



JOINT METHODS AND CONTENTS FOR AWARENESS ACTIONS

Guidelines

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A. Introduction

Environmental factors play a major role in determining the health and well-being of children. Accumulating evidence indicates that children, who comprise over one third of the world's population, are among the most vulnerable of the world's population and that environmental factors can affect children's health quite differently from adults' health.

Health is determined by a variety of factors. In addition to the physical environment, genetics, and biology, social, economic, and cultural factors play major roles. Although it is critical to understand the various driving forces during childhood that shape health and behaviour throughout life, the emphasis of this document is specifically on exposure to environmental chemicals.

The WHO and DG Health have warned that air pollution - indoor or outdoor - is a major environmental health concern, as it can lead to serious health effects. Much progress has been made in the EU to improve outdoor air quality and reduce the emission of pollutants. However, indoor air quality also requires attention because it is where we spend most of our time. Indoor exposure to air pollutants may occur in any indoor environment e.g. schools.

According to the literature, the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of air pollution are children aged 6-14, 11% of total CE Programme area's population. Indoor conditions are a fundamental determinant of health and well-being.

Thus, the communication that we want to carry on in the framework of InAirQ project is called "Health Communication", whose definition is:

The study and use of communication strategies to inform and influence individual and community decisions that enhance health.

The methodology that shall be adopted in order to perform the awareness actions to be tested by InAirQ Project Partners has already been defined in the framework of the Communication Strategy, a document issued at the very start of the project and containing guidelines for an effective communication. In the framework of the application of joint methods for awareness actions, the indications given in the Communication Strategy will be focussed relating both to the audience which will be delivered the awareness actions, both to the key messages we want to deliver.



B. Methodology

The InAirQ project considers that the effective mitigation of the health impacts of indoor air pollution on the most vulnerable population at the regional/national level requires a package of integrated measures to be mediated on a transnational scale. This is to facilitate experience sharing on a scale proportionate to the need for policy on indoor air pollution at the national level and to coordinate the development and implementation of the planned actions at the local level. On this basis, the project activities have been structured to maximise opportunities for cooperation and the pooling of experience and ideas at the transnational level. This will bring together different actors with shared interests and equally, to recognise the diversity of their individual circumstances. The collective recognition of the problems faced together with respect to the inherent diversity within the partnership, and knowledge transfer from the advanced partners will promote new understanding of the need for more integrated health and social development.

B.1. Objectives of campaign

To raise public awareness of a topic or issue is to attempt to inform a community's attitudes, behaviours and beliefs. Normally, raising awareness also means trying through information to influence these attitudes, behaviours and beliefs positively in the achievement of a defined purpose or goal: for example, improving public health. In other words, to raise awareness of something is to promote its visibility and credibility within a community or society. To raise awareness is also to inform and educate people about a topic or issue with the intention of influencing their attitudes, behaviours and beliefs towards the achievement of a defined purpose or goal.

The objectives of our awareness raising process, to be implemented as part of the InAirQ Action Plan, is to inform and raise awareness about the issue of indoor air quality, especially in environments frequented by children, and to change behavioural attitudes in a way that pays attention to health needs when relating to indoor environments.

The importance of defining objectives of the process is related to the principle that effective communication is driven by its purpose: what do we want to change, and who needs to be reached so as to bring about change? We need to define how to capture the attention of the target audiences and deliver a convincing campaign message. Thus, it is necessary to identify the problem, to analyse the situation, to identify the stakeholders and target audiences, and to set up the communication



tools. To be successful, a communication campaign has to reach people with a message that will help them decide to change their behaviour. If the message isn't understandable, if it doesn't reach its audience, if it doesn't seem to apply to them, or if it simply doesn't register at all, they won't respond.

Thus, the objectives of InAirQ raising awareness campaign are to deliver communication for three different scopes:

- 01. Communication for Informing and Understanding.** There will be a number of groups/audiences that the project will need to target directly with the communication actions. This will be because we believe that they can benefit from what our project has to offer. Thus, it will be important that these groups/audiences have a deeper understanding of the project's work.
- 02. Communication for Awareness.** Generally, creating awareness about the project's work will help the "word of mouth" type dissemination and help the audience to build an identity and profile within their own communities.
- 03. Communication for Action.** "Action" refers to a change of practice resulting from the adoption of methods, activities or approaches offered by the project. These groups/audiences will be those people that are in a position to "influence" and "bring about change" within their organizations. These are the groups/audiences that will need to be equipped with the right skills, knowledge and understanding of the project work in order to achieve real change.

The communication objectives for each target group are shown in Table 1.

B.2. Awareness campaign audiences

The general objective of the dissemination activity is promoting the project and its outputs through a continuous process of communication towards identified target groups. The identification of targets of the awareness raising campaign helps to properly identify needs of the target groups and to select the most relevant approach to reach and influence their behaviour.

