



Case Study of the Multimedia Project and Social Impact Campaign

“RX FOR SURVIVAL: A GLOBAL HEALTH CHALLENGE”

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This case study expresses the research of Margaret Reilly McDonnell, who served as a consultant to the U.S. Coalition for Child Survival from February 2007 to May 2007. The case studies were developed to help inform the Coalition’s advocacy and communications campaigns to support the U.S. Global Commitment to Child Survival Act of 2007. Please send all comments or queries to Margaret at Margaret_mcdonnell@yahoo.com

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I. BACKGROUND

“If one asks the average American what they think about when they hear the words global health, images of children with ‘flies in their eyes’ in the developing world comes to mind. Global health doesn’t affect them because it happens ‘over there’...Most aren’t aware of the burgeoning, preventable diseases that kill millions yearly...few Americans understand that global health may be one of the most important issues of this century and that in today’s borderless society our health is inextricably bound to others.”¹

Recognizing the value of broadening Americans’ understanding of global health and engaging them in global health solutions, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Merck Company Foundation provided funding to WGBH/NOVA Science Unit and Vulcan Productions to create the multimedia campaign *Rx for Survival*. The campaign producers partnered with *TIME* magazine, National Public Radio (NPR), and Penguin Press “to bring global health and child survival to the forefront of American consciousness on multiple platforms in November 2005,” culminating with the six-part PBS documentary television series.²

A subsequent grant was allocated to launch a “social impact campaign” focusing on child survival, utilizing the resources and expertise of several technical global health organizations. The thrust of the social impact campaign was to encourage engaged audiences to take action (raise awareness, speak out, volunteer, and donate) for child survival.

“By harnessing the power of the media, forging strategic partnerships, and developing grassroots efforts, *Rx for Survival* hoped to seed a long-term legacy of commitment and activism to improve the health of the world.”³

Campaign Objectives: Raise Public Awareness and Inspire Action

As outlined in *Rx for Survival: A Global Health Challenge Multimedia Project & Impact Campaign Case History*, the campaign was based on three guiding principles: to move audiences from awareness to saliency to action, to develop a multi-platform approach, and to serve as a model for partnership in global health solutions.

Rx for Survival had two main objectives:

- 1) Awareness: Educate and Inform
 - a) Create heightened awareness and understanding of global health and child survival and its relevance to American lives.
 - b) Raise the target audience’s level of commitment to “helping developing countries improve the health of their people through U.S. international aid” by 10 percent.
- 2) Saliency: Inspire to Action

¹ WGBH, *Rx for Survival- A Global Health Challenge Multimedia Project & Impact Campaign Case History*, WGBH, November 2006, p 1.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

- a) Increase Americans' commitment to becoming "personally active in improving health of people around the world" by 10 percent.
- b) Build an educated constituency to solve global health problems via short and long-term initiatives.

Despite these goals, there was a lack of clarity and commitment among partners about what *Rx for Survival* should achieve beyond high ratings. Because of the grant's limitations, *Rx for Survival* could not identify a tangible objective or "ask," such as a piece of legislation or an increase in appropriations. Therefore, the activities undertaken were largely focused on the television series and not towards building a sustainable constituency for global health, or more specifically, child survival.

II. LEADERSHIP, PARTNERSHIPS, AND RESOURCES

As indicated at the campaign website, "*Rx for Survival — A Global Health Challenge* is a co-production of the WGBH/NOVA Science Unit and Vulcan Productions, Inc. in collaboration with CARE and Save the Children, and in association with the Global Health Council and UNICEF. Major funding was provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and The Merck Company Foundation."⁴

Leadership

The *Rx for Child Survival* campaign was directed by staff from WGBH and Vulcan Productions and led by WGBH's director of national strategic marketing and Vulcan Productions' vice president and executive producer for media development. The Global Health Council also played a leadership role, utilizing its sub-grant to help organize and implement the "social impact campaign" for child survival.

WGBH and Vulcan Productions established an advisory board, which consisted of senior representatives from Child Survival Partnership, National Council of Churches, the National Academies of Science, Interfaith Alliance, Sherry Lansing Foundation, Oxygen Media, United Nations, Pathfinder International, John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Health, and Morehouse School of Medicine.⁵ The advisory board was utilized for the representatives' connections, expert advice, and publicity.

Partnerships

As the *Rx for Survival* Web site explains, a "constellation of groundbreaking partnerships"⁶ supported the project's vision. Partners were divided into the following categories.

