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# Designing an Effective Human Trafficking Awareness Campaign: Lessons from Nepal

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## Key Findings:

- Tailor the campaign to the local media landscape, being mindful of access and user friendliness. Consider differences in media access by social factors (e.g., women in Nepal have less access to print media than men) and how different media platforms are consumed (e.g., television programs are more likely to be viewed in a group setting, which may facilitate public dialogue).
- Base the campaign content on real-life stories of trafficking survival, which can be curated through direct interviews and anonymized case notes from local organizations. The information collecting process to ensure the campaign's local resonance must reflect the highest levels of professional and ethical standards.
- Pilot the campaign with relevant stakeholders, testing the length of the campaign, the images employed, the storyline, and platform accessibility.
- Overall, employing stories to transmit facts is more effective than a fact-based campaign. However, when comparing the relative effectiveness of three narrative-based media platforms—graphic novel, radio, and video—no format elicits systematically different outcomes. The lack of a more effective format suggests that the best platform is one that is both accessible and low-cost.



Awareness campaigns are designed to educate the public on important issues that affect society. When knowledge is delivered with accessibility and entertainment in mind, audiences are more likely to shift their attitudes and change their behavior (Singhal and Rogers 2003).

However, what goes into constructing an entertainment-education awareness campaign? This report offers guidance on key considerations to take into account when designing this type of campaign. It also highlights how to create a culturally relevant campaign that can be tailored to multiple media platforms. These instructions are based on lessons learned from The Human Trafficking Vulnerability (HTV) Survey in Nepal, an experimental study that tested the effectiveness of anti-trafficking awareness campaigns in changing everyday attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and behaviors.<sup>1</sup>

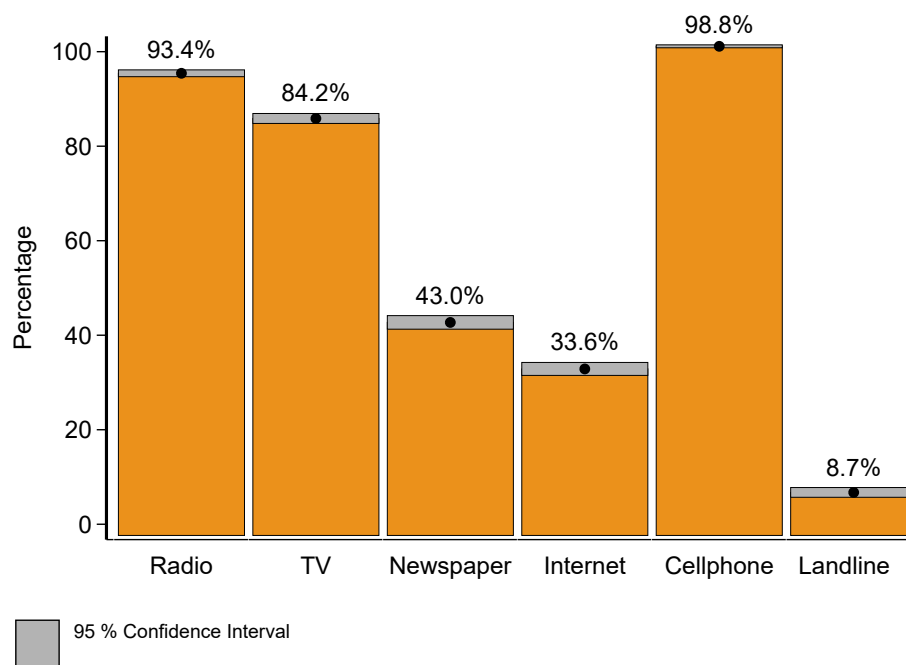
Awareness campaigns are regularly adopted wholesale from one social, political, cultural and economic context to the next. Instead, we advocate for the creation of materials that are tailored to the specific environment in which they will be deployed. To that effect, we provide guidance that addresses pre-production considerations, such as the collection of relevant background data. We also identify each phase of the production process, highlighting how to address potential challenges along the way.

