

Dorfman, L., Ervice J., Woodruff, K. (2002 November). *Voices for change: A taxonomy of public communications campaigns and their evaluation challenges*. Berkeley, CA: **Berkeley Media Studies Group**. Makes the case that communications campaigns cover a broad range of different types and characteristics, and can be differentiated along the axes of **purpose**, **scope**, and **maturity**. Examines what communications campaigns that fall on different areas of these three axes look like, and how *where* they fall may affect the evaluation approach used and lead to distinct evaluation challenges and needs.

**Voices for Change:  
A Taxonomy of Public Communications Campaigns  
and Their Evaluation Challenges**

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Prepared for the **Communications Consortium Media Center**

November 2002

This paper was commissioned by the Communications Consortium Media Center for a collaborative project designed to research, develop, test, and disseminate principles for evaluating nonprofit communications. This is the second background paper in the series. The first paper, "Public Communication Campaign Evaluation, An Environmental Scan of the Challenges, Criticisms, Practice, and Opportunities," was produced by the Harvard Family Research Project. We thank the David and Lucile Packard Foundation for its support in the planning phase of this project.

The authors thank Lawrence Wallack, Portland State University, Esther Thorson, University of Missouri School of Journalism, and Phillip Wilbur, American Heart Association, for their comments on earlier drafts of this paper. The authors also thank Anne Arnesen, Wisconsin Council on Children and Families; Susan Bowa, SeaWeb; Thom Clarke, Community Media Workshop; Joel Grube, Prevention Research Center; Rhonda Hunter, Earthwater; Debbie Morgan, Frameworks Institute; and Bruce Orenstein, Chicago Video Project, for their willingness to share their communications campaign experiences with us.



The challenge is to make things as simple as possible and not one bit simpler.  
— Albert Einstein

Communications campaigns are getting increased attention from foundations and the groups they fund. In large and small ways, those working for social change are beginning to invest more in communications and expect more from their efforts. And why not? This is, after all, the information age, teeming with new media and multitudes of new venues for exchanging information. The enormous reach and seemingly unlimited potential of communications tactics like advertising and other mass media intoxicate us with their promise of instantly informing and perhaps even persuading millions of people at once.

But are social change groups using communications effectively to pursue their goals? The question matters: if the answer is no, an enormous opportunity is being squandered and resources wasted. If the answer is yes then those effective communications methods need to be shared. But answering the question poses its own challenges: evaluation is complicated, intimidating, difficult, and often expensive. Because communications campaigns are so hard to evaluate, we don't have a strong body of evidence about what works and what doesn't, and what we do know is not well disseminated and integrated into practice. Developing workable principles for evaluating public communications campaigns should help.

This is the second in a series of background papers for a collaborative project designed to research, develop, test, and disseminate principles for evaluating nonprofit communications. The project is a collaboration between practitioners and evaluators who are partnering in an effort to explore the best ways to evaluate campaigns that, as we will see, have myriad forms and vexing challenges for evaluation. Through this process, evaluators may have to shed old notions of what constitutes acceptable evaluations. Likewise, public communication campaigners will have to face hard questions about how they do what they do, and whether it makes a difference. It won't be easy. We suspect, though, that the close examination demanded by this process will yield new ground on which both evaluators and campaigners can cultivate new methods for assessing what works, what doesn't, and why.

Before we can begin articulating standards for evaluating communications campaigns we must say definitively what they are. This paper begins that process. In it, we have assembled examples of communications campaigns executed in the public interest by groups large and small, locally and nationally. Our objective is to array the range of communications campaigns and define their key characteristics. Our intention is to create a complete taxonomy of campaign types, so that later, when principles for evaluating communication campaigns are created, they will be able to accommodate the different challenges posed by various types of campaigns. To do this we have catalogued a variety of campaigns (presented in the Appendix). From these campaigns we have

selected exemplars to illustrate the various classifications of public communication campaigns. Finally, we have posed questions that must be wrestled with as we begin articulating principles for evaluating public communications campaigns.

What matters here is what the range of communication campaigns looks like, and how they might differ from one another. The differences will become important when evaluators assess effectiveness and when they compare communications campaigns to each other. Different types of communication campaigns will demand different sorts of evaluations. In this paper, we hope to clarify general parameters of public communications campaigns that will inform the ongoing project to develop evaluation principles.

## **FIRST, WHAT IS A PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN?**

Public communications campaigns impart ideas for a strategic purpose. The American Heritage Dictionary tells us that communications is the art and technique of using words effectively to impart information or ideas. That definition is a good starting point, because even though communications might involve images or music, we are usually most concerned about the words. The American Heritage Dictionary also tells us that campaigns are an operation or series of operations energetically pursued to accomplish a purpose. This definition also provides a good beginning, because the efforts we examine may be singular events or long-term courses of action, but they will all have a specific purpose. And, we assume they will be energetically pursued.

Many have offered definitions of communications campaigns. The first background paper in this series, the Harvard Family Research Project's overview of public communication campaigns, begins with the classic definition from Rogers and Storey: "Public communication campaigns use the media, messaging, and an organized set of communication activities to generate specific outcomes in a large number of individuals and in a specified period of time."<sup>1</sup> Other experts have emphasized similar qualities. For instance, Rice and Atkin say that public communication campaigns "may involve a conventional mix of brochures, posters, advertisements, and commercials or a different array of communication methods" for the purpose of achieving certain objectives.<sup>2</sup> Communications campaigns use a variety of techniques and strategies in hopes of improving individual lives and making the world a better place.

But the classic definitions immediately raise questions. Do communications campaigns have to be directed at "large numbers of individuals" as Rogers and Storey suggest? What about efforts with very narrow targets, sometimes one person? Does Rice

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<sup>1</sup> Rogers, E. & Storey J., Communication campaigns. pp 419-445 in Berger and Chaffee (Eds.), Handbook of Communication Science, Newbury Park: Sage, 1987, quoted in "Public Communication Campaign Evaluation: An Environmental Scan of Challenges, Criticisms, Practice, and Opportunities," Prepared for CCMC by the Harvard Family Research Project.

<sup>2</sup> *Public Communication Campaigns*, Rice, Ronald E. & Atkin, Charles K. (eds.), Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA, 2001, pg. 5.

and Atkin's definition over-emphasize the "media" aspect of campaigns? What exactly should be classified as part of a communications campaign?

In trying to define what constitutes a "campaign," we found the word used for everything from a single media event to a multi-year, multi-pronged, multi-million-dollar initiative. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, for example, is in fact a large nonprofit organization whose goal is to reduce the teen pregnancy rate by one-third between 1996 and 2005. The Campaign pursues legislative, educational, community organizing, and entertainment media initiatives in an attempt to raise awareness of the problem, shift cultural messages on teen sexuality and pregnancy, disseminate research on what programs help prevent the problem, and advocate for comprehensive sex education in schools. In recent years, the Campaign's activities have been as varied as influencing pregnancy-related story lines on "Dawson's Creek," testifying on Capitol Hill about welfare reform reauthorization legislation, and facilitating efforts to find common ground between religious leaders and public health leaders around teen sexual behavior. Clearly, this effort employs a broad definition of "campaign" although not all aspects of the Campaign's work are communication (though differentiating between what is and what is not communication is a messy business). Nearly all of the Campaign's activities impart ideas for a strategic purpose, and many go further to prescribe individual and policy action.

In contrast to the National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, other campaigns exist without a formal organization. For example, emergency room physician and researcher Garen Wintemute, well before he directed the Violence Prevention Research Program at the University of California, Davis, was a savvy user of communications who, it could be said, had his own campaign. Prior to initiating research studies he would consider how the findings could attract news attention to influence policy. One such study, "When Children Shoot Children," examined the deaths of 88 children shot by other children.<sup>3</sup> At the news conference he held to release the study, Dr. Wintemute presented a plywood board bearing real guns paired with toy guns that replicated their look perfectly. This was part of the problem, in fact. Some children had killed playmates when they picked up a real gun thinking it was a toy. The visual was commanding and even the local reporters, who pounced on the story, could not tell the difference between the real and toy guns. Dr. Wintemute successfully used the study — and the national news coverage it garnered — to pressure Toys R Us to remove the replica guns from its shelves.<sup>4</sup> He imparted his information for a specific strategic purpose.

Defining what constitutes a communications campaign turns out to be more art than science. The variation is so great, as we'll demonstrate throughout this paper, that a concise definition encompassing every possibility — impart ideas with strategic purpose — remains so general it is almost useless. Communications campaigns, it turns out, are what their practitioners say they are.

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<sup>3</sup> Wintemute et al. When children shoot children: 88 unintended deaths in California. *JAMA* 257: 3107-3109, 1987.

<sup>4</sup> See "When Children Shoot Children, the Media Pay Attention," pp 159-164 in Wallack et al., *Media Advocacy and Public Health, Power for Prevention*, Sage Publications: Newbury Park, CA, 1993.

Despite our inability to define them both comprehensively and succinctly, we nevertheless can say a great deal about the characteristics of campaigns, and in the next section, offer a system for classifying public communications campaigns that we believe will be applicable in almost every instance.

## **THE TAXONOMY**

A communications campaign might be a local, singular effort or a large scale, long-term crusade. Corraling the myriad possibilities into one cage is our daunting task. We suggest that communication campaigns be differentiated along axes of **purpose**, **scope**, and **maturity**. The purpose, scope, and level of maturity will influence what sort of evaluation is appropriate or even possible for a given communications campaign.

We first elaborate our taxonomy for communication campaigns by explaining purpose, scope, and maturity. We then describe several campaigns in detail to highlight differences between them and illustrate various points along the continuums of purpose, scope and maturity, including the challenges for evaluation in each (Exemplars). The Appendix, “A Partial Sampling of Communication Campaigns, from the mid-1980’s to Today” lists many more campaigns; however, because it was impossible to catalogue every known campaign, the Appendix is in no way exhaustive. We are eager to hear from readers with additional suggestions.

Our taxonomy does not include campaigns for political candidates, ballot initiatives, or commercial products (like “Got Milk?”). Since most nonprofits focus on pro-social issues we have not included campaigns from groups such as the NRA or others who challenge public health or social justice goals. However, it may be informative to examine those campaigns in the future.

### **Purpose**

Purpose may be the most important factor an evaluator (or campaign strategist) discerns. At the tactical level, communication campaigns may look very similar: many use the same general techniques (e.g., gathering news, getting on the editorial pages, advertising, and promotion). The distinguishing factors rest in the what the campaign is trying to accomplish. Still, practitioners face a muddled jargon that describes communications campaigns, where terms like “social marketing,” “public awareness,” “public engagement,” “public will,” and “media advocacy” are used interchangeably. In many cases the labels have become a distraction. We will avoid them and instead focus on purpose.

The Harvard Family Research Project, among others, has articulated the various reasons one might employ a public communications campaign.<sup>5</sup> They describe a

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<sup>5</sup> See for example, Harvard Family Research Project, op cit; *Communicating for Change: A Review of Communications Campaigns Conducted by Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Groups, 1994-2000*, by

continuum of campaigns focused on individual behavior change at one end and public will or policy change on the other. Others, such as Hornik<sup>6</sup>, would likely add social norm campaigns to the mix, but the fundamental divide still stands. A campaign's ultimate goal is to either affect individuals directly or the collective policies that shape our behavior. The campaign, in turn, can be categorized accordingly.

Whichever end of the spectrum, communication campaigns are pro-social in that they “attempt to shape behavior toward desirable social outcomes....The outcomes of those behaviors – the campaign’s ultimate goals – may include healthier individuals, families, and communities or specific policy results that lead to better outcomes for individuals, families and communities.”<sup>7</sup> In this definition, “behavior” is used broadly to include policy. We suggest that evaluators will need to clearly differentiate the policy and behavior ends of the spectrum. A great many communication campaigns have worked to change individual behavior: smoking less, exercising more, reading to children, not littering. But communication campaigns have a history of affecting policy, as well. This has been important since policy can shape the “social and economic factors [that] influence health behaviors and individual lifestyle.”<sup>8</sup> Indeed, “several decades of research have demonstrated that lower social class, social deprivation, and lack of social support are among the most important determinants of health”<sup>9</sup> and it is policy, rather than behavior, that will most affect those risk factors and improve social and environmental conditions.

