GM Crops Communications Guide

How to communicate about GM crops to increase acceptance

HELLO!

ROLE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to help advocates for GM crops create communications that help people see GM more positively.

The previous guide shows that a negative narrative about GM that causes people to distrust it.

This guide reiterates the need for a positive narrative to counteract the negative one: That everyday people and farmers actively choose GM for their families and communities out of care and compassion because they know GM lets us care for us.

The primary role of the guide is then to show how that narrative can be translated into communications.

This includes advice on how to represent who supports GM (**protagonists**) and why they support it (**motivation**), as well as what **language** and **imagery** to use to consistently build trust.

Lastly, the guide includes **example communications** which stakeholders and partner organisations can use as inspiration for their communications.



A Positive Narrative about GM crops

A NEGATIVE NARRATIVE CAUSES MILLIONS TO DISTRUST GM

Outsiders and the powerful

use scary science to create unnatural crops

for their own profit

at the expense of people's health and wellbeing.

OUR APPROACH IS TO OVERWRITE THAT WITH A POSITIVE NARRATIVE:

Everyday people and farmers

actively choose GM crops for their families and communities,

out of care and compassion

because they know GM lets us care for us.



How to translate the narrative into messaging and communications

OUR NARRATIVE

The story <u>behind</u> all of our communications.

Not language we communicate.

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OUR CORE MESSAGE:

The simplest expression of our message.
This is how we communicate the narrative to audiences.



OUR CORE MESSAGE:







"GM IS GOOD FOR US"







The core message works alongside a range of benefits

GOOD FOR OUR PROSPERITY

GOOD FOR OUR SECURITY

GOOD FOR OUR HEALTH

GOOD FOR OUR GENVIRONMENT

GOOD FOR OUR AUTONOMY

- Better harvests are good for us.
- Full markets are good for us.
- Living without fear of starvation? That's good for us.
- A feast on every table is good for us.
- We're growing a prosperous future with GM.
- Let's grow our yields with stronger crops.
- We're growing towards selfsufficiency.

- Stronger crops are good for us.
- Crops eaten by people, not insects? Good for us.
- Looking forward to a good harvest. That's good for us.
- Stronger crops help us to protect our communities.
- We want our families' food supply to be safe and secure.
- That's why we support GM.

- Nutritious meals are good for us.
- Food without pesticides is good for us.
- Healthy food is good for us.
- GM means healthy crops which means healthy food which means healthy lives.
- GM protects our health by protecting our food.
- We're growing a healthier future with GM.
- Let's grow healthier meals.

- Fewer pesticides in the soil good for us.
- Insect-resistant crops are good for us.
- We have only one country.
 GM helps us protect it and our biodiversity.
- We're growing a healthier environment with GM.

• Let's protect our

biodiversity. Lets grow GM.

- Growing what we want to grow is good for us.
- Let us grow with GMO
- Our crops, our land, our choice.
- Let our farmers choose what crops they grow.
- More choice is good for us.
- GM is freedom because it gives us choice.
- GM puts us in control.
- I choose GM because it's what's best for my family.

"... GM IS GOOD FOR US"

"GM is good for us" is the conclusion we always want the audience to reach.

Any given execution will have a specific point to make...



... which can be naturally punctuated with our core message.

Core messaging can flex to suit different stages of GM adoption

If GM crops are NOT currently commercialized

Core message: GM COULD BE GOOD FOR US

- Give voice to everyday people calling for GM to be adopted
- Express (through the voices of everyday people) how GM will benefit them
- Paint a vision of a brighter future with GM
- Use future tense (e.g. We could, We will, We can)







If GM crops are commercialized

Core message: GM IS GOOD FOR US

- Show everyday people actively using and enjoying GM crops with happy, healthy results
- Show local people doing any or all of these as appropriate: developing, testing, distributing, growing, harvesting, and eating GM crops
- Demonstrate benefits to local people and farmers (through their voices)







The core messaging can flex for different protagonists. Sometimes "us" is a person and their family, other times it is all the people of a country.

"GM IS GOOD FOR US"

Good for Families

Good for Farmers

Good for Communities

Good for Nigeria

Good for Africa

The building blocks of powerful communications

The next section shows how 'GM is good for us' is most powerful when:

- ✓ It's delivered by the right protagonists everyday people and farmers.
- ✓ It's clear they make an active, independent choice to support what they know is best for them.
- ✓ We show that they are motivated by care and compassion for their families and communities.
- ✓ We use language and imagery that focus the conversation on the caring motives behind GM and the good it does for everyday people.

SHOW THAT EVERYDAY PEOPLE AND FARMERS BELIEVE

"GM IS GOOD FOR US"

Everyday People and Farmers

✓ DO

Where possible communications should be written from the **point of view** of and in the voice of:

- Everyday people or farmers
- Figures trusted to have the interests of ordinary people at heart

Show everyday people **recognising** and **embracing** the many ways GM makes their lives better

Show GM **empowers** people to build the **prosperous** life they want for themselves and their families.