- **Media Partners:** To spread public understanding of the challenges of global health. Partners included *TIME* magazine, NPR, Penguin Group Books, and *NOW*.

⁴ Rx for Survival website: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/rxforsurvival/>.

⁵ *Credits for Campaign:* Rx for Survival website: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/rxforsurvival/credits-campaign.html>.

⁶ *Partners:* Rx for Survival website: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/rxforsurvival/>.

- Educational Partners: To ensure that global health issues become a topic of study at American colleges and universities. Partners included the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.
- National Mobilization Partners: To ensure that the “right message got to the right people at the right time.” Partners included the Global Health Council and UNICEF.
- International Fulfillment Partners: to ensure that private donations were allocated to organizations operating in the field and were used to implement health interventions; CARE and Save the Children.
- Outreach Partners: to inform their members about the need to learn and do more about global health; American Academy of Pediatrics, American Public Health Association, CORE Group, Girl Scouts of the USA, Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI), National Public Health Information Coalition, Pan American Health Organization, Rotary International, The United Nations Association of the USA and the US Coalition for Child Survival.
- Community Coalitions: to establish partnerships between local public television station and community groups, such as PTAs, county health departments and Girl Scout councils, to develop grassroots activities to inform, educate and motivate members of their communities about *Rx for Child Survival*; 21 community coalitions throughout the U.S.

Resources

It is difficult to access the extent of resources dedicated by each partner organization to *Rx for Survival*. According to one interviewee, partners were trapped in a “prisoner’s dilemma,” wanting to be associated with the initiative yet not willing or able to devote many resources or employee time. This perpetuated a lack of ownership or united front among partners. Moreover, some of the leading partners lacked the grassroots organizing infrastructure or advocacy experience to mount a successful social impact campaign.

III. RESEARCH TO IDENTIFY SALIENT MESSAGES AND TARGET AUDIENCES

Under the Gates grant, extensive research was conducted to determine the existing awareness of global health, to identify salient messages, and to segment target audiences. Qualitative research was tested on 12 focus groups to gauge core values and attitudes about global health issues and impact campaign themes, activities, and branding messages (November 2003, March 2004, Lake, Snell, Perry). Additionally, 2,000 Americans were surveyed to measure awareness and saliency of global health issues and to segment target audiences into attitudinal and action-prone groups (January 2004, Belden Russenello; Wirthlin). In November 2005, after the PBS series aired, a follow-up survey was conducted with 1,200 Americans to measure target audiences’ awareness and saliency-action change (November 2005, Belden).

Messaging

The major results from the messaging research were: Americans have limited awareness of top international health problems; improving global health is a top priority for international aid (37 percent); many people (27 percent) are extremely interested in getting involved in global health; and people are motivated by moral responsibility (54 percent) and self-interest (42 percent). Another critical finding was that the top messages and programs of interest are preventing deaths of children under 5 (38 percent) and improving families' self-sufficiency (35 percent).

Target Audiences

Based on the research, target audiences were segmented into three clusters.

- “Global Yuppie Doer” (primary target audience): 20 percent of the U.S. population; skews young, female, urban, high education level, more liberal, professional, internationally focused, reliable voter, high levels of contribution/volunteerism, high PBS usage.
- “Community Family Doer” (secondary target audience): 21 percent of the U.S. population; skews middle-aged, white, female, married with kids, high education and income, professional, domestically focused, reliable voter, high contribution/volunteerism, high NPR usage, some PBS usage.
- “Struggling Multicultural Faithful” (secondary target audience): 19 percent of U.S. population; skews female, more African American and Hispanic American, urban and southern, lower education and income, conservative, blue-collar, unreliable voter, high contribution/volunteerism through religious organizations.

Inferences

These findings determined that the social impact campaign should focus on child survival and target the three aforementioned audience clusters. While this research was useful in surveying the awareness, interest, and potential willingness to act among the American public, it did not identify specific child survival messages that should be communicated when reaching out to target audiences. Instead, *Rx for Survival* continued to address the multiple facets of global health and focused on generating momentum and publicity for the PBS television series.

Subsequently, the message about child survival was lost. As one interviewee said, very few people would have finished the television series or left the Time Global Health Summit talking about the “10.8 million children that die every year” or the “simple and proven low-cost solutions utilized to combat preventable diseases.” The agenda was simply too broad and uncoordinated.

