
# the evaluation exchange

Harvard Family Research Project ■ Harvard Graduate School of Education ■ Emerging Strategies in Evaluating Child & Family Services ■ Vol. VII, No. 1 ■ Winter 2001


## from the director's desk

We all know how effective good advertising can be, for better or for worse. It can help us to make good consumer decisions or make us want french fries in spite of our New Year's resolution. But as one recent Boston subway campaign from the Horizons Initiative put it so well, "A cute kid on TV can get you to spend $900 on tires. Can one on a poster get you to spend two hours with homeless kids?"

Advertisements like this are an important element of strategic communications campaigns, asking audiences to think about the important issues that face families and children. As programs work to meet needs, achieve social change and influence policy, a strategic communications campaign is a critical means of educating the public about a problem and the specific ways in which they can invest in the solution, be it through volunteering two hours a week, writing a legislator a letter or buckling a seatbelt.

Strategic communications, as we understand it, encompasses a broad range of activities. Communications campaigns can include subway and television ads, grassroots organizing, coalition-building at the local and national levels, large-scale campaigns to change attitudes and behaviors, such as smoking, and strategies to build public will to increase investments in early care and education, just to name a few. We have discovered through our exploration that strategic communications and the related field of social marketing are too large to cover in one edition of a newsletter. Our goal is to articulate a vision for the integration of strategic communications and efforts to evaluate them into the work of nonprofits. This vision has been greatly enhanced by our interviews with prominent people in the field, including the contributors to this issue. We begin what we hope will be an ongoing conversation about the role and value of strategic communications by focusing this edition on important issues for programs to consider as they implement and evaluate strategic communications campaigns.

Our investigation shows that more and more nonprofits are struggling to develop strategic communications capacity and to use it as a tool to help achieve their service, public policy and fund raising goals. Just as there is a continuum of integration of evaluation into programs, there is a continuum for strategic communications. Evaluators have argued long and hard — and successfully — for the incorporation of evaluation from the outset of a program or initiative. Our conversations with those in the strategic communications field, such as Elizabeth Heid Thompson of Sutton Social Marketing, Pat Lewis of The Communications Network and Lori Dorfman of the Berkeley Media Studies Group, suggest that nonprofits and others increasingly understand the importance of inviting the strategic communications expert to the table, along with the evaluator, at the very first planning meetings.

With this comes the challenge of evaluating the contribution of the communications strategy components and of examining their value-added. As Elizabeth Heid Thompson pointed out, an evaluator who does not include the strategic communications aspect of the program or initiative misses many important means by which outcomes may be achieved. Efforts to address these challenges are in their infancy. It is our sense that the integration of evaluation efforts that provide information for planning and continuous improvement, as well as for assessment of impact, is critical to support and assess strategic communications work. Therefore, the articles in this issue range from the basics of how to use organizational learning to prepare for strategic communications planning and the ABCs of making a strategic plan to examples of large scale, complex research and coalition-building initiatives in which strategic communications is incorporated from the early planning stages.

This issue of *The Evaluation Exchange* is designed both to acquaint those less familiar with strategic communications with the framework and basic concepts, and for those more familiar, to describe an array of applications and campaigns within the child, youth and family arenas. We have also made a special effort to assemble for our readers some of the best resources for learning more about strategic communications in the New & Noteworthy section.

We will continue to explore the role of evaluation and value-added of strategic communications in efforts to inform and build public will to improve outcomes for children and families in future issues. Please give us your feedback on this issue and alert us to useful examples and resources to include in future ones.

Heather

**Heather B. Weiss, Ed.D.**
**Founder & Director**

## in this issue

the
evaluation
exchange




Published by
Harvard Family Research Project
Harvard Graduate School of Education

 The Harvard Family Research Project gratefully acknowledges the support of the Heinz Endowments, the F.B. Heron Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and the Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation. The contents of this publication are solely the responsibility of the Harvard Family Research Project and do not necessarily reflect the views of its funders.

*The Evaluation Exchange* accepts contributions from policy makers, practitioners and researchers in evaluation and related fields. Contributions are welcome for regular *Evaluation Exchange* columns, as well as articles that highlight the training component of evaluation practice.

Please send a query letter outlining your proposed article to:

**Leslie Goodyear**
Harvard Family Research Project
38 Concord Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
e-mail: leslie_goodyear@harvard.edu

# > campaigns to watch

**The California Wellness Foundation** awards grants for health promotion, wellness education and disease prevention programs throughout California, with general grantmaking centered around five priority areas: community health, population health improvement, teenage pregnancy prevention, violence prevention and work and health. Programs funded by the California Wellness Foundation include "Wellness Villages," broad-based neighborhood health improvement projects that solicit the interests of residents and local youth. Ten communities throughout California have each been awarded $1,050,000 for this initiative. For more information, contact: The California Wellness Foundation, 6320 Canoga Avenue, Suite 1700, Woodland Hills, CA 91367. **http://www.tcwf.org**

**Connect for Kids** is an award-winning project of the Benton Foundation, and its Web site targets adults - parents, grandparents, educators, policy makers and others - who want to become more active on behalf of kids in their communities. The Connect for Kids team is made up of children's experts, journalists and communications specialists who use the latest research on the status of children and studies in communications to provide timely information to interested adults. **http://www.connectforkids.org**

**The Early Care and Education Collaborative** is a multi-year project of five state-based child advocacy organizations and five national organizations working to design and implement public education strategies aimed at expanding the supply and quality of early care and education resources. **http://www.earlycare.org**

**Fenton Communications** is publishing *Communicating for Social Change,* an overview guide that walks through nine components that make up successful communications efforts. Fenton interviewed more than 40 communications experts and the guide includes quotes and case studies. *Communicating for Social Change* is sponsored by the David and Lucile Packard Foundation; copies will be available in late March, 2001. Groups interested in receiving a copy should e-mail Fenton through their Web site, or call 202-822-5200. **http://www.fenton.com**

The **I Am Your Child** campaign seeks to raise public awareness of the importance of the first three years of life and to increase the supply of and access to quality child development programs. Through state coalitions and partnerships with national organizations, the campaign provides information and resources on healthy youth development and school readiness. **http://www.iamyourchild.org**

A collaboration of Children's Defense Fund, the Children's Partnership and Children Now (CA), the **100% Campaign** is an effort to ensure that all of California's children obtain the health care coverage they need to grow up healthy and strong. The 100% Campaign conducts policy research and analysis and uses this information to develop a strategy for informing policy makers and advocates to develop effective system changes to health care coverage. **http://www.100percentcampaign.org**

**Zero To Three** promotes the healthy development of infants and toddlers by supporting and strengthening families, communities and those who work on their behalf. They communicate research and best practices, promote beneficial policies and practices and provide training, technical assistance and leadership development. Additionally, Zero To Three sponsored a 2000 survey of 3,000 adults and parents that measured their knowledge of child development. **http://www.zerotothree.org**

Special thanks to the following people who helped frame this issue of **The Evaluation Exchange**

**Elaine Arkin**, health communication consultant, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; **Lisa Deal**, program officer, David and Lucile Packard Foundation; **Lori Dorfman**, director, Berkeley Media Studies Group, Public Health Institute; **Elizabeth Heid Thompson**, vice president, Sutton Social Marketing; **Pat Lewis**, former director, The Communications Network; **Patricia Patrizi**, chair, Evaluation Roundtable and Improving the Practices of Philanthropy Project, OMG Center for Collaborative Learning; **Tom Reis**, venture philanthropy director, W.K. Kellogg Foundation; **David Smith**, senior vice president, Greer, Margolis, Mitchell, Burns & Associates; **Phil Sparks**, vice president, Communications Consortium Media Center.

# Pitching Policy Change

In previous issues of *The Evaluation Exchange*, we have written about the development and evaluation of such complex projects as comprehensive community initiatives.[1] Many of these endeavors are developed with broad-based change in mind and may be both multi-site and multi-level. In this article, we present some of the challenges voiced by communications experts in interviews about the use and evaluation of mass media initiatives.

With growing demand for accountability and fierce competition for funding, nonprofit organizations and foundations are increasingly looking for ways to use information to their advantage. To a great extent, the capacity of social sector organizations to achieve their visions and goals lies in how effectively they communicate. Whether proposing a plan to a board of directors or initiating a large-scale media campaign, how programs and initiatives develop, package and deliver information impacts their chances of success. Hence, *strategic communications* has become an organizational function that is difficult to live without. Knowing that the media's influence is not likely to wane in the near future, we believe more work is needed to guide the development and evaluation of communications initiatives. Based on investigations into the literature and interviews with communications experts, this article presents our understanding of the role of strategic communications in nonprofits and the challenges faced by those charged with evaluating campaigns.

With a call for evaluation designs that foster learning among stakeholders and with the ever-present accountability demands that programs, evaluators and foundations face, the need for clear thinking on this topic has never been greater.

Frank Karel, vice president for communications at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, defines strategic communications as "the managed process by which information is produced and conveyed to achieve specific objectives vital to an organization's mission."[2] While this definition sounds simple, it encompasses a broad range of activities — from grassroots organizing and coalition-building to local and national campaigns using mass media to convey messages to the public. For the purposes of this article, we focus on the use of mass media initiatives to deliver public will-building messages and the importance of incorporating evaluation into the process of planning and implementing all aspects of a strategic communications campaign.

Most social sector organizations deliver more than just a service; they strive to improve people's lives. A social change mission is also at stake, requiring the use of communications strategies to generate public demand and increased investment in initiatives and programs. While it is indeed a challenge to produce and convey information that increases the likelihood that an organization's social change mission will be accomplished, even more complex is how that process and its intended effects in the political realm are evaluated.

Large scale strategic communications initiatives with a mass media component also reflect complexity in at least three ways. First, they often connect and integrate different types of activities that are required for broad-based change. Second, they operate within a context in which it is impossible to clearly link cause and effect. Last, and perhaps most importantly, strategic communications cannot be divorced from an organization's overall goals and objectives.

An example of this kind of complexity is the California Children and Families Commission (CCFC), which is responsible for the implementation of the California Children and Families First Act (Proposition 10) and is charged with implementing a systems-change strategy to ensure that children ages birth to five receive the services they need. In keeping with their mission, they have identified five sequential building blocks necessary to achieve their mission and goals.[3] Two of these building blocks, "Changing Public Awareness: Public Education and Outreach" and "Improving Public Policy: Policy Development and Advocacy," each have their own strategy but are not divorced from overall CCFC mission and goals.

