# **NEW EXTENDED EDITION**



## A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO COMMUNICATION FOR #GOODFOODGOODFARMING TRIED AND TESTED BY ORGANISATIONS AND CAMPAIGNERS

# WHY Communication Is important

Just imagine how many misunderstandings could have been prevented in history if the sender had spent more effort in clear communication. Clearly a lot! The effectiveness of our communication relies on its ability to communicate complex information on our agriculture and food systems in accessible formats. Success is based on the extent to which a communication campaign is able to get to the audience which absorbs, understands and acts on the message. If your target audience is not addressed in a way that suits them, your campaign might end up having a smaller impact as it could have had!

Communication work might sometimes fall short behind your full schedule, but it is essential to help you reach your political goals through public pressure. Only with protest on the streets and social media, and with media and public discourse debating the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), can we push for the transition of agriculture in the EU and beyond. Targeted advocacy work and communication together form two arms of a strong body moving forward towards the agri-food-system we envision.

Take this toolkit as an inspirational reader to remind yourself how important and fun it is to communicate in engaging ways with your audience!

In this toolkit, we have collected practical experiences and inspirational ideas with which you can spice up your communication activities. We present these examples for different aspects of communication, like work with journalists, on social media but also alliances with like minded others, based on the experiences of civil society coalitions working on agricultural policies in France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Poland.

# CONTENTS

# PAGE 1

2

# PAGE **3-5**

#### WHY COMMUNICATION IS IMPORTANT

#### WORK WITH THE MEDIA!

Example 1: Workshop to get journalists interested in your topics

Example 2: Invite journalists for farm visits

Example 3: Hook up with influencers

PAGE 6

PAGE 7

PAGE **8-9** 

**VOICING DEMANDS TO DECISION MAKERS** Example 4: Citizen's video to mobilise to sign a petition and join a mailing action

#### **EXPLAINING THE PROBLEM** Example 5: Making good infographics

**TELLING A STORY - FIND YOUR HERO!** Example 6: Farmers videos "Growing a better future"

Example 7: What will animals tell us on Christmas Eve?

# PAGE 10-11

#### **BEING FUNNY AND ENGAGING!** Example 8: Meme-Generator

Example 9: Scavenger hunt to raise awareness about farming transition

# PAGE 12-13

## **BUILDING ALLIANCES**

Talk to your network! Example 7: internal monthly newsletter

Talk to your allies! Example 8: Tweetstorm #VoteThisCAPdown

# **LEARN** More

## SOCIAL MEDIA TRAINING

You want to learn more on how to build and strengthen your social media presence? Watch the recording of a social media training we organised with the European Climate Foundation here. Learn about how to gain more followers and outreach and on how to engage decision makers and transmit your messages on social media.

### PRACTICAL GUIDE TO Campaigning

You want to become a campaign expert? "Game on!" summarises the basic steps of designing an impactful campaign and guides you through the process, with practical experiences gained during a European campaign for sustainable production of tropical fruits.

### CREATING EASY AND Powerful Campaign Videos

You want to shoot a video for your campaign, but have no budget for a professional videographer? You are curious to try to animate videos? Then watch the recording of the training "Creating easy and powerful campaign videos". Learn how to produce explanatory videos on a low budget and hear about tips for making powerful campaign videos to get your messages heard.

# WORK WITH THE MEDIA!

Effectively working with the media should be a key aspect of every campaign. To do so you need to:

Find the media and journalists you want to pitch your stories to (e.g. national vs. local media, mainstream vs. specialised media on your topics, digital outlets, facebook pages with many followers, influencers, etc.).

**Engage** with them adapting your story to their interests and needs and pitching it to them.

La nueva PAC, una oportunidad histórica para el mundo rural y la naturaleza (Por Otra PAC - APIA) am 26.10.2020 1 7 4 0 → TEILEN =+ SPEICHERN ...

EXAMPLE 1: WORKSHOP TO GET JOURNALISTS INTERESTED **IN YOUR TOPICS** 

#### What happened and why?

A way of engaging journalists is to invite them to a workshop, where you can present your ideas, concepts and views but also get to know their interests and needs. Por Otra PAC organised an online training in Spain in October 2020, collaborating with the environmental journalism association (APIA).