In fact, many health and social problems are related to conditions outside the immediate individual’s control. A focus limited to personal behavior change ultimately fails us as a society because it narrows the possible solutions too much. For example, individual children and their parents need to make healthy personal choices so they’ll grow up with strong bodies and sound minds. If they do that, we should have a healthier society. But the choices are difficult, and sometimes impossible. How can children get adequate exercise -- important for establishing good habits and preventing childhood obesity and adult cancer -- if there are no safe places to play? Or if physical education is no longer a mandatory part of the school curriculum? Or if there are insufficient resources for after-school sports? Personal choices are always made in the context of a larger environment. Public communication campaigns can address both ends of the spectrum.

Communications campaigns, then, have an element of reform: “Reform, defined as action that makes society or the lives of individuals better, is a unifying principle of public communication campaigns. Better is defined by emerging values in a society

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EDK Associates Inc.; and Winett, Liana B. and Wallack L. Advancing Public Health Goals Through the Mass Media. *Journal of Health Communication* 1:173-196, 1996.

<sup>6</sup> *Public Health Communication: Evidence for Behavior Change*. Hornik, Robert C. (ed.), Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: Mahway, NJ, 2002.

<sup>7</sup> Weiss, J. & Tschirhart, M. Public information campaigns as policy instruments. *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 12(1): 82-119, 1994, quoted in Harvard Family Research Project, op cit.

<sup>8</sup> Siegel, Michael, MD, MPH, and Doner, Lynne, MA. *Marketing Public Health: Strategies to Promote Social Change*. Aspen Publishers: Gaithersburg, MD, 1998, pg. 19.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

during each period in its history.”<sup>10</sup> Of course, “better” may not be neatly defined. Indeed, depending upon the issue, campaign goals (and their implicit and explicit values) can arouse a great deal of contention. This tension between personal behavior on the one end and public policy on the other looms large in many campaigns.

The tension between personal behavior and policy action is not particular to communications campaigns. It is an artifact of American culture. The roots of this tension can be found in the history of rugged individualism as our prevailing frame, myth, or “grand narrative” — it is the primary storyline for news, politics, and culture. It is not the only storyline certainly, but the dominant one.<sup>11</sup>

The purpose continuum, then, can be drawn from a focus on personal behavior on the one end to policy change on the other. We place behavior and policy change at either ends of the purpose continuum because they are the tangible outcomes and institutionalization of social norms and public will. Public will and social norms describe stages of change that should result in either of those tangible ends. Public will and policy change are sometimes used interchangeably. Our assumption in this paper is that public will is one step toward policy change, and in some cases may not even be required to change policy.

Social norms can be powerful, even though they may not be as tangible as behavior change or policy. For example, faced with wide-spread drinking -- particularly binge drinking -- on its campus, Northern Illinois University officials developed a social norms communications campaign. Campus officials knew from early research that students overestimated the amount of alcohol their peers consumed. “Having perceived heavy drinking as the ‘usual’ behavior of their peers, [students may be] more likely to engage in this ‘typical’ behavior,” they reasoned. Thus the campus effort focused on changing students’ perceptions of their peers’ drinking habits.

To change those perceptions, officials conducted baseline surveys on students’ drinking behavior and over the course of several years relayed that information back to them through fliers and pamphlets. Two “Money Brothers” -- students hired by the project and dressed conspicuously in dark glasses, trench coats and fedoras -- also roamed the school, passing out \$1 bills to students who could accurately recall the information from the flyers. (They also passed out flyers and pamphlets to anyone, regardless of their ability to recall the information.) Follow-up surveys showed that by the end of the campaign, fewer students not only saw binge drinking as the norm, but more students self-reported a reduction in binge drinking.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Rice and Atkin, op cit, pg. 5.

<sup>11</sup> The roots of individualism in American culture, and how they affect news coverage, are elaborated in Lawrence, Regina. Issue 12: American Values and the News about Children’s Health, Berkeley Media Studies Group, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Haines, Michale P., and Spear, Sherilyn F. Changing the perception of the norm: A strategy to decrease binge drinking among college students. *Journal of American College Health*, November 1, 1996.



The fact that tension exists across the purpose spectrum does not mean that both ends are not important or necessary. In some cases, either end of the continuum may be the object of a communications campaign depending on the life of the issue. For example, before President Clinton signed the Children's Health Insurance Program into law, advocates directed their attention to seeing that policy enacted. After the Act became law, advocates redirected their communications efforts to inform eligible families about obtaining health insurance for their children, a behaviorally-oriented goal. At that point, communication campaigns were launched by children's advocates to inform potential consumers of health insurance about how to enroll rather than to stimulate political or civic action on the issue.

The mushy middle. Some campaigns will be easy to locate on one end or the other of the purpose spectrum. Many, however, will be harder to classify, either because the campaigners themselves are not sure where they fit or because the campaigns have more than one purpose, what we call the "mushy middle." Or, the campaigners believe that a progression from knowledge to attitudes to behavior change is necessary prior to widespread social change or policy action and claim to be working on all aspects simultaneously. Other campaigns begin with policy goals that, in some cases, have successfully bypassed widespread public opinion change. Evaluators will have to determine a campaign's theory of change in order to assess where on the purpose continuum to locate a given campaign.

We are not recommending that every campaign span the entire continuum of purpose. We are saying, however, that campaigner will have to clearly articulate for evaluators where they are on the spectrum, how that placement relates to their theory of change, and show how the communications campaign relates to other activities (e.g., policy work behind the scenes).

Ambiguity between goals and actions. Despite these distinctions, a campaign's tactics don't always line up with stated goals. Classifying campaigns along the continuum between personal behavior and political action can be tricky. For example, both EDK Associates<sup>13</sup> and the Harvard Family Research Project cite the "There's No Excuse for Domestic Violence" campaign as a public will effort. The classification makes sense, and perhaps could go further toward a policy classification since the campaign's Web site prominently features a "take action" section with quick links to pending legislation in Congress. The public's ability to support policy change is literally a "click" away. The public service campaign alone, however, while encouraging bystanders to intervene and teach children that domestic violence is wrong, is not connected to a policy context and so is presumably operating out of different goals related to influencing personal behavior.

Similarly, the Campaign to End Handgun Violence Against Kids, sponsored by The California Wellness Foundation, also used advertising to educate about the toll gun violence was taking on children and youth in California. While the ads themselves made no explicit link to policy, other materials in the larger campaign did make an explicit link (see Scope below).

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<sup>13</sup> EDK Associates, op cit.

There may be several reasons for the ambiguities. To wit:

- *Timing.* Pushing for specific policy change may be premature for an audience that does not see the problem as a significant – or public – one. For domestic or sexual violence in particular, advocates may have decided that the public needed to be convinced first that the problem extends beyond a basic victim/perpetrator conceptualization. Only then could advocates rally the public to apply sufficient pressure for institutional- or social policy-change. (See “Maturity” discussion below.)
- *Mixed goals.* A campaign may have both individual change- and public policy-oriented goals. Given the relative scarcity of full-time public will or policy campaigns, any public policy component may be enough to land a campaign on the policy side of the continuum, in the view of some analysts.
- *Working behind the scenes.* A campaign may indeed have a policy change emphasis – it just may not be public. That is, the public face of the campaign may stress individual behavior change while advocates work behind the scenes to change policy.
- *Universal approach.* Lastly, researchers may tend to characterize a campaign as “public will” simply because it takes a universal approach to a problem. This may be the case with domestic violence and/or sexual assault prevention campaigns in particular, which often seek to put “the problem in a social context.”<sup>14</sup> In doing so, the campaigns follow one of the first objectives of a public will focus: “affect perceptions of social issues and who is seen as responsible.”<sup>15</sup> Still, if the campaign never makes the leap to institutional or policy change, it probably shouldn’t be classified as such.<sup>16</sup>

In addition, some communication campaigns seem guilty of calling attention to a problem without offering clear, preferable solutions. In one example, the “Covering the Uninsured” campaign, sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, seeks “to publicize the extent of the [uninsured] problem and inform more Americans, so that together we can find solutions.”<sup>17</sup> The priority is on building public awareness; the campaign itself offers no clear policy recommendations. Indeed, on the “legislation tracking” section of the Web site, various policies under Congressional consideration are compared side by side, but no judgments are made as to which are better or worse. Such neutrality is intentional: the Web site states that the 13 campaign sponsors don’t always see “eye to eye” on the issue. The risk, of course, is that such neutrality leaves the public thinking, “but what then do we *do*?”

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<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, pg 5.

<sup>15</sup> Harvard Family Research Project, *op cit*, pg 6.

<sup>16</sup> EDK Associates *op cit*.: “The biggest gaping hole in...public engagement campaigns, is the lack of connection between...communications effort and their programming and policy work.” Pg 43.

<sup>17</sup> <http://coveringtheuninsured.org/about/>

That said, a National Public Radio story on a recent health policy poll offered a different take on the campaign. In describing the disconnect between the public's clear desire to find solutions to the uninsured problem and Congress' continual fixation on drug benefits for seniors, the reporter states that Covering the Uninsured's communication campaign was designed to raise the issue on policy makers' agenda, not the public's. Even so, the question lingers: once the campaign raises the issue, what's next?

Indeed, some campaigns may not be able to publicly state policy intent, either because the campaigners don't all agree, as in the Covering the Uninsured case above, or for other reasons. Some campaigners may be prohibited from taking stands on policy. Others may begin with incremental change at the behavior-end of the spectrum that they hope eventually leads to policy change. The danger, of course, is that the controversial nature of the policy solutions prohibits the policy goals from ever getting sufficient attention. Our experience is that while most people agree that both ends of the spectrum are important, more attention is paid to the least politically challenging goals. Policy change will always be more controversial than behavior change.

It may be, in fact, that though we have used the term "communications campaign" interchangeably with "public communications campaign" in some instances a communications campaign may not be so public. At times, there will be good strategic reasons to keep a campaign "inside" or private. An organization seeking to change policy may have developed communication objectives, message strategies, and tactics for delivering the message, but it may be to a small audience using private channels. Or, it could have completely private aspects that would not be revealed, even to evaluators. For example, a strategic coalition may include members who cannot publicly acknowledge their participation, yet that participation may be a key factor in the campaign's eventual success. Similarly, a campaigner may act alone, taking advantage of a meeting with a decision maker and advocating accordingly. The meeting is certainly communications, and may be a crucial part of an overall campaign, but may be entirely private. We will raise this issue again when we discuss considerations for evaluators at the end of the paper.

Overall, evaluators will need a thorough understanding of a communications campaign's purpose before a useful evaluation can be designed. Where the communications campaign sits on the purpose continuum will dictate evaluation methods and appropriate measures. The most basic outcome question for evaluators at either end of the continuum are: Did behavior or policy change in the desired way? The problem, of course, is that such changes take time, frequently much more time than evaluators, or campaigners, want to wait. A key task for the development of evaluation standards will be the creation of interim measures and data gathering methods that work across the entire spectrum of purpose.

## Scope

In addition to a campaign's purpose, a second critical axis for differentiating public communications campaigns is scope. By scope we mean the most visible part of a communications campaign: its size and extent. That is, how far does a communications campaign reach – over what region? Over what time period? Is it local, statewide, or national? Is it neighborhood-based (e.g., like the Henry Horner Mother's Guild campaign which was focused on a single housing project [see Exemplar]) or population-based (e.g., targeting smokers, say, or chefs, like Give Swordfish a Break [see Exemplar])? Some communications campaigns will be entirely local, connected to a single group about a single issue concentrated in a relatively short time period. Others may stretch across the country and last for years. Each of these factors – time, reach, and frequency -- will vary from campaign to campaign, and standards for evaluation will have to accommodate communication campaigns of varying scope.