### Who Sets the Public Agenda?

During the early to mid-20th century, scholars such as Walter Lippman and Bernard Cohen pioneered the early thinking on what we now know as "agenda-setting." Lippman observed that the media give priority to certain issues over others, essentially acting as gatekeepers between the world's events and what the public actually sees. Furthermore, Cohen observed that the press was not necessarily adept at telling people what to think, yet was successful in telling people what they should think about, ultimately setting the public agenda.[4] Paul Lazersfeld demonstrated the impact of the media from another perspective, suggesting that the media often influence only a few opinion leaders or "elites" who, in turn, impart their knowledge to the public.[5]

Building on this base, a number of complex time series analyses have been conducted more recently that show that public opinion seems to follow, not lead, the agenda set by the press.[6] Moreover, experiments by Shanto Iyengar and David Kinder show that the public's concern about issues and the importance they assign to those issues follows quickly on the tail of the attention paid to those issues by the national media.[7]

But how often the media, and television news in particular, present an issue can and does have an impact on the attitudes and responses that are elicited from the public.[8] The more attention that the media pay to an issue or candidate, the more that issue is *primed*. How an issue is *framed* — the subtle differences in the presentation of a question, statement or problem that will elicit different responses and attitudes — also affects how people come to their opinions. The importance people attribute to social issues depends on a complex and subtle combination of elements, including problem and solution presentation and the identity of the message's deliverer.

While working to influence what lands on the *public* agenda requires a well-articulated and implemented strategy, those using the mass media to accomplish policy goals need to understand the factors that impact what lands on the *policy* agenda. The agenda-setting process is now thought to encompass media, public and policy agenda-setting.[9]

Although factors such as interest groups impact what ultimately appears on the policy agenda, evidence has shown that "public opinion is often a



*continued >*

> continued from page 3

proximate cause of policy, affecting policy more than policy influences opinion."[10] Given that public opinion is such a strong predictor of policy makers' decision making, it is not surprising that mass media initiatives are used by organizations as a method to achieve their larger organizational goals. The powerful influence of the news media, particularly television news, provides the incentive to develop activities that will influence their coverage of issues. Yet the convergence of multiple factors that impact the ability to achieve desired outcomes can create complexity and confusion for those seeking to plan, implement and evaluate such initiatives.

## Influencing the Public Agenda

### *Designing and Evaluating Mass Media Initiatives*

Media campaigns aimed at changing certain attitudes and behaviors have shown some results; however, changes in public opinion and policy are a challenge to measure.[11] Although it is difficult to link cause and effect in the evaluation of mass media initiatives, it is important to invest in understanding the role that the initiatives play in shaping public will and policy.

Evaluators of mass media initiatives face significant challenges. Those engaging in projects aimed at influencing public will need to show that the investments made in strategic communications have been well spent while funders and their boards will want to know how media efforts contributed to larger institutional and programmatic goals. How can these initiatives be approached in a way that takes into account the many activities required, the multiple media channels used (news, advertising, entertainment) and the organizational and political contexts within which the initiative operates?

### *Articulating a Complex Strategy and its Outcomes*

At a minimum, when considering a media initiative, it is critical to articulate why it is needed and what purpose it serves. Time should be taken at the outset to articulate what the strategy will be, including desired outcomes, how these outcomes and the initiative reflect and promote the mission of the organization, how key outcomes will be achieved and what contextual factors may impact that process.

Reflecting on our discussion of agenda-setting, a long-term goal, such as policy change or an increase in public investment, may take years to accomplish. In this era of accountability, there will undoubtedly be pressure to show results much earlier. Building a case along the way — with demonstrable and measurable intermediate outcomes — that strategic media interventions targeted at public opinion contributed to a change in public will and policy is key to demonstrating the value of mass media initiatives and strategic communications campaigns.

Therefore, knowing what outcomes are needed one year from now — intermediate outcomes — to make other outcomes possible two to five years out is an important aspect of developing a logical and coherent strategy. If the purpose of the mass media initiative is to ultimately increase public funding for a particular cause (long-term outcome), what must be accomplished in the interim to make that possible? Whose awareness needs to be raised? Which opinion leaders must be convinced of the validity of the cause? And how will these challenges affect an organization that is trying to accomplish these objectives?

### *Matching the Outcomes to the Mass Media Initiative Strategy*

In evaluating complex mass media initiatives with multiple variables, there may be a tendency to go with the "usual suspects" in terms of outcomes, as suggested by communications expert Susan Bales, who raises the point that evaluators often tend to measure the "measurable." Counting messages delivered without clearly thinking through what the right outcomes and appropriate approaches are for measuring desired outcomes substitutes outputs for outcomes. These include outputs such as the number of op-eds placed in the paper or the number of pamphlets distributed. Although outputs may be important, they are not replacements for outcomes. Measuring process is important too; one useful approach may be to look at whether op-eds supported a reframing of the issue consistent with the initiative's mission.

Public opinion is a common outcome measured by evaluators of mass media initiatives. Before embarking on an evaluation procedure to measure public opinion, a critical question to ask is whether the mass media initiative is designed to make great shifts in public opinion on an issue or merely get the issue on the public agenda, providing information to encourage new ways to think about the issue. Which path the initiative chooses — moving public opinion or informing an audience — has significant implications for the specific goals, objectives and outcomes that are articulated early on, and, therefore, what outcomes are ultimately measured.

The issue of early care and education illustrates an approach that highlights how encouraging new ways of thinking about an issue can be used as a strategy to spur future investment. As seen in recent polls and as a result of being exposed to important findings from recent brain research, the public now acknowledges that learning begins at birth; the public does not, however, always connect these developmental findings with the need for quality early care and education. Furthermore, the public does not always support increases in early care and education funding if they perceive that funding will be shifted from primary school education.[12] Thus, strategists are now considering how to reframe the concept of early care and education so it is viewed as part of a continuum of learning that starts at birth and proceeds through elementary school. Strategists hope that, by connecting early care and education more closely with the concept of primary education, public support of increased investment for education during the birth to five age span will grow.

### *Applying Information During Planning and Implementation*

With the strategy and outcomes articulated, the process of planning for and implementing a mass media initiative should acknowledge the value of applying research-generated information at the start of planning and during implementation with the help of the formative evaluation process. Overall, evaluating complex mass media initiatives and strategic communications campaigns is not very different from evaluating large, complex program and policy initiatives. As in any complex evaluation, it is important to be aware of the cycle of evaluation in which formative research — such as needs assessments or market research — leads to intervention design, which is accompanied and followed by evaluation and course correction and re-design for ongoing continuous improvement.

There is much to be learned from those in the field who are implementing communications initiatives as well as from the different approaches to evaluation that have been applied to other complex initiatives. With a call for evaluation designs that foster learning among stakeholders, and with the ever-present accountability demands that programs, evaluators and foundations face, the need for clear thinking on this topic has never been greater. ■

**Marielle Bohan-Baker**, HFRP, research associate



footnotes and citations on page 19 >

How can organizations build capacity to engage in strategic communications campaigns? **Jacqueline Dugery** of the **Pew Partnership for Civic Change** offers some innovative ways to build on organizational learning.



# Coming of Age *in the* Information Age

We live in an information age that is set to transform the prospects of communities. In-boxes, both real and virtual, overflow with research from think tanks, foundations, national organizations and university research centers about "what works" to build strong communities. Packaged in various shapes and sizes — reports, newsletters, issue briefs, how-to guides — such information creates knowledge and builds the capacity of nonprofit practitioners to develop and strengthen their organizations and programs. On any given day, the following may cross a nonprofit practitioner's desk: a report on evaluation findings that suggests a new program design or intervention; a Web site featuring current information on a specific field to keep practitioners abreast of new developments, trends and possible grant opportunities; and issue briefs that synthesize recent research in a particular area. The link between knowledge and practice is clear.

Perhaps less obvious is the potential of fusing information and knowledge gathering with an organization's strategic communications work. In fact, both are essential precursors to any communications effort. Deliberately integrating knowledge with fundraising, marketing, community awareness campaigns and membership recruitment efforts will yield significant dividends for an organization's communications efforts. However, simply increasing quantity and accessibility of information is no guarantee that those seeking knowledge can find it and find it useful. Accessing, absorbing and applying information require considerable investments of time — something that is often in short supply in the nonprofit practitioner community.

To understand the process of knowledge creation, the Pew Partnership for Civic Change launched a series of focus groups with nonprofit practitioners from San Antonio, Texas, St. Louis, Missouri, and Baltimore, Maryland, to sharpen our understanding of how this group accesses the information they need to enhance their programs. Specifically, we wanted to know:

- Current learning approaches and activities of the nonprofit sector
- How nonprofits create, manage and apply knowledge
- Preferred ways nonprofits receive information
- What nonprofits want to become better learners

### Findings

Several key findings from the focus groups provide a snapshot of the challenges facing the nonprofit practitioner trying to manage the latest information while also providing quality services and keeping the lights on.

- Nonprofit practitioners are struggling, often in isolation, against a dizzying glut of information. They are surrounded by masses of useful information but day-to-day activities preclude them from tapping into it. Stacks of unread reports, articles, and listserv messages stimulate a nagging sense of inadequacy about their work. Frustration builds when practitioners know that the information that they need is out there but do not know how to get to it quickly.
- Most nonprofits have not integrated a systematic learning process into their organizations' culture to deal with information. Instead, they rely on "periodic learning" — a hybrid of continuous and just-in-time learning. Periodic learning rarely targets long-term issues or challenges facing the organization.
- For most nonprofits, direct one-on-one contact with someone they trust — usually other nonprofit practitioners and parent organizations — is the preferred method of accessing needed information. Low on the list were conferences and workshop training, except for networking "hallway conversations."
- Learning is often equated exclusively with organizational development and basic program evaluation issues. Nonprofits focus their scarce learning time on issues such as strategic planning, board development and fundraising and struggle in their efforts to develop better data collection processes and measurement tools. Rarely did practitioners find time to invest in learning how to develop new programs and strategies so that their organization could continue to fulfill its mission.

For those who create and disseminate information for the nonprofit sector, these findings may suggest a dismal picture — practitioners overwhelmed by day-to-day work and often unable to ferret out and apply the information they need to deliver services. However, the focus group participants were eager to both acknowledge the inefficiencies in their learning processes and suggest solutions. Two potential solutions — a knowledge broker and a learning collaborative — were developed by focus group participants.

### Knowledge Broker

High on the wish list for practitioners is a trustworthy local source who can open doors to the best-known and most current information — a knowledge broker. The knowledge broker's role would be similar to that of an agricultural extension agent. As the client, the practitioner would set the learning agenda, identify how the agenda fits into the organization's short- and long-term goals, articulate the organization's strengths and weaknesses vis-à-vis learning and identify viable strategies for disseminating information within the organization once received. The broker's role would be to sort through, synthesize and translate information tailored to the interests and needs of the organization. Success would rely on the ability of the practitioner and broker to develop a process that supports continual — rather than piecemeal and erratic — learning. By reacting specifically to the interests identified by the organization, the knowledge broker ensures that the information is relevant to the organization.



