

# EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT


Resilient & Responsive Health Organizations (RRHO)

2018



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# Training Agenda

- Introduction—Why a Communications Strategy? What is it?
  - Defining & Prioritizing Target Audiences
  - Communicating an Organization's Value
  - Developing Key Messages
  - Identifying Communications Tools/Mix
  - Next Steps
  - Key Takeaways
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# WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR AN ORGANIZATION'S **COMMUNICATIONS** ?

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- A. M&E Director
- B. Communications / Public Relations Officer
- C. Registrar/Director
- D. Board Members

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E. **EVERYONE** is responsible for communicating.

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# WHY A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY?

# Sustainability Planning

## Who are we?

- Mission/Vission
- Strategic Plan

## What do we need?

- Leadership
- Resources
- Systems

## From Where?

- Mix of resources
- Funding Sources

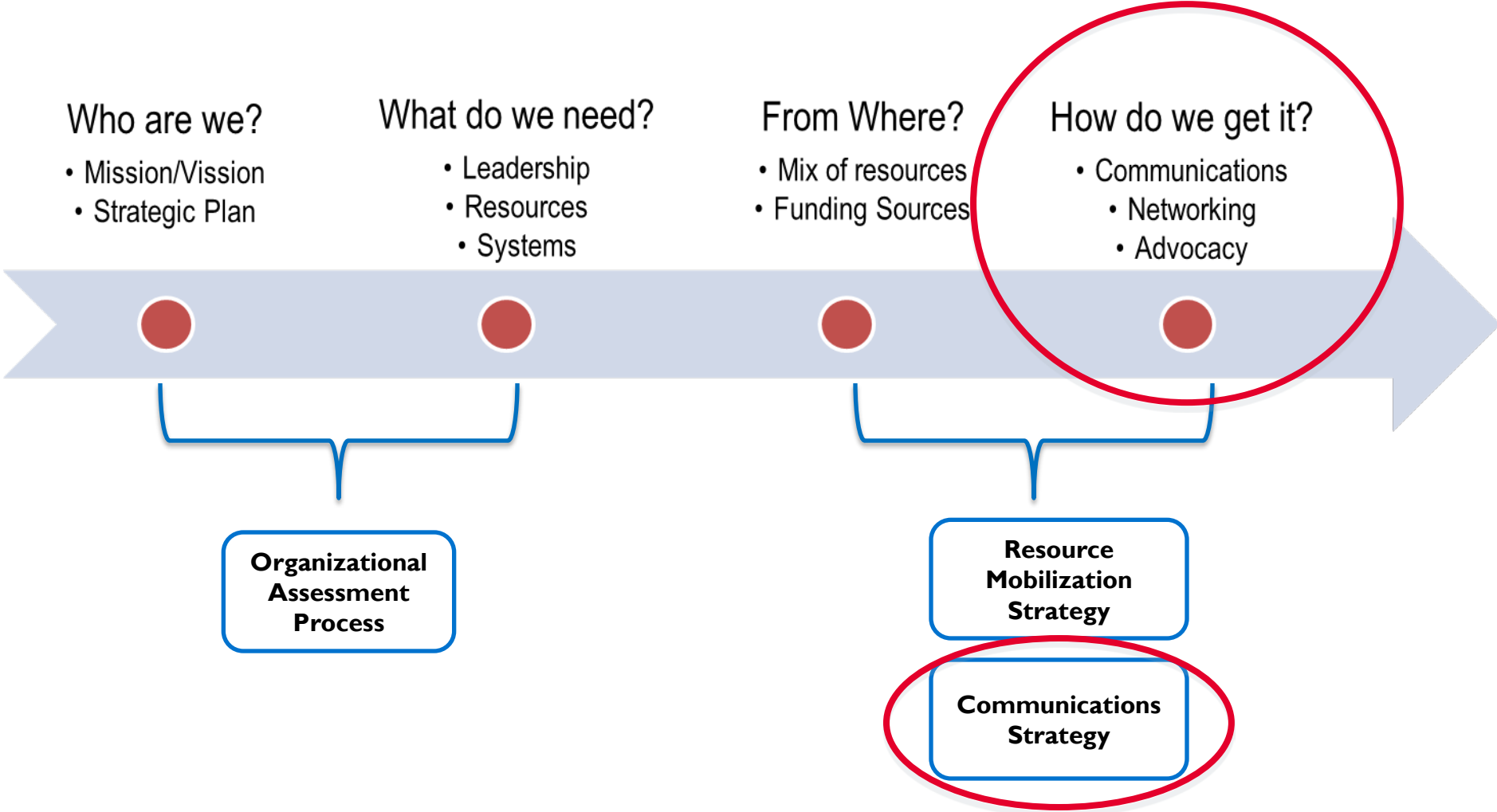
## How do we get it?

