FROM: GOVERNMENT, TO: CITIZENS - WRITING WITH CARE -

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents an *Effective Communications Strategy* implemented by an agency of the Colombian Government that was based on the integration of insights from evidence-based policy design, design thinking, behavioral economics and plain language techniques. Effective communication creates an emotional connection that effectively communicates a message. It also encourage citizens to take action. The strategy encouraged citizens and businesses to present accurate reports and pay contributions to the Social Protection System. First, we describe how we integrated insights from different disciplines in order to design and implement an *Effective Communications Strategy*. We then show how we applied this integration into mass-mail letters and e-mails sent to employees in order to encourage them to act as first line auditors of their employers and to enforce their rights. As we advanced in the design thinking process the percentage of employees who opened and read the letters increased from 17 to 94%. This was a significant result, achieved before it was decided to implement the strategy on a larger scale. The paper represents an attempt to contribute to the way governments can design and implement effective communications by integrating and applying knowledge from different disciplines.

KEYWORDS: *Social Protection System, fiscal and financial sustainability, contributions, compliance, behavioral economics, design thinking, plain language, prototyping.*

INTRODUCTION

Social Protection Systems (SPS) are a set of guarantees provided by governments in order to make a positive difference to the lives of citizens. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2012, 5), these guarantees are: *i*) access to essential health care; *ii*) basic income security, access to nutrition, education and care for children, *iii*) basic income security for citizens of active age who are unable to earn sufficient income (e.g. in case of sickness, unemployment, maternity and disability) and, *iv*) basic income security for the elderly (e.g. pensions). These guarantees "are an economic and social necessity for development and progress, and an important tool to prevent and reduce poverty, inequality and social exclusion and insecurity" (ILO, 2012, 31).

'Financial and fiscal sustainability' is one of the essential principles on which SPS rely to prevent and reduce poverty, inequality, social exclusion and insecurity. This principle balances short- and long-term benefits with the cost of the System (ILO, 2012, 17).

In Colombia, the 'financial and fiscal sustainability' principle is undermined by the existence of high levels of evasion of the contributions that finance the SPS. Employers, employees and the self-employed are obliged to contribute to the System. However, a considerable number of people do not fully comply with their obligations. According to the UGPP (*Unidad de Gestión Pensional y Parafiscales*), the Colombian government agency responsible for promoting social security and payroll tax compliance, contributors evaded 26.8% of their obligations in 2012 (UGPP, 2013, 1). This percentage corresponds to approximately USD 7.3 billion per year. Such evasion levels have important social impacts such as economic insecurity, social exclusion and an unhealthy and unproductive workforce (ILO, 2012, 17).

Salamanca, J., Desmet, P., Burbano, A., Ludden, G., Maya, J. (Eds.). Proceedings of the Colors of Care: The 9th International Conference on Design & Emotion.
Bogotá, October 6-10, 2014. Ediciones Uniandes, Bogotá, 2014. ISBN: 978-958-774-070-7

The UGPP has been working to design and implement innovative strategies intended to reduce evasion and, therefore, guarantee financial and fiscal sustainability of an SPS that makes a difference in people's lives. Audits (the traditional way to enforce compliance) are not feasible if they are the only strategy implemented by a government. Due to the finite nature of resources, the UGPP could never reach all evaders by using audits, because they are expensive, and the number of evaders is high. Also, if audits are not implemented jointly with other strategies that aim to gain the trust of contributors and generate the perception that government is an ally that defends citizens' rights, they might encourage more evasion instead of reducing it (Swedish Tax Agency, 2005).

This paper aims to describe one such innovative strategy, which we call *Effective Communications*. As advisors to the UGPP in the design and implementation of this strategy, we integrated insights from evidence-based policy design, design thinking, behavioral economics and plain language techniques. The paper describes the integration process of these insights, and their expected effects on citizens' behavior.

We also present a specific application of this strategy, which consisted of 615,000 e-mails and letters sent to employees. In these communications the UGPP *i*) informed employees about the payments made by their employers on their behalf; *ii*) encouraged them to compare those payments with the deductions made by their employers from their salaries; and, *iii*) gave them instructions on how to act if there were discrepancies between these deductions and their employer contributions (if deductions were higher than payments this might mean that the employer was retaining a fraction of the salary they should have been contributing to the system). Before sending the letter en masse to 615,000 employees, we developed various prototypes, which evolved as we integrated knowledge drawn from design thinking and other approaches. With the first prototype we encouraged only 17% of employees to open and read the letters, whilst in the last version 94% of employees did so. This was an important result, achieved before deciding to carry out the mass mail-out.

The research presented in this paper is intended to contribute to the ways in which governments can formulate and implement strategies that effectively influence behavior. Although this is not necessarily a trend in developed countries, in developing countries such as Colombia, governments usually rely on 'traditional' knowledge (e.g. law, economics, etc.) to design and implement policies, generally turning to regulatory proposals in order to promote compliance. Governments can integrate design and other non-traditional approaches at any stage during the public development process, in order to produce effective strategies.

In particular, this work is a contribution to the way governments communicate with their citizens. In the case of the UGPP, this strategy is the first step in a new direction towards improving communication with contributors. It acknowledges the importance of using trans-disciplinary knowledge; it recalls the usefulness of testing policies on a small scale before applying them on a larger scale; it recognizes the power of prototyping; and it uses plain language in order to communicate with citizens in a simple and transparent manner, without punitive intention. It is a new direction that requires governments to "write with care".