*continued on page 6 >*

> *continued from page 5*

Who would these knowledge brokers be and where would they come from? For starters, they would be experts in a particular issue, such as youth development or media communications, adept at accessing and delivering a range of research on a particular topic in a timely manner. On the soft-skills side, they would also be trained to develop long-term relationships with nonprofit practitioners. Frequent visits and regular phone contact would ensure that the brokers develop sensitivity to organizations' operating environment, taking into account their time constraints, budget issues and community contexts. An organization interested in amplifying their message to constituents might, for example, consider a knowledge broker with media relations skills. Depending on the organization's needs, the broker might suggest specific vehicles for a message, develop a framework for researching key audiences and identify possible tools for tracking the impact of selected communication strategies. The value of the broker rests on his or her ability to synthesize and translate information for the practitioner in a way that efficiently captures and transfers knowledge.

In all likelihood, every community already has formal or informal knowledge brokers. Possible sources for knowledge brokers might include local universities or colleges, retired nonprofit practitioners, independent consultants or foundations. Practitioners could also be encouraged to consider the "unusual suspects"— those not traditionally tapped by their community. Our focus group participants indicated that the private sector and local government agencies are often underutilized resources.

### Learning Collaborative

The second suggestion raised by the focus group participants was a learning collaborative or learning team. The collaborative would consist of individuals from within the same organization or a cross-section of individuals from different organizations. In contrast to the knowledge broker, the responsibility for learning would be shared by each member. This strategy is hardly revolutionary. In the medical profession, for example, residents often convene regularly to discuss recent research findings. Members take responsibility for synthesizing and presenting one professional journal article to the group, obviating the need for each individual to read every article that crosses his or her desk. For instance, a collaborative may develop a learning agenda that focuses on effective media campaigns. One member might be responsible for identifying several examples of successful public awareness campaigns while another may focus on how to identify the most appropriate vehicle for the message and yet another may be charged with summarizing methodologies for evaluating a media campaign.

There are several components that point to the viability of a successful learning collaborative. First, there is a built-in incentive for members to participate. Second, meetings are regularly scheduled and are considered "part of doing business." Third, the collaborative is doing more than updating colleagues on recent activities — it aims at specific and longer-term learning.

The potential for introducing knowledge brokers and learning collaboratives would address several of the challenges raised by nonprofit practitioners by introducing a regular, methodical learning process and focus to the nonprofit organization. Through synthesis and sharing, practitioners would be able to maximize their learning time and both meet their desire for personal contact and receive tailored support from a trusted source. Collaborations and knowledge brokers would help break the isolation that nonprofit practitioners often operate in, particularly when it comes to learning, and both hold promise for decreasing the frustration that comes from not being able to access needed information. A final added benefit is a likely increase in practitioners' sense of efficacy and control.

With support from their stakeholders — board members, funders, and other practitioners in their communities — nonprofit organizations are poised to do more than just harness the information age. They are willing and enthusiastic learners ready to *come of age*.

Introducing these concepts would be neither quick nor simple. Both money and time would be required, as would a change in practitioners' mindset. We know that organizations, when faced with the choice, opt for doing rather than analyzing. However, with support from their stakeholders — board members, funders, and other practitioners in their communities — nonprofit organizations are poised to do more than just harness the information age. They are willing and enthusiastic learners ready to *come of age*.

This article is based on a report, *Coming of Age in the Information Age*. It is available to download from the Pew Partnership for Civic Change Web site, www.pew-partnership.org. Copies may be requested from mail@pew-partnership.org or (804) 971-2073. ■

**Jacqueline Dugery, director of program research**
The Pew Partnership for Civic Change
5 Boar's Head Lane, Suite 100
Charlottesville, Virginia 22903

e-mail: dugery@pew-partnership.org

**NCPTP director Sarah Brown** describes the unique way in which the Campaign has enlisted the support of "unusual suspects" in its efforts to improve child well-being and reduce child poverty.

# Engaging the Media as Partners in Teen Pregnancy Prevention

Despite recent encouraging declines, the rates of teen pregnancy and birth in this country remain very troubling. Every year, almost one million teenage girls become pregnant, with four in ten girls experiencing at least one pregnancy before age 20. The teen pregnancy and birth rates in the United States are the highest of any fully industrialized nation. Simply put, too many young people are having babies they are ill-prepared to raise — a burden that limits their ability to participate fully in American life and places their children at greater risk from the beginning.

With this sobering backdrop, the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy was organized in 1996 by a diverse group of individuals who concluded that reducing the nation's rate of teen pregnancy was one of the most strategic and direct means available to improve child well-being and reduce persistent child poverty. In an effort to provide a benchmark against which progress could be measured, the Campaign set a specific goal of reducing the teen pregnancy rate in the U.S. by one-third by 2005. To achieve its objectives, the Campaign adopted a two part strategy: (1) Building a more coordinated and effective grassroots movement by working with states and local communities and (2) influencing cultural values and messages by working with the entertainment media, parents, faith communities, teens and others.

### Campaign Strategy

The first strategy centers on working with people in states and communities. We provide research and data they can use in their programs or coalitions and direct technical assistance through site visits and regional conferences. We give them new ideas and contacts and help them find effective ways to reduce teen pregnancy in their unique settings. The second strategy is more visible and highly-leveraged, involving a broad scale effort to influence social norms primarily through the entertainment media viewed by teens and their parents. Our rationale for targeting the entertainment media is based on a straightforward idea: no small non-profit group — or even large non-profit — will ever have the resources to communicate its core ideas powerfully and frequently enough to its target audiences through the usual method of programs and pamphlets. The problem of teen pregnancy is simply too big and diverse. Therefore, enlisting the help of entertainment media is essential to conveying important ideas often to an audience that is paying close attention.

It's fine to work with states and communities to make their efforts more research-based, more media savvy, more tolerant of differing views and diverse in the types of remedies offered. But doing so will be a hollow exercise if the entire culture, especially popular teen culture, is sending kids messages that getting pregnant at a young age is no big deal, that having sex rarely has consequences and that parents can't do anything about their children's sexual attitudes and behavior. Although the media cannot solve the problem of teen pregnancy alone, we know that we can't solve it without them.

### The Campaign's Approach and Organization

The Campaign's overall approach at both the national and local levels is distinctive. We are non-ideological and have worked hard to reduce the conflict that too often has impeded action on this issue. Second, we rely extensively on high-quality research to inform everything we do. And third, we are working in highly-leveraged ways with some of the most powerful individuals and organizations in the country to change young people's lives.

The Campaign's organization is also unique. In the five years since it was established, the National Campaign has assembled a distinguished Board of Directors, many of whom might fairly be seen as "outsiders" in the world of adolescent reproductive health (i.e. John E. Pepper, Chairman, Board of Directors, Procter & Gamble Company, Stephen W. Sanger, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, General Mills, Inc., and Bruce Rosenblum, Executive Vice President, Television, Warner Brothers). This diverse Board reflects the Campaign's strong belief that, if this country is to make real progress in reducing rates of adolescent pregnancy, we must involve more than just the "usual suspects."

Additionally, the Campaign has:

- maintained bipartisan leadership groups in both the House and Senate with equal numbers of republicans and democrats on each panel;
- established a Youth Leadership Team to foster greater involvement of youth in teen pregnancy prevention on a national level and in communities and to ensure that teen voices are reflected in the Campaign's programs and messages; and
- enjoyed the support of four advisory groups' "task forces" made up of 75 leaders in the areas of media, research, religion and public values, and state and local action.

### The Campaign's Media Program

Our media programs are centered on helping the entertainment media to be part of the solution to high levels of teen pregnancy. Our goal is to integrate prevention messages into the popular media as a way to reinforce the messages that young people are hearing in local prevention programs, in schools and from their parents — and, in some cases, as a way to introduce the topic to those who may not hear about it any other way. We know from public opinion polling and other research that, although teens prefer to hear about sex and pregnancy prevention from their parents, they most often learn about it from the media. While entertainment media leaders do not see themselves as teachers, many do understand the enormous potential they have to educate, deliver helpful messages and shape behavior.



*continued on page 8 >*

> *continued from page 7*

Since the Campaign's beginning, the number of media partners with whom we work has increased exponentially. We estimate that, since the Campaign's inception, we have worked with more than 53 media partners and are actively working with 27 of them. We believe that the primary reason for this growth is that we offer a variety of messages about preventing teen pregnancy — from encouraging abstinence among young teens to offering frank advice about contraception to showcasing good parent-child communication. We also work hard to find new and interesting angles on the issue so that we remain relevant in their view. Most importantly, our solid grounding in research and the inclusion of teenagers' views and voices keeps what we are doing fresh and interesting to our media partners. They, in turn, deliver the information to their audiences through their programs, magazines, and Web sites in their own style, language and format.

> Although the media cannot solve the problem of teen pregnancy alone, we know we can't solve it without them.

The primary way we engage media leaders is to offer briefings to key editors, script writers, and producers. We gain access to these key people through introductions arranged by members of the Campaign's media task force and board. These briefings are carefully tailored for the specific show or magazine meeting with us. Such sessions are typically followed by additional informal communication as the writers develop ideas, ask questions and need data. Over the past three years, we held 62 briefings for individual shows and magazines; these have resulted in our messages appearing in programs and magazines that reach more than 250 million viewers and readers nationwide. For example, *Teen People*, a top-rated teen magazine with a circulation of eight million teens per month and our partner since its inception in 1998, has run six editorial features on issues related to teen pregnancy in 2000 alone. The magazine's November, 2000, issue, for example, featured the winners of our second annual public service advertising contest for teens, and winning entries were made into postcards and distributed nationwide. In June, *Teen People* editors hosted the opening session of our Youth Leadership Team meeting and in May, the magazine included an excerpt from *Voices Carry*, a Campaign publication that the magazine's 7000 teen "trendspotters" helped develop. In its year-end issue, *Teen People* identified teen pregnancy as *the* top issue of 2000.

Although influencing the content of media will continue to comprise the majority of the Campaign's media work, with the help of Ogilvy & Mather, a worldwide leader in advertising, we have developed a number of public service announcements that serve to draw attention to the issue, reinforce the messages in the content of other media, make teen pregnancy more relevant to those segments of teens and adults who are not thinking about it, and give the Campaign a useful, creative tool for communicating with young people, in particular, in language that resonates with them.

The Campaign's new PSA campaign for teens, *Sex Has Consequences*, was launched nationwide in October, 2000, with ads developed by Ogilvy & Mather that are part of an overall effort to last for the next three- to five years. The first phase of this effort is a hard-hitting series of print ads that reach teens in familiar language, with a peer-to-peer perspective, in a non-judgmental and realistic way. Rather than offering more information about how to avoid pregnancy, our PSAs aim to reach teens at the deepest emotional level, to motivate them to *want* to prevent pregnancy. Our intent was to create something different, bolder and more direct than other ad campaigns on teen pregnancy prevention have been. These ads cut through the clutter of the teen media environment and get the attention of young people who often do not have pregnancy prevention on their minds at all. While somewhat controversial among adults, the ads have tested extremely well among teen boys and girls from a variety of ethnic, economic, and geographic backgrounds in formal and informal focus groups, as well as with our Youth Leadership Team. In extensive focus group testing of the concepts and executions, young people affirmed that these ads accomplish our goal: sparking conversations among teens about the consequences of sex and helping them consider reasons to avoid pregnancy. Samples may be viewed on the Campaign's Web site (see below).

