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Descriptive Title: Pre-testing of Brochures and Comic Strips
Program: Water Efficiency and Public Information for Action Project
Strategic Objective: SO2
Sponsoring USAID office: USAID/Jordan, Operating Unit WRE; Cooperative Agreement No.: 278-A-00-00-00201-00
Contractor Name: Academy for Educational Development
Date of Publication: 2002
Key Words: NGOs, Water Conservation, Jordan, Education
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THE ACADEMY FOR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Cooperative Agreement No. 278-A-00-00-00201-00

THE WATER EFFICIENCY AND PUBLIC INFORMATION FOR ACTION (WEPIA)

PRETESTING OF BROCHURES AND COMIC STRIPS

REPORT

February, 2002

Introduction

WEPIA has prepared a series of seven brochures that will be distributed to the general public. Each of the seven brochures deals with a specific aspect of water saving in the homes.

The purpose of the study was to test the brochures for:

- Ease of understanding.
- Recall
- Whether they provide motivation to act.
- Suitability of size, colours and format.

Another aspect of the research was to test 10 cartoon strips that were prepared by Prisma for the general public. The cartoons will appear weekly in newspapers, and they feature the character “Ehab Tafiq” in different situations.

The messages were tested for the following:

- Level of humour
- Understanding of the essential messages
- Whether the messages provide motivation for action
- If there are any offensive messages
- If the situations seem realistic
- Sequence
- Character development

Qualitative research was employed. Four group discussions were held among men and women of the C1C2 social classes. These were structured as follows:

	Sex	Age	Social class
1.	Male	25 - 35	C1\C2
2.	Female	25 - 35	C1\C2
3.	Male	36 - 45	C1\C2
4.	Female	36 - 45	C1\C2

The groups were also asked to select a slogan which will represent all WEPIA's media efforts.

Overall review

Brochures

The concept of the brochures was very well accepted. The presentation was acceptable, although the language was thought to be a bit dry and complicated. Overall, the main messages were understood, except for some parts where technical terminology and arithmetic calculations were confusing and not well comprehended. The text was lengthy at times and respondents felt bored and were distracted.

Messages seem to be addressed to different target audiences. For example, covering the swimming pools is clearly addressed to the upper classes in West Amman. There is a need to determine which messages go to which audience, since this has created some adverse reactions in the groups.

Most importantly, most messages did not seem to provide any motivation for action. The purpose of doing any measure needs to be clear in people's mind. They want to know what is the benefit of doing such actions. So, the concept of saving money on water and energy may be the motivation needed to act. Also, the use of WSD's can reduce the amount of water consumed without changing one's habits and lifestyles.

In this context, WSD's are still not clear in people's minds. What are they and what is their function need to be clearly defined and explained. Also, from where could they be purchased.

Some messages were not credible. Watering the garden in the early morning and not in the evening contradicts a message aired on Jordan TV. Placing a bucket on the roof while it is raining was also thought to be unnecessary.

Many messages were repeated in different brochures. Also, some messages were fragmented, clarification on the reason and how to do it were mentioned in different brochures. Specifically, when discussing the disposal of chemical waste, instructions on how to do it and why were mentioned in different brochures.

There is also a need to unify the figures and terms throughout the brochures, water tanks were confused with toilet tanks. Reference should not be made to tanks when discussing toilets. There is also a need to check the spelling.

The objective of the brochures has to be clearly defined. This is what we, as citizens, are expected to do. Many kept referring to the government's responsibilities. The brochures should be set apart as an effort that the average person can do to share in the overall effort of saving water and keep it clean and available for this and future generations.

The cartoon strips were appreciated, the sense of humour was enjoyed by all participants, and the messages were understood. The situations seemed realistic and could be related to.

Slogans were also tested in the groups and one winner emerged. It was the one already used on the brochures. "The solution starts with you."