THE CHALLENGE: PROMOTING SOCIAL PROTECTION CONTRIBUTIONS COMPLIANCE THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS

Evasion is measured as the difference between potential contributions and actual contributions made to the SPS. In 2012 the UGPP estimated evasion of SPS contributions for the first time in Colombian history. This estimate was made on the basis of information from 60,000 individuals that were statistically representative of the population obliged to contribute to the SPS. The estimate indicated that in 2012 evasion amounted to 26.8%, corresponding to USD 7.3 billion. Of those USD 7.3 billion, USD 4.28 billion represented evasion in the pension system (59% of total evasion), and USD 2.61 billion evasion in the health care system (36% of total evasion) (the UGPP, 2013, 1-2).

The estimate also indicated that there were many people evading small amounts of money. Most individuals evaded on average between USD 25 and USD 75 per month. Consequently, traditional strategies such as desk audits and regulatory initiatives were not cost-effective, because they were very expensive compared to the potential resources that they might help recover. In response, we proposed alternative, cost-effective, strategies that might change people's behavior. Particularly, we came up with the *Effective Communications Strategy* that we present in this paper.

The purpose of this communication strategy was *i*) to motivate people to pay attention to what the UGPP had to say to them, *ii*) to provide information that mattered to people, and *iii*) to give clear instructions to people about how to start complying with their SPS obligations.

To accomplish that purpose we integrated tools from plain language techniques, behavioral economics, evidence-based policymaking and design thinking. Plain language was necessary to design a message according to the reader's point of view. Behavioral economics promoted a change in the behavior of readers, encouraging them to verify that the contributions made by their employers were filed accurately. Evidence-based policy provided the tools necessary for the design of the prototypes that would produce the scientific evidence necessary to validate the initiative. Design thinking was central to the iterative learning process developed with the use of prototypes and the human centered approach that allowed the team to assume the reader's position.

The communication channel

Along with staff from the UGPP we decided that the best way to communicate with people in order to influence their behavior and thus promote compliance, was by sending them e-mails and/or letters. The UGPP needed to provide confidential information to each individual, so massive generic communications (e.g. advertisements) were not useful. Also, the UGPP had access to individuals' home and e-mail addresses, which facilitated the use of letters and e-mail. Finally, e-mails and letters were also more cost-effective than desk audits and the UGPP had experience in their use.

Letters and e-mails were also an alternative to traditional regulation, which is usually supported by the publication of laws or other legal documents. The Organization for Cooperation and Development (OECD) an intergovernmental organization that gathers best practices in public policy around the world, has stated that e-mails and/or letters are a useful alternative to regulation when governments seek to change behavior "through the provision of greater information or changing the distribution of information. That is, [advancing] information which may be available to some businesses and consumers and not to others... The objective may be to provide information that is either too difficult for consumers to collect themselves or would be too costly to gather" (OECD, 2012, 51).

The use of multiple tools for designing and testing communications

Besides selecting the communication channel, we also had to be able to communicate a message effectively. It is well documented that governments have difficulty in communicating in a simple and easily understood manner (Federal Plain Language Guidelines, 2011). We used plain language techniques and insights from behavioral economics to overcome this difficulty and to induce people to act according to the purpose of the messages.

Plain language (Sunstein, 2011, 1) encourages greater transparency and accountability on the part of governments urging them to communicate using clear and concise messages written with the reader in mind (Plain English Campaign). Implementing plain language in government communications can "improve public understanding, save money and increase efficiency, reduce the need for the public to seek clarification from agency staff, improve public understanding of agency requirements, reduce resources spent on enforcement and reduce the number of errors that are made and thus the amount of time and effort that the agency and the public need to devote to correcting errors" (Sunstein, 2011, 2). According to the Australian Government, the principles of plain language are: *i*) choose the straightforward option, *ii*) keep sentences short, *iii*) use an active voice, *iv*) use you and we, *v*) give instructions directly, *vi*) choose words appropriate for the readers, *vii*) avoid nominalizations, and *viii*) use lists (Government of South Australia).

For example, the Internal Revenue Service (the US tax agency) has started to transform its communications using plain language techniques. The director of the IRS identified the need to transform the organization's communications when she received a letter about her tax return and had to read it five times before she understood what it was saying (Center for American Progress, 2011). The project's results were the redesign of "85 of the most commonly sent letters, accounting for 50 percent of the correspondence volume. New notices were based on nine prototypes, each of which had been tested for user-friendliness by a sample of 400 representative taxpayers" (Center for American Progress, 2011).

Behavioral economics insights are useful for evaluating empirically how people react to different messages, which may vary in form and content, and for understanding the way people react to those messages. For example, the Behavioral Insights Team (BIT) in the United Kingdom has carried out several experiments within the process of designing effective communications to reduce fraud, error and debt, based on seven lessons from behavioral economics. These lessons are: 1) make it easy (e.g. produce easy to follow instructions), 2) highlight key messages, 3) use personal language, 4) prompt honesty and key moments, 5) tell people what others are doing, 6) reward desired behavior, and 7) highlight the risk and impact of dishonesty (Behavioral Insights Team, 2012, 4). One particular experiment conducted by the BIT was related to the use of color in letters. In this experiment the BIT showed how highlighting a section of the message with bright red or blue makes it more likely to be believed than using green or yellow (Behavioral Insights Team, 2012, 10). The experiments conducted by the BIT also concluded that people commonly focus on information given at the beginning of letters.

