

DECI-2

Developing Evaluation & Communication
Capacity for Information Society Research

Research Communication:
Step 7 Module: Methods and Media



ResCom Steps 12 adjusted to match UFE

1. Organizational readiness assessment.
2. Communication team readiness assessment.
3. Stakeholder analysis.
4. Situational analysis.
5. Defining communication purposes.
6. Defining communication objectives.
7. **Methods and media.**
8. Field testing.
9. Implementation of strategy.
10. Assess effectiveness.
11. Institutionalization of ResCom.
12. Tell the story.

Communication Functions

Some functions emphasize process and interaction
Others focus on packaging materials, some of which may be in interactive formats

NETWORKING will require participatory multiple way communication; **POLICY INFLUENCE** will call upon the building of relationships between policy makers and researchers, public relations and advocacy; **DISSEMINATION** of information is dependent on well-packaged material and messages while **CAPACITY BUILDING** around the research issue will require longer-term educational communication

Methods based on Objectives

The choice of methods and media is based on each **Communication Objective (intent)**, the stakeholder group to be reached and their preferred/desired channels of communication.

Example

Objective: To become a recognized hub in the ABC community within 12 months to the extent that the project team get invited to the XYZ events, receive# requests / month, and are followed on Twitter by # readers.

Communication functions:

- **Participatory communication** is horizontal which means the communicator is situated as members of a network and plays a peer role, sharing and exchanging information on the topic.
- **Advocacy communication** means the communicator takes a stand and pushes for a set of issues that matter to to the project. In this effort it is best to avoid using Public Relations or Awareness Raising; balancing the tone will be key.

Example

Group(s): stakeholders that belong to the ABC community.

Method and media: regular updates on project progress in website(s), social media, and face-to-face gatherings; scheduling to match preparatory phases for events you wish to be profiled in; interviews with influential stakeholders on relevant mass media. (Include tracking as much as possible.)

The packaging fixation

The **Policy Influence** and **Dissemination intent** will call for attention to packaging project information (project objectives, methods, findings, conclusions, recommendations) using different media (Websites, social media, printed materials, publications and conference presentations, Radio and TV, small group media such a theatre).

