

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## **Introduction**

**Background:** Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials such as posters, flyers, leaflets, brochures, booklets, etc. are some of the printed means of promoting desired, positive behaviours of people. In Sri Lanka, Health Promotion Bureau (HPB) has been established as the focal point for health promotion and publicity activities in the country. It develops and distributes numerous IEC materials all over the country to address many health issues. These IEC materials are utilized by health institutions at different levels for their health promotion activities.

**Statement of the problem:** It has been observed and experienced that there were issues in utilization of IEC materials produced by HPB. The underutilization of IEC materials had adversely affected planned health promotion activities of other healthcare institutions.

**Objective:** This research project was undertaken to address these issues to facilitate utilization of IEC materials produced by the HPB.

## **Methods**

This was an interventional research project conducted in HPB and RDHS, Gampaha and was designed in three phases. The pre-interventional phase aimed at identifying the mechanisms and also the gaps in accessing IEC materials by Health Education Officers (HEOs) at health district level and Health Education Nursing Officers (HENOs) at hospital levels. Various qualitative and quantitative techniques, namely Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, Direct observations and Surveys were conducted during this phase.

## **Results**

It was evident that many IEC materials produced were stagnating in the Central IEC Stores of the HPB whereas the HEOs and HENOs at district and hospital levels highlighted unavailability of IEC materials on time for their planned health promotion activities. Further, it was found that the existing mechanisms to access information on available IEC materials and place orders were not so effective and most of the HEOs and HENOs were not satisfied with the mechanisms.

Considering the above gaps, an online platform was developed with a categorized list of IEC materials available at HPB, an ordering mechanism, an online feedback mechanism about district level utilization and also with downloadable versions of available IEC materials to be used in an emergency situation.

The post-interventional evaluation was conducted using same techniques in the pre-interventional phase to assess the effectiveness of the interventions. It was revealed that the interventions made the mechanism significantly more user-friendly and convenient. Also, it increased the number of types and amounts of selected IEC materials requested and dispatched after the interventions and thereby improved the utilization. Furthermore, in contrast to pre-interventional assessment there was a significant improvement in level of satisfaction of HEOs and HENOs about accessibility and usefulness of the new mechanism to facilitate utilization of IEC materials.

## **Conclusion and recommendations**

The interventions were effective in facilitating utilization of IEC materials. It was recommended to improve the online system further with inclusion of stock levels of IEC materials available and to implement this project in other health districts to improve utilization of IEC materials island wide.