THE RAPID SYPHILIS TEST TOOLKIT

PLANNING 2

Return to last page viewed

Advocacy and Communications Activities

Return to last page viewed

Advocacy and Communications Activities

Contents

Additional Reference

The Use of Rapid Syphilis Tests (WHO/TDR 2006)
http://apps.who.int/tdr/svc/publications/tdr-research-publications/use-rapid-syphilis-tests

Hyperlinks

Please note that hyperlinks within this document are indicated by **text underlined** and **emboldening.**

Return to last page viewed

Introduction

By this stage you will have developed a clear advocacy and communications strategy (refer to the chapter Planning 1 – Advocacy & Communications Strategy of this Toolkit). The next step is to put strategy into practice. This chapter explores the various advocacy and communication tools and activities you can use and how best to ensure they are effective. Successful advocacy often rests on the ability to communicate effectively, either verbally or in writing. So this section will also provide some tips on how to express your message.

1. Planning

Planning 1 explored planning your activities. Here's a quick reminder:

- Depending on your objectives, targets and available resources, there is a range of advocacy and communications activities you can use to effect change.
- In order to be strategic it is important to always consider how the activities you plan to use will help achieve your objectives.
- Activities must be appropriate to the target audience: at different moments in the strategy, you may require different tactics and therefore different activities.
- Communications activities and material needs should be considered alongside your channel plan. This will help you to make the most of the channels which most effectively reach and engage your audiences.
- The aim is to combine your activities in a winning mix. You can use different activities at different moments but ideally ensure that they are mutually reinforcing.
- Refer to your checklist to ensure that all the necessary planning steps have been undertaken before you start on your advocacy and communication activities. There is an example of a checklist in Appendix 1.

Examples of activities often used in advocacy and communications[1]:

Method 1: Research and policy development

Explanation
Primary and secondary research or evidence sourcing combined with policy analysis (including producing policy briefs and reports) are the foundation of your advocacy. They are an essential source of credibility.

Common Use
Provides evidence of the problem, identifies root causes and options for addressing them.

Policy briefings are a key advocacy tool for communicating with your target audience – they provide concise, accessible explanations of the problem, preferred solutions and actions the target can take.

Examples
Research reports.
Policy reports.
Policy briefings.

[1]Adapted from Golding S. et al, 'Tax Justice Advocacy: A Toolkit for Civil Society', in Christian Aid/SOMO, Jan 2011)

Return to last page viewed

Method 2: Raising awareness

Explanation
Informing people of the situation so that they are aware of the issues. This is often the first step in an advocacy process, which empowers people to engage with the issue/campaign and take action. It is essential to remember that **awareness raising is a means to an end, not an end in itself!** Because advocacy is about achieving change it is not enough to stop at awareness raising: you must build from there and encourage people to act. Rather than simply telling the audiences that you're going on a journey, you need to tell them **why**, ask them to **join you**, share ideas for different directions and the delights of the final destination.

Common Use
When information is hidden.
When issues are complex.
To build confidence of those partners you hope will take action in the future.

Examples
Training
Posters and leaflets
Videos
Community meetings
Road Shows
Music, drama, songs, jingles

Method 3: Networking

Explanation
Building alliances with as many people and organizations as possible. Creating a movement for change.

Common Use
To make long-term advocacy sustainable.
When additional strength in numbers and skills are needed.

Examples
The Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia (UPCH) hosted a workshop called "Opportunities for implementation of Rapid Syphilis Tests (RST) in Latin America for the Elimination of Congenital Syphilis". It was held in November 2010 in Lima, Peru. This workshop was the second regional meeting to address the problem of congenital syphilis, after the one held in Brasilia, and involved representatives from 17 countries in the region. The workshop provided an ideal opportunity for participants from all countries to share their experiences of implementing rapid syphilis testing. It further provided an opportunity for those countries where rapid syphilis testing had not yet been introduced to understand the importance and benefits of doing so. Participants addressed the topics of advocacy and political commitment; awareness and training of health care workers; technical knowledge about rapid syphilis testing; communications; and dissemination of research findings.

Method 4: Lobbying

Explanation
Speaking directly to the target, explaining the details of the problem and the proposed solution.

Common Use
When the target is open and will listen to facts and careful argument.

