

Developing a Communications Campaign for Mandatory Fortification



Food Fortification Initiative
Enhancing Grains for Healthier Lives

Presented by Sarah Zimmerman
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First let me point out that this is a communications campaign for mandatory fortification. It is not a campaign to promote increased sales of foods made with fortified flour in a voluntary program.

Secondly, this is not one person's job. I hope that your country has a National Fortification Alliance, and a group within that alliance is responsible for communications.



Awareness

Target audience: consumers



South Africa photo from GAIN

Rwanda photo from Project Healthy Children

Kenya photo from PSI

We tend to think of communications in one of two ways. One way is awareness for consumers. A logo is an important part of this as it helps consumers identify fortified products. The goal is for consumers to understand that vitamins and minerals are being added to their wheat or maize flour. We want consumers to know that this will be good for them, and we want consumers to accept these fortified products.



Advocacy

Target audiences: policy makers, millers, nutritionists, bakers, food inspectors



2011 quality assurance / quality control training at Bakhresa mill in Tanzania.

Another way to think about communications is to think of advocacy for stakeholders. This usually involves training or sharing information.



Now let's look at these together.

Which of these two aspects of communications generally requires the most money and most creativity?

Typically it's awareness. I'm going to represent that with a green box to illustrate the investment required.

Yet I rarely hear of consumers demanding unfortified flour. On the other hand, I can think of several times when other groups either kept the legislation from passing or did not comply with legislation once it was passed. So I'm going to put a red box around them.

I see a problem here. We're spending the communications budget and using our best creative efforts in the green box when the roadblock to effective fortification is usually somewhere in the red box.

What I will share with you in the next few minutes is a tool that will help you bring these two aspects of communications together. It will help you use your time and communications resources in ways that address the real challenges to communications.

<http://www.ffinetwork.org/plan/Communications.html>

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Communications

Effective grain fortification programs require multiple stakeholders to work towards fortification, and it can take a lot of time, energy, and money.

Among the stakeholders involved are policy makers to create legislation making fortification mandatory; millers to correctly fortify the flour or grain; government authorities to monitor for compliance with the legislation; bakers to accept and bake with fortified flour; and consumers to purchase and consume fortified products.

An effective way to garner support and foster action for cereal grain fortification is through a communications campaign. This is more than simply sharing the scientific evidence for fortification. Educating key decision makers is not always enough as competing interests, forgetfulness, and lack of motivation may divert their attention. Effective communications must also inspire people to take action.

The **Fortification Communications Toolkit** and accompanying workbook can help you plan and conduct a communications campaign. The toolkit is designed for proponents of fortification of wheat and maize flour and rice. However it can be used as a basis for developing a communications campaign for other types of food fortification as well.

The toolkit guides users through seven steps including:

Download Free Communications Planning Tools

Fortification Communications Toolkit
A 53-page guide to identifying and researching specific target audiences, developing a communications strategy to address the perceived barriers and benefits, and monitoring the campaign for effectiveness. [See more...](#)

Fortification Communications Toolkit Workbook
Templates to copy and use to organize a communications campaign. [See more...](#)

This tool is on the CD you have received during this meeting. You can also download the tool from the FFI website. Click on the link in red at the top of this page. The tool also comes with a workbook for you to use in completing some exercises.



Key Principle

- It is not enough to educate; we have to influence behaviors



Godfrey Oakley in feature story about "turning flour mills into birth defect prevention factories." Emory University photo.

The toolkit applies this key principle to the entire communications campaign: it is not enough to inform or educate our audiences. We have to also motivate them to change behaviors.

A great example of this comes from the United States. In the 1990s, Dr. Godfrey Oakley who is pictured here, worked at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the birth defect prevention group. In 1991, results of a randomized control trial were published that proved without a doubt that folic acid could prevent most neural tube defects. Flour had been fortified with iron and other B vitamins in the US since the 1940s, so Godfrey thought it would be simple for folic acid to be added to the flour fortification standard.

What he found instead was a very political process. A government agency called the Food and Drug Administration or FDA had the final decision. They were well informed about the role of folic acid, and Godfrey met with FDA staff multiple times to educate them about this. But it simply wasn't high on the FDA priority list.

Eventually Godfrey met a doctor named Dick Johnson who worked for the March of Dimes, a non-governmental organization focused on preventing birth defects. Dick asked the FDA what progress they were making in adding folic acid to the standard for enriched grains. The FDA told Dick they were working on it. Dick went back in a few months, and still nothing had been done. Then Dick gave them a deadline. He said if the policy wasn't changed by that time, he would bring children with spina bifida to the FDA office, and they would stay there until the policy was changed.