## Understanding the Local Media Landscape

Prior to designing an effective campaign, it is important to collect data on the media landscape of the country. This information can determine which types of media the population can access, and the media platform that is most appropriate for the particular audience. This process should include collecting data on media access and usage, as well as literacy levels.

## Assessing Media Access

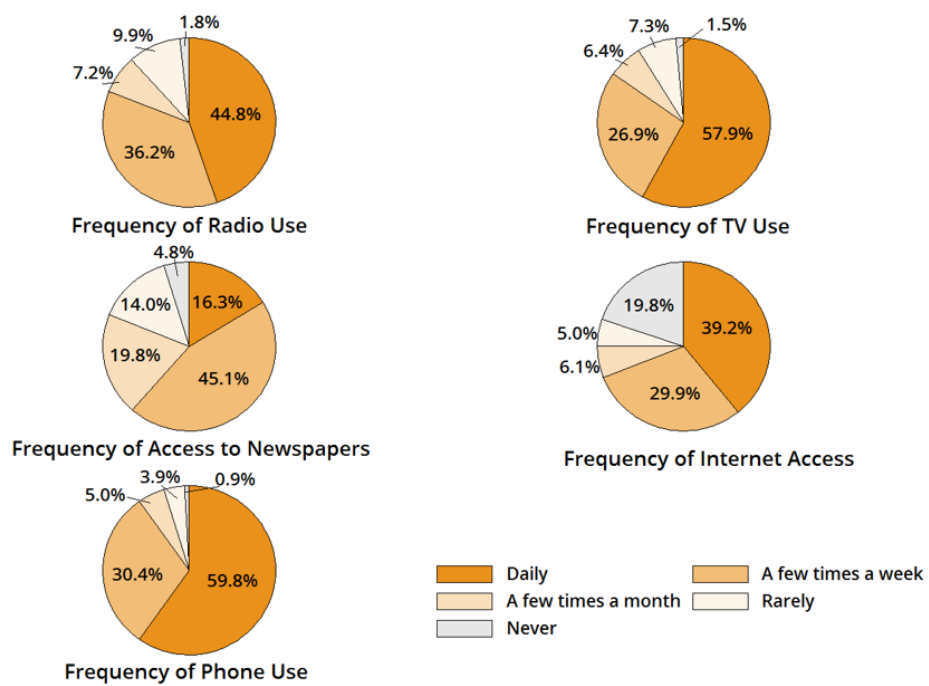
Nepal has a diverse media landscape, with over 15 television stations, 100 newspapers, and 300 officially licensed radio stations (Infoasaid 2011). According to HTV data (see Figure 1),<sup>2,3</sup> radio is the most accessible media platform, with 93.4% of respondents answering that they have access to a radio. Of those, 81% listen to the radio every day or a few times a week (see Figure 2).<sup>4</sup>



Source: Nepal Human Trafficking Vulnerability Study, Wave I (2014)