- Communications
- Networking
- Advocacy

**Organizational  
Assessment  
Process**

**Resource  
Mobilization  
Strategy**

**Communications  
Strategy**



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# Be thinking about:

- Who needs to know about your organization?
- What do you want these groups to do?
- What do you want your organization to be known for?
- Once the communications strategy is developed, how do you (realistically) operationalize it?

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AND REMEMBER

NOT EVERYTHING CAN BE A  
**PRIORITY**

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**WHAT IS A  
COMMUNICATIONS  
STRATEGY?**



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**A COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY** is a  
**BUSINESS TOOL.**

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Organizations use communications strategies to **HELP**  
**ACHIEVE** their **BUSINESS / STRATEGIC**  
**GOALS.**

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Communications strategies must be **MAPPED** to:

A BUSINESS PLAN,

A STRATEGIC PLAN, or

A SET OF BUSINESS GOALS.

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Communications objectives contribute to the achievement of the overall objectives of an organization.

They should not be seen as an “add-on,” but something as **FUNDAMENTAL** as operational or policy objectives to achieving an organization’s overall mission.

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# Communications Strategy

**WHO** says **WHAT**

Through **WHAT CHANNELS**

To **WHOM**

With what **IMPACT**



**WHAT IS THE  
SITUATION?**



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# An organization's communication strategy must address its reality

1. What are your **current / past efforts** to communicate as an organization?
2. What **works well** when you try to communicate as an organization?
3. What are the **challenges or roadblocks** to communicating as an organization?
4. How can your organization **overcome** these roadblocks?



**How do we  
start?**



# BY GOING BACKWARDS

Our instinct is to first ask **WHAT** (product) should we create?

We need to shift to first asking: **WHO** are we trying to reach?

This can be VERY challenging—for everyone.

**TO WHOM** is your  
organization  
communicating? 

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Who are your audiences and **HOW DO YOU NEED TO INFLUENCE THEM** to reach your strategic goals?

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## Understanding your audiences will help you...

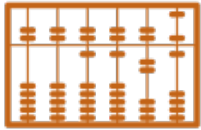
Tailor  
content

**Focus on  
quality of  
what is  
produced  
over  
quantity**

Increase  
odds of  
materials  
being read

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# Consider your audiences'...



Numeric literacy



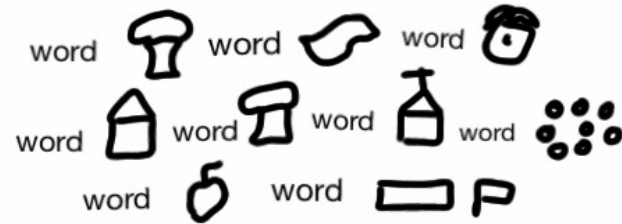
Education/level of  
technical expertise



