

Qualitative research techniques can be used to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices of a target audience as they give insight into what, how and why—critical elements in behaviour-change communication.



WENDY STONE/LIAISON

TRAINING OUTREACH WORKERS IN INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS IS ESSENTIAL FOR COMPREHENSIVE STI AND HIV PREVENTION PROGRAMS, SUCH AS ONE INVOLVING THIS WOMAN IN KENYA.

# **CAPACITY BUILDING: INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION (IEC) TRAINING FOR HIV/AIDS PREVENTION IN KENYA**

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## **CAPACITY BUILDING: INFORMATION, EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION (IEC) TRAINING FOR HIV/AIDS PREVENTION IN KENYA**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Information, education and communication (IEC) materials are an important component of behaviour change communication (BCC) efforts. To be effective, however, they must be carefully designed or selected to meet the specific needs of a target audience. The Kenya AIDS NGO's Consortium (KANCO) recognized that most of the staff of its 200 member organizations did not have the formal IEC training that would allow them to develop much-needed HIV/AIDS-prevention materials or to evaluate the most appropriate existing materials.

In response, the Programme for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH/ Kenya) and Family Health International's (FHI's) AIDS Control and Prevention (AIDSCAP) Project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), collaborated on developing a long-term training approach for KANCO members. This approach provided both a solid theoretical framework and practical grounding in IEC approaches to create a team of NGO programme officers who could promote sound IEC practices for use in future behaviour change programmes.

### **GOAL AND OBJECTIVES**

The overall goal of this technical assistance project was to build the capacity of Kenyan institutions to carry out HIV/AIDS-prevention and control activities by strengthening and institutionalizing IEC media and materials development skills among the programme staff of KANCO member agencies.

The main objectives of these training sessions were to enable programme officers to:

- Understand and practice all the sequential steps for developing IEC materials.
- Acquire skills needed to develop effective IEC materials on HIV/AIDS prevention.
- Develop at least two versions of one new HIV/AIDS IEC material.
- Disseminate the materials developed to all interested groups.
- Share different experiences, expertise and materials.

### **EXECUTION OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME**

#### **Identification and Selection of Trainees**

PATH's aim was to reach as broad an audience as possible. After the list of KANCO member organizations had been updated, letters were sent to the organizational directors with information on the objectives and structure of the proposed

training and a request that they nominate suitable candidates (programme officers)—preferably those working in relevant BCC units.

To further sensitize and inform the directors about the training programme and what it would entail, PATH organized a half-day “kick-off” meeting for key persons from the organizations asked to nominate participants. The purpose of the meeting was to brief participants on the background and rationale for the training and to emphasize the need for nominated persons to attend all the training sessions. The 29 meeting attendees represented 24 Kenyan organizations.

During the meeting PATH conducted an exercise in which participants worked in groups of five to form a square from odd-shaped cards. The lesson drawn from this exercise was that individuals achieve better results when they pool their resources and expertise to work as a group. This reinforced the rationale for KANCO members to meet together for training in effective media and materials development and to then work together to develop communication interventions for their common target audiences.

**Training Methodology** The training was accomplished through a series of nine two- to three-day training workshops conducted between December 1993 and August 1996. Participants were carefully selected following the meeting with key NGO representatives. This process ensured commitment from the organizations to release their chosen participants for the full training, including essential field activities, and gave programme officers a chance to practice new skills in their work between training sessions.

Before the workshop started, PATH trainers gave a questionnaire to all nominated participants.

This questionnaire was not a test of knowledge. Rather, it sought information on participants’ expectations and prior experience in developing or using BCC materials. Its purpose was to give the trainers insights into the participants and their backgrounds and levels of experience. PATH trainers learned that some participants had been exposed to some of the information the training was designed to cover, while several others were total novices. The task of the trainers, therefore, was to accommodate both groups in a way that maximized the strengths of each. Thus, PATH used a flexible approach to cater to the differing needs of the participants.

PATH programme officers were the lead facilitators/trainers in all the workshop sessions. PATH also invited other professionals (a graphic artist, a radio and TV producer, and a printer) to facilitate relevant sessions and work with the trainees in various workshops. In all cases, PATH trainers used participatory training methodologies and group work and provided relevant handouts for reference.

Participants were grouped into teams that worked together over the course of the project, in both workshop training sessions and the field. The teams selected the target audiences for their materials. In the subsequent training sessions, the course covered all aspects of materials development, production and dissemination. Key topic areas included: qualitative and quantitative research design for an initial needs assessment among the target audience(s); incorporating research results into message design and development, including handling controversial issues; selecting the appropriate media and format; working with artists and producers; field-testing and revising

materials; making costing and production decisions; and, materials dissemination.