We decided to test the impact of the initiative and make the corresponding adjustments using one of the central tools of evidence-based policy and design thinking: prototyping. Prototypes allow governments to test, evaluate and adjust initiatives before they are implemented on a larger scale (Nesta, 2011). Prototyping in government *i*) provides an opportunity to test new ideas without the pressure of obtaining immediate positive results, *ii*) facilitates the participation of a wide range of actors that are interested in the testing occurring; *iii*) allows experimentation over short time periods and, *iv*) enables an iterative learning environment (Nesta & ThinkPublic, 4). Prototyping is also useful to test the cost-effectiveness of a policy in terms of fulfilling its objectives and it shows others how to implement a successful public policy (Ettelt *et al*., 2013).

Besides prototypes, we used three additional elements of design thinking: *i*) designing within the practical constraints of sending a large number of communications, *ii*) creating an interdisciplinary team, and *iii*) implementing a human centered perspective with input from readers. For the first element, we identified the feasibility, viability and desirability of the initiative, taking into account the approach developed by the design consultancy IDEO that "the first stage of the design process is often about discovering which constraints are important and establishing a framework for evaluating them" (Brown, 2009). For the second element, we formed an interdisciplinary team of lawyers, engineers, economists, architects and designers to create collective ownership of ideas. For the third element, we used a human-centered approach

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to increase the likelihood of developing a breakthrough idea from the standpoint of the reader (Brown, 2009). To do this, we monitored readers' responses to every prototype through surveys. We also incorporated design thinking in the iterative use of prototyping. We validated the strategy through two prototypes that allowed us to "avoid costly mistakes such as becoming too complex too early and sticking with a weak idea for too long" (Brown, 2009).

THE APPLICATION: ONE PAGE LETTER

All the elements described in the last section were integrated and applied to the design of a letter that effectively alerted employees about the payments that their employers made to the SPS on their behalf. We needed to empower the employees through letters and e-mails so they could act as auditors of their employers. Our goal was to expose the behavior of dishonest employers by reducing the information asymmetries that existed between employers and employees regarding the accurate payment of the social security contributions, so that they could enforce their rights.

In the e-mails or physical letters sent to the homes of employees, we provided information about the taxable income declared by the employer on behalf of the employee. The communication also gave information about the total amount of contributions made by the employer to the pension and healthcare systems and the deductions that the employer should have made in order to contribute the correct amount. Through these communications the UGPP invited employees to contrast the information they received with the payroll vouchers that their employers gave them and to follow several steps if there was a difference.

To test the effectiveness of the communication we developed one field experiment using two prototypes. We sent over 1,492 letters in the experimentation phase and 615,000 letters during the large-scale implementation phase (mass mail-out).

The process was divided into three phases: *i*) experiment planning, *ii*) experiment implementation including two small-scale prototypes and *iii*) mass mail-outs of the letter and e-mails to 615,000 employees.

Phase 1: Planning the Experiment

The experiment-planning phase consisted of i) the identification of the profiles of the employees to whom the communication (by letter and e-mail) would be sent and ii) the first draft of the communication.

Identification of the profiles

The selection of the people who would receive the communication was based on the identification of employers who might pay less than they were obliged to (inaccurate contributions). Ideally we should have identified those who were also hiding information from their employees, but this was not possible to determine because only employers have access to this information.

To identify employers who potentially provide incorrect information the team worked with the same data used in the 2012 estimate of evasion. We carried out a statistical analysis to understand the factors that increase the probability of being an employee whose employer is making inaccurate contributions. Through this analysis we found that there is a 45% probability or higher that inaccurate contributions will have been made if employees: *i*) earned USD 750 or more on a monthly basis; *ii*) worked in real estate activities, in organizations which provide health services or in the retail trade; *iii*) worked in firms with 10 or more employees and, *iv*) did not live in the Atlantic (Caribbean) Region. So, the communications were targeted at employees with these characteristics

One additional condition was considered in the particular case of the e-mails: employees had to be 40 years old or younger. This was based on the findings of five different studies by the Colombian Ministry of Information Technologies and Communications regarding the relationship between citizen demographics and e-mail use (Coneus, K. Y Schleife, K., 2010; MinTic, 2010; MinTic et al., 2010; MinTic *et al.*, 2012; DANE, 2013).

