PANEL PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION WITH JOURNALISTS (WMS1D)

Module
Working with the Media (WM)

Format
Panel discussion

Purpose
This presentation contributes to the module learning objectives by clarifying the roles and responsibilities of journalists, describing the structure of media organizations, and establishing a dialogue between researchers, communication officers, and journalists to discuss their experience working together.

Time Required
- 2 hrs.

Activity Description
Journalists (from any type of media) will be invited to present on the structure of their organization, the role and responsibilities of key staff within their organization, explain story assignments and deadlines, and discuss how decisions are made about what types of stories make the news. Journalists can also spend time discussing their positive and negative experiences working with researchers or communication officers from NGOs.

The journalist(s) can present a PowerPoint presentation or hold an informal discussion. Informal discussions tend to be more interactive. Regardless of what format is chosen, ensure sufficient time is allowed for a Q&A session from participants.

Possible journalists to invite as part of the panel may include:

- A freelance journalist. Freelance journalists are self-employed and do not belong to a specific media house or organization.

- A beat reporter. Beat reporters specializes in a particular issue, sector, or institution by building a base of knowledge on the topic over time and are able to provide insight and commentary in addition reporting the facts.
• Analytic journalist. An analytic reporter tries to break down a complex issue to foster public understanding.

• Investigative reporter. An investigative reporter investigates a certain subject matter in-depth. They usually cover issues surrounding political corruption, serious crimes, etc.

• A news blogger. A news blogger is someone who reports on issues using a site published on the internet known as a blog.

• A radio news anchor. A radio news anchor is someone who presents news on a radio program.

Some questions that the facilitator can ask (depending on the type of media the panelists work in) include:

• Has a researcher or communications officer from an NGO communicated scientific or medical jargon that is difficult to understand?

• Has an organization sent you a press release that has been confusing or unclear?

• What is the best way to grab the attention of a journalist?

• What are some things you wish researchers or advocates knew about journalism?

• How can researchers or advocates help journalists who are writing about their study findings?

• How can researchers correct misinformation or discrepancies on a piece that has already been published?

• Is it necessary to pay a journalist to cover a story or report on an issue?

Prior to the discussion, facilitators can ask participants to jot down some frustrations they have experienced with the media. Facilitators can share these frustrations to the journalist(s) who can then shed some light and provide additional insights and explanations.

Open up the discussion to the larger group and allow participants to ask the journalists questions.
Key Learning Concept(s)

- Media organizations have a certain way of functioning with specific roles and responsibilities for staff. Not every journalist has the power to decide what is published or broadcast.
- Know how to communicate with journalists and media houses.
- Understand how to build relationships with journalists from all types of media.
- Recognize where a participant can improve their ability to work with a journalist in country.

Materials Needed

- Flip chart, markers, laptop, and LCD projector

Associated Presentations

What is the media and why work with them? (WM1L)