Examples
Meetings with Health Ministers etc.
Community and district meetings with decision makers.
Phone calls.
Briefing documents.
Public meetings/fora.
Inviting Ministers to make presentations and chair sessions at key events.
Inviting politicians to tour Sexually Transmitted Infection/ Maternal, Newborn and Child Health services in their areas with media members.

Return to last page viewed

Method 5: **Media**	**Examples**
Explanation Using the media is one of the most effective ways to raise public awareness and spread campaign messages. Community, local, national and religious radio, television and newspapers are all different forms of media. **Common Use** When you cannot get direct access to policy makers or in addition to it. To raise awareness. To raise the profile of Sexually Transmitted Infection/ Maternal, Newborn and Child Health issues and generate external pressure on decision-makers.	Radio phone-ins or interviews at the studio. Press releases. Briefing a journalist. Writing opinion editorials. Sponsoring a programme about syphilis and rapid syphilis tests.

Method 6: **Mobilising/Popular campaigning**	**Examples**
Explanation Closely connected with awareness raising and media. Involves harnessing public pressure so that as many people as possible engage in the campaign and contact decision-makers to call for change. **Common Use** When policy-makers can be swayed by public opinion and/or by their constituents. To show strength of feeling. To use strength in numbers and organization.	Petitions. Road Shows. SMSs. Letter writing, postcards, email actions (although these may be limited in some countries due to high illiteracy rates and limited access to the internet).

2. Research and Evidence Sourcing

Robust data and powerful evidence of the impact (and potential impact) of increased funding and policy change around rapid syphilis testing is crucial to influencing advocacy targets.

As well as commissioning or undertaking your own primary research (i.e. research done from scratch, information collected by interview or questionnaire designed for a specific need), you could also look for data and evidence from other sources (i.e. secondary research) such as:

- Ministry of Health (MOH)
- Demographic Health Surveys
- Other Prevention Of Mother To Child Transmission (PMTCT)/ Maternal and Child Health (MCH) / Sexual Health programmes
- National Reference Library; Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

More information on the compilation of data as part of an advocacy and communication strategy can be found in Chapter 3.4, in the section titled "Conducting a Baseline Survey".

It may also be useful to source data and evidence from countries which have already implemented the changes you would like to see.

Return to last page viewed

3. Policy Analysis

Policy analysis is what you do with your data and source material in order to formulate arguments for particular health reforms or innovations. Developing a policy position is an essential element of transforming your research into a means of communicating with decision-makers and advocating for change. Clear policy recommendations are key to developing your position.

3.1 Top Tips For Formulating Policy Recommendations[2]

By this point you will have done some research that supports your original problem analysis. As described above, you now want to use your research as a basis for advocating for positive change, perhaps by publishing the research in a policy report.

Whatever written document you give your target decision maker – whether it is a position paper or a policy report – you will need to include recommendations that spell out to those you are trying to influence what they need to do in order to bring about positive change.

- Don't just present policymakers with a list of recommendations in isolation. You also need to provide some information (however brief) about the problem/ issue and your concerns.
- As much as possible, base your recommendations on real evidence (either taken from research undertaken on a given issue or from your own on-the-ground experience). Policymakers are unlikely to take your recommendations seriously without such evidence. If you are using statistics and figures, always mention the source of the information.
- Make sure your recommendations are well reasoned and clearly show they're obtainable. It might help to put yourself in the shoes of the person or institution at which the recommendation is targeted.
- Make sure your recommendations are as specific as possible and are asking the person or institution to do something. Avoid broad rhetorical statements which policymakers can easily agree with, but which they then do nothing about.
- Try to ensure that your recommendations relate to real political processes and opportunities which the person or institution has some power to influence (e.g. forthcoming parliamentary bills, budget planning processes etc).
- Only put one 'ask' in each recommendation. Clear, succinct recommendations (of no more than 2-3 lines) will be more difficult for policymakers to ignore and will be easier for you to monitor if and when they are implemented.

[2]Helen Collinson, for INTRAC Summer School, July 2007

Return to last page viewed

- Try to avoid recommending that the targeted person(s) or institution 'don't do something' or `stop doing something', as this can appear negative and confrontational (which may be appropriate for public campaigns but not for lobbying). Turn each 'don't do/stop doing' into a positive 'do'.