The Ad Council has distributed the ads to its list of 8,000 magazines and newspapers with information on how the publications can place the ads *pro bono*. Several teen publications, including *Teen People*, *MH-18, The Source, Cosmo Girl, Vibe,* and *Electronic Gaming Monthly,* are providing free placements in their publications. The ads have also been featured on several websites including Zaphealth.com, Ricki.com, and Oxygen Media's network of sites. Postcard versions of the ads have also been distributed nationwide in Tower Record stores and on 75 college campuses.

### Future Campaign Evaluation

An important part of the Campaign's future is to evaluate the impact of its work. From the beginning, it has been interested in continuously assessing whether it is making a difference. To this end, the Campaign collects performance measures for each organizational program area on a quarterly basis. We also collect feedback on specific activities within program areas such as our regional technical assistance conferences, and our new public service advertisements (currently being evaluated). In addition, through our ongoing relationship with the Harvard Business School (which recently prepared a case study about the Campaign) and our growing relationship with McKinsey and Company's new nonprofit consulting branch, the Campaign continues to be at the forefront of nonprofits attempting to evaluate their work. ■

**Sarah Brown, director**
National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy
1776 Massachusetts Avenue NW, suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20037

e-mail: campaign@teenpregnancy.org
www.teenpregnancy.org

Using an integrated self-assessment evaluation design, **KIDS COUNT** has incorporated strategic communications into its long-term vision to improve child well-being.

# KIDS COUNT Self-Assessment

## Bridging Evaluation with Strategic Communication of Data on Children & Families

In 1990, the Annie E. Casey Foundation embarked on the KIDS COUNT initiative to measure, state by state, the educational, social, economic, and physical well-being of children and families using the best available data. KIDS COUNT began at the national level with the annual production of the *KIDS COUNT Data Book*. In 1991, the Foundation began supporting state-level projects. The network of state level KIDS COUNT projects now includes all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

KIDS COUNT is more than numbers – it is about strategically communicating data to ensure that credible, reliable information provides the basis for informed decision-making about children and families. As such, state-level KIDS COUNT projects have made important contributions to the field of child well-being and to the evolution of data-based advocacy. Throughout the country, KIDS COUNT data are credited with influencing significant policy decisions to improve the condition of kids and families.

**But how do we know the true impact that KIDS COUNT data have on decision-making for children and families?**

In order to answer this question, the KIDS COUNT Network embarked on a process of Self-Assessment to review the internal functioning of each state-level project and evaluate the impact of that work on improving the lives of children and families. Underlying the entire effort is the principle of learning — if we learn more about what we do, how we do it, and the effects of our work, then we can become more effective and efficient communicators and better generate our desired outcomes.

**Self-Assessment: Evaluation of choice for KIDS COUNT**

In 1999, a Self-Assessment working group was formed, comprised of volunteers from the KIDS COUNT Network. Innovation Network, Inc. (InnoNet), an evaluation consulting firm in Washington, D.C., was hired to work with the group as it developed and implemented the Self-Assessment process. Throughout the evolution of this process, members of the KIDS COUNT Network have been involved, advising InnoNet on development and serving as pilot testers for each instrument and tool created. The full Network has been consulted at various junctures to ensure buy-in from the whole.

KIDS COUNT Self-Assessment includes two parts: a process and an outcome evaluation. This was important because, in order to understand and measure each project's outcomes and impact, the projects must better understand how they operate internally and how they might improve.

**Assessing the capacity and internal structures of KIDS COUNT work**

For the process evaluation, a tool was developed to assess the capacity and internal structures of each project. The tool examined standard KIDS COUNT components: data collection and analysis, communications and dissemination, policy analysis, community and constituency mobilization and fund development/ sustainability. Status indicators are used to examine the activities within each component. Even though projects vary in structure, size and budget, the tool was constructed to accommodate the diversity within the Network.

The process evaluation tool is, in large part, a work plan document. As such, after each activity is assessed, projects use an *Action Steps* page to articulate the major challenges and solutions for items rated less than outstanding. By including the *Action Steps* page in the tool, projects are able to plan for improvements and changes rather than merely acknowledging areas for growth. For many KIDS COUNT projects, this process tool allows them to easily report their work and future plans to funders.

The process tool was successfully pilot-tested with 11 KIDS COUNT projects in December, 1999, and was rolled out to the full Network in February, 2000. By the end of 2000, 40 projects completed the process evaluation tool, actively using their results to implement improvements. Each process tool was analyzed by InnoNet, given an individual report and provided with a variety of ways to understand project specific results. While individual project results are confidential, aggregate results are compiled and reviewed by the Network and the Annie E. Casey Foundation to determine areas for technical assistance and training.

The most innovative feature of the process tool is the database of "thinking points" which help guide, rather than dictate, the direction of KIDS COUNT projects as they improve activities identified in their *Action Steps* pages. The "thinking points," phrased as questions, are derived from success stories within the Network and are intended to help frame potential improvements and solutions.

The responses to the process evaluation are encouraging. One KIDS COUNT project noted that the Self-Assessment helped identify weakness in the area of media communications, which was remedied by the hiring



continued on page 12 >

*A conversation with*

# Susan Nall Bales

*Susan Bales is president of the FrameWorks Institute, a Washington, D.C. based nonprofit that conducts communications research on social issues, helping advocates apply research to public education campaigns. She and her colleagues at the Institute have been instrumental in developing strategic frame analysis, a new appropach to communications research and practice. Prior to her work at FrameWorks, Bales served as director of strategic communications and children's issues at the Benton Foundation for six years and as VP for communications at the National Association of Children's Hospitals for four years. Bales also founded the Coalition for America's Children. A graduate of the University of California at Los Angeles, Bales received her MA degree from Middlebury College.*

**Q What is strategic frame analysis and how does it fit into an overall strategic communications approach?**

**A** I think doing communications strategically means recognizing that you come into an environment where people already have ways of understanding an issue, whether as a result of the way media framed it, from personal communication, or from cultural models that developed over time. You don't just walk out the door one day and say, "I have an issue that I want people to consider." It's important to understand that *the way* people already perceive an issue is part of what you may be up against.

And so, step number one is to identify what people already bring to the conversation that you want to have with them; and secondly, to consider the implications of the way they understand an issue for their policy preferences.

The other important part of strategic communications is to bring a little bit more social science into the art of communications. And that means understanding that strategic communications is about three principles: agenda-setting, framing and priming. It's about whether your issue is on the public agenda and how the media participates in putting it on or off the public agenda; how the nature of the way the issue is framed by the media either contributes to or impedes your getting it on the public agenda; and finally, whether your issue becomes a lens through which people evaluate candidates for public office or how other issues can serve as a useful lens on your issue.

I think that those three principles — agenda-setting, framing and priming — that come out of the social science literature are absolutely pivotal for advocates to understand as they approach communication. We teach them in our trainings so that advocates have a vocabulary for, and a sensibility to, the processes of communication.

**Q How does strategic framing fit in?**

**A** Well, framing is a concept that runs through the cognitive, social and behavioral sciences. For the work that my colleagues and I do, it allows us to bridge the differences among these various disciplines that study communications and policy preference, but have done so in isolation from each other. So, the great thing about the concept of framing is that, whether you're looking through the literature of anthropology, psychology, political science, linguistics or sociology, people have studied framing, and so it's a core concept.

Essentially, framing has to do with the way an issue is composed: the messengers, visuals and metaphors that are used to convey an idea. The cues that are given to people by the framing direct their reasoning about issues. Given this, it is vital that advocates understand the composition of the frame and what kinds of meta-messages or world views it calls into play. What we have tried to do in our work is to break down that frame; to deconstruct it and show people that, when you're talking about making news, you have a number of different variables you can manipulate. It's not just the message, it's the visual, metaphors and colorful language that are used. You can tell a story in many different ways and the more you know about which elements help and hurt your cause, the better you will be at telling a story about social policy.

> You can tell a story in many different ways - the more you know about which elements help and hurt your cause, the better you will be at telling a story about social policy.

Strategic frame analysis is really something that has been invented in the last five years by a group of communications scholars and practitioners getting together to compare the way that they look at communications. I would cite as part of that team, Frank Gilliam, with the Center for Communications and Community at UCLA; Meg Bostrum, a political strategist and public opinion expert, linguists George Lakoff at UC/Berkeley and Pamela Morgan, and Joseph Grady and Axel Aubrun, co-founders of Cultural Logic.

In my own work, as someone who's run communications campaigns for twenty-five years, I've tried to go back and develop a conversation between the various academic disciplines that ask how people think about social issues. I've added a more applied question, however: how can we change the communication in such a way that people will take another look at social problems? The result is strategic frame analysis, which is based in both theory and practice and attempts to continue that dialogue.

**Q What are some examples of methods used in strategic frame analysis?**

**A** Traditionally, people have invested in focus groups or surveys to answer these questions. We like to use a technique called "elicitations," which we find more useful in the early stages of an investigation. These are one-on-one interviews that allow people to talk about an issue while analysts look not so much for opinions as for the kind of models that they bring into the discussion to make sense of a particular issue. In talking about foreign policy, for example, do people really reason off of a "neighbor model"? In thinking about child care, do people see the day care center as an environment or a container?

Secondly, you have to understand the mediators, the places where people get their information on social issues. Increasingly, it's from local TV news. Understanding how the media tends to look at your issues is really important, and that doesn't take a lot of money to do. You know, you can do a pretty good content analysis by farming it out to people in your coalition and watching news for a week, taping it, and looking at how your issue plays out, if it's visible in any way. Or, following the work of the Center for Media and Public Affairs (www.cmpa.com) which tracks the media presentations of many social issues. I think any serious communicator on social issues should subscribe to their *Media Monitor*.

Our content analyses document the dominant frames of news coverage. But it's at this point, I think, that many people make a tactical mistake by attempting to mimic the news. They think, "If we could just get more news," or, "if we could just get our spin inserted into that news, we'd be winning." Instead, what you want to do is figure out how the dominant frames of news coverage are likely to affect public opinion and how you can change as many variables in the frame in order to get out a new message that is more likely to set up different policy preferences.

So we experiment with different elements of the frame and we manipulate those elements in experiments that Frank Gilliam conducts at UCLA. If you start using, for example, police officers to talk about early childhood education, or if you start using older people to talk about youth, will you get a different policy outcome? If you use the backdrop of the state capital to talk about children's oral health, will you cause people to say, "Wait a second. What does policy have to do with this? Why is this a legislative issue?"

Our methodology is divided between techniques we use to study and categorize the dominant frames that are currently affecting public understanding on a given issue, and then another set of techniques to determine whether our hypothetical "reframes" actually set up different policy choices. In essence, we've reconfigured the traditional investigation of "message" and added a number of new methods.

