

A stylized illustration of a person in a black silhouette holding a microphone. The microphone's head is a globe showing continents. Concentric white circles radiate from the globe, suggesting a signal or broadcast. The background is a solid blue color.

Media Advocacy for Contraceptive Security

*A Tool for Strategy
Development*





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Executive Summary

The Media Advocacy Tool is designed to help interested program managers, communication specialists, and representatives of funding agencies develop media relations strategies that will get reporters and editors interested in covering health issues related to contraceptive security. The drive to develop this tool originates from two recent international meetings on contraceptive security.

In 2001, a group of experts who met at the first international conference on contraceptive security in Istanbul, Turkey, identified the media as a key advocate in the effort to attain contraceptive security. In response, 87 representatives from a variety of sectors from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, and the Philippines convened in Penang, Malaysia, in 2003 to determine how the media could be used to build a constituency for contraceptive security in each participant country. The meeting resulted in both country-specific media advocacy plans and the commitment to implement the activities detailed in those plans. It became clear, however, that stakeholder organizations needed a tool to guide them when advocating for contraceptive security with the media.

The Media Advocacy Tool is designed in a modular way so it can be used as part of a larger health communication strategy or as a stand-alone guide to action. Moreover, it acts as a complement to the SCOPE strategic communication planning tool. This approach leads to a more efficient use of resources as messages are crafted

to complement those already active or those intended for future campaigns. The tool can be used as a practical guide for a tactical approach or can be used to develop a comprehensive media advocacy strategy.

With this tool, the user can simplify the more complex conceptual issues related to contraceptive security and then design and convey effective messages to audiences unfamiliar with the topic. This straightforward guide allows the user to set goals, identify credible spokespeople to deliver messages, craft appropriate messages, and plan a media advocacy campaign. The guide also includes motivating examples from the real world of successful interventions in several countries.

The tool covers fundamental aspects such as:

- Defining contraceptive security for those who are not familiar with the concept
- Explaining when a media advocacy campaign makes sense within a larger communication strategy
- Guidance on how to set realistic media advocacy goals
- How to target media and assess potential impact
- Framing advocacy messages for contraceptive security
- Choosing the right spokespersons
- Understanding opposition
- Planning and evaluating an advocacy campaign



Introduction

The global demand for contraceptives is steadily rising due to an increasing population of users created by the success of family planning programs and population growth. HIV prevention strategies that utilize male and female condoms have contributed as well. This trend will certainly continue with a contraception prevalence rate of almost 60%¹ and the largest generation of adolescents (15-24) in history—more than 1 billion—entering their childbearing years. By 2015 more than \$1.8 billion annually will be needed to support commodity costs. And yet, as demand has grown dramatically, financing has declined substantially. In 2002, donors met just 20% of total estimated global contraceptive requirements.²

The ability of families to plan and space their children is critical to the health and economic prosperity of not only families but also of countries and regions. Successful family planning programs save lives, enhance economic growth, promote gender equality, reduce poverty, and result in direct and indirect savings on health and social services.

Large increases in financial support for family planning by both donors and developing countries are required to meet the needs of the world's people. Advocates must actively

1 UNFPA. (2002). Donor Support for Contraceptives and Condoms for STI/HIV Prevention [electronic version]. Retrieved on June 27, 2006, from the UNFPA Web site: http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2005/presskit/factsheets/facts_youth.htm

2 Ibid.

press governments to make the financial commitments necessary to close contraceptive funding gaps and honor their pledges at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development and the Millennium Development Summit in 2000.

This toolkit is a resource for those advocates. *It provides practical guidance for creating a communication campaign to encourage greater governmental and public commitment and prioritization for contraceptive support and funding through the media.* This guide can help to outline a campaign that can be mounted either as a discrete effort or as part of a larger endeavor. It can also be utilized in conjunction with larger strategic communications or advocacy tools such as the “P-Process” or the “A-Frame.”

This toolkit is NOT designed as a basic “how-to” guide on the mechanics of working with the media, although it does include sections on the use of spokespersons and message development. These elements are key to the construction of an advocacy effort directed at a nation's leaders or elites through the media, and, therefore, they are addressed.

Numerous exemplary and insightful media “how-to” guides have been published which we would recommend to advocates as an additional resource. A list of Web sites can be found in the addendum although it is not, by any means, exhaustive.





Advocates could include any of the following: program and organization managers responsible for designing and implementing reproductive health programs; communication specialists responsible for directing health community strategies and interventions; representatives of funding agencies interested in media advocacy as part of their support to country initiatives; non-governmental organization, and civil society representatives interested in encouraging public, media, donor, and governmental support of contraceptive security; NGO advocates seeking to design a communications and advocacy campaign with which to encourage resource support from private or public funders.

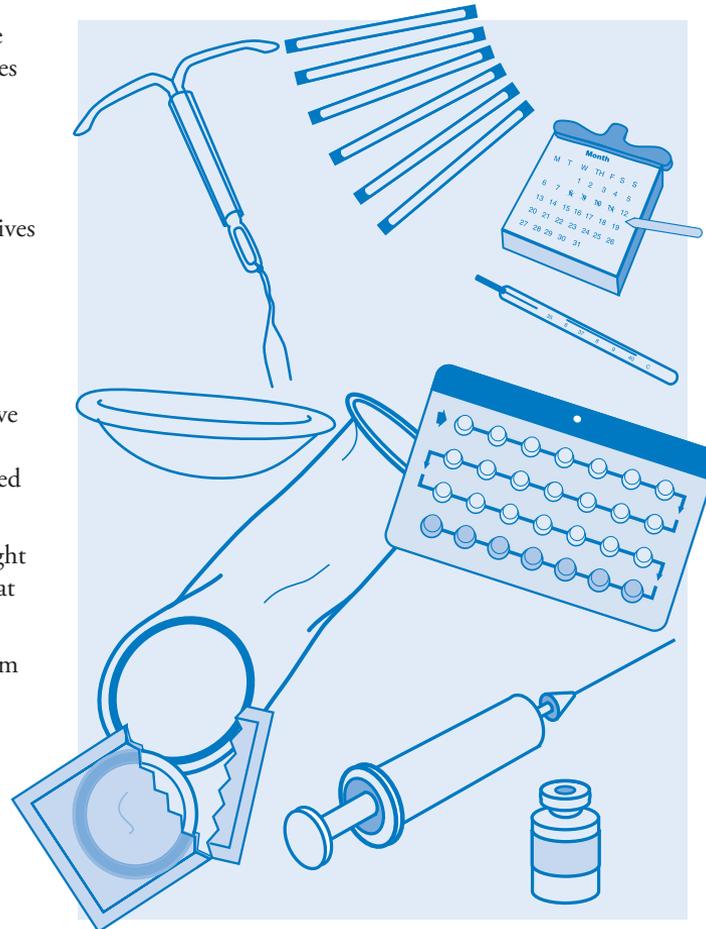
We hope that this media advocacy toolkit can help to design a successful effort to ensure greater awareness, attention, and commitment to the contraceptive needs of families.