- Be clear about whom each recommendation is directed at. In situations where multiple policies and institutions have a bearing on the issue, you may need to group different sets of recommendations for different advocacy targets, e.g:
  - The Non-Governmental Organization Forum calls on central government to:
  - The Non-Governmental Organization Forum calls on municipal authorities to:
  - The Non-Governmental Organization Forum calls on the World Health Organization (WHO) to:

- Think about the order in which you present your recommendations. Start with recommendations for immediate remedies and then move on to recommendations for longer term remedies.

- Select the 2-3 most important recommendations. These should be placed prominently at the top of briefing papers or in the executive summary of your research report or in press releases. That way your target audience knows what you want them to do from the start – even if they never read beyond Page 1!

- To ensure there is real ownership of an advocacy initiative by the network/organizations involved, make sure that the formulation of recommendations is undertaken in a participatory manner:
  - Create a team within your organization or network to take the lead in formulating recommendations.
  - Facilitate a meeting of multiple stakeholders to discuss the issue in question and the conclusions of any research undertaken. Encourage participants to put forward solutions, based on the discussion of the evidence. The proposed solutions can then be used to start developing recommendations for policymakers.

3.2 Policy Briefing

A policy briefing is often the most common and useful communication tool in an advocacy campaign. A policy brief is a document which outlines the rationale for choosing a particular policy alternative or course of action in a current policy debate. It is distinct from a policy report because it is short and should be accessible to non-expert audiences. As any policy debate is a market-place of competing ideas, the purpose of the policy brief is to convince the target audience of the urgency of the current problem and the need to adopt the preferred alternative or course of action outlined, and thereby serve as an impetus for action.

Return to last page viewed

Table 1. Key ingredients of effective policy briefs[3]:		
Engagement	Appearance/design	■ Brief 1-4 pages ■ Visually engaging, easy to navigate - clear descriptive headings ■ Presentation of information through charts, graphs, photos ■ Use headed notepaper if possible and get others to check for grammar and spelling mistakes – poor presentation can discourage people from reading
	Clear language/writing style	■ Easily understood by educated non-specialists – avoid jargon and academic concepts ■ Ensure tone indicates you are willing to cooperate with decision-makers
	Presentation of evidence-informed opinions	■ Presentation of author's own views about policy implications of research findings ■ Clear identification of argument components that are opinion-based ■ Build arguments around what you believe to be the weak points of the policy-makers
Evidence	Persuasive argument	■ Clear purpose ■ Cohesive argument ■ Quality of evidence – new or unique if possible; up-to-date; relevant ■ Transparency of evidence underpinning policy recommendations (e.g. a single study, a synthesis of available evidence, etc.) ■ Presented in language that reflects your targets' values, i.e. using ideas, evidence and language that will convince them
	Authority	■ Messenger (individual or organization) has credibility in eyes of policy-maker ■ Ensure that your position accurately reflects the views of those you claim to represent
Policy context	Audience context specificity	■ Addresses specific context: national and sub-national ■ Addresses the target audience's needs: social vs. economic policy
	Actionable recommendations	■ Information linked to specific policy processes ■ Clear and feasible recommendations on policy steps to be taken

[3]Adapted from N Jones & C Welsh, 'Policy Briefs as a Communication Tool for Development Research', ODI (May 2008)

See the 'Policy Briefing template' in **Appendix 2** for more ideas on structure and content. Ideally, a policy brief should be focused, evidence-based, succinct and accessible. Given that your target audience will often not be experts, it is important to try to avoid jargon and technical language where possible.

Return to last page viewed

4. Lobbying

Once you've formulated your policy, have clear recommendations to share, have a good grasp of the political opportunities and have identified your targets, it's time to engage with the decision-makers and those who may be able to influence them.

Face to face meetings with your advocacy targets, sometimes known as lobbying, can be one of the most effective ways to influence them. These can be with your ultimate targets – the people with real decision-making power such as ministers – or with their civil servants or advisors. Six of the seven early adopters who pioneered the roll-out of rapid syphilis testing in high burden countries responded to a questionnaire. In it, 5 out of 6 rated lobbying as the most effective of the advocacy approaches they deployed, alongside the initial research or evidence sourcing.

