



# **strategic** **communications** **for civil society**

A Guide  
Autumn 2020

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# Strategic Communications for Civil Society

*A Guide*

*Autumn*  
2020



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# Why Develop a Communications Strategy and Plan for your CSO?

Civil Society Organisations (CSO) operate for a number of good reasons – for charitable causes, to fund raise for others, to educate, to mobilise and associate for a common cause, to be a foundation to support others and many other reasons. But the reality remains that there is limited understanding of the roles of CSOs or what CSOs do in Bhutan. The first CSO mapping report (2017) shows a common misperception that CSOs are part of government.<sup>1</sup> Also, we now live in COVID times

when there's an urgent need for CSOs, government and other groups to reach specific constituents and audiences. We see the challenges of coordinating messages and using channels of communications effectively to avoid misinformation and confusion. Such disruptive times remind us of the need to be well-prepared in the event of crisis and other challenging situations such as natural disasters or when there's a merger of organisations and so forth.



These are the reasons for your organisation to have a communications strategy if you don't already have one. CSOs have many programmatic, fundraising,

CSOs can put in more effort into communicating what they do to a wide-ranging audience. This includes the members of your organisation,



**Your plan to promote your CSO and to communicate what it is that you do should be based on, and guided by your CSO's overall strategic plan."**

and advocacy goals that are often not achieved because there is no communications plan in place to make them a reality. It's time to change that. Developing a communications strategy and formulating it into a written plan is worth all the effort. A well-thought out strategy and resulting message platform and communications plan will enable you to get everyone inside your CSO on the same page on how to communicate your organisation's mission statement. It will also enable groups to collaborate better while undertaking a campaign to change behaviour or to fund raise for example.

your network of supporters, your potential funders or partners, or the people you are trying to reach; or all of the above. Similarly, CSOs are often carrying out various activities that need to be promoted – eg. announcing an event, sharing your annual report, advocating for a cause, fundraising for an activity, or even planning a fixed term campaign... the needs are many and each of them would do well to be first considered as part of the CSO's strategy. Your plan to promote your CSO and to communicate what it is that you do should be based on, and guided by your CSO's overall strategic plan.

This guide will help you to consider how to effectively explain what it is that your CSO or organisation does, and what results it has achieved.

Once a broad strategy is finalised, it's followed by a communications plan to detail how to make the strategy a reality.

## What is a communications plan?

This is a plan for delivering strategic messages to targeted key audiences to drive positive outcomes for your CSO.



## Developing a communications plan helps us to figure out the following:

- Who are you trying to reach?
- What message do you want them to receive?
- How will you try to reach them?

Once you get this done, you should emerge much clearer about your CSO and what you plan to, or have achieved. And remember, this strategy is not just for the communications officers, but something that ought to be prepared with your colleagues.

This guideline will provide some helpful tips and useful checklists for the communications strategy and plan.

## Who is this guide for?

- Your organisation's strategic communications plan has large goals but no proper steps to help actualise it.
- Your CSO has a communications plan, but no one else on the team seem to understand why it even matters.
- You think you're doing the right thing but you're uncertain why you're doing it and if you're doing it effectively.
- You and your colleagues are simply putting content out there without a clear strategy, concrete goals or objectives.
- You are involved in a project to reach new/intended audiences and need to update your communications plan to expedite activities.

## Helpful definitions



### Goals

are the broad primary marketing or promotional outcomes that support your organisation's larger mission-oriented goals. Examples of goals include raising issue awareness, fundraising from individuals, and managing your CSO's identity and reputation so that your nonprofit can achieve its mission. You can add measures within goals, such as "keep 50% of our donors year to year".



### Objectives

are the SMART steps you take to achieve a strategy, and we define SMART as Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resourced, and Time-Bound. Examples include expanding a mailing list by 10%, doubling website access rates, and increasing social media engagement by 20% or to increase viewers on our CSO's youtube page by 10% by summer, 2021 or to increase our membership by 5% by end of spring, 2021.



### Strategies

are the promotional approaches you take to achieve your goals. Examples of strategies include content promotion/marketing strategies, event promotional strategies, and relationship promotional strategies.



This scan will enable us to understand how we are perceived as a CSO. You can also use the PESTEL framework to understand the environment you work in.



**P**

**Political**

How may government and other political factors impact the CSO?

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**E**

**Economic**

What economic trends in the country could have an impact on the work of the CSO?

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**S**

**Social**

How do citizens understand civil society? What are emerging social and demographic trends?

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**T**

**Technological**

What technological innovations could affect our market? How does technology contribute in strengthening the CSO?

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**E**

**Environmental**

What ecological aspects influence civil society work?

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**L**

**Legal**

What changes in legislation could or can impact civil society work?

