

**Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition
National Flour Fortification Program of Uzbekistan**

Communication and Marketing Component Progress Report

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List of Acronyms

ACWG – Advocacy and Communication Working Group

NFFP – National Flour Fortification Programme

FF – Flour Fortification

GAIN – Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition

NFA – National Fortification Alliance

WB – World Bank

IDA- Iron Deficiency Anemia

IEC- Information, Education and Communication

USI – Universal Salt Iodization

NGO – Non Governmental Organization

Contents

1. Introduction	Page 4
2. Strategic communication framework and plan	Page 4
3. Development of core creative elements and products	Page 7
4. Mobilization of bakers and retailers for promotion of fortified bread	Page 9
5. Greater involvement of children	Page 10
6. Getting mass media on board	Page 11
7. The Launch of the communication campaign	Page 11
8. Future directions	Page 12

I. INTRODUCTION

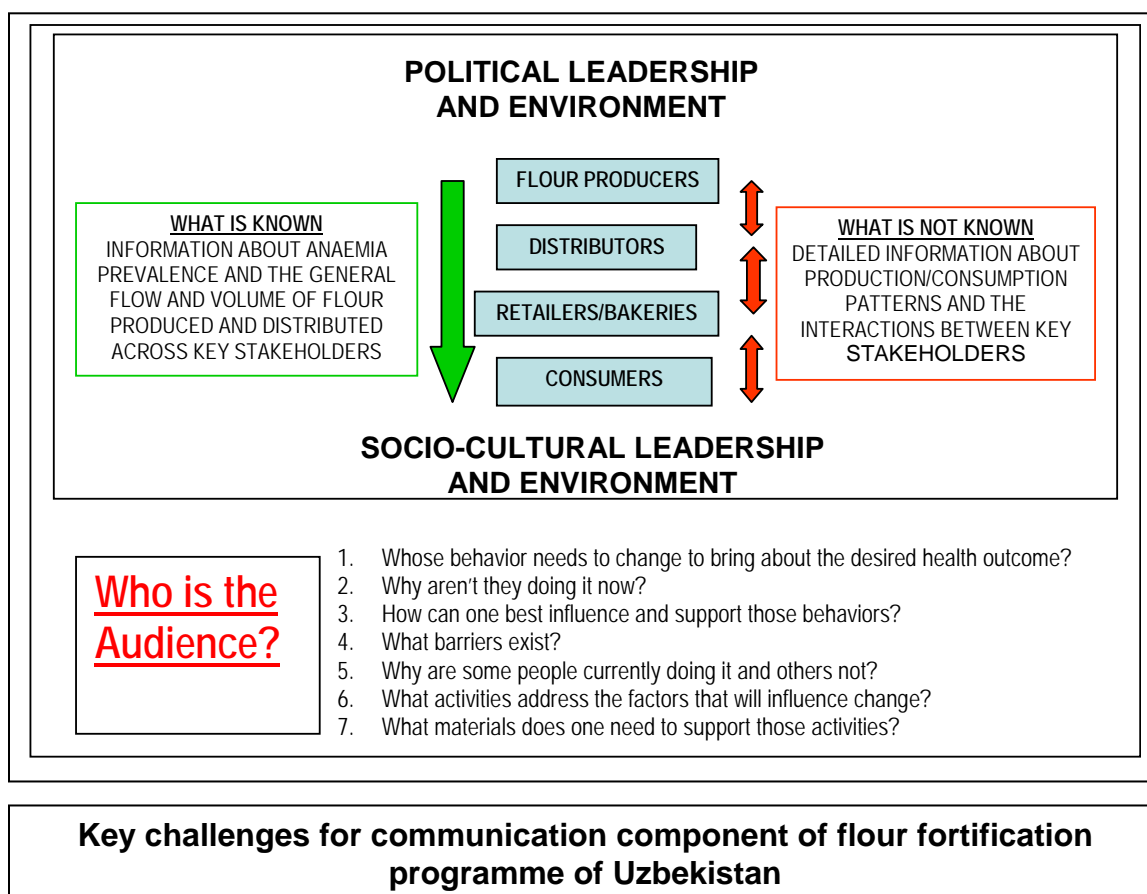
Communication very often is seen as mere production of various brochures, posters, banners, leaflets, T-shirts, TV-spots etc. for increasing awareness or level of knowledge of target audiences. However, more than 60 years experience of development communication clearly demonstrates that it takes much more than information to arrive at behavioral impact. As in any strategic programme communication theory the process of designing communication strategy is seen as critical element in success of communication efforts of the National Flour Fortification Programme of Uzbekistan. NFFP communication component is envisaged as a strategic mix of policy advocacy (directed at political, business and social leadership), programme communication (including behavior change communication) based on behavioral objectives identified through formative research, and social mobilization and partnership-building -- directed at mobilizing all stakeholders and new/appropriate partners. This is a continuous over time process of setting and shaping up behavioral objectives, situation/problem/market analysis, establishment of benchmarks, process and impact indicators, audience segmentation and identification of its initial behavior phase, positioning of the communication activities, defining communication channels and tools and development of management plan. Massive communication activities intended for behavioral impact will not start until this process is completed. Strategic Communication Framework and Plan provides initial guidance towards designing result/benefit-oriented, science-based, client-centered, service-linked, programmatically-sustainable, multichanneled, participatory communication approaches, nevertheless there are critical information gaps for the design of the programme that need to be filled with number of researches and studies.

II. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION FRAMEWORK AND PLAN

In May 2005 UNICEF hired an experienced programme communication consultant who provided expertise in development of the communication strategy for the National Flour Fortification Programme of Uzbekistan. The consultant started his work with the situation analysis of flour market, consumption patterns, anemia prevalence, production and distribution of fortified flour and other major factors affecting the communication campaign. Throughout the mission it was clear that quite a large amount of critical information is missing for the development of the strategic, evidence based communication approaches for the NFFP.

In the middle of May UNICEF organized programme communication workshop with the involvement of key programme partners, flour producers both Uzdonmahsulot and private, retail organizations, association of bread makers, mass media and others. The objectives of the workshop were to build consensus and a shared understanding amongst the key FF partners, on the strategic aspects of an Advocacy, Communication and Social Mobilization plan for the National Flour Fortification Programme of Uzbekistan. The specific objectives and expected outcomes included:

- Identification, analysis and elaboration of key issues, constraints, and information gaps towards the development of a strategic framework/plan for advocacy and communication.
- Identification, prioritization and agreement on 8-10 key work-streams, timelines/milestones, focal points and mechanisms for implementation, management and monitoring of communication activities (2005 -2006)
- Elaboration and agreement on a plan for project start-up/launch activities and products (July – Sept 2005)
- Agreement on, and establishment of, an inter-agency Advocacy and Communication Working Group
- Strengthening the FF partnership and establishing stronger linkages with the technical components of the project.



The workshop was attended by 60 participants, including specialists from different backgrounds including education, health, social mobilization, flour and bread production, quality control, mass media, Children’s Parliament. This multi-sectoral, participatory, approach towards development of the communication strategy resulted in great number of ideas and perspectives offered by the group. The main outcome of the workshop was obtained common understanding of the communication strategy and approaches towards strategic behavior change communication. Though at the beginning of the exercise the group of programme partners and flour producers was tend to focus more on the products and activities, rather than on the identifying and prioritization of key communication issues, constraints and information gaps. The challenge was to make people “think big” looking at the strategic results of the project.