There are a few key ground rules for face to face meetings:

Prepare: do your background reading, know who you are talking to and your subject. Be as helpful as possible in providing your target with the information which could help them persuade others of the necessary change/action.

Be focused: on your desired outcome, the specific action you would like the person you are meeting with to take and the messages you want to communicate in order to engage them.

Cultivate a relationship: try to develop a positive personal rapport during the meeting and be sure to follow-up with agreed action points and relevant further information as quickly as possible.

Avoid: getting too personal, comfortable or pushy. You might not get invited back.

4.1 Top Tips for successful lobbying[4]

The following tips are for guidance only: you should always adapt your lobbying style to your specific cultural context, adopting behaviour appropriate to a particular region, country or institution.

- Be clear on what you want.
- Know the views of the people to be lobbied.
- What's in it for them – why should they change their views?
- Be timely – the earlier you start trying to influence a process or policy the greater your chance of success.
- Who will represent the decision makers at the meeting and what are their roles? Are there any disagreements or power struggles between them?

[4]Adapted from Hilary Coulby, INTRAC training

Return to last page viewed

Always research your targets. Use your analysis of their values, knowledge and experience to inform your tactics.

Develop your messages

- Be simple and explicit.
- What is the issue?
- What do you want them to do about it? Have clear, concrete policy 'asks', informed by your evidence.
- Propose a solution – don't just be 'anti' something; solutions should be informed by what is feasible.
- Use examples that will engage their interest – make it human, use real life examples.
- Prepare a short (maximum 2 page) brief – use a large type face so it is easily readable.

Alliances

- Work together – think about lobbying with other organizations as it can strengthen your negotiating position.
- Get experts on board.
- Involve people and communities who are directly affected by the issue – they are often the most powerful advocates!
- Agree your agenda and arguments before the meeting – if you argue between you in the meeting it will reduce your chances of success.
- Ensure that the chairperson does not allow one person to dominate the meeting.

Plan and rehearse

- Know who's going to say what – if more than one of you will be lobbying, always have a pre-meeting to prepare for the main one.
- Know your stuff – it's essential for your credibility. However, if an issue arises in the meeting that you don't know the answer to, say you will get back to them after you've consulted your senior advisors – never make it up!
- Consider the best time and place for a meeting.
- Be sure you know the venue.
- Arrive on time; be prepared to leave before time.
- Dress appropriately.
- Be polite, acknowledge status.
- Give name/business cards.

Tactics

- Focus on your most important concerns first and leave smaller issues to the end. If by any chance your meeting is interrupted or it finishes earlier, you will have delivered the key messages.
- Try not to let the meeting get off track. If the target digresses or tries to change the subject, politely but firmly bring them back to the topic in hand.

Return to last page viewed

- Know which issues you are prepared to compromise on and which you are not.
- Plan for different kinds of responses.
- Summarise progress at various points.

Use negotiating techniques

- Be conscious of your body language.
- Relax, keep your voice calm – this may vary between cultures; so, as usual, the advice is 'know your context'.
- Listen actively – don't interrupt and demonstrate empathy. If you don't hear what someone is saying, you won't pick up on what the 'sticking points' are and what you particularly need to persuade them on. Everyone likes to be listened to, so don't alienate them needlessly.
- Ask questions.
- Keep to time – brief is best; don't get distracted, stick to your plan.

Build relationships: the messenger can be as important as the message.

- Consistency of personnel builds trust and transparency.
- Being a credible and reliable source of information makes people listen.
- Be friendly, use social skills.
- Keep in regular contact.
- Focus on action:
  - Lobbying is not a talking shop so seek something concrete from the meeting, ideally a commitment for 'action' from your target.
  - Finish a meeting by suggesting that another one would be useful.
- Be aware that some opponents will try to "shoot the messenger", and be prepared for attempts to discredit you.

Your advocacy doesn't finish at the end of the meeting!

De-brief

- Discuss whether your objectives were achieved. Seek to establish which tactics worked and which didn't so you can learn for the next meeting.
- Assess the target's response to you.
- Establish if you've learnt any new information that is relevant to your future strategy.
- Plan your next steps.
- Share the meetings outcomes/minutes with relevant people in your organization or network.

