

5. Crafting your message

Once you have developed your campaign strategy you know what you want to achieve, and who you need to target to achieve this, it's time to craft your messages.

Message

Convey

Inspire

Communicate

Evoke

What makes a message effective?

A message tells your audience (which could be policy makers, journalists, partners or the general public) what they are asked to do, why it is worth doing, and the positive impact of their action.

Essential elements of your message include:

- What you want to achieve
- Why you want to achieve it (and why others should want to achieve it)
- How you propose to achieve it
- What specific action you want your audience to take

Your message should capture the essence of what you are trying to say to your audience. In just a few sentences, a message should communicate why your issue is important and what you want others to do for your cause. It should also give your audience choices of actions and tell them what you hope the outcome of the actions will be.

There are different ways to present your message. You can take an informative approach, presenting facts and figures, or you might decide to take an emotive approach.

Camilo Serna, Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas, Colombia

“It is also important to define the channels through which the strategy will be implemented. Keep in mind that all actions performed (definition of the audience, creating messages, broadcast messages, etc.) should have the same objective to communicate. This, in order to prevent sending mixed messages.”

- **Logic and reasoning** - Using facts, evidence and reasoning might be very effective when your message targets government officials or potential donors. These people tend to be performance driven and like to use statistical evidence to back their actions.
- **Emotion** - An emotive message tends to be effective if you want the public to act, if you are appealing to an individual or if you're planning a fundraising appeal.

Audiences have different needs and expectations, and will respond most effectively to a message prepared with them in mind. Of course politicians are also just people who will feel emotions upon hearing a story about a child who lost her legs and potential livelihood after stepping on a cluster munition. At the same time, facts showing the widespread consequences of cluster munitions might trigger people to give you an extra dollar during your fundraising event. Whichever way you decide to frame your message, there is no right or wrong way of doing it – it all depends on the context you are working in and who you are talking to.

It is worth spending the time to develop and tailor your messages for different audiences, for different contexts, and for different media. It is also useful to develop your organisational description, your campaign aims and your calls to action in varying lengths; for example in one sentence, a short paragraph, a long paragraph and on one page. Set yourself a challenge, can you even adapt these elements into 140 characters for Twitter?

Maria Eugenia Villareal, ECPAT, Guatemala:

“To make cluster bombs an issue of importance in my country, I introduced the issue as a human rights and humanitarian disarmament matter.”

The character of the speaker

You can appeal to the audience through the reputation of the person delivering the message; this could be you, or a cluster munition victim telling his or her own story, a politician, a technical expert, or a respected celebrity who cares about the ban on cluster munitions for example.

Example message to a government that has not yet joined the Convention on Cluster Munitions:

Ban Cluster Bombs, Join the Convention:

Cluster bombs have caused excessive harm to civilians in every conflict in which they have been used and contamination of land continues to kill and injure people trying to rebuild their lives for decades after.

The life-saving Convention on Cluster Munitions is a comprehensive, effective solution to the problem of cluster munitions. It prohibits the use of the weapon, as well as requiring clearance of cluster munition remnants, destruction of stockpiles, and the provision of assistance for victims. Today 113 countries have joined the Convention, of which 84 are States Parties.

At least 43 countries that have stockpiled, produced, and/or used cluster munitions have joined the Convention, including key international and regional military powers. Several of the world's most affected states have joined the convention, including Lao PDR, Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon. Their participation shows that a wide variety of states with different political, economic, and security perspectives all support the global ban on cluster munitions.

On the occasion of the anniversary of the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munition we call on [COUNTRY] to act now to prevent further harm from this weapon. Every country in the world can and should join the Convention on Cluster Munitions. It's a question of political will and of placing a priority on the protection of civilians over the use of outdated and indiscriminate weapons. We therefore urge [COUNTRY] to accede without delay.

The content of your message

- **Know your audience** – Take into account their interests, ideas and knowledge
- **Keep it simple** – Your messages should be short and easy to understand, with a clear call to action

Find opportunities to connect your message to relevant events in the news, a major report launch, or an upcoming deadline or anniversary. These windows of opportunity are brief time periods in which you can achieve significant impact with your message.