I Contraceptive Security Defined

Contraceptive Security exists when people are able to reliably choose, obtain, and use quality contraceptives and condoms for family planning and HIV/AIDS/STI prevention when they want them.

This definition rests on five assumptions:

1. Every person should be able to select the contraceptives and condoms they want to use.
2. Because choices are individual, security can only be achieved by meeting the needs of each and every individual.
3. Because people must make a choice, they should have access to the tools to make that choice. Information and education about their options should be provided through communication.
4. The right product for the client is available at the right time, in the right place, in the right condition, and at the right price.
5. The products can be used correctly to their maximum effect and benefit.



II Why Undertake a Media Advocacy Campaign?

The media, in its many forms, is a powerful agent for education and change. The media's reach and general accessibility make it a potent and key component of transforming public attitudes and urging policy change. In many cases, the media has had a revolutionary impact on societies.

Both the media and those that seek to influence it have become increasingly sophisticated and professional. Media endorsements are routinely sought by political and policy leaders. Well-funded individuals, campaigns or causes purchase time or space from different media outlets in an effort to influence opinion. Individuals with media expertise are employed to try to affect media coverage. Campaigns, be they political, corporate or issue-related, undertake research to learn what opinions media consumers hold of their leaders, issues or products and how they consume media (when and what they watch, listen to or read).



Reasons why the media is important in any advocacy campaign:

- Media can help drive policy change by bringing an issue to the attention of the elites and the public and/or articulating a point of view.
- Positive exposure through “earned” media can sometimes be more powerful than paid media because it implies—either implicitly or explicitly—endorsement.
- A media advocacy effort can be part of a larger campaign or it can be the campaign.
- A media advocacy campaign can be a small scale, cost-effective way to reach small, influential audiences.
- A media advocacy effort can create the impression of a larger campaign or movement.
- Media coverage and campaigns are tangible and measurable.





A large-scale communications campaign is often beyond the reach of advocates due to expense or the scale of effort. Therefore, an “opinion elites” campaign—that is an effort designed to speak to those who are policymakers or societal leaders encouraging greater governmental and/or donor support for contraceptive funding through the media—can be an effective, cost-effective method of shaping public policy.

This type of effort—media advocacy with opinion elites—is utilized under the following circumstances:

- When government action is necessary,
- When traditional lobbying efforts by advocates have either been ineffective or must be supported,
- When there is government opposition to a policy sought by advocates,
- When there is a seeming lack of urgency or awareness (inattention) surrounding an issue,
- When a broader campaign is too expensive,
- When an issue lacks widespread public awareness or support.

The media’s role in an opinion elites campaign is to educate, to signal the importance and urgency of an issue, to provide a forum for advocates to call for action and present solutions, and to create a broader impression of public support. Often, an elites campaign can only be successful if it provides “cover” for elites to take action—that is, demonstrating that taking a position favorable to your cause will not endanger their standing with the public or the press.

Lesson

The media is one of society’s most powerful institutions and must therefore be a part of any campaign to change or influence public policy.

III Who are Opinion Elites?

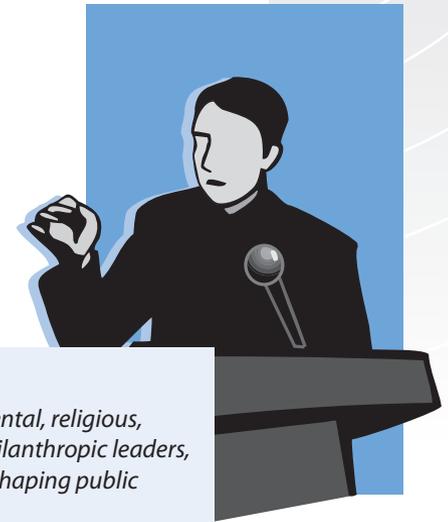
In every country the world over, in every state, in every city, in every town there is a cadre of individuals that are recognized as society's leaders. They can be crowned or elected, or represent different constituencies. They can be public servants, or religious, corporate, academic or non-governmental organization leaders. These individuals often set policy for societies through government, personal leadership, the strength of the institutions that they represent, or by example. They can be reached and engaged in social causes through a variety of mechanisms—one of which is the media.

These leaders are often among the society's most powerful, sophisticated members. Considered "opinion elites," they are connected to the media in several ways —

- They can be members of the media themselves.
- They are the subject of media coverage.
- They use the media to make their views and opinions known.
- They are consumers of the media, particularly news media.

Opinion elites are keenly aware of media's transforming and influential role and they generally seek to curry favor with the media or use it to their advantage. They fully understand that the media is often the lens through

which the general public learns about the world around them. They also realize that media can effectively shape public opinion or shift attitudes. This makes the media an important tool in the effort to bring about change, particularly policy change and to influence opinion elites.



Lesson

Opinion elites are society's governmental, religious, community, business, media, and philanthropic leaders, and they are or can be influential in shaping public policy.

IV The Need for a Realistic Campaign Goal

Since the media has a large and powerful role and is dedicated to covering breaking news, compelling topical issues and topics of general interest (sports, gossip), advocacy campaigns mounted with the media must be **focused, credible and realistic**. The media has much to cover and must believe that your issue is of interest to their audience, and is an urgent, compelling, and credible issue. Your issue must compete with all other news to win coverage on television, radio or in print. It must be easily understood by the media and its viewers/listeners/readers—this is particularly important for television, which often communicates in sound bites. If a reporter, producer or news director must work hard to understand your information, he or she will not use it.

Lesson

The larger goal of bringing contraceptive security to the forefront of the public's awareness is not realistic, since it will most likely not excite the mainstream media. A different, smaller, more concrete goal must be the focus of an advocacy campaign.