Follow-up

- Write a thank you email or letter summarising the main points and reminding the target of any actions that were agreed.
- After a reasonable time period contact the target again to see if they have done what they promised and if you can be of further assistance.

Return to last page viewed

5. Letters and Petitions

Whilst funders and policy-makers are likely to receive extensive correspondence from groups and organizations wanting to influence them, letters and petitions can be useful ways to establish your position and the support there is for it with your given advocacy target. As with any written communication, you should adhere to the principles of clarity and brevity.

5.1 Top tips for writing letters to policy-makers

- **Be brief** – write a maximum of 1 to 2 sides. Otherwise you risk being ignored, or a junior person reading and responding instead of your main target.
- In some cases, if you have particularly compelling information that supports your request, you can include it as an **attachment**. However, try to keep attachments short. Recognize that most policy-makers are too busy to read lengthy reports that are longer than an executive summary or a 2-4 sided briefing.
- As with meetings you should always **be courteous, including** addressing your audience according to their proper title.
- State your purpose in writing the letter and **deliver your message immediately.** Don't be afraid to put your request for action up-front.
- **Information about yourself.** Explain who you are and who you represent (your organization, part of a coalition, etc.). If your audience does not know you well, make it clear how you are connected to the issue you are raising.
- Seek to establish some **common ground** with the target in the letter and ideally build from there.
- Be very clear about the **one or two key points** you wish to communicate and do it clearly and succinctly. Don't overload your letter with policy detail – and no rambling!
- Refer to **established facts** and positions taken by respected groups. Use statistics strategically, but sparingly.
- Provide evidence that **others support your views.** If you have significant public support for your position make sure the decision makers know that. Give examples of the number of supporters who have signed petitions or postcards, or attended rallies. The same is true if you have the support of professional bodies and/or businesses.
- Be specific about what **action** you want the target to take.
- **Acknowledgment of your audience.** Recognize your reader as someone whose opinion matters. Thank him or her for taking time to read your letter and show your appreciation for any past support. Offer to provide additional information or assistance in the future.
- Always check your **spelling and punctuation** – don't make a bad impression.
- **Keep a copy** and the response for your records – these may be useful later when you are evaluating the progress of your tax advocacy.

Top Tips for Petitions

- ✓ Clearly define your goals and 'asks' (the things you are calling on your target to deliver).
- ✓ Ensure the target is appropriate for the asks.
- ✓ Clearly and briefly pitch your cause – the 'Elevator pitch' in the Communications section might be useful here.
- ✓ Promote it through appropriate channels and partners.
- ✓ Collect data where you can and feedback to your signatories.

Return to last page viewed

6. Logos and Slogans

An important element of establishing recognition of your advocacy or communications campaign recognition is the use of a **consistent visual identity.** Solidify your campaign in people's minds with a logo or series of images and phrases that are featured in all of your campaign materials. Use the same colour and fonts throughout.

Your key message can be easily captured in a popular, simple slogan. A slogan is particularly useful for public mobilization and for use in the media. Since they are primarily designed to mobilize the general public or secondary audiences, you need a message that is emotive, passionate, eye-catching and will make people determined to take action.

A strong logo combined with a snappy slogan that sticks in people's minds can be very effective communication tools. Here are some examples:

Cisne: Peru

China

EGPAF

Peru and China developed project specific logos. In Peru, the name "ciSne" was chosen by a group of pregnant women who were consulted by the study team. In Spanish, "cisne" means swan: the name was selected to represent the transformation of something undesirable like a syphilis infection that could harm a woman's unborn baby into something beautiful, a healthy baby.