The proceedings of the workshop were well documented and were incorporated into the Strategic Communication Framework and Plan. This document provides recommendations which are directed at strategic planning and decision-making level, including analysis, a broad roadmap till September 2006, and a set of more detailed recommendations and a suggested roll-out plan for core activities for the period June – December 2005 (the first 6 months, including the start-up/launch phase). The analysis and recommendations of the Strategic Communication Framework and Plan were reviewed, refined and endorsed by all key partners at the first meeting of the Advocacy and Communication Working Group (ACWG). [Strategic Communication Framework and Plan available upon request rhaydarov@unicef.org]

The ACWG as a formal entity is an integral part of the National Fortification Alliance (NFA), representing the advocacy and communication constituency, providing guidance, oversight, coordination and recommendations for the development and implementation of strategic approaches for improving effectiveness and scaling up Flour Fortification (FF) advocacy and communication policies and interventions, and synthesizing and disseminating evidence-based best communication practices. The group works towards empowering the FF partners to develop, implement and evaluate effective, appropriate and evidence-based strategic FF communication activities to achieve the goals of the National Flour Fortification project.

The group is drawn within the FF partnership as well as a variety of institutions, representing a broad range of relevant disciplines. The ACWG is lead by UNICEF and chaired by the senior Ministry of Health representative Dilorom Ahmedova, chief pediatrician of the Republic of Uzbekistan. While the initial capacity of the group is still limited due to lack of social-development communication knowledge and experience in the context of global communication theories, over time this will be improved for better design and planning of strategic communication approaches.

Based on a preliminary, overall situation analysis, and till such time as more specific data/information starts becoming available from the planned studies in September/December (commissioned by the World Bank and UNICEF), the goals and specific objectives of the communication component of the GAIN-funded Uzbekistan Flour Fortification project are elaborated below (based on Strategic Communication Framework and Plan).

Overarching Communication Goals (July 2005 - September 2006)

1. Building stronger and demonstrable political and social commitment at all levels, for the reduction of IDA through Flour Fortification (production, distribution, consumption, promotion).
2. Developing and implementing communication interventions, including launch/start-up activities which will facilitate the creation of an enabling environment (for millers, distributors, retailers, bakers and consumers) for the sustained production, distribution, consumption and promotion of Fortified Flour and flour products.

3. Supporting and mainstreaming pro-poor approaches and outreach, for improved and sustained access/consumption of fortified flour to reduce IDA among women of child-bearing age and young children.
4. Mobilising a wider set of actors/players, including the private sector, NGOs and the media, to facilitate Flour Fortification activities (production, distribution, consumption, promotion).
5. Strengthening the National Fortification Alliance and building the capacities of the NFA partners in developing, planning, implementing, managing and evaluating large-scale communication and social mobilization interventions.
6. Facilitating closer linkages and collaboration between the GAIN – FF project and other relevant national health/development programs (e.g. World Bank-MoH Health Project-2, ADB – Women’s Health Project and, CARK Regional FF/USI initiative, UNICEF - ongoing life-skills and health projects, MoPE – ongoing projects of health education in schools).

Specific Communication Objectives (in the short-term, July – Dec 2005)

1. Through conduct of targeted policy advocacy directed at political, business and social leadership, address all information and perception-related factors that act as barriers to the creation of legislation for the mandatory fortification of flour.
2. Through conduct of a public campaign, as well as localized communication activities:
 - o create greater awareness of IDA and its impact on health; and the benefits of flour fortification in the prevention of IDA
 - o inform the general public, as well as specific sections of society, about the availability of fortified flour and flour products in their region
 - o promote the Fortified Flour (“Healthy Food”) logo
3. Through conduct of qualitative and quantitative research among key stakeholders, establish baselines and identify specific social-behavioral barriers, towards crafting a tailored behavior change communication strategy, which will be implemented in addition to the wider public awareness campaign.

For the past 3 month project rolled out successfully in close coordination with technical component (production and distribution) contributing to the achievement of objectives above. In details communication activities are elaborated further in this document.

