From Evidence to Influence: Lessons from the Field

KIM LONGFIELD
Global Health & Research Consultant
kimlongfield.com

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Communicating evidence is important

- Convey new ideas and discoveries
- Make complicated information accessible to different audiences
- Challenge people to think differently about the status quo
- Influence policy, funding, practice
- Instill change
How do WE typically communicate evidence?
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“Long-term sustainability of equality and diversity...”

“The program is founded on a robust evidence base and evaluation strategy...”

“Gender-sensitive multi-sectoral capacity building facilitates knowledge sharing and engages stakeholders in inclusive green growth...”
How do WE typically communicate evidence?

“How producing reports that are laden with development jargon and technical language is the equivalent of writing in a secret code that can only be read by the wealthy, powerful and educated.”

--- Floyd Whaley, Asian Development Blog
What happens when we don’t communicate well?

"The murder rate in our country is the highest it’s been in 47 years, right?“
-- Donald Trump

"Here's the fact: The No. 1 source of income into Mexico are Mexicans working here and sending the money back."  
-- Kellyanne Conway

“....I would not agree that (human activity) is a primary contributor to the global warming that we see.”  
-- Scott Pruitt, EPA Administrator

The damage done by vaccines was “bigger than asbestos, bigger than tobacco, bigger than anything you’ve ever seen.”  
-- Robert F. Kennedy Jr, American radio host, environmental activist, author, and attorney
What happens when we don’t communicate well?

ALTERNATIVE FACTS
Communicating clearly must be a core function of our job
Communicating clearly must be a core function of our job
What gets in the way of communicating evidence?

Discomfort telling our story  
Holding out for perfection  

We can’t figure out comms  
It can feel seedy  

We tend to work alone  
Hard to see the forest through the trees
What gets in the way of communicating evidence?

WE DO
THE STEPS
1. Set your objectives

What do you want your communications to do?

- Secure funding
- Shift policy
- Influence programming
2. Know your audience and how to target them

Consumers

“If you want grown-ups to recycle, just tell their kids the importance of recycling, and they'll be all over it.”

-- Bill Nye the Science Guy
2. Know your audience and how to target them

Donors

“We make the future sustainable when we invest in the poor, not when we insist on their suffering.”
-- Bill Gates, American business magnate, investor, author, and philanthropist
2. Know your audience and how to target them

Policymakers

“No woman can call herself free who does not own and control her body. No woman can call herself free until she can choose consciously whether she will or will not be a mother.”

-- Margaret Sanger, Founder of Planned Parenthood
2. Know your audience and how to target them

Implementers

“We've taken on the major health problems of the poorest - tuberculosis, maternal mortality, AIDS, malaria - in four countries. We've scored some victories in the sense that we've cured or treated thousands and changed the discourse about what is possible.”

-- Paul Farmer
3. Build a bridge between evidence and communications

Universal health coverage/SDG Goal 3

Global Goals (FP2020, HIV 90:90:90, etc.)

Consumer empowered health care
- FP/RH
- HIV/TB
- Malaria
- WASH
- NCDs

Theory of change

PSI’s Strategic Approach
- Evidence
- External communications
- Internal learning

Flagship projects

Is used to test
Is used to advance
Is used to strengthen
4. Execute

**PSI’s Strategic Approach**
PSI is driving an effective and sustainable HIV/TB response by rapidly innovating in the weakest parts of the response.

**Evidence Sources**
- Routine case finding data: Malawi, Swaziland, Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Myanmar, Central America, South Africa
- Review of the literature, post-2012, on gaps in access to treatment

**External Communications Goal**
For PSI to be perceived as having recognized that what got us to this point in the HIV response won’t be enough to reach the 90-90-90 target.

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**Data Collection**

- Donor report
- Success story
- Earned media
- Learning note
- Blog post
- Roundtable
- Meeting
- Conference
5. Evaluate

- **Pageviews**
  - Graph showing pageviews from April 2015 to January 2016.

- **Social Media Engagement**
  - Twitter: 523 (45.3%), 75 engagements.
  - Facebook: 277 (22%), 40 engagements.

- **Sentiment Analysis**
  - Brand Awareness:
    - We can gather and analyze perceptions of your brand and assess your market positioning.
  - Thought Leadership:
    - We can conduct surveys on your behalf that showcase your service offerings and thought leadership across the development industry.
CALL TO ACTION
Implement the steps

➤ Set your objectives
➤ Know your audience and how to target them
➤ Build a bridge between evidence and communications
➤ Execute
➤ Evaluate
Your responsibility

► Communicate clearly

“If you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough.”
-- Albert Einstein

► Go beyond explanation and use evidence for influence

“Everyone should have their mind blown once a day.”
-- Neil deGrasse Tyson, Director of the Hayden Planetarium in New York City and science communicator
THANK YOU
Contacts

Kim Longfield
*Kim Longfield Consulting*
kim@kimlongfield.com

Minal Bopaiah
*Brevity & Wit*
minal@brevityandwit.com

Dana Sievers
*Population Services International*
dsievers@psi.org