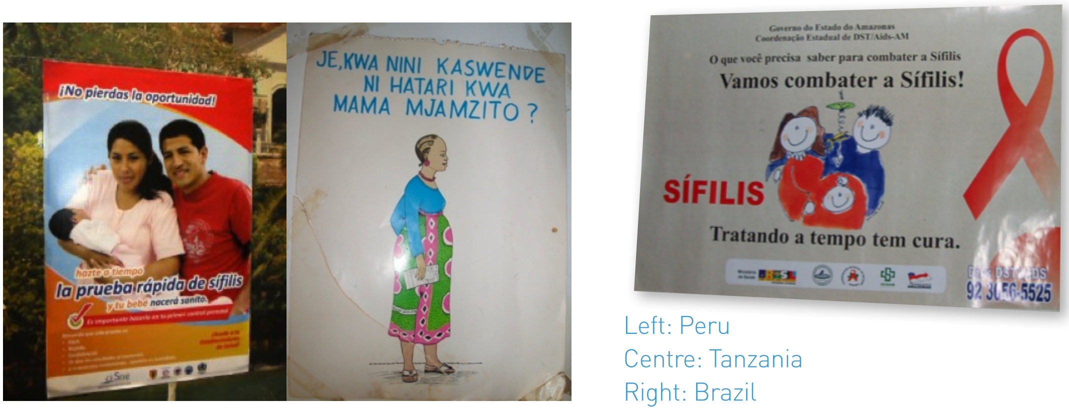
The five other country sites used the logo of the implementing organization for their project. In Uganda and Zambia, this was the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric Aids Foundation (EGPAF) logo.

> **Solidify your campaign in people's** minds with a logo or series of images and phrases that are featured in all of your campaign materials. Use the same colour and fonts throughout.

Return to last page viewed

7. Posters and Leaflets

Posters and leaflets can provide strong visual images for your advocacy campaign and popular messages for communicating with some of your stakeholders such as members of the public, community groups or men and women attending health clinics. They may also have a strong focus on educational or behavioural change. Posters are particularly useful as a way of giving a visual identity to a campaign and conveying a strong message.



Left: Peru
Centre: Tanzania
Right: Brazil

7.1 Top tips for writing a campaign leaflet[5]:

- Use your organization's logo and/or your campaign's logo if you have one.
- Include brief outlines of: what the problem is, what the solutions are and actions that can be taken by your audience.
- Use your campaign slogan – it emphasises the message you want to communicate.
- Keep it short. People may not have much time to read. You might be distributing your leaflets to people passing by on the streets. The quicker they get your message, the better!
- Keep it simple. Don't use acronyms or technical language.
- Make your campaign action visible: a leaflet not only brings information to the public; it also encourages people to care about sexually transmitted infections and Maternal, Newborn and Child Health issues, and to act on that concern.
- Think about including a section on how people can give feedback or get in touch to support the campaign in the future: e.g. "Text this number *** if you'd like to get more involved".
- Make it colourful and lively so it attracts people's attention and makes them want to read it. Add pictures and use colourful fonts.

As part of their awareness campaign, the study team in Peru produced a leaflet to hand out to pregnant women and their partners (see right). The image on the leaflet cover clearly targets couples. It is a friendly approach that invites couples to read more about syphilis testing.

[5] 'Tax Justice Advocacy: A Toolkit for Civil Society' S Golding et al (SOMO/Christian Aid Jan 2011)

Return to last page viewed

8. Using the Media – Why, What and How?

8.1 Why?

Engaging with the media is crucial to achieving your campaign and/or communications objectives. It can help you to:

- Raise public awareness about the issues
- Spark public debate about the issues
- Put pressure on key decision/policy-makers to take action
- Change behaviours
- Recruit more supporters for your campaign
- Celebrate your campaign achievements

8.2 What does the Media want?

- **A compelling narrative** – a story that is clearly relevant to readers / viewers / listeners.
- **Real voices and images** – to provide the human interest angle.
- **Accurate and comprehensive background information** – to help journalists and broadcasters with their research.

Before you begin planning any media activity, consider the following:

- Who is your **audience**?
- Which are the best **media** to reach your audience?
- What are the different **interests and concerns** of your audiences and those media?
- What's your **story**? Why is it important / relevant to your audience? Why is it significant now?
- Who are your best **story-tellers/spokespeople**? Which experts can speak most clearly about it? Which people can talk most clearly and openly about its impact on their lives?
- What **assets** do you have / need to help the media communicate your story? (Think about statistics, quotes, photographs and footage.)
- What background information do you need to put your story into context? (This is often best delivered in question and answer (Q&A) format.)
- Is there a particular event or activity that you want media to cover that introduces or illustrates your story?