To determine the goal of your media advocacy campaign, an assessment of the political, social, and economic environments is necessary. The following questions can help to determine the goal of a campaign and will help to compile necessary information for the media.

- What are the public's contraceptive needs and consumption?
- How is the contraceptive supply financed?
- What is the level of donor funding?
- What is the expected decline in donor funding? What impact will this decline in funding have?
- Which decisions do you want them to make?
- What is the government's role (level of funding/delivery system)?
- What is the government mechanism(s) that finances contraceptive support and delivery or engages support from donors?
- What part of government is responsible for reproductive health funding or services? Who are the decision makers?
- What is the current level of support for or knowledge about contraceptive security among your audience?



- What are the barriers to resource support for contraceptive security (hostility, lack of resources)?
- Finally, what action do you want to advocate?

Media advocacy campaigns need not be limited to advocates lobbying to gain greater resource support or more advantageous policy outcomes. Governments too can mount highly effective media advocacy campaigns aimed at ensuring the alliance of local governments and the support of the public and press for its goals.

example: Mexico³

With the phase-out of external support for contraceptives between 1992 and 1994, the Mexican government implemented a plan to maintain national contraceptive security. Its efforts were based on two pillars: all contraceptives required would be purchased by the government; and efforts to increase contraceptive prevalence during and after the phase-out would be mounted through a media advocacy campaign.

The media advocacy effort included a national program of information, education and communication outreach to high-priority and often-neglected audiences, intersectoral collaboration, and training.

The political will and energy brought to bear by the federal government to gain the participation of all states in the effort, to adequately prepare for procurement and delivery, and to inform and involve the public ensured a smooth phase-out and successful transition to contraceptive self-reliance.

example: Turkey⁴

In 1994, the Government of Turkey and USAID announced an agreement that contraceptive commodity donations would be phased out over a five-year period. A local women's organization, KIDOG, organized a campaign to achieve the following: 1) obtain annual public budget allocations for contraceptive procurement, 2) direct funding for free services to the poor, and 3) create an advocacy coalition of NGOs active in strengthening and improving the quality of life for Turkish women.

KIDOG developed the advocacy campaign around these objectives and framed its efforts as an issue of women's rights. The media was used to raise public awareness and advocate Turkish self-reliance. Audiences included senior officials at the Ministries of Health, State and Women's Affairs, officials at the State Planning Organizations and Social Security Institution, parliamentarians, and former President Demirel.

As a result, in May 1998 the General Secretariat of the Office of the President issued an executive action ordering "the necessary actions for the purchase of necessary medication and materials" by the Ministry of Health in order to continue providing adequate FP services and contraceptives once donor support came to an end.

³ Bowman, J. (June 2004). Media advocacy for contraceptive security: Key findings from an Asia regional workshop. Baltimore: The Health Communication Project based at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/Center for Communication Programs.

⁴ Ibid.

V Media Targeting and Assessment

No media advocacy campaign can be effective without first discerning what mediums your target audience most often consumes and which media outlets they use the most. Whom are you trying to reach and what do they watch, read or listen to? Outlets should be ranked in terms of priorities. This simple process can help you to ensure that your efforts are dedicated to those outlets that are the greatest priority.

- What is the medium (television, radio, newspapers, magazines, Web) most often consumed by your targeted population? And which outlets are most used by your targeted population?
- Which are most popular with the general public? Among those media outlets, whom or what should you contact to promote your agenda? A particular reporter, editor or producer? A particular columnist? TV news show? A particular newspaper? A radio station or show?
- Do you know those people or have you had previous contact with them? Do you have their contact information?
- What media outlets and sources influence members of the media? This will be an important forum.

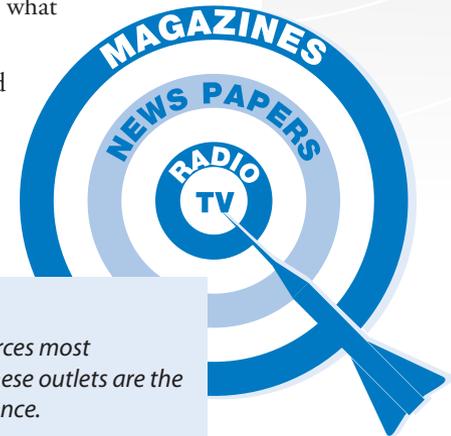
After you have determined which outlets are of the greatest importance to you, you should conduct some basic

research to help you determine what obstacles you might face or what support can be amplified.

- Has the media covered contraceptive security/FP/contraception recently? Has it been supportive or hostile?
- Who covered the issue?
- If the media hasn't covered the issue, has it covered a similar health or women's issue?
- What reporter covered this issue?
- What other campaigns have been successful in engaging the media recently? What can you learn from them? What did they do and what was the result?
- Who does the media generally find compelling as a spokesperson?
- What can you practically apply to your campaign?

Lesson

Determine the media outlets and sources most important to your target audience. These outlets are the ones that you will try hardest to influence.



VI Framing an Advocacy Message for Contraceptive Security

A campaign message is the cornerstone of your campaign—it is the core around which any media advocacy campaign is built. It must communicate the problem, the solution, and a “call to action” with a sense of urgency and in a way that is easily understood. If possible, it should also convey a shared sense of values. In sum, it is the articulation of your effort.

“Contraceptive Security” is a particularly difficult concept to communicate. First, while contraceptive or contraception is a term well understood by the public and press, “security” is a word more readily identified with personal safety, conflict or terrorism. In the current global context with many countries coping with internal or regional conflict, the term “security” competes with a variety of more immediate concerns. Second, its very definition is a notion that, like other health and developmental goals, seems largely unrealistic and unobtainable to the media and to the public—not unlike other development goals such as eradicating poverty or hunger.

Global advocacy campaigns increasingly reflect and recognize these obstacles and have tried to set more realistic goals. The Millennium Development Goals, endorsed by all the world’s countries in 2000, outlined broad development goals at the cusp of a new century that urged countries to

work together to achieve still lofty, yet more realistic goals. Instead of advocating the elimination of poverty, the world’s governments endorsed halving the number of people living on \$2 a day by 2015. Instead of the elimination of infant mortality, the goal calls for a reduction in the mortality rate of children under five by two-thirds.

