

12 Steps for Communication Programming

This list is compiled based on studies of successful communications programs in Peru and Viet Nam and represents the key ingredients for success.

1.

Political commitment is essential, especially when combined with increased resources.

- Use locally organized groups to exert pressure on all levels of government
- Engage political leaders through seminars and presentations
- Fact sheets can be disseminated to local and national authorities
- Leaders at all levels can be invited to join steering committees

2.

The clinical aspects of the program must be in place and functioning before communication activities begin.

- Generated demand must be answered with an accessible, acceptable, affordable, and available supply of high-quality service and reliably available drugs
- Well-trained and sensitive community health workers should be available to supervise treatment both in clinics and in patients' homes
- Communication activities should correspond with expanding clinical services

3.

Formative research can unlock key communication challenges

- Allows program planners and designers to hear - and learn - from the intended audiences
- Need to recognize stigma and misunderstandings about the causes of TB, sources of infection, TB transmission, symptoms, treatment, and prevention
- Provide baseline data for further monitoring and evaluation

4.

An effective program needs a system to monitor, evaluate, and measure progress towards the goal and to communicate results to all levels.

- Allows the program to see where it is successful and which areas need assistance
- Set indicators so that progress can be monitored and the results disseminated
- Monitoring and supervision should occur at all levels of TB control
- Supervisory visits should be about problem solving rather than mistake finding

5.

Build on a program's strengths, be proactive, and maintain flexibility

- TB control programs are a long-term commitment
- Should be proactive, adapting to the challenges and changes anticipated through monitoring and evaluation
- Challenges include HIV co-infection and MDR-TB

6.

Communication activities are most effective when they are integrated into all program activities at all levels

- Mass media can educate and motivate the service use and treatment completion
- Health workers trained in interpersonal communication & counselling skills can improve clinic experience and ensure completion of treatment
- Community mobilization activities can educate the public, reduce stigma, and create a supportive environment for case detection and treatment

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7.

Programs effective when consistent messages are conveyed through a mix of communication channels

- Logos and branding can help make the TB control effort more visible
- Multiple channels can reinforce messages to effectively raise awareness
- Messages can provide hope that TB is curable
- Develop tailored materials for ethnic minorities & other high-risk groups

8.

Make sure everyone knows the goal and it motivated to work towards it

- Set clear and consistent goals and targets
- Make the objectives known to everyone involved in TB control so
- Incentives can be used for health care workers and teams when patients complete treatment, and can also be widely disseminated and recognized at public gatherings
- Patients can be motivated to continue treatment through incentives

9.

Communities and local health care providers are important players in the TB control program

- Educate people about the links between partners and the referral system in TB control
- Recruit community volunteers to promote treatment
- Include TB topics in school curricula
- Encourage health staff to engage in outreach
- Create peer support groups (TB clubs) to help enhance treatment compliance

10.

Training of TB control program personnel in interpersonal communication and counselling skills is critical

- Health care workers often have some of the greatest misperceptions about TB
- Standardize counselling tools such as flip charts and video spots for clinic use
- Training in interpersonal communication and patient-focused counselling skills can create a positive, welcoming, and encouraging environment in the clinic
- Health care workers trained in empathy and problem solving can help patients comply with treatment

11.

Partnerships are necessary at all levels; everyone has a role to play in TB control

- Partnerships between the health system and community based organizations can expand the reach and visibility of the program
- Partnerships can create a supportive environment for case detection and treatment

12.

Public events are an effective way to reach large numbers of people and create awareness about the program

- Public events can reach large numbers of people and provide an inexpensive way to get press coverage, generate interest, and advocate for continued support
- Visible activities can be organized around World TB Day