This time the FDA acted and passed the requirement for folic acid to be included in enriched cereal grain products.



US Results in 10 Years

- 36% reduction in NTDs from 1996 to 2006
- Prevented an estimated 10,000 NTDs
- Resulted in savings of US\$ 4.7 billion in direct costs

Ten Great Public Health Achievements, United States 2001-2010. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 2011. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6011a5.htm>

Here are the results of adding folic acid to the grain fortification standard in the United States. The CDC included this as one of 10 great public health achievements in the decade from 1996 to 2006.

My point in telling you this story is ask a question. What if Godfrey Oakley and Dick Johnson had only educated the policy makers at the Food and Drug Administration? What if they had just given everyone at the FDA a copy of the 1991 randomized control trial showing that folic acid prevented NTDs? We can't know the answer to that question, but we do know that the action by the March of Dimes influenced the FDA behavior in ways that the previous education had not.

I am not recommending that you threaten to protest in a government office. But we do need to be creative about how to influence the behavior of policy makers.



Key Steps

- Identify and Research Audiences
 - Focus groups
 - Individual interviews

We often conduct audience research to determine how to create awareness among consumers, but this is often neglected with advocacy. The key step in influencing behavior is understanding what motivates your audience. Two ways to learn this are through focus groups and individual interviews. The tool kit has guides for both of these.

Also remember that you cannot return to your country believing that everyone there will be as motivated as you are to prevent NTDs. You heard Graham's great presentation this morning, and you are ready to take action. But the key decision makers in your country may think that providing safe drinking water or dealing with refugee health or stopping Ebola is a higher priority than preventing neural tube birth defects.

Do your audience research and find out what motivates them before you start your communications campaign.



Use Audience Research to Determine:

1. Who influences the primary audiences?
2. Barriers to fortification
3. Benefits of fortifying
4. Benefits of not fortifying

After you have conducted your audience research, study your notes and determine these four things:

1. Who influences the primary audiences? For example, if you determine that the parliamentarian in your country is a key audience, but you cannot get an appointment with him or her, then who influences the parliamentarian? His wife? The captain of his son's soccer team? Who do you know who can influence the person you are trying to reach.
2. Second, what keeps them from taking action toward fortification? Are other things higher priorities? Do they think it's too expensive?
3. Third, what are the benefits to them personally if fortification is implemented? Will they look good politically for taking action that benefits the population?
4. Fourth, what are the benefits of not fortifying? Do they think it will be easier to just do nothing?

After you have done this research, then you will be able to develop messages and activities to influence the behavior of your audiences.

Communications Channels Pros and Cons		
Channel	Pros	Cons
Factsheet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easily shares scientific or in-depth information (good for policy makers and health providers) Good to answer frequently asked questions or provide how-to information Inexpensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be difficult to reach large groups Audience must have interest and desire to read it Difficult for less literate audiences
Poster/Billboard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If placed well, can reach lots of people Can reach larger than intended audience Can be placed where fortified products are sold Inexpensive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only provides a small amount of information Might be difficult to get businesses to hang posters Audience usually must be literate
Television commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can reach many people Can reach beyond immediate target audience Repetition of messages Can show visuals and model behaviors visually 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expensive Message can be obscured by commercial messages Audience may skip over commercials
Radio commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inexpensive Has a large reach Opportunity for audience involvement if they call in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hard to communicate the logo part of the brand due to lack of visuals Often reaches smaller group of consumers than television
Study tour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shows how effective and simple fortification can be Can act as a final push for policy makers to pass the law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expensive Takes time to plan and coordinate
Events (town hall meetings, parties, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be inexpensive Can reach beyond immediate target audience Can be an opportunity to share the experience of those with micronutrient deficiencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be expensive Harder to provide tailored messages
Newspapers, television news, or other news media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coverage can be free Can reach larger than intended audience Can provide detailed information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often little control over the content of the story shared Print media not good for less literate audiences

The toolkit has a chapter on activity development that includes a list of pros and cons of specific activities, sample activities from multiple countries, and help with establishing priorities and a budget.

I don't expect you to read this on the screen, but let me point out that page 34 in the toolkit on the CD offers this list of pros and cons of various communications channels. Using your audience research and this list will help you determine the best way to move forward.



Conclusions

- It is not enough to educate; we have to influence behavior too
- Research audiences to learn what motivates them
- Plan communications campaign to:
 - Address perceived barriers
 - Maximize benefits of fortification
 - Minimize benefits of not fortifying



For More Information

See communications toolkit and workbook on disc

Download toolkit and workbook from

<http://www.ffinetwork.org/plan/Communications.html>

Contact:

Sarah Zimmerman

szimme2@emory.edu