First Draft: Content proposal

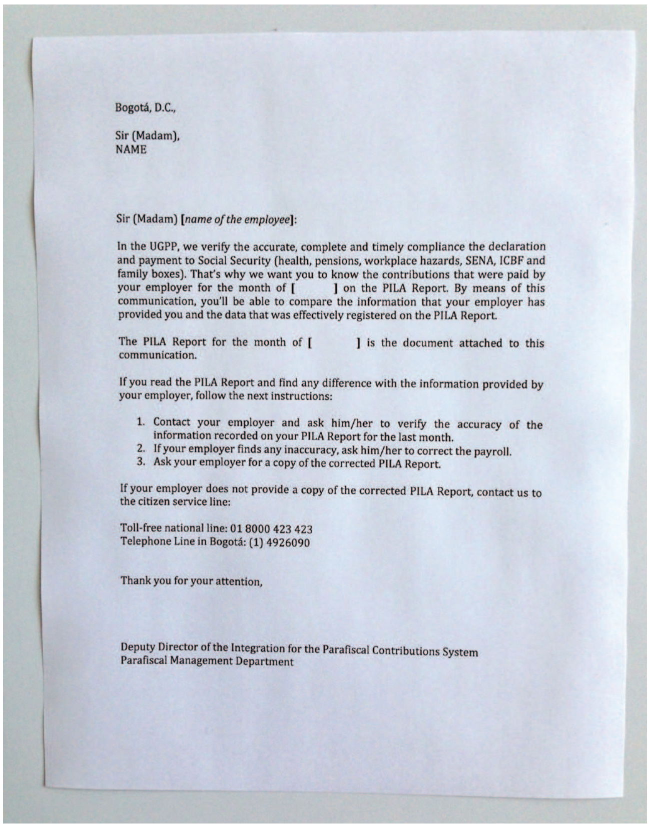
The first draft of the communication was designed using elements of plain language and the results of investigations by the BIT. For example, we wrote the communication in the first person in order to generate empathy with the employee. We also included easy-to-follow instructions on how to verify the taxable income reported by employers.

The communication was intended to persuade employees to check if the Taxable Income specified in the letter was the same as that reported on the payroll vouchers they received from their employers (see *Figure 1*).

We then reviewed this communication and identified a number of difficulties: *i*) it did not explain which document the recipient should compare the information to, *ii*) the information was difficult to understand because it attached the entire contributions report, *iii*) the letter did not differentiate total Taxable Income from the deductions from the employee's wage (information that is easy to access since it is included on the payroll voucher) and *iv*) the communication had no layout design.

Taking these aspects into account the content was adapted (*see Figures 2 and 3*). The amended communication did not include the entire contributions report and only specified the relevant information we wanted to validate: Taxable Income, total contributions made by the employer to the pension and healthcare systems, and the deduction that the employer should have made according to the reported taxable income and the contributions made to pensions and healthcare systems.

Now that we knew that the language was easy to understand the prototype was ready to be sent to the first 493 employees.



Bogotá, D.C.,

Sir (Madam),
NAME

Sir (Madam) [*name of the employee*]:

In the UGPP, we verify the accurate, complete and timely compliance the declaration and payment to Social Security (health, pensions, workplace hazards, SENA, ICBF and family boxes). That's why we want you to know the contributions that were paid by your employer for the month of [ ] on the PILA Report. By means of this communication, you'll be able to compare the information that your employer has provided you and the data that was effectively registered on the PILA Report.

The PILA Report for the month of [ ] is the document attached to this communication.

If you read the PILA Report and find any difference with the information provided by your employer, follow the next instructions:

1. Contact your employer and ask him/her to verify the accuracy of the information recorded on your PILA Report for the last month.
2. If your employer finds any inaccuracy, ask him/her to correct the payroll.
3. Ask your employer for a copy of the corrected PILA Report.

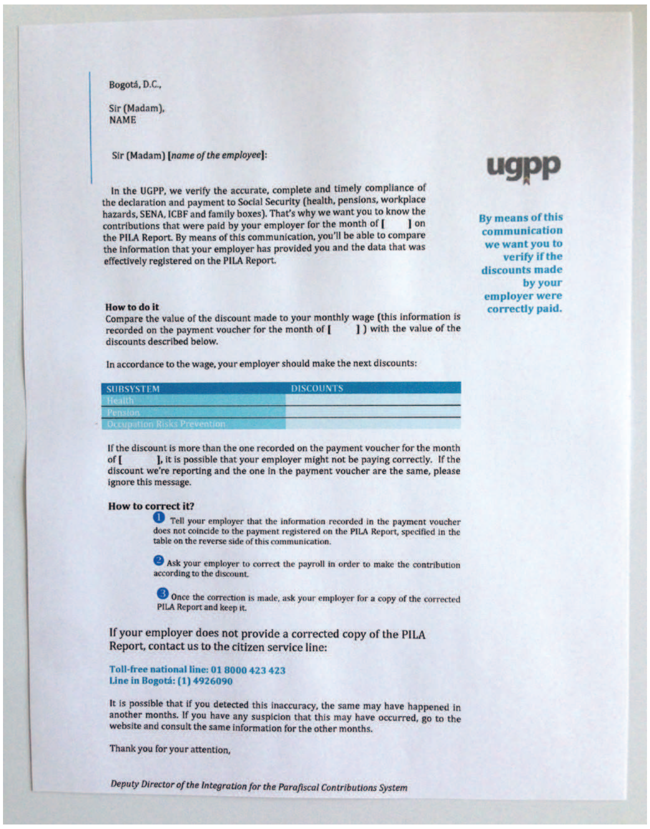
If your employer does not provide a copy of the corrected PILA Report, contact us to the citizen service line:

Toll-free national line: 01 8000 423 423
Telephone Line in Bogotá: (1) 4926090

Thank you for your attention,

Deputy Director of the Integration for the Parafiscal Contributions System
Parafiscal Management Department

Figure 1. First Draft



Bogotá, D.C.,

Sir (Madam),
NAME

Sir (Madam) [*name of the employee*]:

In the UGPP, we verify the accurate, complete and timely compliance of the declaration and payment to Social Security (health, pensions, workplace hazards, SENA, ICBF and family boxes). That's why we want you to know the contributions that were paid by your employer for the month of [ ] on the PILA Report. By means of this communication, you'll be able to compare the information that your employer has provided you and the data that was effectively registered on the PILA Report.

