



PUBLIC AWARENESS & COMMUNICATION MODULES AND MATERIALS

Module 2: Strategic Communication for Integrated Solid Waste Management (ISWM)

**Prepared by the International Consortium
GTZ-ERM-GKW**

Why Communicate?





What is Communication? (1)

- **Strategic Communication: a tool to increase management effectiveness: a management tool**
- **Tools to engage your own organisation / staff / bosses (internal communication)**
- **Set of tools to involve others (external): other sectors, decision makers, end-users, etc.: stakeholders**
- **Tools to change current perceptions, attitudes, practices and behavior of these various stakeholders**

PA & CP – MODULE 2

- **Above all, communication is a two-way process**



What is communication?

Solid Waste Management is a complex field that involves many different players (stakeholders) from different sectors. ISWM projects often fail to succeed because the people or organisations concerned are not reached or do not support the project. It is often assumed that when the technical measures are arranged and found, the waste problem should be solved. In most cases however, communication is at least part of the solution, and often it is a crucial part. When the appropriate technical solutions are in place, communication can help prepare end-users for the changes they can expect, how they can adjust to them, and accept the changes made.

Two-way process

Above all, communication is a **two-way process**, in which the two parties, the sender and the receiver, exchange information. This two-way aspect is crucial to a proper understanding of communication. Everything you say, write or do, and how you say it, is picked up by the person you say it to, it is transformed in his/her mind, and the reaction is based on that transformation.

Communication can be **formal** or **informal**, and it can be unplanned. It becomes an effective support to management when it is well thought-through, when it is intended, designed, and targeted to a specific person or audience.

Internal versus External

Many projects and organisations develop communication activities that are targeted at external audiences. Internal communication is just as important, and usually receives much less attention. For a manager, internal communication helps to prepare the organisation for a job, to set the minds of the staff in the direction of the messages the organisation wants to communicate to its external target groups. Often, it is worthwhile to first organise this internally before making the step towards external communication.



What is Communication? (2)

- Mix of social instruments (e.g. information, exchange, dialogue, education, training, marketing)
- Communication is always part of a mix of other instruments (research, policy development, law enforcement, etc.), which it reinforces

'Strategic Communication is the oil that makes the technical mechanisms of solid waste management work'



Communication: an element that is part of a mix of instruments

Communication includes a range of social instruments that can help the manager to bring about the change that is needed. The word communication therefore includes much more than just public relations, and it goes beyond educating people.

To solve management issues in a solid waste programme, a government has various instruments: research, laws and regulations, financial (dis-) incentives and taxes, information and awareness raising. Communication is only one element of these instruments and mostly only effective in a mix with other instruments. In most cases communication alone cannot solve the problem. Likewise, technical measures are much more effective when supported by properly communicated messages.

Case example

Every weekend, a National Park receives a few hundred visitors from the nearby cities. These people do not enter the park but stay close to the parking lot at a small but especially for the purpose designed area to barbecue and enjoy the nice weather and the idea that they are out in nature. When they leave, they leave a terrible mess behind. The Park finds it more and more difficult to invest in more cleaning personnel. The director of the park does not want to use the wardens or the local police to patrol and enforce a better environmental behavior, as he really considers this group as good ambassadors and supporters of the park. Instead he has put up nice signboards requesting the visitors to leave the place as clean as they have found it. The Director doesn't understand why there is no improvement even with these signboards. Finally, one of the wardens comes to him and asks how the visitors could clean up after themselves, as is asked in the signboards, if there are not enough waste baskets?

Lessons learned: in most cases communication alone cannot solve the problem, one also needs to provide people with the possibility to act. Communication then supports the use of those provisions.