The project aims to arise the interest of a very broad audience from the operators of schools buildings to the users of the assets (pupils, their parents, teachers and school personnel). The findings of the project, deriving from the activities of development and testing of school management actions and adoption of technical improvements for schools, can potentially be replicated for all future interventions on the European existing school buildings.



The target groups for the awareness campaign activities are:

- Municipal and regional institutions
- Pupils of the involved schools and their parents
- Management bodies of the schools and school staff

Table 1. Type of communication planned for each target group

TARGET GROUPS	TYPE OF COMMUNICATION		
	Communication for Awareness	Communication for Understanding	Communication for Action
Pupils of the involved schools and their parents			
Municipal and regional institutions			
Management bodies of the schools			

B.3. Key messages

The InAirQ project aims to describe the health impacts of the indoor air quality on the vulnerable population and to take action to improve the healthy environment in schools in the CE area. The WHO and DG Health have warned that air pollution - indoor or outdoor - is a major environmental health concern, as it can lead to serious health effects. Indoor exposure to air pollutants may occur in any indoor environment, such as schools. According to the literature, the most vulnerable to the adverse effects of air pollution are children aged 6-14, 11% of total CE Programme area's population.

The project communication will lay upon three key messages, to be delivered to different audiences and through different communication tools:

1. Intervention methods for air pollution
2. Use of indoor materials and equipment
3. Maintenance and managers' responsibility.

B.3.1. Intervention methods for air pollution

According to literature, a wide range of interventions are available to reduce indoor air pollution and associated health effects. Interventions can be classified according to the level at which they are effective: a) interventions on the source of pollution, b) interventions to the living environment, and c) interventions to user behaviour.



Interventions on the source of pollution in a school may regard improvements of ventilation of the living areas and laboratories, which can contribute significantly to reducing exposure to smoke. There are many ways to achieve better ventilation of the living environment, such as:

- chimneys
- smoke hoods (with flues)
- HVAC.

Interventions to user behaviour relate to changes in user behaviour which are able to play a role in reducing pollution and exposure levels. For example, Opening windows and ventilating the premises while using substances that can alter indoor air quality (such as chalks or felt-tip pens or detergents) is an operation that reduces the exposure of this most vulnerable age group to health-damaging volatile pollutants.

Such changes in user behaviour are unlikely to bring about reductions as large as those expected from the installation of mechanical HVAC systems. However, they should be seen as important supporting measures for other interventions.

Further information on actions to be taken to reduce indoor pollution will be provided when the Action Plans are drawn up.

This message must be communicated to all the selected target groups.

B.3.2. Use of indoor materials and equipment

Indoor air contaminants can originate within the building or be drawn in from outdoors. Four elements are involved in the development of IAQ problems: sources, the HVAC system, pollutant pathways, and occupants. Among the contaminants originated within the building we can find harmful substances coming from furniture, materials and building equipment, such as:

HVAC system:

- dust or dirt in ductwork or other components of HVAC system
- microbiological growth in drip pans, humidifiers, ductwork, coils
- improper use of biocides, sealants, and/or cleaning compounds
- improper venting of combustion products
- refrigerant leakage.

Working and operating equipment:

- emissions from office equipment (volatile organic compounds, ozone)
- supplies (solvents, toners, ammonia)
- emissions from shops, labs, cleaning processes



- elevator motors and other mechanical systems.

Building components and furnishings

- locations that produce or collect dust or fibres
- textured surfaces such as carpeting, curtains, and other textiles
- open shelving
- old or deteriorated furnishings
- materials containing damaged asbestos.

Unsanitary conditions and water damage

- microbiological growth on or in soiled or water-damaged furnishings
- microbiological growth in areas of surface condensation
- standing water from clogged or poorly designed drains
- dry traps that allow the passage of sewer gas.

Further information on the choices to be made in relation to furnishings and equipment to be used in schools to contain the spread of indoor pollutants will be provided at the time of drafting the Action Plans.

This message must be communicated to all the selected target groups. In particular, local institutions that deal with the management of schools will be sensitized on the topic of the choice of non-toxic substances and materials to be used in schools; the same message can be delivered to the children of the classes involved and their families to encourage them to seek a healthier indoor environment at home.

B.3.3. Maintenance and managers' responsibility

Given the present knowledge, it is difficult to relate complaints of specific health effects to exposures to specific pollutants' concentrations. The significant exposures may be to low levels of pollutant mixtures.

The source of pollutants which may be attributed to maintenance and managers' responsibility may be:

- chemicals released from building components or furnishings volatile organic compounds or inorganic compounds
- accidental events, such as spills of water or other liquids, microbiological growth due to flooding or to leaks from roofs, piping, fire damage (soot, toxic substances and exhalations from electrical equipment, odours)
- special use areas, such as laboratories, print rooms, art rooms, exercise rooms, food preparation areas



- redecorating/remodelling/repair activities; in this case, pollutants can come from emissions from new furnishings, dust and fibres from demolition odours and volatile organic and inorganic, compounds from paint, caulk, adhesives, microbiological released from demolition or remodelling activities.
- microorganisms in mist from improperly maintained cooling towers
- airborne dust or dirt
- pesticides from pest control activities
- emissions from stored supplies.