Job function

# And what kind of information they respond to

9736628395766  
637251839463527191  
55278262893746233

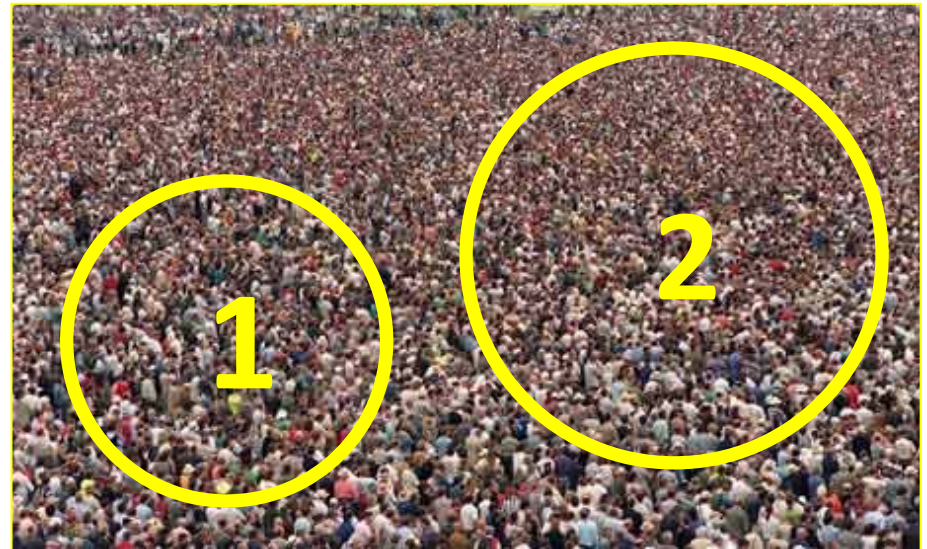


[freshspectrum.com](http://freshspectrum.com)

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# Prioritize Audiences

With resource constraints, you cannot be all things to all people. Not everyone can be your priority.






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## STRATEGY STEP

# Define and Prioritize Target Audiences

Who are your priority audiences given strategic / resource mobilization objectives?

- Current donors
  - Service providers
  - Training Institutions & Students
  - Potential Partners & Donors
  - MOH
  - The Public
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# Moving Audience from Point A to Point B



**Current**  
Understanding /  
Knowledge  
/ Actions

- What do they currently think / know / do?
- How do they currently receive information?
- What are you currently doing to reach / communicate with them?



**Future**  
Understanding /  
Knowledge  
/ Actions

- What do you want them think / know?
  - What do you want them to do?
  - How would they prefer to receive communications from your organization?
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# Another Way to Ask The Same Questions

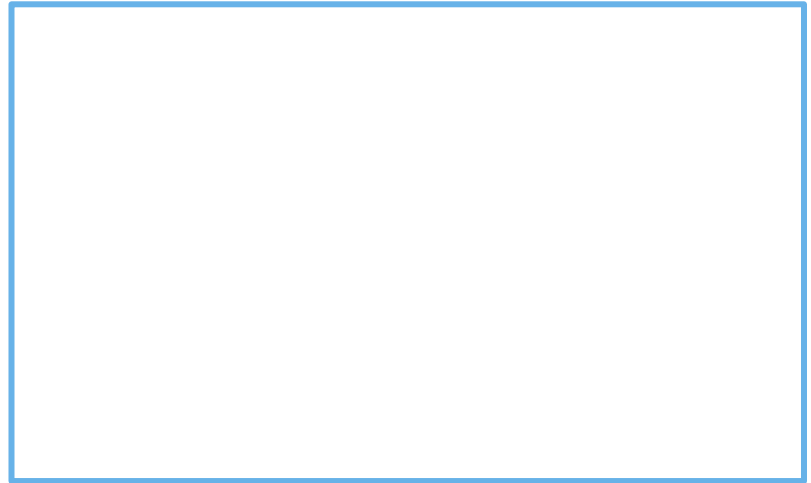
- **Why** is communicating with each audience necessary?
- **How** does each receive information today?
  - Is this method effective/any proven impact?
- **Where** can you communicate with each audience?
- **When** is the best time to disseminate messages?

