for background information.

Keep in mind:

a. Do not expect journalists to know what you are talking about. It might be the first time that they hear about your issues, explain everything in common language.

b. There are no stupid questions; there are only stupid answers.

c. Do not speculate about things you do not know.

d. Never ever lie.

Afterwards:

a. Evaluate the media attention you have been able to gain.

b. Add the journalists, that attended the press conference to your mailing list.

c. Make phone calls a few months later, to see if you can get some follow up attention. For instance, if you have opened a new facility, inform them about the number of clients or how the project is getting on.

6. Press Tours for Journalists

A press tour for journalists from the national media and abroad can be a very powerful tool to gain support and visibility for projects and programmes. A successful press tour will provide your organisation with friends for life. However, press tours also tend to reveal the weaknesses and problems of projects and programmes.

Most journalists have a positive attitude towards development aid and towards projects and programmes in this field.

They are also very keen on aspects that are important in the public debate such as:

- a.** Does the money go where it should, in other words: how bureaucratic or corrupt is the receiving government or organisation?
- b.** Is the money spent wisely and effectively?
- c.** Does the programme serve the needs of poor people?
- d.** Are clients treated with respect?
- e.** Does the project improve the clients' quality of life?

Preparations:

a. The responsibilities, needs and interests of journalists are different from those of politicians, policy makers or parliamentarians. It is therefore not a good idea to combine visits of these groups.

b. Similarly, radio, television and print media journalists have different requirements and should also constitute separate groups.

c. Keep the group small.

d. Make sure, that you have at least one interpreter for every three foreign journalists.

e. Do not splash out on luxurious hotels for the journalists. Especially western journalists will find it hard to deal with projects for poor people, in relation to the luxury of the hotel, in which they are staying and might feel bribed.

f. Prepare an information kit with background information, names of locations, statistics etc. for the journalists to take home with them.

During the press tour:

a. Journalists want to go to the field, while host organisations sometimes want them to visit important people in the capital. To avoid irritation, it is wise to limit visits to ministries, political leaders etc. to a third of the visits at the most.

b. Journalists are aware that the work involved is difficult and that there are obstacles and problems. They will highly appreciate it, if you share your problems with them, which contributes to your accountability. Hiding problems and weaknesses will make them suspicious and less enthusiastic about what you are doing. They will judge you by the way you are dealing with problems and mistakes, not by the fact that they exist.

c. The best spokespeople for your work are the beneficiaries of your projects. The story of their life, their problems, their concerns and their appreciation of your work will make it into the feature stories. Give your guests the opportunity and plenty of time to talk to them.

The RHI Practical Media Guide is part of the ComNet's capacity building measures. The "Information and Communication Network" (ComNet) is a Regional Dimension Project funded by the European Commission (EC) and UNFPA under the EC/UNFPA Initiative for Reproductive Health in Asia (RHI) and co-ordinated by the German Foundation for World Population (DSW). It aims at helping the partners of the RHI to increase their capacity in the field of Information and Communication and informing the international community about the activities of the RHI.

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EC/UNFPA INITIATIVE FOR REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN ASIA



Dealing With Advocacy

A Practical Guide



ComNet co-ordinated by the German Foundation
for World Population (DSW)

DSW

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1. What is Advocacy?

Few countries in the world, if any, guarantee every individual access to the information and the means to exercise their reproductive rights to a level that has been agreed upon at numerous international conferences.

Advocacy – in the field of reproductive health and rights – can be defined as the process that leads to broader access of more people to quality reproductive health services, and that facilitates a more complete self-determination of every individual in matters of sexuality and reproduction.

Advocacy is geared towards change: change in personal behaviour and attitude, change in the political and public debate, institutional change and legal change. It is a process that involves all levels of society, since reproductive choices and possibilities affect everybody.

A top-down model will not work in this area, because individuals make reproductive choices in their private lives. However, governments and institutions can limit reproductive choices of individuals severely by regulating access to services and information.

Advocacy is not the same as Information, Education and Communication (IEC) but often advocacy and IEC go together. For instance: in order to change regulations that limit the access of young or unmarried people to contraceptive services, the public, the policy makers and the politicians need to be informed and educated on the dangers of STDs and unwanted pregnancies for young people. Here, IEC is a precondition for advocacy to change laws and regulations.

Advocacy is a process that requires civil courage: the courage to speak out, to stand up, to generate and stir debate and controversy and – more often than not – to oppose the powers that be.

Sometimes it looks as if the task of changing the current situation is too much for any group of people. In fact, a dedicated and committed group of people is the only entity that will ever change anything anywhere.

2. Why do NGOs need Advocacy?

NGOs working in the field of reproductive health and rights tend to be very good at their core business: providing services. However, providing quality services without advocacy has its limitations. Few NGOs can provide structural solutions in a situation, where access and services are limited by law or regulations. Sometimes, governments and state institutions let NGOs do the work that is seen as controversial, as long as the NGOs do so in silence. That provides a solution for individuals that find their way to the NGO services, but it does not change the public debate and forces the NGOs and their clients to operate in an atmosphere of secrecy.