**Q** **In recent years, we have seen personal stories used to emotionally impact audiences, with the intent of spurring policy change. Could you explain the difference between this approach to communications, which you define as episodic, and the more thematic approach? What kinds of policy results are achieved through each approach?**

**A** Our perspective on this point owes a great deal to the work of Shanto Iyengar at Stanford University.

The critical point is whether you can insert into the discussion of any given issue some contextualization, something that broadens the frame so that it isn't a single episode about a single person and a single trouble that afflicts them, which does not lead to public policy solutions.

In the content analyses we've done lately on children's and youth issues over a six-week period, 97% of the coverage was episodic. What that means is that the coverage told the story of individual episodes that happened to individuals. These stories make no connection to causes or to consequences of those events.

So for a viewer that is not familiar with a particular social problem, what you see is a parade of individual stories that may be regrettable or might make you feel like somebody should do something. But it is more likely that you will write a check to a charity, if you do anything at all, and less likely that you will make the connection to policies that affect the conditions by which personal choices are constrained.

Alternatively, a thematic story looks at trends across time. It connects a current situation to what came before it, or it forecasts consequences. It tells a story in terms of the environment surrounding the person. It makes a link between conditions. And it helps people understand causality and the systems that determine outcomes.

So, for example, just to boil this down to essence, an episodic story would be about a violent child. A thematic story would be about the conditions in a neighborhood and what was available to a child other than violence. On this point, we have written a guide for advocates, outlining how to tell social policy stories in a different way, one that puts individuals in context and connects them to their environment.

**Q** **When developing a message, how important is it to connect the particular problem to a possible solution?**

**A** Oh, absolutely important. Because one of the problems we see, and this is especially true of children's issues, is that people are firmly convinced that children are in trouble in America. But they don't think that there's anything that can be done about it, and they cannot name a single, positive solution to a children's problem that isn't about "fixing the parents." They can't come up with a community that did something positive. And in fact, when you put in front of them, as we have in focus groups, examples of a problem that was solved, or a community that came together to tackle a problem, they love these kinds of stories!

I mean, it is an eye-opener, and it's very energizing to people to know that others are getting together and making some progress. There's some recent research that suggests that people really have a hard time identifying problems. They're better at coming up with solutions, once you've identified a problem for them. But they have a hard time being able to identify the problem itself. And so, the challenge in the frame is to help us orient the problem in such a way that the solution is inherent in it; that the systemic solution or the policy solution is set up because, without that prompt, the "default frame" is to fix the individual. ■

**Marielle Bohan-Baker**, HFRP, research associate

*continued from page 9 >*

of two contractors with significant media relations experience who will develop a strategic communications plan for the organization and assist with the release of upcoming publications. Another project said, "The self-assessment tool has been enormously helpful to us. It has given us creative ideas that will improve our program. Our overall project is better integrated and more comprehensive as a result."

### Assessing outcomes and impacts of KIDS COUNT work

Clearly, the answer to the overarching question – **What is the impact that KIDS COUNT data have on improving the lives of children and families?** – is largely dependent upon the outcomes part of the Self-Assessment, currently in development. After a thorough search of the literature, a framework was designed to measure the impact of data-based advocacy on various constituent groups. When complete, projects will be able to measure and understand how the strategic communication of data on children is influencing decision-making on behalf of kids and families.

The outcomes evaluation will be structured differently from the process evaluation. Every KIDS COUNT project will be given a core module of evaluation questions, indicators and a set of collection instruments with instructions on how to gather the information needed to measure the indicators. For the more well-developed projects, there will be additional modules so they may obtain more in-depth information about the impact of their work. In the future, the entire Self-Assessment process will be Web-based.

Without a doubt, the outcomes evaluation is the more challenging aspect of the Self-Assessment. Unlike evaluations of direct service agencies, measuring the impact of an indirect service is a formidable task. And yet, KIDS COUNT projects recognize that the benefits are significant. If the projects can gain a concrete understanding of how the various users of KIDS COUNT data perceive and value their data and information, it can contribute significantly toward better targeting of their data and communications efforts.

The KIDS COUNT Network embarked on this Self-Assessment process to learn how to be more efficient and effective in their work. They continue to strive for excellence and to increase the ways in which data are used to advocate on behalf of children and families. In the end, the more KIDS COUNT data are utilized in policy making, community planning, and program delivery, the greater the likelihood that the lives of children and families will be improved. ■

**Deborah L. Morgan**, network coordinator
KIDS COUNT - National Association of Child Advocates
1522 K Street NW, Suite 600
Washington, DC 20005

202-289-0777, tel.
e-mail: morgan@childadvocacy.org

covering Kids™

## Outcome Evaluation Proves Campaign Value

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation-funded *Covering Kids* strategic communications campaign is an example of how, with sufficient support and comprehensive planning, a strategic communications campaign can be strengthened by using a research and evaluation framework.

The media campaign is a part of the larger *Covering Kids* coalition-building effort to increase enrollment in the SCHIP (children's health insurance) program by decreasing institutional barriers and simplifying the enrollment process for eligible families. The campaign was guided by a basic question: How can we motivate eligible families to apply for this insurance? This in mind, the strategic communications team at Greer, Margolis, Mitchell, Burns & Associates, Inc. planned a comprehensive communications approach including paid advertising, earned media and grassroots enrollment events. Research and evaluation to support this approach, conducted by Wirthlin Worldwide for the Foundation, included formative research — interviews with eligible families and a national survey — and outcome evaluation to test the effects in six pilot and two comparison media markets. The process serves as a model for how strategic communications can be integrated into larger organizational goals and activities, including framing objectives, coalition-building, mass media initiatives, evaluation and continuous improvement.

For example, the formative research found that a majority — 60% — of the target population did not realize their eligibility to enroll in Medicaid or SCHIP, but more than 80% said they would enroll in the program if they could. This understanding of the target audience and the primary barriers to enrollment guided the research team's planning for message development.

Initiation of the campaign, through staged press conferences and media saturation, was linked to a peak outreach time — back to school. In conjunction with message delivery, the campaign worked with the local *Covering Kids* coalitions to increase the level of activity in local areas through additional outreach and enrollment events. The *Covering Kids* messages were delivered via print, radio and television media.

The point of action for the target audience was to call the national hotline (1-800-KIDS NOW) to get enrollment information. Outcome evaluation started with measuring hotline calls across time to identify whether there were increased numbers of calls during the campaign period. In one target market there were 75% more hotline calls in the campaign period than in the same period the year before, and in another the hotline was ringing off the hook, with a whopping 700% increase in calls. To understand what prompted hotline callers to call, the evaluation team called back hotline callers and asked how they found out about the program and whether they planned to enroll. They found that 90% of callers said they had seen the advertisements, and 82% planned to apply to enroll. In addition, pre- and post-campaign target audience telephone surveys in the test and comparison markets found that awareness of the SCHIP program increased among eligible families. Although increasing SCHIP awareness and prompting eligible families to call were the most direct intended outcomes for the communication campaign, data on application requests and new enrollment also are being analyzed to identify whether increases over other periods occurred.

Based on the evaluation findings, *Covering Kids* plans to make a second pass at advertising in the same markets in addition to continued coalition building, media tracking and measurement of long term impact. They also plan to expand to two new markets, testing a radio-only campaign in those markets. ■

For more information about this initiative, contact **David Smith** at Greer, Margolis, Mitchell, Burns & Associates, Inc., 1010 Wisconsin Avenue, NW, Suite 800 Washington, D.C. 20007; 202.338.8700, tel.; 202.338.2334, fax

**Taj James** gives examples of how, through the activities of Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, young people were empowered to use the media to achieve their organizing goals.



# The Media
## A Tool for Change?

In an information economy, access to and control over media messages is critical. If knowledge is power, then the production and distribution of ideas and information are the tools to transform that power into positive change. For groups supporting youth empowerment, we must ask: How can we put these powerful tools to work to produce, analyze, and control information so that power ultimately resides in the hands of young people?

At Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth we are answering that question. Coleman's youth leadership group, Youth Making a Change (Y-MAC), is a youth-organizing council of diverse, low-income high school students who work to organize their peers to impact local public policy. Y-MAC's efforts to use the media to promote its campaigns provide instructive lessons on successful strategic communications. Following are some key principles we found to support youth as they transformed the media into a tool for positive change.

■ **Get support from the experts.** Just like any other aspect of an organizational strategy, a media strategy needs to be rooted in a framework. Our media strategies have been developed with the support of a group called *We Interrupt this Message*, a national intermediary that trains youth and community groups in strategic media. *We Interrupt* helps youth groups study the media and analyze bias as a way of directly challenging anti-youth bias. They train the youth in Y-MAC, and many other groups in the youth movement, on basic public relations skills — how to write a press release, how to talk to reporters. But more importantly, *We Interrupt* helps groups understand media bias so they can develop a winning message that challenges stereotypes around youth, race and poverty.

■ **A strong communications strategy and message depend on a clear organizing goal.** Many groups try to work with the media only to discover that their campaign goals are unclear. Developing a clear organizing strategy is essential to the creation of a successful media campaign. Who is really responsible for the problem? What can be done to fix it? Who has the power to do that? A good message puts all those things together into a sound bite or press release.

*An example from Y-MAC*

When Y-MAC conducted their own evaluation of city-funded youth centers, they initially planned to publish a report card ranking each with a letter grade from A to F. This tactic was based on a strategy used by Coleman's parent organizing group, Parent Advocates for Youth (PAY). Stories of the PAY report cards in the local newspaper led to politicians and parks administrators acting to address the problems and prompted local residents to take act on behalf of their beleaguered local parks.

Y-MAC initially thought that using this strategy would spark rapid change and force youth centers to be held accountable. On reflection, however, Y-MAC reconsidered its goals: was it trying to force these agencies to change in the short term or did it want a solution that would lead to youth participation and accountability in the long run? Y-MAC changed its media strategy and decided to publish results, but withhold the names of the youth centers evaluated because it realized that the real target was not the individual agencies but the city for not making sure youth were participating and involved in the evaluation. Y-MAC shifted their demands to require, as a condition of funding, that the city mandate that all city-funded youth programs involve youth in program planning and evaluation. This demand allowed Y-MAC to get media attention for its report while also getting political and popular support for the proposed policy from the evaluated agencies. The campaign was a success and, this year, the city's department of Children Youth and Families hired 60 youth to evaluate its funded programs.

■ **Reframe the problem and offer a solution.** Often, our first task in strategic media is to change the subject. The media sometimes misses the point and will frame stories about people of color, youth and the poor in ways that blame the victims for problem. We must redefine the problem in a way that points to its genuine roots and offer a solution that points to the institutions, not victims, responsible. This strategy requires that we also do research to answer these questions.

*An example from Y-MAC*

Y-MAC's biggest research tool is an annual youth election conducted in San Francisco high schools. Through YouthVOTE, students voice their views on the issues and candidates on the November ballot and answer survey questions related to youth issues. The 5,000 to 10,000 students who participate in YouthVOTE each year help Y-MAC develop issue campaigns that can have an impact on policy decisions made by adults.