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## Exercise 1:

### Environment Scan - People's perception of my CSO



**Consider the following.**

**1**

What do people know about your CSO?

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**2**

What is your organisation's main mission and what do you do?

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**3**

What is your relationship to your beneficiary community?

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**4**

Are you achieving your aims?

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**5**

Are you well-known?

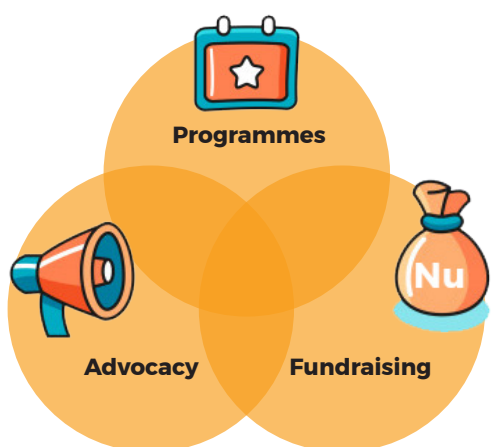
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## How can Communications help your CSO?

Communication helps to facilitate your CSO's work or programmes. When you are clear about your work, it can provide more consistency in your communications with people outside your organisation. This will help you share your CSO's results, impacts, what you want targeted groups of people to do and to understand what it is that they want from your CSO. Communication is a 2-way street compared to traditional previous media (which is largely used to provide information or entertainment compared to current media technology which enables people to share their views and suggestions, and to engage in media production).



Components of CSO work.

## Why communicate?

CSO's main work is to carry out programmes, to advocate for causes or change, and to fundraise. See figure below: Components of CSO work

### A good strategic communications plan will enable your CSO to

- develop a clear path forward for your communications with a wide-ranging group of people to build relationships, engage and make supporters feel valued.
- provide a clear overview of your organisation's work, results etc to engage colleagues, members, potential donors, clients etc.
- enable your team to be more productive and less reactive when sharing stories about your work.
- provide more concrete, measurable objectives to work towards.
- encourage more participation, increased donations, membership, advocacy and so forth.

- Apart from broad components of civil society work, CSOs also have specific programming communications needs.
- Advocacy – one of the most common advocacy needs is to promote your CSO's mission. Hence staff, board members and network members are all important “ambassadors” to share your organisation’s mission or cause.
- Social mobilisation - Some CSOs carry out social mobilisation to create awareness on certain issues, or to get support. Effective communications is required to be successful in social mobilisation.
- Behaviour change - You will need to focus on effective messaging if your CSO works to change behaviour.







1

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# 2

Section

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3

# Developing a Communications Strategy and Plan

**H**ere are some broad tips when considering drafting a strategy and plan to improve your CSO's communications with a variety of stakeholders and target audiences. Begin by defining ;



Your organisation's communications goal



Your audience/  
target groups



Develop key  
messages  
(prioritise  
messages)



Find your voice



Track your  
outreach

## 1. Communication Goals and Objectives

Think broad here and position your CSO. Consider your CSO's broad goals e.g. creating a stronger CSO identity so that it can achieve its mission. Additionally, what is it your CSO wants to achieve -- attract new donors or new members? Promote your organisation? Change behaviour? Promote healthy measures? Educate the public about your core issues? To share results? Think about how all this will help to achieve your CSOs or groups goals?

## Exercise 2:

List your CSO's communications objectives in order of priority.



1

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2

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3

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4

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5

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Look at your CSO's vision and mission. What do we want to achieve? How will we achieve it? What indicators have we set to measure our success? Much of this will come from your CSO's strategic planning. Your CSO strategic plan is the basis on which you will work out your communications plans. As a broad goal, every communication activity contributes to the strengthening of your CSO's aims and objectives.

## 2. Target Audiences/Target people

List the important audiences or people you want to reach :

### 2.1 External (global or audiences outside your CSO)



Donors or advisors



External networks  
or affiliated  
networks



People (segment  
them - young,  
old, which region?  
etc.)

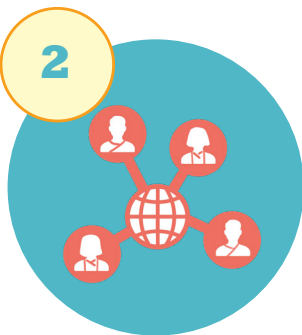
### 2.2 Internal-What is your context in Bhutan? Consider -

Other CSOs and organisations – do  
you complement each other or run  
independently?



Local funder

2



Networks

### **Examples of audiences/or your target groups**

Donors. When naming your audiences, focus on the role your audiences play and how they relate to your CSO. List your audiences in order of importance. If you have a sense of their age, gender or interests, those are helpful to list out for each audience.

3



Your members,  
volunteers,  
staff, board  
members

Audiences that are of interest but perhaps not as important. Influencers or decision-makers?