Advocates for contraceptive security must, in a similar way, focus their message to appeal to the media, which is driven by daily events and which is unlikely to devote much attention to a topic that is broad and comprehensive. The more urgent an issue can be made, the greater the likelihood that it will garner coverage. Advocacy campaigns, particularly those aimed at influencing the media or policymakers, must champion well-defined achievable actions even as they articulate a broader goal.

Opinion elites campaigns must present *the problem*, *the solution*, and *the call to action*. The campaign alerts the media (and therefore the listeners/viewers/readers) to a problem, provides





a solution, and articulates *what action must be taken to achieve the solution*. The call to action is particularly critical to any advocacy campaign as it is an articulation of the desired outcome of the campaign.

Lesson

Define your campaign's "call to action." This summarizes what you want policymakers to do in support of your cause.

Test It!

A good test of your problem, solution and call to action is to read them as if they were part of a newscast. Are they effective messages? Easily understood?

Your Message

Your message should evoke a response by conveying a sense of urgency and impact while also connecting to the audiences' fundamental beliefs or values. Why should people care, why should they care now (why is this issue an important one at this moment) and what will happen if nothing/something is done? Your message has to break through the clutter of competing messages and issues. It also must move the audience to care or be concerned.

- Convey a sense of urgency.
- Convey a sense of impact.
- Convey a sense of values.

Strengthen Your Message with Facts

Whenever possible, bolster your message with facts from a respected third party source. Journalists, elites, and the public are increasingly skeptical. Qualitative and quantitative research have proven that citations from credible sources assure listeners/readers/viewers of the veracity and truth of your statements. Facts and figures help to make your arguments more concrete.

example: Ghana News Agency⁵

Help! Our Women Are Dying

9/8/2005

"Dr. Henrietta Odoi-Agyarko, Head of the Reproductive and Child Health Care of the Ghana Health Service (GHS) has disclosed that 12,000 women are likely to die by 2015 if prompt attention is not paid to addressing problems causing preventable deaths through pregnancy and its related complications."

⁵ Retrieved June 30, 2006, from the GhanaHomePage Web site, <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/artikel.php?ID=90257>

VII Finding and Using Credible Sources and Messengers

In any media advocacy campaign, who says what is almost as important as what is said. Your message can only be credible in the eyes of the media if the source is credible. The media as an institution must also be seen as trustworthy in the eyes of its audience. Therefore, most journalists are trained to check sources, to test the accuracy of information, and to assess the reliability of spokespeople.

Two of the 17 points in the Society of Professional Journalists Code of Ethics⁶ are

- Test the accuracy of information from all sources and exercise care to avoid inadvertent error. Deliberate distortion is never permissible.
- Identify the sources whenever feasible. The public is entitled to as much information as possible on a source's reliability.

Those individuals or spokespeople considered “public figures”—those that represent governments, institutions, organizations, constituencies, corporations or associations recognized by the public—are generally considered credible.

Credible spokespeople can have one or several of the following: authority, expertise, celebrity, a constituency, a sympathetic or extraordinary story, or a widely known political platform.



⁶ Retrieved June 30, 2006, from the Society of Professional Journalists Web site, <http://www.spj.org/pdf/ethicscode.pdf>

Authority

Individuals who represent governments, institutions, organizations, constituencies, corporations or associations are considered to be authoritative. For instance, on health issues, comments, research or opinion released by the Director General of the World Health Organization would be immediately considered credible by the media. So too would the comments of a local doctor or nurse, the leader of a local NGO that provides health services, or a professor of medicine.

Expert

Individuals considered “expert” are those that can offer some opinion which is authoritative because the spokesperson has some measure of formal training, specialized education or depth of experience in a particular arena, such as medical specialists, researchers, and practitioners. Often, this might not be a person but a study or finding, for instance, “3 out of 4 doctors agree...”

Celebrity

Celebrities can be powerful advocates but are generally most effective when paired with an issue expert or when they speak on behalf of a respected organization. The media has an interest in the opinion of a celebrity but rarely believes them to be an authority. It is their passion and the dedication of their time (which all consider very valuable) that make them such effective advocates. They are often valuable in “pulling” media to a site or an event that media would otherwise be unlikely to visit or attend.

Actress Angelina Jolie, well known for promoting humanitarian causes around the world and most recently working with refugees as a spokesperson for UNHCR.



Photo: Stefan Serruos

Celebrity can also include those who are particularly beloved and individuals who exemplify honesty, courage, integrity or some other trait that is much admired. Often, just a quote from a celebrity can be used. An American example might be someone such as Jimmy Carter. International examples might include Bishop Desmond Tutu and President Nelson Mandela.

Constituency

Representatives of major constituency groups can be particularly commanding spokespeople, particularly if the constituency that they represent is well-respected, much admired, has considerable political clout, or is generally not associated with advocacy or political campaigns. Leaders of religious organizations are particularly powerful as they project moral approval of an issue.

Human Interest

Ordinary citizens can be very effective advocates if they have either an extraordinary or ordinary story to tell which illustrates the need for action to be taken by the government. They must be sympathetic, articulate and have had an experience that illustrates your point. Most of all, the average viewer can identify with the story or the spokesperson. They should convey a feeling of “that could be me,” which creates a sense of empathy for an issue.

example: Indonesia

Contraceptive Security has been framed as a fight against poverty in Indonesia. Several human-interest stories portraying the daily lives of low-income Indonesian women have been published in leading newspapers to illustrate this message.

Platform

A platform is the position of a political party or movement. While all representatives do not necessarily espouse every position taken by the party (or none may be stated on contraceptive security/commodities/reproductive health), an examination of the platform can be helpful in identifying the likely support or opposition of elected/appointed leaders or candidates. These leaders can be particularly compelling in policy discussions because they make and influence policy, and the press will believe that the responsibility for creating policy change falls to them.



Photo: PaineNet Inc.

South African President Nelson Mandela, anti-apartheid activist and Nobel Peace Prize winner, continues to voice his opinion on a variety of issues.

“Influential Drivers”: Who Are They and How to Find Them?

When constructing an opinion elites campaign, consider what individuals will be the most persuasive spokespeople or advocates with both the media and the target audience. Consider the following:

- Do they have public or private access to decision makers?
- Do they have stature within the opinion elite community? Is this person a past political leader,



the spouse of a political leader, recognized authority, Nobel winner, spiritual leader, media personality, NGO leader, wealthy business leader, doctor, advocate?