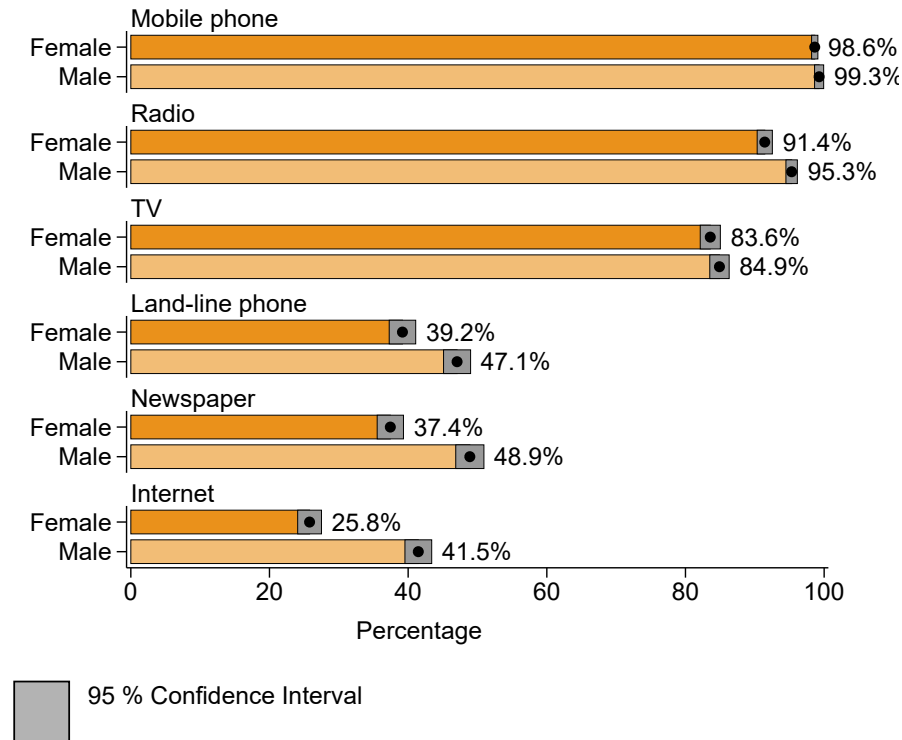
**Figure 1: Media Access**

Media access and usage data can help determine what media strategy to use for a campaign. For instance, access to electricity and the affordability of media devices have important effects on the types of media that low-income and/or remote populations can access. In Nepal, for example, regular load shedding presents a major constraint.<sup>5</sup> It affects access to media that relies on electricity, thus suggesting against the adoption of a television-based campaign.



Source: Nepal Human Trafficking Vulnerability Study, Wave I (2014)

**Figure 2: Media Usage**



Source: Nepal Human Trafficking Vulnerability Study, Wave I (2014)

**Figure 3: Media Access by Gender**

Other constraints to consider are social factors such as gender (see Figure 3). When analyzing media access in Nepal by gender, there is a consistent gender gap regardless of media platform. For example, only 37.4% of women have access to print media, versus 48.9% of men. This reflects a gender gap in Nepali literacy. According to the 2011 census, the male literacy rate is 71.1% and the female literacy rate is 46.7%. If literacy levels of the target population are low, it is important to pursue a media strategy that does not have a heavy print content.

The cost of certain media can also be a constraint. In many Nepali communities, televisions are too expensive to be privately owned, and are often found only in public spaces such as bars and restaurants. That said,

communal consumption of media can actually increase the effectiveness of an awareness campaign. As HTV data shows, consumption of awareness campaigns as a group facilitates public dialogue that can enhance the effects of campaign messaging (Archer, Boittin, and Mo 2016).

## Choosing a Media Platform

Aside from accessibility considerations, different types of media platforms present varying challenges pertaining to message presentation, durability, and cost.

When it comes to presentation, some formats invite more opportunity to present detail and a narrative style of communication. For instance, a graphic novel format has the potential to overlay images and text in a way that visually captures the nuance of extended, multi-faceted conflicts. In the case of human trafficking, survivor testimony can be a powerful tool for advocacy. Radio dramas can foster engagement with realistic stories and sounds, while preserving survivor anonymity, as they contain no visuals. Posters can captivate an audience through the use of compelling images and concise text.

In terms of durability, print media can be permanently left in target areas, do not require electricity to operate, and are always available to read. In comparison, television or radio are dependent on program schedules, signal reception and electricity. That said, they are easily disseminated and unaffected by literacy levels.

In terms of cost, print media can be expensive to produce because it involves printing and shipping costs, and may be logistically challenging to distribute. Costs associated with creating radio and video campaigns can include expensive equipment, experts who know how to use that equipment, and actors to present the material in a compelling manner. Radio and video campaigns might also require the purchasing of airtime.

