

How to make an effective migration information campaign?

The Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration, Mobility, and Integrated Border Management is happy to present you the second issue of the “Experts Speaking” rubric dedicated to migration information campaigns.

The topic is of great importance both for EU Member States and EaP countries due to the recent growth of irregular migration, violation of visa-free and Schengen rules and the asylum system abuse by citizens of the Eastern Partnership countries. According to the data provided by the European Commission, a total of 22,287 detections of illegal stay of nationals of the three EaP visa-free countries (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) were reported between January and June 2018, representing a 7% increase in relation to the same period of last year and an 11% as compared to the last six months of 2017.

Information and awareness raising campaigns addressing prospective irregular migration is a tool increasingly used by EU Member States and EaP countries. These campaigns help migrants to make informed decisions since they often lack information or rely on false claims and wrong perceptions perpetuated by mass and social media.

Please find below the key recommendations provided by the experts who participated in our recent Panel meeting in Tbilisi on how to create a truly successful migration information campaign. Enjoy reading!



Ms. Tara Dermott,
IOM X

CHOOSE THE RIGHT APPROACH

“In my view, there are two key elements of information campaigns that inspire real change: evidence and participation.

Only campaigns that are grounded in strong situational analysis, informed by diverse stakeholders (including members of the target audience!) and that

have clear objectives by which their impact can be assessed, can truly demonstrate their success.

The secret behind effective information campaigns is having robust internal processes to ensure that your campaigns will have the desired impact. While there are many processes to choose from under the [Communication for Development \(C4D\)](#) umbrella, make sure that the approach you choose includes:

1. Situational Analysis: Know your audience!
2. Strategic Design: Consider carefully what is the best way to communicate the desired behaviour change and how. This is also the time to enlist diverse campaign partners.
3. Development & Testing: Test your campaign products with members of the target audience when still in production to make sure that they understand the key message.
4. Implementation: Leverage the power and popularity of diverse media platforms to maximize engagement.
5. Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E): Even more important than having a plan for M&E is having a plan as to how you will use the learnings from your M&E to inform ongoing and new campaign activities.”



Ms. Iryna Sushko,
NGO Europe Without Barriers

DEVELOP A CAMPAIGN PLAN

“First of all, success factors of awareness raising campaign are based on the creation of a campaign plan, including the clearly defined objectives. This is the first step to see initial practical goals and to develop concrete activities for each task. The next step is to identify target groups and their needs. Campaign developers should work both with a wider society as well as marginalized groups and the instruments of reaching these groups may vary a lot. Campaign developers should define specific tools and channels that may encourage people to learn new information.

The effectiveness of the campaign also depends on partners and



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networks who can play the role of advisers or assist in spreading the information and messages of the campaign and increasing its visibility. Cooperation with local authorities and government structures is important as well. Every information campaign should have a clear and simple box of messages that can be easily communicated to different target groups. To cause behavioural changes, messages should appeal to the values shared by the target audience. The campaign developers have to focus on measuring all the outcomes and analyze what activities have an impact on target groups. Tailoring the messages to each selected group is one of the key recipes of an effective campaign. Also, it is very important to combine the different channels when spreading information. The campaign should not end up if their short-term goals were accomplished and showed the impact on the target groups. In this case, the campaign implementors should develop the next stage of activities aimed at achieving the strategic long-term goals.”

COMBINE RESEARCH AND CREATIVITY



Dr. Leonard Novy,
Institute for Media
and Communications Policy

“Campaigning combines art with science. You need a „theory of change“, the best possible evidence and data about the problem you aim to tackle, about its root causes, as well as about who your target group is. On this basis,

you have to come up with creative solutions conducive to bringing about the desired behaviour change. Providing information alone is insufficient since peoples' decisions are rarely based on objective information, but on often culturally embedded interpretations of information. Hence, information campaigns in the field of migration which merely disseminate information on the “objective” risks of migrating will remain ineffective since their audience is likely to consider them as attempts to prevent them from realizing their aspirations.

Campaigns can be implemented through various channels, ranging from social media over (usually costly) mass media to physical gatherings in community centres. What successful campaigns have in common is their focus on and fit to the target groups. Attention is scarce and you are competing with multiple alternative sources of information. So, trust is a key. Particularly since it is not only what you say, that matters. But also, what people hear. People will always process information through the lens of their culture, individual experiences, and aspirations. Storytelling and framing can help develop sound, credible campaigns.”



Prof. Pierluigi Musarò
University of Bologna

USE THE RIGHT MESSAGES

“The focus of the awareness raising campaigns needs to be framed within the existing migration schemes, stressing the risks of irregular migration and economic opportunities to face unemployment in home country, coupled with the development of a critical thinking of prospective migrants when pondering the option of irregular migration. Important is the knowledge creation about the pull reasons pushing for undocumented migration because campaigns to deter irregular migration are usually targeted at potential migrants in their country of origin before they have made the decision to leave. Fundamental to note that perceptions on Europe are formed in the country of residence, and they are based on a multitude of sources: social media and new communication networks have increased the scope and the intensity of distribution of false narratives; so-called filter bubbles and echo chambers can lead to isolated misperceptions that are not corrected. At the same time, these technologies and communication networks might also provide a channel to promote a more realistic narrative. The migration choice is far to be an individual only choice: the role played by family and networks in migration flows has been substantially documented. So, important to consider the role of stigmatization, the process of labeling, the possible shame for the failure of the migration project. For this reason, it is better to work with the communities, adopting their knowledge and tools, encouraging the members to take lead to facilitate the campaign.

Finally, it is important to creatively attract attention and engage the right target group. Usually, a negative message works only for short period effect because fear is only a part of the story. It is better to present alternatives and different opportunities, to clarify rights and obligations, and not only saying NO or YOU WILL DIE.”

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