Small in scope does not necessarily mean small in effect. The key point here is that some groups may use small-scope communications strategies that have powerful leveraging abilities. In the extent of the group's overall work, public communications campaigns may consume less time or fewer resources yet be no less effective. For example, ADAPT, American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today, has a long history of community organizing and direct action, including civil disobedience, that was instrumental in getting public transportation accommodations into the Americans with Disabilities Act. The organization is now focused on shifting government resources from supporting nursing homes and institutions to attendant services so people with disabilities can live in their homes. ADAPT regularly punctuates its organizing and advocacy with dramatic news events that get terrific coverage, but the news events themselves are only one small part of the group's overall activities. Public communication campaigns, therefore, while perhaps sounding large, comprehensive, and well funded, are not always. Communication campaigns can be small, targeted, and exist on a limited budget.

A campaign can be a stand-alone entity removed from other programmatic work or it can be deeply integrated into other efforts like community organizing or policy advocacy. In this context, the most visible part of a communications campaign, such as advertising, is sometimes called "air cover for ground troops."<sup>18</sup> For example, the Campaign to End Handgun Violence Against Kids, a public education campaign conducted by Martin and Glantz for The California Wellness Foundation, was sophisticated and well-resourced. It began with public opinion research that discovered not only that Californians weren't aware that handguns were the number one killer of kids in their state, but also that once they knew that information they were much more likely to support policies restricting access to guns. The Campaign created award-winning television ads to promulgate that message; conducted a statewide video-conference that brought community members and policy makers together in a highly visible and credible manner, and put them on the record; and provided outstanding materials to anyone who called the campaign's phone number, 1-800-222-MANY,

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<sup>18</sup> Harvard Family Research Project, op cit, pg. 5.

including postcards addressed to public officials that asked the question, “What are you doing to prevent handgun violence against kids?”

Though extremely well done and memorable, the ads were only a small part of the overall campaign. They aired in only two media markets in the state — Los Angeles, the population center, and Sacramento, the political center. Besides the TV ads, the campaign hired community organizers to bring residents and public officials together for town meetings; sent mailings from the Foundation’s president to more than 10,000 opinion leaders in the state; held events that got news attention, and followed up that coverage with letters to the editor and op-eds; developed a Web site that linked visitors to violence prevention information and ways to take civic or political action; and provided mechanism for directly contacting elected officials to ask what they had done to prevent handgun violence against kids. While perhaps the most widely visible, the air cover — the TV ads — were in fact one of the smallest parts of the campaign.

While the Campaign was comprehensive, it was only one part of a 10-year, \$60 million Violence Prevention Initiative sponsored by the Foundation and its funding partners. The Initiative included fellowships for young researchers, grants to 16 community coalitions throughout the state, a policy center, and more. The education campaign provided a language to talk about violence as a public health issue and other materials that educated policy makers and the public about relevant gun policies. The communications campaign gave air cover to the ground troops, the others in California — inside and outside of the official Violence Prevention Initiative — working to enact policies to restrict access to guns.

Scope will not limit evaluation capacity. More important to evaluation will be the distinctiveness with which campaign elements can be isolated and connected to various effects. Either small or large campaigns might lend themselves to measurement and assessment.

### **Maturity**

Communications campaigns may be one-time events or last for years. Consider Hands Across America, an event designed to raise money to fight hunger and homelessness by joining the hands of more than five million people across 4,152 miles, which lasted one day, Sunday, May 25, 1986.<sup>19</sup> Smokey Bear, on the other hand, has been with us for decades. Both types of campaigns may be important, valuable, and in need of evaluation. Maturity may turn out to be a very important aspect of campaigns relevant to evaluators since mature campaigns may have integrated lessons that strengthened their effectiveness. Mature campaigns may also have evolving objectives, strategies, and tactics. And, maturity can apply to issues themselves, not just campaigns.

**Campaign maturity.** Maturity does not necessarily have to mean that an older campaign is a more effective or more important campaign. But it may mean that a campaign is harder to evaluate. Precisely because Smokey Bear has been around so long

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<sup>19</sup> Manning, Jason, <http://eightiesclub.tripod.com/id248.htm>, viewed on September 30, 2002.

the effects of the campaign are hard to assess.<sup>20</sup> Maturity could be understood in terms of moving along a developmental spectrum — changing tactics, or messages to take into account evaluation results, changing political landscapes, new opposition arguments, or any new knowledge in general. For example, a campaign to encourage parents to put babies to sleep on their backs to avoid Sudden Infant Death Syndrome learned that other family caregivers and child care providers were most resistant to taking the campaign’s recommended action and so changed its target from parents generally to include those groups (see Exemplar). That campaign’s target expanded over time.

Formality may be a component of the maturity spectrum. As campaigns mature, they may become more formal, with clearer goals, well-developed materials, and deeper integration into an organization’s overall activities. Formal campaigns will be easier for evaluators to identify and track than informal communication efforts that are less well-articulated at the organizational level.

Mature campaigns allow for learning that leads to wisdom. There are greater levels of feedback in mature campaigns, people gain confidence in the work they are doing and there is a greater chance that they will be able to approach the more “dangerous” end of the purpose spectrum where controversy reigns. A mature issue cuts the learning curve and leads to comprehensiveness. Mature campaigns, or campaigns on mature issues, have the benefit of better identifying gaps in public information and gaps in public policy.

**Issue maturity.** Maturity can also apply to an issue. Over the years, advocates become more sophisticated as the issue develops either because of experience on-the-job or through research. Campaign maturity is different than issue maturity, though at times they may be hard to distinguish.

We maintain that as issues mature the campaigns they engender will become more comprehensive and move across the purpose continuum from behavior to policy. Consider the issue of drinking and driving. In the 1950s the issue was barely visible as a public health problem. Drivers had “one for the road” before they left the bar. Alcohol problems were personal problems and the remedy was to “drive defensively.” The development of a national focus on alcohol problems coalesced in the 1970s with the formation of the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, which began concentrated government support for research and intervention. The issue gained great visibility and began to mature in 1980 when Mothers Against Drunk Driving was founded to support families of victims and advocate for cultural change regarding how society tolerated drunk drivers. Combining forces with public health advocates who investigated and promoted a variety of prevention strategies, MADD has expanded its purpose and scope to focus on state policies across the country. The alcohol issue has matured over the last 50 years, and while many programs still focus on personal drinking behavior, others include such policy goals as reducing alcohol outlet concentration in the

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<sup>20</sup> Rice, R. Smokey Bear, pp 276-279 in Rice & Atkin (Eds.), *Public Communication Campaigns*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Sage Publications, 2001.

inner city, removing alcohol advertising that reaches kids, and raising excise taxes. Communications campaigns have expanded accordingly.

As the focus expanded to include policy, the issue has become more controversial. Experts and advocates argue about whether the alcohol industry is friend or foe.<sup>21</sup> Similar arguments are underway currently in the field of nutrition about the food industry.<sup>22</sup> Communications campaigns that focus on the policy end of the spectrum will be attacked by stakeholders, like the alcohol industry, that don't want to see restrictions on their profits. The same stakeholders will be supporters of narrowly focused behavior change campaigns (such as Designated Driver or industry moderation campaigns like Anheuser Busch's "Know When to Say When"). Several scholars have argued that these industry-sponsored campaigns do more harm than good because they distract attention from the strategies with the greatest public health promise.<sup>23</sup>

As issues mature, the purpose spectrum may in fact be best represented by a spiral rather than a line or continuum. Take seat belts. It took public policy to require that seat belts be included in vehicles. Then campaigns were conducted to inform and educate the public about using seat belts. But communications campaigns that asked people to buckle-up had only limited success. Refinements lead to a deeper understanding of the problem that links individual behavior to the broader policy environment. Seat belt use increased dramatically only after primary enforcement laws were in place. The issue moved from policy to personal behavior back to policy.

#### **When does a campaign become a movement? The case of tobacco control.**

Tobacco is a very mature issue that, as a consequence, provides a range of communications campaigns, including some examples of very comprehensive campaigns. In 1964, the Surgeon General released the first government report that linked smoking with heart disease and cancer. Since that time, public health advocates have progressed from strictly behavioral goals focused on helping smokers quit to include a variety of local, state, and national policies designed to reduce tobacco consumption and prevent smoking initiation. In a sense, advocates have completely reshaped the definition of the problem from one of addicted smokers to a widespread public health problem. When the problem was "smoking," the fix was in the individual smoker. Responsibility for change has now expanded to include the tobacco industry and the government bodies that regulate it (or should regulate it – not all battles have been won).

The solutions to the tobacco problem that advocates seek now routinely include policies that focus on the environment rather than the individual smoker, such as

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<sup>21</sup> See for example, Wallack, L. "WARNING: The Alcohol Industry is Not Your Friend?" (editorial) *British Journal of Addiction*, (1992) 87, 175-77 and Wallack, L. "Some Proposals for the Alcohol Industry," (editorial reply) *Addiction* (formerly *British Journal of Addiction*) (1993) 88, 167-178.

<sup>22</sup> See Nestle, Marion, *Food Politics, How the Food Industry Influences Nutrition and Health*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2002.

<sup>23</sup> See DeJong, Atkin, and Wallack. A critical analysis of "moderation" advertising sponsored by the beer industry: Are "responsible drinking" commercials done responsibly? *The Milbank Quarterly* 70(4):661-678, 1992 and DeJong and Wallack. The role of designated driver programs in the prevention of alcohol-impaired driving: A critical reassessment. *Health Education Quarterly* 19(4):429-442, 1992.

increasing excise taxes, clean indoor air laws, removing advertising, promotion, and sponsorship, and more and more recently, suing the industry. Even individually-oriented cessation-based approaches have policy aspects, such as advocating for insurance coverage of smoking cessation counseling and products. Research has focused on widespread community education and action that has led to large-scale federal and foundation supported communications campaigns and other programs.

The terrific change in the last 38 years was not “linear” or orchestrated. While there has been great leadership from some in government, funders like the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and other advocates, there has also been ferocious disagreement about the best course of action.<sup>24</sup> There has been greater progress in some places than others. Some efforts are well-funded, and others still struggle for adequate support to reduce the nation’s single largest cause of preventable death.

What makes this issue mature is the way solutions occupy the entire spectrum of purpose, from behavior to policy, and especially how advocates have learned from research and experience how to creatively push the policy-end of the spectrum to yield the biggest environmental improvements for health. What moves the campaign against tobacco closer to a movement is the increasing numbers of people who work on the issue, the variety of methods they use, and the increasing momentum over time.

A very mature issue does not guarantee a mature campaign. In some instances new communications campaign territory is being explored, even in a mature issue like tobacco control. For example, in California, a new program is developing a communications campaign, still in its nascent stages, to eliminate tobacco sponsorship from rodeos. The communications campaign will benefit from what has been learned over the years in tobacco control, but it will also chart new territory as public health advocates work to keep pace with a well-resourced, highly motivated, and very clever tobacco industry.

The tobacco control campaigns with the greatest resources have been supported by taxes on cigarettes instituted because of voter initiatives, first in California and Massachusetts (since then Oregon, Arizona, and others have done the same). California and Massachusetts generated millions of dollars to spend on comprehensive tobacco control programs. In each state, a public communications campaign was paired with community-based programs and policy development to reduce cigarette consumption among smokers, halt smoking initiation among youth, and decrease exposure to environmental tobacco smoke in the population at large.

