**Shelter Communication Strategy**

**Goal of the Strategy**

**Background Information**

* Country Profile, general data
* Current Housing situation

**Key challenges**

Main identifies challenges related to shelter&settlement, defining if necessary Shelter Packages based on typology or location.

Objectives • Audiences • Messages • Tools and activities • Resources • Timescales • Evaluation and amendment

**Objectives**

Begin your plan with a set of objectives that are clear, simple and measurable.

Key communication Objectives per Essential Shelter/Housing Package (Typology or Location)

Your objectives are the key to the success of your communications strategy. They should ensure that your communications strategy is organisationally driven rather than communications driven. Your communications activity is not an end in itself but should serve and hence be aligned with your organisational objectives. Ask yourself what you can do within communications to help your organisation achieve its core objectives.

Aligning your communications and organisational objectives will also help to reinforce the importance and relevance of communications and thereby make a convincing case for the proper resourcing of communications activity within your organisation.

* Objectives
* Overarching Positioning

**Audience**

Current behaviour / Desired Behaviour / Barriers

* Prioritise your target audiences and user groups according to their importance and influence relative to your objectives.
* Consider as well the 'gatekeepers' to some of your key audiences
* Consider Influencing Audiences
* Consider who could be your indirect audience

You should identify those audiences with whom you need to communicate to achieve your organizational objectives. The best audiences to target in order to achieve an objective may not always be the most obvious ones, and targeting audiences such as the media may not always help achieve your objectives. Everyone would like a higher media and political profile, yet activities aiming towards this may ultimately be self-serving and only communications driven, with no wider impact. They can even have a negative effect if you dedicate resources towards this that would otherwise be put towards communicating with key stakeholders.

**Key messages for each Shelter Priority**

Strategic targeting and consistency are key to your organization’s messages. Create a comprehensive case covering all the key messages, and emphasize the different elements of the case for different audiences. Successful Communication: Targeting Tools to maximize impact you should summarize the case in three key points which can be constantly repeated. Remember that communications is all about storytelling: use interesting narrative, human interest stories and arresting imagery.

**Channels, Tools and Activities**

* National Level
* District / Zonal level
* Community Level
* Interpersonal
* Make sure you are using the most effective channels to communicate with your audience – think about the channels that your audience will prefer.
* It's useful to try out your messages in different formats
* Two-way communication is important in building relationships with your key audiences. What channels are you going to use to get feedback and answer their comments?
* Find out how your target audience prefers to receive information. Don't assume

Identify the tools and activities that are most appropriate to communicating the key messages to the audiences. These will be suggested by your audiences, messages, or a combination of the two. For example, an annual report is a useful tool in corporate communications whereas an email newsletter lends itself well to internal communications.

Ensure that you tailor your tools and activities to the level of time and human and financial resources available.

**Operational and Implementation Plan**

* Timescale
* Draw up a project plan that includes all the activities you intend to carry out, with deadlines, responsibilities and costs.
* Don't underestimate the time and money involved in carrying out your activities. Remember to include staff time as a cost.
* Try out your messages in different media, for example, a press release, a report, a newspaper article or a web page. This will help you find the most effective way of presenting them.
* Role of Key Stakeholders
* Capacity Building

**Resources and Timescale / Activity timeline and Cost**

The key rules to observe are always to deliver what you promise and never over promise.

Use your resources and timescales to set legitimate levels of expectations and outline the case for more dedicated resources.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**

* Build in some simple evaluation measures at the start so that you'll know if and how you have succeeded in meeting your objectives
* Update it regularly in the light of experience and opportunities
* Share successes and knowledge about what works and what doesn't

Consider performing a communications audit to assess the effectiveness of your strategy with both your internal and external audiences. You should use open questions with appropriate prompts and benchmarks and, if possible, get someone independent to do the work. Consider and discuss the results carefully and use them to amend your strategy.

Example audiences to consider are your staff, funders, key political targets and media.

Questions you should consider asking are:

• What do you read/see/hear?

• What works/doesn’t work?

• What do you want to see more of?

• What information do you need that you are not currently supplied with?

• How often do you want us to communicate with you?

While drawing up your strategy, you should involve your team, and on a smaller scale, the entire organisation. Feed the communications strategy into the organisational strategy to ensure maximum alignment and efficiency.

Indicators

References