Around 30 journalists participated in the online training with speakers from Por Otra PAC, trying to show the diversity of the coalition: they invited a farmer, an expert on the links between agriculture and the Green New Deal, a member of a consumer association as well as an environmental journalist, who talked about his experience covering these topics. The purpose of this activity was to strengthen relations with environmental journalists, trying to grow their interest on CAP issues just before the vote on the CAP in the European Parliament in October 2020.

## LESSONS LEARNT

• Try to make a link with stories/issues that are already part of the news. In this activity, the focus was on biodiversity loss, the European Green Deal and rural depopulation, which is a big issue for Spanish media right now.

• Avoid jargon and technical details when dealing with non-specialized media. When doing an activity with journalists, place yourself in their position - what's the news factor in the information we're presenting?

• It's key to find great spokespeople to present the issue.

• It's very difficult to get coverage about the CAP beyond specialized news outlets and requires even more effort.





### EXAMPLE 2: Invite Journalists For Farm Visits

Another way of engaging the media is to provide attractive photo material and experiences on the ground to attract their attention. Therefore, Hnutí DUHA organised a field workshop with journalists. The central aim of the invitation was to show the difference between the landscape with intensive agriculture (without draws, ponds, wetlands etc.) and landscapes that create habitats for insects, birds and other natural wildlife.

In that way they were highlighting the benefits of agroecological farming practices in a vivid and interesting way for the media while giving farmers a direct voice to report about their work, hopes and struggles.

# LESSONS LEARNT

• Journalists are always very busy, so you have to think of ways to make this an attractive offer for them, and make sure they can arrive there without traveling too far.

• You should do farm visits with a small group so that the group has enough time to talk to the farmers.

• When selecting the date for the farm visit, think about the seasons and what you want to show to journalists. During winter, there might not be much plant and animal life on the fields, and it might also be freezing weather.



453.743 Aufrufe • 28.09.2020

58.740 🐠 1297 A TEILEN =+ SPEICHERN

#### EXAMPLE 3: Hook up with influencers

#### What happened and why?

Pour une autre PAC partnered up with the famous French Youtuber Max Bird to produce a video on the impact of the CAP on our agricultural production and food systems. In a very entertaining way and in less than 8 minutes, he explains why the CAP is important and needs to be changed. The video received 440000 views on Youtube and more than 860000 views on Facebook.

The video was created to invite people to participate in an official public debate on the CAP reform, to connect it to other ongoing campaigns and raise awareness on the subject.

Instead of making a video that would criticize the current agricultural system, Pour une autre PAC decided to go against our opponents favorite defenses: blaming the failures of our farming system on the consumers and their choices and claiming that citizens cannot give their opinion on the CAP because they don't know a thing about agriculture and it concerns only farmers.

## LESSONS LEARNT

- This kind of project is definitely the best way to increase our fame. All the communication work done by Pour une autre PAC so far had less engagement than this single video.
- However, finding the right partner, or even getting a response from Youtubers is very hard and took us several months. You don't actually work with the Youtuber but with a production company managing the contract.
- You have to be aware that you could end up with a video which could say things that you will not agree on (this was the case for us). The Youtubers consider themselves as artists and your instructions compete with what the Youtubers want to do and what their followership likes.
- NGOs and coalitions usually take a long time to approve materials. This conflicts with the Youtuber's planning which might settle shooting and sharing of the video months in advance.
- If you don't handle a project like this in a good way, you lose your credibility with other Youtubers: it's a small world.
- After all, this project is not sinecure but is very profitable. If you have the opportunity to do it, do so and make sure that there is an important call to action behind.

European policies might sometimes seem quite far away. Therefore it is important that your supporters feel engaged and can take actions to decision makers directly.

#### EXAMPLE 4:

#### CITIZEN'S VIDEO TO MOBILISE TO SIGN A PETITION And Join A Mailing Action

#### What happened and why?

GFGF made a video with small sequences recorded by citizens, which criticized the status quo of agriculture policies and demanded radical reforms. A pre-given script helped to guide the contributors and to express a shared call to action. GFGF produced the video to raise awareness among people about the damaging CAP subsidies and to mobilise people to sign a petition and participate in a mailing action, aiming to show decision makers that people across the EU demand change. Such videos are suited to show the broad support of your campaign and to help citizens find easy ways to address political decision makers. Find the video available with English subtitles here. Feel free to copy the briefing for contributors and to adjust it for your own project.