**Audience:** \_\_\_\_\_

**How aware is this audience of your organization?**



**What kind of information does this audience respond to?**



**What do you want this audience to know?**



**What do you want this audience to do?**



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# Questions?

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OK. Now we know your audiences a little better.

Let's talk about developing **MATERIALS**  
for them.

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**Not yet.**

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**WHAT** is your  
Organization's  
Value? 



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What does “value” mean?

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# What is Your Organization's Value?

A value statement can describes your organization's value as it relates to a specific audience.

Audiences have targeted interests & priorities:

- What are their interests & priorities?
- What is your value in that environment?
- **YOU** have to be able to tell them explicitly.

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# **How to Define Your Organization's Value to Others**

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# Defining Value to Others

## Activity—Value Worksheet

What is your organization's value to each? Consider:

- What does (or what can) your organization do that no one else can do for that audience?
- How can your organization help them reach the audience's/donor's goals?
- What does your organization know that the audience might not know?

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# Value Example Sharing

What is your organization's value to each audience?

Consider:

- What does (or what can) your organization do that no one else can do for that audience?
- How can your organization help them reach the audience's/donor's goals?
- What does your organization know that the audience might not know?

Listen for commonalities.

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# ACTIVITY

MASTER YOUR “ELEVATOR SPEECH”



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# Elevator Speech:

“ An elevator speech or pitch is a conversation, or an ice breaker, that will (hopefully) lead into a **deeper dialogue** about the functionality, and specialty, of what **you and your organization can offer.**”


“ The name comes from the notion that the speech should be delivered in the short time period of an elevator (lift) ride, usually **20-60 seconds.**”

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# Why is preparing an elevator speech so important?

- To describe the value of what your organization does
- To spark interest in your organization

Remember: You only have **20-60 seconds** to make a powerful first impression





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# The Cs of a Great Elevator Speech:

Concise. Clear. Compelling. Credible.  
Concrete. Customized. Consistent.  
Conversational.

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# The Formula:

Who you are + Who your organization is + What your organization does + What makes your organization unique + Link to your listener + The ask/action.

## Effective Elevator Speech Checklist

Please tick each box that reflects your assessment of the Elevator Speech presented.

Critical elements required in elevator speech	Excellent	Good	Needs more support	Comments
1. Who you are				
2. Who you serve				
3. What you do				
4. What is unique about you (niche)				
5. Where you work				
6. Jargon and acronyms are clearly avoided. The language is listener friendly.				
7. The speech is memorable and sincere.				
8. It ends with an action request.				
9. The speaker conveys warmth, friendliness, confidence, and enthusiasm.				
10. Passion about what you do is projected.				
11. The speech sounds effortless, conversational, and natural.				
12. Content and overall delivery of the speech				

Do not confuse an elevator speech with a mission statement.


Do show impact and tell a story. Have examples ready. Do not use numbers.

Do end with a specific call to action.

Do not use jargon or acronyms. Use clear and simple language.

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# Your turn!

- Review the elevator speech checklist and “do’s and don’ts”
  - Consider your target audience(s) and their priorities as well as your organization’s value to them.
  - Practice with a partner
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# Q&A

How will you ensure that all members of your organization are prepared to communicate your organization's value to support resource mobilization and other strategic goal efforts?

**WHAT** is your  
organization  
communicating?



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**Messages help you communicate  
with one voice about your work.**

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# Messages can:

Introduce. Explain. Advocate. Persuade.

Differentiate.





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**Messages are NOT:**

An answer to every question.

Advertisements. Brands. Quotes.

Stories. Speeches. Elevator Pitches.



