










International
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Guidelines for building effective messages and outreach activities aimed at the media

Introduction

These Guidelines are intended to assist ILO-Irish Aid disability project staff in building effective messages as part of their outreach and advocacy campaigns aimed at the local media. They are designed to:

- provide ideas for organizing special events and activities that help create media attention; and
- promote the 'decent work for people with disabilities' message.

The term 'media', as used in this booklet, includes professional communicators who work as editors, journalists, broadcasters, producers, developers of programmes, presenters as well as those working as web editors, and interactive multimedia products.

The more precise the goals and objectives, the easier they are to implement.



Building effective messages and outreach activities aimed at the media

Step 1: Develop precise goals

The first step in developing an effective communications strategy: be clear about what you want to accomplish. The more clear and precise the goals and objectives, the easier they are to implement.

Example

Goal:

Sustained awareness of and commitment to the concept of disabled persons as capable citizens and contributors to society by the media.

There are several tools and resources for delivering core messages to the media.

Tools and resources for communicating with the media

There are several tools and resources that project field staff can use to communicate core messages to the media:

- Press releases (or News Releases)
- Press conferences
- Interviews
- Special activities/events, for example, national days, special commemorative days such as the International Women's Day (8 March), the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October) or International Day for Persons with Disabilities (3 December)
- Articles for publication (newspapers or magazines)
- News stories on TV or radio
- Informal briefings for the media (or round-table discussions involving the media)
- Media kits (usually in the form of a folder containing a background information note on the issue, a press release highlighting a new development, a CD or DVD with interviews or testimonials or relevant reports)
- Other, more direct means of communicating, for example, internet, brochures and posters

Be strategic in deciding which media to approach.

Step 2: Get to know your media

As project staff, whatever method you've chosen to communicate key messages, you should familiarize yourself with the publication, TV or radio outlets to learn what each journalist, editor, broadcaster or programme presenter covers and what interests them and their audience – be strategic in deciding who to approach. Project messages on disability should be tailored to address these different concerns and perspectives of the media. Recognize their:

- Level of knowledge/awareness about disability
- Primary concerns/expectation about the capacity of people with disabilities
- Perspective on disability, since this will impact how they cover the issue
- History of covering disability
- Possible barriers to understanding of disability, their impact and causes
- Ability/likelihood to take action that will result in more inclusive societies

>>> Know and engage your media allies.

***Build your case for stronger action to promote
the inclusion of people with disabilities in
policies, laws and services.***

Step 3: Build your case for stronger action to promote the principles of inclusion of people with disabilities in policies, laws and services

Collect disability-related information to help illustrate that inclusion matters:

- Information on disability in your country/region/city: the general population, sub-groups as well as the availability of support services. You may find such information at local research or policy institutes, ministries – for example, labour and employment, social affairs and empowerment, etc. – or independent government offices or departments – for example, national statistics office, census bureaus, national commission on population, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as organizations of and for disabled persons, universities, among others.
- Information on the social and economic costs of disability. Consider the following:
 - *what are the economic costs of disability on the individual and their families, communities and countries? For example, caregivers staying home from work to look after a disabled family member.*
 - *what are the social impacts of disability on the individual and their families, communities and countries? For example, children staying home from school to look after a disabled family member, or disabled parent(s) who are unable to care for their children.*

Step 3, continued

You can also collect information to:

- Show who is most affected
- Show improvements in inclusive approaches to policies and laws, training and employment services
- Show that inclusion makes economic sense
- Document what has been done to promote inclusive approaches to employment and skills training in other parts of the world

Extract numbers that highlight disability from different angles, for example:

- Disability and women
- Disability and HIV/AIDS
- Disability and poverty
- Disability and youth

Use statistics to develop a list of key messages and stories that will resonate with the local media. The messages and stories should highlight successful projects, identify areas where further work is required and, perhaps, outline next steps.

The key to making the most impact is to have simple messages that are compelling and memorable.