Below is a description of the process of producing the campaigns and

adapting them to different platforms. Additionally, we provide insights from the HTV study on the cost effectiveness of different media platforms in the Nepal context.

## **Awareness Campaign Pipeline: From Concept to Implementation**

### **Phase 1. Background Research on Local Awareness Campaign Models**

The first phase of designing a good campaign is getting to know the models typically deployed in the target area. Most likely, an audience has seen awareness campaigns before, so getting a sense of what they are familiar with will help produce locally relevant messaging. For instance, the HTV research team partnered with media experts and community organizations, including a professional graphic novelist and a local radio production company.

The team interviewed several directors of communication at international and local anti-human trafficking agencies based in Kathmandu. In these meetings, they discussed awareness-raising strategies, prevalent trends in awareness-raising campaigns, and the potential for new approaches based on the agencies' research, resources, and on-the-ground experience.

Through this process, the team identified the forms of trafficking that are most prevalent in Nepal, as well as common practices employed to combat them through awareness raising campaigns.

## **Phase 2. Developing the Campaign Content**

The next phase involves developing content for the campaign. One approach that agencies identified for developing good content is to base the narrative on survivor testimony and real-life stories of trafficking survival. There are several ways to collect testimony. One way is to interview survivors directly. Such interviews should only be carried out with researchers who are trained to work with victims, and who are abiding by all professional and ethical standards in that process, including securing the informed consent of the survivor about the purpose of asking to hear and distribute their story. When interviews may not be possible or appropriate, local organizations can provide aggregate or anonymized case studies from their own work.<sup>6</sup> The HTV team used a combination of these methods to design the content of the campaigns.

## **Phase 3. Producing a Draft of the Campaign**

Once the case studies review and interview processes are complete, the content can be collated to develop distinct narratives. This can involve turning case studies and interviews, as well as news articles, documentaries, and other secondary source research on human trafficking, into scripts or narrative stories on which to base the awareness campaigns. The HTV team combined material from all these sources to develop six scripts that describe common types trafficking cases in Nepal, without compromising the anonymity of individual survivors who had shared their stories with the research team.

Once the content is developed, it can be adapted to a given media platform. This process involves the refinement of the script to accommodate the limits of a given format. For instance, with a graphic novel, it is beneficial to experiment with the ratio of text to images to take into account different literacy levels: a more literate audience might engage more with greater text in any given image; a less literate one will likely prefer fewer words. Story length can also be adapted to cater to different

levels of education. In the end, the HTV team adapted anti-trafficking messages to four different platforms: graphic novel, radio, audio-visual, and poster.

## **Phase 4. Piloting the Campaign with Relevant Stakeholders**

### **Step 1: Establish a Supportive Audience Network**

To create an effective awareness campaign, it can be helpful to pilot the campaign with a stakeholder audience. This involves developing a list of groups that are willing to participate, producing a sample of the draft campaign to distribute, and setting up focus group sessions to review the campaign. In the case of our study, this audience included the agencies and experts that participated in the pre-production phases, the target audience, women's and minority groups, and groups of trafficking survivors. Piloting with a wide variety of groups is critical to developing a campaign that is effective for a wide audience.

### **Step 2: Gather Feedback from Piloting**

The piloting process is an opportunity to gather feedback on multiple aspects of the campaigns. Focus groups can help test the amount of time it takes to read, watch, or listen to a given campaign. They can also review images, storylines and provide feedback on the accessibility of the media platform. In our case, participants were timed as they read the graphic novel version of the campaign. Then they were invited to discuss the campaign as a group in a structured manner through guided questions. One member of the HTV team led the discussion while another took notes.

When it comes to the media platform, participants may have low visual literacy or different aesthetic preferences and may find certain images confusing or complicated to follow. For example, in some focus groups,

participants noted that close-up drawings in place of written narrative caused confusion. A more illustrative approach, where the drawings reinforced the written narrative, proved more effective.