Specific findings

A. Brochure entitled “Ways of Using Water in Cooking and Laundry”

Messages were well understood and recall was high. The brochure contained some useful ideas on how to save water. It was thought to be informative and, to some extent, clear.

“It tells us how to save water.”

“Use two sinks, if available. One for cleaning and one for rinsing”

“Not to keep the water running while washing vegetables and fruits.”

“Check for leaks and do the repairs immediately. Leakages can waste a lot of water.”

But some of these messages were not believed to be practical.

“Many do not have two sinks.”

“I don’t believe this cleans the dishes efficiently.”

“Cooking does not consume a lot of water anyway.”

However, some concepts were regarded as being addressed to a different social class. Use of short cycles on the automatic washing machines and dishwashers was not very well accepted or even understood. Also, the mention of pressure cookers brought some feelings of discontent.

“What does short cycle mean?”

“Nobody has dishwashers, so why include them here?”

“Pressure cookers are expensive. We cannot afford them.”

The brochure included some technical terms that are not understood by laymen. Mainly, the use of phosphate free detergents. None of the respondents knew what this meant or whether the detergents that are available in the market contained phosphate or not.

The use of a jug to keep cold water in the fridge was not considered to be practical. Also, changing the water every 2 – 3 days was thought to be an unnecessary waste.

“Water can stay more than 2 days and still be good. Actually, you can keep it for 2 weeks.”

Some even could not understand the whole idea.

“This is only for people who have coolers. They fill bottles with water and put them in the fridge.”

However, the instructions regarding the disposal of chemicals at home were not very clear to almost all respondents. Where to dispose of such products was also not clear.

“We usually dispose of such products in the toilet.”

“If not in the toilet or the sink, where then?”

The effect on the environment could not be related to.

“How can draining such products down the pipes affect the environment.”

B. Brochure entitled “ Water Audit”

The title, even after reading the brochure, was not understood. Respondents failed to see the purpose of conducting such a procedure for the sole purpose of measuring the amount of water they consume.

“The water comes every week and it fills 2 tanks, that is all I need to know.”

Anyway, the procedure for calculating the water flow was thought to be complicated and too technical.

“I am an Arts student, I did not understand a thing.”

The consensus among all participants was that it was too complicated and not easily understood.

“Regular citizens will not know how to do it.”

Even those who could understand the procedure they confessed that they would never go through this hassle.

This brochure needs to be changed. All confirmed that people would not be interested in reading it.

The section dealing with checking leakage in the toilet tanks was a bit confusing. Confusion was between water tanks on the roof and water tanks in the bathroom. The latter should be referred to as “niagara.”

“How can I put ink in the water tank and then drink its water.”

The Arabic word “sounbour” was also not understood.

“If you are referring to the tap, then it was mentioned earlier as “hanafieh”, so sounbour should mean something else.

Checking the water level on the roof tanks for any leakages was thought to be a useful piece of information.

“This is a good way of knowing whether there is any leakage that is not visible.”

C. Brochure entitled “Use Water Wisely”

This brochure was thought to be precise, useful and easy to understand. Having a stake in the future was a compelling message and one that invited many positive responses. It provides a good motivation for any action. Also, in this section the reason for not throwing chemicals in the pipes was understood.

“This water will come back to us, so we have to be careful what we throw in the pipes.”

“This brochure gives reasons and solutions.”

Save water, money and energy is a good concept and one that provides motivation. This message is relevant and can reach a wide section of the population.

Water shortage is a well known fact. However, global warming was not associated with the water shortage in Jordan.

“Global warming increases the water levels in the seas.”

“Water has to reach 100 degrees to evaporate. Global warming does not reach to that level.”

The section on the water saving devices was not completely understood. There is a need to explain what these devices are and what is their function.

“What are the old pieces that we need to replace. And what are the new pieces”

“Replacing the old pieces with new ones means that we already have them. But we don’t know what they are.”