Step 4: Develop key messages

Some PEPDEL/INCLUDE key messages, expressed in simple language:

- One in 10 people in the world has a disability
- Many women and men with disabilities can and want to work
- Equal access to education, skills training and employment services is essential to obtaining decent and productive work
- Activities among governments and employers' and workers' organizations and NGOs, including those of and for disabled persons, can help promote inclusive work environments
- Self-employment provides a means of economic independence for many disabled women and men
- Activities among women entrepreneurs associations and NGOS, including those of and for disabled persons, help existing or aspiring disabled women entrepreneurs acquire new skills, and provide business support services and access to credit and new markets.

>> You will need to fine-tune your own 'local messages'.

***Stories enable us to share knowledge,
experience and lessons learned. What's more,
storytelling helps promote advocacy.
Everyone likes a good story.***

Step 5: *Developing messages into stories*

Generally speaking, you can integrate your messages into three types of stories:

News stories - present basic facts about current events and issues.

Feature stories - provide an opportunity for more in-depth exploration of an issue, allowing for opinion as well as facts. (Feature stories can describe people (or an individual), places, circumstances and ideas and may focus on a specific area such as disability. Local media are generally interested in featuring local people with a story to tell.)

Success stories – show what can be done about a problem or issue.

The News Story

Step 5, Story Examples, continued

Examples

News story

Message: New UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in all forms of employment, and calls on States to promote work opportunities in the general labour market for people with disabilities.

Story: The ILO today welcomed the unanimous adoption by the United Nations of a new Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, saying that provisions of the ground-breaking Convention would benefit millions of people whose inability to find jobs due to social exclusion costs countries between 1 to 7 per cent of GDP.

The Feature Story

Step 5, Story Examples, continued

Feature story

Message: People with disabilities can and want to be productive members of society.

Story: As a child, Vo Thi Hoang Yen was affected by polio. She can walk only short distances, with crutches, and needs a wheelchair to move further. Yet her impaired mobility has not prevented her from achieving more than other people without disabilities. In November 2009 she received the Kazuo Itoga Memorial Prize for her outstanding achievements in promoting the rights of people with disabilities.

Ms. Vo was chosen to receive the Prize in recognition of the way she has dedicated her life to promoting the inclusion of women and men with disabilities at all levels of society. Though she faced many barriers in her early years, today Ms. Vo is a lecturer at Ho Chi Minh City Open University and Director of the Disability Resource and Development Centre.

The Success Story

Step 5, Story Examples, continued

Success story

Message: People with disabilities are less likely to be in employment than non-disabled persons. Disabled men are almost twice as likely to have jobs as women. But, with access to training and the right opportunities, the barriers to participation in all levels of society are broken.

Story: The Yenegew Co-op was formed in 2004 after a proposal by the Ethiopian Federation of Persons with Disabilities won a prize in the World Bank Development Marketplace Competition in 2003. The competition aims to fund the most innovative ideas in development, and that year's theme was *'Making Services Work for Poor People'*.

Irish Aid has been in partnership with the ILO since 2001, funding projects promoting women's entrepreneurship, employment of people with disabilities and development of legal frameworks for the disabled. (In 2008, Irish Aid signed an agreement with ILO for a new three-year grant of €9 million.) The ILO, through Irish Aid projects, supported the Yenegew co-op from its inception, funding training for co-op leaders and providing working capital. At its 30 sites, the co-op now employs 184 people, all of whom have visual, hearing or mobility impairments, had Hansen's disease (leprosy), or have children with intellectual disabilities. Four years ago, workers earned 100 birr per month. Now the wage is 600 birr (€32) per month, on the higher end of the scale for unskilled labour.

>> Local statistic and feature stories generally have the greatest impact.

Be relevant – create messages and stories that will resonate with the media.

Step 6: The “recipe” for communications success

- Be relevant. Stress the national/local context and issues the media care about, such as the cost to national/local economies of excluding disabled persons from the labour market, and the consequences of inaction on discrimination against disabled workers.
- Pick your main message. State it right at the beginning. Example: “It is time to make general services and programmes on education, training and employment services available on an equal basis to disabled persons. Without this approach, disabled people will continue to be excluded, live in poverty and the Millennium Development Goal of cutting poverty in half by 2015 will not be achieved.”
- Back it up with several additional key messages on how exclusion perpetuates poverty, inequality, discrimination, and social isolation.
- Provide personal examples and stories to “give the message a human face”.
- Offer specific “solution” suggestions.