Piloting feedback can also help refine the script to incorporate more colloquial phrasing, exclamations, and evocative language. For instance, participants may prefer more realistic (as opposed to fictitious) scripts. In particular, stories that feature comments taken directly from interviews produced a heightened level of detail and brought local features to the surface. In our case, more generic storylines were deemed too “foreign,” predictable, and less relevant. This decreased the story’s impact.

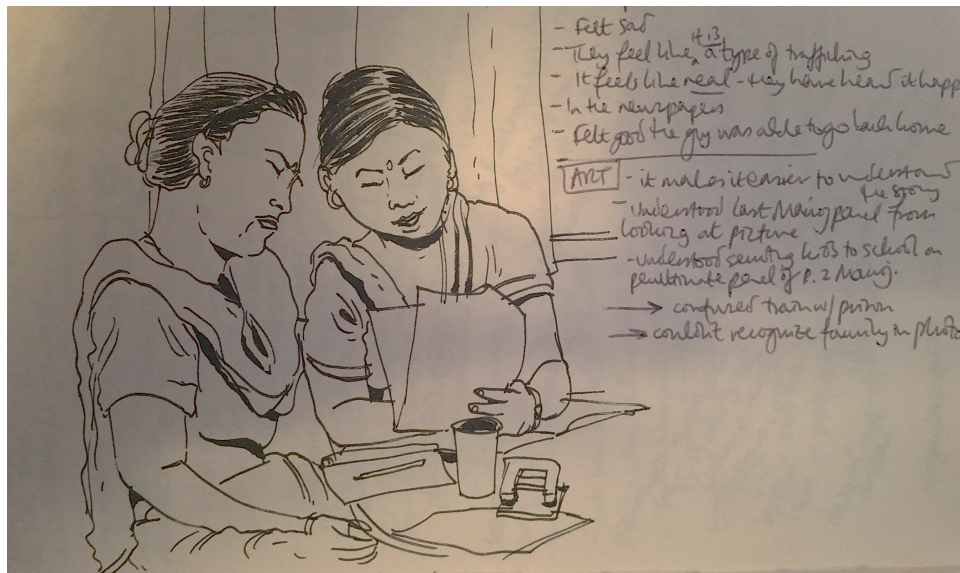
It is also important to consider the cultural relevancy of scripts and images. Piloting can be used to reflect on whether the target audience could relate to the renderings of skin color and dress, as well as the depictions of the physical environment and the characters’ mannerisms.

Given the amount of feedback the piloting process can generate (see Figure 4), it is important to catalogue it carefully. During the piloting process, The HTV team met regularly to consider and weigh the value of feedback from different sources before incorporating it into final drafts of the campaign.

### **Phase 5. Adapting the Final Campaign to Different Platforms: Radio, Video, and Poster**

After incorporating feedback from the piloting process, scripts and drawings can be adapted to different media platforms. For audio-based platforms it is important to work with professional producers (see Figure 5), voice actors, and equipment to ensure high quality audio. Additional text and introductory verbal synopses may need to be incorporated into the script that prefaces the main story, provides contextual information, and lets listeners know what they are about to hear.

A video platform can be developed relatively simply and with limited



**Figure 4: Livesketch of Feedback from a Piloting Session**

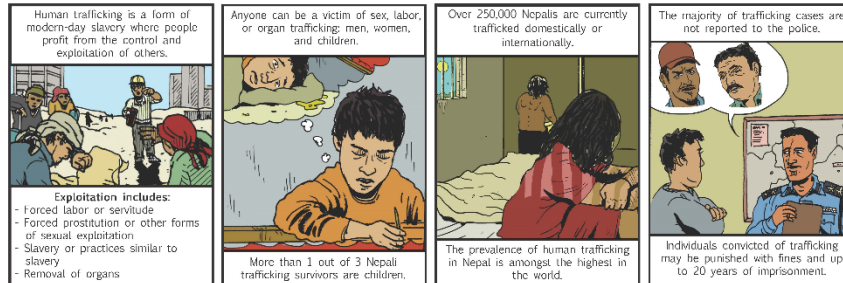
resources if the audio from the radio is combined with the visuals from the graphic novel. Production of this style of video involves editing the audio into smaller sections and matching them to their corresponding panels in the graphic novel artwork using video editing software.