Another limitation of services without advocacy is that NGOs cannot capitalise on the experiences of their clients. NGOs that are providing services know the needs and desires of their clients and should be able to advise policy makers accordingly.

Many NGOs have experienced that there is a certain tension between service provision and advocacy. Advocacy can bring you into the spotlight and into the heart of controversy. That may scare off potential clients. If the government provides funds for the provision of services, it might seem difficult to criticise that same government publicly.

However, more than anybody else, NGOs are able to show what limitations do to people, what the results of certain policies are in the lives of people, and what could be done to empower people to make responsible and informed choices. Using their expertise in the public debate and in the process of law-making is not only a great opportunity to make their organisation known and respected; it is also a responsibility towards their current and future clients.

3. Advocacy as a Process

A successful advocacy campaign is based upon the following components:

- a. Strategy
- b. Building Bridges
- c. Networking
- d. Forming Coalitions
- e. Taking Concrete Action
- f. Developing Materials
- g. Breaking the Silence

| 5

Without a strategy, people easily get disappointed because it is hard to measure progress if there is no formulated goal and a plan to achieve that goal. Without substantial support an NGO might easily be isolated and ignored. Without public debate, politicians and policy makers might put aside the NGO agenda as irrelevant.

ad.a. Strategy

For an advocacy campaign, identifying your goal is of utmost importance. Progress in the area of reproductive health and reproductive rights is all too often a matter of small steps. But not all small steps are going in the right direction. For instance: in a situation, where young unmarried people have no access to contraceptive services, it might seem like progress when access is allowed with parental consent. However, this might exclude the majority of young people, while it seems as if the problem is solved.

The strategy for your campaign should contain the goals you want to achieve. For instance: changing public attitude, sensitising policy makers and politicians, altering the rules, amending the laws etc.

A strategy plan should also contain the steps needed towards achieving your goal. Almost always, it is important

to first and foremost create public support for your goals. It is the basis upon which your campaign stands. There are examples of high placed authorities of good will, which tried to change the rules without a public debate. The temptation of making big steps forward is – of course – great, but the progress will seldom last. Ending harmful but deeply rooted practices, for instance, is a process that needs the whole community to be involved, in order to be successful. Making harmful practices illegal overnight, rarely makes the situation better and makes public debate more difficult.

ad.b. Building Bridges

Building bridges means finding ways to gather as many people and organisations in support of your goal as possible. It is not necessary to agree on everything, in order to co-operate in achieving a concrete goal. Many reproductive health and rights issues can be considered from different angles. Some might want to see them primarily as health issues, while others see them as human rights issues. That is a difference that requires informal discussions and exchanging views, but it should not withhold you from co-operating to achieve change. Some might want to emphasise the importance of reproductive rights in the process of empowering women, while others see it as a basic right for all individuals. Again, these are great issues to discuss, but no reason not to join forces for the better. Many people (and organisations) consider reproductive health services for young and unmarried people or abortion services as “harm reduction”, more than as rights for every individual. Nevertheless, they still might be on your side in campaigning for access to services.

Make sure, that all the partners in a campaign understand that this co-operation is about this specific goal and does not mean that you are tied forever on every issue. Respect different angles and arguments. Be pragmatic on who is going to advocate your issue where. A conservative medical board might be more easily convinced by a retired and well-respected medical doctor, than by a feminist action group.

ad.c. Networking

Networking is easy, time consuming and fun. It simply means going to the places and occasions, where you can find out who the actors are in the particular field that you want to approach in your campaign. It is also about making yourself and your organisation known to all the possible actors: colleagues, NGOs, medical organisations, lawyers, teachers, politicians, policy makers, journalists, influential community leaders etc. It enables you to find out what the current debate is about, what the priorities of other organisations are, who your potential partners are. Most countries have an active reproductive rights movement, which contains many different organisations and individuals. Make sure that you and your organisation are firmly rooted in that movement. They have to get to know and respect you before they will consider co-operating with you.

ad.d. Forming Coalitions

The key to a successful coalition is equality and respect. In a successful coalition, small and big groups, moderate and radical groups work together taking advantage of each other's strengths, without ignoring differences. A small NGO can sometimes be more flexible, but might have a limited reach. A big NGO might have a greater impact, but can be suffering from a bureaucratic structure, that does not easily adjust to new developments. Radical groups can play a role in paving the way for more 'middle-of-the-road' NGOs.

Problems in coalitions are often caused by a lack of equality. One or two of the groups take all the credit for the results, for instance, or one organisation seems to appear in the media all the time without mentioning the others. In many countries, there is a certain level of competition between NGOs, competition with regards to donors, towards government money or even competition in getting clients. It might help to discuss this openly and to try to make sure that every NGO gets something out of the coalition. Giving credit, where credit is due, helps a lot; trying to put your organisation at the forefront all the time does the opposite. Working together

in a (temporary) coalition has no doubt numerous advantages if you can make it work. The broader the coalition, the greater the impact it will have.

