✳PATH

Projecting Health

Engaging communities through visual communication

Public health programs have historically encouraged healthy behaviors through social behavior change and communication (SBCC) approaches. Years of experience have shown us that the more people can relate to communication messages, the greater their impact. What if there was a way to empower local communities to develop and produce their own education programs to directly influence one another?

Utilizing advances in digital technology, PATH and its partners are revolutionizing SBCC methodology with a new approach for health education. Projecting Health, sometimes called Digital Public Health, focuses on community-led use of digital media to effectively improve health knowledge and behaviors. The new method equips communities with basic skills and low-cost tools for targeted message creation and delivery bolstered by scientific evidence and visual demonstrations. The Projecting Health model can be easily integrated into existing government structures and community-support programming, and is already demonstrating enormous potential to transform health education and SBCC across the globe.

REVOLUTIONIZING BEHAVIOR CHANGE MODELS

Community engagement is critical to effect change, address barriers, and ensure sustainable action for better health outcomes at local levels. Traditionally, SBCC programs have sought to improve health practices by addressing gaps in awareness through the development of education and communication materials, such as pamphlets, posters and/or radio/television campaigns. The Projecting Health model transforms these methods by using customized educational videos that are developed and produced by the communities and shared via low-cost, portable projectors and other mobile devices. Through this innovative approach, PATH is maximizing the potential impact on improving health practices while reducing the challenges of time, money, and resources to influence those behaviors.

Current easy-to-use digital media technologies allow for a simplified approach for targeted message development and delivery. PATH's digital messaging model combines focused health information with visual demonstrations aligned with local customs and dialects. Additionally, this visual approach allows the flexibility to focus on barriers and drivers for health practices specific to that community, with familiar and trusted individuals conveying the

information to provide the social context and support for practicing health-seeking behaviors. As a result, the videos are relatable and impactful to the viewer (e.g., a mother), as she can recognize and identify with the actors and issues from within her own community. The result is a more enriching discussion and sharing of experiences between her and her peers and a subsequent adoption of effective health practices.

PATH/Brittany Fiore-Silvast

Videos are shown in public screenings led by facilitators who explain concepts and behaviors.

COMBINING STRENGTHS FOR FURTHER INNOVATION

Digital Green, a nonprofit organization based in India, originally pioneered the use of community-led videos to improve the uptake of key agricultural practices among local farmers. It engaged local communities to create educational videos demonstrating effective agricultural techniques, which they shared with villages through public screenings led by facilitators who explained the techniques and encouraged their use. The program generated such remarkable success that it is now fully supported through government systems in India.

PATH and the University of Washington (UW) partnered with Digital Green to expand the model using similar digital messaging techniques to specifically address health challenges in developing countries, beginning in India. Recognizing the value of this approach, PATH and UW have provided technical expertise in incorporating complex health topics and messaging into the model, along with educational and capacity-building know-how to guide frontline health workers in video production and dissemination.

IGNITING INNOVATION IN INDIA

Over the past two years, PATH and its partners launched the Projecting Health project in 84 villages across 3 blocks in Uttar Pradesh, India. We have successfully integrated the model into existing community support programs, such as mothers' group meetings and village health and nutrition days. Community members have already developed, acted in, and shared numerous health videos, and preliminary data suggest that these screenings have improved local health knowledge and maternal and newborn care practices.

The Projecting Health model consists of several key elements that enhance video production and stimulate community engagement:

- A community advisory board to identify video topics and guide activities.
- Community-level training on basic digital media technology for video production.
- Development of key messages and storyboards by community members.
- Production of videos featuring community members.
- Facilitator-led dialogue sessions before and after video screenings.
- Creation of a local, open-access digital video database for broad dissemination.

Projecting Health empowers communities improve health knowledge and behaviors using digital technologies.

A COMMUNITY-DRIVEN MODEL TO ENHANCE IMPACT

The Projecting Health model presents an unprecedented, cutting-edge opportunity for demonstrating significant global health impact. By shifting the driving force for change from health experts to community members, the model has the potential to be exceptionally effective for modifying behaviors in many health areas across a range of global settings.

PATH envisions that all future health programming in areas such as immunization, reproductive health, nutrition, HIV prevention, and water and sanitation could easily incorporate the Projecting Health approach to achieve wide-scale adoption of healthy behaviors. PATH is currently pursuing expansion to other geographic regions and key topic areas to validate replicability and scalability.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please contact:

Kiersten Israel-Ballard, Senior Program Officer
kisrael-ballard@path.org

Michelle Desmond, Technical Officer
mdesmond@path.org

SARITA'S STORY

Sarita was seven months pregnant when she first experienced severe abdominal pain. She and her mother-in-law had regularly attended mothers' group meetings and village health and nutrition days where they had viewed and discussed various digital public health videos.

"I had watched the video of maternal danger signs in the village screenings which taught me that whenever I should feel any danger sign I should immediately go to the hospital or consult the doctor as early as possible" Sarita

As a result, she consulted a community health worker and went to the local hospital where she received the medicine she needed to treat her symptoms. Two months later she delivered a healthy baby girl.

The information shared via the Digital Public Health project empowered her with the knowledge to ensure a healthy pregnancy for herself and a safe delivery for her daughter.

March 2014