ABSTRACT

Objective: To describe the process for developing and implementing a national multi-channel communications campaign, emphasizing mass media, to increase demand and utilization of micronutrient supplements for women and children in Bolivia as part of the national Progama Multisectorial Desnutrición Cero.

Methods: The design of campaign materials and messages was informed by a baseline knowledge, attitude, and practice (KAP) assessment (n=432), conducted in four departments. Findings were used, along with channel analysis, to develop a dissemination plan. Draft materials were field-tested using focus groups with target audiences (caregivers of children 6-59 mo of age and pregnant/lactating women) and modified based on feedback. All activities were carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Sports.

Results: The baseline KAP survey showed variation across different micronutrient supplements and departments, for example any knowledge of vitamin A ranged from 55-100% and any knowledge of therapeutic zinc for diarrhoea or stunting ranged from 10-30%. Television and radio were the preferred channels for receiving health and nutrition information, including on services available. Field-testing of draft materials found generally high acceptance and value of the materials; feedback led to modifications which increased emphasis on enablers for how to conduct the recommended practices. Final materials included television and radio advertisements, roadside billboards, health center banners, and calendars for caregivers.

Conclusions: A branded national multi-channel communications campaign to promote micronutrient supplementation was developed and found to be highly acceptable by the target audience. The campaign was implemented as a demonstration project over a 7-month period and will be evaluated in order to inform recommendations for national scale-up.

BACKGROUND

- Available evidence suggests that micronutrient deficiencies are common in Bolivia, particularly among women and young children. For this reason, micronutrient supplementation for these groups is prioritized within the national Progama Multisectorial Desnutrición Cero (PMDC) or Multisectoral Zero Malnutrition Program).
- Coverage of interventions to provide micronutrients is low or stagnating. There is a need for behaviour change communication to improve awareness, demand, and appropriate use.
- Effective behaviour change communication requires well-crafted and culturally-appropriate messages and selection of appropriate channels to reach the target audiences.

OBJECTIVES

To describe the process for developing and implementing a multi-channel communications campaign, emphasizing mass media, to increase demand and appropriate use of micronutrient supplements for women and children in Bolivia as part of the national PMDC.

METHODS

- The Ministry of Health and Sports (MHS) engaged a private communications firm to develop a branded multi-channel communications campaign for the micronutrient supplementation component of the PMDC. To design the campaign we:
  - Conducted a baseline assessment with quantitative and qualitative components (La Paz, Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, Pando) representing diverse regions of the country to assess relevant knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) of target audiences (n=452 pregnant/lactating women and caregivers of children 6-59 mo of age).
  - Developed specific campaign objectives and designed campaign materials and messages, using a situation

RESULTS

Development of specific campaign objectives and materials

- Situation assessment findings showed variation in KAP and coverage across the different micronutrient supplements, which led to a diverse range of specific campaign objectives and content (Table 1 includes selected examples).
- Materials included visual representation of the cultural diversity that exists within the country, and radio ads were translated to local languages (Quecha and Aymara) for further reach.

Field-testing and subsequent modifications

- Field-testing of draft materials found generally high acceptance and value of the materials, most scored high or very high based on the evaluation criteria.
- Most feedback was either positive and confirmed the form and content of the materials was appropriate, or resulted in relatively minor changes, mainly relating to further clarification or highlighting of enabling information such as how to conduct the recommended practices, and where to get the supplements.

DISCUSSION

A well-branded national multi-channel communications campaign to promote micronutrient supplementation was developed following the principles of social marketing and was found to be highly acceptable by the target audiences. The campaign was implemented as a demonstration project over a 7-month period, and reached an estimated 3.5 million people.

An evaluation is planned to assess the association between campaign exposure (frequency and intensity) and relevant KAP related to micronutrient supplementation among women and caregivers. The evaluation will allow us to understand the potential influence of each communication channel on coverage and appropriate use of micronutrient supplements.

In addition the evaluation will enable us to assess the cost relative to the potential influence of each channel.

Findings will inform recommendations for national scale-up.

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