The anti-tobacco campaigns were multi-purpose, focused on both individual behavior change and policy change, were extremely large in scope, perhaps the largest ever, and used well-researched strategies and tactics applied to a very mature issue. Both campaigns were comprehensive. In Massachusetts, in three years, there were more than 9,000 community events held or sponsored by the anti-tobacco program reaching more

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<sup>24</sup> See for example, Pertschuk, M. *Smoke in Their Eyes: Lessons in Movement Leadership from the Tobacco Wars*, Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2001.



than 3 million people. In California, the communications component of the program reached more than half of the adults in the state and more than 80% of the youth. And, the campaigns were expensive. In California, the campaign spent \$61.33 million a year between 1989-1994; in Massachusetts, \$38.67 million a year between 1993-1995.<sup>25</sup>

The investment has paid off. According to Siegel and Biener<sup>26</sup>, the campaigns enjoyed success at both the personal and policy ends of the purpose spectrum:

- They doubled the rate of decline of cigarette consumption compared to the rest of the country, reducing per capita cigarette consumption by 10-13%;
- In California, there were significantly more “quit attempts” (which is a marker of success since smokers usually must try several times before they overcome their addiction);
- In Massachusetts, there were fewer heavy smokers and more light smokers, which nets a public health benefit in reduced heart disease and cancer;
- In both states, there was an explosion in the number of local ordinances and regulations that prohibited smoking indoors. In 1997, “nearly all of the local ordinances and regulations in the U.S. that prohibit smoking in private worksites and restaurants were enacted in California and Massachusetts during the period in which the statewide programs were in effect”<sup>27</sup>; and
- Both states adopted youth prevention policies.

Interestingly, there was no change in public attitudes about smoking between the beginning and end of the campaigns. It may be that educating the public about the dangers of smoking occurred to such a great degree in the many years prior and was heightened during the ballot initiatives that created the resources for the campaigns in the first place that no further movement could be detected. In California, many clean indoor air ordinances were enacted before the campaigns discussed above were instituted, and before the media campaign illustrating the dangers of secondhand smoke. Presumably, local citizens learned about the dangers of secondhand smoke in the news coverage of the policy debates about the ordinances. And, California’s media campaign, which targeted industry lies and abuses, may have readied the ground for policy action (more air cover for ground troops) and contributed to the unprecedented jury awards we are now seeing when tobacco companies are put on trial in the state.

**Fierce opposition.** Do mature campaigns have more developed opposition? In 1996, the tobacco industry was spending \$4.8 billion<sup>28</sup> on advertising and promotion, up from \$2.5 billion in 1989.<sup>29</sup> Spending was up to \$8.24 billion in 1999, a figure that is especially significant because the increase from 1998 -- \$6.73 billion – came after the adoption of voluntary guidelines and promises the industry made after being sued by the

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<sup>25</sup> Siegel, M., Biener, L. Evaluating the impact of statewide anti-tobacco campaigns: The Massachusetts and California tobacco control programs. *Journal of Social Issues* 53(1):147-168, 1997.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p 160.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Media Strategies for Smoking Control: Guidelines, USDHHS Publication #89-3013 [1989].

Attorneys General of several states. After vowing to “behave itself,” industry spending skyrocketed. During the California campaign, the “tobacco industry pumped \$1 million per day into a pro-tobacco media campaign in California, contributed more heavily to California legislators than to members of the U.S. Congress, and funded local ‘smokers rights’ groups that attempt to block and overturn tobacco control regulations.”<sup>30</sup>

Governors and legislators have also been targeted by the industry. In just the last several months, both Massachusetts and California have each had their tobacco control budgets slashed by more than half. Apparently, a track record of success in saving lives is just not good enough. The lesson for communications campaign funders might be that even with big spending programs in place, there is still a need for defense of those programs that only independent funding can provide. The state programs by themselves are virtually helpless to defend themselves. And, evaluators may need to ask, Against what opposition?

### Summary

Communications campaigns, then, will differ from one another depending upon where they fall on the continuums of purpose, scope, and maturity. The variation is tremendous and may change over time even within a single campaign. The question for evaluators will be how to capture the nuance in a particular campaign and tell its story in a useful way. In the next section we describe nine campaigns that vary in their purpose, scope, and maturity. We present these exemplars not because they are outstanding campaigns (though they might be) but to give us a few common reference points to discuss the variety of purpose, scope, and maturity and the challenges they raise for evaluators.

### THE EXEMPLARS

This section describes nine communication campaigns from along the continuums of purpose, scope, and maturity. After the campaign descriptions we identify key opportunities and challenges for evaluators who would want to assess these or similar campaigns. The first three Exemplars are located on the personal end of the purpose continuum. **Don’t Dump – Drains to Bay**, **Put Your Baby Back to Sleep**, and **5 A Day** focus on changing individual’s behavior to dump toxic waste properly, prevent Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, and eat healthier. The fourth Exemplar, **Better Badger Babies Bus Tour**, describes a campaign with a personal message for individuals about brain development in young children, but also hopes to seed an environment that will be more receptive to policy. The fifth, **Unconventional Wisdom: The Community News Project**, is focused on the policy environment for social issues in Chicago generally, but is not linked to specific policy objectives. **Give Swordfish a Break**, the sixth exemplar, illustrates a campaign directly targeting government policy, but for enforcement of that policy rather than to change or enact new policy. The seventh Exemplar, **Watch Your Mouth**, is a comprehensive, large scope campaign with goals at both ends of the purpose spectrum, but a with strong policy bent. The final two Exemplars, **Henry Horner Mothers Guild** and **Local Investment in Child Care**, are both focused solely on policy,

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<sup>30</sup> Siegel and Biener, op cit, p 149.

one a local campaign designed to spur specific government agency action, the other with overall policy goals that uses communications as a leveraging tool.

**Don't Dump – Drains to Bay**

	Behavior Change	Policy Change
Purpose	Small, Targeted	Large, Broad
Scope	Younger, Informal	Older, Formal
Maturity		

- Problem: Pollution, such as trash, motor oil, excess fertilizer, and animal waste, is dumped untreated into storm drains, which empty unfiltered into rivers, lakes, ground water and oceans.
- Solution: Inform the public by marking storm drains with anti-dumping messages; distribute additional information to nearby residents and businesses.
- Where: The original campaign started in the state of Washington. It has since spread to hundreds of localities throughout the country.
- When: Late 1980s – present.

Ask Joe Q. Public what’s polluting our rivers, lakes, estuaries and oceans and he’s likely to name easily recognizable targets like the smoking industrial facility or the rusty toxic waste dump. He’s less likely to mention, or even know about, the pollution creeping into the water system as his teenage son washes his car in front of the house.

Non-point source pollution is a big deal. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, such pollution is “the nation’s leading source of water quality problems. It’s the main reason that approximately 40 percent of our surveyed rivers, lakes, and estuaries are not clean enough to meet basic uses such as fishing or swimming.”<sup>31</sup> Just what is non-point source pollution? It occurs whenever rain, snowmelt, or irrigation water passes over the ground, picks up pollutants, and feeds it into lakes, rivers, estuaries and ground water.<sup>32</sup> Pollutants include anything from sediments and nutrients from improper agricultural practices to the oil from a leaky car engine to the candy wrapper discarded in the street to the dog waste left by an owner. All of it gets washed untreated through the storm drains into waterways during the next rainfall.

Working for a used oil recycling program in Washington state in the mid-1980s, Rhonda Hunter was aware of the problem, as still too many people dumped old motor oil in neighborhood storm drains. She wasn’t sure, however, how to deliver a more targeted message that she hoped would encourage them to stop. Inspiration hit on a trip to Vancouver, Canada, where on a road volunteers had painted a line of yellow fish leading

<sup>31</sup> EPA web site, 9-26-02, [www.epa.gov/owow/nps/facts/point1.htm](http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/facts/point1.htm)

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

to a storm drain. The volunteers then spread their storm-drain-to-waterway-anti-pollution message throughout the neighborhood.

Rhonda returned to the Washington State Department of Ecology with the desire to take this concept further. Wanting a more explicit message, since the fish made little sense without the volunteer's explanation, she added the direct phrase "don't dump here – drains to bay" with the image of a locally known fish. A stencil-prototype was designed, and working with a community-based group in Bellingham, the new image appeared on or adjacent to storm drains throughout the city. The technique quickly gained popularity among pollution-prevention advocates, spreading easily through the state and across the nation.

The assumption in this campaign is that once residents see the stencil and learn the consequences of dumping into storm drains, they will find a different way to dispose of their waste. This campaign is located on the behavior end of the purpose spectrum. Costs for Rhonda's stencils are \$10 to \$15 each, depending on the quantity ordered. And, of course, volunteers could make their own.

Today, stenciling campaigns are led by volunteers ranging from Boy Scouts to individual families to school, church and community groups. The stencils themselves can be tailored to fit a particular community, and icons have included herons, trout, trigger fish, and blue crabs. In addition to the visual reminders, organizing groups usually pass out flyers to local residents that provide more comprehensive information about non-point source pollution and its solutions. In all, the campaigns have appeared in 40 states and scores of communities.

But do the stenciling campaigns work? In their favor, the campaigns have an excellent community engagement component. Cities generally don't conduct the work; volunteers do, and they're often educated in the process. Moreover, because the stencils must be re-applied every few years, the public is engaged repeatedly. The campaigns have also prompted news coverage, which spreads the message further in a highly credible way. Follow-up studies have shown that "stenciling works to raise citizen awareness of storm drain connections to local lakes and rivers."<sup>33</sup>

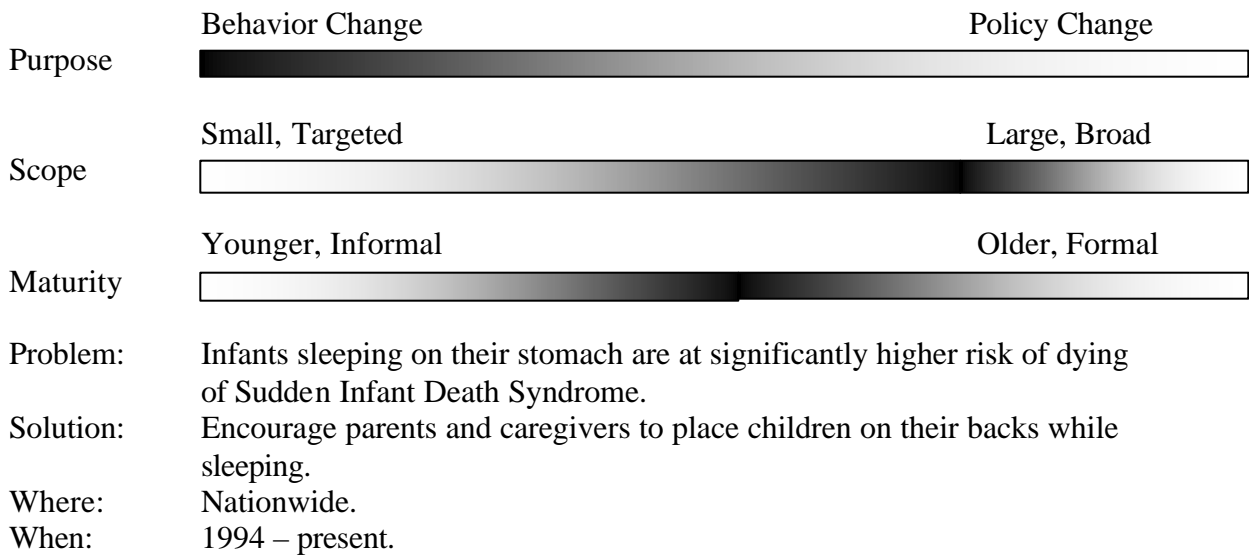
Measuring whether or not that general awareness and specific message transfers into behavior change, though, is a different matter. If non-point source pollution levels do fall, that decline could be influenced by a variety of factors: a separate litter campaign could be wildly successful, leading to less trash on city streets; lawn fertilizer directions could be made easier to follow, reducing the chances of overuse; chemical recycling programs could become more accessible, upping their usage. Determining what role the stenciling played in reducing non-point source pollution is a difficult knot to untie. Further, even if the storm drain stenciling campaign is successful and one type of non-point source pollution is reduced, another kind (e.g., run off from agriculture) may "step up" to take its place.

