
Risk = hazard + outrage: Implications for COVID-19 vaccination programmes and a guide to health communication moving forward

The health communication momentum: How do we accelerate?

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Outline

- Introduction to WHO in the Western Pacific Region
- WHO's approach to communications
- Response to outbreaks and emergencies including COVID-19
- COVID-19 vaccine communications
- Health communication in the Western Pacific moving forward: C4H

Our work

- The Western Pacific is one of six WHO Regions. It is home to around 1/4 of the people on Earth.
- Working with **37 countries and areas**, through **1 Regional Office and 15 country offices**, we are uniquely placed to help countries deal with the array of 21st Century public health challenges.
- Our remit includes:
 - Building health systems for all
 - Fighting communicable diseases
 - Tackling noncommunicable diseases
 - **Speedy response to outbreaks and emergencies**
 - Tailored support for the Pacific
 - Health at the heart of the global development agenda



Communication for Health (C4H)

C4H harnesses the power of communication as a tool for health.

C4H - communication principles and processes that **inform and change** attitudes and behaviours for defined **public health outcomes** at the individual, community and societal levels.



C4H is all about health IMPACT



Informed by data and theory



Measurable



Planned



Audience and people-centred



Collaborative



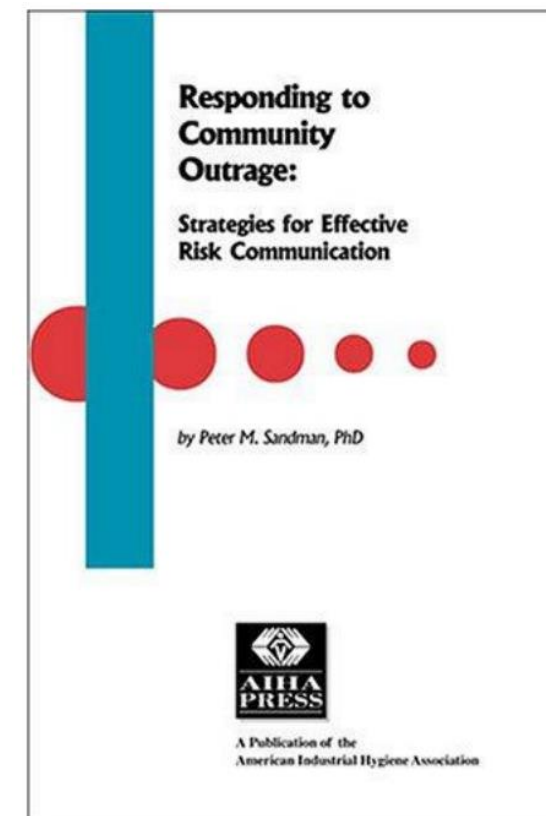
Targeted

Communicating in emergencies

- Understanding **risk perception**
- **Perception = reality**
- Sandman's organizing principles:
 - The size of the hazard
 - The level of outrage or anxiety produced by the risk

Risk = hazard + outrage

- **Factors in perception**, for example:
 - Is the hazard voluntary or involuntary?
 - Familiar or unfamiliar?
 - Seen as fair or unfair?
 - It is memorable or not memorable?
 - Can I trust you or not?



COVID-19 vaccine communications challenges

Volume of information –
infodemic management

Sensationalized stories
and broadcasting about
side effects and major
adverse events

Rapidly evolving
evidence/data

Prioritization for vaccine
roll-out for general public,
healthcare workers and
elderly (WHO SAGE
Priority Roadmap)

Balancing **vaccine
demand** and information
sharing about **supply**
(managing uncertainty)

Apathy/fatigue and **loss
of confidence** and/or
trust in vaccines, govts,
institutions, science, etc

Applying the Communication for Health (C4H) approach to COVID-19 vaccine communications

From the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, WHO in the Western Pacific applied the Communication for Health (C4H) approach to its own response and the support provided to Member States:

- Developed a **regional communication strategy to encourage uptake of vaccines and continued compliance with protective measures** grounded in C4H principles
- **Evidence-based through research and multi-source social listening** to shape strategy and messages
- **Message testing** to ensure content resonates with target audiences
- **Partnering with trusted voices and targeted communication** through channels that best serve the needs of target audiences
- **Storytelling** to highlight the human impact of the pandemic and encourage appropriate actions to reduce risk
- **Measurement, evaluation and learning (MEL)** to identify lessons and fine-tune and adapt plans / activities