How to do it
Compare the value of the discount made to your monthly wage (this information is recorded on the payment voucher for the month of [ ]) with the value of the discounts described below.

In accordance to the wage, your employer should make the next discounts:

SUBSYSTEM	DISCOUNTS
Health	
Pension	
Occupation Risks Prevention	

If the discount is more than the one recorded on the payment voucher for the month of [ ], it is possible that your employer might not be paying correctly. If the discount we're reporting and the one in the payment voucher are the same, please ignore this message.

How to correct it?

1 Tell your employer that the information recorded in the payment voucher does not coincide to the payment registered on the PILA Report, specified in the table on the reverse side of this communication.

2 Ask your employer to correct the payroll in order to make the contribution according to the discount.

3 Once the correction is made, ask your employer for a copy of the corrected PILA Report and keep it.

If your employer does not provide a corrected copy of the PILA Report, contact us to the citizen service line:

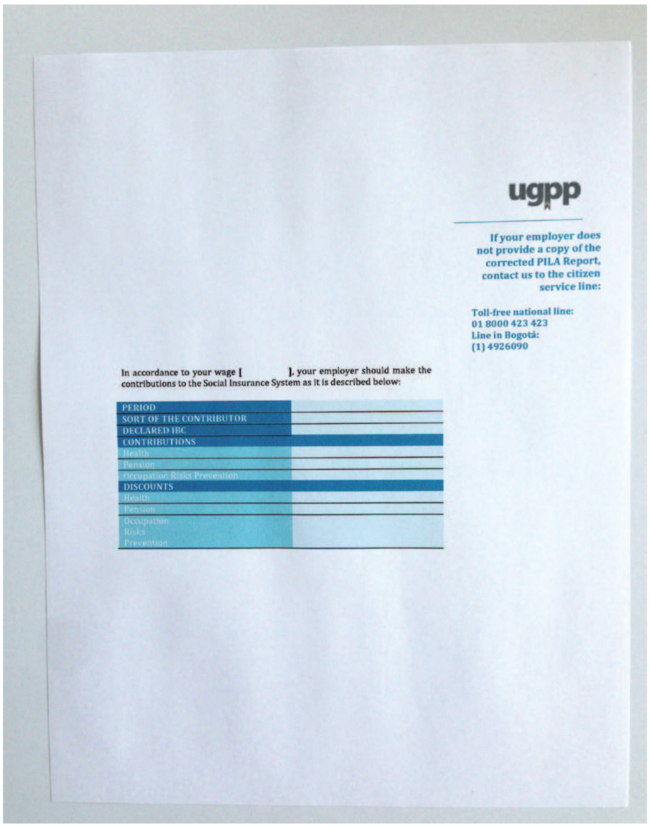
Toll-free national line: 01 8000 423 423
Line in Bogotá: (1) 4926090

It is possible that if you detected this inaccuracy, the same may have happened in another months. If you have any suspicion that this may have occurred, go to the website and consult the same information for the other months.

Thank you for your attention,

Deputy Director of the Integration for the Parafiscal Contributions System

Figure 2. First Prototype (front)



In accordance to your wage [ ], your employer should make the contributions to the Social Insurance System as it is described below:

PERIOD	
SORT OF THE CONTRIBUTOR	
DECLARED IBC	
CONTRIBUTIONS	
Health	
Pension	
Occupation Risks Prevention	
DISCOUNTS	
Health	
Pension	
Occupation Risks Prevention	

Figure 3. First Prototype (back)

Phase 2: Experiment implementation and prototypes

It was decided to implement the project using an experimental phase, because we wanted to engage in an iterative learning process. We varied the content and layouts and adapted the communication based on the feedback received from employees.

The experimentation phase was a safe context in which to implement a design-driven approach as part of a government initiative.

The first prototype

The pilot consisted of the physical mailing of the first prototype of the letter to 493 employees, selected using the criteria chosen during the planning phase. To validate the impact of the pilot we prepared a survey, in which we asked employees if they had: i) read the letter, ii) understood the message and, iii) followed the instructions.

The UGPP selected 50 employees randomly to participate in the survey. Of those 50 employees that were selected, only 12 responded, of whom only two said that they opened the letter/read the e-mail. This translates into an effectiveness of only 17% in persuading people to read the letter.

This finding made us realize that we needed to rethink the prototype. If we wanted the message to reach our target, we needed to appeal to people's emotions in orden to attract their attention and ensure they opened the letter.

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The redesign

During the development of the design process we realized we needed a change our perspective, so we decided to implement an inter-disciplinary approach championed by design thinking. We added a practising architect and a graphic designer to our team of economists, engineers and lawyers.

We started the redesign by formulating fundamental questions about the concept of the letter: What is a letter? Why do people read letters? How could we get people to read our letter? How could we generate curiosity and make it attractive to readers? Who were our readers? Why should they read the message? What is the problem? What should our readers do to solve the problem? How might they do this? When should they do it? Why is the issue important?

The first insight came from the definition of a letter. A letter is a communication that one person sends to another to communicate a message. We learned that we needed to highlight the name of the employee we were directing the letter to, and identity of the sender using the UGPP logo. We did not know if the logo would have an effect, since only 0.1% of the population in Colombia had heard of the UGPP, so we decided to include the logo of the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit too. We were not going to follow the standard of an official communication from a government agency, but we needed to be careful differentiating the letter from an advertisement.