Show the positive effects of GM on the daily lives of everyday people:

- Prosperous farms with crops growing rich and full
- Happy farmers with abundant harvests
- Plentiful, delicious, nutritious food in markets and homes
- Well-fed, healthy people enjoying the bounty and security that GM brings







Everyday People and Farmers

✓ DO

Use the first person plural in written language – **We, us, our, let's...**

Localise names, settings, and other details so they truly feel like 'one of us'

Authenticity is key. Use real people or describe real attitudes and actions.

Show these people in **everyday settings** (at home, on the farm, at markets).





Everyday People and Farmers

X DON'T

Highlight protagonists whose reasons for 'pushing' GM are unclear or suspect:

- Outsiders (including Westerners)
- Corporations
- Powerful people or experts not trusted to share local people's interests





Everyday People and Farmers: example imagery



The voice of Everyday People and Farmers speaking as one

Let's grow something for our families.

Let's grow something for our neighbours.

Let's grow something for our children and their children.

Let's grow something that isn't killed by drought.

Let's grow something that feeds us, not the insects.

Let's grow something that keeps famine and hunger from our doors.

Let's grow something that we choose to grow.

Let's grow something that feeds our people and our independence.

Let's grow something that says we believe in the facts not the scare-mongering.

Let's grow a movement, not just a crop.

Let's grow a future beyond our own lives.

Let's grow something that grows.

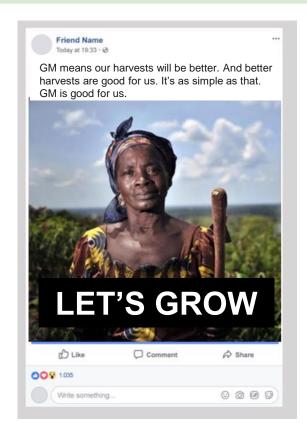
Language like this would work especially well when motivating a large group to see the potential of GM and join the cause.

Everyday people and farmers call for GMO: Example communication



Language like this works well in more colloquial contexts. It's not as flexible as the core message but is punchy and memorable.

Everyday People and Farmers: example communication





This kind of plainspoken language is a good way to add authenticity to the movement in support of GM – giving a voice to everyday people

SHOW THE **ACTIVE CHOICE** BEHIND

"GM IS GOOD FOR US"

Active Choice

✓ DO

Show ordinary people and farmers **independently choosing** to grow, cook, and eat GM crops with **confidence** and **happy**, **healthy results**

Declare that people deserve the **independence** and autonomy to grow and eat what's best for them

Give them a voice that allows them to express their choice - GM crops are something they want because they know how good they will be for them and their families.



Active Choice

X DON'T

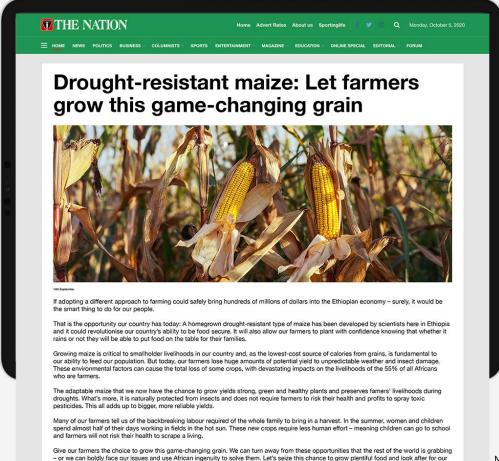
Give undue prominence to the interests of government figures, large corporations or outside experts.

Don't make GM seem like something the 'higher ups' have decided upon that is simply happening to everyday people.





Active Choice: example communication



own people now and tomorrow. There's no denying it's good for all of us.

This kind of messaging brings the voice of farmers to the fore and frames opponents of GM as opponents of farmers.

Media: Press/Blog/Owned media /Advocacy materials

Active Choice: example communication



Language like this works well in more colloquial contexts. It's not as flexible as the core message but is punchy and memorable.

Active Choice: example communications





Friend Name

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Write something...

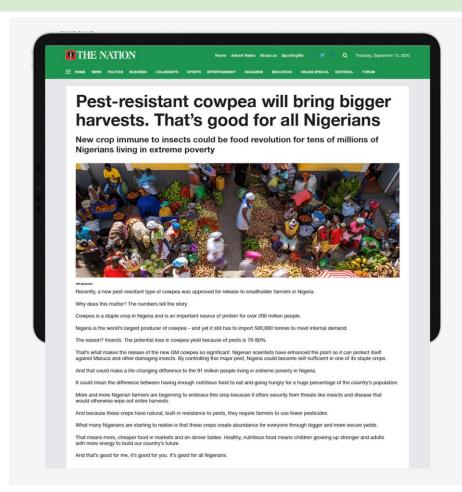
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Wherever possible, work with people to help them express messaging in words that feel natural for them.

