

# UNIT 8A:

## COMMUNICATING YOUR CAMPAIGN: DEVELOPING YOUR MESSAGE

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## DEVELOPING YOUR MESSAGE



YEL (Indonesia)

**This unit will help participants to develop their campaign message by focusing on its main points and principles, and to become an effective messenger.**

## COMMUNICATING: POINTS AND PRINCIPLES

80  
mins

8A.1



### **Exercise 1 – Key ingredients for successfully communicating your campaign**

**Using Handout Unit 8A.1, divide participants into groups of three and give each group a set of cards. Lay them face down, and in turn, pick up and read the top card. Take several minutes to absorb and talk through what is written on the card. Ask each group to note any questions or strong observations to take back to plenary.**

**The cards will have the following written on them:**

- a clear vision
- agreed key messages
- keeping it short and simple
- clear and realistic objectives
- knowing your audience
- developing empathy
- remembering that communication is a process
- building relationships
- credibility
- evaluation criteria

In plenary, ask participants to share their views and deal with any questions or strong observations that arose during the exercise.



Take a short break and slowly read aloud the following stories. This will help to reinforce learning from this exercise, about how important it is to have a clear campaign message.

***(Story begins)***

Have you heard this story about malaria prevention? Some people got involved in a campaign to build awareness of the causes of malaria. Health workers toured communities with posters and other visual information to explain malaria to people. They showed enlarged pictures of mosquitoes and explained their life cycle. After the health visitors had left, the villagers were amused: “These practices don’t apply to us. Our mosquitoes are tiny – we pity the people who live in places where the mosquitoes are that size!”

***(Story ends)***

***(Story begins)***

Have you heard about the chicken story? In the 1970s, an aid agency ran a successful development project in one part of East Africa. It wanted to explain this idea to villagers elsewhere. So it sent a film crew to make a short film explaining the project, and the film toured villages with a mobile cinema. Afterwards, a survey found that what villagers most remembered about the film was “the chickens”. The agency was puzzled. Chickens had nothing to do with the project at all. Eventually they looked at the film. A cut-away shot showed one of the agency’s four-wheel drive vehicles speeding past a hut. As it raced by, a large group of chickens flurried and flew across the screen. In the target village area, chickens were a sign of wealth. The chickens were therefore by far the most interesting feature of the film!

***(Story ends)***



The Union for Senior Services (Finland)

## What can good communication do for your campaign?



Give a copy of Handout Unit 8A.2 to all participants who are literate. Have each person read their phrase aloud, with enthusiasm, as if it were a rallying cry.

### Good communication...

- educates, persuades and motivates
- creates awareness and builds loyalty
- creates a sense of injustice that will mobilise positive action
- gains the attention of the media
- wins new converts and ambassadors – those who speak and act enthusiastically in support of the cause.



Leave this list of features as a visual reminder, written out on large flip chart paper – or invite each participant to write, illustrate and decorate their statement, and display these on the wall.

# DEVELOPING YOUR MESSAGE



## What's in a message?

In plenary, and using Handout Unit 8A.3, recount this short anecdote:

**“If you can't write your idea on the back of my business card, you don't have a clear idea,” said a well-known theatrical producer. And, attributed to many people, this well-known phrase: “If I had more time, I would have written a shorter letter.”**

**A message is a concise statement about your campaign that captures:**

- what you want to achieve
- why you want to achieve it – positive or negative consequences of no action
- how you propose to achieve it
- what action you want your audience to take.

A message should capture everything you need to say. Messages are not the same as slogans or sound bites.

The simplest thing you can do to create your message is to be direct and straightforward. Forget being “clever”. Say what you mean. Try telling a relative – when they “get it”, try using their way of saying it.

**A good message:**

- can be tailored to fit specific audiences
- uses clear, brief arguments that will persuade the audience
- uses simple and unambiguous language that can be easily understood.





15  
mins



## Exercise 2 – Short and simple

**Form pairs and ask each pair, in four minutes, to produce instructions for what to do in the case of a fire. Next, ask each pair to stand up and hurry around the room to pass on that message to two other people quickly and urgently.**



Return to plenary and debrief on what was learnt.

Note: Always let the message fit the function.

Read aloud the following to underline the importance of clarity and simplicity.

### **Example of a bad message: If you find a fire...**

- Communicate with the immediate community in your building. Advise them of the situation. Make sure older people are aware of what is happening.
- Look for the nearest fire exit or other convenient way out of the building. Walk slowly and calmly towards it and make your way out.

- Does the fire look serious? If it is bad, call the fire brigade. Either use your mobile phone or ask someone in a neighbouring building to use their landline. Make sure everyone stays a safe distance away from the fire.

**Example of a good message: If you find a fire...**

- raise the alarm
- go immediately to a place of safety
- call the fire brigade.



## Exercise 3 – Practising developing a message

**Divide participants into small groups and instruct each group to develop a presentation on a general subject that is familiar to them. The topic will depend on your group. You might, for example, choose “the participatory approach” or “the positive role older people play in communities”. Allow groups to work out their message and then help them refine it. Each group should be prepared to present their message in an engaging way to their fellow participants in plenary.**

In plenary, build a sense of occasion to hear the presentations. After each one, invite the audience to critique it for clarity of message and delivery style. (Was it engaging?) You may choose to set this up as a television-hosted competition, where you are the host and the groups compete for the winning prize.



COSE (Philippines)



# THE MESSENGER

In plenary, recall the presentations made by groups during the previous exercise. Invite participants to reflect on positive characteristics of messengers, and invite comments, ensuring that the discussion covers the points in the following checklist.