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<sup>33</sup> Earthwater web site, 9-26-02, <http://www.earthwater-stencils.com/why.html>

But it is plausible that the stenciling campaigns can contribute something to a problem with few systemic solutions (hooking all storm drains up to a treatment facility, for instance, would be prohibitively expensive and practically difficult during big rains — that’s why we have storm drains). Anecdotal evidence, though, is encouraging. In one instance, litter from one specific culvert was deluging the Jackson Bottoms Wetland Preserve in Oregon. A week after local students implemented a storm drain stenciling campaign in the neighborhood above the drainage area, the trash levels fell off dramatically. A well-designed evaluation would help non-point source groups know whether their work was making a difference.

**Put Your Baby Back to Sleep**



In 1992, The American Academy of Pediatrics officially recommended that babies be placed on their backs for sleep. This was based on numerous reports that babies who sleep on their stomachs are at significantly higher risk of dying of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

The Back to Sleep campaign was launched in 1994 to spread the message that putting babies to sleep on their backs can save lives. Sponsored by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau, the SIDS Alliance, the Association of SIDS and Infant Mortality Programs, and the American Academy of Pediatrics, the campaign originally targeted parents with the back-to-sleep message. In 1997, the focus was expanded to target grandparents, babysitters, and child care workers.

The campaign sits squarely on the behavior change end of the purpose spectrum. The assumption is that once the message is delivered to the correct actor, more babies will be put to sleep on their backs and SIDS deaths will decline.

The campaign uses brochures, posters, print public service announcements and informational videos to convey the simple message that babies should sleep on their backs. The campaign also emphasizes several other steps that caregivers can take to reduce SIDS risk, such as removing fluffy bedding and toys from the crib and keeping babies' surrounding smoke-free.

It is impossible to separate the impact of the official campaign from pediatricians' individual decisions to counsel their patients (as a result of the original American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation). Nevertheless, the combination was powerful: in 1995, there were 1600 fewer SIDS deaths than in 1992. By 1998, SIDS deaths in the U.S. had fallen almost 40% from 1994 levels; these are the largest declines ever observed in the U.S. The decrease is attributed to the American Academy of Pediatrics statement and the Back to Sleep campaign.<sup>34</sup>

In 2000, the National Infant Sleep Position Study found that physicians had the greatest influence on whether or not caregivers placed infants to sleep on their backs.<sup>35</sup> It is not surprising that the direct advice of a doctor may be more effective than ads or brochures in initiating this behavior. However, the study also found that caregivers who had heard the back-to-sleep recommendation from multiple sources, including reading materials and media spots, as well as doctors and nurses, were more likely to put babies on their backs, so the campaign materials likely had a valuable reinforcing effect.

The study also found that a significant portion of caregivers was still placing infants to sleep on their stomachs despite having been told that doing so increases the risk of SIDS. Because these caregivers perceived that their babies were more comfortable or slept better on their stomachs, they did not change this behavior despite warnings from doctors or the Back to Sleep campaign. Of particular concern for a field attempting to eliminate racial disparities in infant mortality, more African American than white babies are still put to sleep on their stomachs.

### Five a Day for Better Health

	Behavior Change	Policy Change
Purpose		
Scope	Small, Targeted	Large, Broad
Maturity	Younger, Informal	Older, Formal

<sup>34</sup> National Association for the Education of Young Children: "Back to sleep: Reduce the risk of SIDS." Washington DC, 1998.

<sup>35</sup> National Institutes of Health, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development: "To reduce SIDS risk, doctor's advice most important in choice of placing infants to sleep on their backs." NIH News Alert, April 25, 2000.

**Problem:** The general public consumes too few fruits and vegetables (higher levels of consumption promote better health).  
**Solution:** Conduct campaign encouraging the public to consume more fruits and vegetables.  
**Where:** Nationwide.  
**When:** 1990s.

Remember when President Reagan wanted to count the ketchup in school lunches as a vegetable? Despite the jokes about that proposal, the fact is that for too many Americans, French fries and ketchup are their veggies of choice – with predictably adverse affects on their health.

To encourage Americans to improve their health by consuming more fruits and vegetables, the National Cancer Institute initiated the national 5 A Day for Better Health Program in 1991. The program is a public-private partnership between the National Cancer Institute of the National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Produce for Better Health Foundation, a nonprofit consumer education foundation representing the fruit and vegetable industry. (The national 5 A Day campaign was based on a similar program initiated in California in 1988.)

5 A Day sits on the behavior change end of the purpose continuum. The objective is to inform the public about the value of eating at least five servings of fruits and vegetables each day. The assumption is that once informed, the public will change its eating habits.

The need was clear: Baseline surveys found that only 23% of adults were consuming the recommended level of fruits and veggies in 1991. The average adult ate one and a half servings fewer than the recommended five every day. Awareness of the nutrition guidelines was low: just 8% of American adults thought they should eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day.<sup>36</sup>

The 5 A Day campaign set out to motivate Americans to eat better, with the simple message that eating five servings of fruits and vegetables every day leads to improved health. The theory was that awareness of this message would lead to increased consumption – an assumption based partially on the baseline survey result showing that the Americans most aware of the health benefits and proper number of servings of fruits and vegetables were also those who ate more of these foods.

For program activities, the National Cancer Institute campaign budget of roughly \$20 million was supplemented with local grants for state-level implementation and ample support from food industry partners, who made in-kind contributions totaling an estimated \$368 million from 1992 to 1999.<sup>37</sup> Campaign elements included public service

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<sup>36</sup> Subar AF, Heimendinger J., Patterson BH, Krebs-Smith SM, Pivonka E. and Kessler R. 5 A Day for Better Health: A Baseline Study of Americans' Fruit and Vegetable Consumption. Division of Cancer Prevention and Control National Cancer Institute: Rockville MD. 1992.




<sup>37</sup> National Cancer Institute. 5 A Day for Better Health Program Evaluation Report: Evaluation. 2000.

announcements, leveraged advertising from agricultural industry partners, press education kits, point-of-purchase displays and promotions such as cooking demonstrations in grocery stores. After the first two years, activities from the national program tended to concentrate on the advertising strategy, disseminating PSAs with the 5 A Day message and adding the 5 A Day logo to produce ad campaigns.

After the campaign’s first six years, results were mixed. A 1997 evaluation found some changes in knowledge: the proportion of Americans who understood the basic five a day message increased from 8% in 1991 to 20% in 1997. However, behavior did not follow: there was no statistically significant increase in total consumption of vegetables and fruit. (There were significant increases in consumption among Latinos and 18-34 year olds.<sup>38</sup>) The evaluators note that this is perhaps not surprising given the nearly \$10 billion spent in 1999 alone for the marketing of food, fast food and beverages – expenditures that dwarf the campaign’s budget and flood the media environment with the wrong kind of nutrition “education.”

Other studies have examined outcomes from smaller multi-component nutrition programs offered at schools, worksites, churches and Women, Infant, and Children programs as part of various states’ 5 A Day programs. These studies found that the 5 A Day message has more traction in changing eating patterns when it is combined with peer education (for instance, kids teaching other kids to cook) or intervention channels that also target the social environment (for instance, efforts to make more fruits and vegetables available in school cafeterias).

**Better Badger Baby Bus Tour**

	Behavior Change	Policy Change
Purpose		
	Small, Targeted	Large, Broad
Scope		
	Younger, Informal	Older, Formal
Maturity		
Problem:	Not enough people know about the profound implications the first few years can have upon a child’s life.	
Solution:	Use the official state animal, hop into a yellow school bus, draw attention to the issue, and make presentations at community events to inform the public.	
Where:	State of Wisconsin.	
When:	1999-today.	

In the late 1990s, child care advocates throughout the country were awash in groundbreaking scientific discoveries that indicated just how powerful prenatal and early

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.



postnatal experiences are on children's brain development. Out was the model of the brain developing along a predetermined path; in was the understanding that a child's brain would be drastically influenced by the quality of stimulation, care, and love he or she receives in the first few years of life. Provide children with a stimulating, contact-rich environment, the new evidence showed, and those children are more likely to be emotionally, mentally, and cognitively successful later in life.

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families didn't want the new research to gather dust on a shelf, so it launched a public communications campaign, Great Beginnings: First Years Last Forever, to highlight the importance of the early years. To assist that process, the Council secured a school bus, educational materials such as videos and brochures, and seed funding from the Northwestern Mutual Foundation. Soon after, the Better Badger Baby Bus Tour – named to capitalize upon the widespread use of the little critter as a mascot and icon throughout the state – hit the road, spreading the message that a child's early years are critical years. Currently the Tour and related activities has an annual budget of about \$140,000.

The Tour was and continues to be grounded in grassroots efforts, as the bus only makes an appearance where local groups have completed considerable preparatory work. These community "Brain Teams" review what resources the bus has to offer and determine how it will fit into their own plans. As a result, when the Tour arrives the event has a decidedly local feel. Some communities have held news conferences with Tour experts and local leaders (e.g., Mayor, hospital spokesperson, Board of Education member, etc.). Others have organized good parenting workshops for teenage mothers, or have arranged for presentations to local business leaders that stress the importance of early care programs. Once the Tour has departed, the Council staff provide additional technical assistance to the local Brain Teams so they can continue to spread the message however they see fit.

In terms of campaign purpose, the Tour is not easily labeled. At its most concrete level, the campaign aims to change behavior by imparting to parents, teachers and caretakers the promising practices and techniques that encourage children's brain development. Yet the Tour is not simply a series of care-giving classes. In seeking out a broad public audience, including business and civic leaders and policy makers, the Tour has a distinct public will flavor as it raises the salience and importance of early brain development on Wisconsin's radar. As the Tour's Web site states, one of the goals is to "elevate the public discourse about the importance of the first years, so policy makers and civic leaders can make sound decision about policies and programs for young children and their families."<sup>39</sup>

That does not mean, however, that the Tour is advocating for a particular policy agenda. Tour planners in fact first want the public to internalize the new research findings. Interestingly, the Council does do a great deal of policy work (e.g., lobbying for better wages for child care providers), but such work has appeared only at the periphery




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<sup>39</sup> Wisconsin Council on Children and Families Web site, , [www.wccf.org/projects/bus.html](http://www.wccf.org/projects/bus.html), viewed in October, 2002.

of the Tour. At the core, the Tour is about getting people to understand the importance of the early years; it's presumed that with this knowledge well-ensconced by the public the case for policy-level changes will be easier to make in the future.

Judging from the public's reaction to the Tour, it seems people are hungry for the information. The Tour's general events and trainings for parents and caretakers are increasingly popular. A written curriculum designed for use in high school biology and family living classes promoted on the Tour is selling briskly. And news coverage has been consistent and thorough; given the science behind the message (not to mention the visuals of the Tour bus itself), Tour staff reason the subject matter is appealing to journalists, parents, and even those not in direct contact with kids. So the Tour keeps on making appearances, logging more than 30,000 road miles this year alone. The eventual trick, of course, will be converting that broad interest into support for policy change.

**Unconventional Wisdom: The Community News Project<sup>40</sup>**

	Behavior Change	Policy Change
Purpose		
	Small, Targeted	Large, Broad
Scope		
	Younger, Informal	Older, Formal
Maturity		
Problem:	Coverage of 1996 Democratic Convention in Chicago is likely to be static and predictable, leaving out compelling stories about successful initiatives in the urban center that have occurred since the last Democratic convention was there in 1968.	
Solution:	Provide journalists with a "roadmap" to community-based stories and local sources.	
Where:	City of Chicago.	
When:	1995-1996, although portions of the campaign continue to this day.	

From the initial perspective of Thom Clarke and the staff at the Community Media Workshop, the July arrival of the 1996 Democratic National Convention in Chicago wasn't an event to celebrate. The convention itself was a "pre-packaged show with a pre-determined result," and the thousands of journalists covering the event would likely focus on the resurrection of Bill Clinton, the downfall of political advisor Dick Morris, and Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley. The big names and big events were enticing for obvious reasons. Add to them the fact that when Chicago last hosted the Convention riots tore through the streets and it's easy to see why Workshop staff worried that the news would have "very little to do with neighborhoods, or with serious public policy."

