A Novel Caribbean Campaign for NCD Awareness

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Healthy Caribbean 2012: Rallying for Action on NCDs
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Mobile phones in advocacy and education

www.healthycaribbean.org
Who we are:
Healthy Caribbean Coalition (HCC)

- An indigenous, Caribbean NCD alliance of civil society organisations
- Established following a civil society led conference on chronic diseases: Healthy Caribbean 2008 – a Wellness Revolution
- Run entirely by volunteers
- Limited funding from corporate partners
A Novel Campaign

- In March 2011: the Healthy Caribbean Coalition launched a novel NCD advocacy and education initiative, the **Get The Message (GTM)** campaign, in 15 Caribbean Community (CARICOM) member states and two associate territories.
Aims

- To raise awareness and support for the United Nations High Level Meeting on NCDs
- To develop an NCD advocacy initiative that would inspire young people to become involved
- To develop a catalyst for the strengthening of the capacity of the HCC
- To demonstrate the ability of civil society to come together to respond to a major health issue
Objectives

- Engage and educate Caribbean people about NCDs, the high prevalence of these diseases and the impact of unhealthy lifestyles
- Educate on the need for a "whole of society" and "whole of government" approach to NCDs
- Initiate & foster conversation about NCDs and healthy living
- Provide a positive forum for communication about NCDs among the youth
Objectives

- Inspire a popular ‘people’s movement’ to agitate for change that leads to a decline in common risk factors for NCDs: tobacco exposure, excessive alcohol use, unhealthy diets and physical inactivity.
- Obtain regional support for Caribbean leaders attending the Summit.
- Actively encourage Caribbean leaders to aggressively address risk factors for NCDs and to structure effective health systems for care.
Target Audience

17 Caribbean Countries
Challenges

- Introduce the concept of NCDs in territories with different cultures, backgrounds, languages and literacy rates
- **Overcome the foreignness of advocacy and empowerment**
- Introduce the concept of using mobile phone technology for advocacy
- **Educate about the UNHLM and its importance**
Challenges

- Set realistic targets, given no regional or international precedents for the campaign
- Design messages and determine the strategy to reach each audience
- Manage small numbers of volunteers in each in-country team
- Attract corporate partners willing to participate despite little financial benefit
Partners

- Two major regional mobile phone providers with a combined customer base in excess of 10 million subscribers
- A traditional media network
- A major regional health insurance company
- WHO/PAHO in partnership with the HCC
Strategy

- SMS/text messages sent via mobile phones act as an electronic signature
- SMS/text blast messages received from mobile phone providers encourage participation
- Support from traditional media (T.V., print, radio)
- Public service announcements (PSAs): 5 educational and 1 advocacy PSA
Strategy

- “Text-a-thons”
- Press releases
- Social media; to generate a campaign ‘buzz’
- Posters, Stickers, Flyers, T-shirts
- Community events
Strategy

- 160 character text blasts sent to mobile customers
- Simplest possible form of statement of advocacy: SMS/text “Yes”
- SMS/text sent to specific campaign short codes created and activated by service providers
- Auto response generated
- All text messages FREE of cost!
Logo and Slogan

Get the Message
Text the Message
Be the Message
A Message For Every Audience

- Campaign partners used internal intranets and other media to encourage staff and customers to send SMS/text messages.
- Regional health journalists attending a PAHO/CBU conference encouraged to cover NCDs and the GTM campaign.
- Organizations e.g. hospital in Antigua, actively encouraged staff texting.
- Visual campaign material shown on multimedia screens during regional and international events.
Images
Haiti – “For Everyone”

- Campaign translated to Haitian creole including PSAs
- Educated people on NCDs and mobile phone advocacy in an environment of low literacy
- Truck with loudspeaker, emblazoned with the logo ‘Di Tout Moun’, encouraged people to text
## Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERRITORY</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
<th>Country Target</th>
<th>% to Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anguilla</td>
<td>4,036</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>807.20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Antigua</td>
<td>33,335</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>333.40%</td>
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<td>Barbados</td>
<td>98,744</td>
<td>35,000</td>
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<td>BVI</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>500</td>
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<td>Cayman Islands</td>
<td>1,610</td>
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<td>Dominica</td>
<td>9,648</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>77.20%</td>
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<td>Grenada</td>
<td>28,381</td>
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<td>283.80%</td>
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<td>Guyana</td>
<td>39,252</td>
<td>100,000</td>
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<td>Haiti</td>
<td>95,539</td>
<td>500,000</td>
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<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>47,423</td>
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<td>Montserrat</td>
<td>7,348</td>
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<td>1469.60%</td>
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<td>St. Kitts</td>
<td>14,659</td>
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<td>293.20%</td>
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<td>St. Lucia</td>
<td>14,688</td>
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<td>146.90%</td>
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<td>St. Vincent</td>
<td>14,163</td>
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<td>113.30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Suriname</td>
<td>47,646</td>
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<td>47.60%</td>
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<td>Trinidad</td>
<td>2,891</td>
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<td>2.90%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turks &amp; Caicos</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>500</td>
<td>139.00%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALS</strong></td>
<td>460,091</td>
<td><strong>1,000,000</strong></td>
<td><strong>46.00%</strong></td>
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Factors influencing territory response

- Size of the campaign team relative to the size of the target audience
- Strength and motivation of the local campaign team
- Support from other media
- Number of text blasts sent out in specific territory
Lessons Learned

- A realistic time frame for achieving objectives is critical.
- Need to identify key decision makers among partners at an early stage and set clear roles for partners.
- Do not step outside of your area of expertise. E.g. let mobile phone partners with greater experience create text blast messages.
- Achieve buy-in from regional NCD alliance partners not accustomed to working together.
Lessons Learned

- Need to develop strong, motivated in-country teams of volunteers
- Free SMS/text message is critical to success
- Data must be reported in a timely manner. Reporting should be controlled by the campaign and not service providers.
- Mobile phones CAN be used as an effective tool for advocacy and education with respect to NCDs!
Beyond the UNHLM

- Establish GTM as a specialized advocacy division of the Healthy Caribbean Coalition
- Purchase a mobile network system with unique short code(s) to be used continuously
- Member NGOs would have an opportunity to use mobile phones for advocacy, education and to raise charitable support
- Develop a powerful NCD lobby that can influence Caribbean political structures