Members? Elected officials?  
Partners? Other organisations working in your field?

**Exercise 3:**

Create a map of your target groups/audiences. Segregate them according to external and internal audiences, and prioritise them according to related goals.



Goals/Objectives	Audiences/ Target groups	
	Internal	External
1.		
2.		
3		
4		
5		
6		

### 3. Messages - Positioning Statement (Internal)

**Reflect:** Think of a time when friends asked you what you do, or what your CSO does? Could you explain readily? Then think of a time when you were meeting with a potential partner or donor, were you able to explain what your organisation does?

Synthesising your CSOs messaging through key messages can help you reduce any confusion when talking about your CSO. Especially when your organisation has a few parallel programmes. Key messages help explain your main statement for your individual audiences so that every member in your CSO can feel confident about explaining your work to board members, partners and donors, people who receive your services and training and to members of your networks.

**Key Messages:** Develop key messages for the various objectives above.



Clearly articulate what your CSO does, the main benefits you offer to the public and what makes your organisation unique. What sets you apart from the many other nonprofits that serve the same beneficiaries or work in the same field?





## Exercise 4:

Write a sentence/message that best describes what your CSO is about/does and answer the questions from the previous page.

[illegible]

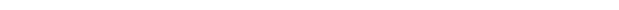


4



# 3

Section











4

# Communication Platforms

## (Communication Channels, Target Audience & Message Frequency)

There are many channels through which to share our CSO's messages. Which are the most useful for the audiences or groups you want to reach? Let's discuss...

Here is an example of communications channel for two key messages on COVID-19 :

Key message	Who?	What channel?	Frequency?
 <p>e.g. Prevent COVID-19: Wash your hands regularly</p>	 <p>Elderly, above 70 years of age</p>	 <p>BBS TV or create a Wechat group</p>	 <p>After the daily evening news at 7pm &amp; 8pm from Sept 30-Oct 10</p>
 <p>Prevent COVID-19: Stay home. Stop local infections</p>	 <p>Youth</p>	 <p>FB page – create 1?</p>	 <p>Update with messages every other day from date ____ till ____.</p>

**Exercise 5:**

Create a table for your cause. Use the goals/objectives you prioritised in earlier sessions to create a table for yourself.



What is the best way to communicate with each audience group? Develop different strategies as part of your plan. For example, get more stories into the daily newspapers, or get more videos into youtube, or plan a talent fun day, a sponsored walk to fundraise... etc.

Goals/ Objectives	Key message	Who?	What channel?	Frequency?



Useful tips for social media target audience and platforms.  
Use this as an example for your communications plan.

## 1 Website Articles

News article once a week (see Section III for messaging topics)

### Target audience

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

## 2 Email Marketing

E-newsletter once every 1-2 weeks

Periodic email shares around one key issue

### Target audiences

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

### 3 Facebook

Multiple updates each week (ideally several per day)

Periodic promoted posts for excellent resources or important messages

#### Target audience

1

2

### 4 Twitter

A tweet each day?

#### Target audiences:

1

2

### 5 YouTube

New video each month to then share across other platforms

#### Target audiences:

1

2

### 6 Periodic updates

Once every quarterly/few months, around compelling and strategic issues

Petition created to target a key decision-maker

#### Target audience:

1

2

## Communications Tasks & Responsibilities:

At the centre of all this is the communications officer. But CSOs often do not have persons dedicated to communications; many tend to multitask and take on communications responsibilities alongside other duties. In this case it is critical that your CSO consider the following:

1

Identify who is authorised to send external communications, and the process of clearance of such communications.

2

Manner of communications: news releases, emails, tweets? Who will do them? Are there guidelines? E.g. use of logo, language etc.

3

Who can issue news releases or statements to the media? What is the process?

4

Who should represent/appear or be interviewed on behalf of the organisation?

5

Social media content – who is authorised, who can be the administrator etc?

6

Any guidelines for circulation of project reports etc?







3



# 4

Section



5

# Messaging

**M**essaging is everything in this connected world. A story, a quotation, or a phrase help to describe a particular situation or issue.

These stories, quotations can easily go viral to reach audiences outside of your target groups.

## Exercise 6:

*Sharing your stories is at the core of your organisation's identity. Let's start by asking ourselves ....*



What do we hope to achieve by sharing stories of our work, the people we serve, our team, our mission, etc. ?

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What would success look like if the messages work and communications reaches the intended people who are encouraged to take certain actions ?

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## To be successful in creating messages, we need to know:

- Our audience or target groups of people
- Why they should support us or get involved
- What are the obstacles that prevent them from supporting your organisation's work? Is it lack of information, misinformation, mistrust even...?
- Looking at your audience and what they care about, identify a few story ideas
- Make a plan to collect the stories – who will do it? What is it about? A volunteer, a constituent, a beneficiary? What unique challenges may the person be facing that we should be sensitive to e.g. a person in rehabilitation, a young child from a broken family etc.