Example message appeal to people to donate:

Tumana was 3 years old when she was travelling with her family and had stopped for their lunch break in the area of Mgerinat in the north of Western Sahara. As they were finishing lunch and the family was starting to get ready to get back onto the road, Tumana walked to go to the toilet – a small group of bushes. On her way she saw some interesting looking items, a bit like toys, spread and stacked on the ground. She picked one up to play with, triggering it to explode. The toy like item turned out to be an unexploded submunition of a cluster bomb. The blast of the cluster munition left Tumana unconscious.

Tumana survived the blast, but lost her right arm.

The incident changed Tumana's life and that of her family entirely. They were forced to move away from their village, leaving behind everything, including their source of income. They moved to Rabuni, where they stayed in a refugee camp.

Tumana is 10 years old now, but still too young to get prosthesis because her bones are still growing. Every year she needs surgery, which is performed abroad.

Today Tumana is doing well. She goes to school and has learnt to write with her left hand. However, she does find it difficult to deal with the questions she gets from other children about her arm, bringing up painful memories.

Tumana receives assistance through the AOV mine victim assistance programme. With your generous donation AOV can support more children like Tumana.

Global Cluster Munition Coalition messages

The message to eradicate cluster bombs will have the most influence if global campaign messages and the advocacy messages used in each country, are linked and mutually reinforce each other.

The global Cluster Munition Coalition develops and shares updated messages on all major aspects of the cluster bomb ban and recommendations of which countries and audiences to focus on. These global messages can be adapted and tailored to the situation in each country.

You can get the most updated versions of these messages and recommended audiences by visiting the CMC website www.stopclustermunitions.org or contacting CMC staff.

More resources:

- Cluster Munition Coalition Lobbying Guide, available from CMC staff
- [Influencing policy makers](#)
- [Getting media coverage](#)



Crafting your message for the media

Your message for the media will again depend on your audience, but should include:

- The situation or problem the campaign or action is addressing
- The solution you propose
- The action that can be taken to help solve the problem

Your message and its three parts (problem, solution, action) should be featured in every article and interview you do and conversation you have.

Your core message should also be shaped into two products:

- **Talking points** – These summarise your central message in three or four sentences and include your main argument and evidence to support it.
- **Sound bites** – These are shorter, and convey your message in words and symbols that will grab the audience's attention. They are important for print media, but even more so for TV or radio.

See [Getting media coverage](#) section for more support.

Denise Coghlan, Cambodia Campaign to Ban Landmines & Cluster Munitions:

“Let survivors tell their own stories.”

Useful facts and statistics:

- Cluster bombs have been used in at least 36 countries and 4 disputed territories since the end of World War II, by at least 20 government armed forces. Most recently cluster munitions have been used in Syria and South Sudan.
- Countries with the highest number of casualties include Laos, Iraq, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Lebanon.
- Where the status was recorded, civilians accounted for the majority of cluster munition casualties (94%). Most civilian casualties were male (82%) and a significant proportion were children (40%). 60% of cluster munition casualties are injured while carrying out normal daily, livelihood activities in usual and accustomed places.
- The Monitor estimates that prior to the global effort to ban cluster munitions, 91 countries stockpiled millions of cluster munitions containing more than 1 billion submunitions.
- Israel rained an estimated 4 million submunitions on South Lebanon in 2006, the vast majority over the final three days of conflict. Failure rates were around 40%. Remaining landmine and cluster munition contamination in Lebanon is said to affect 565 towns and more than 900,000 people, or approximately one in five people of the population.
- Laos, as one of the most heavily affected countries in the world, is still trying to clear the remnants of 270 million submunitions dropped by the United States between 1963-74 - it could take decades more but it is achievable. Yet until then, 80% of people in affected areas are still having to use land that they know or suspect to be contaminated with deadly explosives.
- At least 34 states have developed or produced more than 200 types of cluster munitions.