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# MESSAGES SERVE AS THE FOUNDATION FOR ALL COMMUNICATIONS:

Website or social media content

A conversation with family or friends

Face-to-face meetings with stakeholders

Success stories

Media interviews

Brochures

Elevator pitch

Introductions to reports or assessments

Peer-to-peer communication

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# Messages are supported by

- Facts
- Figures
- Data
- Examples
- Anecdotes
- Human Stories
- Sound bites

## Key Message

Fact

Figure

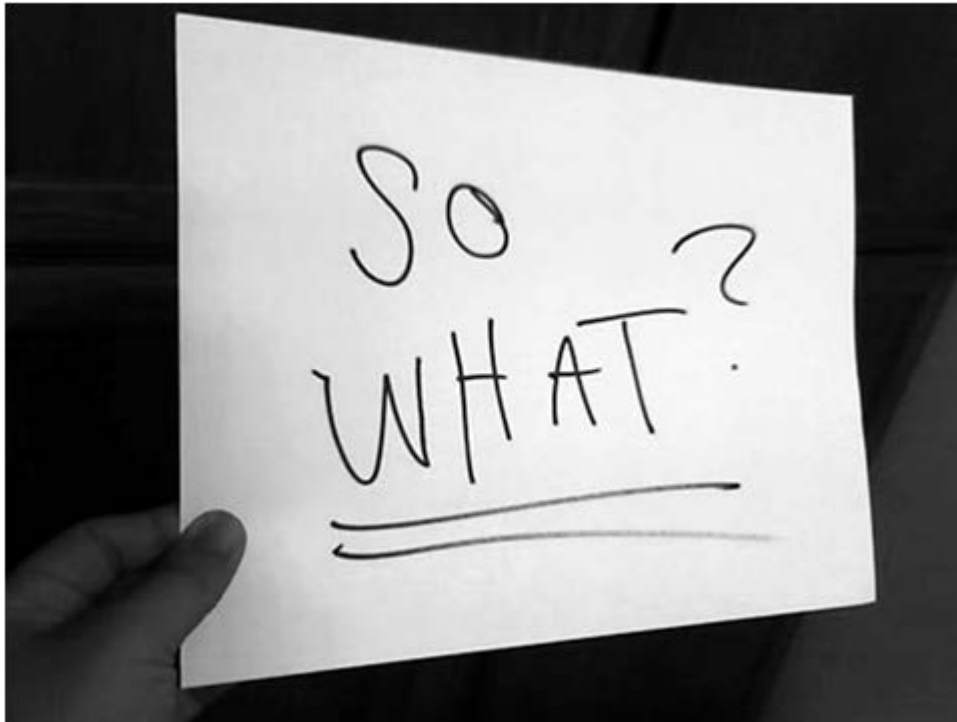
Example

Anecdote

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**Audiences are selfish—they  
want to know—**



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**Let's get started**


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**What does your organization do that  
no other organization does?**



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**How does your organization  
contribute to / improve services in  
your country?**




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**What would happen to health facilities if your organization did not work in your country?**



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**What does your organization do better than any other organization / group?**



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**What does your organization want  
people to do?**

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**What would happen to health facilities or training institutions if your organization stopped working & had to close its doors?**

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**What would happen to the people of your country if your organization closed its doors and stopped working?**

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**What makes you proud to be a part  
of your organization?**



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**Let's agree on the  
most crucial ones.**

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**WHAT CHANNELS**  
**will your**  
**organization use to**  
**communicate? —————→**

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**(Finally!)**

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**What communications channels / methods does your organization use now? What have you used in the past?**

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**What communications channels will your organization use to reach priority audiences with its key messages?**



# Choosing Tools Strategically

Determine what is **appropriate** for the audience to be reached.

Assess what is **feasible** for your organization to produce.

## Face-to-Face

- Meetings
- Events
- Conferences

## Printed Materials

- Brochures/fact sheets
- Success stories
- Results-based reports

## Traditional Media

- Print
- Broadcast TV/radio

## Web-based Media

- Websites
- Blogs
- Social media

## Audio/Visual

- Videos
- Photos

## Journal articles

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# **Starting Point: Organizational Capabilities Statement**

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# Why do we develop an organizational capabilities statement?