**Once again, when we share stories, think of who it is we're telling the story to.**

- What he/she thinks of our CSO or knows about our work, or the issue?
- What would we like them to know?
- Why would they believe us? Is our story genuine and compelling?
- What channels will we use to share the story, and will people share it further?

## Developing messages

Review your key messages and the intended audience. We'll now focus on expanding and developing messages for our communications plan. Each key message can be expanded for the various platforms or channels.

## Reminders:

- What do we want to share with the public? Or your funder? Or your members? Identify 3-5 main themes each time. Anything more can be difficult for people to grasp.

## Exercise 7:

Prioritised theme:



Remember the action you want your target audiences to take.

### What is it?

1. Become a member
2. Donate
3. Attend annual conference/ events/workshops
4. Subscribe to get email updates
5. Take advocacy action
6. Share stories or testimonies
7. Comment & engage on social media, website etc.

e.g. practise health measures to prevent COVID- 19 - wash hands, wear masks etc.

1

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2

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3

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## Keeping your message consistent is just as important as developing the message itself.

### How to handle the media?

There will be times when you will be called upon to speak to the media or to hold a media conference e.g. health organisations in COVID times. Have a plan for the news media.



These could be in the form of news releases, invitations, contact numbers for your office and the reporter. Have good pictures ready in hand and findings or data.

## Social Media use for your CSO

Social media has a wide reach and when effectively used, can enable your CSO to advocate for change, share vital information, educate, launch a membership drive, and fundraise. But we also know we live in an age of instantaneous reach and are often swamped by social media messages, so your CSO's social media must be clearly thought out to be effective and not simply add to the current wave of infodemic.



**Does your  
CSO have a  
guideline for  
social media  
use?**

## Exercise 8:

*Review your website, as your website reflects your organisation. Here are some things to look out for when reviewing your website.*



1

### Home Page

Is there clarity of the information about the organisation?

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Is there a good balance of text and visuals?

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Is there a Write up on the organisation's programme?

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Does it provide multiple points of contact (e.g. email, phone) and location?

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2

### User friendly and functionality

How easy is it to navigate the website?

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Do all the pages work or are broken and needs fixing?

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Are Social media handles easily accessible through the website?

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3

### Fresh and quality content

Does it have recent activities of the organisation posted or is it largely administrative announcements?

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Do the visuals tell stories about your activities or your organisation?

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Are there regular posts or are the stories outdated?

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## **A. Tips for a Social Media guideline<sup>2</sup>. Consider...**

- Have a guideline or disclaimer on your CSO's social media site explaining what's encouraged, and what may be removed.
- What will you post on your CSO's Facebook page, or what will you encourage people to post? What is inappropriate to share?
- Who is responsible for posting/messaging?
- Think of various groups on social media, are there clear policies guiding the use of these sites? What about your CSO?

- Consider – who should communicate, the tone of your messages, who do we involve? Any other considerations?

- How would your CSO deal with a crisis e.g. pandemics and health scares, scandals and so forth?

## **B. Daily/Weekly messaging topics for social media**

Tip: Create “sound bites” (a short extract from a recorded interview or speech, chosen for its succinctness or concision) from articles above and share across social media. Every new article can be the source/inspiration for 3-6 different social media messages. As much as possible, also include links back to articles on the website.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://jcsocialmarketing.com/2020/02/how-to-write-a-nonprofit-social-media-policy/>? And

<https://www.classy.org/blog/how-to-write-your-organizations-social-media-guidelines/>

You may want to detail some of the topics you know will resonate with your target audiences and strengthen the number of visits to your site. Make sure your team strikes the right balance of topics (see examples below) that will appeal to your audience.

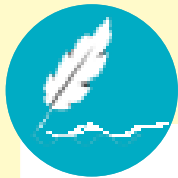
**R****Research  
Results**

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**S****Stories from  
the Field**

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**O****Organisation  
News**

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**I****Inspirational  
Quotes**

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**J****Job  
Openings**

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### **C. Key dates – create a communications calendar/schedule**

Build up to key dates with related messaging the preceding week or month, depending on the importance of the event. Include any events

throughout the year that involve external audiences, these could be international commemorative days, children's day, etc.

## Process for developing your CSO's social media platform/s :



## Social Media Guidelines

**Be clear** about what your CSO will encourage people to post on your social media sites, and what is not appropriate to share on these sites. e.g. will you permit people who post anonymously? Under what conditions? When do you draw the lines? Every CSO has a different target audience, so discuss this with your management. If you work largely with youth, your CSO ought to consider how to protect them against hate speech, inappropriate online behaviours etc.