Strategic, effective communication

Communication may be formal or informal, but should always be intended and targeted to be effective as a management tool

Communication becomes strategic and an effective tool when the objectives have been clearly defined from the outset

Objectives may be targeted at:

- Knowledge
- Awareness
- Attitude
- Behaviour
- Networking

Objectives of communication

Communication can have different objectives, depending on the needs at that moment in solid waste management. When a person or organisation communicates, the purpose is usually to bring a certain message across. Other people and/or organisations need to **know** and **understand** something. In many cases the ambitions are higher. People and/or organisations need to **change their attitudes**, they need to change the way they look at a certain issue and the way they feel about it as an effect of communication. In other cases, and especially in solid waste management issues, a change in attitude is not enough. The desired effect of communication in ISWM is often the **change of behaviour** or **practices**.

Case example

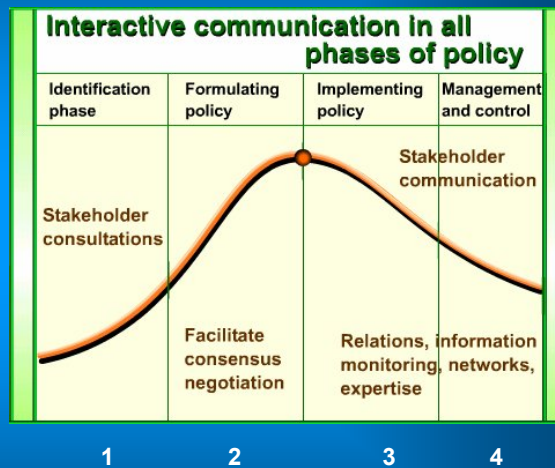
*As no regular waste collection system has been developed by the municipality, many citizens use a bay near to the city to deposit their waste. Inhabitants of the bay collect seaweed and shells for eating. To protect these inhabitants from pollution-related health issues, the local authority introduces a new regulation restricting the unregulated deposition of waste. Possible aim of communication is to inform the citizens and the collectors about this new regulation (**knowledge**). But knowing about the regulation does not imply that the citizens stop depositing their garbage in the bay. The people need to believe it is in the best of all interests that the bay and its inhabitants should be protected (**attitude**). Even when the citizens agree with the regulation and understand the reasons for implementing it, this does not necessarily mean they will obey (**behaviour**). They might continue dumping their bags and boxes in the bay because of the lack of suitable alternatives. If the desired change of behaviour has more individual disadvantages than benefits, communication is not enough. Other measures are necessary. For instance, a waste collection system needs to be put in place or an easily accessible dump site that does not harm a local population or the environment as much, need to be identified.*

Lesson learned: when the changing of knowledge, attitudes and/or behaviour is the aim of communication, the 'sending' of messages is often the main concern of the communicators. But anyone who believes that communication is mainly about the sending of messages, is mistaken. In many cases listening to the people involved is more important. One must know the perceptions of the people who are involved, the language they use and the way they can be reached.

Objectives of communication (3)

Communication objectives become strategic when clearly linked to the different stages in the management cycle of the project or policy

Each phase in the management cycle requires different communication support



How does communication assist in the different phases of a project?

Communication can have different functions. It can be communication **about** a project or a management intervention. Communication can also be seen as **an instrument of** management, as part of the different management tools that are available to the protected area management.

The objectives of communication differ per moment in the project or process. Similar to policy development, any process in integrated solid waste management knows a period of conception and formulation, of development, of implementation and of monitoring. Following this cycle, the different functions of communication can be described. Obviously, in reality the phases are not always strictly separated but may overlap in time and implementation.

Phase 1: Identification of the issue

In this phase, communication serves to identify problems early by listening to people. It helps in agenda setting for the remainder of the process in such a way that it is acceptable to all partners. Methods used: stakeholder consultations, surveys of opinions and attitude, and media analysis

Phase 2: Formulating the policy

At this stage, communication can serve to raise awareness or understanding of the policy proposals and the issue. Methods: KAP (Knowledge, Attitude & Practice) surveys, communication strategy design, integration of communication in mix of policy instruments (in, for example, the management plan), and facilitate consensus negotiation between parties.