To tell potential donors or partners:

**WHO** we are

**WHAT** we do, and,

How we are  
**UNIQUE.**

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# Capability Statement

A brief written description of **what you have done**, **who** you are, **what** you do, and how you are **different/unique**.

A capability statement describes **what an organization does**, its program **experience**, and **strengths**.

Serves as a resume / CV for the organization—a brief document that markets your experience and skills to position for future funding

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**A prepared document that is adapted with context: where can we use it?**

- Proposals
- Brochures
- Meeting materials
- Support for your elevator speech
- News releases / media outreach

# Sample Capability Statement

## Hope Ethiopia

*Mobilizing Ethiopians to Combat HIV/AIDS*



Hope Ethiopia was among the first local organizations to respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Ethiopia by engaging the most valuable resource in communities—the people. Since 1996, Hope Ethiopia's programming has centered around spreading HIV awareness/prevention and prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) messaging and providing voluntary counseling and testing services (VCT), with a special focus on engaging men. Hope Ethiopia works primarily in the rural regions of Oromia and Amhara, with some activities in Addis Ababa.

### PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- **Sub-granting:** Sub-granted \$890,000 to 41 local NGOs providing VCT and prevention services from June 2008 to March 2012.
- **Training:** Trained 560 promoters in providing HIV prevention messaging, 330 health educators in mother-to-child HIV transmission education, and 120 clinical staff in performing male circumcisions.
- **Capacity-building:** Strengthened institutional capacity of sub-grantees and their partners in areas of operations, financial management and monitoring and evaluation, and facilitated linkages between sub-grantees to create support networks.
- **Community mobilization:** Created networks of HIV+ women in local communities to promote PMTCT messaging and provide peer support.
- **Male involvement:** Provided male-focused HIV/AIDS education sessions for 790,000 men since February 2006.

### PARTNERS AND FUNDERS

- USAID—New Partners Initiative Grantee
- Ethiopian Ministry of Health—HIV/AIDS Prevention & Control Office
- Catholic Relief Services
- PACT
- Stephen Lewis Foundation
- IntraHealth
- Women AID Ethiopia

### OUR APPROACH

- Focus on working in rural, resource-limited areas.
- Engage local cultural institutions, including traditional male leadership, in HIV prevention activities.
- Implement innovative, easily replicable & sustainable peer education program model.
- Enlist community participation through local community and faith-based organizations and community-led support networks.

Hope Ethiopia | Bole Road, Dasset Building near Braas MCH Hospital | Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

+251-0911-517-872 | hopeethiopia@yahoo.com

Registered NGO in Ethiopia



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# Capability Statement Worksheet

**Step 1:** Make a list of your organization's **core attributes**

**Step 2:** List your organization's current and past funding, projects, roles/activities—your organization's “**past performance**”

**Step 3:** What is unique about your organization's approach, experience or skills—these are your organization's “**differentiators**”? What makes your organization stand out?

**Step 4:** Fill in your organization's contact information and other data

**Step 5:** Write a summary statement. These 2-3 sentences will become the introduction to your organization's capability statement.

# Capability Statement

## Session 16 Capability Statement Summary Worksheet



Use the information from the Capability Statement worksheet with examples to complete the summary page

Target Audience:

1. Start with 2-3 sentences to introduce your organization.

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2. Describe your organization's core attributes.

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3. Describe your past performance, including funders and partners.

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4. Describe what is unique about your approach, experience, skills – what differentiates your organization from peers or competitors.

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5. Fill in your organization's contact information and other relevant data

Logo:

Contact Name:

Email:

Phone:

Fax:

Address:

Website:

Corporate data:

Adapted from "Going the Distance: Step-by-Step Strategies to Foster NGO Sustainability  
New Partners Initiative, Capable Partners Program, United States Agency for International Development

## WORKSHEET

### Capability Statement Assessment

Answer YES or NO to each of the following questions.