**Disclaimers:** Explain what your CSO's website welcomes, what is not welcome e.g. false content, 3rd party advertisements or solicitations, or rude and defamatory remarks etc. State it somewhere in the social media site. CSOs need to be wary of graphic, obscene, explicit or racial comments or submissions and comments that are abusive, hateful or intended to defame anyone or any organisation. Put this in your disclaimer for a blog or any social media channel that encourages free exchanges. Your disclaimer can state that if the posts breaches any of the conditions, your CSO will have the right to take the posts down.

**Confidentiality:** What information should be confidential and why? Your social media talks about work, and communicates with your community. Respect their need for confidentiality. Is the safety of the staff and clients at stake if there is a confidentiality breach? Should you be sharing personal phone numbers on your website for example?

**Privacy:** Do not share personal phone contacts and emails, nor very personal pictures.

**Be Honest.** Be factual.

**Respect Copyrights** when using pictures, video, content etc. Source your content if it's from elsewhere

**Get consent** from underaged, or persons in difficult circumstances. Decide how – on form or verbally etc.?

**Consider the tone** and voice across all your channels: Blog, website, FB, wechat etc.

**Respect** your audience, your CSO and co-workers. Demonstrate civility in social media messaging and exchanges.

**Controversial issues** - all CSOs deal with challenging situations – point out misrepresentations. Be civil when doing so, be factual, be sensitive.

**Respond to your own mistakes –**

try and be the first to respond to your own mistakes. If copyrights etc involved, remove them immediately. If mistakes and misinformation are shared, you can either add a correction immediately, or in dire cases, create a new message and note that the old post was removed and replaced citing the reason for the removal (link to your disclaimer).

**Model civility and productive**

**sharing.** Have a clear etiquette – be responsive, don't ignore negative feedback, how do you deal with it? Avoid arguments, do not goad others into inflammatory debates etc.

Encourage professional posts and be clear about your CSO's social media etiquette.

Make your guideline available online. Use your guidelines to educate rather than restrict or prohibit.

**When in doubt** – don't post!

**For chat-sites.** Consider how to simplify comments eg. you may wish to state that the chat site should not be filled with emoticons, or with bank account numbers etc.



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# 5

Section

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6

# The Communications Plan



We're now ready to get down to developing a communications plan. In summary, here's the list of previously recommended steps for your communications plan.

1

Identify target groups – internal and external.

2

Prioritise messaging according to situation – e.g. in COVID times -- orange alert, red alert, and winding down.

3

Message development and confirmation -- Message and pictures? What kind of information is worth sharing? e.g. no of people who have received training/help/recovered?

4

Identify spokespersons – Who can speak to the press?



**5**

Identify communications tools to be used -- Media briefings, press releases etc.

**6**

Identify allies and stakeholders  
– who can help you/your CSO?

**7**

How to handle media -- Produce media briefings/fact sheets etc.  
Set up a press office.

**8**

Co-ordination with other CSOs or within your CSO -- Bring your colleagues on board e.g. programme, membership, management, finance etc.

**9**

Review your web page and social media.

**10**

Plan and assess the communications plan -- short term, long term. How do you know you've achieved your goals?

**11**

Get your plan into action with a calendar of activities.

**12**

Figure out what each action will cost, in time and resources. Develop a budget.

## Communications Plan for your Main Target Group

Who do we need to communicate with?	Why do we need to communicate with them?	What do we want to communicate with them about?	How? (Strategy)	
<b>Primary target group/audience</b>  Eg. adults above 70 years	To Prepare them for lockdown	Inform them about COVID-19 health checking locations/ contacts	Counselling in person	
		To understand their needs	- Produce a TV ad - Write some stories	
<b>Secondary targets:</b>  - Other adults - Youth - Potential volunteers - Funders and partners	To Prepare them for lockdown	- To understand signs of COVID-19 and take precautions - To observe physical distancing	Social media advocacy	
<b>Existing/potential funders/partners</b>	To keep funders apprised	Progress in meeting objectives	Annual reports	
	To interest new funders	Account for use of funding/support	Newsletters	

	When/ how often? How to share?	Cost?	Who is responsible?	M&E reach and success
	During Quarterly checkups	Work on a separate budget sheet	Communications Officer	Communications or Programme Officer, ED and whole organisation
	Print in local newspapers weekly for a month			Check if the targeted group goes for counselling
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Through direct email, BBS or social media</li> <li>- Through public institutions eg. clinics, schools etc.</li> </ul>	Work on a separate budget sheet	Communication and Risk Management Team	Communication and Risk Management Team and ED
	Once a year through email	Cost of designing the annual report	Director	Get feedback from funders and potential funders after sending a proposal
	On website	Cost of website	Communications Officer and Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Keep a record of all publicity</li> <li>- Published articles etc.</li> <li>- Assess the coverage, what it has achieved for our CSO</li> </ul>

Exercise 9:

Here is a sample of the communications plan template. Fill up the communications plan below for your organisation.