For example, in the aftermath of the Columbine tragedy, the city of San Francisco put more police officers in the high schools without consulting students. When the YouthVOTE survey showed that 70% of students did not want more police on their campuses, and, in fact, felt increasingly unsafe because of their presence, student organizers had data to back up their challenge to the city's political leaders. They held a press conference on school safety and encouraged the addition of more nurses, counselors and mental health workers who could support youth in critical ways. Y-MAC used the media to redefine the problem and offer a solution. At that time it came to light that there was only one health clinic in all of the city's 20 public high schools, and that none of the other high schools even had a nurse. Y-MAC took this information as a call to action and successfully organized, rallying four million dollars to fund seven new school-based wellness centers. ■

**Taj James**
*Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth*
459 Vienna Street
San Francisco, CA 94112
415-239-0161, tel.
415-239-0585, fax
e-mail: tjames@colemanadvocates.org

*We Interrupt this Message*
965 Mission Street, Suite 220
San Francisco, CA
415-537-9437, tel.
415-537-9439, fax
e-mail: hcutting@interrupt.org
www.interrupt.org

Taj James is the former director of Youth Policy and Development at Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth and a board member of *We Interrupt this Message*. He is currently the director of the Movement Strategy Center (**www.movementstrategy.org**).

# Challenging the Norm in Welfare Reform Reporting

Congress passed legislation in 1996 that substantially changed the face of welfare by making benefits contingent on meeting work or work preparation requirements. After almost five years, the reauthorization deadline for this legislation looms close on the horizon (October 1, 2002).

There is little doubt that the media will play a role in informing the reauthorization debate. Welfare reform researchers who want to disseminate their results and advocates who want to build public will for their positions can be more effective in informing the debate if their media strategies are grounded in research on how welfare issues have been presented to date.

### The Dominant Frame

We know from social science research that the manner in which a problem is "framed" can profoundly influence how it is viewed. As William Gamson notes, "Policy controversies [like those inherent in welfare reform and its reauthorization] inevitably involve battles over meaning. Think of them as *framing contests*. On most issues there is typically a conventional, dominant frame that most people use … Controversy is created when challenges offer an alternative way of framing an issue."[1]

The dominant frame in the mainstream media on poverty and welfare reform appears to be one of *personal responsibility*. This frame "fits" with the intent of 1996 welfare reform legislation that emphasized work in return for receiving benefits.

In addition to the focus on personal responsibility, coverage on welfare is often episodic; it tells stories about individual welfare recipients (and often not success stories) and neglects to place stories in a broader context that connects them to causes or solutions.

Media campaigns with a stake in perpetuating this dominant frame during the reauthorization debate are at an advantage. Those who want to challenge this frame have a more difficult task. However, lessons from ethnic media research may provide some useful tips for tackling that task.

### Adding Value through Ethnic Media Research

In 2000, the Harvard Family Research Project embarked on a media research project to shed more light on how the media was treating the topic of welfare reform.[2] This research took a unique vantage point by looking at how the ethnic media covered this topic.

HFRP analyzed the content of articles published between October, 1999, and March, 2000, from a total of nine African-American, Native-American and Spanish language newspapers. Researchers read each newspaper thoroughly, clipped or downloaded articles and summarized the content based on research protocol.

When the ethnic media research is juxtaposed against the presentation of research in the mainstream media, it provides a useful contrast for how messages about welfare reform can be framed for a different or possibly greater effect.

### An Alternative Frame

As the following quote illustrates, while personal responsibility is still discussed in ethnic media coverage of welfare reform, HFRP found that governmental responsibility in helping people transition off of welfare and out of poverty became part of the frame.

> If Giuliani wants to help people make the transition from welfare to work — not just get them off the rolls — then he should ensure that transitional benefits like Medicaid, food stamps, and day care are available for those leaving public assistance. Instead, his 'job centers' inappropriately close cases, turning away thousands who would qualify for these benefits, making it tougher for them to get and hold a job.
>
> - "The Urban Agenda: Giuliani: Building His Campaign on the Backs of the Homeless," *New York Amsterdam News*, 11/10/99

This frame is strategic because it opens the issue up and challenges people to look at welfare reform in a slightly different and expanded way, building on the notion of personal responsibility and suggesting that welfare recipients want to work and be responsible but realistically need help in transitioning off welfare.

### Enhancing the Alternative Frame

All good frames should define the issue, explain who is responsible and suggest potential solutions. HFRP's ethnic media research suggests that there are ways to enhance the alternative frame for greater impact.

First, the issue can be defined by connecting it with results about what has happened *to* families and children. While welfare reform has sparked a colossal amount of research, much of the story on results to date has been reported in terms of simple caseload declines.[3]

Second, the frame needs to connect with a discussion of solutions. Policy analysts note that some of the primary reauthorization questions will be targeted at what government supports are needed for families who have left welfare and for those who remain.[4] The challenge for those who want to effectively inform the debate will be not only to frame this issue by indicating that current and former welfare recipients need supports and that government can play an important role in providing those supports, but also to connect this discussion with clear and specific policy implications. ■

**Danielle Hollar**, HFRP, consultant
**Julia Coffman**, HFRP, consultant

[1] Gamson, W. (2000). Framing social policy. *The New England Nonprofit Quarterly, 7(2),* http://www.newenglandnonprofit.org/advocacy/framing.htm.

[2] This was part of a larger research project connected to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's Devolution Initiative to examine how the media covered welfare reform and health care – two policy areas that devolved considerably from the federal level to the state level in the 1990s.

[3] We Interrupt this Message (1999). *Silencing poverty: A study on news coverage of welfare*. San Francisco, CA. Hollar, D. (2001). A holistic theoretical model for examining welfare reform: Quality of life. Forthcoming in *Public Administration Review*.

[4] Haskins, R., Sawhill, I., and Weaver, K. (2001). *Welfare reform: Reauthorization: An overview of problems and issues*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution.

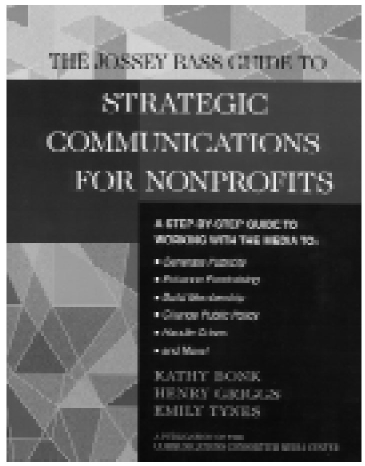
This article details the process of designing a plan for strategic communications as discussed in *The Jossey-Bass guide to strategic communications for nonprofits*, written by **Kathy Bonk, Henry Griggs and Emily Tynes**, 1999.

# The ABCs of Strategic Communications

A communications plan is an important part of an organization's daily operation. As a living document, it frames media activities, including internal and external communications, clarifies the organization's priorities, target audiences, resources and staff assignments.

What are the elements of a communications plan?

The elements are basically the same whether an organization is, for example, a large not-for-profit hospital, a museum, a university, a small advocacy group, service provider or foundation. A communications plan affirms and is driven by the organization's goals and outcomes, its vision, as expressed in a mission statement, and its values and beliefs.




### Overall communications goals:

The organization's communications goals may include:

- Developing and implementing communications plans for enhanced visibility and crisis management
- Generating positive media coverage by cultivating relationships with reporters
- Increasing the awareness and involvement of specific, targeted groups of individuals
- Changing attitudes or teaching new skills to clients and staff
- Generating support from the public, policy makers and clients for community reforms across your state
- Encouraging financial contributions

The activities in the communications plan should support the organization's overall communications goals. It is important to set measurable goals in order to know when they have been achieved and to be able to gauge the progress along the way.

### Vision and mission statement

The organizational mission statement is the cornerstone of the communications plan, driving the overall direction of media activities. The organization should include this mission statement at the very beginning of the communications plan to remind staff, board members and other internal decision makers that media-related activities flow from the organization's core mission and vision, not just from its communications department. Media activities enhance the organization's overall image, advance its agenda and influence public will.

### Organizational values and beliefs

Every organization, foundation, public agency and institution has, at its heart, a system of values and beliefs. These values should be reflected in all that the organization plans and does, including communications goals and strategic plans.

### Critical elements of a communications plan

In addition to the goals, vision and values that form the cornerstone of an organization's communications strategy, there are six critical elements organizations need to construct that strategy:

- *An understanding of the target audience and how to reach it*
- *Research into past media coverage and public opinion about the issues*
- *Messages to be delivered*
- *Materials to be produced*
- *Financial resources from which staff and equipment will be drawn*
- *A written work plan*

It is important to identify these elements and put them in place before implementing day-to-day activities. Successful implementation of a communications plan depends on pulling these elements together:

### Identification of the target audience

The first task is to identify who the target audience is and how to reach it. List categories of people who are important to the success of the organization and identify ways to reach them. Audiences may include donors, potential members, elected officials, church groups, judges and the legal community, business leaders, communities of color, trade associations, women's leaders, teens, senior citizens and the general public. In addition to these important outside audiences, it is important for organization not to forget its internal audiences, such as staff, board members and volunteers.

### Research into media coverage, public opinion and facts

How do target audiences perceive the organization and its issues? With the Internet, it is not difficult to develop a profile of how the organization's issues are covered in the media, how often the organization is quoted or described, and what public opinion polls have been done on relevant topics. A short and simple media analysis can be an instructive tool and will indicate the amount of resources necessary to increase name recognition.

Good data can be a gold mine in outreach to the media. Most media use "factoids" to help their audiences put stories in perspective. A good communications plan should collect data on the important issues in formats that can answer the "who, what, when, where, why and how."

### Message development

Develop a phrase of four to ten words to describe the organization that



*continued on page 16 >*

> *continued from page 15*

can be used every time a reporter does a story about the agency. It is important to be able to tell reporters how the group wants to be described; otherwise, journalists will come up with descriptions that may not be accurate.

The next step is to develop message points for the organization's spokespeople to use when they talk with reporters. One might consist of the basic facts about the group, but should be limited to three or four points to communicate in each interview.

Answer the following questions in-house before every media event or interview: What should the headline be? What should the article include? Answers given in the interview or at the media event should always deliver the key points.

No strategic communications plan is complete without a built-in evaluation component as a way to check accountability and make improvements over time.