# **VOICING DEMANDS TO DECISION MAKERS**

# **LESSONS LEARNT**

• Make sure to define some technicalities beforehand (e.g. sound, format for filming, background) and brief your contributors.

• Plan enough time to do editing (at least 2 weeks).

• Make sure the video does not surpass the limits of social media platforms you want to use (2:20 min. on Twitter, 1:00 min. on Instagram).

• Try to show the diversity of your movement (e.g. cooks, activists, farmers etc.).

• Remember that your contributors are no professionals: rather get more people than needed on board to be able to choose between the sequences.

• Link the video with an easy and accessible option to act e.g. with a petition or mailing action to decision makers. You can also organise a live event on social media to reach out as wide as possible.



# **EXPLAINING** The problem

As a campaigner or advocacy officer you might be well informed about problems concerning our current food and farming system. However, the people you want to inform about the problems might not be fully aware about the problem yet.



Think wisely which information to use and how to inform them about your topic. Infographics might be a good way to make people aware of a problem and increase the number of supporters.

## EXAMPLE 5: Making Good infographics

What happened and why? Coalition Living Earth started a campaign about pesticides, more specifically glyphosate, preparing infographics to inform citizens that do not know much about agriculture and food policy yet about an issue related to industrial agriculture. The aim was to highlight potential ill effects of glyphosate on humans and the environment as well as to explain how agricultural policies have an impact on agricultural practices and food quality.

The coalition connected their campaign with a petition to the Prime Minister on the prohibition of the use of glyphosate for desiccation, amateur use and a call to adapt the agricultural policy in Poland to the requirements of the EU "From Farm to Fork" and Biodiversity strategies.

# LESSONS LEARNT

- Before creating infographics the coalition developed a factsheet and a database of scientific sources to be sure that they were providing proven data. They consulted the texts for the infographics with experts.
- The statistics on social media showed that the infographic which explicitly displayed data concerning the Polish situation was most successful, while information concerning the EU level was less popular.
- Unfortunately, the number of recipients of our campaign did not translate into the number of people who signed the petition within 2 months time. Therefore the coalition extended the period for collecting signatures.
- Style matters: find a style for the campaign that will attract attention.
- Language matters: it is important to approach the topic in such a way that it will be close to people or will evoke some feelings in them.
- Substantiality matters: if you share material in groups/ pages on social networks, you, as the author of the post, must be well prepared for the discussion, especially when the topic arouses a lot of emotions or there is a lot of false information around it.



# TELLING A STORY FIND YOUR HERO!

One key point in communication is the story behind your campaign and more explicitly so, your hero: Who's important in the story? Who can tell the story? Who has an important voice, perspective or symbol for our story? An important step is to find out who could be an example to make the situation we are trying to change more tangible and moving.

In relation to farming, it is obvious that farmers should be among the heroes of our story line, but also beekeepers, shepherds, cooks etc.

#### EXAMPLE 6: Farmers videos "Growing a better future"

#### What happened and why?

Coalitions from Germany, Spain, Italy and Poland together with the European coordination of the Good Food Good Farming campaign produced short videos with projects that farm/ work in an environmentally and socially just way. The purpose of the video was to showcase alternatives to the current food system in crisis, and to urge the need for agricultural policies to support this transition, which is already happening in many corners of Europe.

# LESSONS LEARNT

• Make sure the video is within the usual social media timeframe (i.e. Instagram 1:00 min., Twitter 2:20 min.).

- Personal stories emphasise credibility and urgency of the messages you send.
- Make sure to send clear instructions to the videographers and the interviewees (e.g. to address political aspects sufficiently).
- Define a clear purpose and a clear outcome that relates to a political subject: Why do you interview this person? What message, perspective or knowledge do you want them to share with the audience?
- When translating the videos to other languages (e.g. English), make sure that the translations are well prepared in advance. This usually takes a lot of time!



Not everyone does engage with animal welfare or other issues related to good food and farming on a daily basis. This is why events that concern a lot of people can be a good hook for your campaign.

#### EXAMPLE 7:

### WHAT WILL ANIMALS TELL YOU ON Christmas eve?

The Polish coalition "Living Earth" partnered up with "Stop Industrial Farms" coalition and organised the campaign "What will animals tell you on Christmas Eve?", to address the general public as well as the local communities cooperating with them.

