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State of the Art in Prevention and Control of Dengue in the Americas

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dengue



EGI-Dengue: Communications and behavior change component

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EGI-Dengue: Social communications & Behavior change

Objective: To strengthen country capacity to implement social communications strategies focused on changing behaviors as part of an integrated dengue prevention and control program.

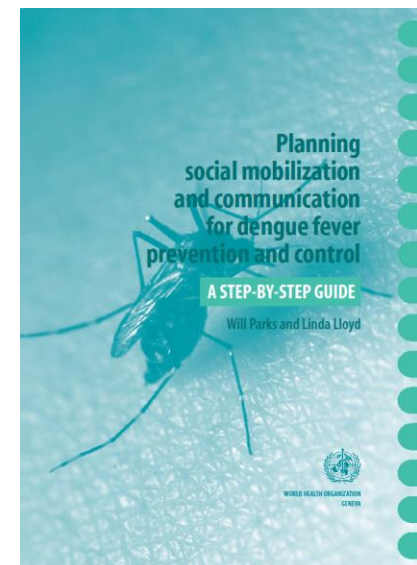
Through technical cooperation, we promote:

1. Community-based integrated vector control strategies and tools.
2. Evaluation of program effectiveness by measuring changes in behavior.



Achievements to date: Behaviour change planning guide

- Selection of WHO's Communication for Behavioural Impact (COMBI) planning methodology as a tool for developing social mobilization and communications activities focused on behavior change (2003)
- **Publication of the first step-by-step communications and behavior change training manual for dengue (2004)**





Achievements to date: Capacity building

- Train-the-trainer **sub-regional COMBI workshops** (2004):
 - Central America / Dominican Republic (4 countries)
 - Central America / Belize (4 countries)
 - English-speaking Caribbean (4 countries)
 - Andean (4 countries)
- Train-the-trainer **national level COMBI workshops** (2005 to date):
7 countries



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Achievements to date: New tools for education

- Development of an **interactive video game** (educational entertainment) focusing on the broader issues of vector borne diseases, sanitation & community and intersectoral participation (ages 9-13):

Pueblo Pitanga: Enemigos Silenciosos

<http://www.pueblopitanga.com/>

Pittsville Town: Silent Enemies

<http://www.pittsvilletown.com/>

- Under review by *Games for Change*
- More than 44,000 downloads



Achievements to date: Financing

- **External seed financing** (PAHO, CDC, DFID, CIDA) to support implementation of several COMBI plans
- Most countries financed their COMBI plans for dengue prevention and control internally with **MOH funding**





Achievements to date: Technical assistance

- Creation of a **peer-to-peer technical assistance group** (GT-Dengue International Technical Assistance Group, Social communications):

individuals trained in communications, health promotion, public health, social work, and medicine working in ministries of health, universities, and PAHO country offices provided technical support





Achievements to date: Evaluation

- **External evaluation** of implementation of the COMBI planning methodology at the national level in 6 countries: Barbados, Brazil, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Laos, Malaysia (2005)
- **Internal evaluation** of implementation of the COMBI planning methodology in the Region of the Americas, and revisions to the COMBI step-by-step process based upon experiences in 15 countries (2009)

Evaluation of Communication for Behavioral Impact
("COMBI") Efforts to Control *Aedes aegypti* Breeding
Sites in Six Countries

John Elder, Ph.D., MPH
Professor of Public Health,
San Diego State University, and
Adjunct Professor of Pediatrics,
UCSD School of Medicine
October 2005



WHO Mediterranean Centre for Vulnerability Reduction (WMC)

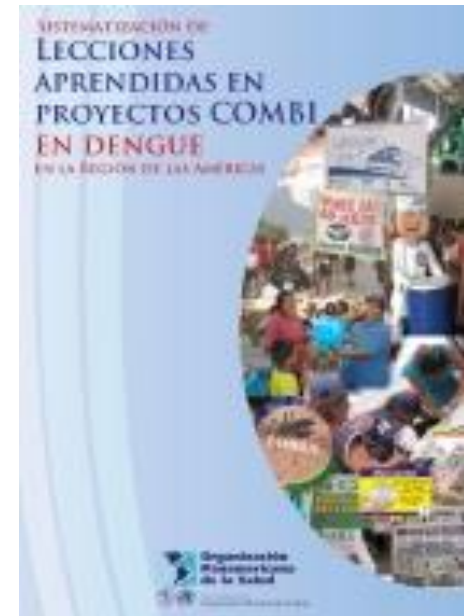


Achievements to date: Evaluation

- **Publication of lessons learned from COMBI projects** for dengue prevention and control in 15 countries in the Region of the Americas (2011, Spanish only):

Sistematización de Lecciones Aprendidas en Proyectos COMBI en Dengue en la Región de las Américas

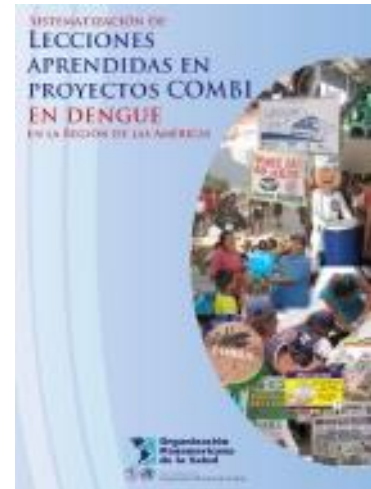
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Strengths: Communications perspective

- Health promotion and communications staff quickly adopted the COMBI planning methodology
- Training in COMBI facilitated understanding of when and how to use social communications vs. risk communication
- Creation of integrated dengue prevention and control programs by forming multidisciplinary teams





Strengths: Communications perspective

- Use of information and data (epidemiological and entomological) as part of a dynamic COMBI planning process to support the activities contemplated in EGI-Dengue national plans
- **Community empowerment (ownership)**





Strengths:

Dengue program manager perspective

- **Value of social communications for dengue prevention and control is widely recognized**
- Development of tools to promote community participation for vector control efforts
- Diverse tools created and positive experiences from COMBI projects that involved the health sector, community members and students





Challenges

- Weaknesses in implementation of the COMBI planning methodology and lack of technical assistance during implementation
- Turn over with trained communications staff results in lack of continuity and inappropriate changes to COMBI plans
- Lack of validated behavior indicators that can be incorporated into routine dengue program monitoring



Challenges

- Lack of support from ministries of health and local governments for communications and behavior change interventions
- Political influence in decision-making and implementation of control measures
- Belief that health and illness are the sole responsibility of the health sector
- Gaps in knowledge of both vector control professionals and the community



Next steps

- **Strengthen communication with policy makers for implementation of the EGI-Dengue strategy**
- Support communications and behavior change capacity building within ministries of health
- Work with countries to strengthen risk and crisis communications for dengue outbreaks
- Publish an updated, revised edition of the COMBI planning guide using regional experiences



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Integrated Management Strategy for the Prevention and Control of Dengue in the Americas

Thank you!



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