



## ***How to Work With the Media***

This is a training tool developed by IDRC



## *What's In It For Me?*

- Informing key audiences
- Influencing key audiences
- Strengthening links



## *What's In It For Me?*

- Promoting dialogue
- Marketing
- Accountability



## *What's In It For Me?*

- The media are the means, not the end
- The media are only one part of a larger communication strategy



## *Science vs the Media*

Scientists think that the media

- Distort and sensationalize
- Act shallow and ignorant
- Don't understand science
- Take a "gotcha" approach



## *Science vs the Media*

Reporters think that scientists

- Are bad communicators
- Hide behind jargon
- Do boring work
- Are out of touch



## *Science vs the Media*

- Years vs hours
- Neutrality vs emotion
- Consensus vs controversy
- Questions vs answers
- Team vs stars



## *Understanding Media*

- Are deadline driven
- Are often stressed
- Seek new and interesting stories
- Thrive on conflict
- Need to convince editors



## *Understanding Media*

- Don't like to give out interview questions in advance
- Is not into promotion



## *Types of Journalists*

- Science journalists
- General journalists
- Star journalists



## *Types of Media*

- Newspapers
- Radio
- Television
- Magazines
- Web and new media
- Video



## *Types of Stories*

- News
- Features
- Opinion
- Interviews
- Letters to the Editor



## *What Makes News*

- Superlatives – biggest, smallest, oldest, first
- Impact on people
- Link with other events or issues
- Conflict
- Celebrity connection



## *Media Messages*

- Focus on three to five key messages
- Emphasize the impact on people
- Keep messages succinct and simple
- Use active verbs
- Find the “sticky message”



## *Media Interviews*

- Breathe deeply
- Relax and smile
- Use a “message track”
- Don’t fill silences
- Look interviewer in eye
- Everything is on the record



## ***Making a Media Pitch***

- Compile a list of reporters
- See the story from a reporter's perspective
- Be clear and concise
- Be timely



## ***Making a Media Pitch***

- Identify the project
- Identify the issues
- Identify the characters
- Identify the stories

## *Making the Pitch*



### The Project

- don't use acronyms



## *Making the Pitch*

### The Issues

- Boil down to the basics
- Focus on the human angle
- Highlight conflict
- Link to current events



## *Making the Pitch*

### The Characters

- Showcase key individuals



## *Making the Pitch*

### The Stories

- Suggest a narrative
- Think visuals



## *Making the Pitch*

Dear X: I am writing about the upcoming AIDS conference in Toronto. IDRC will be there and I have several story suggestions that will interest your audience: a former union leader in Swaziland mobilizing with HIV-positive women to combat stigma and provide food to orphans; young Peruvian men and women from poor communities banding together in cyberspace to help fight HIV/AIDS; women selling their bodies in the “hungry season” to feed their families. Researchers from the developing world will be available for interviews. You can reach me at:



## *Making the Pitch: Tips*

- Put yourself in the audience's shoes
- Be prepared
- See media as allies
- Stay on message

# *How to Write a News Release*



- Include organization's name and date
- Follow with a headline
- Start with conclusion
- Arrange in short paragraphs
- Use a quote
- Include backgrounder and/or bios
- Include contact information and website

## News Release

### An African Success Story: Photo Exhibit

Ottawa, Canada, October 23, 2008 – Lucille Teasdale – one of Canada's first female surgeons – and her Italian husband and Piero Corti turned a small dispensary in Gulu, Uganda, into what is known today as one of Africa's largest non-profit hospital, St. Mary's Hospital Lacor. Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Lucille Teasdale & Piero Corti Foundation are proud to present *Lacor: An African Success Story*, a photo exhibit by Mauro Fermariello that depicts the life-long devotion and commitment of these two incredible doctors and local practitioners in providing much needed medical services to the citizens of Gulu and its surroundings. The exhibit is hosted by Library and Archives Canada.

Date: Monday, October 27, 2008

Time: 5:00–7:00 p.m.

Where: Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington Street

Dominique Corti, the daughter of Drs. Lucille Teasdale and Piero Corti, will inaugurate the exhibition. Corti, who was born at Lacor Hospital, ensures the legacy of her parents' work as honorary president of the Lucille Teasdale & Piero Corti Foundation, which supports the work of the hospital. She will be joined by Dr. Martin Ogwang, Institutional Director of Lacor Hospital, photographer Mauro Fermariello, IDRC Vice-President, Programs, Rohinton Medhora, and Doug Rimmer, Assistant Deputy Minister, Library and Archives Canada.

Lacor Hospital is an African success story. It has survived decades of conflict, the onset of the AIDS epidemic, and an outbreak of Ebola. For years, thousands of Night Commuters also sought shelter overnight at Lacor, sleeping within the protective walls of the hospital compound to evade capture by rebels. Today, Lacor Hospital is training the next generation of Uganda's doctors, nurses, lab technicians, public health educators, and AIDS counsellors.

A partner of the Foundation, IDRC administers a health research program inspired by the couple's legacy. It is also providing financial support to Lacor Hospital to improve its digital technology to more effectively collect, share, and access health information.

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#### About IDRC

Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) is one of the world's leading institutions in the generation and application of new knowledge to meet the challenges of international development. For nearly 40 years, IDRC has worked in close collaboration with researchers from the developing world to build healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous societies.

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## *How to Write a News Release: Tips*



- Use simple, everyday language
- Give it the human touch
- Avoid jargon and acronyms
- Use the active voice
- Send two or three days ahead of time

## *How to Write a News Release*



- Consider attaching a backgrounder or bio
- Remember that news releases are not always effective
- Consider other ways to get a reporter's attention

## *How to Hold a News Conference or Public Event*



- Hold event early in the day
- Advertise widely and follow up
- Take special care of logistics
- Prepare speaker and practice
- Consider visual events such as a field visit

## *How to Cultivate Reporters*



- Update your list of key reporters
- Arrange face-to-face meetings
- Have some information to offer
- Try to understand their needs



## *The Exclusive*

- Journalists are competitive
- Exclusive stories help their careers
- Respect an offer of exclusivity
- Feel free to recycle the story to other reporters later

## *How to Handle Media Requests*



- Always be prompt
- Keep reporter in the loop
- Be prepared with facts and figures
- Be both professional and personable



## *Be Ready to Respond*

- Monitor the media
- Monitor events
- Consider a letter to editor or op-ed



## *Evaluation*

- Keep a media tally
- Analyze quality as well as quantity

## *Summary*

Good luck with the media!