## Checklist

- The messenger can be as important as the message.
- Consistency of the messengers in your group builds trust and transparency.
- Being a credible and reliable source of information as a messenger makes people listen.
- Try to ensure your messengers include someone who is directly affected by the issue.
- Have friendly messengers with strong social skills.
- Have messengers who are natural communicators; who keep in regular contact and take the initiative in communicating with others.

In a closing reflection, ask each participant to think of an outstanding example of a good messenger, and use them as a role model. Ask participants to think about whether they themselves are effective messengers and what they can do to develop their skills as a messenger.



Wrap up: Please refer to facilitators' notes in Appendix A for guidance on monitoring progress and embedding learning.

# UNIT 8A:

## HANDOUTS



## Handout Unit 8A.1

### What do you need to successfully communicate your campaign?

- a clear vision
- agreed key messages
- short and simple messages
- clear and realistic objectives
- know your audience
- develop empathy
- remember that communication is a process
- build relationships
- credibility
- evaluation criteria.



HelpAge International



## Handout Unit 8A.2

### What does good communicating do for your campaign?

#### Good communication...

- educates, persuades and motivates
- creates awareness and builds loyalty
- creates a sense of injustice that will mobilise positive action
- gains the attention of the media
- wins new converts and ambassadors – those who speak and act enthusiastically in support of the cause.



HelpAge International (Peru)



## Handout Unit 8A.3

### What's in a message?

**“If you can't write your idea on the back of my business card, you don't have a clear idea,” said a well-known theatrical producer. And, attributed to many people, this well-known phrase: “If I had more time, I would have written a shorter letter.”**

### **A message is a concise statement about your campaign that captures:**

- what you want to achieve
- why you want to achieve it – positive or negative consequences of no action
- how you propose to achieve it
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A message should capture everything you need to say. Messages are not the same as slogans or sound bites.

The simplest thing you can do to create your message is to be direct and straightforward. Forget being “clever”. Say what you mean. Try telling a relative – when they “get it”, try using their way of saying it.

### **A good message:**

- can be tailored to fit specific audiences
- uses clear, brief arguments that will persuade the audience
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## Handout Unit 8A.4

### The messenger

- The messenger can be as important as the message.
- Consistency of the messengers in your group builds trust and transparency.
- Being a credible and reliable source of information as a messenger makes people listen.
- Try to ensure your messengers include someone who is directly affected by the issue.
- Have friendly messengers with strong social skills.
- Have messengers who are natural communicators; who keep in regular contact and take the initiative in communicating with others.



HelpAge Kenya



## Handout Unit 8A.5

Older people are at the heart of campaigns work. Through this training and the ongoing engagement of older people, we are growing a global movement of campaigners who will portray the characteristics listed below.

### PROFILE OF AN OLDER PERSON CAMPAIGNER

# YOU



**...CAN DIALOGUE AND DEBATE AND PERSUADE AND YOU CAN WIN!**

**...ARE SURE TO MAINTAIN AND ATTEND TO YOUR GROUP**

**...HAVE A UNIQUE PLACE TO SPEAK CREDIBLY ABOUT ISSUES – BECAUSE YOU EXPERIENCE THEM**

**...ARE KEEN TO INFORM OTHERS ABOUT OLDER PEOPLE AND THEIR REALITIES**

**...HAVE A HEART TO DEVELOP YOUR GROUP**

**...ALLOW PEOPLE TO SELF-IMPROVE TOGETHER**

**...ARE STRONG WHEN YOU CONSIDER YOUR OWN VALUES, CULTURE AND HISTORY**

**...ARE READY TO PARTICIPATE**

**...ARE A GOOD ANCHOR FOR YOUR GROUP**

**...UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT, ESPECIALLY THE POLITICAL CONTEXT**

**...ARE A VALUABLE SPOKESPERSON FOR THE MEDIA**

**...CAN SPEAK ABOUT YOUR LIFE AND THE CHALLENGES YOU FACE IN AN ENGAGING WAY**

**...SHOW EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE GROUP OR MOVEMENT**

**...DEPEND ON THE SOURCE OF POWER WITHIN YOURSELF**

# PROFILE OF AN OLDER PERSON CAMPAIGNER

## RHODA NGIMA, 77, KENYA



HelpAge Kenya

**“We have been removed from a very dark pit and brought to the surface where there is light. ADA has made me an ambassador to spread news about older people. I have learnt that even in older age I am able to do something worthwhile and constructive for my country.”**

***Rhoda Ngima***

Rhoda has long been a pivotal figure in her church and community, where she brings people together, inspiring them to stay strong and keep going through life’s challenges. She’s now bringing her leadership experience and social commitment to ADA, where she’s already made a big impact.

In 2009, she led an ADA delegation to meet the Prime Minister. And the following year, she met the Minister for Gender, Children and Social Development to explain the benefits of increasing pensions. After the meeting, the Government agreed to raise pension payments for all older people in Kenya.

In 2012, Rhoda travelled to Brussels where she met several Members of the European Parliament. In her speech, she spoke about her life in Kenya and the challenges older people face in developing countries, urging the European Union not to forget her generation.

She passionately believes that the world’s older people should unite as one voice.



HelpAge Kenya



This is one unit from a set that makes up the ADA Campaign Training Manual. You can download single units, or the full manual from:

**[www.agedemandsaction.org](http://www.agedemandsaction.org)**

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