The most standard and often the most useful approaches to securing media coverage include:

- Press Releasing a story
- Organizing a Press Launch, Conference, Photocall or Event
- Offering Comment or Media Interviewees about an existing story

Return to last page viewed

8.3 Tips On Writing Press Releases[6]

- Press releases should be no more than 1 or 2 sides of A4. They should sell your story to the relevant media. The key to creating an effective press release is to make it attention grabbing and as easy as possible for a journalist to turn it into a story.
- Try to write an attention-grabbing headline but don't be too clever and be wary of being too controversial: is that really how you want your audience to see you?
- Make sure the first and second paragraphs include all the essential details – the WHO, WHAT, WHERE, and if possible the WHEN, HOW and WHY of the story.
- Keep language simple and jargon-free.
- Use quotes from real people to bring the story to life. Ideally choose people who are available for interview or further comment.
- Use the 'Notes to Editors' section at the end to reiterate essential information (including your contact details) and important detail that didn't quite warrant space in the main release.
- Follow up press releases with phone calls to the journalists you think will be most interested, to remind them of the content of the release and offer them more information. If they are not interested, ask if they can suggest anyone else on their title who might be.
- Keep a log of all contact with journalists and aim to build long-term relationships with them.
- Respect journalist deadlines whenever possible – they are critical. This means providing information when they ask for it, but also avoiding hassling them when they are up against it.

For a Press Release template see **Appendix 3 (page 19).**

8.4 Tips on Organizing a Press Launch, Conference, Photocall or Event

Organizing a press event can be hugely time consuming and costly, so you need to be convinced that a) it is the most effective way to generate coverage and b) you have enough to offer the media to get them there and get them covering the event.

- Make sure the timing is right and that a) you organize it for when you have the most interesting things to say to the assembled media; b) that it doesn't clash with any other similar story or major event; and c) that it is the right time of day to hit deadlines for the kind of media you want to cover it (For example, it will need to be in the morning to attract coverage in daily papers.)
- You need to consider who will speak at the event – experts and people with real stories are important, but to ensure attendance you may also need well-known speakers to make it really attention-grabbing.
- Pick the venue carefully and plan the running order meticulously, considering risks and building in contingency time.

[6]'How to Write A Press Release', Friends of the Earth UK

Return to last page viewed

- Try to mix up the running order with engaging content – think about using films, images and graphs between speakers.
- Promote it thoroughly and in good time: send out press releases in advance, ideally to named individuals, and follow-up with phone calls to sell it in.
- Ensure you have all your Media Materials up to date and ready in advance of the event in a Press Kit. (These include Press Releases and Q&As.)
- Follow up on the event by contacting the media that attended to offer further information and maintain relationships.

Message used in the Peru launch of rapid syphilis testing:
The pilot study demonstrated that rapid tests improve the coverage of syphilis screening, treatment coverage of pregnant women and their partners, and are cost effective compared to the rapid plasma reagin (RPR) which was previously used. Healthcare workers and pregnant women like the new tests as they are easy to do and give a result in 15 minutes. Additionally, they can improve the quality of patient care, as they are offered in the first antenatal visit with rapid HIV testing. The inclusion of rapid tests is a proposal that falls within the framework of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the National Strategic Plan for the Reduction of Maternal and Perinatal Mortality 2009-2015.

Launch of Rapid Syphilis Testing in Lima, Peru. "Vida, Si. Sifilis, No" (Yes to life, No to syphilis) was launched on April 19th 2011

Return to last page viewed

8.5 Writing an Opinion Piece/Editorial

Writing an article for a newspaper or web blog about an issue that reflects your organization's opinion can be a good way to get the message across. Research which wires and which newspaper sections would be most appropriate for such an article. Also pay attention to the size of the articles. Some newspapers have sections where they always publish opinion pieces, particularly in the politics and economy sections.

8.6 Top Tips on Conducting Media Interviews:

- Prepare! Research the programme and its editorial approach. Ensure that interviewees are fully briefed on the issues and have prepared a series of answers to likely questions. Make sure you and they have considered how to handle more probing or challenging questions as well as standard ones.
- Make sure you have considered the 3-5 key points you want / need to make. This includes being specific about what you want people to do in response to your story.
- Don't be afraid to repeat your key points – but ensure they are relevant.
- Be careful not to get drawn in to talking about things which you don't know much about or are controversial. You might want to be clear about the things you do NOT want to talk about before the interview.