- Do they represent an NGO that is considered particularly powerful with your opinion elite audience?
- Do they command media attention?
- Are they a political leader that is routinely covered in the news?
- Are they wealthy? Are they identified with a cause or organization because they have supported it with charitable giving?
- Do they represent an institution that is expert or do they have research or opinion to publicize that supports your message?

Amplifying the Power of Spokespersons

Effective campaigns can amplify the power of their spokespersons by mobilizing them in unique or unlikely ways.

“Strange Bedfellows”

Campaigns or causes often try to create the impression of more widespread support than actually exists by pairing disparate individuals or organizations in support of an issue. If a cause seemingly enjoys joint support from organizations or individuals that traditionally oppose one another, then the media, elites and the public often assume the issue has legitimacy, is in the best interest of the public and is deserving of support. This is a particularly powerful method in countries with strong or polarized political parties or advocates. It can also work successfully with interest groups (business and labor, environmentalists and corporations, security and civil liberties groups, men’s and women’s associations).

For instance, could “strange bedfellows” be mobilized to sign an open letter to the media, to the Minister of Health, or other critical government officials? Could you place an advertisement of two often opposing sectors/leaders/politicians with a headline such as “When do these men/organizations agree?” When employing this method it is important to state outright or imply that these two representatives do not often/ever agree, but that they do on your campaign goal.

Sector Support

Another tactic to creating the impression of general acceptance and support is to mobilize widespread support among different sectors with an interest in the topic, for instance, enlisting the heads of hospitals in a region, the deans of medical schools, a majority of elected female representatives, and a number of religious leaders. Individually, these spokespeople would be less compelling; together they represent an entire industry or sector.

For example, could female legislators and women's constituency groups be persuaded to write a letter or visit an editor/publisher or participate in a press briefing on the issue? Could powerful legislators or the leader of a women's group invite an editor to lunch? Could female legislators form their own caucus in support of your topic and participate in a press conference? What are the popular women's magazines that can be targeted? What are other activities that could be implemented with different sectors and leaders?

example: Xinhua General News Service⁷

ASEAN Women Parliamentarians Urge Closer Regional Cooperation

Vientiane, Sept. 18

Women policymakers in ASEAN countries agreed to establish channels for more effective regional cooperative ties, and urged their governments to pay more attention to issues relating to poverty reduction, women and children.

The one-day meeting of Women Parliamentarians of ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (WAIPO) held in Laos' Vientiane on Sunday adopted three resolutions, namely enhancement of parliamentarians' roles in poverty eradication, parliamentarians in advocacy for reproductive health and child survival, and the Beijing + 10 Platform for Action towards achieving millennium development goals (MDGs).

⁷ Retrieved June 28, 2006, from Xinhua On-line [English version], http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2005-09/18/content_3507258.htm

Creating a Coalition

Often support for a cause comes from a very committed few along with many who are only superficially involved. And, those who are deeply committed to the issue most likely do not command the same authority with the general public as individuals or organizations do that have a more peripheral involvement. In this instance, it is often a useful organizing tactic to launch a coalition that incorporates members of the very powerful and the deeply committed and to enlist the committed few to be the spokespeople on behalf of the coalition. This allows the few to speak on behalf of the many and it involves powerful voices without requiring much of their time.

When considering who and how to engage others in the campaign, the quality most often sought should be leverage—leverage with the media, leverage with elites. For instance, who will be persuasive with the Minister of Health? What constituencies are important? But it is also important to keep up a steady drumbeat of advocates speaking out or engaging the media. And, nothing breeds success like success. The more a topic is discussed, the more support it can attract. The more influential drivers it can engage, the easier it will become to make news and to engage even more people.

Your effort should operate on a dual track: first, engage the media and, second, always try to expand your coalition or enlist new support. As your outreach to engage others progresses, it will yield more ideas for media and other campaign activities.



example:

The following is the International World Leaders Statement released on the anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) to spur interest and support for the goals of ICPD.⁸ A smaller, national, state or local effort on behalf of your goal could be mounted.

In 1994, at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, Egypt, the world's governments and civil society committed to an action plan to ensure universal access to reproductive health information and services, uphold fundamental human rights including sexual and reproductive rights, alleviate poverty, secure gender equality, and protect the environment.

Since 1994, both the public and private sectors have made substantial efforts to transform the ICPD's 20-year plan into reality. Meaningful gains have been made, but much remains to be done. The largest generation of adolescents in history—more than one billion young people—are now entering adulthood in a rapidly changing world. The exponential increases in HIV/AIDS, persistently high levels of death and ill health due to preventable complications from pregnancy and childbirth, inadequate access to family planning services, and weak public health systems are still major challenges.

We are deeply concerned that the gap between rich and poor is growing and that millions of the world's people, but especially women and young people, are highly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS, sexual coercion and violence, discrimination, and other violations of their human rights.

We call on leaders in every walk of life to join us in reaffirming the ICPD's vision for human development, social justice, economic progress and environmental preservation. We call on the international community, national governments and private philanthropic organizations, to prioritize and fund the ICPD Programme of Action. By signing this leadership statement, we pledge to do our part.

The list of signatories is available on the World Leaders Supporting the ICPD Web site, <http://www.icpdleadersstatement.net/documents/signatories.htm>

⁸ Retrieved June 27, 2006, from the World Leaders Supporting the ICPD Web site, <http://www.icpdleadersstatement.net/documents/statement.htm>



Being a Spokesperson Doesn't Always Equal Speaking

Being a spokesperson on behalf of a cause does not necessarily mean a public speaking role. A spokesperson can also communicate support in a number of other ways:

- A written statement
- A letter which can be released to the media
- A quote in a press release
- Signing a broad statement of support with other leaders
- Allowing an image/logo to be used
- Hosting an event at an institution, corporate headquarters, or NGO
- Allowing a past quote to be used in an advertisement or other promotional materials
- Agreeing to post information about an issue or campaign on an individual or organizational Web site

Approaching a Spokesperson

Often just securing the endorsement or involvement of a spokesperson is a difficult job that requires a well-thought-out approach. After considering and identifying who would be your most persuasive and valuable spokesperson with your opinion elite audience, an effort to solicit their support must be made. Often elites can be used to engage one another. Remember, NGOs frequently have patrons who may be willing to embrace the cause of contraceptive security.

