Introduction to *C-Bulletins*

This series of 10 *C-Bulletins* is written for communication practitioners who are engaged in developing and adapting materials and activities for audiences with lower literacy skills. Each bulletin offers practical, how-to assistance, real-life examples, field experience, and includes a list of additional resources for further reference.

What Is Social and Behavior Change Communication (SBCC)?

SBCC is the systematic application of interactive, theory-based, and research-driven communication processes and strategies to address tipping points for change at individual, community, and social levels. It does this by:

- using an interactive, planned, and strategic process

- applying a socio-ecological model—examining social, cultural, economic, and legislative factors as well as concepts relating to individual behavior change

- operating through three key strategies— advocacy, social and community mobilization, and behavior change communication (BCC)

Because it is based on a socio-ecological model, SBCC uses theories and models from various disciplines to provide road maps for understanding and addressing barriers to change, and clarifies assumptions on which interventions are based. SBCC theories and models also help to identify indicators that can be used to measure success.

By using an SBCC approach, practitioners can begin to understand their intended audiences, the contexts in which they live, and their needs as adult learners.

C-Bulletin topics were inspired by issues C-Change and partners have experienced developing and adapting SBCC materials for audiences who have difficulty reading. Many of the existing resources for these audiences were designed with pictures only, and guidance on developing materials lacked information on matters such as how interactivity relates to literacy, whether readability formulas work for local languages, and how audiences are mobilized to identify and advocate for local solutions to local problems.

While the series focuses on health, the advice and approaches recommended within can be applied to other sectors, including agriculture, democracy and governance, and the environment.

C-Bulletins are easily digestible and modeled after a series of technical bulletins called *Guides for Planning and Developing Your Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drugs Prevention Materials* by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. They provide a complement to *C-Modules*, a systematic step-by-step process to SBCC (http://www.c-changeprogram.org/focus-areas/capacity-strengthening/sbcc-modules).

How Does Literacy Influence SBCC Materials Development?

Literacy goes beyond the capacity to read, write, and perform basic numeric skills. It includes health literacy, technological literacy, cultural and media literacy, and other skills: a complex set of abilities that allow people to understand and use the dominant symbols and systems of a particular culture for personal and community development.

Materials that are conscious of literacy issues often try to make information more palatable for different audiences. While giving people information and increasing knowledge are important for behavior change, neither alone has proved to be sufficient. A considerable body of evidence demonstrates that major determinants of health and illness form a complex web of social, psychological, and structural interactions. It also confirms the following facts about human behavior:

- People give meaning to information based on the context in which they live.

- Culture and networks influence people's behavior.

- People can't always control the issues that determine their behavior.

- People's decisions about health and well-being compete with other priorities.

With these in mind, *C-Bulletins* suggest a variety of formats for SBCC materials and activities and provide advice on suitable illustrations, text fonts, and other practical issues that need to be addressed within a participatory materials development process. By following this guidance, practitioners will be able to increase the quality and usability of SBCC materials for lower literacy audiences.

What's in the *C-Bulletins* Series?

The *C-Bulletins* series includes 10 topics to guide the health communication practitioner in developing and adapting materials for lower literacy audiences. These include the following:

1. Understanding Literacy, How Adults Learn, and What This Means for SBCC Practitioners

2. SBCC Material and Activity Formats for Audiences with Lower Literacy Skills

3. Developing a Creative Brief

4. Using Participatory Processes to Develop SBCC Materials

5. Writing Text to Reach Audiences with Lower Literacy Skills

6. Visual and Web Design for Audiences with Lower Literacy Skills

7. Working with a Creative Team

8. Testing SBCC Materials

9. Conducting a Stakeholder Review

10. Adapting Materials for Audiences with Lower Literacy Skills

Communication**Bulletins**

Resources for More Information

C-Change. 2012. *C-Modules: A Learning Package for Social and Behavior Change Communication.* Version 3. Washington, DC: FHI 360/C-Change.

Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. 1994. *Guides for Planning and Developing Your ATOD Prevention Materials.* Rockville, MD: U.S. Dept. for Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Kickbusch, I. 2001. Health Literacy: Addressing the Health and Education Divide. *Health Promotion International* 16(3): 289–97

Rudd, R., and A. Anderson. 2006. *The Health Literacy Environment of Hospitals and Health Centers.* Boston: National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy and Health and Adult Literacy and Learning Initiative, Harvard School of Public Health.

Street, B., ed. 2001. *Literacy and Development: Ethnographic Perspectives*. New York: Routledge.

Acknowledgments

Feel free to make copies. We welcome the sharing of resources.