Phase 3: Implementing the policy or project

Aim of communication is now to support the implementation phase: to inform target groups on how to proceed, to communicate the core message of the policy (or project) and accompanying measures. Methods include information campaigns, development of specific materials, marketing and education, targeted stakeholder communication.

Phase 4: Management and control

At this stage communication serves to sustain changed attitudes and behaviour. It includes relations maintenance and networking, continued information dissemination, and monitoring or progress.

Stakeholders

Solid waste management (or the lack of it!) affects people of flesh and blood

People can affect the success of your interventions (two ways)

Therefore: ISWM is about research and interventions but mainly it is about dealing with stakeholders

What are stakeholders?

- (Groups of) people who are instrumental to realising the objective: they can influence the outcome
- (Groups of) people who will be influenced by the ISWM intervention, and can therefore be barriers or success factors

PA & CP – MODULE 2

Stakeholders & Target Groups

ISWM is about research and technical and financial interventions but mainly it is about dealing with stakeholders. Strategic Communication plays an important role in this. Stakeholders are groups of people who are instrumental to realise the conservation objective: they can influence the outcome. Also, stakeholders are groups of people who will be influenced by the conservation programme, and can therefore be barriers or success factors, in case they support the intervention.

Why bother about stakeholders? As we have seen, ISWM affects people of flesh and blood. People can affect the success of your interventions, and your measures can affect the life of the people. In other words: managing solid waste issues is about managing people.

Stakeholder segmentation

When dealing with stakeholders, it is important to distinguish between them. Partly for strategic reasons: Know who you are dealing with! On the other hand it is important for practical reasons: limited resources (time, budget, manpower) do not allow you to target all stakeholders, so you have to know which groups to prioritise over others. To be able to do this, you need proper identification and analysis of the stakeholders, more attention to methods and how to do this will be discussed in the module on Gender.



Segmentation of stakeholders

Segmentation requires identification and analysis.

Ask yourself:

- Who has most impact?
- Who will be most crucial for me to achieve my objectives?
- Is this now or in a later stage?

This will give you:

- Primary and Secondary stakeholders
- Intermediaries

Why segment stakeholders?

Strategic reason

Know who you are dealing with!

Practical reason

Limited resources: prioritise!

—————> Ready for target group selection

8



Segmentation of stakeholders

A simple guidance to further segment the stakeholder population is by asking yourself:

- Who has most impact?
- Who will be most crucial for me to achieve my objective?
- Is this now or in a later stage?

This will give you:

- Primary and Secondary stakeholders
- Intermediaries

Upon which you will be ready for target group selection.

What is a target group?

After segmentation of stakeholders, one can decide which group to target. These then become the target audience of this particular communication intervention or project at this particular time. In other words, the target group(s) may consist of only part of the stakeholders of the solid waste management issue at hand.

Target groups can be defined using different criteria, which differ from situation to situation:

- Geographically
- Demographically
- By Lifestyle / Livelihood
- By Attitudinal & cognitive state
- Other..

It is important to segment or define the target group in such a way that they form a more or less homogenous group, so that the message and approach you choose in the communication strategy will be effective for everyone in that group. You may find along the way that further segmentation is needed. It is very useful to better understand the characteristics of the target group that are related to your communication objectives: do you want to improve the knowledge about a certain issue, it is worthwhile to first assess the extent of the target groups current knowledge about the issue (see next slide).



Target group Analysis

After segmentation of stakeholders, one can decide which group to target, these become your target groups

Target groups can be defined
(Geographically, demographically, by lifestyle / livelihood, by attitudinal & cognitive state, others (define!))

To be prepared for the different reactions to a ISWM issue, analyse the perceptions of the target groups

People can look at an issue thinking of social, ecological, economical, health (etcetera) aspects: their perception is their reality!

Also analyse your own perception, realise what the differences imply!

PA & CP – MODULE 2

Analysis of stakeholders in biodiversity: what are their characteristics?