### Production of high-quality public relations materials

Public relations materials are important tools for reaching reporters, donors, policy makers and others in the target audience. These should include:

- A consistent and easy-to-recognize logo and stationery design
- An easy-to-understand, one page fact sheet about the organization
- At least one press kit on the issues and activities to be highlighted in the media
- Hard copy brochures and consistent Web site content
- Videos, slides, overheads and computer presentations
- Reports and studies for public release as news items
- One paragraph and one page biographies on spokespeople and agency heads
- Copies of the current newsletter, if there is one
- Copies of newspaper articles about the group

### Assessment of resources

The communications plan needs to spell out how resources will be allocated, including staff time, budgets, computers, software, equipment, databases, in-house and contract services and volunteer help. For mid-sized to large organizations, it is prudent to hire a communications director. In agencies with fewer than ten employees, everyone from the executive director to the person who answers the phone should be a part of the communications team. A resource review for the organization should do the following:

- Assess staff time, in-house services and existing media technologies
- Recommend and arrange for training and technology updates as needed
- Designate or decide to hire a communications director
- Develop a budget that includes provisions for outside contracts and services, such as freelance writing, video production, database management, graphic design and Web site management
- Access funding and build programs for expanded activities that include executive loan programs, internships, pro bono support from commercial media firms, donations from local and regional corporations and grants from foundations.

### Development of a work plan

Organizations should develop work plans for each major activity or event and try to review overall plans at least quarterly. Elements of a communications work plan should spell out assignments and important tasks:

- Develop timelines, calendars of events and priorities
- Assign responsibilities to lead and support staff, giving each a list of specific tasks
- Review progress and enforce or revise deadlines
- Hold people responsible for completing work and reassign tasks as needed

### Crisis control

The work plan should also include a crisis control plan. This should be thought of as a fire drill, and regardless how non controversial the organization, there should be a plan in place to deal with possible negative stories in the media. This plan should include the identification of a crisis coordination team, a plan to ensure timely and appropriate responses to negative press and regular internal briefings about the procedures for implementing a damage control plan.

### Evaluation

No strategic communications plan is complete without a built-in evaluation component as a way to check accountability and make improvements over time. Major evaluation activities might include analyzing media content and monitoring certain developments, such as shifts in public opinion, policy changes, increased membership and organizational participation, and improved institutional capacity.

### Summary

A written communications plan should be easy to read and should have a format adaptable for overhead or computer presentations to larger audiences. Most organizations have been through a strategic planning process at some point; this effort is no different. Remember, the elements of a communications plan are basically the same whether the organization has thousands, hundreds, dozens, or a handful of employees. ■

Bonk, Kathy, Griggs, Henry and Tynes, Emily. (1999). Designing a Communications Plan, Chapter 4. *The Jossey-Bass guide to strategic communications for nonprofits.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

# > ask the expert

**Karen Lake** works as director of communications for the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. **Grant Oliphant** is director of planning and communications for The Heinz Endowments.

We asked two experts, both representatives from foundations, to address the role of strategic communications in philanthropy today. How can strategic communications contribute to achieving desired outcomes for both a foundation and its grantees, and how can foundations support the strategic communications efforts of their grantees?

**Karen Lake:** "At the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Marketing and Communications Department is part of a bigger unit known as Impact Services, which is comprised of the Marketing and Communications staff, as well as staff from Policy, Evaluation, Organizational Learning and Technology. All of the Impact Service areas work together to support programming goals. In Marketing and Communications, this means providing direct support to programming staff for a range of activities. The department is responsible for conceptualizing strategies and for developing quality communication tools to advance Foundation goals. As part of this process, it integrates and refines the themes and messages that tell the Kellogg Foundation story. Although printed and electronic materials may be the most visible signs of Marketing and Communication activities, a more lasting product of the department's collective efforts is changed public perceptions and behaviors that advance the Kellogg Foundation mission.

"The Marketing and Communications Department seeks to connect with both internal and external audiences. Increasing programming impact – fostering systemic change for societal benefit through public dissemination of lessons learned from grantee efforts — is one crucial dimension of the Department's work. Another is leveraging learning — expanding the impact of programming within the Foundation to increase organizational effectiveness and inform program decisions.

"To accomplish these goals, the Marketing and Communications Department assigns a communication manager to work closely with staff in the programming units. Similar support is provided to administrative units in the Foundation. The communication manager functions as an internal partner in each phase of programming — from conceptualization of strategic approaches and the production of communication tools to the analysis of impact on target audiences. Whether the task is accessing resource data, identifying related trends and key audiences, developing strategies and tools to reach targeted groups or packaging and disseminating information about impact, the communication managers are responsible for managing and integrating strategic communications to advance program directions and increase return on the Kellogg Foundation's investment.

"The ultimate programming goal of any foundation is to achieve greater impact for social benefit. Foundations seek solutions to societal problems — solutions that can be applied to other communities on a local, state, national or even global scale. But finding workable solutions is not enough. To achieve maximum impact, the ideas and information that come from grantee experiences must be distilled into communication strategies to inform a wider audience. Only by placing new knowledge in the hands of decision-makers — policy makers, parents, teachers, farmers, health professionals, colleagues in philanthropy and others — can a foundation hope to achieve its objectives and accomplish its mission.

"Marketing and communications staff are actors in philanthropy. As such, part of their job is to help engage and empower foundation grantees to both embrace and use the marketing and communication tools to bring about lasting changes.

"A goal of the Kellogg Foundation is to ensure that staff members leave grantees with the skills and competencies needed to continue their project long after the Foundation's funding and involvement has ended. This may be accomplished through workshops, direct technical assistance, and advice and consultation. It also may include linking grantees to people and resources in the field who can help them achieve their goals.

"Ultimately, the Foundation hopes grantees will recognize the value and importance of integrating marketing and communications into their work. Beyond that, it seeks to instill critical planning, implementation, and follow-up skills with grantees. It wants them to be able to deliver the right message in the right medium at the right time to the right audience. By being able to do this, the grantee will be able to advance it goals, maximize organizational resources and capitalize on opportunities in the larger environment."

**Grant Oliphant:** "It's fair to turn this question around and ask how any foundation that is serious about its obligation to create value could realistically expect to do so in today's world *without* a strong communications capacity. The outcomes most foundations seek involve either promoting learning, through the dissemination of knowledge, or changing social and individual attitudes and behaviors. Both of these, at heart, are communications challenges, and we live in what is arguably the most complex communications environment in human history.

"At The Heinz Endowments, we have been working to develop a more coordinated approach among our five program areas around a shared set of organizational goals. As part of that process, we have increased our emphasis on communications, going so far as to connect that role with strategic planning and evaluation as part of a portfolio of services designed to heighten our impact and measure our effectiveness, both within programs and as a whole organization.

"We have learned that it is important not only to prioritize strategic communications planning at the level of the foundation, but also to invest in building the capacity of key grantee organizations to draft, execute and coordinate strategic communications plans of their own. Grantees are often seen by foundations as part of a broad effort to improve public policy, move public will, or affect how people and communities make decisions. Yet these organizations typically are adept only at the traditional, one-on-one service model and have little or no grounding in the varied communications techniques demanded by the complicated media environment in which we all now find ourselves. Moreover, they rarely have a clear sense for how their efforts relate to the work of other grantees or to the broad goals of the foundation.

"A strong communications planning process can help a foundation and its grantees identify shared goals and opportunities for unified action. The template for such a process is fairly simple. It begins with basic steps: clarifying the project or mission and its relation to the overall mission of the foundation; delineating the partners or players involved; and identifying the key target audiences and the changes in knowledge or behavior that are desired.



*continued on page 20 >*

The **Berkeley Media Studies Group** works with community groups, journalists and public health professionals to use the power of the media to advance public policy. They study the process of news gathering and analyze media content to support media advocacy training, professional education and strategic consultation. **http://www.phi.org/programs/programs-centers.htm#bms**

**Causemedia Inc.** is a full-service communications firm that integrates cause-related and social marketing strategies with compelling media campaigns for maximum visibility and heightened public awareness. Clients include the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Boston Public Health Commission and WGBH. For more information, contact: Causemedia, 50 Hunt Street, Watertown, MA 02472
**http://www.causemedia.com**

**The Center for Communications and Community** at the University of California, Los Angeles, is a service, research and training institution that works to develop media relationships so that community-based organizations can effectively interpret news stories, engage in policy advocacy and fundamentally alter the shape and scope of public policy. Frank Gilliam, Ph.D., is the Center's director. For more information, contact: Center for Communications and Community, UCLA, 1015 Gayley Avenue, Suite 105, Los Angeles, CA 90024-3424; 310-794-6211, tel.; e-mail: fgilliam@ucla.edu
**http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/issr/ccc/**

The **Communication Initiative** focuses on the use of strategic communications for sustainable development. Their Web site includes opinion polls, discussion forums, electronic magazines and a directory of people, organizations and programs involved in communication and international development. For more information, visit
**http://www.comminit.com**

**Greer, Margolis, Mitchell, Burns & Associates, Inc. (GMMB&A)** is a strategic communications firm specializing in advertising, political consulting and public education campaigns on social problems. Clients include Child Welfare League of America, Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress, the Democratic National Committee, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.
**http://www.gmmb.com**

The Kaiser Family Foundation's Web-based project, **www.kaisernetwork.org**, provides live audio and video coverage of health policy events, daily health reports, analysis of health ads, searchable database of health opinion polls and a calendar of national events.

The **Strategic Press Information Network** (SPIN) project helps grow the capacity of grassroots groups to shape public opinion and garner positive media attention by providing comprehensive media training and intensive strategizing. SPIN's products include *SPIN Works!*, a media guidebook for communicating values and shaping opinion, and *Internet PR*, an online tutorial designed to help grassroots activists determine why and how to use the Internet throughout media campaigns. For more information, contact: Independent Media Institute, 77 Federal St. 2nd Floor, San Francisco, CA 94107
**http://www.spinproject.org**

**Underground Advertising** creates unique advertising for nonprofit organizations and socially-minded businesses. Clients include The Pew Charitable Trusts, Rainforest Action Network, the Breast Cancer Fund and the Legal Community Against Violence. For more information, contact: Underground Advertising, Pier 9, Suite 116, San Francisco, CA 94111; 415-433-9334, tel.
**http://www.undergroundads.com**

**Bales, Susan N. (Ed.). (1999). *Effective language for communicating children's issues.* Washington, DC: Coalition for America's Children and the Benton Foundation.** Conducted to aid child advocates in developing effective messages, the discussions highlighted in this report unearthed adults' views on health care, poverty, welfare, the working poor, crime, rebuilding communities and why children should be a priority.
**http://www.connectforkids.org**

**Balch, George I., and Sutton, Sharyn M. *Keep me posted: A plea for practical evaluation.* Washington, DC: Sutton Social Marketing.**
**http://www.suttonsocialmarketing.com**

**The CSAP Communications Team**, located at University Research Co., LLC. developed a set of technical assistance bulletins to enhance the communications capacity of national, state and local groups. They are available for use by the general public via SAMHSA's National Clearinghouse for Alcohol and Drug Information (NCADI) at **http://www.health.org** or 1-800-729-6686 (1-800-487-4889/TDD). (The NCADI inventory number follows each title.) Titles include: *Working with the Mass Media* (MS708), *Choosing Appropriate Channels of Communications* (MS724), *Identifying the Target Audience* (MS700), *Evaluating the Results of Communications Programs* (MS706) and *Culturally Competent Approaches to Media Literacy* (MS724). University Research Company, LLC, 7200 Wisconsin Ave., Suite 500, Bethesda, MD 20814; e-mail: cct@urc-chs.com

**Carragee, Kevin M., Ryan, Charlotte, and Schwerner, Cassie. (1998). Media, movements, and the quest for social justice. *Journal of Applied Communication Research, 26*(2).** This essay examines the efforts of the Media Research and Action Project to assist marginalized groups in employing news as a political resource. The analysis highlights the news media as critical arenas of struggle for social movements and community groups seeking political change and social justice.

