

HOW TO DESIGN PRINT MATERIALS

Before you develop any print materials, review the behavioural objectives of your communication initiative and consider the main groups you want to reach (e.g. affected caregivers, children, health workers, teachers and/or others); whether they can they read, and if so, whether they like to read. This would be best done before a disaster strikes because it would allow for significant pre-testing, translation to local dialects, and the input of various groups within the affected community. Working on print materials pre-disaster also allows you to design materials with greater assurance that the messages and graphics are culturally, religiously and gender-appropriate.

When designing print materials, keep the following principles in mind:¹

The number one principle is: community engagement

- Involve affected community members in all phases of material development – this goes beyond pre-and-post testing of your print material. Emergency preparedness allows you to engage the affected community to the fullest.

Choose a simple, logical design and layout

- Present only one (1) message per illustration.
- Make materials interactive and creative.
- Limit the number of concepts and pages of materials.
- Messages should be in the sequence that is most logical to the group.
- Use illustrations to help explain the text.
- Leave plenty of white space to make it easier to see the illustrations and text.

Use illustrations and images

- Use simple illustrations or images.
- Use appropriate styles: (1) photographs without unnecessary detail, (2) complete drawings of figures when possible, and (3) line drawings.
- Use familiar images that represent objects and situations to which the affected community can relate.
- Use realistic illustrations.
- Illustrate objects in scale and in context whenever possible.
- Don't use symbols unless they are pre-tested with members of the affected community.
- Use appropriate colours.

Use text to your advantage

- Use a positive approach. Negative approaches are very limited in impact, tend to turn off the affected community, and will not sustain an impact over time.
- Use the same language and vocabulary as your affected community; limit the number of languages in the same material.
- Repeat the basic message at least twice in each page of messages.
- Select a type style and size that are easy to read. Italic and sans serif typefaces are more difficult to read. Use a 14-point font for text, 18-point for subtitles, and 24-point for titles.
- Use upper and lower case letters.

Provide supervision for material production

- Without careful supervision, materials may end up in wrong colours, incorrect alignment, or careless print jobs. Have an experienced member of your team providing close supervision to the printing work.

Special Note:

Combine print materials with small community media, IPC approaches and other participatory communication strategies.

Printed IEC materials are most effective when combined with other forms of communication. In the initial response, print media can be used to quickly dispense life-saving messages to large numbers of affected people. Experience has shown, however, that print materials are more effective when combined with interpersonal communication. This allows the affected community to discuss the new information with someone that they trust.

Footnotes

- 1 Source: Adapted from United Nations Children's Fund, 'A manual on communication for water supply and environmental sanitation programmes', *Water, Environment and Sanitation Technical Guidelines Series, No. 7*, UNICEF New York, 1999, p. 74