SI No.	Who do we need to communicate with?	Why do we need to communicate with them?	What do we want to communicate with them about?	
1	<b>Primary target group/Audience:</b>  e.g. adults above 70 years			
2	<b>Secondary targets:</b>			
3	<b>Existing/potential/ Funders/partners</b>			
4	Others			



	How? ( Strategy)	When/ how often? How to share?	Cost?	Who is responsible?	M&E reach and success

## Fundraising & Volunteers

Fundraising as a CSO is a year round effort, and should not be done just at the end of the year. Communicate with your partners and supporters regularly and keep them up-to-date with what your CSO does.

Most donors give to civil society organisations because they want to support the cause – be it animal rescue, skills for the unemployed, education for remote schools, or leadership, governance skills and a range of many other causes. This applies also to your networks and volunteers. They would all like to know that their gift or support has led to results and created impacts. These are often reported in CSO's annual reports. One of the best ways to do this is to share stories that would provide the impacts and connect it with the reason they gave in the first place. Or the reason they joined your organisation as a member or volunteer.

Stories should include data, facts, results, and that human interest story so that your donor/funder/volunteer/member understands that their support made a difference. E.g. show pictures of the

recipients of the services and facilities the donor supported, or a thank you from the people who attended the training or school that was funded. Make your donor feel that their support is appreciated and their “gift” has helped to meet a need or solve a problem. Similarly, your volunteers should be acknowledged and their support shared as stories of impact.



### Broad tips:

- Remember to link communications with all fundraising initiatives.
- Link your communications to your membership drive.
- Ensure messages are in sync with fund-raising or member-drive goals.
- Use tools that target the audience.
- Share stories that support your efforts.
- Share good news as soon as they occur.
- Tell the impact story.

## Say it simply...eg.



“ Thanks to your kind support, we were able to provide 100 toilets this year to rural schools attended by 3,000 children.”



“ The women you supported have completed the first 3 months of their life-skills training to prepare them for finding a job.”



“ The youth summit you supported has enabled 200 rural youth to come up with five plans to support the needs of their communities. .”



“ With your support and voluntary efforts, we were able to vaccinate 250 stray dogs in Paro town, keeping them well-protected for the year. “





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# 6

Section

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7

# Campaigns

There will be times when your CSO will be called upon to plan a campaign that focuses on a cause, an issue, to change behaviour or even to fundraise. Campaigns call for more detailed planning and coordination to have an impact.

Campaigns should be launched across all platforms simultaneously. Articulate a clear start date and end date, select a powerful photo or video, and create a sense of urgency. Convey the impact of someone taking action. What will you collectively achieve?

Spread it across the communications channels/social media using the same campaign image/message. Keep messaging regularly about the campaign's progress, urging people to act or help spread the word. Once the campaign is over, report back

honestly on how you did. And always thank everyone for participating, regardless of what the results were.

Before you start your campaign, you need to conduct research for the purpose of your campaign. Is it for fundraising? Or to advocate for a change in policy/behaviour? Research will provide you with the baseline data and understanding of current perceptions or views on your campaign issue.

It is important to understand the current situation, the gaps, and the current behaviours of the target audiences you wish to reach (KAP - Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices ). Once you have a good understanding of your audience, you can begin your campaign plan which should include a communications plan.

**Campaign messaging:** Drawing from your campaign's theme, goal, background, significance... single out the most important message to communicate to supporters. Break down the message:

**What is the problem?** Bhutan faces COVID-19 threats.

**What is the urgency?** It is affecting a growing number of people in Bhutan and the threat of community spread is very real.

**What do you want the campaign/or target group to do?**

Stay away from fake news. Keep informed by following news from the Prime Ministers Office, Ministry of Health and the mainstream media

## Exercise 10:

*Develop your own message:*



1

Problem:

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2

Urgency:

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3

Action:

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## Call to action

Ask your supporters/target audiences to take action to make that change you're asking for. What is the action you want people to take – donate, volunteer, change ways, share campaign messages?

