

MODULE 16

Developing a communication strategy

Duration: 1.5 hours

Prerequisites: Modules 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15



Key questions:

1. Why do we need to communicate?
2. What constitutes a good communication strategy?
3. What are the steps to be taken before starting?
4. How to design a successful message?
5. What are the main communication channels?
6. What about using videos?
7. What are the three levels of marketing the SPF?



Objectives:

The objective of this module is to design an effective communication strategy to reach out to beneficiaries of social protection programmes, policy-makers, donors, and other stakeholders. The module provides understanding on what comprises a good strategy and how to design one. This includes designing an appropriate and effective message for the target group and marketing it well so that it reaches the intended audience.



Overview:

This module starts with a presentation on developing a communication strategy to generate awareness on social protection. It is followed by a group exercise that helps participants get a practical idea of how they can design a strategy that will effectively send a message to different target groups and stakeholders.

Why do we need to communicate?

Social protection is a key factor that helps promote socio-economic development in a country. To effectively implement various social protection schemes, stakeholders need to communicate the right messages to the right people in order to push for this agenda. In communicating, it is always important to define why we are doing so. Some people communicate to increase visibility, some communicate to change peoples' behaviours or views, while still others communicate to raise awareness. Communication is also important to inform potential donors about the situation and raise funds that can be used to fund the implementation of the SPF.

It is essential to make the targeted beneficiaries aware of social security schemes, benefits, and procedures to register for schemes and avail benefits. This session aims to give some guidelines on creating a strategy to communicate with existing and potential beneficiaries. The methods for creating awareness may be put into practice by the government, social security offices, workers' and employers' organizations, civil society, and others using media such as newspapers, television, talks and campaigns in communities, schools, workplaces, social security agencies, and so on.

What constitutes a good communication strategy?

To decide what is to be achieved by communicating, a good strategy is needed. A good communication strategy has three major components: a diagnosis, guiding policy, and coherent actions. The diagnosis of the situation identifies the strengths and challenges and prioritizes which of the problems are critical. After the diagnosis, a guiding policy may then be created, which is a consistent and unified approach to resolve the problems. It provides a set of linked activities and goals and is in accordance with the diagnosis. A set of coherent and coordinated actions then flow from the diagnosis and guiding policy. A good communication strategy has nothing to do with a mission statement, vision, or statement of goals.

What are the steps to be taken before starting?

It is important to define the audience group and 'know' them, reasons for reaching out, change in behaviour expected, appropriate message to be communicated, channels through which the communication can take place, and signs of success. The knowledge, attitudes, preferences, and feelings of the target group are important to learn so that the message can be appropriately designed. The message and argument must appeal to them. We need to find out which communication channels they have access to, so that the message reaches them. It is also crucial to decide what change in behaviour or thinking is desired in the target group.

How to design a successful message?

While designing the message, it is essential that the audience identifies with the message. It must be aligned with the experiences, knowledge, interests, and preferences of the target group. The message must follow the "five Cs": be clear (no jargon), concise (30 seconds or less), consistent (repeated often), compelling (says something powerful), and convincing (by using information and stories). The audience must immediately be able to understand the message and how they would benefit from it. It can consist of three parts:

- definition of the problem;
- evidence for the problem;
- solution to the problem.

For example, in order to make a video on the SPF and its benefits, the current position or the problem may be defined as not having access to affordable, quality health care services. This may be supported by a testimonial from a person in a remote area who talks about the problems faced by their family when they cannot access health services. The solution proposed is the effective implementation of the SPF, following which everyone, including the person from the remote area, can have easy and quick access to good quality health facilities.

What are the main communication channels?

It is vital to choose the appropriate communication channel depending on the target group, the message, and the available funds. To promote social protection programmes and services and the SPF, the media, Internet, social partners, and civil society organizations may be used. Each has its own advantages and drawbacks. For instance, stakeholders such as NGOs and social partners can carry information on various programmes, registration procedures, and processes to claim benefits directly to the potential beneficiaries, especially those in remote areas. The Internet may not be accessible by people in remote or rural areas, however the messages sent over the Internet can be completely controlled by the senders. When stakeholders use print, radio, or television media, the content of the messages cannot be completely controlled. Leaflets and posters can contain a lot of information, while social media sites can go viral among Internet users.

What about using videos?

Videos, advertisements, and public service announcements (PSAs) go a long way towards achieving effective communication. As a form of oral storytelling, they can be engaging and easy to watch. Videos can reach out to and be understood by a large number of the target population. Usually, they would contain a single powerful message delivered in a short time span of around 30 seconds. Videos, advertisements, and PSAs can connect with the viewer by telling a story through the use of dialogue, music, and catchy tag lines. People can identify with the story and characters in the video and thereby remember it.

Some ad campaigns on topics such as insurance and preventing drunk driving are given at the end of this module. These videos show how a powerful message can be effectively delivered. In all the videos, the message is found to be simple, direct, and powerful.

What are the three levels of marketing the SPF?

There are three levels for marketing the SPF:

- Marketing 1.0 focuses on the product or idea we want to communicate, such as different social protection schemes and services and the SPF.
- Marketing 2.0 focuses on the needs of the target group. For example, the SPF can be marketed to policy-makers as something that will promote socio-economic development in the country. The SPF can also be marketed to potential beneficiaries as something that will help them in times of financial distress.
- Marketing 3.0 focuses on the behavioural patterns and subconscious desires of the target group. These techniques aim to create a powerful and long-lasting impact on people. For instance, the videos on drunken driving, speeding, and health and life insurance are simple, effective, and targeted at people's subconscious. The SPF can be marketed to policy-makers as something that would contribute to increasing their popularity and to potential beneficiaries as something that can contribute to a healthy and happy family.

Practical session

The presentation is followed by a practical session for participants to design a communication strategy for different target groups. The “advocacy and strategic communications planning grid” gives a framework which can be used to design a strategy to communicate with any chosen target group.



Takeaway message:

Beneficiaries have to be made aware of various existing social security programmes and the procedures to register and avail benefits. They also need to know of their right to social security and understand their obligations in the financing of social security through taxes or social contributions. Often it may be difficult to get the message across to all people, especially when they live in remote areas or do not have access to print, radio, or other media. It is also important to talk to and convince policy-makers of the changes needed in the social security system, adoption of laws and national strategies, need for funds, and so on.

It is very important to design a communication strategy that is suitable to the target group and effectively reaches them. The strategy must have a message that is appealing to the target population, clearly understood, and easily remembered. The message must clearly explain how target groups would benefit from the proposition. There are many channels and media that may be used and it is important to select the appropriate ones.



textbook



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Resources:

	Master module 16 – Developing a communication strategy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Presentation – Building a communication strategy for social protection		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Instruction sheet for the group activity on designing a communication strategy		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Advocacy and strategic communications planning grid for various target groups		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Video of the presentation on Creating awareness		
	Part 1 – Building a communication strategy		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Part 2 – The three levels of marketing		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Part 3 – Group presentations		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Additional videos:		
	Appealing to emotions - advertisement on drunk driving		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Advertisement on Prudential Life Insurance		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Interview of Michael Cichon - Window of opportunity social protection		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

e-box available at: <http://www.social-protection.org/gimi/pages/abnd/>