Lesson

Identify individuals or organizations that are respected or important figures in your country and enlist them in your campaign in some way.

VIII Your Opposition—Who Are They and Why Are They Opposed?

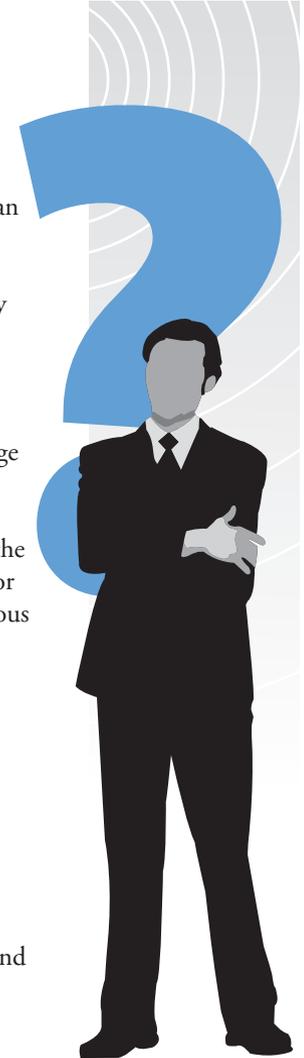
Opposition can take many forms, including apathy by the press and elites, hostility by elites or constituency groups, and other issues/causes that must compete with your issue for meager resources or government funding. In all cases, you should strive to be respectful of their position without lending it credibility. Respond with facts, with measured language, and with the most appropriate advocate. Do your homework on your opposition at the outset of your campaign if at all possible. Know what their position or argument is or is likely to be and plan a response. Being thoroughly prepared will allow you to act more quickly and effectively. Do not hesitate to counter, but do not seek out a fight or act in a hostile manner.

Always respond when you are attacked in the mainstream media if the attack is given credibility. The media should seek you out before printing or airing a piece that includes an attack on your issue, advocates or coalition. If you are not contacted, you should politely but firmly insist that you should be given an opportunity to publicly respond. If you are not successful in getting your response published or aired, ask for time on the opinion editorial pages or editorial section of a broadcast. The more outrageous the attack, the more measured your response should be; always use facts that are substantiated. You do not need to dispute each and every point, only to cast doubt on their argument to diminish their credibility. Even if an outlet is unwilling

to publish/air a response (hard news or editorial), you can impact later coverage by casting doubt on the veracity of an opposing organization or individual. Often, when outlets print or air stories which are unfairly biased, they will cover your issue at a later point in a more favorable light without admitting their mistake.

However, there are some outlets that are, or will be, openly hostile to your issue either in their biased coverage or their editorial content. An assessment must be made if you want to continue to contact them and respond to attacks, or ignore them. In some cases it may be worth the effort to win over conservative media outlets, reporters or writers. Gaining unlikely supporters can bring tremendous rewards.

If your opposition stems from the government, it will be critical to mobilize elites, the media and/or the public in your favor. In this instance, a broad coalition of organizations and associations should be mobilized to respond to the government position. Opposition should be evaluated as to the source and the issue, and then countered by rational arguments, which could include emphasizing the needs of women, couples, and families, and the overwhelming benefits of FP services and contraceptives.





*example: The Philippines*⁹

With declining support for family planning from international donors and more than four million women and families relying on public services for their family planning needs, contraceptive security advocates have mobilized to demand that the Minister of Health budget family planning services for the poor.

But, they have met substantial government opposition. The Health Secretary has instead encouraged citizens to pursue “self-reliance” and “responsible family planning through natural family planning.” The President when questioned about the necessity of family planning services and the looming funding gap suggested that NGO’s provide the necessary financial support and defended her government’s position as in “accordance with important doctrines of the (Catholic) Church.”

Church leaders promised to lobby legislators to reject support for family planning services or supplies not in accordance with “natural family planning.”

In response, FP advocates have mounted an aggressive media effort confronting the government’s position, promoting a public discussion of the need for a continued contraceptive supply. The issue of access to contraceptives is being cast as a moral issue and a fundamental right of Filipino families by NGOs. Parliamentarians and local government leaders have been enlisted to articulate the necessity of family planning for health and societal reasons. And NGOs have called for the continued recognition of the separation of church and state and allowing all to pursue the tenets of their faith as they see fit.

Lesson

Identify who your opposition is and why they are opposed. Then, construct an effective and appropriate response that can be deployed if and when needed.

⁹ See footnote 3.

IX The Planning Process—Ten Simple Questions to Outline Your Campaign

1. *What is your goal?*
2. *What is the governmental process to achieve your goal?*
3. *What is your message?*
4. *What is your brand?*
5. *What organizations or individuals make up your organization?*
6. *How will you expand your circle of support/allies?*
7. *Who are your most influential spokespeople/influential drivers? In other words, what spokespeople will be the most convincing to your target audience of opinion leaders? (This person(s) may or may not be particularly compelling with the general public. How will you utilize them?)*
8. *What events could be created to engage others (NGOs, spokespeople and the public) and to influence opinion elites and the media?*
9. *How will you ensure a consistent, purposeful flow of information to the media and become a credible source?*
10. *How will you organize your campaign timeline?*



X Steps to Success and Practical Suggestions

In every campaign, there are critical organizational moments. These require careful consideration, work and attention to detail.

Step 1:

Select your audience. Are you directing your messages to legislators, to regulators, or to the head of state? As in any other communication effort, the first step is to define your audience. By clearly understanding whom you want to address, you will be able to better tailor your messages in terms of tone, style, and content, thereby increasing your campaign's potential for success.

Step 2:

Determine the form of your campaign organization.