III. DEVELOPMENT OF CORE CREATIVE ELEMENTS AND PRODUCTS

For the communication campaign it is critical that it has its own look and identity including core creative elements. UNICEF based on competitive selection hired a professional advertising agency Avesta GREY - a branch of GREY Global Group. A creative brief was prepared which included following assignments as development of:

- Campaign Name, Theme and Strap-Line/Slogan
- Visual Theme, or “Look” of the Campaign, creative of creative characters
- Development of visual products and materials
- Logistics assistance for the launch



NON-POLVON symbol of the campaign

The launch of the communication component was agreed by ACWG to coincide with the resumption of flour fortification at Tashkent mills. Hence communication component was put into tight schedule. In very short time (2 weeks) core creative elements were created, pre-tested and modified in 3 rayons of Uzbekistan (using focus group discussions) and endorsed by the Advocacy and Communication Working Group. This included development of color schemes, layouts, fonts, slogans and strap lines. The symbol of the campaign is “Non-Polvon” – kind, open, healthy and friendly comic personage – a baker producing fortified bread from the fortified flour. The comic personage was found well accepted during the focus group pre-testing. The name for this comic character was also found during the focus group discussions. Further on it is planned that “Non-Polvon” will evolve into a cartoon with secondary characters (wife and children).

The strap line for the campaign says – “Bread for Iron Health”. The phrase “iron health” in local language has strong idiomatic meaning – strong health or good health, and slogan sounds rather smart playing with all three key words – “iron” – fortified with iron, “health” and “bread”. The appropriate uzbek equivalent was found, which was also very well perceived by all focus groups. It was decided to leave the name for the campaign so far as National Flour Fortification Programme of Uzbekistan, where the word “National” means all-country programme, implemented by Government. The color schemes as seen in all materials where chosen from bread related colors as yellow and brown. On the background in all materials there is wheat, symbolizing and linking it all to bread and flour themes as well.

It is also important to mentioned the “Healthy Food” logo. As was decided by the ACWG the “Healthy Food” logo will remain as brand, as it is a registered mark and was more or less promoted at the regional level. However from focus groups and interviews it was clear that “Healthy Food” logo itself makes little meaning to customers. This is due to the limited branding and promotion activities undertaken within previous project. It is believed that with mass roll-out of the campaign and more marketing of the product the brand will be very much recognized. Nevertheless for identification of points of sales along with the “Healthy Food” logo, modified theme of this was developed into the concept of the “Healthy Family”. This concept was very much supported in focus groups and for a lot of people this sticker was associated with “entrance”, “pharmacy”, “happy family” and “health”. After the core creative elements were commented and approved by the ACWG number of products were commissioned both for launch and for initial awareness-raising phase. This included:

- “Healthy Family” points of sales stickers
- Indoor posters for points of sales
- Brochures for retailers and bakers
- Awareness leaflets for customers
- Flour and bread transporting trucks branding
- Outdoor banners
- T-shirts for young parliamentarians
- Caps for children and journalists
- Tents for launches at mills

The production quantities of materials were kept to the minimum need for launch and first awareness phase. Mass production will be commissioned before the behavior impact communication phase. The feedback on materials is quite positive, mass production will be started with minor adjustments. As more information revealed over time few more products will be commissioned in the next month.

IV. MOBILIZATION OF BAKERS AND RETAILERS FOR PROMOTION OF FORTIFIED BREAD

UNICEF established good partnership with the Association of Private Bread Makers “Toshkentnon”. This association was organized by the decree of the Cabinet of Ministers. Mission of the association is to ensure sustainable supply of “loaf” bread to the population of Tashkent city. “Loaf” bread is cheapest and most cost-effective bread on the market, hence it plays very important role in addressing the demand of the most vulnerable population groups. The association unites 54 state and private bakeries, producing bread and patisserie, supplying 300 – 350 tons of bread per day, serving nearly 1,200,000 population of Tashkent city. The association through 40 major bakeries has access to nearly 1,500 points of sales and the organizational structure presented quite effective mechanism to reach such a big number of private points of sales in one go.