The purpose of the campaign was to increase public awareness about the situation of animals in industrial farms and the need to secure animal welfare. Each day in the campaign was devoted to a different farm animal: cow, pig, chicken, fur animal and fish. The campaign highlights the failures to implement these animals' welfare in industrial farms. For each animal, graphics and postings were prepared and shared on 5 days in a row on social media channels.

# LESSONS LEARNT

• well-chosen timing and context of the campaign: Linking your campaign with popular traditions/ events can draw a lot of attention towards your project. Linking the campaign to Christmas has aroused great emotions and was the element that drew attention to the campaign. Even the EU Agri-Commissioner took part in the discussions.

• well-written posts and graphics: Take care that your posts and graphics are well-written. The Polish coalition gave specific information on the practices applied to a certain animal on an industrial farm to inform the public about the reality of factory-farmed animals.

Caution: Be prepared to handle unfriendly reactions.

Sometimes, it might not be easy to grab social media attention. Emotional or funny communication can be a way of attracting notice online and participatory formats can increase your outreach. Consider:

# BEING FUNNY AND Engaging

People are flooded with written information all the time, so come up with something new and unusual, and tend to use more visual communication than pure texts.



### EXAMPLE 8: Meme-generator

#### What happened and why?

Wir haben es satt! built a meme generator to target the German Minister of Agriculture, Julia Klöckner. They took a whole series of classic memes as templates and mounted Julia Klöckner's head on the various motifs and included photos of Julia Klöckner as meme templates. The meme generator went online with about 20 graphic templates and a whole catalogue of HIER KANNST DU SELBST EIN KLÖCKNER-MEME ERSTELLEN: kloecknermemes.de

scandalous political decisions of the minister as background information.

In a concerted action with several organisations and movement actors, WHES launched a 24-hour meme wave under the hashtag #Klöckner-Fail, in order to draw attention to deliberate blockade actions which hinder the necessary shift in policies.

# LESSONS LEARNT

- This kind of political satire is polarising. If you are planning to include memes in your communication, you need to plan beforehand how to react to negative feedback. WHES was confronted with criticism that perceived the action as too radical or personally assaulting.
- When using meme templates you should be aware if these memes could be framed/ (miss)understood in another way than you intended.
- Dare! The contested nature of such actions is a factor that creates publicity and should not hastily be regarded as counterproductive.
- It is a good way to address politicians directly and get their attention because they are attached to their public image.

# AKTION SCHNITZELJAGD

#SeedbombChallenge

Bringt eure Stadt zum Blühen! Mit Samenbomben für Artenvielfalt.

### **EXAMPLE 9:** Scavenger Hunt to Raise Awareness about Farming Transition

It can be hard to engage the general public for your purpose – especially in times of a pandemic. But it also offers room for you to get creative! You can plan a scavenger hunt for your target audience! The German campaign coalition "Wir haben es satt!" organised the "Action scavenger hunt: On the trail of the food revolution", which invited their followers on a journey to find out what a sustainable food system looks like.

They developed a participatory and multi-level online participation format, which consisted of 5 different challenges that the participants had to master offline in a small group of friends over a weekend, e.g. organise a picnic with sustainable ingredients or throw a seed bomb to make their city bloom. Empowering images and language linked fun, enjoyment and nutrition as the central motif of the action.

"Wir haben es satt!" deliberately avoided "scandal communication" and focused on positive and motivating language and images.

A central goal: The participants were supposed to document the completion of the scavenger hunt on Instagram or TikTok, using the hashtags provided.

## LESSONS LEARNT

• The hybrid character mixing onand offline elements brought together fun and entertainment with political protest. This kind of "protestainment" is a new and successful way how you can engage new people.

• The scavenger hunt offers you to directly link different individual topics (cheap meat, biodiversity, corporate power, etc.) and to capture the breadth and diversity of the protest movement. This allows you to involve partners or members with different interests.

