



PHE partnerships guide

External communications

Version 1

blue ventures
beyond conservation

PHE Population
Health
Environment
Network
Madagascar

About this guide

This guide consists of 15 chapters covering the core **values**, **skills** and **knowledge** needed to develop and implement effective cross-sector Population-Health-Environment (PHE) partnerships. You have downloaded **chapter 9 - External communications**. If you wish to download other chapters or the entire guide please visit the Madagascar PHE Network's website [here](#).

This guide is primarily designed for use by the staff of environmental organisations wishing to develop cross-sector PHE partnerships with health service providers in line with priority community needs and their organisational missions. Many chapters will also be relevant to the staff of health organisations wishing to develop cross-sector PHE partnerships with environmental organisations working in under-served zones. And of course livelihoods-focused organisations working at the interface of sustainable development and natural resource management are also ideally placed to develop and implement collaborative PHE initiatives with relevant partners.

This guide draws on the PHE implementation experiences of Blue Ventures and other members of the Madagascar PHE Network in order to provide practical advice structured in a conversational format with case study examples. As such it should be highly relevant to organisations working in Madagascar and much material will be applicable to organisations working in other countries as well.

This guide is accompanied by various complementary resources including an integrated PHE community outreach tool (illustrated PHE story cards) available via the Madagascar PHE Network's website [here](#). Please note that a comprehensive online library of documents relating to PHE programming has been collated by the Population Reference Bureau and can be found [here](#).

This guide should be considered a living document and as such it will be updated regularly. Please don't hesitate to contact Blue Ventures (pheinfo@blueventures.org) if you have any suggestions for improvement or requests for elaboration. We look forward to incorporating your feedback into future versions of this guide.

Credits and acknowledgements

This guide was written and produced by Laura Robson, Blue Ventures' Health-Environment Partnerships Manager.

Thanks to all Madagascar PHE Network members who provided case study examples of various aspects of their PHE partnerships for this guide. Thanks also to the following members of Blue Ventures' health and conservation teams who provided valuable input and feedback on the content and structure of this guide: Caroline Savitzky, Dr Vik Mohan, Nicholas Reed-Krase, Urszula Stankiewicz, Charlie Gough, Rebecca Singleton and Kitty Brayne.

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This guide should be referenced as follows: *Robson, L. (2017) PHE partnerships guide. London, UK / Antananarivo, Madagascar: Blue Ventures Conservation.*

9. External communications

<p>By the end of this chapter you should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know why it's important to communicate externally about your PHE partnership Know what communication channels you can use (social media, blogs, newsletters, webpages) Know how to design an external communications plan (with details of your target audiences, key messages, and what you want them to think / feel / do as a result of your communications) Know some potential media outlets to pitch to 	<p>This chapter may be of particular relevance to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managers and communications staff of environmental organisations Managers and communications staff of health organisations
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Why communicate externally about your PHE partnership?

Raising the profile of PHE issues and cross-sector solutions including your PHE partnership is important for:

- Building understanding of the rationale for and benefits of this approach among potential partners
- Building support for this approach among funders and policy makers
- Encouraging uptake of this approach by other organisations

What channels can be used to communicate externally about your PHE partnership?

You can share concise and fairly informal updates using **social media**: Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, etc. Typically these would be photos with short captions, relevant hashtags (e.g. #popenviro #health) and mentions of partners, and links to newsletters or webpages or blogs for more information.



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Our community outreach work in Madagascar has included radio shows introducing health and conservation topics for listening groups to discuss. Find out more about the connections between these issues at <http://blueventures.org/conservation/approach/phe>.

Album: Timeline Photos
Shared with: Public

Open Photo Viewer
Download
Embed Post

Photo © Garth Cripps.
7 August 2015



You can share more detailed updates as **blogs**. These could focus on aspects of [PHE partnership development](#) or [most significant change stories from community members](#). Note that fully informed consent must be obtained for the use of most significant change stories and photos of community members, and it's not recommended to take photos of health service clients during consultations in order to respect their privacy. [WordPress](#) is a free and easy-to-use blogging platform.

You can also create simple **newsletters** (e.g. <http://eepurl.com/cxra3f>) using [MailChimp](#) (another free service like WordPress) to keep your supporters up-to-date with your work. These could include photos and short stories with links to relevant blogs or webpages for more information.