**Galinsky, Ellen, and Nina Sazer O'Donnell. (2000). *The seven lessons of early childhood public engagement.* New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.** This brief describes recent early childhood public engagement efforts nationwide and outlines critical lessons for public engagement leaders. **https://swww.igc.apc.org/fwi**

**Gilliam, Frank and Iyengar, Shanto. (2000). Prime suspects: The influence of local television news on the viewing public. *American Journal of Political Science, 44*(3).** Using several methods of analysis, this paper evaluates the contribution of violence and race in news scripts on public opinion. The authors examine the prevalence of the crime news script in the local television news market, undertake several experiments using different versions of a crime script and conduct a survey of county residents' news-viewing habits and views on crime and race. For more information on this study, visit **http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/issr/ccc/papers/primesus.html** or contact The Center for Communications and Community: 310-794-6211, tel; e-mail: fgilliam@ucla.edu

**Gilliam, Frank and Iyengar, Shanto. (1998). The superpredator script. *Nieman Reports. Children and violence: The witness. The victim. The accused, 52*(4). The Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University.** In this report, the authors detail an experiment they conducted to examine the connections between local newscasts and viewers' perceptions of juvenile crime. They analyze different news frames used and propose alternative approaches for story reporting.
**http://www.nieman.harvard.edu/reports/98-4NRwint98/Gilliam.html**

**Gunther, Herbert C. (1998). *10 principles for effective advocacy campaigns.* San Francisco: Public Media Centre.** This guide provides succinct yet potent strategies for reaching a target audience. Issues addressed include agenda-setting, strategic diversity and influencing the undecided.
**http://media.socialchange.net.au**

**Gould, Douglas. (1997). *A funder's guide to successful media investments.*** Douglas Gould & Co. is a communications consulting firm dedicated to helping progressive not-for-profit organizations and foundations advance important causes through effective multimedia education strategies and campaigns.
**http://www.douglasgould.com**

**Iyengar, Shanto. (1991). *Is anyone responsible? How television frames political issues.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.** This article examines the effects on the public of thematic and episodic



continued >

*Footnotes for Theory & Practice, continued from page 4 >*

[1] See Coffman, J. (2000). Simplifying complex initiative evaluation. In *The Evaluation Exchange.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.

2 Karel, Frank. (2000). Getting the word out: A foundation memoir and personal journey. In Isaccs, Stephen L., and Knickman, James R. (Eds.) *To improve health and health care 2001: The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Anthology.* Princeton, NJ: The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

[3] See the California Children and Families Commission's "2000-2001 Fiscal Year Objectives and Priorities" document at http://www.ccfc.ca.gov/files/ObjPriorities7-20-00.pdf for more information. Proposition 10 is funded by a tobacco tax that generates approximately $700 million annually providing major non-categorical resources to help California's young children and their families.

[4] Rogers, E. M. (1994). *A history of communication study: A biographical approach.* New York: The Free Press.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Iyengar, S. & Kinder, D. (1987). *News that matters: Television and American opinion.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

[7] Kinder, D. R. (1998). Communication and opinion. In *Annual Review of Political Science. 1: 167-97.*

[8] Gilliam, F.D. (May, 1999). The influence of local television news frames on attitudes about childcare. In *Effective language for communicating children's issues.* Washington, DC: Coalition for America's Children with the Benton Foundation.

[9] Rogers, E. M. (1994). *A history of communication study: A biographical approach.* New York: The Free Press.

[10] Page, B. I. & Shapiro, R. Y. (1983). Effects of public opinion on policy. In *The American Political Science Review.* 77: 175-190. Also see Weiss, J. A. & Tschirhart, M. (1994). Public information campaigns as policy instruments. In *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management. 13: 1, 82, 119.* Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management.

[11] Dungan-Seaver, D. (December, 1999). *Mass media initiatives and children's issues: An analysis of research and recent experience relevant to potential philanthropic funders.* Prepared for The McKnight Foundation. Also see Andreasen, A. R. (1995). *Marketing social change: Changing behavior to promote health, social development, and the environment.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

12 Voices for Illinois Children commissioned Market Strategies, Inc. to do a poll of 600 registered voters in Illinois between February 15 and 19 of 2000. The margin of error on the poll is +/- 4.0%. Source: www.earlycare.org. See also Bostrom, M. (May, 1999). Children as a political issue: A review of public opinion. In *Effective language for communicating children's issues.* Washington, DC: Coalition for America's Children with the Benton Foundation.

*continued from page 18 >*

framing in network reports. News cases covered include crime, terrorism, poverty, unemployment, racial inequality and the Iran-Contra Affair.

**Iyengar, Shanto and Richard Reeves. (Eds.) (1997). *Do the media govern?: Politicians, voters, and reporters in America.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.** This collection of articles focuses on the business of news reporting, the effects of news on its audience, the use of the media in the policy process and media-based political campaigns.

**Lakoff, George and Mark Johnson. (1979). *Metaphors we live by.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.** This paper examines the use of metaphors in everyday speech and their importance in language and understanding.

**Leiderman, Sally, Wendy Wolf and Peter York. (2000). *Some thoughts about public will.* Center for Assessment and Policy Development.** A progress report on investments in public will, this publication covers frameworks, messages, the role of foundations, lessons learned and next steps in public will strategies to improve outcomes for children and families. **http://www.capd.org**

**Ortony, Andrew. (Ed.) (1979, most recent is 1993). *Metaphor and thought.* Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press.** The essays in this book are revised papers presented at the 1977 multidisciplinary conference on metaphor and thought at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Topics include education, psychology and social policy. Of special note is the essay titled, "Generative Metaphor: A Perspective on Problem-Setting in Social Policy," by Donald A. Schon.

**Preston, Michael B., Bruce A. Cain, and Sandra Bass. (Eds.) (1998). *Racial and ethnic politics in California.* Berkeley: Institute for Governmental Studies Press, University of California.**

**Wallack, L., Woodruff K., Dorfman L, and Diaz, I. (1999). *News for a change: An advocates' guide to working with the media.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.**

**Wallack, L., Dorfman, L., Jernigan, D., and Themba, M. (1993). *Media advocacy and public health: Power for prevention.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.**

**Wallack, L., and Dorfman, L. (2000). Putting policy into health communication: The role of media advocacy. In Rice & Atkin, (Eds.), *Public communication campaigns.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications**

**Wallack, L. and Dorfman, L. (1996). Media advocacy: A strategy for advancing policy and promoting health. *Health Education Quarterly, 23*(3).**

**Wallack, Lawrence. (1990). Improving health promotion: Media advocacy and social marketing approaches. In C. Atkin and L. Wallack (Eds.) *Mass communication and public health: Complexities and conflicts.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.** This chapter examines the advantages and limitations of both media advocacy and social marketing, and how the blending of the two is a more comprehensive approach to using mass media to promote health.

***Making health communications programs work: A planner's guide.* (1992). Bethesda, MD: National Cancer Institute, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.** Expanding upon and replacing "Pretesting in Health Communications," this guide explains the factors that contribute to a successful health communications program and includes examples of their use. Although currently out of print and only available on the Web, a newly revised version and an interactive version will soon be available online. The print version will be available within a year. **http://rex.nci.nih.gov/PATIENTS/COMM_ED_RES/PLAN_PUBS.htm**

***Reaching young people worldwide: Lessons learned from planning and communications projects, 1986-1995.* (1996). Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs.** More than 30 programs from around the world that help youth maintain their health are reviewed. Chapters present research and evaluation methods, communication outputs and activities, collaboration and support and lessons learned. Activities that benefit youth and references are also included. **http:// www.jhuccp.org/pubs/working_papers/wp2/contents.html**

***The use of mainstream media to encourage social responsibility: The international experience.* (1995). Advocates for Youth Media Project.** Study commissioned by the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. Examines the outcomes of programs using mass media entertainment to stimulate changes in health behaviors. **http://www.kff.org/content/archive/1092/**

***Sixty-second guide to working with the news media.* The Independent Sector.** This guide provides quick tips for staff and volunteers in building strong media relations skills, with topics such as building and maintaining friendships, pitching a story, deciding when to put out a news release or hold a news conference, editorial pages and talk radio shows. **http://www.independentsector.org** ■

**Kathleen Hart**, HFRP, research analyst

# b r o w s i n g

http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~hfrp

HFRP is proud to announce the launch of its new and improved Web site, featuring a design overhaul, streamlined content and additions of several new resources, including "news" and "research areas" links.

HFRP online continues to offer an exhaustive listing of its publications on early childhood care and education, family, school and community issues, evaluation and accountability information and professional development, with many available for free download.

The site also offers access to family involvement tools and resources via the FINE network (The Family Involvement Network of Educators) and offers both html and pdf versions of ***The Evaluation Exchange***.

We hope you will visit the new site, still at the same URL, and encourage you to offer feedback on changes and suggestions for improvement. Happy browsing!

*> continued from page 17*

"The next step is to develop and test messages for delivery to the target audiences. During this phase, it is not only important to know how the target audiences understand, react to and potentially act on the messages to be delivered, but also crucial to know the context in which those messages will be delivered. At what policies or behaviors will the messages be directed? What is the policy environment for those issues at that time? What events might be happening in the target area at the time the messages will be delivered? What other messages have recently been delivered to those audiences? The answers to these questions may change the strategic approach to message delivery.

"Concurrently, the foundation and its grantees can be collaborating on a plan for the effective delivery and support of these messages. The plan should include first the building of an infrastructure for sustained communications, and second, the implementation of that infrastructure to achieve communications goals.

"The building of the infrastructure may include the creation of networks for communications and advocacy among organizations with similar missions. While like-minded organizations routinely undertake communications initiatives, sometimes these initiatives are more patch than quilt. Their lack of coordination can limit the ability of organizations to become potent advocates or to leverage successful programs and learn from unsuccessful ones.

"Strategic communications is not a panacea; it is not the solution to every challenge. But it is almost always part of the solution. And the communications planning process, when conducted in an inclusive fashion that invites grantees in and devotes as much time to listening as to speaking, invariably will help foundations and the organizations we fund to challenge cherished assumptions and to become more effective voices for change." ■

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation: http://www.wkkf.org
The Heinz Endowments: http://www.heinz.org

http://gseweb.harvard.edu/~hfrp

## contact us @

Harvard Family Research Project
Harvard Graduate School of Education
38 Concord Avenue
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138

hfrp_gse@harvard.edu

nonprofit org.
US postage
**PAID**
Boston, MA
Permit #57868