Active Choice: example communication



Active Choice: example communication



A good way to ladder up the benefits of GM. When "good for us" means good for all the people of the country.

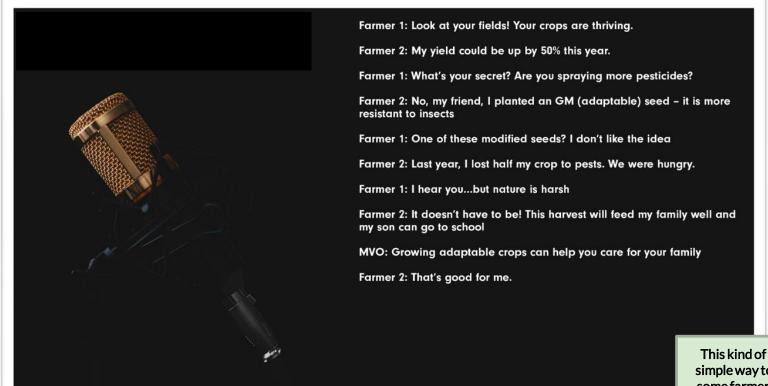
Media: Press/Blog/Owned media/ Advocacy materials

Explaining our active choice: example Copy

We're producing crops that can withstand drought That offer security from the threat of insects and climate change That need fewer chemical pesticides to thrive We're growing a secure future We're sowing fields full of life-giving plants Bursting with plentiful, nutritious food That will fill our bellies and care for our children. We're growing a healthier future Our vibrant farms and markets are creating prosperity Giving our people more choices And the opportunity to choose a better life For themselves, their family and their community This is how we're Growing our Future

This kind of argument works well when there is more time or space to make the case for choosing GM.

Explaining the active choice: example radio ad



This kind of role play is a simple way to explain why some farmers choose GM and to make others feel like it is okay to change their mind.

Example reply to skeptics: GM is our active choice

It's a simple choice. We grow crops that can survive insects and drought. Or we grow crops that can't.

We protect the food that sustains our loved ones and communities. Or we struggle to survive.

We care for our land and use it to cultivate prosperity. Or we watch our natural birthright wither away.

Lofty arguments about breeding methods must not distract us from what GM crops can do for ordinary people.

These plants can help us look after ourselves – any caring person would make the right choice for our country. If we embrace an agriculture based on caring values that puts the good of our people first, we can be the generation takes our people's health, wealth and happiness into our own hands.

This is our chance raise our voices and ask for what we want. Let's remember why we grow – because it's good for us.

> Language like this works well if and when someone is asked to explain their choice or if they are questioned whether it really is their choice.

SHOW THE CARE AND COMPASSION BEHIND

"GM IS GOOD FOR US"

Care and Compassion

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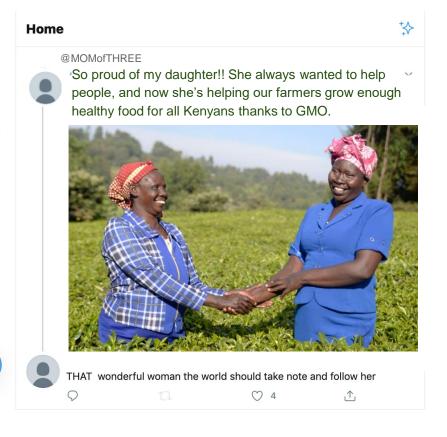
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Show that everyday people's motivation for embracing GM is their care and concern for their families and communities.

Convey that **people who care about people** support GM. Feature stories of successful local communities and give voice to community influencers.

Show **local people** helping to **develop and distribute** GM crops because they want to **help others.**



Care and Compassion

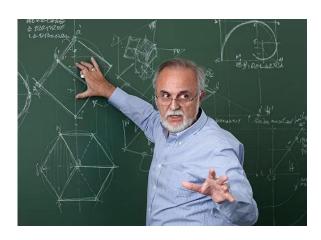
X DON'T

Make the scientific case for GM while **not making it clear** what the speakers' or advocates' real motives or interests are - and whether they are really aligned with those of everyday people.

Focus on **facts and figures** rather than emotions or language that conveys compassionate motivation.

Depend on **expertise** to give an advocate credibility without establishing their motives

Fail to counter suspicions that motives are self-interested or profit-driven.







Language like this helps to highlight the links between healthy crops and healthy food and emphasises how GM benefits the health of everyday people.





Language like this works well in more colloquial contexts. It's not as flexible as the core message but is punchy and memorable.



This is a good way to ladder the benefits of GM. Showing that it is good for 'us' the farmers as well as 'us' the people of this country.