Two stages in this process proved very challenging. The first was trying to interpret research findings as the basis for message development. Participants were familiar with the old-school way of assuming “we know what the issues in HIV/ AIDS are...and we can therefore go straight into writing our materials.” In many projects in the past, this assumption has resulted in the production of materials that are laden with information, but ineffective in stimulating decision-making or behaviour change. Thus, PATH trainers worked rigorously and challenged workshop participants to think “outside the box” —in other words, to be creative in thinking “what will be new in my material, and what is the desired action response from those who see or read my message?” The second challenge was in pretesting, getting participants to realize that it is not the writer’s perspective that really matters in gauging the efficacy of the message, but rather that of the target audience. Some participants were very “possessive” of what they had written and reluctant to incorporate the drastic revisions suggested by pretest audiences.

#### **THE MODEL ADOPTED FOR THIS IEC TRAINING SERIES**

Effective communication strategies are designed to meet very specific and clearly defined objectives. Over the years PATH has developed a systematic approach for developing effective BCC materials. The framework presents a continuous process, but has seven identifiable steps or stages that overlap and feed into one another. These steps, which were designed to be followed sequentially, are:

- strategic planning and design
- developing messages and designing materials
- pretesting and revising materials
- training in how to use and monitor the use of materials
- evaluating the impact of materials
- planning for continuity.

PATH has used this model in various settings and has produced a comprehensive IEC materials development training curriculum based on it.

In carrying out the training for Kenyan NGO staff, PATH trainers used each of the model’s seven steps to form the content of a two- to three-day workshop. Where necessary, the content of one step was covered in more than one workshop.

**Analysis (Workshop One)** Changing human behaviour through communication demands that programme implementers maintain a thorough understanding of: the problem to be addressed (to make sure there is understanding of what the issues are); the target audience or the group(s) to be served (segmented by various demographic, geographical, and social and economic factors that influence or shape people’s behaviour); the capabilities of local institutions (including who is doing what and where, in order to build on their work); existing policies and programmes (to capitalize on the positive ones and avoid potential conflict); and, programme priorities (to ensure that they are consistent with programme goals).

During this first workshop, PATH invited an epidemiologist from the National AIDS and STD Control Program of the Ministry of Health to give a presentation on HIV/AIDS in Kenya using a computer model. This model, known as the AIDS Impact Model (AIM), presents HIV/AIDS data that include the profile of

groups infected, projected future trends, the implications of these HIV/AIDS trends for various sectors of the economy, and the effects of different HIV/AIDS-prevention and control interventions on trends in HIV transmission and infection in the population. This session gave trainees updated information on the HIV/AIDS situation in Kenya and helped them identify priority issues and groups for intervention focus.

In addition, participants reviewed the different organizations' approaches and experiences in HIV/AIDS-prevention and control activities, identified primary target groups and reviewed existing IEC materials. After much discussion and review of existing materials, participants agreed to focus on pre-adolescents, adolescents, youth out-of-school, adult men and couples.

### **Research Methodologies (Workshop Two)**

The second workshop exposed trainees to formative research methodologies with an emphasis on qualitative methods, particularly focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews. PATH emphasized qualitative research techniques because qualitative data disclose information that may be used to influence the audience's behaviours or allay their fears or doubts. Qualitative research techniques can be used to assess the knowledge, attitudes and practices of a target audience as they give insight into what, how and why—critical elements in behaviour-change communication.

The objectives of this second workshop were to enable participants to learn how to organize and conduct focus group discussions, practice facilitating and note taking in an FGD and develop an FGD topic guide.

Highlighted in the training were the critical interpersonal communication skills needed to conduct effective FGDs. Such interpersonal communication skills include questioning (with an emphasis on probing responses to open-ended questions) and listening skills. Participants were also taken through various perception and values clarification exercises to help them learn that because people's values and perceptions differ, leaders need to remain objective while conducting FGDs.

### **Data Analysis and Strategic Planning**

**(Workshop Three)** During the third workshop, participants worked together to summarize and analyze the qualitative data they had gathered. Manual analysis involved categorizing the information, identifying key words or phrases from participant responses, identifying patterns in responses (issues that are reported similarly across FGDs) and interpreting (making inferences from) the patterns.

To help participants summarize data, PATH introduced FGD summary sheets grouping information into the following categories: general impressions or observations of the facilitators and note takers based on the main points discussed in the FGD; knowledge about HIV/AIDS; attitudes/beliefs about HIV/AIDS; behaviour/practices related to HIV/AIDS; quotes to illustrate key findings; recommended interventions and media preferences; and, any other relevant information that did not fall directly into any of these categories.

