



Introduction to public awareness and education:

Key concepts, tools and approaches

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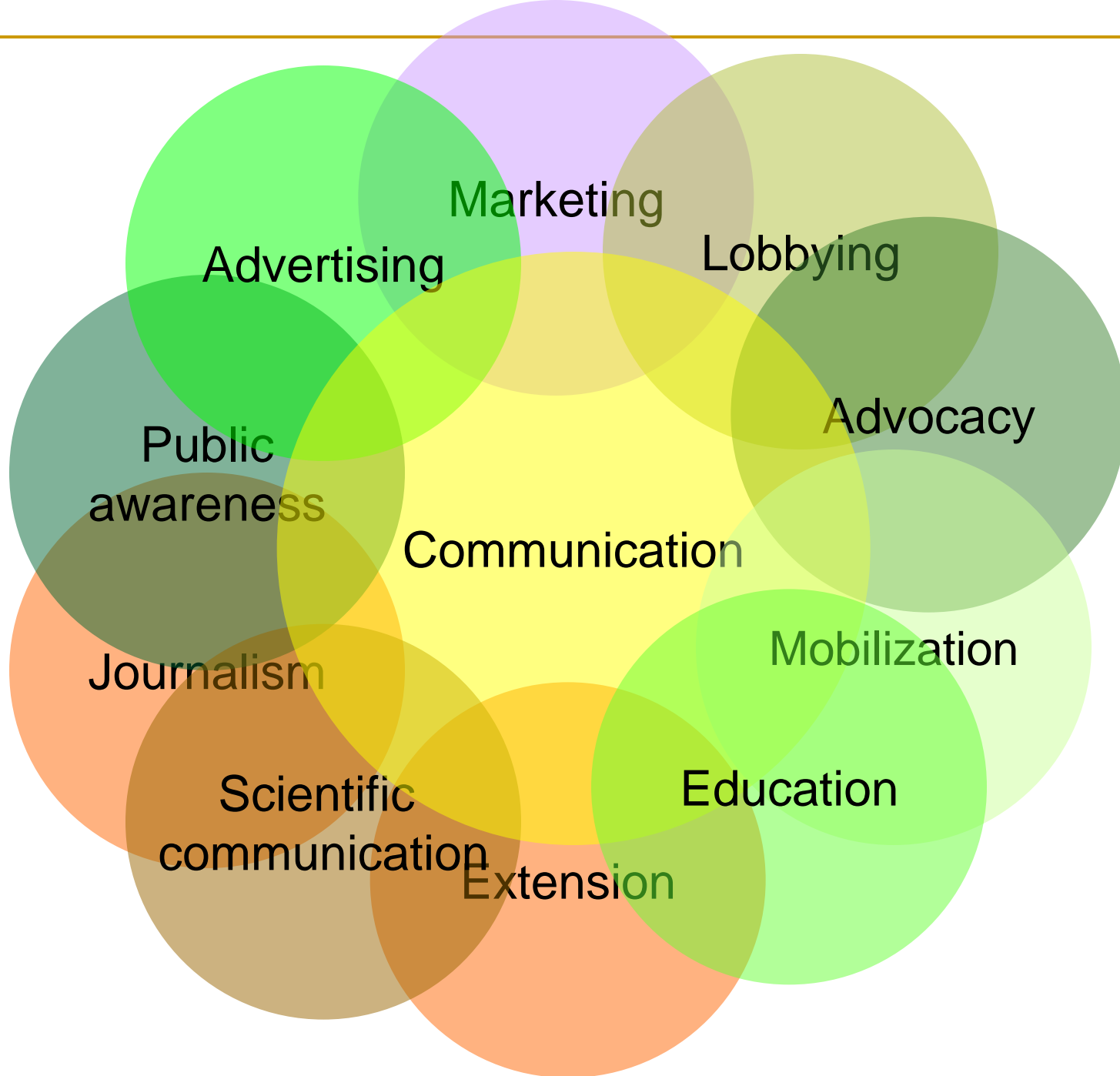
Adopted from Paul Mundy and Bob Huggan