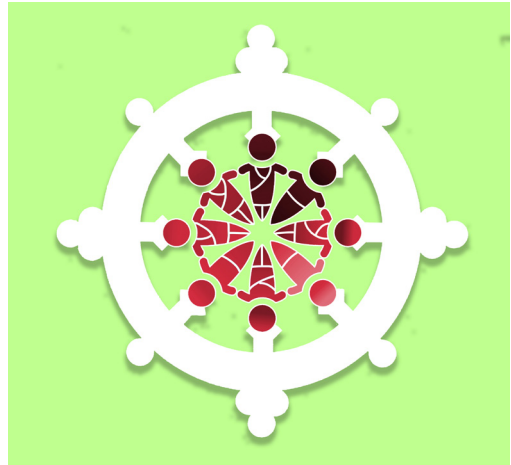
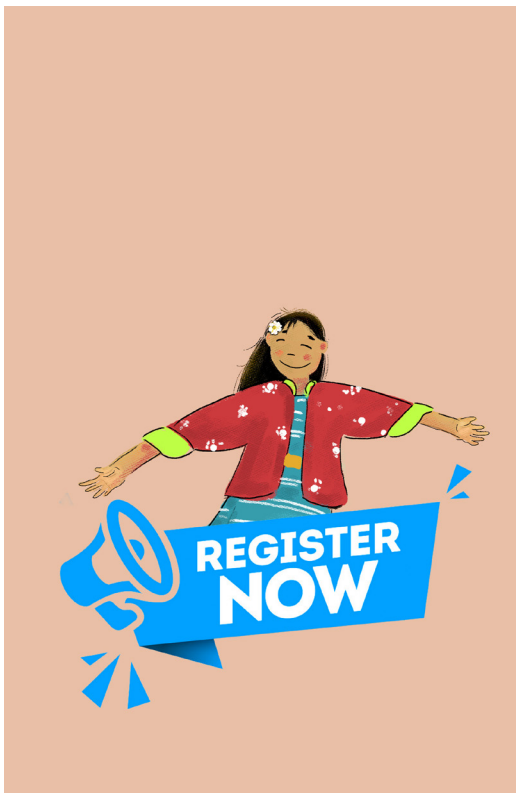
**Spell out the campaign and some core ideas,  
as in the examples below:**

### **Event Campaign – Jan 2021**

**Use** consistent image across platforms

**Main message:** “Join us at the launch of our Gyenkhu campaign on Jan 12th”

**Use** “Register Now” button throughout your social media presence



### **Membership Drive – Mar 2021**

Consistent campaign branding across platforms

**Main message:** “Become a Member”  
Clearly list key benefits of membership

Set goal of **X new members** by March 31st

Ask **entire community** to help spread the word and help you meet your goal

Publicly **welcome new members** to the community (Facebook, website)  
Encourage existing members to share why they value their membership

## Fundraising - Nov 2021

**Set** a modest fundraising goal

Clearly **communicate** impact of new funding – how it will be spent

Use a **powerful photo** of a beneficiary

**Short timeframe** (2 weeks to meet your goal, to create a sense of urgency)

Make sure it's **quick and easy** to donate online



**Regularly check** back in with the community – “We’ve raised Nu. 100,000 to date, but still need Nu. 250,000 more to reach our goal. Please make your donation today and help us spread the word!”

**Report back** to the community with the results. “We reached our goal! Thank you all for your participation and support!” OR “We fell short of our goal but still raised Nu. 250,500 which can have a big impact. Thank you all for your support and helping to spread the word!”



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Section

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8

# Communicating in a Crisis/ Challenging Situation

There will be times when a CSO faces a difficult or disruptive situation such as a natural disaster or situations that come suddenly such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Such circumstances tend to put your organisation, your members or stakeholders at risk or in challenging situations. It could also happen that your organisation is facing a merger, a potential change in mission, or even when your CSO is receiving negative feedback. A crisis communications plan will enable your CSO to be in better control when such challenging situations occur so that you can respond accurately and promptly.



Here are some tips to handle challenging situations:

**Respond quickly.** Let people/ target audiences know what your CSO is doing to remedy the situation. But accuracy is important. If you don't have the answer, say so – it's better to say that and then share the accurate information later.

**Be honest.** Try to provide facts. Be transparent.



**Correct misinformation.** Do not delete comments on FB pages, unless they are hateful. Do not give the impression that you are covering up.

**Show collaboration** with other CSOs or government agencies. If you're not at the front lines of the immediate crisis, it's a good time to show solidarity with other organisations who are, by sharing their content on social media and encouraging your supporters to support them as well.

**Track platforms and comments.** Answer queries even if the update is that you have no new information at this time.

**Handle complaints sensitively.** If your organisation is facing complaints etc, then try and put yourselves in your complainants' place: what do they need to hear and see from you right now to be reassured?

**Collaborate.** If planning a campaign to deal with a natural disaster, work across the board with as many affiliated or related agencies as needed. Follow the steps for making a communications plan.

**Be prepared.** Have a plan in place to be ready for any eventuality.

## Wrap-up

Story-telling is one of the most effective ways to share and grow support for your causes, and is central to all strategic communications plans. So start thinking about the stories you can share today. Ensure that they fit into a communications plan with well-thought out channels, how often the stories should appear, and how you will monitor its reach and, possibly, results. The communications plan is an on-going process that should be visited regularly so that your CSO is in touch with all the people you want to reach and to share your results and impacts.