The second insight came from understanding the differences between an open letter and a closed communication. Each of these has different objectives and we needed to prioritize and classify the information accordingly. The outside of the letter needed to generate curiosity and tell the person why the communication was important to them, and the inside should contain the confidential information, instructions and also motivate the employee to follow them.

The third insight came from understanding the deep structure of the content, allowing us to simplify and divide it into different sections. We decided the communication was going to be sent with a "z" fold as a self-enveloped letter. This meant that the content had to be divided into six sections.

A priority in the redesign of the letter was to understand the needs and desires of the people who were going to receive it. The main elements that were changed to achieve a higher impact were *i*) the content, colors and style of the cover and back of the letter, *ii*) the new layout of the content including elements from infographics, and *iii*) simpler text and instructions (*see Figure 4*).

The cover of the letter was designed to consist of a question in bold white letters on a red background. We insisted on the importance that the cover should be red to increase the likelihood of attracting attention. The question "(Name of the employee), do you know if (name of the company), paid your social security accurately?" was an instrument to generate curiosity, talking directly to the employee. The back of the letter addressed why it was important, informing the employee of the 3 main risks if their employer was not paying correctly. With all these elements we intended to persuade people to open the letter rather than consider it junk mail (*see Figure 5*).

The extensive paragraphs were transformed into smaller sections with infographics that easily communicated the message. This allowed us to guide the recipient rapidly through the sections in which the most important information was displayed.

The text was simplified and titles were added to each section in the form of questions to enforce the active voice of the UGPP. The instructions were enumerated and included easy-to-follow steps. This structure was designed to motivate the employees to follow the steps and verify if their employers had paid the correct contributions. The contact information of the UGPP was highlighted to make it easier to respond to additional questions. Particular fonts - family and size - were chosen to give hierarchy to the messages.

The communications included information on the deductions the employer should have made, the total contributions to the healthcare and pension systems, and the Taxable Income reported by the employer for a specific month. This information was confidential and was placed in the sections of the letter that were only visible when it was opened. The letter also highlighted the benefits of making accurate contributions (*see Figures 6 and 7*).

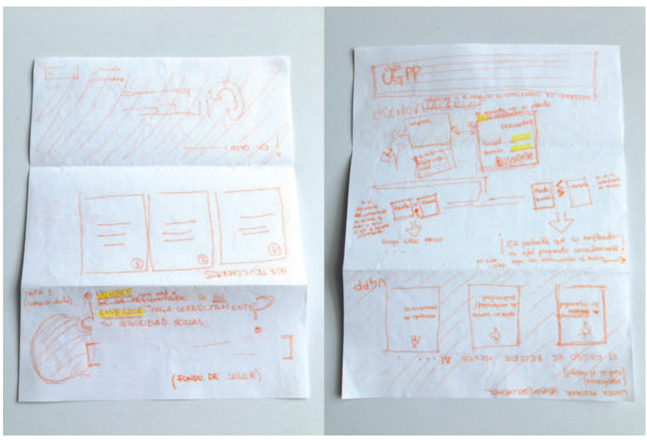

Figure 4. Redesign draft

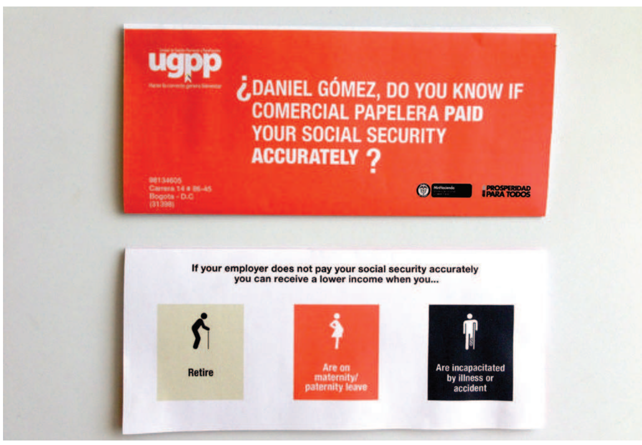

Figure 5. Outside of the letter

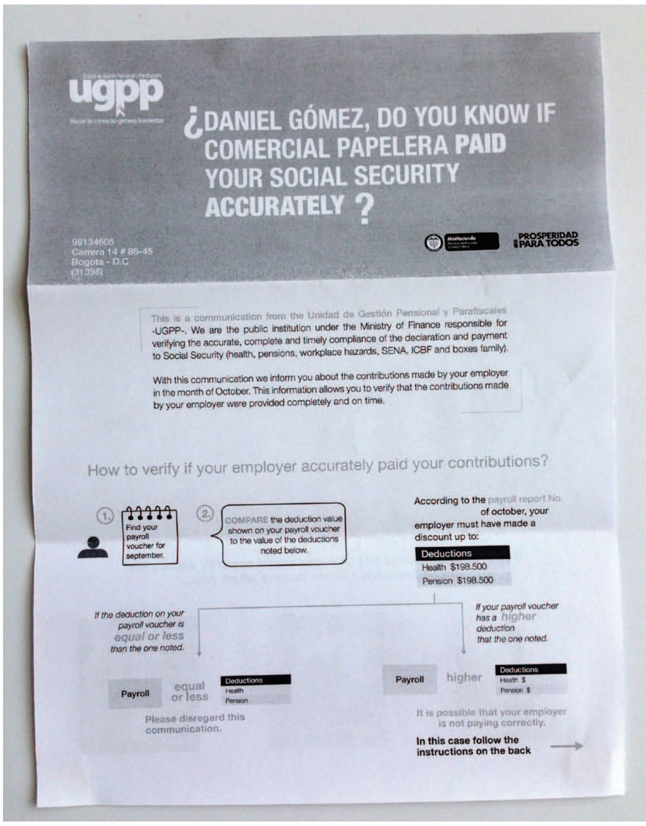

Figure 6. Second Prototype B&W (front)