IV. STRATEGIES, COMMUNICATION TOOLS, AND TIMELINE

As outlined in *Rx for Survival: A Global Health Challenge Multimedia Project & Impact Campaign Case History*, *Rx for Survival's* execution strategy was two-pronged: a multimedia blitz on air, online, and in print to educate and raise awareness; and a social impact campaign in the community, in the classroom, and on Capitol Hill to engage the public and inspire them to action.

Multimedia Campaign

Through its partnerships, *Rx for Survival* created a strategic two-week media blitz on air, online and in print that culminated with the PBS documentary television series (November 1-3, 2005). Activities and events included:

- Penguin Press published *Rx for Survival: Why We Must Rise to the Global Health Challenge* (October 24, 2005), a companion book that follows the documentary trail of the television series. The book was written by prize-winning health policy, science, and medicine reporter Philip J. Hilts.
- NPR produced a 12-part *Rx for Survival* Series (October 29-November 5, 2005) broadcast across key programs including *Morning Edition* and *All Things Considered*.
- *TIME* published a global health special cover issue (on newsstands October 31, 2005) and the *TIME* magazine family (*TIME.com*, *TIME International* and *TIME For Kids*) provided regular and extensive coverage of global health topics throughout 2005 and into 2006.
- *TIME* hosted the *TIME Global Health Summit* (November 1-3, 2005) in New York City, which convened more than 500 influential leaders to address global health challenges and develop solutions.
- WGBH/Vulcan Productions produced a six-hour documentary television series filmed in 21 countries that looked closely at the most critical health threats facing the world. The series premiered November 1-3, 2005.
- PBS' *NOW* program followed up the three-night series with a broadcast on November 4, 2005 that examined of U.S. global health policy, assessing where it has been and what the future holds.
- WGBH/ Vulcan Productions produced a two-hour PBS special of the series entitled *Rx for Survival: The Heroes*, based on the response from the original series. The special aired on April 12, 2006.

Marketing and Communication Tools

- Spokespersons Brad Pitt, Angélique Kidjo, Andrea and Barry Coleman, and Drs. Ernest Darkoh, Alfred Sommer, Harvey Fineberg, and Nils Daulaire were solicited for the series.
- Major media relations campaigns were launched around the premiere of the documentary series and its special re-broadcast.
- Major press events were hosted, including a press conference at the Television Critics Association Press Tour in Los Angeles and a women’s briefing in New York City.
- Targeted print and online ad campaigns (*O, The Oprah Magazine; Glamour; Newsweek; NYTimes.com; and Salon.com*) were launched, to reach potential viewers.
- Monthly *Rx for Survival* newsletters and customized e-postcards were published, featuring success stories, dispatches from the field, and project news.
- A web and viral campaign was launched and included in-bound site links, online chats, PDA downloadable content, a Google ad grant, and blog ads.
- Cross-promotions with partners were held via weekly partner forums, briefings, and annual conferences; content in members’ communications and websites; and media relations.

Impact Campaign

The “Rx for Child Survival” social impact campaign was aimed at encouraging the public to promote child survival solutions in communities by raising awareness, speaking out, volunteering, and donating. They hoped this would, in turn, influence the classroom, newsroom, and Capitol Hill. The campaign, however, set no specific target date, agenda item, or unified ask.

Activities and Communication Tools for the Community

- Unprecedented partnerships were formed with CARE, Save the Children, UNICEF, and the Global Health Council, and 10 outreach partners to engage members.
- To foster community engagement in global health and child survival, PBS stations established 21 community coalitions to mobilize a diverse constituency and encourage local organizations to host global health screenings, panels, health fairs, and essay contests.
- Faith-based groups were mobilized to disseminate empowering messages and participate in the campaign’s “Month of Prayer” activities for child survival
- University students were recruited to support global health advocacy and engage in campus and community-wide outreach through the newly formed *University Coalitions for Global Health Resources Group*; partnered with Student Campaign for Child Survival

- An e-mobilization campaign, targeted at the “Global Yuppie Doer,” was carried out through care.com’s 5-million- member network of social activists (mostly highly educated women aged 18-50 years). The campaign encouraged a series of daily actions, from visiting the Web site and spreading the word to donating time and money.
- A pro-bono, 12 week word-of-mouth campaign was led by 3,000 “BuzzAgents,” to spark conversation about and interest in “Rx for Child Survival.”
- A 30-second public service announcement on the child survival campaign was produced for major cable operators to air preceding the premiere.