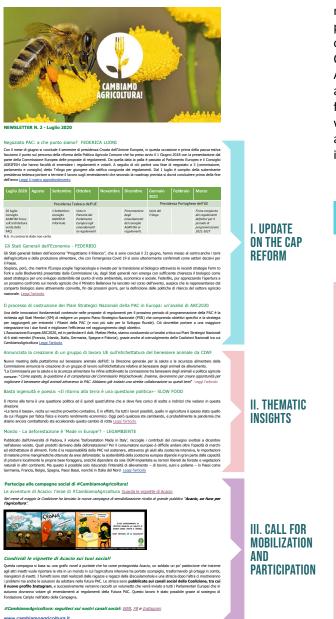
• To guide and mobilise well you need to create a lot of graphic and video material and possibly also send out packages with materials for the scavenger hunt, which is time consuming. You should plan well ahead, being aware how much time you have to prepare this.



# BUILDING ALLIANCES

#### **TALK TO YOUR NETWORK!**

Civil society coalitions assemble a diversity of organisations willing to work together and form a strong, joint voice. To keep them dedicated, it is important to have regular and clear internal communication.



The more people and organisations feel involved, the more they get active and spread the message.

## EXAMPLE 10: INTERNAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

#### What happened and why?

The Italian coalition is formed by more than 70 subjects of different kinds (like associations, committees, farms, etc.) and level (from local to regional and national), coordinated by a direction table of 14 associations. The coordination group noted a low level of participation of many of its members in lobbying and advocacy activities.

To mobilize and inform all, they created a monthly newsletter addressed to all member entities which is also published on the website. Each newsletter issue is composed of a first part that reports an update on the CAP reform, with links to in-depth articles on the website. A second part provides thematic insights with specific articles related to the CAP reform and Agroecology, and finally a last part presents campaign initiatives underway with an invitation to participate. The coalition asks all associations to provide insights and ideas, which can be included in the newsletter.

# **LESSONS LEARNT**

• The newsletter was very appreciated by coalition members who often shared the newsletter with their own members.

· Many associations have been more active in recent campaigns, especially during the days of the reform vote in parliament. Some of them also asked to organise some events in collaboration with the coalition's coordination.

• It is better to use a specific program or server to send the newsletter, so as not to risk that the newsletters are considered as junk mail. We also want to improve the way of sending (from a specialized server) and the graphics.

• In addition, it would be appropriate to provide graphic material that associations can share with their members, designed specifically for the public.

• To make sure you reach the right people inside your member organisations you need to collect the relevant email addresses not only the generic info@xxx.org

amoagricoltura.it

#### **TALK TO YOUR ALLIES!**

Our communication gets stronger when we team up with others. Relations to other initiatives, organisations or movements can be the "glue" allowing us to build a bigger outreach and a message backed side by side by consumers and farmers.

### EXAMPLE 11: Tweetstorm #votethiscapdown

#### What happened?

During the plenary vote on the CAP reform in the European Parliament in October 2020 Good Food Good Farming exchanged with the climate strike movement Fridays for Future (FFF) and joint forces for a twitter storm asking Members of the European Parliament to reject the amendments on the CAP reform watering down environmental and social ambition. With FFF groups, organisations and individuals joining, the hashtag #VoteThisCAPdown went viral on Twitter in various EU countries.

# #vote this CAP down

## LESSONS LEARNT

• As allies we can act together coordinating our efforts without doing the same actions, but to be visible as aligned forces, in this case with a joint hashtag #VoteThisCAPdown.

• Alliances are a long-term effort. The cooperation needs to grow over time to be ready to act when the moment comes, and all actors need to be informed well and in time so they can prepare their social media accounts and brief their communication colleagues etc.

• You can make it easier for possible allies to join if you offer them ready to use visual material and messages for their social media account in a short and concise briefing.









## COMMUNICATION TOOLKIT

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO COMMUNICATION For #goodfoodgoodfarming Tried and tested by organisations And campaigners

#### **AUTHORS:**

Ronja Dietschmann | Verena Günther Good Food Good Farming

#### **CONTRIBUTIONS FROM:**

Zuzana Dynková, Hnutí DUHA | Friends of the Earth Czech Republic; Maud Lebeau, Pour une autre PAC; Federica Luoni, Lipu | CambiamoAgricoltura; Guillermo Prudencio Vergara, Por otra PAC; Agnieszka Makowska, Koalicja Żywa Ziemia and Daniel Knopp, Wir haben es satt!

> Find out more on Good Food Good Farming: www.gfgf.eu





#goodfoodgoodfarming EUROPEAN DAYS OF ACTION

www.gfgf.eu