<sup>40</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all quotes are taken from "Beyond Conventional Wisdom: An Assessment of the Community News Project," Community Media Workshop, August, 1997.

Enter the Community News Project, a Workshop campaign aiming “to showcase local non-profit sector initiatives.” The Community News Project’s purpose was to focus on the policy environment. Through the news, policymakers are directed to key issues and potential solutions to social problems. While the Community News Project did not have a specific policy goal, it is located toward the policy end of the spectrum.

The Community News Project challenged journalists “to examine ways that ordinary people in Chicago’s neighborhoods work to solve the problems of living in a big American City – to establish the connection between a story inside the Convention hall and citizens living the real, civil society around it.”

Staff, though, needed to develop new tools to cut through the Convention’s pre-packaged clutter. To support the project, the staff patched together funding that, over time, eventually totaled almost \$200,000. They started planning early, in the summer of 1995, and by the spring of 1996 CNP was rolling. The concept was decidedly straightforward: staff and consultants developed a series of “briefing papers” on community issues such as school reform, economic development, integration, campaign finance, and welfare reform. Each paper “offered a balanced, objective and information-packed overview of a Chicago community issue, followed by an in-depth list of expert local sources representing a wide range of viewpoints and anecdotal examples.” In other words, the briefs provided otherwise uninformed reporters with a roadmap to compelling local issues and knowledgeable sources.

The briefs were delivered to reporters in a targeted fashion – no blast faxes here. Again staff started early, determining to the extent that they could which national reporters would be on the scene and contacting each about the briefs. Generally, the Community News Project sent the briefs only to the 400-600 reporters, editors, and producers who requested it, and then only at regular intervals: one a month six months before the convention, one a week several weeks before the convention, and several a week during the days leading up the opening ceremony. When the hoards of journalists finally arrived, the Community News Project was waiting with a booklet version of the briefs. More than 6500 booklets were distributed to reporters, while the Community News Project Web site made the information available online.

During the convention, scores of stories bearing Community News Project fingerprints appeared on ABC, CNN, the Associated Press, the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and other news outlets. Local community sources reported a marked increase in contact from journalists. The Community News Project Web site recorded 600 hits on the convention’s opening day.

It seems clear that the Community News Project inspired a great deal of news coverage that otherwise probably would not have appeared. There were two primary reasons. First, the journalists found the briefs – with clear overviews of various issues and long lists of local sources, presented in a balanced, independent fashion that eschewed ideology – to be an invaluable starting point to their work. Second, the project met the

reporters on their own terms, in ways they “understand and value” by preparing briefs that were balanced journalism, not advocacy pieces. The end result was that “Chicago’s communities had a voice in the media during the Convention.”

Numerous journalists continued to use the booklets long after the Convention and local contacts in Chicago were able to develop ongoing relationships with reporters. CNP now regularly updates the briefs online.

**Give Swordfish a Break!**

Purpose	Behavior Change	Policy Change
Scope	Small, Targeted	Large, Broad
Maturity	Younger, Informal	Older, Formal
Problem:	North Atlantic swordfish populations are dwindling to a point where the species is threatened.	
Solution:	Convince certain swordfish consumers to stop buying swordfish as a way of pressuring policy makers to implement an appropriate recovery plan for the fish.	
Where:	Eastern seaboard of the United States.	
When:	1998-2000.	

Big, bold, majestic, and with that gleaming bill slicing through the water, the Atlantic swordfish is instantly recognizable and appreciated, two qualities which make it one of the few “charismatic mega-fauna”<sup>41</sup> of the aquatic world. In the 1990s, though, its future did not look bright, as strong science indicated the species was headed towards extinction due to decades of over-fishing. In stepped SeaWeb and the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC) with an environmental protection campaign that used smart messages, strategic messengers, and clear goals in an attempt to save one popular fish.

Planning for “Give Swordfish a Break!” began in the summer of 1997 as part of a larger project supported by the Pew Charitable Trust. The federal government had recently passed a new fisheries law requiring that a restoration plan for endangered species such as the swordfish be put in place by 1998. SeaWeb, a national strategic communications group, and NRDC, however, anticipated stonewalling; they designed the swordfish campaign to pressure the government to abide meaningfully by its own directive. “Give Swordfish a Break!” is located at the policy end of the purpose spectrum not to change policy but to enforce it.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Susan Bowa, SeaWeb, September, 2002.

Structuring the campaign was tricky. SeaWeb and NRDC's research demonstrated people could connect the sea food on their plate with the plight of the swordfish in the Atlantic, but they felt large-scale consumer boycott campaigns are difficult to build and maintain. So the two organizations focused on key "gatekeepers": chefs and restaurants that served swordfish. Nora Pouillon, a well-known organic chef with two Washington D.C. restaurants, agreed to be the point person, and the campaign was launched. Other chefs, restaurateurs, hoteliers, caterers, and grocers also signed onto the effort. They became spokespeople in the news on this issue. Just the fact of a high-profile chef or cruise line refusing to use swordfish helped increase news attention.

Their message was clear and consistent: campaign supporters would "take a 'time out' from serving or selling north Atlantic swordfish as a way to pressure the government to develop an effective swordfish recovery plan."<sup>42</sup> The message deliberately omitted fishermen, as SeaWeb and NRDC did not want the sympathetic image of an embattled fisherman clashing with the swordfish. Besides, changing fishermen's behavior in and of itself wasn't a key part of the solution. Rather, correcting irresponsible government management of swordfish fisheries was the action that needed to change. The campaigner's message was promulgated primarily through news coverage and a small ad campaign that, in one example, linked the popular movie "The Perfect Storm" with the plight of the fish (since the reason the boat was caught in the storm so far out to sea was because swordfish were over-fished and unavailable in safer coastal waters).

Government management, however, soon threw the campaign a curve. Due to international agreements, the federal government deferred the enactment of a recovery plan to the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT; it also governs swordfish management). Thus it wasn't just enough to convince the U.S. government to act; the U.S. had to pressure ICCAT to act as well. Here, though, the campaign's policy goals kept the momentum going. Clear from the beginning, the goals reflected SeaWeb and NRDC's belief that lasting swordfish protection could only result in government-mandated fishery management changes. So while the campaign's demands grew more complex, and the policy target shifted slightly, ICCAT's involvement didn't fundamentally alter the campaign's approach or goals.

And it worked. News coverage was widespread, and thoroughly conveyed the campaign's message. By the time ICCAT considered a recovery plan, the U.S. was facing heavy pressure from hundreds of swordfish "gatekeepers." Even commercial fishing industries were pushing the U.S. to do something, if simply to find relief from attention garnered by the campaign. Eventually, the U.S. did exert enough influence on ICCAT to enact an adequate recovery plan. Continued campaign pressure also led to the closure of a swordfish nursery area managed solely by the federal government. With its goals realized, SeaWeb and NRCS shut down "Give Swordfish A Break!"

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<sup>42</sup> SeaWeb web site, September, 2002, [www.seaweb.org](http://www.seaweb.org).

**Watch Your Mouth! Washington State’s Citizen’s Watch for Children’s Oral Health**

Purpose	Behavior Change	Policy Change
Scope	Small, Targeted	Large, Broad
Maturity	Younger, Informal	Older, Formal

Problem: Children’s oral health (or lack thereof).  
 Solution: Raise the issue on the public’s agenda and pressure policy makers to respond appropriately.  
 Where: State of Washington.  
 When: June 2000 – present.

In June, 2000, Washington Dental Service issued a grant to the FrameWorks Institute “to develop and implement a campaign, with the goal of raising public awareness of the importance of improving children’s oral health in Washington State.”<sup>43</sup> The effort emerged from a confluence of events: the FrameWorks Institute had been conducting public opinion and media research on children’s oral health; the U.S. Surgeon General released a comprehensive report on children’s oral health problems in May; and the Washington Dental Service was ready to move on the issue. The campaign was eventually named the “Citizen’s Watch for Children’s Oral Health,” or more simply, “Watch Your Mouth!”

But Watch Your Mouth is not just a public awareness campaign. From the beginning the campaign has been about policy change. Washington Dental Service started with a broad policy interest, and oral health research showed that the most helpful reforms would be systemic in nature. But which policies should be advanced? Then there was the general public. Its support was important, as FrameWorks felt long-term systemic change was unlikely without bringing the public along. Yet preliminary research showed children’s oral health had little salience with a wide audience, and when it was discussed the public viewed it “largely as an issue of personal responsibility”<sup>44</sup> requiring individual solutions (e.g., better tooth-brushing habits). Reaching the general population and shifting its perspective, so that oral health is seen as an individual *and* collective responsibility that requires both responses, would require good community outreach and organizing combined with a communications campaign.

Thus began a three-pronged effort that deliberately integrated communications, community organizing and policy advocacy. First, FrameWorks, Washington Dental

<sup>43</sup> Watch Your Mouth: A Campaign to Improve Children’s Oral Health. Concept Paper. FrameWorks Institute, pg. 1.

<sup>44</sup> *ibid*, pg. 2

Service, and other key partners such as the Children’s Alliance and the Human Services Policy Center of the University of Washington recruited more than 130 individuals and groups, representing a highly diverse and credible constituency of health, business, union, education, and children’s organizations, to participate in Watch Your Mouth. Once assembled, the campaign developed a policy agenda that shaped communication efforts, and began to place children’s oral health on the public’s radar. Op-eds appeared in the state’s major papers, and the campaign distributed 300,000 posters, mugs, brochures and temporary tattoos. The results were dramatic: polls showed a marked increase in the public’s support for improvements in children’s oral health. Most importantly, the public also supported systemic policy solutions.

Expenses for the Watch Your Mouth campaign are heaviest in the first few years and diminish as the project matures and the coalition’s work expands. FrameWorks Institute licensed the Watch Your Mouth concept to the Washington Dental Service the first year for \$115,000 which included training but not materials production costs. Subsequent years are much less expensive as the training and consultation needs decline. Of course, local costs for staff, meetings, mailings and other activities will vary depending on where the project is implemented.

In year two the campaign built upon its earlier success. The public communication effort continued, but the campaign also prioritized its policy goals (covering the uninsured and incorporating oral health into “well child checks” at age one and upon entrance into kindergarten are two top issues) and narrowed some of its education efforts to target key policy-makers and push its policy agenda. Policy change has come slowly, however, with legislation stalling during the last session. But campaign leaders are confident that with their broad coalition in place, strong public support, and developing legislative leaders, policy change will happen in year three (2002-3).

**Broken Promises: the Henry Horner Mother’s Guild<sup>45</sup>**

	Behavior Change	Policy Change
Purpose		
Scope	Small, Targeted	Large, Broad
Maturity	Younger, Informal	Older, Formal
Problem:	Over decades the Chicago Housing Authority had seriously neglected the health, safety and maintenance of a large housing project.	
Solution:	With the help of the Legal Assistance Foundation, a local mothers group filed a class action lawsuit and took its story to the news media.	

<sup>45</sup> Excerpted from Gerber, L., and Dorfman, L. Henry Horner Mothers Guild: Tenants Go Public on Public Housing, submitted to U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Washington D.C. and The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention by University Research Corporation, August 14, 1996.

Where: City of Chicago.  
When: Late 1980s – early 1990s.

In 1957, in an isolated, semi-industrial area on Chicago's west side, the Chicago Housing Authority constructed and opened 21 buildings to provide 1,777 apartments for some of the city's poorest residents. By the early 1990s, however, the Henry Horner Homes were nothing but an urban nightmare. The development "segregated the poor cutting them off physically and psychologically from jobs, health care, and opportunities more readily available to the rest of the city." After 25 years of Chicago Housing Authority neglect,

Death trap elevators constantly broke down. Leaky plumbing caused frequent flooding. Inadequate security gave gang members complete access to and control of the buildings. Vacant apartments harbored trespassers and criminals. Outside, there were no safe playgrounds. Mothers kept their children indoors because just outside their front door the drug dealers did business.