A one day orientation meeting was conducted for 40 managing and marketing directors of major bakeries in Tashkent. The orientation included information on anemia and folic acid deficiency health and socio-economic implications, NFFP and important role of bakers in this programme (them being at the middle of supply – consumption chain). Mobilization of private retailers for promotion of fortified bread is quite a challenging task, due to their lack of understanding of business principles and role of marketing, as well as scarcity of time for orientation/sensitization (business people are always “on the run”). A lot of them have very strong opinion that bread is a non-elastic good and consumers will buy it anyway. This though varies from baker to baker. Some of them are more eager to collaborate than others understanding their social-responsibility in this project.

Through association project reached over 1,500 points of sales (supermarkets, specialized bread stores, mini-markets and grocery stores and bazaars). Identification materials, brochures and leaflets were distributed to all points of sales and shop directors in their turn were oriented for promotion of fortified bread.

Further partnership building with private bakers is required, which can be done through provision of marketing materials and branding, which along with project efforts will lead to their increased sales. The association will be further collaborating in various communication activities in Tashkent city.

V. GREATER INVOLVEMENT OF CHILDREN

Children's Parliament is a UNICEF assisted project which aims to build the capacity of over 200 young people representing all regions and districts of Uzbekistan. These young, motivated people are elected every 2 years from their districts to serve as young parliamentarians to work on various children rights and social issues. Each of them have a group of activists in their own school and community which whom they implement projects. Two times a year Children's Parliament meets for the regular sessions in Tashkent, where they are trained on various issues and discuss projects. At the sessions young parliamentarians meet their colleagues from the Uzbek Parliament to whom they address their concerns and come up with proposals.



Children's Parliament mobilizing retailers and points of sales

In order to achieve better programme synergy and higher efficiency it was decided to combine “vertical” and “horizontal” approaches for mobilization of bakers and retailers. “Vertical” approach as described in previous chapter was implemented by the Association of bread makers “Toshkentnon”. “Horizontal” approach is sustained by outreach strategy of young parliamentarians and volunteers to mobilize retailers and bakers on-sites.

Eleven young parliamentarians from Tashkent city with the help of their 35 volunteer-friends were oriented on the anemia causes and implications, NFFP and their important role in the project. Each young parliamentarian was assigned to certain bakery to work with retail directors. At the same time one week prior to the launch event in Tashkent these 45 young people visited all 1,500 points of sales, communicating key messages to retailers, identifying their initial knowledge and attitudes through simple questionnaire and ensuring that visibility and marketing materials are present. The results of this monitoring are currently being analyzed.

Young parliamentarians and their fellow volunteers did a great job. Even some bakery directors and retailers were claiming to the association: “Who did you assigns to us?”, “These children are getting on us with their rights to grow healthy and well-nourished”, “We are tired of them following us and calling us”. Of course, nor bakers or retailers could not say NO to very persistent and persuasive children. This enthusiasm and drive very much contributed to creating the initial impulse among one of the most difficult communication target groups of NFFP – private bakers and retailers. Good collaboration between UNICEF, Children's Parliament and Association of Bread Makers “Toshkentnon” made it success.

Further on, when sufficient quantities of fortified flour and bread is available at the shelves nationwide the special session of Children’s Parliament will be undertaken devoted to the issue of flour fortification, followed up by relevant activities in all districts of Uzbekistan.

VI. GETTING MASS MEDIA ON BOARD

The role of mass media can not be overestimated in such large-scale and nationwide project as the National Flour Fortification Programme of Uzbekistan. In order to have competent (content wise) media coverage with unified key messages and information on the anemia and folic acid deficiencies as well as the NFFP, a special briefing was undertaken for the journalists of 35 TV/radio channels and newspapers and magazines. The discussion touched upon in-depth technical questions regarding anemia and flour fortification, which was very much driven by questions of journalists.