Activities and Communication Tools for the Classroom, Newsroom, and Congress

- An online teacher guide for 7-12th grade students was developed to enable nationwide educators to integrate *Rx for Survival* into their science, social studies, and health curricula. In collaboration with the campaign, the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health developed a global health undergraduate course, which began in Fall 2006.
- The project was presented the at the World Economic Forum in Davos in 2005 and 2006; a global health journalist conference, co-sponsored with the National Press Foundation, was held in October 2005; a 200-page Newsroom Guide to Global Health was commissioned and published; and editorial meetings with news services and seeded global health editorials in key media outlets were conducted, to increase U.S. global health reporting.
- Screenings were hosted on Capitol Hill to present the documentary series and campaign and engage the public and private sectors in galvanizing the will to improve global health. The U.S. Senate was encouraged to designate November the National Month of Global Health.

V. EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF CAMPAIGN

As indicated in *Rx for Survival: A Global Health Challenge Multimedia Project & Impact Campaign Case History*, *Rx for Survival* made significant contributions in raising awareness and inspiring action.

Raising Awareness through Multimedia Campaign

- Multimedia components delivered in-depth global health coverage to as many as 6.6 million Americans. Six-hour TV series: 9.2 million unduplicated viewers in 7.7 million U.S. households; broadcast in 40 countries. “Global Yuppie Doers” reached — viewership by 18-to-34 year-olds was 50 percent higher than PBS’s primetime average. TIME’s global health issue reached 29 million U.S. readers; NPR’s 12 reports reached 26.3 million NPR listeners.
- Marketing generated half billion media impressions that could be tracked. Print, broadcast, and radio media relations garnered 235 million media impressions; web and viral campaign produced more than 23 million impressions; online and print *Rx for*

Survival tune-in advertising campaign generated 160 million impressions while the *Rx for Survival* PSA aired more than 175,000 times and reached 20 million households or subscribers.

- The project raised the target audience (“Global Yuppie Doer”) level of commitment to “helping developing countries improve the health of their people as a top priority for U.S. international aid” by more than 10 percent from 42 percent to 48 percent (January 2004 and November 2005 surveys).
- PBS television series and multimedia campaign won several awards, including a 2006 News & Documentary Emmy for Outstanding Informational Programming – Long Form, a 2006 Global Media Award for Best TV Documentary presented by the Population Institute, and a 2006 Global Health Council Global Health Excellence in Media Award. The series was an International Documentary Association Award nominee; the marketing and impact campaign won a 2006 Public Relations Society of America Silver Anvil Award of Excellence for Public Service; and the Web site was a finalist in the 2006 Japan Prize competition and named a 2006 Webby Award Honoree.

Inspiring Action through Social Impact Campaign

- The project increased American’s personal commitment to “becoming personally active on the issue of improving the health of people around the world” by more than 10 percent from 27 percent to 34 percent (January 2004 and November 2005 surveys).
- The project built an educated and engaged constituency of communities, families, faith-based groups, educators, journalists, and policy influentials. The 21 community coalitions hosted 300 local events, reaching an estimated minimum of 122,000 people in direct face-to-face interactions with the *Rx for Survival* and *Rx for Child Survival* messages.
- The project inspired service-minded youth to take action. Several fundraisers were sponsored by local Girl Scout troops, elementary school classes, and universities throughout the U.S.
- The project raised \$85,577.57 through 704 donations that will be provided to CARE and Save the Children child survival intervention projects in Nicaragua and Vietnam, respectively.
- The project increased media coverage of global health. The National Press Foundation distributed a newsroom guide to journalists and schools of journalism; print coverage of global health increased by 30 percent from 2004 to 2005; and several key editorials that supported key themes of global health and referenced the project.
- The project raised awareness on Capitol Hill. Senator Patty Murray introduced and the Senate designated November 2005 as the national “Month of Global Health”; the *Rx for Survival* Congressional Screening in Washington, D.C. was attended by more than 400

people, including representatives from 61 member offices, 12 key committees, several government agencies, and more than 125 NGOs.

VI. ANALYSIS: BEST PRACTICES AND LESSONS LEARNED

Multimedia campaign

Best Practices: Established dynamic media partnerships; Raised high-profile publicity for global health

Overall, the *Rx for Survival* multimedia campaign was successful in terms of establishing dynamic media partnerships and increasing the profile of global health. The collaborative network of PBS, NPR, TIME and Penguin Books created an impressive media campaign, particularly in the two weeks leading up to the television series. They were also able to attract several celebrities, politicians and philanthropists to engage in various initiatives. Most noticeably, Brad Pitt narrated the PBS television series. The TIME Global Health Summit attracted attendees such as Ted Turner, Bill Clinton, Glenn Close, Sir Richard Branson, Madeline Albright, and numerous senators and congresspersons. Unfortunately, this event was largely symbolic and amorphous in its mission, so it had little substantive impact.