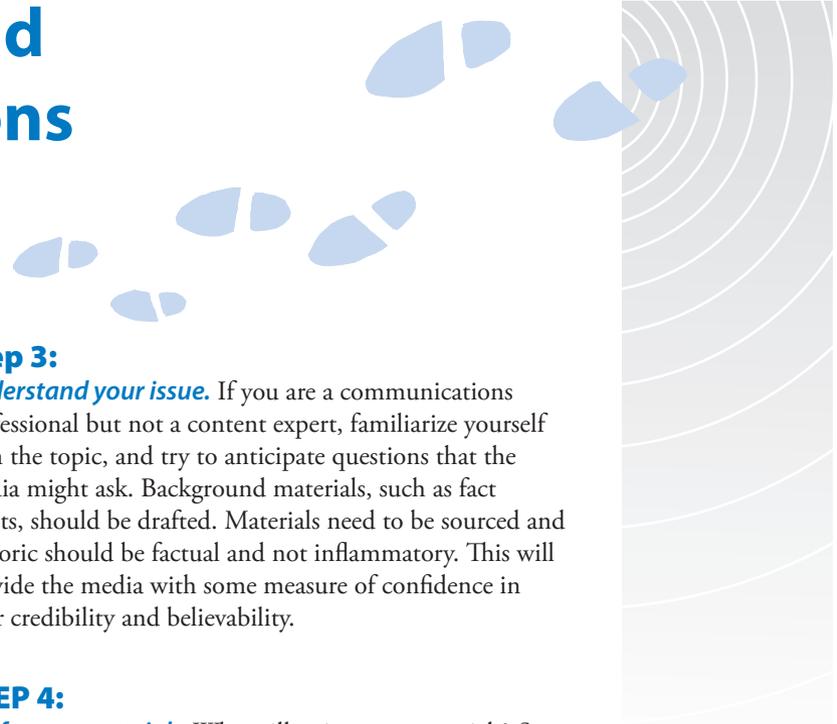
What form will your campaign organization assume? Will it be a coalition of organizations? Will there be a lead organization with others in support? Will it be a new entity? Will it be a single person who encourages a number of organizations or individuals to assume responsibility for parts of the campaign but who does not act independently?

Step 3:

Understand your issue. If you are a communications professional but not a content expert, familiarize yourself with the topic, and try to anticipate questions that the media might ask. Background materials, such as fact sheets, should be drafted. Materials need to be sourced and rhetoric should be factual and not inflammatory. This will provide the media with some measure of confidence in your credibility and believability.

STEP 4:

Draft your materials. Who will write your materials? See Step 1 and tailor content and messages accordingly. These materials (or language lifted from them) will be used in almost every campaign activity. It is vitally important to get them right.





STEP 5:

Develop the broadest possible support. Assess the strength of your organization and work to earn support from missing sectors or champions that you hope will be supportive. For example, if your coalition consists of medical practitioners and NGOs but no political, community or religious leaders, attempt to enlist representatives of these groups. There is value in demonstrating broad and deep support for your topic. Realize that not all organizations or individuals are equal, and different things could be asked or expected of different supporters.

Step 6:

Understand your media. Who are the appropriate contacts at each outlet? Do you have their phone, fax number and e-mail? What are your most important media outlets—which is most often watched, listened to or read by your targeted audience in government or among the elite? What journalist(s)/outlet(s) drive news for other outlets? In other words, which media do members of the media read, watch, listen to? Are they sympathetic? Hostile? What journalist(s)/outlet(s) are most often read by constituencies?

It is of paramount importance to identify targets and create lists. Without contact information, outreach cannot be implemented. Time and attention to detail here will pay off throughout the campaign. This step is critical to success all along the way.

Step 7:

The campaign should meet with its target (e.g., the Minister of Health) to discuss the situation and encourage his/her attention and action. The press will want to know if you have done so and what the reaction was. It will also give you a sense of how opposed or supportive the government will be to your message. This can determine the entire tone of your campaign. Will your efforts be encouraging and complimentary of government action to solve this crisis? Or will your efforts have to push to have the problem even recognized by the government?

If the campaign cannot obtain a meeting with the Minister of Health, it could be a signal about the government's recognition of the problem and can be information to use with the media. If the media suspects that the government is hiding from this issue, it will be of greater interest to them.

Step 8:

Announce your effort. Often one of the most vital steps in a media advocacy campaign is creating a first impression. This is most obvious in political campaigns when candidates carefully plan and implement kick-off announcements. To achieve the greatest effect, these events are well orchestrated to display the broadest possible support from as many sources and constituencies.

Every campaign should work as hard to introduce itself to the press, but this activity does not necessarily have to take the form of an event. A campaign effort and coalition can be kicked off with an open letter (that is released to

the media) stating the issue, the signers' commitment to the issue, and their intention to seek a resolution to the problem. The letter can be addressed to the media or directly to the government.

This tactic is generally very useful since it almost always elicits a response from the entity or person to whom the letter is addressed. The release of the letter is accompanied by a press release with a greater amount of information (what does the coalition/campaign seek to accomplish and why, who constitutes the coalition, how to contact the coalition/campaign, etc.). The letter can also be placed as an advertisement in a local newspaper(s) and sent along with a cover letter to columnists, pundits, publishers and to other prominent news outlets. Often the outlet in which an ad is placed will feel some responsibility to cover the topic. Campaign representatives (not necessarily those that have signed the open letter) can also be scheduled for interviews or visits with journalists.

Because news cycles are short, take advantage of potential media attention as soon as possible (including information about your coalition—it is important to make as much news as possible while creating an impression of your larger effort).

Step 9:

Be persistent. Communicate regularly with the media through e-mails, phone calls, memos or visits. Find a reason to communicate which is not frivolous; try to provide new information or an update with each communication. Become a resource for the media. Remember that it is more important that your issue is covered appropriately than it is that an individual or organization is quoted or recognized. Your effort is not to build a brand but rather to elicit support.

Step 10:

Create a calendar or timeline and plan around it. To be successful, it is necessary to know and understand the process by which your goal can be achieved. If the Ministry of Health must budget funds to continue services, then the process by which that money is discussed and allocated must be understood so that media or communications efforts can be organized at critical moments throughout that process.

While the process of ensuring funding is critical, there are other opportunities to communicate with the media. What are the national or international celebrations? Can you invite an expert to make a speech at an important moment or to an important audience? Can you involve a celebrity and have them attend a meeting or make a site visit?





Some Simple Steps That Can Create Greater Awareness, Elicit Support, or Turn Up the Pressure:

When an outlet, particularly a print outlet, publishes a good story on your topic, copy that story with the paper's masthead and circulate it to elites, members of the legislature, and your government target along with a short letter restating your case.

Be sure allies are aware of any coverage by disseminating your information to them as you do to opinion elites. Being supportive encourages your allies.

Be willing to spend time with reporters, writers, editors, and news directors to educate them on your topic, at their discretion and pace. Be realistic about how much time they will give you.

