






World AIDS Day Media Toolkit

Tips and resources to get your World AIDS Day messages out through the media!

CONTENTS

-  **Introduction**
-  **Understanding what the media is and what it does**
-  **Things to keep in mind as you plan events and messages**

Introduction


World AIDS Day, 1 December, is one of the most recognised international health days and a key opportunity to raise further awareness in communities and across the world about the state of the pandemic and critical next steps that must be taken to halt the spread. To make your events as effective as possible, and to get your message out as widely as possible, start planning now.

This guide will help you make more effective use of the media as you plan your events. Use it and adapt it to your own context – and send us any feedback on what worked best for you and any new tips you'd like to add to this resource. Send comments and suggestions to media@worldaidscampaign.org

Copyright 2009 World AIDS Campaign. All rights reserved. You may copy and distribute this resource as long as credit is given to the source.

Written by Sara Speicher, Communication Point Ltd. www.communicationpoint.org

Photo credits: ©iStockphoto.com/ericphotography, ©iStockphoto.com/TMarvin, UNAIDS/P.Virot, UNAIDS/O.O'Hanlon



Universal Access and Human Rights

Understanding the media is and what it is does

When we say “media”, what do we mean?

For our purposes, when we talk about media, we are talking about the broad range of news media that includes newspapers and magazines, television, radio and internet news. The geographical reach of the media is one of the main determining factors of their coverage – whether they focus on local issues, have a national audience, or broadcast internationally.

Understanding what gets covered

Some people remark that overall, many media seem to be covering HIV and AIDS issues less than in the past. That should not surprise us, when we understand that “news” essentially covers what is “new”. Repeated messages, for instance, that governments are not doing enough, that more money is needed, that AIDS continues to devastate the lives of millions of people – as true as it is – will not alone make news.

We have to be able to sharpen our messages and get them out in new and compelling ways that capture media interest.

Basically, news is made for what it says, who says it, or how it is said – and preferably all three. Here are some ways to generate media interest:

- Provide new facts – or facts presented in new ways. Preparing a launch of a report with compelling (but simple) facts and figures.
- Enlist “newsmakers” to help get your message across – people with high public profile, such as local or national celebrities, respected community leaders, politicians.
- Demonstrate a broad base of supporters. You may get far more attention if it is not just your organisation issuing the message, but a broad coalition of partners who have come together with a focused message, whether on a report or in a street demonstration.
- Plan dramatic events – although make sure the drama doesn’t overshadow the message you want to get across.



World AIDS Day Media Toolkit

As much as possible, keep in mind the geographical reach of your media contacts. A local paper will be interested in a local angle – photos and names with as many local connections as possible. A national paper or station will look most at what trends, statistics and major events happen that effect more than one area. International media need to make the connection between a national story and international trends and news. So, for instance, a large demonstration in the national capital would get more local coverage if information and photos of local people participating in the march were included. International media would probably only be interested if international high-profile people were involved, if it was particularly large, if focused messages and actions connected to other parts of the world.

In all of this, consider also *when*. Timing is a critical factor in getting anything covered by news media. Timing includes considering what are the other big stories being covered – will they overshadow your news or is there a connection you can make. Timing also includes the day and time when you plan your event or release your information. For print media, for instance, World AIDS Day coverage is often written days before December 1, so a press release issued on 30 November or 1 December has little chance of being reported unless it is groundbreaking news. Likewise, events happening in the morning have generally a greater chance of being reported as it gives a chance for journalists to write in the afternoon for their print deadlines, and for broadcasters to prepare clips for evening news.

For most of these media remember – what may be life or death to you, and something you have dedicated your lifetime to may end up as 15 seconds on television or a couple of paragraphs in an article. Don't get depressed, but do plan realistically and creatively to get the best and most accurate coverage possible.

Things to keep in mind as you plan events and messages

Keeping media coverage in mind as you plan messages and events

As you plan your events and messages for World AIDS Day it's always helpful to keep your broad goals in mind:

Who do you want to reach?

What do you want to achieve?

Who can you partner with to broaden support and participation?

Universal Access and Human Rights



Sometimes it helps just to think of the news headline you would want to see for your event, and then plan your messages and events so that headline becomes a reality.

More specifically, think critically as you plan:

What: is your message compelling? What is new? Can you back up your message with simple but compelling stories and facts?

Who: Who is going to help deliver your message? Someone who is directly affected and could share about personal impact could be compelling. What about a high-profile, articulate person who can share their commitment – someone that will attract people and the media to your event and get the message heard more widely?

How: What creative activities and events can best attract people and media and convey your message?

When: When would activities be best placed to reach and involve your target audience? (Forget what's "convenient" for the planners!) When is the best time to attract media?

When do you want stories to be covered in the media? (Then let's work out from there the best time to share information and hold events so they can be reported then.)

Where: Where an activity takes place also carries a message, as well as needing to be a place your target audience can reach. Should the event be held in a heavily affected area? In a central place that already attracts many people? In front of government buildings?

If you have ongoing relationships with a journalist, test your ideas with them – is it something they or their agency would be interested in covering? What suggestions do they have to make it more newsworthy?

If there is an organisation or person particularly in charge of communication and media relations for your events, make sure they are in on the planning meetings. They can help give advice on the best messages and most media-attractive events, as well as gain the information they need up front in order to write press releases, contact journalists, and plan media events and information.

A word about your message

Your core message is not a speech, an article, or even a paragraph. Your message has to be one line or sentence long. If you could only say one thing, what would it be? Again, sometimes it's helpful to think of the headline you'd like to see – that is your key message.