You should feature your PHE partnership on your organisation's website if at all possible. Ideally you would create a **dedicated webpage** (e.g. <https://blueventures.org/conservation/community-health/>) outlining:

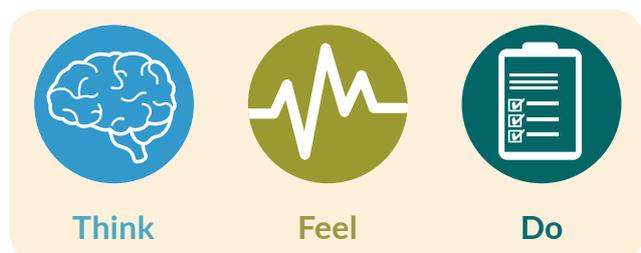
- the problem / challenges that it seeks to address (e.g. unmet family planning and other community health needs, food insecurity, livelihood vulnerability, inadequate community capacity for natural resource management, etc) in the region(s) where you work
- the solution / PHE activities that you're facilitating (e.g. provision of voluntary family planning and other community-based health services, alternative income-generating initiatives, capacity building support for local natural resource management efforts, etc) and how these are integrated at the community level (e.g. integrated community outreach combining health and environmental topics)
- the impact / statistics (e.g. number and type of contraceptives distributed = couple years of protection provided, estimated number of unintended pregnancies averted, etc - possibly presented in infographic form) and most significant change stories from community members (with photos, quotes, etc - so long as fully informed consent has been obtained)
- your team and PHE partners (e.g. names and photos of your team members, names and logos of your PHE partners, etc)
- your values (e.g. listening and responding to communities, upholding reproductive rights, etc)
- links to relevant blogs

How to design an external communications plan for your PHE partnership?

Depending on your organisation's capacity for external communications, you may wish to simply communicate externally about your PHE partnership in a rather *ad hoc* way using some or all of the channels outlined above. However, it can also be valuable to reflect on what you hope to achieve through your external communications and to tailor your approach accordingly.

Some questions to consider:

- **Who is your target audience?** Individual supporters, institutional funders, potential partners, policy makers, etc?
- **What is your key message?** Can you condense this into a summary sentence?
- **What do you want them to think / feel / do?** What is the purpose of your communications?
- **Are there any risks that you need to mitigate?** Known sensitivities or potential for misunderstanding?
- **What media outlets do your target audience read?** Where do you need to get your message?
- **What kind of language and content is appropriate (for this target audience and media outlet)?** Technical or informal, quantitative results or qualitative stories, etc?



You could work through these questions and record your ideas in a table such as the one below:

Target audience	Key message	Think	Feel	Do	Risks	Media outlet	Language and content
Staff of potential environmental partners in other regions where you hope to expand your PHE work	PHE is a powerful mechanism for enabling couples to plan the number and spacing of their births, thereby allowing women more time to engage in NRM and bolstering local NRM efforts, and can be easily incorporated into existing NRM initiatives through partnerships with specialised health agencies	Partnering with health orgs can advance and add value to my work	Don't need much new technical expertise to incorporate health into my work	Reach out to health orgs to explore partnership opportunities	Misunderstanding of the rationale for PHE (it's about addressing unmet family planning needs and upholding reproductive rights - ensuring full access and free choice - not driven by population-related environmental concerns or goals)	E.g. Mongabay	Can be fairly technical as for a specialised audience
Staff of potential health partners in other regions where you hope to expand your PHE work	PHE is a powerful mechanism for addressing unmet family planning needs of rural populations (by leveraging the operational infrastructure and community relations of environmental orgs - especially engaging men), and for improving community health more generally (especially nutrition and food security through sustainable NRM)	Partnering with environmental orgs can advance and add value to my work	Environmental orgs share my commitment to SRHR	Reach out to environmental orgs to explore partnership opportunities	PHE acronym (mention of "population" may trigger misconception of population control) vs. sensitivities around SRHR	E.g. Guardian Global Development Professionals Network	Can be fairly technical as for a specialised audience
Health / development / environmental fundors	PHE is a logical and cost-effective way of achieving health / development / conservation outcomes = win-win-win for all involved!	Funding PHE makes more sense than single-sector investments	Want to encourage my grantees to explore opportunities to work holistically	Proactively invest in and support wider uptake of PHE	Insufficiently compelling quantitative data relating to the "added-value" benefits of PHE	E.g. Stanford Social Innovation Review	Engaging and accessible, hard facts good

Potential media outlets

The [New Security Beat](#) is the blog of the Wilson Center's Environmental Change and Security Program. It regularly features posts about PHE partnerships from across the world. They're interested in guest contributions so if you'd like to write a blog or if you've already written something that you think they might be interested in, just email a brief pitch or a link to their editor [Schuyler Null](#) outlining your idea and your expertise.