## Exercise 11:

## Evaluation and amendment.



**Discuss:**

[illegible]

## Monitoring and Evaluation:



It is important to track your communications initiatives to be sure they reach your intended audience and have achieved their intended results. To do this, you'd need some baseline/or benchmarks before you start. Research through surveys, interviews etc. is vital as it also gives you clues to people's perceptions and other vital information for planning purposes.

### Check that all tasks get done

#### Monitor progress



1

What works?

2

What messages reach people or what messages do people respond to?

3

Measure changes if possible  
e.g. no of new members,  
amount of funds raised etc.

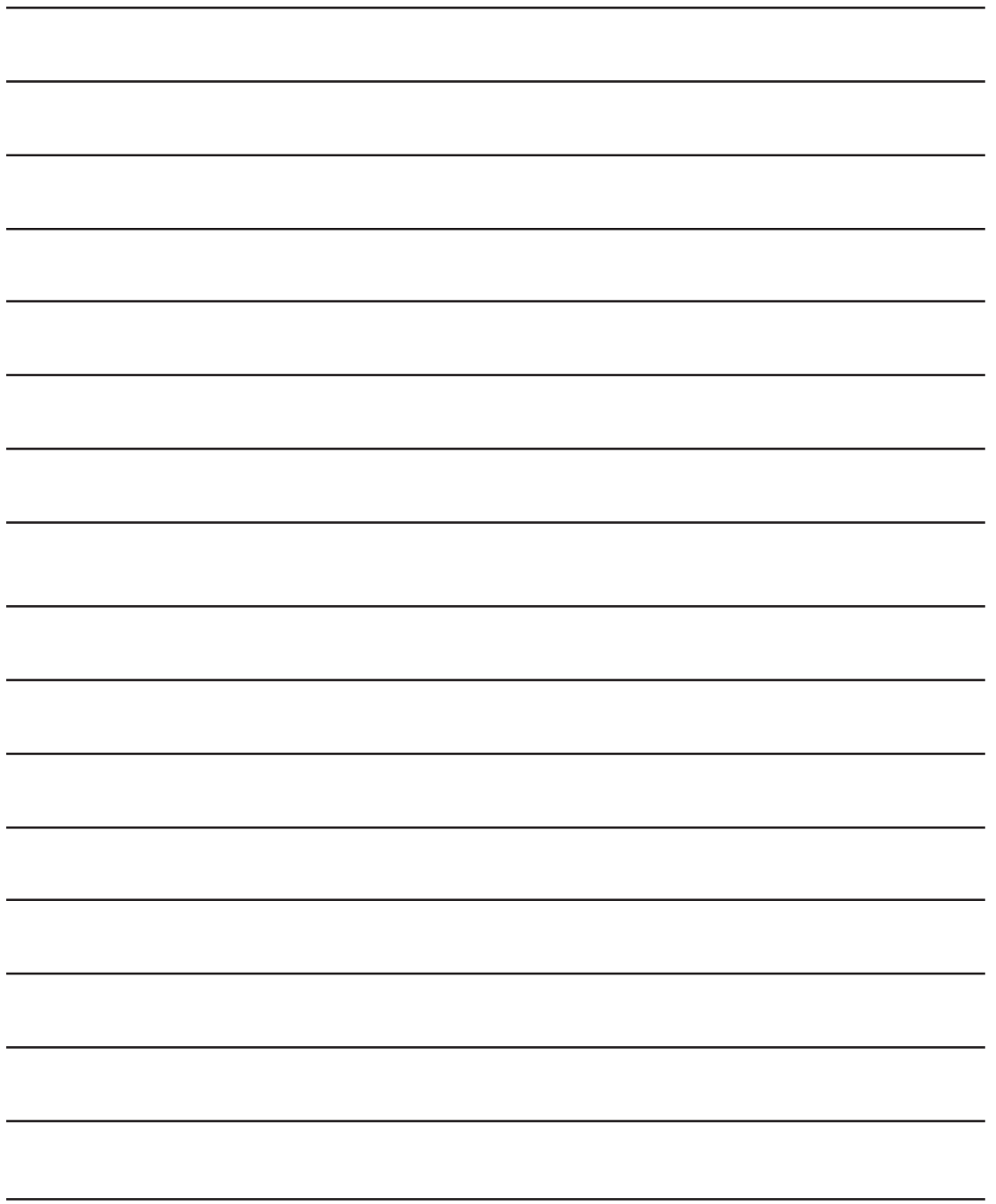
### Develop your next plan with the learnings



- Are there new channels of communications available?
- Do you need to rework or re-purpose your messages and tools?

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**HELVETAS**  
BHUTAN