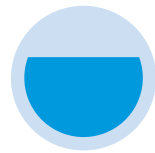
COVID-19 vaccination communications strategy

Overarching Communications Outcomes

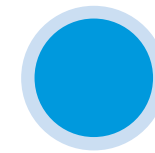
People in the Western Pacific Region:



Understand and feel confident in countries' approach to rollout of COVID-19 vaccines (incl strategy for prioritization)



Maintain trust in and demand for COVID-19 vaccines and routine immunization



Understand the importance and **adhere to other protective health behaviours**

Communications objectives



Build public knowledge and awareness



Enhance confidence around COVID-19 vaccines

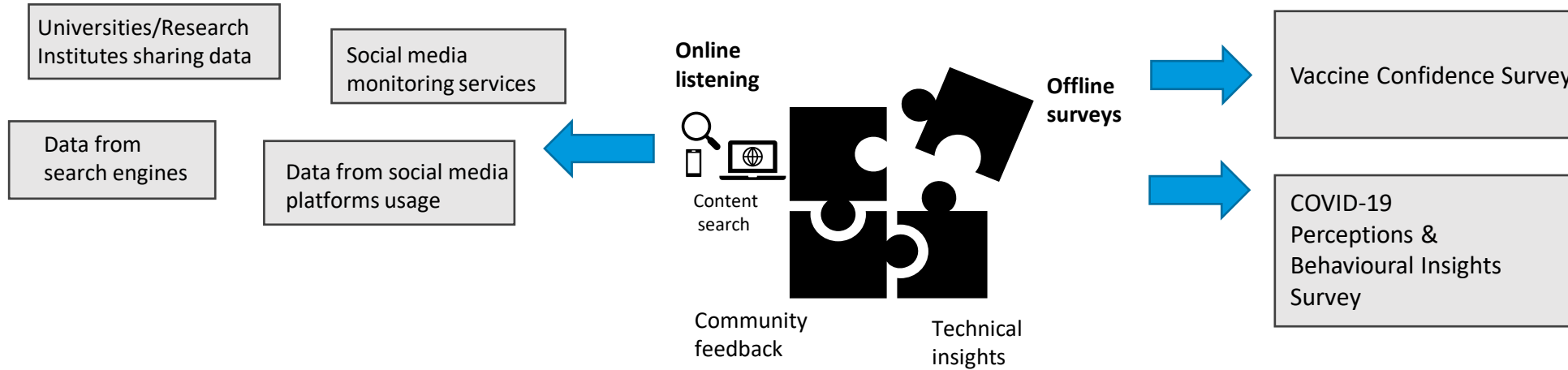


Underline the need for continuing public health measures



Reinforce support for routine immunization

Social listening from multiple sources



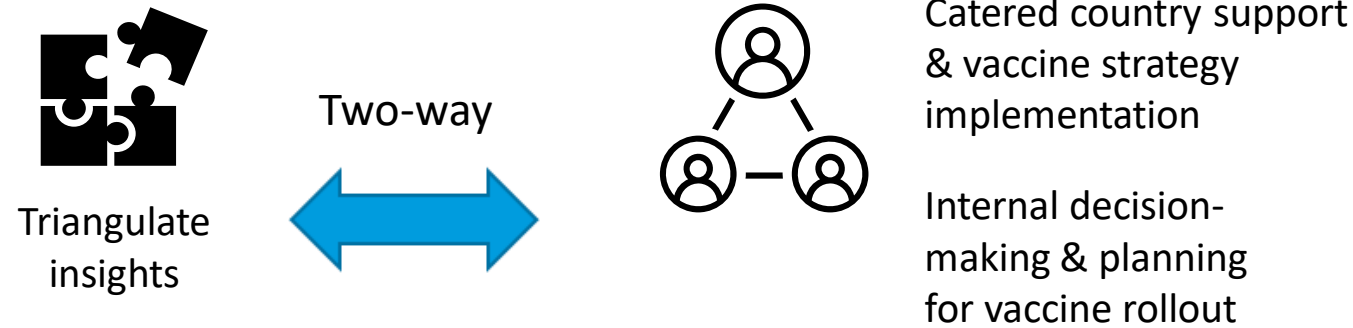
What do people understand about vaccines and where are the gaps?