Lessons Learned: Establish sustainable, institutionalized media engagement for child survival; Utilize media to deliver targeted, action-oriented messages

The campaign's marketing efforts and messaging were tailored to garnering an audience for the PBS television series, rather than building a long-term sustainable constituency for public health or child survival. The scope was too broad, as it sought to educate the public about the many facets and challenges of global health. At the TIME Global Health Summit, there were speakers and symposia on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, healthcare financing, child survival, etc. As one interviewee indicated, "we had all the right people in the room, but no focus." Clear messages and action items were not delivered, so audience members, including the media, left informed but not empowered as to what they could do to help.

Social impact campaign

Best Practices: Created 21 community coalitions; Developed educational tools

Overall, the "Rx for Child Survival" social impact campaign was successful in developing relationships with faith-based groups, service organizations, students, educators and journalists. Many wonderful tools were developed to educate and engage the public, including classroom curriculum, games for youth, and Girl Scout badge activities.

Lessons Learned: Determine ownership or commitment of "ask" among partners; Negotiate a specific advocacy or communications strategy; Involve non-technical and outside-the-Beltway partners to develop local bastions of support; Strategize coalitions and grassroots organizing

According to several key players, the "Rx for Child Survival" social impact campaign was limited by several shortcomings. While there was a genuine commitment among partners to leveraging global health and child survival as well as increasing U.S. commitment, it was somewhat compromised by organizational, financial, and territorial interests of the various organizations. Fundamentally, WGBH and Vulcan Productions (the campaign's main grantees) were primarily focused on developing the television series and getting people to watch the show.

This, as well as legal and administrative constraints to how the funds could be used, created challenges in linking WGBH products (i.e. Web site, series) with partner action tools (i.e. advocacy Web site).

Moreover, implementing partners were unable to reach consensus or obtain ownership over their target mission and audience. There was continuous debate over whether the target audience was “within the Beltway” (Capitol Hill and the Administration), “outside the Beltway” (grassroots organizing), or among global health organizations (partner education and mobilization). Partners were not united behind a specific “ask,” such as a piece of legislation or increased appropriations.

The Global Health Council attempted several times to convene a policy group to garner consensus regarding the Child Survival Act. However, such discussions were thwarted and attention was pulled back to the series. At one point, the advisory board decided that they wanted to have a congressional resolution regarding global health passed before the premiere. Vulcan Productions hired lobbyists to push for a resolution, and Global Health Council handled most of the organizing for the Capitol Hill screening. As one interviewee indicated, the Global Child Survival Act was included somewhat in outreach efforts, but got crowded out by other goals, given the limited time and resources.

As a result, the social impact campaign was geared mostly towards the PBS television series, and lost momentum shortly after the series premiere. Additionally, the local coalitions (led by local PBS stations) were hesitant to advocate for donations to the campaign instead of the station itself, thus the options for station participation were limited and the option to select coalitions in targeted specific congressional districts was lost. The result was a campaign that provided little guidance beyond the plea to “raise awareness, talk to your neighbor, volunteer, and donate money.”

VII. INTERVIEWEES

Dr. Jim Sherry, formerly with Global Health Council during *Rx for Survival*; current chair of George Washington University's Department of Global Health. Interviewed in person on February 23, 2007. Contact: jim.sherry@gmail.com or 202-416-0092.

Rachel Wilson, previous Director of Policy Communications at Global Health Council, primary liaison with *Rx for Survival*; currently with PATH. Interviewed by phone on March 5, 2007. Contact: rwilson@path.org or 202-210-6576.

David Oot, Director of Health, Population and Nutrition at Save the Children. Interviewed by phone on March 2, 2007. Contact: DOOT@dc.savechildren.org or 202-530-4369.

Kathy Bonk, Executive Director at Communications Consortium Media Center. Informal conversation on February 12, 2007 and Monday, March 12, 2007. Contact: kbonk@ccmc.org or 202-326-8700.

Dianne Sherman, formerly Associate Vice President, Public Affairs and Communications, Save the Children. Informal conversation on February 27, 2007 and March 12, 2007. Contact: dsherman2407@verizon.net.