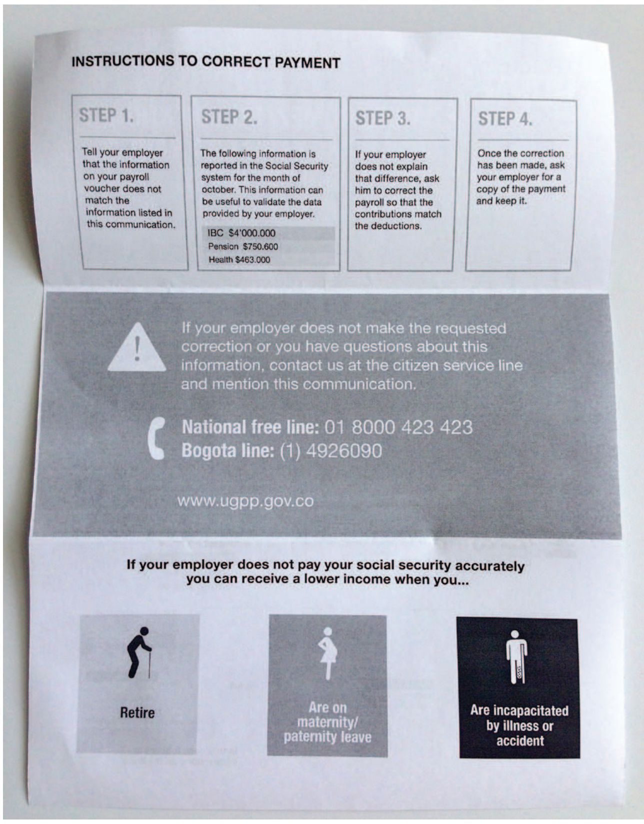

Figure 7. Second Prototype B&W (back)

Second Prototype

The second prototype was sent to 999 employees. It was sent in black and white because we had budget restrictions that meant we could not hire a third party capable of color printing in time to meet the mailing deadline.

This prototype was validated in a different way. Among the 999 employees, the team knew 15 recipients personally. They had different backgrounds and they did not know in advance that they were going to receive the communication. This allowed us to document their reactions in more detail. The trade-off this implied was that these 15 employees were not randomly chosen (compared to the employees selected for testing the first prototype), but we needed more detailed feedback regarding the communications and decided to proceed with this option.

Based on the answers given by the 15 employees, we concluded that this second prototype improved effectiveness: people opened and read the letter. Of the 15 employees, 14 opened the letter. This corresponds to 94% effectiveness, which is almost 6 times the effectiveness of the original prototype, though we should be careful with this comparison for the reasons explained in the last paragraph. Despite the success of this prototype, all of our 15 acquaintances agreed that the letters would have had greater impact if they had been printed in color.

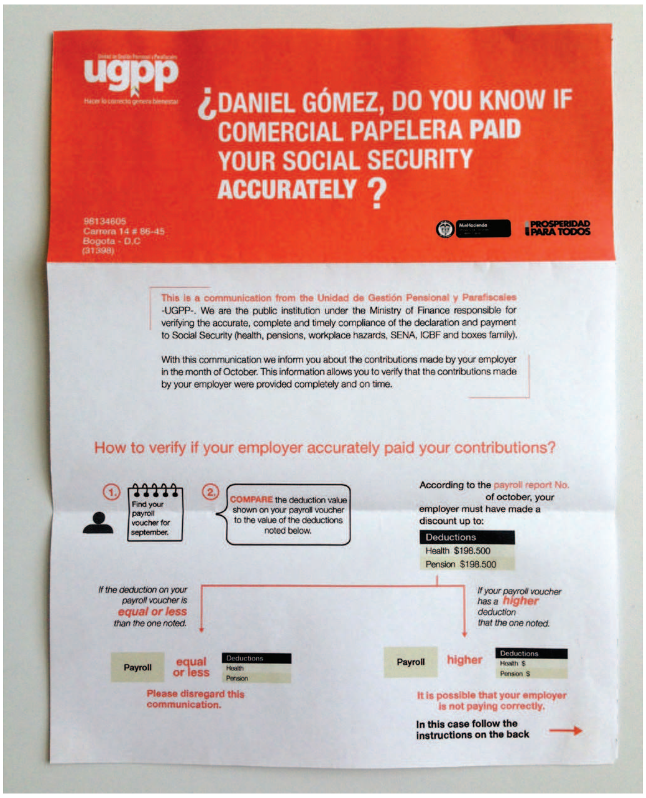

Figure 8. Second Prototype (front)