The following checklist could be used for the further analysis of target groups:

Interest: Are they interested in the issue you want to communicate about?

- No interest in the issue makes communication difficult. High interest makes it easier.
- In cases of low interest, think of ways to link your issues to what is of high interest to them, think of potential benefits for them

Knowledge: How much do they know?

- Determine the knowledge of your target group before you communicate. If there is little knowledge, be prepared to provide a great deal of information before you can expect a two-way communication flow
- Start always from what they know and speak their language (quite often that means the language of non-experts)

Attitude: How do they feel about the issue?

- If the group has strong feelings against your plan, your ideas will require a lot of time, patience and effort. Sometimes the feelings can be so strong that effective communication becomes impossible for a while. Listening and trying to understand their position is often more effective than arguing.
- If their position is based on (irrational) emotions such as fear, do not try to rationalize but take the emotion serious and try to find common solutions.
- If the group has strong feelings in favor of your plan, communication will be much easier.

Information Behavior: How does the group look for information?

- Do they get information – which is reliable in their perception - from other members of the group, or from local opinion leaders? Do they read newspapers and magazines, listen to radio, watch TV, use internet.
- Will they look actively for information? (phone, library, internet, databases etc.)
- Will they attend public meetings and hearings?

End values: What are the beliefs, norms and values of the group?

- Is this a very traditional group or a very unconventional one?
- How formal are they in their contacts with others and especially outsiders?
- What are their specific religious or political beliefs?
- How does our issue connect with their sense of safety, belonging, recognition, etc.
- Others (define! Depending on your specific situation/area/culture/local practices)

Communication Planning

- Planning is a prerequisite for effective and efficient use of resources for communication.
- Planning communication needs decisions about target groups, objectives, messages, media and organisation/budgets etc.
- How to prepare a strategy in 10 steps

A STRATEGY IN 10 STEPS

- 1) *Analysis of issues*
- 2) *Outline of role of communication*
- 3) *Determination of the target groups*
- 4) *Determination of the communication objectives*
- 5) *Determination of the strategy/message*
- 6) *Determination of means*
- 7) *The budget*
- 8) *Organisation*
- 9) *Plan*
- 10) *Monitoring & Evaluation*



Messages & Materials

When approached strategically, selection of means will always be in relation to:

- the issue at hand
- the target groups
- their level of KAP
- the resources

Types of Media

- *interpersonal*
- *printed media*
- *Visual media*
- *IT / digital media*
- *Mass media*

Look, listen, do not assume: pre-test (both messages & materials)



Types of materials

A commonly made mistake in communication projects is that people tend to jump to the selection of materials without proper analysis, planning and without a well thought-through strategy. Such haste can prove to be an expensive time-waster, when it turns out that the materials are inappropriate for the audience, and need to be revised or even completely re-done. The situation, the type of problem, the audience, their level of knowledge, attitude or practice, their habits in the use of media: all these elements together determine which material is the most appropriate carrier for your message. Materials range from:

- interpersonal means (Such as (non-exhaustive) consultations, assemblies, meetings, interviews, focus group discussions, workshops, excursions, games, theatre, etc. ...)
- Printed media (such as letters, minutes, (annual) reports, brochures, leaflets, journals, magazines, newsletters etc. ...)
- Visual media (exhibitions, visitors centres, posters, slides, overhead sheets, film/video...)
- Digital media (internet, email, CD-Rom...)
- Mass media (radio/TV broadcasts, newspaper articles, press conferences, press releases)

Each type has its advantages and disadvantages, for different reasons: there are no televisions, people are mostly illiterate, radio is not transmitted properly across the mountains, that newsletter is politically unacceptable, there are too many people to gather in a few assemblies...

The diversity of these factors that influence the choice of media clarifies the importance of proper analysis and strategising before selecting the material to be produced.