Having this meeting done a week prior to the launch of communication component of NFFP helped much to have quality media coverage for the event including news coverage at 2 major state channels broadcasting throughout Uzbekistan. All journalists were provided with media packs, including key messages for the programme. Journalists expressed great interest in the topic. Further, media fellowship awards will be established to trigger high coverage of the issue through all mass-media channels both at national and local levels.

VII. THE LAUNCH OF THE COMMUNICATION COMPONENT

Last week of July and first week of August, 2005 first mills in Tashkent, Ferghana, Djizzak, Khorezm and Republic of Karakalpakstan equipped with microfeeders within ADB project resumed fortification of flour. In the end of July, beginning of August 2005 a series of communication activities were implemented to commemorate resume of flour fortification.

These activities intended to create a greater momentum for massive public awareness campaign; create public awareness on anaemia and demand for fortified bread/flour in Tashkent city; promote branding and visual look of the campaign; generate public awareness in other regions of Uzbekistan on the project and its roll out staggered strategy through wide national mass media coverage of launch events in Tashkent.

In order to cover the whole cycle from production of flour to the consumption of bread the launch of communication component was divided in two major directions – ceremonial launch at “Galla - Alteg” mill and launch at the Association of Private Bread Producers “Toshkent - non”.

The event was attended by high level government officials, representatives of international and public organizations, flour and bread producing industry. UNICEF Deputy Regional Director, Ms. S. Kianian-



Galla-Alteg mill: The Launch event, July 29

Firouzgar, Mr. Martin Raiser, Head of the World Bank in Uzbekistan symbolically passed the microfeeder along with the box of premix to the chairperson and chief engineer of the Galla-Alteg mill, who mentioned that similar feeder already installed at the mill and first bulk of fortified flour was produced today. After which the column of branded and decorated flour transporting trucks left through the main gates of the mill.

This was followed by the press-conference at the mill. All guests, children parliamentarians and mass media boarded the buses and escorted by police as well as branded and decorated with flags flour and bread trucks headed through the center of the city to the Association of Bread Producer “Toshkentnon”. This movement in the city attracted a lot of attention and along with high media coverage resulted in good initial PR for the launch. A short documentary of this will be available soon.



Children try fortified bread produced by Association of Private Bakers “Toshkentnon”

Second part of the ceremony continued at the premises of the Association of Bread Producers “Toshkentnon”. There 40 private bakers made an exhibition of bread and bread products, produced from fortified flour. The fortified bread was handed over to children and pregnant women of the Sabir-Rakhimov district of Tashkent city (home place of the Association). Later on guests and media representatives visited bread store near by, where they met with shop staff and consumers.

The launch event in Tashkent was used to rapidly pilot some “general awareness-building” communication materials. Lessons from that have been learnt and now awareness materials are adjusted to roll out in other regions of Uzbekistan.

Overall launch and initial mass communication activities along with other efforts contributed to the building of political commitment, partnership and awareness for the National Flour Fortification Programme of Uzbekistan. August 11, 2005 the

President of Uzbekistan signed a decree on measures for implementation of the National Flour Fortification Programme of Uzbekistan setting the issue of flour fortification on high political agenda. Further on the project communication component will continue leveraging this political commitment to mobilize partners for promotion of fortified bread and flour.

VIII. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The first phase for getting political commitment was completed as Presidential decree for implementation of NFFP was signed. The programme will be working on maximizing and leveraging its impact from national to regional levels. A low intensity

awareness-building campaign with an incremental build-up will be gradually introduced through the mass-media and regional mobilization activities between September - October 2005.

Until the end of 2005 the focus will be given towards filling the information gaps for designing strategic communication plan. This to include better understanding of knowledge, attitude and practices of various stakeholder groups, identification of enablers and barriers towards desired behavior and establishment of initial baseline.

Based on the formative research development of behavior focused messages and products will remain a priority before massive communication campaign in Spring 2006, once all mills started fortification. Greater emphasis will be given to the involvement of mass-media for the promotion of fortified flour.