9. Conclusion

Using advocacy and communications is like using a tool box – different tools, in this case activities, are appropriate for different jobs at different times. Deployed effectively, they should contribute to the fulfilment of your programme objectives.

> “**Be strategy led – it may be a great idea** for an activity but unless it is targeted, tailored to your audiences and contributes to the fulfilment of your strategies, don't do it!”

Return to last page viewed

Appendix 1. Planning Checklist

Actions	(✓) Check when Complete	Detail
Goals and SMART objectives developed, plus indicators for M&E	☐	
Supply Chain is in place	☐	
Research undertaken	☐	
Policy recommendations developed:		
Is there a demand for testing (based on situational analysis)?	☐	
What is Current Policy on syphilis screening?	☐	
How are the current syphilis tests being funded and implemented?	☐	
Has a budget for RST introduction been developed and have funds been received?	☐	
Is it possible to integrate rapid syphilis testing into existing PMTCT/STI/HIV programmes?	☐	
Have the key stakeholders been identified?	☐	
Have the key messages to influence stakeholders ("elevator pitch") been developed?	☐	
Have policy briefs been developed?	☐	

Return to last page viewed

Appendix 2. Policy Brief Template

Policy Brief Template	No more than 2-4 pages, 1500 words
Title	The title aims to catch the attention of the reader and compel him/her to read on and so needs to be descriptive, punchy and relevant.
Executive Summary	A one or two sentence overview of the brief that entices readers to go further.
Context and summary of the problem	The purpose of this element of the brief is to convince the target audience that a current and urgent problem exists which requires them to take action. The context and importance of the problem is both the introductory and first building block of the brief. ■ A clear **statement of the problem or issue** in focus - answer the questions of **why** the topic is important, and **why** people should care. ■ A short **overview of the root causes of the problem.** ■ Create curiosity about the rest of the brief.
Critique of Policy Options	The aim of this element is to detail the shortcomings of the current approach or options being implemented and thereby to illustrate both the need for change and focus of where change needs to occur. ■ Identify key policy challenges. ■ Give critique of policy options – **why and how the current or proposed approach is failing.** ■ Reduce detail to what the reader needs to know. ■ Provide concrete facts or examples to support assertions.
Policy Recommendations	The aim of the policy recommendations element is to provide a detailed and convincing proposal of how the failings of the current policy approach need to change. See 'Top Tips on Writing Policy Recommendations' above. ■ A breakdown of the **specific practical steps or measures** that need to be implemented - state clearly what could or should happen next. ■ Aim for **concrete conclusions** and strong assertions.

Return to last page viewed

Appendix 3. Press Release Template

Press Release

LOGO

For immediate release: [date]	*(If you want the media to use the story as soon as they receive it)* ***or***
Embargoed for: [time/date]	*(This is a good way of giving journalists time to prepare and to ensure they don't use the information until a specified time).*

Headline *(Start with a snappy headline, but don't be too clever!)*

Photo opportunity if applicable

(What it is, where it is, when it is and contact details).

Paragraph 1:

Summarise the story – who, what, where, when and why.
All key information needs to be in this paragraph.

Paragraph 2:

Put in more details to flesh out the story you have outlined in the first paragraph.

Paragraph 3:

"Quotes from you or someone relevant to the story."
Don't try to cram too many points into one quote – each quote should make one point.

Paragraph 4:

Extra relevant information.

ENDS

Notes for Editors

- *Provide background information in case they run a longer story.*
- *Outline what you have to offer: pictures, interviewees.*
- *Outline any additional relevant information or facts and figures, but keep it short.*

Contact *(Make sure you supply numbers where you can be reached day or night. This can make the difference between your story being covered or not).*

Name: *[type name1]* **Tel:** *[type tel1]* **Name:** *[type name2]* **Tel:** *[type tel2]*

[If not on official paper type your organization's name here]

Address: *[type your organization's address here on one line separated by spaces]*

Tel: *[type telephone no]* **Fax:** *[type fax no]* **Email:** *[type group email]*

Website: *[type web address]* **Charity Number:** *[type charity number]*