Pre-testing

For the same reason, pre-testing is so important. We cannot assume to know exactly how the target group will receive the product. There may be aspects in the text (language, style, sensitive topics) or the lay out that distracts people and that makes them refrain from registering the message. It is therefore worthwhile to pre-test the product before producing the complete number of copies you have planned. This may take some extra time but will increase the effectiveness of the product and will prevent you from risking the entire product to be ignored.



Barriers in communicating ISWM

Why is it so complex to communicate solid waste management issues?

- Scale of problem: lack of insight
- Duration in time to see improvements or deterioration
- Separation of causes and effects of adverse behaviour
- Perceptions towards changes in own behaviour →



Barriers in communicating ISWM

There are several factors which create barriers to communicate about ISWM.

- Uncertainty about the scale of the problem of waste management: often it is not exactly known, or people lack insight in the extent of the problem
- Duration in time to see improvements or deterioration: it takes time before a water quality declines to such a rate, for example, that diseases start to occur on a larger scale
- Separation of causes and effects of unfriendly behaviour: the result of a certain behaviour is sometimes not visible for several years, making people feel they are not responsible
- Perceptions of people towards changes in environmental behaviour: why should they change? These are explained in the next slide.



Perceptions towards changes in own ISWM practices

“why should we change?”

- Own benefits are more important than collective disadvantage (NIMBY)
- No confidence in the cooperation of others ('after you' effect)
- No confidence in own behaviour ('drop in the ocean')
- We can not go back anymore ('society is like that')



Perceptions of people towards changes in environmental behaviour: why should we change?

- Own benefits are more important than collective disadvantage
Think of the NIMBY - syndrome: Not In My Back Yard
- No confidence in the cooperation of others ('after you' effect)
- No confidence in your own behaviour ('drop in the ocean')
- We can not go back anymore ('society is like that')



Stimuli in communicating ISWM

- **Relevance to people's life**
- **Credibility sender** (*'if she says so...'*)
- **Attraction sender** (*'he is a nice person, so he must have the correct opinion'*)
- **Number of people that agree** (*'if everyone believes it, it must be true'*)
- **Number of arguments in message** (*'it is well thought-through, so it may be true'*)
- **NIMBY** (*'if we participate in the decision-making, the solution may be more satisfactory'*)
- **What can you offer?**



Stimuli in communicating ISWM

Fortunately, there are also factors that stimulate people to become more environmentally conscious and to behave accordingly. This is influenced by:

- Relevance to people's life
- Credibility of the sender (*'if he says so...'*)
- Attraction of the sender (*'he is a nice person, so he must have the correct opinion'*)
- Number of people that agree (*'if everyone believes it, it must be true'*)
- Number of arguments in message (*'if there are so many reasons, it must be true'*)
- NIMBY (*'If we participate in the decision-making, the solution may be more satisfactory'*)
- What can you offer?

In general, people are reluctant to change: practices, ideas, perceptions, opinions, all are based on a complex mix of prior knowledge, intuition, tradition, culture, future perspectives and more.

Therefore, people are hesitant to change unless there is something in it for them: will the proposed intervention make their life easier, will it improve their health, will it bring enjoyment, make them feel good, increase their status, or bring economic or other benefits?

These potential benefits are important motivators for change and are therefore an important element to bring into the message that will be communicated.



Four rules for communication (1)

1. You cannot *NOT* communicate
2. People communicate mainly without words



Four rules for communication

When in contact with another person or a group of people, you start influencing each other. From a meeting with a villager in his kitchen, to an informal discussion, a workshop or a presentation for 100 participants to a congress; you communicate. When preparing for any sort of meeting or presentation, be aware of the following basic rules:

1. You cannot *not* communicate

As soon as you are near someone you start influencing each other. Being silent also has a meaning, it might say that you are not interested in the other person. Your attitude right before or after a presentation also influences your audience.

2. People communicate mainly without words

Of course people communicate with words, but emotions are mostly expressed through body language. Words and body language may contradict each other. The conflicting messages can be confusing to the receiver. Saying that you are open to suggestions, while sitting with your arms crossed and with your body turned away from the person you are talking with, may signal that you are not so interested after all. Communication only works well when words and body language are in accordance with each other.