What are they thinking and feeling about vaccination – what concerns are there to address?

What do people believe about vaccination – is there misinformation to address?

Are people getting vaccinated/boosted – what should we focus on to motivate vaccination?

Use of behavioural insights



The goal



Listen to **diverse voices**, incl vulnerable and marginalized groups



Analyse the **most pressing issues** communities face that may impact behaviours and perceptions



Triangulate data - map and fill **needs and gaps** in what people are thinking, feeling and experiencing

Vaccine safety and building trust



Social listening can assist vigilance about detection and reporting of adverse events following immunization (AEFIs)

WHO provided crisis communication support to WHO country offices for adverse events following immunization (AEFIs) – early communication and transparency.

... as well as helping to manage mis/disinformation and information integrity

Vaccines are safe and offer the best protection from diseases. Health emergency response is only effective when science and knowledge reaches, is understood, owned, trusted and used by communities. We need to collectively improve the quality of health information available to the public.



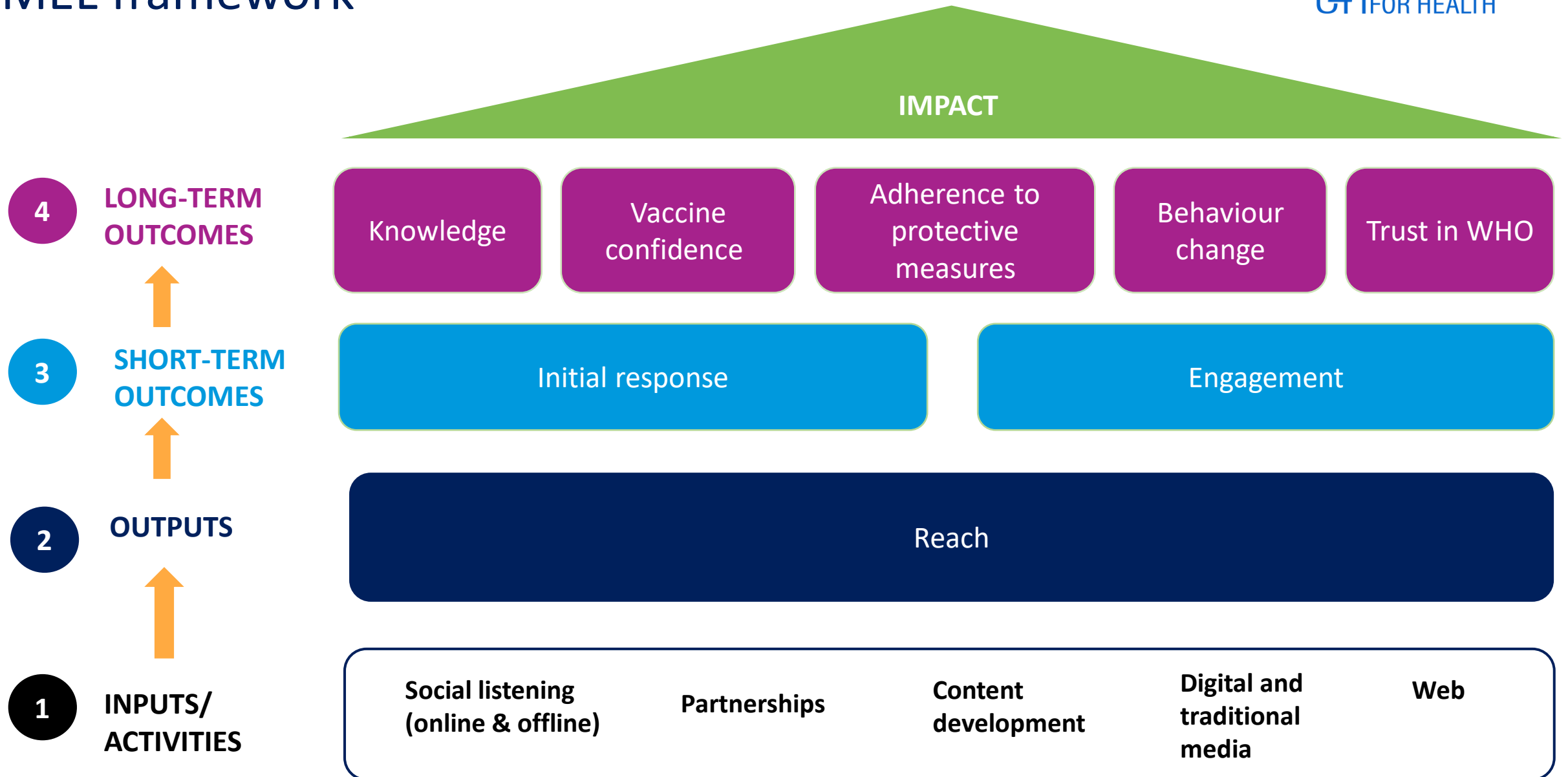
Message testing supports developing messages that resonates with target audiences