D. Brochure entitled “Keeping the Drinking Water Clean and Available”

This brochure was thought to be too long. Too many messages were jammed into one. It includes messages that were mentioned in other brochures with some new additional information. Comments on the common messages were also repeated here.

“Why not put them all together in one brochure.”

Placing a bucket on the roof while it is raining was thought to be unnecessary.

“Why collect water in a bucket when it is raining?”

E. Brochure entitled “Saving Water in the Bathroom”

This brochure contained some useful information about the consumption of water in the bathrooms. As these are the outlets that consume a lot of water in households. But, it also included some technical terms that were difficult to understand. Respondents started guessing what displacement bags or water dams meant.

Also, the dual flush Niagara was not understood to almost all respondents. Many assumed that this could be done manually with the tanks that have lids. Shut-off valves and their purpose were also not clear.

Hand cleaners that do not need any water were confused with the wet wipes that are usually used for children. Some knew what they were but they thought them to be too expensive for daily usage, and they even could not be believed to be an effective cleaner.

“Washing without water is not practical or acceptable. It is costly.”

This brochure explained what to do with the chemicals that are usually disposed off in the bathrooms. But, here again, “makab al nifayat” was thought to be the main one and not the containers that are placed in the streets.

“Do I have to go to Zarqa to dispose of this material?”

F. Brochure entitled “Ways of Using Water in the Gardens”

This included very useful tips and information. Few concepts could not be easily understood like “less is more” and “trimming the grass”. But, on the whole, it was clear.

One of the instructions was to water the garden only in the early morning. This contradicted what Jordan TV has aired some time ago. There was a problem of credibility with this specific message.

Although this brochure was thought to be useful, many believed that this is of no concern to them.

“This is for people in West Amman.”

“Rich people have gardens and country houses. This is not for me.”

This was also reinforced when mentioning swimming pools.

G. Brochure entitled “Water Saving Pieces”

The concept of saving water as well as energy was very well accepted.

“Look at the illustration, he is happy, he saved money on water and electricity.”

Here again, the technical terms were used and were not comprehended.

The use of nozzle was believed to be the sprinklers.

“These are the sprinklers used to water the lawns.”

So, the illustration next to the text could not be understood.

Illustrations

On the whole, the illustrations were liked, the concept of using the character was also appreciated. Only, in the instance of what is considered to be a “woman’s job” there were comments that a woman should be used instead of a man.

“Women do the dishwashing and the laundry, not men”

The Cartoon Strips

The concept of the strips was explained to the groups, and they were shown the 10 strips sequentially.

Overall, the idea was thought to be original and funny. The humour was very much appreciated. The situations were funny and at the same time realistic, respondents could identify with them.

The character gave an identity to the concept, and people eventually started relating to it. They thought that he and his family represented an average Jordanian family.

The messages were, on the whole, very well understood. One message remained a bit vague, this was the renewable and non-renewable reservoirs.

The dropper at the top of the strips was not clear. At times it was thought to be a knife.

The second strip evoked some negative reactions. Although, it was not very serious, but still it would be worth changing the text. Specifically, the first picture where “Abu Tawfeer” seems to insult his son, and also when he keeps the change of 30 piasters. Other than that, all the strips were accepted and liked.

The last comment on Strip three was thought to be irrelevant.

Slogan

As part of its efforts to brand the program, WEPIA has developed a set of different slogans to be tested in the groups. The selected slogan will be used at the end of each product, and will represent what WEPIA stands for in its media efforts.

The groups came up with some slogans like “Wafer ma’a Abu Tawfeer” (save with Abu Tawfeer), some quotes from the Quran and Hadeeth.

The one that was voted the first in all the groups was “the solution starts with you.” It applies to everybody, citizens and officials.

Shape, Font and Size

The font was small, specially in some of the cartoon strips and in the brochures. The shape of the brochures and the colours were thought to be appropriate and acceptable.

Distribution

The most effective way of distributing these brochures was with the water bills. Many suggested delivering them to schools so that the new generation would be exposed to these messages.