Four rules for communication (2)

3. My interpretation is not necessarily someone else's interpretation
4. The relationship between people influences the communication

3. My interpretation is not necessarily someone else's interpretation

We often hear what we want to hear. With different expectations and needs in mind, you might interpret a conversation differently than someone else.

4. The relationship between people influences the communication

A subordinate will talk to a superior differently than to a direct colleague. It is important to recognise this and to be aware of such differences in relationship. The same is true for the environment in which the conversation takes place: a meeting in a Director's office will be different than a meeting with fishermen at the harbour. Communication begins to fail when one party refuses to accept the position of the other.

And remember: "Said is not necessarily heard....":

Said is not always heard...

Often we assume that because we have said or written something, people will act on this information in the way we desire. But communication is about establishing a relationship of shared values, meanings, interests and actions. People have their own ideas, values, experiences, and they explain every message they receive on the basis of this 'background film'. Communicators should therefore always realize that:

*Said is not necessarily heard
Heard is not necessarily understood
Understood is not necessarily agreed upon
Agreed is not necessarily acted upon
Acted is not necessarily repeated*



Four rules for communication (3)

Case Example (1)

Case example

(1)

The management of a Protected Area (PA) is concerned about the plants on the river dikes, which are in danger as farmers are mowing too early in the year. They want to inform the farmers about the best date to start mowing by printing a small leaflet explaining the need and background of mowing on a later date. They announce in the Newsletter of the Protected Area that farmers can obtain this leaflet at the mayor's office. That year, farmers still start mowing too early. No leaflet has been collected, as farmers do not read the PA newsletter. It is also questionable if they would have gone through the trouble of collecting a leaflet at the mayor's office.

Lesson learned: what is said is not necessarily heard

(2)

Through the local police the PA manager is informed about their mistake and the next year they put up a huge poster at public places in the village. The poster explains the scientific facts and gives biological information on the importance of biodiversity and asks farmers to collect the leaflet at the mayor's office. No leaflet is collected and that year again, the farmers start mowing too early. One day, the PA manager talks with one of the farmers and hears that the expert language was not understood, so the farmers thought that the message was not really important for them.

Lesson learned: What is heard is not necessarily understood



Four rules for communication (4)

Case Example (2)

Case example

(3)

The manager has learned his lesson. The next year a new simple poster was made directly giving the main message what to do: only start mowing from the third Friday of June onwards. Alas, again no result. Although the farmers did receive and understand the message, they did not agree. They are very religious in that area and found it insulting to their religion that the poster was suggesting that they should start mowing on a Friday.

Lesson learned: what is understood is not necessarily agreed with.

(4)

The PA management does not give up, and vows not to repeat the same mistake next year. New posters are designed with the same, simple message, to start mowing only after the third Monday of June. But the result is the same. The farmers start mowing too early. By now, the manager is desperate. He talks to the local police and asks if the police could not help the PA. But of course, pure law enforcement is not the answer. By mowing later in the season the farmers are losing an extra quantity of hay for their cattle and that hurts their business. When they are not properly compensated financially, they will not change their behaviour if it means losing income. Even if one would inform them with thousands of brochures and posters.

Lesson learned: What is agreed with is not necessarily acted upon. People only change their behaviour after carefully weighing the costs and benefits of the change you ask from them.

(5)

The PA area finally gets its act together and calculates what average damage farmers will have. In dialogue with some opinion leaders from the farming communities they formulate an attractive proposition: farmers who mow at the right date will receive a nice financial bonus with a minimum of bureaucracy involved. That year most farmers start mowing at the right time. The PA manager is happy and satisfied. But the next year it goes wrong again. The farmers had forgotten the date; they were not notified in time.

Lessons learned: acted upon does not necessarily mean repeated! Behaviour change to become permanent has to be followed by positive feedback and reminders.