Yet the Chicago Housing Authority continued to move low-income families into the complex.

Faced with such degradation a Horner resident, Maurine Woodson formed the Henry Horner Mothers Guild in 1983 to help mothers cope with life in public housing. This "loose-knit self-help group" became the Homes' tenant advocacy group, and single-handedly wrestling with the Chicago Housing Authority bureaucracy to fix damaged apartments, leaky pipes, and vandalized mailboxes. Progress was slow going, though: victories were often small and the Chicago Housing Authority still failed to implement reforms that would have fundamentally improved the living conditions.

In the early 1990s, though, with support from the MacArthur Foundation and the Woods Charitable Fund that allowed them to work with Kim Bobo, a community organizer, the women decided to file a class action lawsuit against the Chicago Housing Authority, citing building code violations and breaching the terms of the tenants' leases. With the encouragement of Bobo, the women also decided to take their story public "to add urgency and significance to their work." They teamed up with Bruce Orenstein, the executive director of the Chicago Video Project, to tell their story.

Over five days and at a cost of \$4,000, Orenstein shot a three and one-half minute tape, a video news release, that dramatically told the mothers' story of a crumbling home, replete with "an animal left dead in a vacant apartment, crumbling asbestos hanging from pipes, floor-to-ceiling graffiti, and dark, dangerous corridors of crime." Professionally shot and edited, the tape deliberately emphasized two themes: "Chicago Housing Authority broke promises to the residents of Henry Horner, [and the] Chicago Housing Authority should be held to the same legal responsibilities and standards as other Chicago landlords." The women also spent hours preparing for their eventual interactions with the press. They practiced their statements, performed mock on-camera interviews, and honed their messages.



The target of the Mothers Guild communications campaign was a government agency: the Chicago Housing Authority. The target was in fact even narrower, one man, Vincent Lane, the chairman of the Chicago Housing Authority. The behavior change the Mothers Guild wanted was political behavior, action from the housing authority to fix the Henry Horner Homes.

The week the Mothers Guild filed its lawsuit, the mothers released the tape and held a news conference. The media reaction was pronounced. Local TV and newspapers and radio covered the event. A national audience saw the women’s plight on “ABC World News Tonight,” “CBS This Morning,” and the “Oprah Winfrey Show.” Most importantly, “in nearly every report, ‘broken promises’ and ‘hold the Chicago Housing Authority to the same standards as other Chicago landlords’ were repeated.” Given such far reaching and strong coverage, the video helped “legitimize the Henry Horner Mother Guild claim against the Chicago Housing Authority.”

Media success, however, did not translate easily into greater gains. The Chicago Housing Authority did make a few repairs immediately following the news exposure, but once media coverage died down, it was back to business as usual. The trial date was eventually set – but for three years down the road. Finally, the Chicago Housing Authority announced that the Henry Horner Homes would eventually be demolished, and the residents would be moved elsewhere.

The Mothers Guild’s effort, though, can’t be dismissed as a failure. For a time, the Guild established the “Chicago Housing Authority tenants as new players in the game,” invigorating them and boosting their confidence for future challenges. The campaign also offered an exceptional learning experience, not simply for the Mothers Guild members but for community organizing and strategic communications. The Mothers Guild, though, was not a strong grass-root group. In addition, media attention is difficult to translate into political power. As Orenstein noted, the Guild’s effort “was more along the lines of a blip on the TV screen. That’s not demeaning what we did. But that’s the reality of it. Nothing is going to change until some real power is developed from those people that are living in these conditions to alter the relations of power between themselves and decision makers.”

**LINCC: Local Investment in Child Care Project**

	Behavior Change	Policy Change
Purpose		
Scope	Small, Targeted	Large, Broad
Maturity	Younger, Informal	Older, Formal
Problem:	Not enough public/private investments in the infrastructure of child care.	

**Solution:** Frame child care as an economic development issue to attract support from the local business community.  
**Where:** Nine counties throughout California.  
**When:** 1997-today.

Ah, child care. It brings to mind cute babies, doting caregivers, bright colors and tiny toys. Imagine a child care setting, and you're not likely to think about big industry dollars and thousands of jobs. If a group of child care advocates in California continues to have its way, however, think again.

The Local Investment in Child Care (LINCC) project grew out of studies conducted in 1997 in several California counties by the National Economic Development and Law Center. These economic impact reports demonstrated empirically for the first time that child care is not just about children; it also has a tremendous impact on a community's economic vitality. Santa Cruz county's report, for example, showed that the "hidden" child care industry generated as much revenue (\$30+ million) as several crops in the County's vaunted agriculture industry. Combine that with the fact that child care generates local employment and provides a ready and productive workforce for local employers (by allowing parents to work), and child care suddenly became – at least in the advocates' eyes – an unsung economic workhorse.

With the economic reports in their back pockets, the Law Center staff and local child care advocates could with more authority demonstrate the implications of their child care-as-industry model. They argued that since child care is not just a warm and fuzzy social service, but also a strong economic force, it makes sense to support the industry in an economic development fashion. If other industries benefited from favorable land use policies, business development loans, and resources to strengthen the business acumen of their practitioners, so could child care.

Convincing local economic development and political leaders, however, was another matter: the child care-as-babysitting mindset was entrenched, and advocates would struggle to change it. The economic reports, though, combined with smart strategic communications, helped to shift the public discussion of child care in new directions. Essentially, the advocates developed a new language – one that was easily understood by the business community and city planners – to talk about child care. And talk they did: Advocates held news conferences to showcase the reports' findings. They recruited members of the business and economic development community to be non-traditional champions of child care. They wrote letters to the editor and op-eds, challenging local leaders and readers to recognize and support the child care industry.

LINCC's communication efforts were never separate from its other work. In fact, it would be hard to isolate the communications expenditures from the \$4 million the David and Lucile Packard Foundation invested in the project since 1996. Rather, from the beginning the advocates incorporated a communication goal – “demonstrate child care's fundamental importance to the economy”<sup>46</sup> – into the project. All media work was linked

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<sup>46</sup> National Economic Development and Law Center website, <http://www.nedlc.org>, October, 2002.

to its overall goals. One news conference showcasing the economic report's results, for example, was designed simply to open new doors with business leaders. Day-to-day work by the advocates made sure that door did not swing shut. A letter to the editor might call upon a local policy maker to back a pro-child care land use proposal, but only in combination with active lobbying at meetings, community forums, and one-on-one sessions. In other words, public communication efforts provided timely support for comprehensive policy work. LINCC's integrated communications sits squarely on the policy end of the purpose spectrum.

Slowly but steadily, the advocates have made headway, gaining financial resources to aid child care facility development, altering their county's general plans and permit codes to integrate child care into community planning, and enrolling child care providers into business management classes. Through it all, advocates have continued to use strategic communications to increase the momentum. They've revised their economic impact reports and re-published, and re-publicized, the results. Economic forums have promoted new partnerships. Child care facility groundbreaking ceremonies have provided public occasions to honor policy makers and business leaders who just a short while ago didn't know they, too, were child care advocates. In these counties, child care is building a reputation as an essential part of the economic and community infrastructure, deserving public and private support.

## **CONSIDERATIONS AND CONUNDRUMS FOR CAMPAIGN EVALUATORS**

As much as we'd like it to be the case, evaluations will never occur in the laboratory. As these Exemplars demonstrate, conditions will vary along the purpose, scope, and maturity continuums, posing tremendous challenges for evaluators and practitioners alike. Our goal, in this section of the paper, is to begin identifying those challenges as a starting point, so as the project to develop principles for evaluating communications campaigns continues, evaluators and campaigners can have a common frame of reference to begin to discuss what types of information will need to be collected and analyzed if we are to have a better idea of what works and what doesn't in communications campaigns.

Developing meaningful principles for evaluating the variety of public communication campaigns will be challenging and require extraordinary creativity on the part of both evaluators and campaigners. Conditions cannot be controlled, and so expectations for scientific rigor have to be balanced against the constraints of messy real world situations. As evaluator Egon Guba noted, we are caught between a rock and a hard place: the rock is rigor and the hard place is relevance. Evaluators may need to be seen as storytellers, imbedding lessons in comprehensive narratives that carefully balance details and generalizations about processes that may or may not lead to short- and long-term outcomes.

There are several basic evaluation questions that evaluators could ask of campaigns from any point along the purpose, scope, and maturity continuums. In general, evaluators need to know:

- What degree of certainty is required (i.e., scientific rigor)?
- What is the purpose of the evaluation, how will it be used (e.g., do we want to find out whether it worked or not, or how to create a better campaign by focusing on various process issues?)
- Who is the audience for the evaluation, and what do they need to know?
- And, simply, What was done?

Of course, all the evaluation measures would be subject to the same confounders described in the Harvard Family Research Project's overview. Here we can illuminate the specific questions and puzzles for evaluators that relate specifically to a campaign's purpose, scope, and maturity using examples from the Exemplars described above.

### **Purpose**

Evaluators will have to determine a communications campaign's purpose and describe its theory of change. The most important starting point for an evaluation will be determining the campaign's purpose, and the theory of change that supports that purpose. Campaigns with well-developed frameworks like 5 A Day satisfy a basic requirement for evaluation because they have clear objectives — evaluators will know where to place them on the purpose continuum. To determine where a communications campaign falls on the continuum between behavior change and policy change, evaluators can ask:

- What is the campaign's goals and objectives? Why this particular focus? What was the motivation to look at individual behavior or policy? Were there any political dimensions to the decision? Was the decision driven by any organizational limitations (e.g. lobbying)?
- What is the theory of change? What are the campaign's assumptions about how it will lead to change?
- How was the campaign designed?

Campaigns with clarity in purpose will be easier to evaluate. For example, it may be easier to discern some effect when the message is specific and clear as in the case of the Henry Horner Mothers Guild. The Mothers Guild's objectives for and messages to Chicago Housing Authority were precise and easily identified when they appeared in news coverage. But even the straightforward measures in communications campaigns with clearly identified purpose quickly get complicated. For example, in Don't Dump – Drains to Bay the non-point source pollution problem is exacerbated by policy shortcomings as well as individual behavior. The Don't Dump – Drains to Bay approach, though, focuses narrowly on one aspect of the contributing factors. This campaign appears to have benefited from involving the community and going to where the problem is to deliver a specific message, although the diffuse nature of the problem complicates

evaluation. How can the effects of the storm drain campaign be isolated from declines or increases of pollution in other areas of the watershed?

Other Exemplars on the behavior change end of the spectrum also offer seemingly straightforward evaluation opportunities. For example, in the case of Put Your Baby Back to Sleep, the message is memorable, the behavior is simple, the negative health outcome is dire and the audience is highly motivated to avoid that outcome. Measurable effects were detected and there were fewer SIDS deaths. But direct advice from a respected health care provider is even more powerful than the message delivered other ways -- and even then, some people are resistant to change no matter how sophisticated and well-developed the messages. The question remains for evaluators: Why did the Put Your Baby Back to Sleep campaign work for some populations but not others? Why was there less decline in SIDS deaths among African Americans? Are there cultural sensitivity issues at work here? Was the campaign not targeted properly? Or something else? Even behavior change must be addressed in its social context. And, other barriers to success will exist. Confounding the 5 A Day campaign, for example, is the message environment dominated by a well-resourced and aggressive food industry. The food industry advertising is a significant barrier to nutrition “eat healthier” campaigns that already have a low chance of affecting behavior change.

The policy end of the purpose spectrum will also pose special challenges for evaluation. For example, the Give Swordfish a Break campaign was very clear and specific, always better for evaluation. And its goal was based on strong scientific evidence that if particular policies were put in place the swordfish populations will recover. But how quickly? What if the science is wrong about how long the fish take to repopulate?

