# Meeting People Where They Are

Once you have a clear goal, it's critical to plan your campaign around your audience. Meet your audience where they are, rather than where you want them to be, by listening to them, understanding their worldview and using empathy to identify the best ways to connect.

## Insights that helped us increase COVID-19 vaccination rates in Delhi, India

*Hi, I'm Saudamini, a partnerships manager working on Verified's campaign to increase COVID vaccination rates in Delhi.*

*In Delhi's informal settlements a lot of the mainstream health advice on COVID-19 wasn't matching the community's needs. People knew to wash their hands, but didn't have running water. They knew to socially distance, but the spaces they were living and working in didn't allow them to. There was also a lot of misinformation.*

*This was true of vaccine uptake campaigns too. Messaging focused on communities who were literate and had regular access to healthcare and technology. Overall, they were very normative and paternalistic.*

*We started our work with these communities by listening to them. This ensured that the communities we were trying to reach had agency: they shaped the campaign's information, were represented in its creative, and involved at every step to make sure the campaign clearly addressed the community's concerns.*

# Define your target audience to create a campaign tailored to their needs and concerns.

✔✔ **What kind of behavior or opinion are you trying to change?**

✔✔ **Who do you want to reach?**

**Case Study**

## Targeting vulnerable communities in Delhi to increase vaccine uptake
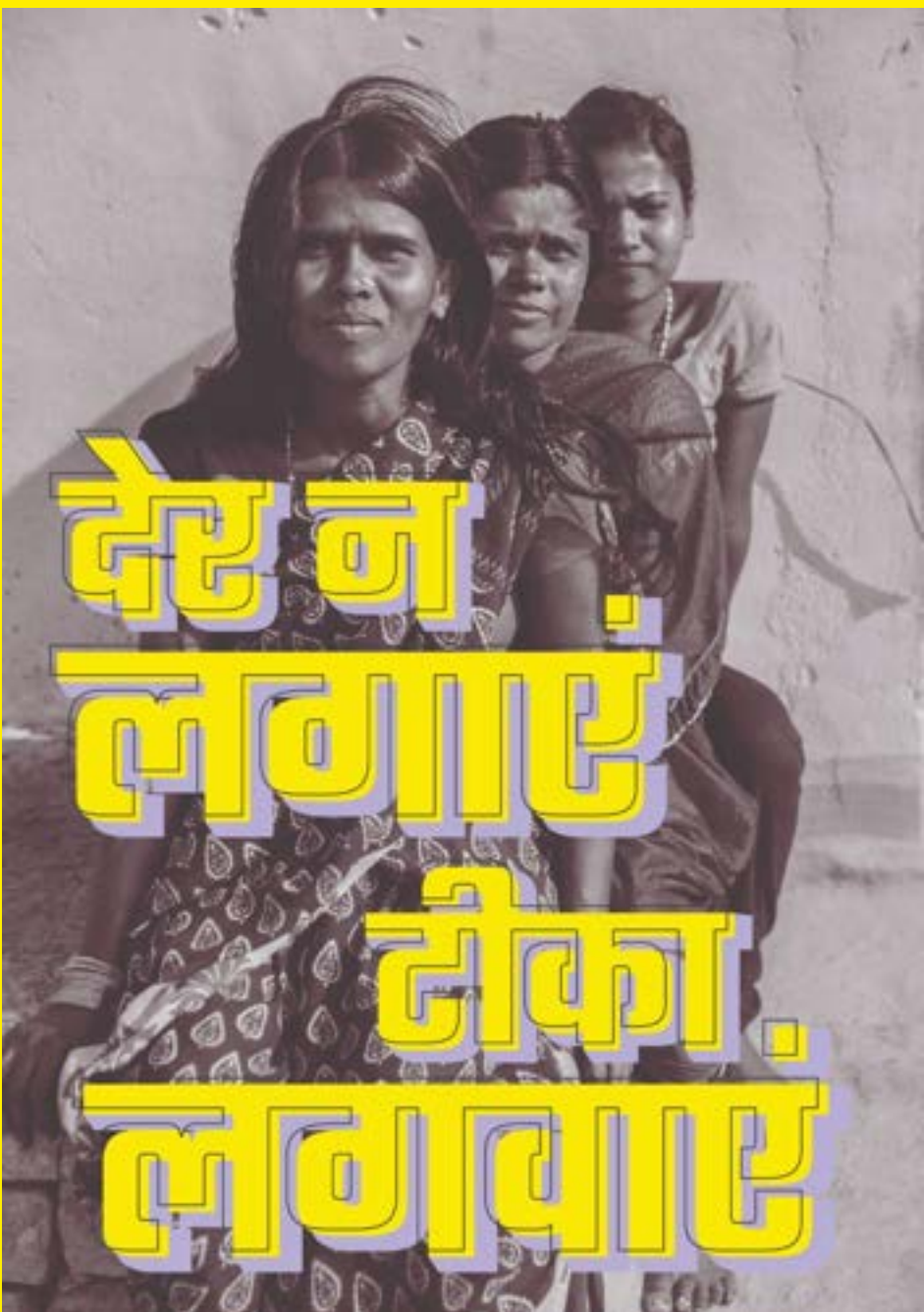


*Translation: Don't delay it, get vaccinated*

Delhi, India's national capital, was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. We collaborated with on-the-ground partners including Chintan, the Centre for Urban and Regional Excellence (CURE) and the Forum for Organized Resource Conservation & Enhancement (FORCE), to survey households in Delhi and design a community-centered campaign to limit the spread and harm of COVID-19.