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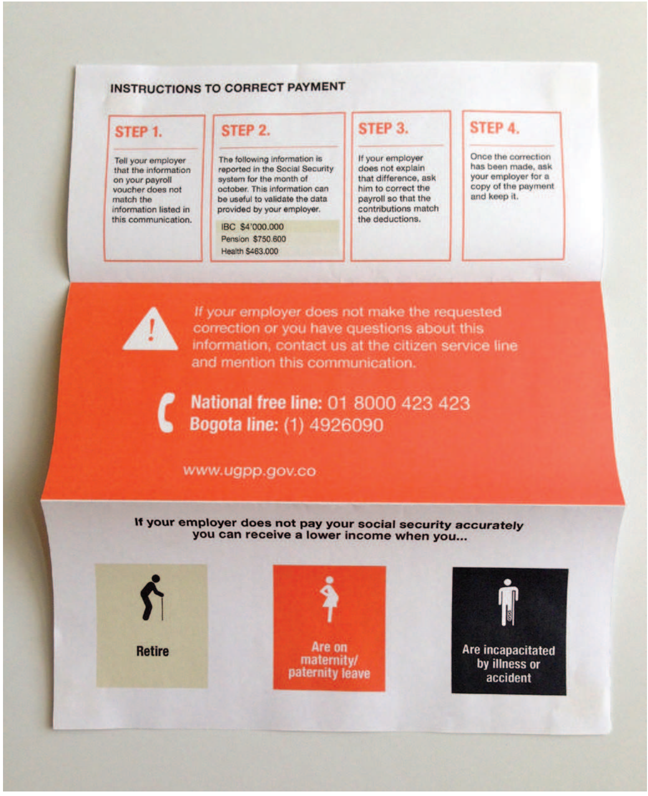

Figure 9. Second Prototype (back)

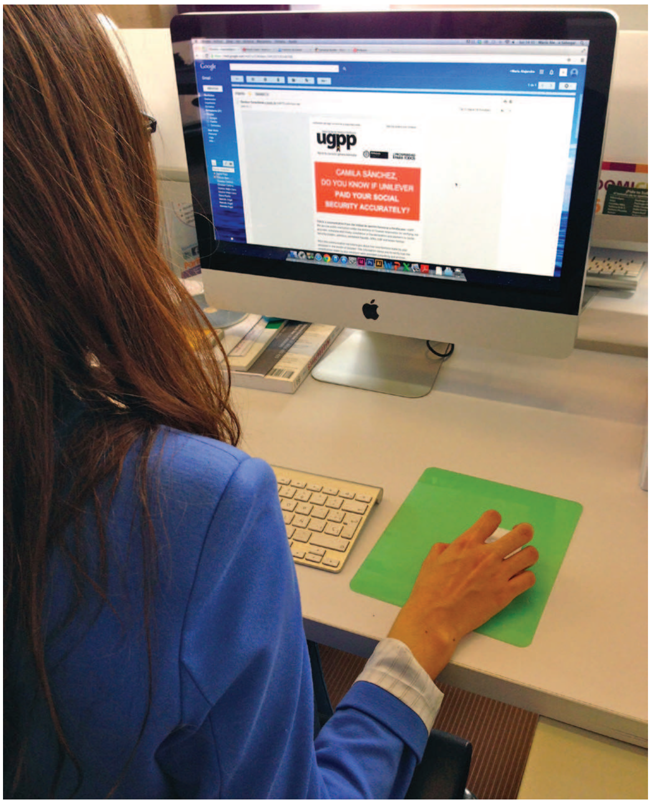

Figure 10. E-mail version

Phase 3: Mass mail-out

Once the team had validated the initiative using the two prototypes, the director of the UGPP had enough evidence to make the decision to carry out a mass mail-out of the final version of the letter. The process of sending the communication was divided into two phases: i) modifying the document according to the parameters and formats required by the supplier and ii) adapting and planning the e-mail version of the communication. The UGPP sent 615,000 letters, which incorporated all the lessons learned during the experimental phases.

CONCLUSIONS

The mass mail-out of 615,000 letters to different employees in Colombia was the first large-scale application of the Effective Communications Strategy. For the UGPP, this was a first attempt to understand employees' attitudes towards government communications, inform them about their rights within the SPS and encourage them to act as first line auditors of their employers. It was the first step in the process of "writing with care".

This first mass mail-out took into account the learning from the experimental phases, carried out on a small scale. In particular, it included the elements that had been designed to persuade people to open and read a letter. The results of the experimental phases were straightforward regarding the power of integrating different approaches, in particular design thinking. With the first prototype only 17% of employees to open and read the letter, while with the second prototype, which included more design-thinking elements, the percentage increased to 94%.

A final step for reviewing the social impact of the letters sent by the UGPP would be to evidence changes in the compliance of contributions of employers whose employees had received a letter. A first step of the mass-mail project was to make the letter attractive in order to increase the likelihood it would be opened and read. Next, we will need to evaluate if there has been a measureable social change in terms of higher compliance. Since the letters were sent out in mid-December 2013, we still have some time to observe the reactions of employees and their employers. In some cases we expect nothing to happen, while in others we would expect a reduction in non-compliance. The measurement of the impact was due to be carried out by the UGPP during the first semester of 2014.

The UGPP, or any other government agency, can apply the Effective Communications Strategy to different types of communications. Once public agencies have learnt to integrate insights from many disciplines, as the UGPP did, (using-evidence based public design, design thinking, plain language techniques, etc.), they will be able to carry out any number of communications actions intended to change people's behavior. A list of challenges faced by government agencies would be a sufficient starting point for innovating in the way public sector communicates.

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http://de2014.uniandes.edu.co | October, 2014. ISBN 978-958-774-070-7. pp. 112-120