Paid advertising can drive attention and alert opinion elites that you have resources and are willing to use them to draw attention to the issue. Often, paid advertising can be relatively inexpensive if appropriate media is targeted for a minor buy.

Don't Forget:

- If your efforts are successful, and you win the government's support, do not neglect to publicly thank and applaud their efforts. They should be rewarded for doing the right thing. **THIS IS CRITICAL** to future efforts.
- If you are not successful in the first year, do not give up. Time and persistence can change circumstances. Also, in the world of media or politics, a single event can dramatically alter the playing field (the election of a new government, a national tragedy).

Lesson

Campaigns are generally won in the most unglamorous ways—through thorough planning, preparation and execution. If properly prepared, your campaign will be able to achieve goals, respond to attacks, and capitalize on opportunities.

Evaluation

Any and every campaign must be evaluated for its effectiveness and impact. Advocates must have some measure to judge whether to continue their efforts, to modify, or to cease them. Evaluation is a sign of campaign maturity because it means that a systematic effort has been planned and implemented and an assessment of the results can be made.

In determining the effectiveness and impact of any advocacy effort, three areas should be considered—process, media, and policy. Both the mundane and lofty should be considered since success is often realized through a combination of vision, hard work, organization and luck.

The following questions should be asked:

Question 1 - Process

Was the campaign successful in mobilizing individuals, organizations, associations, and entities previously absent from the effort? Was the campaign expanded beyond its traditional supporters and were new allies created? Was there a tangible outcome from reaching out to new constituencies? A public letter? A public pledge? A meeting? A statement of support? An e-mail alert? A meeting between constituencies and government? A meeting between allies and media?

Question 2 - Media

Was the campaign successful in increasing the media attention paid to the issue? In other words, did the effort result in more press? A better understanding of the issue? Were more reporters/writers/producers/directors/publications/outlets reached than before the campaign began? What were the results, segmented by outlet (electronic vs. print; editorial vs. news)? Were new media (Internet, e-mail, text messaging) used? Is there a more comprehensive press list? Is there a fax and e-mail list?

Question 3 - Policy

Was the campaign successful in achieving all or part of its policy goals? Are there new advocates in government? In the national legislature? Is contraceptive security now part of a party's platform? Are there indications of support? Modified language from government? Partial support? An impact or financing study called for? What were the results of meetings with the government/national legislature?

It is important to realize that advocacy campaigns can take years to fully reach their policy goals. Often the speed of success is influenced by political, national or human-interest events. And while it is always critical to strive to achieve the central policy goal (Question 3), the building blocks of success are more than likely increasing the size and strength of your coalition (Question 1) and awareness





of the issue (Question 2). Put another way, the successful accomplishment of Questions 1 + Question 2 leads to achieving Question 3.

Lesson

Evaluating your campaign will provide an important list of accomplishments, areas for improvement, and inspiration for the future.

Lessons

Lesson 1:

The media is one of society's most powerful institutions and must therefore be a part of any campaign to change or influence public policy.

Lesson 2:

Opinion elites are society's governmental, religious, community, business, media, and philanthropic leaders and they are, or can be, influential in shaping public policy. They can often be persuaded through pressure applied through the media.

Lesson 3:

The larger goal of contraceptive security is not realistic and will not excite the mainstream media. A different, smaller, more concrete goal must be the focus of an advocacy campaign that will engage the media.

Lesson 4:

Determine the media outlets most important to your target audience. These outlets are the ones that you will try hardest to influence.

Lesson 5:

Define your campaign's "call to action." This summarizes what you want policymakers to do in support of your cause.

Lesson 6:

Identify individuals or organizations that are respected or important figures in your country and enlist them in your campaign in some way. These "opinion elites" can be influential with their peer "opinion leaders" and the targets of your campaign.

Lesson 7:

Identify who your opposition is and why they are opposed. Then, construct an effective and appropriate response that you can deploy if and when needed.

Lesson 8:

Campaigns are generally won in the most unglamorous of ways—through thorough planning, preparation and execution. If properly prepared, your campaign will be able to achieve goals, respond to attacks, and capitalize on opportunities.

Lesson 9:

Evaluating your campaign will provide an important list of accomplishments, areas for improvement, and inspiration for the future.



Resources

Alan Guttmacher Institute
www.agi.org

A Better World for All
<http://www.paris21.org/betterworld/home.htm>

Commercial Market Strategies
www.cmsprojects.com

DELIVER
www.deliver.jsi.com

John Snow International
www.jsi.org

Family Health International
www.fhi.org

The Futures Group
www.futuresgroup.com

International Center for
Research on Women
www.icrw.org

International Planned
Parenthood Federation
www.ippf.org

International Women's Health
Coalition
www.iwhc.org

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School
of Public Health/Center for
Communication Programs
www.jhuccp.org

USAID
www.usaid.gov

POLICY
www.policyproject.com

Population Action International
www.populationaction.org

Resource Flows
www.resourceflows.org

The Supply Initiative
www.rhsupplies.org

UNFPA
www.unfpa.org

United Nations
www.un.org

United Nations Development
Program
www.undp.org

World Leaders Supporting
the ICPD
www.icpdleadersstatement.net



International Calendar

March 8

International Women's Day

March 14-April 22

61st Session of UN Commission on Human Rights, Geneva, Switzerland

March 24

World Tuberculosis Day

April 7

World Health Day

April 15-17

Global Youth Service Day

April 16-17

World Bank Group and IMF Spring Meetings, Washington, DC

April 22

Earth Day

April 24-30

Global Education Week

May 3

World Press Freedom Day

May 16 - 25

WHO World Health Assembly, Geneva

June 20

World Refugee Day

June 26

International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking

June 26

International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

July 11

World Population Day

August 12

International Youth Day

September

*UN 60th Anniversary
UNFPA State of the World's Population Report Release*

September 13-December

UN General Assembly, New York

September 14-16

UN Millennium +5 Summit, New York

October 17

International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

October 24

*United Nations Day
World Development Information Day*

November 16

International Day for Tolerance

November 20

Universal Children's Day

December

Release of UNICEF's State of the World's Children Report

December 1

World AIDS Day

December 5-9

International Conference on HIV/AIDS and STIs in Africa, Abuja, Nigeria

December 10

Human Rights Day

