

<b>Headline</b>	How to beat campaign fatigue among youth		
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## MY LIFE

# How to beat campaign fatigue among youths

Perennial campaigns to turn people away from drugs, get them to clear their trays after eating, or not to drink and drive... Are they working on the young? How best to grab youths' attention? Youthlink writers have their say

### Videos by youths for youths

PLACE the ball in their court by giving them the opportunity to plan, direct and produce a video for their peers.

This can be used, for example, for anti-drug campaigns. Youths can be encouraged to devise a storyline and film a short 10-minute video based on their interpretation of the theme, say, A Drugged Life.

I wouldn't hesitate to take part - in fact, my plot would revolve around how a bright young student's life spirals out of control after succumbing to peer pressure by smoking his first marijuana joint.

Just as a picture paints a thousand words, a thought-provoking video can evoke strong feelings against drugs.

The winning film entry should be given some airtime in local cinemas. This would instill a sense of pride in the winning team, apart from transmitting the anti-drug message to a wider audience.

Endowing youths with the autonomy to contribute to social marketing campaigns will achieve the dual purpose of helping them to stay off drugs and engaging them.

**Rachel Chan, 26, recently graduated from the University of Queensland with a bachelor's degree in business communication.**

### Speak in our language

TO CREATE a successful campaign, organisations need to target what youths think they can do in their own capacity as learning individuals. As they grow up, they become more aware of their community and their contribution to it.

The Get Your Sexy Back campaign to curb drink-driving and the Speak Good Mandarin drive are prime examples of how organisations speak to youths effectively.

The Speak Good Mandarin campaign's multiple-choice posters that adorned the gates of the MRT stations caught the eyes of many of my classmates and we even tuned in closely to the game show on Channel 8 to appreciate interesting tidbits on language and culture.

Through it, I embarked on an exploration of famous Chinese literary gems and relived my school days in grasping Chinese proverbs and idioms. As a Thai Chinese, this has helped me identify with my Chinese heritage, encouraging me to speak the

language and thus understanding the Chinese side of me.

**Jonathan Liautrakul, 20, has a place to read arts and social sciences at the National University of Singapore.**

### Cut down on number of campaigns

PRACTISE Safe Sex, Be Courteous, Don't Drink and Drive, Stop Binge Drinking, Don't Do Drugs, Speak Good Mandarin, Speak Good English...

Because of relentless campaign bombardment, my peers and I suffer from campaign fatigue.

The sheer number of campaigns in a year forces agencies to employ shock tactics in order to make theirs stand out. Just look at the graphic images employed by the Quit Smoking Campaign.

In fact, many of my friends, non-smokers included, simply shrug off the gruesome pictures on cigarette packets.

This just shows how the message has been diluted because of the outrageous lengths that some campaigns have gone to, to prove a point.

I propose reducing the number of campaigns a year. If agencies are serious about the messages they are trying to convey, they need to meet and decide which ones to feature that year, and how to do so.

If not, we'll just shrug off the tiresome preaching.

**Eef Gerard Van Emmerik, 21, is a first-year law student at the Singapore Management University.**

### The message should start at home

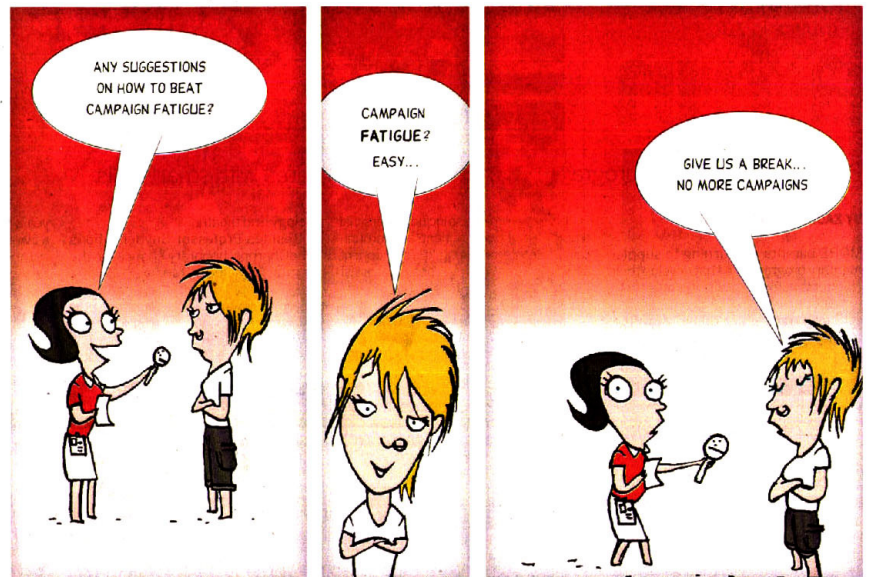
RATHER than placing the burden solely on organisations to preach values to youths, I believe parents too should play their part in inculcating the messages that these organisations want to spread.

Since I was a child, my parents have made sure I cultivated good habits such as clearing the table after every meal, whether we were dining at home or outside.

I believe youths will inevitably become thoughtful individuals if such practices are enforced at home on a daily basis.

Hence, I suggest campaign organisers target parents on top of youths, to remind them of their unique position to influence the latter at home.

Campaigns will then be more effective



ST ILLUSTRATION: ADAM LEE

in making youths socially conscious, because no fleeting advertisement can impart the kind of understanding and awareness parents can provide their children.

Even to this day, I credit my family's constant emphasis on good values in making me a socially conscious person.

**Nicholas Lim, 20, has a place to read business at Nanyang Technological University.**

### Engage youths with fun activities

CYNICAL as we are, we will take to campaigns when we are actually stakeholders or active participants in them.

If we want to get our peers to pick up their dishes, we can have a machine that lights up and gives discounts in stored-value membership cards for returning trays.

Youths can also be galvanised to organise a camp where young drink-driving offenders or ex-drug addicts testify about their experiences. All these should be done with minimum adult supervision.

It is also important to make it fun to spread the message. We want to do the right thing, but most of us do not want to appear prudish as it is generally uncool.

How about public debates between youths on the streets of the Orchard Road area on the merits and drawbacks of drink-driving? Or doing it through Twitter, where pop stars voice their opinions on youth issues? More photography and video contests with campaign slogans as material are the way to go too.

It is about making sure youths enjoy getting involved.

**Alex Liam, 21, is currently serving national service.**