The [Guardian Global Development Professionals Network](#) is an online space for global development professionals to share knowledge and expertise. Because pieces are written for a professional audience - not for the general public - the aim is to share experiences and lessons learned. Pieces should be no more than 800 words and you can submit a pitch using [this form](#).

Writing tips from the Guardian Global Development Professionals Network

How to develop your story

First, decide what you want to write about. You may have a rough idea; try to express that in one line. Then, write down the points that you want to discuss or highlight.

Next, back up those points with links to evidence – numbers, statistics, case studies or opinions (your own opinion, other opinions, those of your peers or people related to the topic).

Once you've gathered facts and opinions, you have your basic material. Now go back to your title and check whether your material is enough to express your idea in a blog? If yes, start writing.

Keep it simple

Good writing is simple writing. Even when writing for a professional audience, avoid clichés and jargon. Read and reread and strike out repetition, avoid or explain any cultural references and acronyms that you use.

Top tips for communicating externally about PHE partnerships

- Avoid the use of too many acronyms (PHE is ok if you spell it out the first time as “Population-Health-Environment” or “People-Health-Environment” and explain what it means)
- Back up your main points with evidence or quotes
- Create a platform for communities to share their own stories and experiences
- Consider using most significant change stories from community members to illustrate impact (so long as fully informed consent has been obtained to use these stories for external communications)
- Always acknowledge your implementing partners (and funders) - also note that you may need to get their approval for external communications before publishing
- Emphasise that this approach is centred on upholding reproductive rights and addressing unmet family planning needs by ensuring full access to voluntary services i.e. enabling all individuals to choose freely the number and spacing of their births (rather than being driven by population-related environmental concerns or goals)

Examples of some key phrases:

What is PHE?

- “Population-Health-Environment” (PHE) is an interdisciplinary approach to sustainable development, integrating voluntary family planning and other health services with community-based natural resource management initiatives
- This holistic way of working is often referred to as “Population-Health-Environment” (PHE) because of the way that it reflects the connections between people, their health and the environment

What does PHE do?

- The PHE approach reflects and addresses the interconnected challenges of poor community health, unmet family planning needs, food insecurity and environmental degradation
- The PHE approach empowers people to make their own family planning choices, while equipping them with the skills they need to manage their resources sustainably
- The PHE approach advances gender equality by involving women in natural resource management decision-making, while engaging men in discussions about family health
- PHE has been shown to produce greater impacts than single-sector health or environmental interventions ([D’Agnes et al, 2010](#)), and to generate additional benefits such as the increased engagement of women in alternative livelihood activities

What are the benefits of increasing access to voluntary family planning services as part of a PHE programme?

- Increasing access to voluntary family planning services improves maternal and child health outcomes, allows girls to delay their first pregnancy until after they have completed their education and affords women more opportunities to be economically active
- Empowering couples to plan and better provide for their families improves food security,



Photo credit: Garth Cripps

enables women to play a more active role in natural resource management and boosts the sustainability of local environmental conservation efforts

- In areas of high unmet family planning needs, increasing access to voluntary family planning services and upholding the reproductive rights of all individuals to choose freely the number and spacing of their births can enable couples to avoid unintended pregnancies and attain their desired family sizes, thereby bolstering community-based natural resource management efforts
- Through the provision of short-term and long-acting reversible contraceptive options, this PHE partnership is estimated to have averted more than XXX unintended pregnancies to date among a population of approximately XX,XXX (see [chapter 8](#) for how to calculate this estimated outcome)

Note: the most powerful external communications about PHE are often rooted in personal testimonies and stories of community members, so the above key phrases should just be taken as examples of the sort of language that you may wish to use when describing your PHE work more generally.

Environmental degradation driven by population growth?

When communicating about PHE issues and solutions, it can be easy to fall into a simplistic narrative about unmet family planning needs and higher than desired fertility rates driving environmental degradation, with provision of voluntary family planning services as the key to promoting more sustainable natural resource use. Evidently the drivers of environmental degradation are much more complex though, with commercial demand for forest and seafood products often overshadowing local subsistence needs. It's therefore important to communicate PHE issues and solutions with nuance, recognising the roles that international markets are playing in natural resource depletion and local communities are playing in natural resource management.



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