*"Delhi has been one of India's worst hit cities and COVID-19 brought the health infrastructure to its knees. The people are literally gasping for air."*

*- Saudamini*

We discovered that disadvantaged populations in Delhi's informal settlements had low access to COVID vaccination and healthcare, and were subject to high levels of misinformation. Our partners helped us identify communities that were disproportionately at risk of contracting the virus due to lack of access to preventive measures, including waste pickers, young people and the elderly.

# Understand where your audience is and what they are talking about.

✔✔ **Identify and talk to relevant community leaders or representatives to find out where the conversation is happening.**

    ✔✔ **This might include local community groups, bulletin boards, radio broadcasts, or specific social media platforms.**

✔✔ **Use tools like Google Trends, Infinite Suggest, or Social Mention to see what people are talking about online and identify trending terms and hashtags.**

✔✔ **Run focus groups, panels or surveys to find out more about your audience in relation to your campaign goals.**

## The conversation in Delhi: identifying drivers of vaccine hesitancy

Traditional public health communications weren't reaching our audience. With our on-the-ground partners, we built a localised network of 115 community leaders across Delhi who helped us better understand our audience and how to reach them.

We discovered that online and offline misinformation claiming vaccinations made people sick or caused infertility were fuelling our audience's vaccine hesitancy. They were getting their information from homegrown social media apps like Taka Tak and Moj, and the global Meta platforms (especially WhatsApp), as well as television, radio, local flyers and bulletin boards. Our campaign recruited community voices that our audience trusted, like faith leaders and teachers, and equipped them with accurate, information about COVID-19 to share through these channels.

*"The role of fake news, rumours and poorly-informed local influencers is palpable. Those who expressed (misplaced) fears claimed they received this information from WhatsApp and general chatter."*

**- Bharati Chaturvedi (Founder and Director, Chintan)**



अपनी और अपने
बच्चों की सुरक्षा के लिए

जल्द ही
वैक्सीन लगवाएं

*Translation: To protect yourself and your children, get vaccinated.*

# Make your audience feel their concerns are being heard by showing compassion and empathy.

✓✓ **Use messaging that shows compassion for people's fears, concerns, and hopes. This increases your credibility and trustworthiness, making you more persuasive.**

✓✓ **Be transparent about what we do and don't know in any given situation, but be sure not to repeat false information.**

✓✓ **The messenger is as important as the message. Make sure you are using messengers that your community trusts and with whom they can identify.**

## Using community messengers to communicate with empathy

We recruited messengers who were trusted and influential in their community to help us share accurate content about COVID-19. Our content was shared online through WhatsApp groups and offline, which allowed us to reach people who were active on social media, as well as people who were not.

Messengers included teachers, street vendors, community toilet care-takers, faith leaders, auto-rickshaw drivers and healthcare workers. We empowered them through interactive platforms that connected them with doctors and vaccine scientists, and made sure they had the best information possible.



*Translation: We thank sanitation workers for helping keep us safe from COVID-19. Please cooperate and collaborate with sanitation workers*



*Translation: Thank you asha didi!*

## Results

Vaccine uptake increased in our target communities by 19% compared to other communities where we weren't active. Our tailored communications campaign was particularly successful with women, who saw a 32% uplift in vaccination. The success of our approach showed how powerful it was to use trusted messengers that the community identified with when trying to encourage behavior change.

*"Using a bottom-up approach based on community listening allowed us to create a campaign by, from and to them, based on listening to our audience and applying what they say to our work. This allowed us to rapidly pivot our messaging based on their insights, content and feedback, and create materials that met our audience where they were at any given time."*

*- Saudamini*

# Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

✔✔ **Starting community partnerships too late**

    ✔✔ Work with partners on the ground from the start—they're best positioned to identify gaps and opportunities.

✔✔ **Trying to reach everyone**

    ✔✔ Different audiences require distinct content. The more specifically you define your audience, the more successful your campaign is likely to be.

✔✔ **Staying static**

    ✔✔ Your audience and their needs will evolve throughout your campaign. Keep updating your analysis and content to reflect these changes.

✔✔ **Sticking to just the facts**

    ✔✔ Create empowering messages through storytelling. Personal narratives are key to building empathy.