It is important to agree upon the basic rules of working together at the beginning of a campaign. Firstly, you should answer the following questions:

- **What decisions should be made by all the groups and which can be made in working groups?**
- **Who are spokespersons of the coalition and what can they say on behalf of all groups?**
- **What should be left to the organisations to speak on individually?**
- **How often should the whole group meet?**
- **How to make sure that not only the already known organisations are going to be interviewed and quoted in the media?**
- **What are the limits in which the different groups can work together?**

ad.e. Taking Concrete Action

Concrete action is needed for each advocacy campaign, as well as a time schedule. For instance: a coalition can decide to spend a year at making condoms more easily accessible for young people. That requires changing the rules and carrying out a public awareness campaign. Different groups can develop different activities under the same umbrella. At the end, there can be a joint event of all the groups. All groups can do what they are good at and give the campaign a place in their annual plan. Youth groups can start distributing condoms at youth events, teachers can start a discussion in schools, the family planning groups can start a campaign to get more young clients, lawyers can formulate alternative laws and present them to politicians. Media can be used to emphasise the problems of young people in the area of sexuality and reproductive health.

It can be very useful to have advocacy/media training at the start of the campaign. That allows you to develop arguments together, to get more confident in public performances, while you also get to know each other better in an informal setting.

ad.f. Developing Materials

Advocacy materials can be developed in many different forms. A common logo for all the groups is a good idea, it ties the various activities and angles together for a common goal. A great advocacy tool – if you can afford it – is an opinion poll at the start of the campaign. Knowing what people think about the issue, the level of information etc. enables you to design advocacy materials for specific groups and to tackle specific arguments. Also, often you will find out that the views of common people on reproductive health and rights are more enlightened, than politicians and policy makers tend to think. Opinion polls can provide you with very convincing arguments for policy makers.

Advocacy materials should be designed to have a maximum impact, in other words, as many people as possible should see them during the campaign. It is very important to test advocacy materials. There are too many examples of advocacy materials that contained a message, which was misunderstood by the public with all kinds of negative results. An infamous example: when the HIV/AIDS pandemic broke out, many countries started huge information campaigns, using billboard posters. Many of these posters used photographs of terminally ill patients, suffering, in pain and terribly skinny. Firstly, fear is not the most effective drive for behaviour change; more importantly, these posters had a very dramatic effect: many people concluded from the posters, that you could easily identify someone with HIV/AIDS and that avoiding sex with them would free you from the danger of getting infected. Sex with a healthy looking person was thus considered safe.

A press package should be made for every advocacy campaign, as well as a package with background information for politicians and policy makers.

ad.g. Breaking the Silence

Advocacy is about breaking the silence on issues, which affect everybody but are seldom discussed in public. To bring stories of women and men, who are suffering as a result of the lack of reproductive choice into the public debate, is one of the most powerful advocacy tools you can use. In many countries, the majority of the public knows that, for instance, young people are sexually active and in need of protection and information, but in the public debate the assumption, that sex before marriage does not exist, remains. It takes the testimonies of young people in one form or another to make visible what everybody already knows and to bring politicians and policy makers to act accordingly.

Scientific research and experience show that an informed public supports reproductive health, whereas an uninformed public is more sensitive to myths and ideology.

4. Opposition

It is no secret that most opposition to reproductive rights and services come from two sources: religious groups and patriarchal views on the role of women.

Both groups use arguments that sound moral, ethical and are highly theoretical. They do not take into account the reality of today's world and they do not trust individuals to be able to make responsible choices. On occasion, they end up promoting rules and regulations that directly affect the health of people.

The reproductive health and rights movement contributes to the improvement of public health, based upon human rights, a moral and ethical concept. The reality of women's lives and the reality of the lives of young people are the starting point for their advocacy activities.

In the debate it is important to stay close to the reality of people's lives. Advocacy materials (and interviews) should always contain a description of the current situation:

how many people are suffering from the lack of services you promote, what is the result of the lack of services, individual stories, testimonies etc. If you can show, that your proposals will save the lives of women and young people or improve their health, you make it very difficult for your opponents to appear reasonable.



5. Integrating Advocacy into your Work

Besides advocacy campaigns with formulated goals, NGOs should also carry out advocacy on a daily basis. This means staying in contact with policy makers and politicians, informing them on the work you are doing, providing them with information that they can use in policy- and law-making.

These advocacy activities can also be geared at the implementation of international agreements and national laws. Many countries support the Cairo Programme of Action, though very few are implementing it to its full extent. Sometimes, national laws are not in line with international treaties and in many countries practices do not realise what the law guarantees.

Building a position as an expert organisation in the area of reproductive health and rights is important for advocacy activities. It means making yourself heard and seen in every debate that goes on in this area.

Finally, advocacy should involve everyone in your organisation. Dedicated personnel, board members and clients are the best advocates for your case that you can wish for. Advocacy takes place everywhere; at the smallest community meeting and in the national parliament. At social gatherings and at formal conferences. Satisfied clients are the best advertisement for your organisation, as they recommend it to others.

It is important to have good advocacy materials and to use your tools effectively. At the end of the day however, the dedication and commitment of individuals is decisive in realising advocacy goals.

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