



Handout 6.1.1: Common Communication Channels

- **Advocacy** works to mobilize resources and political and social commitment for social change and/or policy change. Resources can include political will and leadership as well as money to fund the implementation of policies or programs. Advocacy aims to create an enabling environment at any level to ask for greater resources, encourage allocating resources equitably and remove barriers to policy implementation.
- **Community-based media** reaches communities through locally established outlets. Such outlets include local radio stations and community newsletters/newspapers as well as activities such as rallies, public meetings, folk dramas and sporting events.
- **Community mobilization** is a capacity-building process through which community individuals, groups or organizations plan, carry out and evaluate activities on a participatory and sustained basis to improve their lives, either on their own initiative or stimulated by others.
- **Counseling** is based on one-to-one communication and is often done with a trusted and influential communicator such as a counselor, teacher or health provider. Counseling tools or job aids are usually also produced to help clients and counselors improve their interactions, with service providers trained to use the tools and aids.
- **Distance learning** provides a learning platform that does not require attendance at a specific location. Rather, the students access the course content either through a radio or via the internet and interact with their teacher and fellow classmates through letters, telephone calls, SMS texts, chat rooms or Internet sites. Distance learning courses can focus on training communication specialists, community mobilizers, health educators and service providers.
- **Information Communication Technology** (ICT) is the fastest growing and evolving approach, with an increasing reach throughout the world. This approach includes digital media such as web sites, e-mails, listservs, Internet news feeds, chat rooms, virtual learning and e-Learning, eToolkits and message boards. Digital media is unique in being able to disseminate highly tailored messages to the intended audience while also receiving feedback from them and encouraging real-time conversations. Social media is a sub-set of digital media, and examples include Facebook, Twitter, Linked In, blogs, eForums and chat rooms.
- **Interpersonal and peer communication** are based on one-to-one communication. This could be parent-child communication, peer-to-peer communication or communication with a community leader or religious leader.
- **Mass media** can cost-effectively reach large audiences through radio, television and newspapers. Mass media campaigns that follow the principles of effective campaign design and are well-executed can have a small to moderate effect not only on health knowledge, beliefs and attitudes, but on behaviors as well. Given the wide reach of mass media and the potential to reach thousands of people, a small to moderate effect size will have a greater impact on public health than would an approach that has a large effect size but only reaches a small number of people.
- **Mid-media** can include posters, brochures and billboards and is typically used in partnership with mass media.
- **Social mobilization** brings relevant sectors such as organizations, policymakers, networks and communities together to raise awareness, empower individuals and groups for action, and work towards creating an enabling environment and effecting positive behavior and/or social change.