Special events and activities throughout the year provide an effective way to raise public awareness and attract media coverage.

Ideas for special events and activities

Though the International Day for Persons with Disabilities on 3 December provides an excellent platform for increasing awareness and providing interesting information on disability, it should be just one of several advocacy efforts during the year.

There are other ways to create news and keep the media interested in the issue of *decent work for women and men with disabilities*. As project staff, you can work with the organizers of other commemorative days, global events or conferences. You can use these opportunities to keep the focus on the importance of promoting a broad range of ILO issues from a disability perspective, among them:

- *equal access to employment*
- *social protection, and*
- *working conditions*

List of other international days:

International Women's Day (8 March), World Health Day (7 April), World Day Against Child Labour (12 June), International Youth Day (August 12), World Mental Health Day (October), International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (17 October), International Day of Tolerance (16 November), International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (25 November), World AIDS Day (1 December) and Human Rights Day (10 December).

Special events and activities – competitions, trade fairs, street events, parades – organized with ILO constituents and partners - women's groups, community leaders, NGOs, the business community, among others - attract media attention and help raise visibility on disability. Awards recognizing journalists and media organizations that contribute through their work to better public understanding of the benefits of inclusive societies and the fight against discrimination in employment are also excellent ways of raising awareness on disability with and through the media.

Notes for special events and activities

Examples:

Month Of the Woman Entrepreneur (MOWE)

Held annually across several countries in East and Southern African since the early 2000s, MOWE provides an opportunity for disabled and non-disabled women entrepreneurs to highlight their achievements through a variety of national events including media campaigns, workshops, trade fairs, exhibitions and other promotional activities. (For more information, <http://www.mowea.net/>)

Media Tour

In Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, international and local journalists representing both the print and electronic media were invited for a field visit to highlight project successes as told through the personal stories of disabled women entrepreneurs, or project beneficiaries. As a result of the media tour, several journalists produced interesting stories about the women who had worked their way out of poverty.

Journalism Awards for Promoting Diversity

In 2004, the European Union (EU) Journalist Award was launched as part of the '*Promote diversity. Stop Discrimination*' campaign. Journalists in member States were invited to submit entries on discrimination based on race, ethnic origin, religion, beliefs, age, disability or sexual orientation. In subsequent years, the Awards programme also welcomed entries on the issues of promoting diversity in employment. The winners received a grant for a study trip to a European country of their choice. A similar programme could be considered in selected project countries.

Notes for special events and activities

Examples, continued:

Mobile Tour on Disability

The EU campaign *'Promote diversity. Stop Discrimination'* conducted a mobile tour of 27 countries across Europe to distribute information about EU anti-discrimination measures and spread a message of diversity and equality. Project staff could team up with in-country partners to support a variation on the same idea: a mobile van tour on disability.

(Source: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fdad/cms/stopdiscrimination/downloads/5years08_en.pdf, accessed 13.05.2010)

Media campaign on Disability

A recently launched media campaign in the U.S. uses humour to encourage employers to ignore labels when hiring people with disabilities. For example, one of the print ads introduces employers to a man in a suit whose awkward dance moves make him “rhythm impaired”. The text of the ad reads: “Just because someone moves a little differently doesn’t mean they can’t help move your business forward. The same goes for people with disabilities.” Both the print and television ads are largely financed by agencies in 30 states that provide employment services as well as health and human services to disabled citizens. The campaign is also sponsored by National Public Radio (NPR), a privately supported, not-for-profit media organization that produces and distributes non-commercial news, talk, and entertainment programming.

(Source: <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/29/business/media/29adco.html>, accessed 05.02.10.)

>> Special events and activities throughout the year also provide an effective way to raise public awareness and attract media coverage.

Coordination

To ensure the quality and consistency of messages developed and that special events, activities and initiatives envisioned fit into the overall National Plans of Action for the ILO/Irish Aid projects, the ILO/Geneva Disability Team will closely cooperate with participating Project Staff Coordinators, Regional and National Programme Coordinators and communication focal points. In addition, project staff should liaise closely with the ILO Department of Communication (DCOMM) field communications officers for advocacy and public education activities aimed the media and other audiences.

 **Notes/Reminders**

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