

Beyond Mass Media – partnering for change transcript

BBC Media Action worked with partners from non-governmental and governmental organisations in Bangladesh and Ethiopia to improve maternal and newborn health.

We provided communication training and television and radio programmes.

Partners engaged communities where need was greatest.

Dr Jahangir Hossein, Health Programme Director, Care, Bangladesh

And there was a huge crowd that helped to bring more people. At the end of the drama they started some dialogue among themselves and some of the messages that really they internalised and they started talking about it and asking for more clarification.

Collaboration also helped to draw in important audiences who normally might not be interested in women's health.

Marie-Jeanne Hautbois, Country Representative, Terre des Hommes

Especially for the male audience it was really, really very important to get them together and during, you know, two hours all together with the discussion and everything and to really spend some time on these issues. In the discussion we can see many husbands, many mothers-in-law, many parents in general, telling okay from this video in terms of care-seeking behaviour we can think differently.

Partnerships offered the chance for deeper community engagement

Joby George, Chief of Party, MaMoni Project, Save the Children, Bangladesh

We can stimulate the discussion around how some of the existing social norms need to change, so that it's not about individual practice but it's about the whole community agreeing to these practices becoming their norm. The community at large need to feel that delivering at home is no longer acceptable and it has to become a social norm and they need to be encouraging each other.

Partnerships helped activate group discussion needed for change.

Hilina Assefa, Senior Research Officer, BBC Media Action, Ethiopia

The members are acting as a group and trying to do things collectively in the community. They are supporting the community by collecting money and use it for

emergency, assisting people by calling ambulances, by taking people to the health facility so they are acting as a group and trying to raise like collective action in the community.

Working with what already existed helped to embed health communication within health systems.

Andinet Bayissa, Head of Programmes, BBC Media Action, Ethiopia

If you work with existing structures it will be very useful in a sense that it complements the work that health extension workers are doing. In terms of cost we will not be hiring any person to facilitate all the discussions in all the hundred communities that we're operating our listening groups in. Extension workers are very trusted sources for health-related information so it's easier for the community to change their behaviour based on the information they have got from health extension workers.

And sometimes bringing people together around life and death issues can have unexpected outcomes.

Hilina Assefa, Senior Research Officer, BBC Media Action, Ethiopia

I remember one listening group member telling me that he has started calling his wife by her name and telling her sometimes like how much he loved her. So they told us that it has really increased the way they communicate in the household.