**Figure 5: Recording of Radio Campaign with Professional Actors**

Finally, adapting the images and script to a poster campaign (see Figure 6) involves selecting images from the graphic novel and matching them with information points drawn from the scripts. The main challenge here is to include all requisite facts without overwhelming readers with text.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN NEPAL



## RECOGNIZING THE SIGNS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING



## HOW CAN YOU STAY SAFE?



If you or someone you know might be in danger of human trafficking, send a free SMS to the human trafficking hotline at this number for help:

**6040**

For help, type 1 as your message. For information, type 2.



**Figure 6: Graphic Novel Images and Script Adapted to a Poster**

## Conclusion: Cost-Effectiveness Considerations

We developed and tested four different media formats in our research: a fact-based poster and three narrative-based media (graphic novel, radio, video). The three narrative formats tended to be more effective than the poster, which speaks to the power of stories. However, when we compare the three narrative-based media platforms, we do not find that any format elicits systematically different patterns around human trafficking awareness. The lack of a more effective format suggests that the appropriate platform to select is one that is both accessible and low-cost. In Nepal, radio is the most affordable from both a production and dissemination perspective, and also the most widely accessed media format. As such, we recommend the use of radio narratives when carrying out awareness-raising campaigns in Nepal. That said, the on-the-ground circumstances that lead us to privilege the radio in Nepal may differ widely in other political, economic and social environments, and we urge individuals and organizations that seek to produce effective awareness campaigns in other places to carefully consider the relevant local circumstances in designing the content of the messages they choose to share, and selecting a medium through which to deliver them.

## Notes

1. For a detailed description of the design of the HTV study, as well as more details of the study findings, please see Archer, Boittin, and Mo (2016).
2. These data are drawn from the Human Trafficking Vulnerability Survey, which is based on a sample of the general population of Nepal. The survey was conducted in 10 of Nepal's 75 districts, with eight districts from the Central Development Region and two districts from the Mid-Western Region of Nepal. For more information on this study, please see Archer, Boittin, and Mo (2016).
3. These data are based on the respondents who answered either option 1 or 2 for the following question: do you have access to Radio/TV/Newspaper/Internet/Cellphone/Land-

line? Answer options: (1) Yes, I own one; (2) I don't own one, but I have access to one; (3) No, I don't have access at all.

4. These data are based on the following question: how frequently do you use radio/TV/newspapers/internet/phone? Answer options: (1) Daily; (2) A few times a week; (3) A few times a month; (4) Rarely; (5) Never.
5. These are government-scheduled electricity blackouts aimed at reducing the load on electrical plants.
6. The full list of agencies consulted included Change Nepal, Children and Social Welfare, Child Workers in Nepal (CWIN), The Didi Project, Esther Benjamin Trust Nepal, Himalayan Human Rights Monitors (HimRights), Maiti Nepal, Ministry of Women, National Human Rights Commission, Nepal Youth Foundation, Pourakhi Nepal, Sano Paila, Shakti Samuha, Terre des Hommes, The Asia Foundation, UNWomen, Women Rehabilitation Center (WOREC), and World Education.

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For more information on this study please see the following report, “Reducing Vulnerability to Human Trafficking: An Experimental Intervention Using Anti-Trafficking Campaigns to Change Knowledge, Attitudes, Beliefs, and Practices in Nepal”: <https://www.iie.org/en/Research-and-Insights/Publications/DFG-Vanderbilt-Publication>.

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