Purpose and scope

- This week:
 - Expose you to the what, why and how of public awareness , education and communications
 - Learn skills of the trade of how to inform, educate, communicate with and engender support and action of the public
 - Learn from each other's experience... good and bad
- 5-day workshop will not turn you into a professional public educator, communicator or extension practitioner
- Degrees in adult education, communication, public relations, etc. take 2-3 years

Related concepts

- Public awareness
- Public education
- Public relations (private sector)
- Public communications (*Communication publique*)
- Public outreach
- Public extension



Public awareness vs public education

- Public awareness = informing, sensitizing, drawing attention to,
 - Seminars, brochures
- Public education = imparting knowledge, know how
 - Workshops, training courses,
- Education is more interactive, 2-way communication

Public awareness



Means of raising public awareness

- Seminars
- Workshops/conferences
- Awareness materials (brochures, posters, videos, etc)
- Exhibitions
- Public awareness events
 - Visitors' days
 - Field days
- Media (newspapers, radio, TV)
- Websites and other internet-based tools

Seminars

- Group discussions with stakeholders on theme
 - Develop common understanding
 - Develop strategy or plan action
 - Improve interaction
 - Ensure participation in decision-making
 - Facilitate identification of problems

Conferences

- Hold conference to transmit org's achievements to selected audience
- Deliver info
- Invite questions and discussion from audience

Exhibitions

- Present activities to mixed audience in various ways with various messages
- Allow interaction with publics
- Inform and get instant feedback
- International exhibitions
 - Introduce org to international audiences, mainly to attract funding
- National exhibitions, e.g. agricultural shows
 - Create general public awareness
 - Attract government support
 - Providing info on org and activities
 - Promote networking
- Local exhibitions
 - Promote awareness among general public
 - Potential or actual beneficiaries and partners
 - Reception foyers, libraries, museums, conference centres

Characteristics of a good display

- Comfortable; space for face-to-face interaction
 - Seats for longer discussions
- Automatic audiovisuals
 - Video, PowerPoint presentations
- Striking feature to attracts visitors
 - A stand full of people attracts more people

Visitors' days (1)

- Gather info on audience
- Develop your message to meet their interests
- Decide how to present message
 - Wall-mounted exhibits
 - Posters
 - Demonstrations
 - Computer displays
 - Video
 - Etc

Public communications/outreach

- Process of informing people about an organisation and its activities
- Basic form:
 - Producing and distributing regular reports
- Also, efforts to:
 - Get media coverage
 - Influence policymakers' decisions
 - Maintain good corporate reputation in eyes of stakeholders: government, donors, partners, clients, other publics...

Aim of public communications

- Project positive image of the organisation
- Improve public understanding of what the org does
- Enhance org's relationships with outsiders
- To maintain good rapport and improve cooperation with the public
 - General understanding and cooperation
 - And for specific purposes
- Build partnerships to achieve mutual goals

Organisational image

- Project positive image of the organisation
- Image = perception of org by various publics
 - Publics in contact with org via **personal interaction, media, word of mouth**
- Outside perception not always accurate
 - Perception creates the image
 - Publics see image “reality”

Improving understanding

- Many publics do not understand what the org does
- Much work is technical or scientific
 - So much public awareness describes work so it is easy to understand
- Form and purpose of public awareness programme varies from one organisation to the next

Why public communications?

- Org needs government support and funding
 - Public awareness important for fund-raising and support from government, the community and other important groups
- Org obliged to inform donors, clients, partners, taxpayers and public
- Org needs feedback to focus work and stay relevant to clients' needs
- Many orgs accused of leaving their work “on the shelf”
 - Public awareness helps outsiders hear about this work
- Inform (potential) partners of org's work
 - Strengthens networking and potential for collaboration

Other forms of organisational communication (1)

■ **Extension and training**

- Inform and educate people about health and nutrition issues, and gain feedback about work the org should do

■ **Lobbying and advocacy**

- Convince government and parliament to change laws
- Influence public opinion about an issue

■ **Fundraising**

- Raise money

Other forms of organisational communication (2)

■ **Marketing and advertising**

- Persuade people to buy products and services

■ **Internal communication**

- Inform staff
- Ensure staff involvement in decisions

■ **Scientific and technical communication**

- Communicate research findings

■ **Networking**

- Exchange info and coordinate activities with partners