

Staging a Successful Media Event

A media event involves inviting the media to a specific activity and/or a news conference.

What Should You Think about When Planning a Media Event?

- **What:** Ideally, you will feature a release of something new – research, launch of an effort, etc.
- **When:** The best time to schedule a media event is midday, ideally between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., on Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday.
- **Where:** Make sure to pick a location that is convenient for the media – both for transportation and parking. Ideally, the location will add relevancy. For example, holding a news conference at a university would be an ideal location for the release of research that was conducted at one of the university's colleges. If you are thinking about holding your event outdoors, consider the weather. For example, a blazing summer sun may not be ideal for a news conference.
- **Who:** Determine what the focus of your event should be, whether it is an activity or a high-profile figure. You can also work with other groups and agencies to demonstrate a community-wide effort. The media always takes an interest in the human side of an issue, so look for someone with a personal story to talk about the issue (i.e. someone running in-country MNCH programs in India.) Consider inviting community leaders, medical professionals or celebrities to speak at a news conference.

What Should the Event Look Like?

- **Signage:** Use your organization or coalition's banner as a backdrop to the news conference. Hang posters and banners in the most visible place possible. Cameras will want to get footage of an activity and the banner should be in that shot.
- **Action and visuals:** Recruit people to get the word out and attend your event. You need a lot of people and activity to show that the event is a success. You'll want to show the media that the community cares about your issue.

What Is the Main Message of the Event and Who Should Communicate It?

- **Messages:** Determine the main message of your event. What is the information/statistic/call to action that you want people to take away from your event?
- **Spokespersons:** Assign one or two spokespersons to communicate the message at the event. Make sure that your spokespersons have been briefed beforehand. They should be on hand to respond to the media, convey the message and describe the activities your group has planned. If you are reaching out to international media, consider recruiting the participation of spokespersons who speak other languages that are frequently spoken in affected countries.