Where possible, it's good to use imagery and wording that is emphatic about the potential of GM



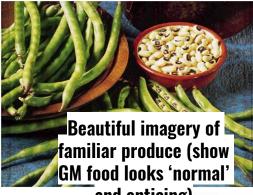




Care and Compassion: example imagery















Example reply to skeptics: GM is care and compassion

Ordinary Kenyans embrace GM crops because they see them for what they are.

When we see the old crops torn apart by parasites, crushed by rot, strangled by drought - as inedible or unviable as dust - and then we see GM crops growing strong and healthy, we know which one a compassionate person would want for their own country.

That is why we welcome GM crops. Because people who care about our country see the good that it can do for us.

We are the mothers of Kenya who want our families to have plenty to eat, whatever the future brings.

We are the farmers of Kenya who want to prosper by growing as much as we can for this nation.

We are every Kenyan who wants to protect our people by protecting our environment and biodiversity.

We welcome GM because in 2020, there is still not enough nutritious food for all our people to be healthy. And we know that with GM, there can be.

We know GM can prevent our crops from dying. Protect crops from parasites and disease.

Some people want to debate fine details of breeding methods.

But we are the quiet majority who put the good of our country, our communities and our families first, so for us the answer is clear.

The verdict is in – GM is good for us.

This is a good way to meet criticism – draw on the lived experiences of everyday people and farmers – show that they choose GM for all the right reasons.

Example reply to skeptics: Those who care support GM



Grandma: Eat your vegetables

Kid: But I don't like them, grandma.

Grandma: You know, when I was a girl, we often didn't have enough food to eat.

Kid: I don't believe you!

Grandma: It's true. Insects ate our crops in the fields.

Kid: Why?

Grandma: Some people thought pest-resistant crops were bad for us and didn't want us to grow them.

Kid: Worse than being hungry?

Grandma: The people who didn't want us to grow them, didn't know what it was to go hungry.

Kid: That's just silly!

Grandma: Yes, my girl. Now we know better.

MVO: Pest-resist crops can help us build a sustainable future. That's good for all of us.

This kind of role play is a simple way to make the case for how GM is in the interests of everyday families.

Summary

STRATEGIC SUMMARY

DISPLACE NEGATIVE NARRATIVE	AMPLIFY PO

SITIVE NARRATIVE

WANTED BY EVERYDAY PEOPLE & FARMERS

PUSHED BY OUTSIDERS & POWERFUL

MOTIVATED BY PROFIT

UPSTREAM PROCESS (GM) CROPS THAT 'AREN'T BAD FOR YOU'

DOWNSTREAM BENEFIT (PEST RESISTANT) DELICIOUS, HEALTHY FOOD

IN THE INTERESTS OF THE FEW

A PROGRESSIVE GRASSROOTS MOVEMENT

MOTIVATED BY CARE

CROPS IN HANDS OF SCIENTISTS

CROPS IN THE HANDS OF FARMERS

SETTING: LAB, CONFERENCE ROOM

SETTING: FARM, DINNER TABLE

OUR NARRATIVE

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Not language we communicate.

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out of care and compassion

because they know GM lets us care for us.

OUR CORE MESSAGE:

The simplest expression of our message.

This is how we communicate the narrative to audiences.



WHEN CREATING COMMS

Protagonists should be EVERYDAY PEOPLE AND FARMERS You should... Use the first person plural: We, us, our, let's... Show everyday settings (farm, home). Localise names and other details You could say... "Let's grow something for our families." "Stronger crops are good for us.' "We are growing self-sufficiency with GM.'

Show their ACTIVE CHOICE to support GM for their families and communities You should... Share stories of ordinary people exercising their autonomy to make an independent choice to favour GM. Amplify the voices of farmers demanding the opportunity to grow GM crops. You could say... 'I choose health. I choose GM.' 'We want to grow our prosperity.' 'I choose what's best for my kids. That's why I choose GM.'

so they feel like 'one of us'

WHEN CREATING COMMS

Show their motivation is CARE AND COMPASSION	
You should	You could say
Convey that people who care about people support GM. Show local people helping to develop and distribute GM crops because they want to	'Healthy crops, healthy food, healthy lives.' "Now that crops are healthier, my family are healthier too." 'People who care about people
() 20 ()	Convey that people who care about people support GM. Show local people helping to develop and distribute GM

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OUR CORE MESSAGE:







"GM IS GOOD FOR US"







Final thought.

Food on the table is good for us... and our families

Fewer chemical pesticides are good for us... and our environment

Higher yields are good for us... and our country

Life without the feat of drought or famine is good for us ... and our neighbours

Nutritious meals are good for us... and our children

The power to choose what we grow is good for us... and our self-respect

So when they ask us 'What do you think of GM crops?'

We say 'Good for us.

THANKYOU