

# COMEDY *in* [SOCIAL] ACTION

## COMEDY EVOKES

*hope and joy, emotions not typically imagined in more somber storytelling about complex social issues. But is emotional response enough to propel attitude change, beyond sharing and setting a media agenda?*

### Entry into Difficult Topics

To capture attention, allow shared laughter and honest conversation, pairing comedy with more serious additional information points to an effective route.

### A Coping Mechanism for the Powerless

For individuals living in tough situations, comedy serves a cultural connection function. It allows them to communicate, to commiserate, and to find optimism and hope.

### Offering Frames of Hope & Optimism

A mixed-message diet—including positive frames that offer positive perspectives and emotions, rather than nearly exclusively dire scenarios that can lead to chronic audience exhaustion and disengagement—may be a path to new engagement.<sup>1</sup>

### Creating Memorable Messages About Taboo Topics

Research from marketing and advertising documents the ability of humorous messages to cut through message clutter, attract attention and be more memorable than non-funny messages.<sup>2</sup>

### Amplifying Awareness Through Sharing

In the cluttered digital era, “humor has been found to be an important determinant in sharing.”<sup>3</sup>

### Reinforcing Existing Calls to Action

Employing comedy to attract attention and bring audiences into a cause—to donate or take other action—works in service of a serious goal.



<sup>1</sup> Cameron, J. (2015). Can poverty be funny? The serious use of humour as a strategy of public engagement for global justice. *Third World Quarterly*, 36(2), 274-290.

<sup>2</sup> Blanc, N., & Brigaud, E. (2014). Humor in print health advertisements: Enhanced attention, privileged recognition, and persuasiveness of preventive messages. *Health Communication*, 29, 669-677.

<sup>3</sup> Campo, S., Askelson, N. M., Spies, E., Boxer, C., Sharp, K. M., Losch, M. E., (2013). “Wow, that was funny”: The value of exposure and humor in fostering campaign message sharing. *Social Marketing Quarterly*, 19(2), 84-96.