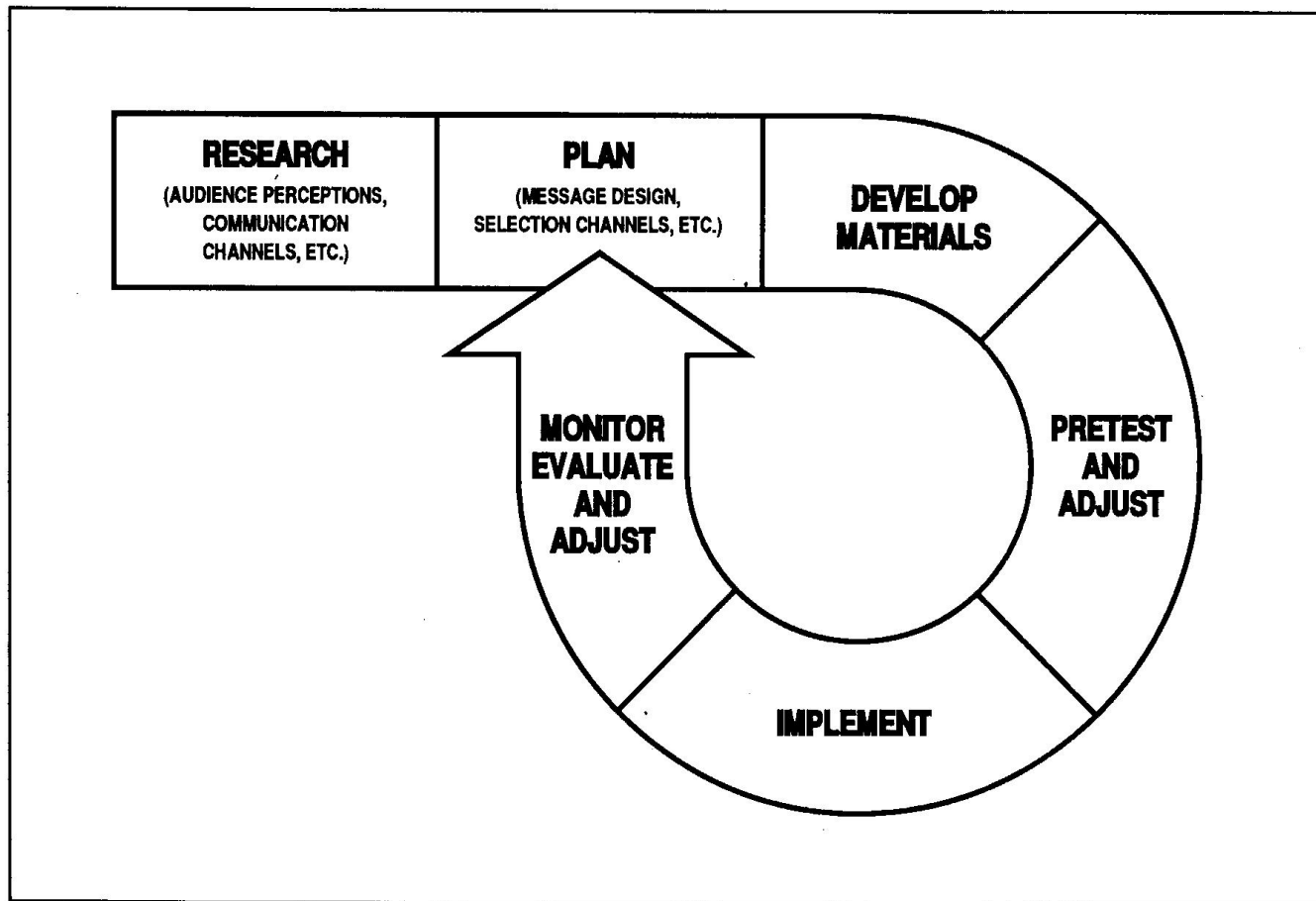
Warning: *In all of these cases, the tendency is to focus on developing the materials...the packaging; but nice packages fail to hit their target without adequate research and planning.*

Packaging of Research Findings

The RAPID Framework suggests that the packaging of research results is extremely important and that efforts to do this should focus on material that is **pertinent** to the issue at hand, **timely** and something that may contribute to the solution of a problem.

N.B: Emphasis on packaging and materials is an industrial model which assumes knowledge can be presented as a packet or toolkit. Some of the most important practical aspects can be shared in the research process rather than packaged at the end!

Planning cycle



Be prepared

RAPID speaks of the importance of timing and the understanding that with some audience/**participants** groups there can be ‘**windows of opportunity**’ when a piece of information may reach a receptive audience/**participants**.

TEHIIP, an IDRC-supported health project in Tanzania **produced a policy brief overnight**, following a tip that a major decision gathering was forthcoming. The brief was a major contributor to a health policy decision.

Module summary (1 of 2)

Method and media:

- Key issues and audiences/**participants** are closely interrelated. Each issue needs to be adjusted to the objective, the language and level of literacy of the audience/**participants**, and their existing knowledge of the subject matter.

Module summary (1 of 2)

Method and media:

- Materials and media need to be selected on the basis of findings from the audience research. Messages that are packaged into more than one media that an audience is exposed to tend to be noticed first, especially if some of the messages come through existing organizational networks that are trusted.

Module summary (2 of 2)

Method and media:

- From that start, we will focus on how the communication materials will be used, who and where they will be produced, how and where they will be field tested, and what mechanisms need to be put in place for their distribution.

Module summary (2 of 2)

Method and media:

- Gauging impact can focus on predictable, measurable outcomes (number of people who can recall a message) while acknowledging that longer term results (changed behaviour) are often the result of many other factors beyond the control of a project.