Evaluation will require a different unit of analysis as it moves along the continuum from behavior change to policy. Behavior change goals target the individual which is the unit of analysis. Survey research and other well-developed methodologies can query individuals before and after a communications campaign, or compare individuals in one locale to another that did not get exposed to the campaign and assess the differences. But as the purpose of the communications campaign moves more toward policy, the unit of analysis for evaluation must change to some aggregate: a neighborhood, a community, a population. Evaluation research could arguably get more complicated as the unit of analysis changes, particularly as it lingers in the somewhat vague “public will” territory. Public will is not the same as public opinion, yet public opinion is often used as a proxy for public will. Thinking differently about an issue is not the same as willingness to act. For example, the Better Badger Baby Bus Tour’s goal was to impart information about the importance of brain development in early childhood, but it also wanted to seed public will in support of programs supporting young children. Apart from counting, for example, the number of news articles about the Tour or the number of people who attend the Tour’s presentations, how can a shift in the public’s perception of the importance of child brain development be measured, and if there are changes, can they be attributed to the Tour? And, even if public opinion in Wisconsin

changed, does that mean the public is willing to act in some way on behalf of young children?

Similarly, the Community News Project's goals were very succinct, making certain project outcomes easier to assess: inspire stories about issues of importance to Chicago neighborhoods when Chicago is inundated with national reporters during the Democratic convention. Many stories were generated, and by that measure, the campaign could be judged a success. But how was the coverage framed? Is getting coverage enough when it is not linked to specific policy debates? There was some success certainly, but success for what end?

Even if communications campaigns on the policy end of the spectrum can be linked to specific policy goals, policy change takes a long time and often happens incrementally. In the Violence Prevention Initiative, for example, a statewide ban on the manufacture and sale of cheap, poorly made handguns, Saturday night specials, was enacted in just six years after the start of the campaign – a very short time according to those experienced with gun policy. Still, is the outcome measure for evaluation passing the law or reducing gun deaths? Do we judge the passing of the law as a success or do we withhold judgment to see if passing the law reduced gun deaths? In Washington, Watch Your Mouth is still hoping for policy success in its third year. Most of the time policy change takes years.

Evaluators will have to develop methods for assessing programs in the “mushy middle” of the purpose spectrum. Communications campaigns that carry out different purposes simultaneously – those in the “mushy middle” -- will be harder to evaluate. Evaluators will need to develop methodologies that help them isolate the effects of multi-purpose campaigns. Since so many campaigns exist in the mushy middle, we suspect this will require a combined qualitative and quantitative approach. Opportunities to employ experimental or even quasi-experimental research designs will be rare.

When goals are not articulated or there are many goals without a clear sense of priority, this is problematic for evaluations because evaluations presuppose clearly defined methods, objectives and activities that are linked together by a clear theory of change. The degree to which this assumption is violated is proportional to the likelihood of an effective evaluation that can determine the strengths, weaknesses, and successes or failures of the campaigns.

### **Scope**

Scope presents its own evaluation questions regarding time, reach, and frequency:

- Where did the campaign take place?
- How long was the campaign? Why that length?
- Was it local or regional or national?
- How often did the campaign make contact with its target?

- Who funded the campaign? How were funding levels established in light of the need? Was the campaign adequately funded to reach its intended goals?

It may be that the smaller in scope (more local or more singular) the communications campaign, the harder it will be for evaluators to disengage its communications effects from the non-communications efforts. For example, in the Local Investment in Child Care project public communication is used to add saliency, urgency and significance to the policy goals, but the communications activities are thoroughly integrated with the policy development, organizing, and advocacy. Given the LINCC project's policy successes – and somewhat limited communication work in terms of scope (short, concentrated efforts at strategic moments) – how will evaluators determine the degree to which the communication efforts versus non-public efforts affected those accomplishments? Determining the exact contribution of communications to overall policy change may be extremely difficult. On the other hand, localized campaigns may provide interesting opportunities for evaluation. A localized campaign would allow for the use of a control group in the way a national campaign might not. The 5 A Day campaign cannot use a control group because it happened nationally all at once.

More clearly targeted campaigns will be somewhat easier to measure, at least in terms of recall. The target population for the Henry Horner Mothers Guild campaign, the Chicago Housing Authority, couldn't have been any more appropriate. The campaign's messages, "Broken Promises" and "The Chicago Housing Authority should be held to the same standard as any other landlord in the city of Chicago," are precise and concise. It would be easy for an evaluator to determine whether the Mothers Guild was successful in getting that message into the news (they were). And the Chicago Housing Authority took an immediate action though it was not all the Mothers Guild would have hoped for. Still, there is some fodder there for evaluation. It was not until years later, however, that the Mothers Guild's court case was decided (in their favor<sup>47</sup>). Process and outcome evaluations were possible in this case, but impact evaluation would be delayed. Still, the verdict in the Mothers Guild's favor – success by a legal measure – does not tell us what contribution was made by the communications campaign.

Similarly, in Give Swordfish a Break the campaign was very targeted, very concise. By focusing on swordfish gatekeepers (i.e., the chefs, grocery chains, etc.), the campaign created good leverage for their policy level advocacy. Did it translate to larger policies the campaigners supported? Did it win new converts to the overall cause? Very purposeful targets in a well-defined, clear time period will also make evaluation a little easier. The targets of the LINCC project have generally been very selective. Even when a report, for example, has received wide-spread media attention, the advocates message has usually been shaped to resonate with policy makers and business leaders. Still, quantitative measures here would only measure exposure. Qualitative methods – content analyses that examined frames, interviews with key targets, case studies, or other methods – would be needed to draw more meaningful conclusions in the smaller-scope campaign.

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<sup>47</sup> Nelson, D. CHA wins OK to replace high-rises. *Chicago Sun-Times*, April 5, 1995.

## **Maturity**

Maturity may pose some of the most interesting evaluation questions, since as campaigns and issues develop they are likely to get more sophisticated and complex. They also may be more likely to change to adapt to changing conditions. Campaigns that are adaptive and change strategies make evaluation much harder, which explains why more mature issues and more mature campaigns will be harder to evaluate. Maturity suggests the following questions for evaluators:

- How or why did the campaign develop? Has the issue changed over time? Has the campaign changed?
- Who initiated the campaign?
- Who are the players? Who is the opposition?
- Was it a stand-alone effort, or was it implemented in conjunction with other programs? If with other programs, how was the communication component integrated into the other activities?

Evaluators were able to say definitively that national declines in smoking were accelerated in California and Massachusetts because of the tobacco campaigns there, and in California there was evidence that when the campaign was cut the accelerated decline in smoking also stopped.<sup>48</sup> But reaching that conclusion required a heavy investment in the scientific evaluation. Local organizations will not always have the resources that will allow them to make similar claims (and many would be frustrated that they could not spend the evaluation resources on the campaign itself). For example, the importance of children's brain development has received attention nationally. Did the Better Badger Baby Bus Tour accelerate that process and spread the word more quickly in Wisconsin? The Tour, a relatively "young" campaign, had significant local leadership combined with a catchy, roving concept that got people's (and the news media's) attention, giving the message a good chance to sink in. Leveraging that understanding into larger successes will take time and persistence, but one would expect evolving outcomes as the campaign matures. Campaign sponsors place the Better Badger Baby Bus Tour in a large historical context, recalling how education reforms took decades. They see their work, including the Tour, as only one contribution to the larger, very long-term, process of early care and education development.

Evaluators may also be interested in the unintended positive consequences of campaigns. For example, the Don't Dump – Drains to Bay campaign is neighborhood-based. It may have been a terrific organizing tool: it is a great way to get people involved, residents see it on all the drains when they walk to school, it is easy to participate in, and may have the added benefit of bringing more advocates to other environmental issues. Perhaps in this case, looking at pollution outcomes is not the only measure for the campaign.

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<sup>48</sup> Fichtenberg and Glantz. Association of the California tobacco control program with declines in cigarette consumption and mortality from heart disease. *New England Journal of Medicine* 343(24)1772-1777, 2000.



Don't Dump – Drains to Bay gained some campaign maturity. Over time its communication techniques have been refined (more localized stencil images, combined with follow-up information passed out door-to-door and any garnered news coverage), but the general approach to the problem has remained consistent since its inception. It would be helpful to know what the other non-point source pollution prevention measures are, and they how might influence the storm drain campaigns. Then an evaluator could make a judgment about the choice of strategy in this instance.

The Community News Project was a one-time campaign (though it lingers), so cannot really be called mature, yet it benefited from a staff that brought years of experience to bear on the issue. The result was a tailored approach that satisfied journalists' needs. The Community News Project's targeted, tailored information met the needs of both journalists and local sources, resulting in comprehensive, community-based coverage of a national event. But, how did local groups use the news after it ran? The project demonstrated that with thoughtful planning, minimal support, and hard work campaigners can generate news coverage and perhaps even set the frame (though an analysis of the frames in the coverage has not been done). But news coverage is fleeting. Campaign organizers regret that they didn't have funding that would have enabled them to do training with local groups around the project, who then could have used the news coverage in directed and strategic ways to further their specific policy goals.

A significant challenge for evaluators will be devising mechanisms for disengaging communications effects from the effects of other campaign activities. Watch Your Mouth was everywhere at once in the state of Washington. Evaluators will have to assess not only whether there was an effect but which campaign elements contributed the most, or the most effectively, to the effect. Assuming Watch Your Mouth reaches its ambitious policy goal in three short years, how will evaluators assess the degree to which the communications campaign did the job versus other non-public (e.g., lobbying-style) aspects of the effort?

Watch Your Mouth keeps its eye on the prize, with coalition building and public communication efforts designed to support its policy change advocacy. The tail, in other words, doesn't wag the dog. It bases its efforts on thorough research including strategic frame analysis. It is also choosing strategies recommended by the first Surgeon General's report on children's oral health. Extensive research confirmed that the campaign's goals are the most effective ways to improve children's oral health. The campaign itself may not be mature at this point, but it is drawing on mature techniques and based in analysis.

### **Watch Out for Icebergs**

Communication campaigns are like icebergs, partly visible and mostly hidden. The most visible part is likely to be media — news coverage, advertising, pamphlets, other materials — and may in fact be much smaller in scope than either the work that it took to create them or other non-communications aspects of the program. Evaluators will have to avoid being distracted by the flashy “media” components of communications campaigns to assess the whole. Similarly, evaluators will have to determine how to

account for the contribution of media or communications air cover to the community organizing and policy advocacy of the ground troops.

Evaluators will also have to figure out how to assess “insider” effects, a special case of communications campaign as iceberg that evaluators will find most in mature issues at the policy end of the purpose spectrum in large and small scope campaigns. The nature of policy change means that it may be hidden. Policy development happens to a large extent within institutions, away from the public eye. Therefore, communications campaigns that focus on policy may be real icebergs, never totally out of the water. Personal behavior change campaigns, on the other hand, will always be completely public.

In fact, there might be “reverse icebergs.” For example, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation’s *Covering the Uninsured* appears to be all above the water — all communications strategy, and up till now, no community organizing, or policy advocacy. But would the campaign organizers agree? Is there work being done related to or dependent upon the visible media efforts that is not visible to the naked eye? Or is the campaign being conducted in stages, with the community organizing or public engagement component coming later? Similarly, *5 A Day* may be all above the water nationally, but at the state level there have been very active policy components less visible to the general public.

The evaluation dilemmas raised by public communication campaigns are as complex as any scientific inquiry. Developing evaluation standards that can accommodate the varied purpose, scope, and maturity of campaigns will require hard thinking and extraordinary creativity. Evaluators need a strategy just as do those who develop programs for behavior or policy change. This strategy needs to be based on the questions we raised in the beginning of this section -- Who is the audience for the evaluation, and what do they need to know? What degree of scientific rigor is required? And, What is the purpose of the evaluation, how will it be used? Fundamentally, evaluators must be certain that a campaign’s theory of change reflects an appropriate and accurate analysis of what it really takes to create the desired effect. In answering these questions, evaluators will challenge campaigners to articulate clearly the purpose of their campaigns, their scope, and level of maturity.

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