Having summarized the research findings, participants were introduced to the process of developing a strategic plan. A strategic plan in this setting uses the information gathered through

the analysis described in the first workshop, as well as the research findings, to set priorities and formulate clear, specific objectives to be accomplished through the communication strategy. The objectives must be specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic and time-bound (SMART).

Through this process of developing “SMART” objectives, project planners can develop more targeted strategies by identifying where various segments of the target audience are on the behaviour-change continuum. All target audience members pass through several stages as they decide whether or not to adopt a new behaviour. In a simplified description of the decision-making model, the stages of behaviour adoption can be outlined as follows: people become aware of the new behaviour or product, they decide to try it, they learn how to use/do it and, finally, they decide whether or not to continue the learned/adopted behaviour. Each stage needs to be addressed with a different communication strategy and a recognition that people often move back and forth between stages.

### **Developing Messages and Designing Materials (Workshops Four and Five)**

This stage provides the link between the research findings and the targeted communication objectives. If baseline data has been successfully compiled and analyzed, the next questions to ask are:

- How can these findings be translated into messages?
- What are the most appropriate media for disseminating these messages?
- What will make the message and the medium carrying it command the attention of the target audience?

- What is the specific call to action from the message, or what do I expect the audience to think, feel or do as a result of seeing or hearing the message?

During Workshop Four, participants were trained in how to use research findings to design a message. They first discussed various communication approaches, the types of messages that are suitable for each approach and the criteria for choosing a medium.

To help participants work through these topics, PATH introduced a materials design worksheet and a strategic message content outline. The materials design worksheet grouped information into an FGD result or finding, the issue to be addressed, the message addressing that issue and the media proposed to carry that message.

The message content outline further synthesized the information using the following subsections: the problem to be addressed; the communication objective; the primary target audience; the secondary target audience; the key message; the main supporting points (the benefits resulting from practicing the modelled behaviour); the tone of the message; and, the desired action response (the positive reaction expected from the target audience).

Using these worksheets, participants worked with a graphic artist and a radio/TV producer to draft their materials. These tasks were spread out over a longer period, covering two workshops during which the groups began drafting the following materials for the respective target audiences:

- Pre-adolescents and adolescents: a booklet with illustrations giving basic facts and information about HIV and AIDS.

- Out-of-school youth: a drama script, stickers and two posters.
- Adult men: a booklet entitled “What every man should know about HIV/AIDS” and a poster.
- Couples: a drama script with a story line addressing the need for correct information about HIV/AIDS, condom acceptability, limiting or reducing sex partners and practicing self control.

**Pretesting and Revising Materials (Workshops Six, Seven and Eight)** Pretesting consists of testing the viability of the draft materials with representatives of the intended target audiences before the materials are finalized. Several rounds of pretesting are conducted to obtain audiences’ reactions and recommendations for changes.

Some of the programme messages and aspects of materials that should be tested include:

- Comprehension: Is the message understood or is it subject to misinterpretation?
- Acceptability: Is the material compatible with the cultural norms of the target audience?
- Identification: Do members of the target audience feel the message is directed towards them?
- Motivation/persuasion: Does the message trigger a reaction from the recipient?

Materials also should be reviewed with professionals in the relevant disciplines. This will, among other things, ensure that the content of the materials is technically correct and the messages are consistent with prevailing policies. The results from technical reviews and pretesting are used to guide the revision of the materials as appropriate.

In addition to theoretical learning on why and how to pretest materials in the

workshop setting, PATH took participants out to field sites to practice pretesting skills. The participants regrouped at the training venue to compile pretest information and learned how to use pretest feedback to revise materials.

**Process Evaluation** After the field practice, PATH administered a mid-course questionnaire to obtain feedback from the training participants. Many offered favourable comments on pretesting, illustrating that the time spent focusing on this skill was worthwhile. Some highlights from participant comments include:

- “This is the first time that I am doing this kind of thing. I never thought that developing materials involves all this. It is certainly a wonderful experience.”
- “It was an exercise I have never done before and I have learned a lot.”
- “It is the first time I have gone out for practical pretesting. I found it difficult to cope with the changes the respondents were giving for my material.”

This exercise confirmed the hypothesis that in many instances agencies take shortcuts in the process of message and materials development. Many of the materials circulating are the work of communication staff who develop them without the benefit of research findings, and they are not rigorously tested to incorporate target audiences’ perspectives.

### **Training in How to Use the Materials and Monitoring Their Use (Workshop Nine)**

Before new materials are distributed, the people who are going to use them need to be trained in how to use them. This stage of the training emphasized that communication materials are

complementary to other forms of communication (e.g., interpersonal) and demonstrated how they can be used to reinforce other initiatives.