Further information on the choices to be made in relation to the management and maintenance procedures to be implemented in schools to contain the spread of indoor pollutants will be provided at the time of drafting the Action Plans.

This message should be communicated mainly to the school staff (management, maintenance and cleaning staff) and to local authorities involved in the awareness raising campaign.

C. Communication tools

In order to involve a greater number of targets in communication actions aimed at informing, raising awareness on the topic of indoor air quality and inducing a change in behaviour, directing it towards greater attention to the indoor air quality, it is envisaged to use a series of communication tools:

Sending targeted emails. for some target groups (typically institutional ones) the offices and professional skills will be contacted through emails tailored to the recipient. For example, emails written to public health departments will focus on indoor air quality as an element to protect children's health; the emails written to the departments dealing with the environment will be focused on the relationship between indoor pollution and outdoor pollution; The emails sent to the authorities and to the school building authorities will focus on the sources of indoor pollution and how to act on these sources to improve the air quality in the schools. The e-mails must have the objective of informing the recipients about the InAirQ project (objectives, operating methods, output) in order to stimulate interest and increase awareness on the topic. The activities in progress and those that will soon be implemented will be communicated and meetings will be required to deepen the topic and stimulate, in this way, the debate within the institutions that can lead to a change in attitude and the issue of regulations and guidelines for the improvement of indoor air quality in schools. Emails can have attachments, for example project newsletters, specific articles published by the PP within the InAirQ



project, brochure and / or leaflet of the project etc. The emails will be sent back to the InAirQ Project website.

Specific meetings with school pupils and their families. Raising awareness among the children of the schools involved in the project and their families on the subject of air quality is an action that can have a multiplier effect on the dissemination of information and awareness on the subject of indoor air quality. Children who will be provided with basic information on air quality and how to improve it will most likely spread the message to the people they are close to: families, other friends, etc. In the same way, even the families, informed and sensitized on the subject, will be stimulated to talk about it and to apply at home the indications provided during the meetings. The meetings, which will take place from March 2018 until the end of the project, can be carried out using supports such as the projection of slideshows and the distribution of informative materials about the pollutants characteristic of indoor air, their main sources and mitigation actions to be implemented to reduce indoor pollution.

Specific meetings with school staff. Since the goal of the InAirQ project is to improve the healthiness of the school environments, particular attention will be devoted to specific meetings with school staff, which should be sensitized on the issue so that the knowledge acquired is a spur to change behaviors orienting them towards a management more virtuous of school spaces. Also in this case the meetings will be held starting from March 2018 and until the end of the project, and can be conducted using supports such as slideshows projection and the distribution of technical materials regarding intervention methods aimed at improving indoor air quality, use of indoor materials and equipment and maintenance and managers' responsibility regarding a more targeted and conscious choice of furnishings, or detergents, or educational materials with low toxicity and low impact on indoor air.

Production and dissemination of information materials. Communication actions, especially those aimed at "non-expert" targets (i.e. people, such as school staff, families and pupils, who do not necessarily have a specific competence or interest in the topic of indoor air quality) should be assisted by supporting materials that, during or after the discussion, can be browsed and read in autonomy, constituting a sort of reminder on the topics dealt with during the meetings. For this purpose it will be possible to use the materials already produced within the InAirQ project (brochure, leaflet) or to produce new materials, with the recommendation that these be synthetic, clear and supported by the presence of images that better explain the topics dealt with. The materials produced for school pupils and their families will have a more informative cut compared to those produced for the school staff, which will be more technical because the school staff is the one who,



in the immediate future, will collect and carry out the inheritance of the InAirQ project, and will implement the actions planned to reduce indoor air pollution in schools. The materials produced will refer to the Action Plan for mitigation actions.

Use of the national Facebook pages of the project for dissemination. In the context of the Communication Strategy and especially the Social Media Campaign, 5 national pages of the InAirQ project were created (one for each State participating in the project), which will be used for the dissemination of the project contents and the messages of which it is he is a bearer. The materials produced will be uploaded to these Facebook pages and made available to the public.

Organization of an event for the presentation of results and dissemination. In order to aggregate interest and involvement around the topics covered by the project it is suggested to organize one or two plenary events presenting the results, to which the students and families of the classes involved will be invited, the school staff of the schools involved and the institutional actors locals. It is important to organize these meetings also to give all participants feedback on the activities of the project and the monitoring activities carried out in the classrooms. The events could be organized in correspondence with the meetings of the local Environment Quality Forums.



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