We used a third-party to conduct short online surveys (small-scale n<300) to test different messages to build trust in COVID-19 vaccination including boosters, and address concerns about vaccine effectiveness and side effects. This included how to phrase messages as part of the sustained management of COVID-19 and continuing to maintain trust in vaccines in the context of concerns about variants.

Managing mis/disinformation and information integrity



MEL framework



What we've learnt through MEL

KNOWLEDGE OF PROTECTIVE MEASURES

High level of knowledge about COVID-19 protective measures, including vaccination, however, there is a steady increase in the percentage of people who believe in rumoured means of protection + also interest in how to check and verify COVID-19 info (social media)

COVID-19 VACCINE CONFIDENCE

Acceptance of COVID-19 vaccines is high, however, there are ongoing concerns, confusion and worry about vaccine safety and side effects, especially among the hesitant

HIGH LEVEL OF TRUST IN WHO

WHO ranked either 2nd or 3rd most trusted source of information across all surveyed countries

COVID-19 related knowledge, adherence to protective behaviours and confidence in vaccines is higher among those who were exposed to WHO content compared to those who were not

➤ *These findings indicate potential contribution, no claims of causality.*

Country COVID-19 vaccine communications



WHO Representative Office in Malaysia has spearheaded C4H approach:

- [Collected and analyzed social listening data and prepared actionable intelligence](#) to inform decision making and the National COVID-19 Immunization Programme.
- Organized an Infodemic management training to [further strengthen emergency response and routine health programmes](#) in the country.
- Conducted behavioural science research to inform communication strategies, [increase uptake of vaccines and promote adherence to protective behaviours for the sustained management of COVID-19.](#)
- More generally [used data to improve strategic communication on COVID-19 in Malaysia](#)



Lao PDR Country Office leverages the power of “the messenger” to tailor communications for specific audiences to increase immunizations:

- [WHO supports the Ministry of Health to develop Hmong language video to promote immunization for hard-to-reach communities](#)

Key lessons identified: data and evidence are cornerstones to inform COVID-19 vaccine communications, especially to address emerging trends and concerns in a timely manner. This demonstrated the proof of concept for scaling up the C4H approach

The health communication momentum: next steps?

- WHO in the Western Pacific is working with Member States to **advance implementation of C4H** to strengthen the use of communication as a **tool to improve health outcomes**, in line with the Regional vision [*For the Future*](#).
 - C4H refers to communications **principles and processes** that **inform** and **change attitudes and behaviours** for defined **public health outcomes** at the **individual, community** and **societal levels**
 - Recognizes that **knowledge, attitudes** and **social norms** are key determinants of health
 - With the overarching **outcome** to inspire and empower people to make healthy choices for themselves, their families, communities and constituents.
- Ongoing work on the **Regional Action Framework on C4H** – for Member States’ consideration at the 74th Regional Committee in October 2023.

Thank you!

For more details please visit:

C4H webpage: <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/activities/Communicating-for-health-impact>

C4H brochure: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/346654>

COVID-19 information to the public: <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/covid-19/information>

COVID-19 vaccines information to the public: <https://www.who.int/westernpacific/emergencies/covid-19/information-vaccines/>