Workshop participants learned that monitoring the use of materials can help identify problems as they arise and ensure a prompt response. To monitor effectively, programme designers must set clear indicators for each activity or material.

To ensure that adequate stocks of the materials were maintained, the teams developed forms for tracking distribution and reordering. These forms were retained at the KANCO secretariat, which became the organizational custodian of all the materials printed.

### **Evaluating the Impact of the Materials and Planning for Continuity (Workshop Nine)**

Impact evaluation reveals whether the communication objectives were realized. Some of the programme aspects that can be evaluated include:

- *Knowledge:* What does the target audience know about the issue(s) addressed by the materials?
- *Approval/attitudes:* How has the audience reacted to the materials?
- *Practice:* Has the target audience acted as directed by the message?

Communication is an ongoing process. Sustained behaviour change requires consistent and repeated efforts. Through monitoring and evaluation data, programme designers should identify new issues that need to be addressed through different communication strategies. PATH's model of materials development creates a loop in which evaluation data opens the way for the next cycle of planning, enabling planners to respond to the changing needs of target

audiences as they move through the various steps towards behaviour change.

As a way of promoting the sustainability of IEC materials provision, PATH encouraged KANCO members to sell some of the materials they had produced. Seven organizations agreed to sell one of their joint products, a comic book entitled *Life, Love and AIDS*. After selling the comic book, an organization was to retain half the proceeds and give the other half to a reprinting fund coordinated by the KANCO secretariat.

### **ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

Working in teams, the participants agreed to focus on five target audiences: men, couples, out-of-school youth, adolescents and pre-adolescents. The group was able to develop and produce five different types of materials: two types of laminated stickers; three posters; one question-and-answer booklet entitled *Peter and Anne Discuss AIDS with Aunt Mary*; a drama script—"Life Love and AIDS"—and a complementary discussion guide; and, a comic book based on the "Life Love and AIDS" script.

### **CONSTRAINTS**

The materials development training was very successful. However, there were a few constraints:

This project did not contain a follow-up evaluation component to assess what the participant programme officers were able to develop in their respective organizations. Nevertheless, PATH has continued interacting and collaborating with the individual participants in other capacities and is confident that this training contributed to the pool of expertise in message and materials development among the NGO community in Kenya.

Assuring consistent participation was not easy. Because the nine workshops were spread over a long time period, a number of participants dropped out due to conflicting schedules at their workplaces.

Pretesting and revising materials progressed at a slower pace than anticipated because the teams were encouraged to take full responsibility for scheduling their time and activities. This proved difficult once the trainees returned to their respective agencies, since their regular jobs and assignments then took priority, leading to frequent cancellation and rescheduling of meetings and pretest sessions.

Staff turnover through job changes, transfers and study leave, which took place in most of the organizations involved, affected the progress of some of the teams.

#### **LESSONS LEARNED**

This “job-release” model of materials development training, where training is delivered in stages interspersed with on-the-job practice of the new skills, was extremely cost-effective.

The team-training process maximized commitment by the group. In addition, the extended process with its spiral of theory, practice and analysis was very effective in grounding participants’ understanding that training is indeed a process.

The materials development model followed by PATH is very flexible. It enabled the participants to use their own experiences and initiatives as they worked in teams. Consequently, the trainers frequently were able to build on the skills and strengths of some of the participants without antagonizing

any of the others. This helped maintain the enthusiasm and interest of the trainees throughout the series of workshops.

Careful planning of materials dissemination greatly increases the breadth and quality control of the distribution, as well the level of use by the target audience.

In developing materials for HIV/AIDS BCC, people should not be afraid of inciting negative reactions from some social groups. Such negative reactions can in themselves be an “advertisement” for the materials.

#### **BEST PRACTICE CRITERIA**

**Relevance** The training model adopted by PATH challenges programme officers to be creative and start thinking “outside the box” as they develop messages and materials. The training focused on pertinent skills that BCC officers use every day in trying to motivate behaviour change to foster HIV/AIDS prevention.

**Effectiveness** Using a team-training model enabled organizations to realize the overall goal and targeted objectives of collaboration and networking. Participants from different organizations worked together in teams, which served to solidify the spirit of inter-agency collaboration.

**Efficiency** This training process helped maximize limited resources to benefit many different organizations. Left on their own, many of the agencies involved would not have been able to access funding for training or for developing their own HIV/AIDS-prevention materials.

**Replicability** This long-term training model is easily replicable internationally, in resource-constrained as well as other settings.

**Sustainability** The income-generation approach proved effective in facilitating the sustainability of IEC materials production by producing a 50 per cent profit on all the materials sold, enabling a reprinting fund to be established.

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