1. Is your capability statement concise, avoiding long paragraphs and run-on sentences?  YES  NO
2. Do you use clear active language and declarative sentences?  YES  NO
3. Do you avoid passive voice? (Passive voice avoids mentioning the subject of the sentence, and sounds vague and unclear. Instead of writing "peer counseling was done by volunteers", say "volunteers served as peer counselors.")  YES  NO
4. Do you avoid unnecessary adjectives (such as excellent, strong, exceptional)?  YES  NO
5. Do you avoid jargon?  YES  NO
6. Do you avoid vague language (such as empower, support—what do these mean)?  YES  NO
7. Do you emphasize your projects' results and client feedback wherever possible?  YES  NO
8. Do you avoid making claims you cannot prove?  YES  NO
9. Do you avoid exaggerating or misleading the reader? Tell the truth!  YES  NO
10. Do you give examples of:
  - What you did?  YES  NO
  - When you did it?  YES  NO
  - Why it mattered then?  YES  NO
  - Why it matters now?  YES  NO
11. Is your capability statement convincing? Is it memorable? Does it stand out?  YES  NO
12. Will the reader care?  YES  NO
13. Are you demonstrating actual capabilities by talking about activities?  YES  NO
14. Do you make clear connections for the reader?  YES  NO
15. Do your differentiators provide a particular benefit to those you serve?  YES  NO
16. Does your past performance instill confidence that you can get the job done?  YES  NO
17. Can your past performance and differentiators serve as a foundation to expand your scope and reach?  YES  NO
18. Is it clear how your services/skills stand out from peers or competitors?  YES  NO
19. Is it clear what positive benefits your organization offers that others do not?  YES  NO
20. Does your capability statement create a sense of trust and show that your organization is capable? Does it tell a donor why they should trust you to implement projects with their funding?  YES  NO

If you cannot answer YES to all these questions, go back and refine your capability statement!

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## STRATEGY STEP

# Identify Communications Tools to Reach Target Audiences



Consider:

- Your organization's strategic & communication objectives
- Audiences to be reached
- Time available
- Available resources (human & financial)



**Next steps**



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A communications strategy is just a piece  
of paper if it is not **IMPLEMENTED**

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But **HOW?**

Who has the time?

What about resources?

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**Does your organization need  
a Communications Officer or  
Director?**





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# Maybe?

Communications enables you to reach your **strategic objectives...**

*but*

Communicating effectively takes **time...**

*and*

Hiring communications staff requires **resources...**

*but*

**NOT implementing your communications strategy can cost you a lot.**



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# IF you hire, WHO do you need?

Developing a JD for communications staff requires a lot of thought and discussion.

What set of skills are most essential:

- Writing?
- Graphic design?
- Web?
- Social media?
- PR/media outreach?

No one person can do it all.

**Prioritize your needs carefully.**

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# Group Discussion

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# Developing Your External Communications Strategy

Develop the communications strategy document (communications objectives to meet the strategic goals, audiences, key messages, potential communications channels).

- Who will finalize the strategy?  
Who should be involved?

Create a **practical** communications action plan—  
timeline and responsible staff member(s).

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# Evaluating & Updating the Strategy

What's working?

What's not working?

Has the funding landscape changed?

Are there new audiences to be considered?

*And remember:*

The communications strategy is mapped to the strategic goals—when the strategic plan is updated, the communications strategy should be updated to reflect the new plan.

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# Key Takeaways

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**WHO** says  
**WHAT**  
Through  
**WHAT**  
**CHANNELS**  
To **WHOM**  
With what  
**IMPACT**

- Know your **AUDIENCE** above all else! Never start developing a resource (brochure, website, etc.) without discussing who the audience is, what they need, and how best to reach them.
  - Define your **VALUE** to your audience, or they won't see it—they will always ask “so what?”
  - Speak with one voice—using **KEY MESSAGES**. Once identified, these key messages serve as the basis of all communications. Do not recreate the wheel with each new communications material.
  - Select your **TOOLS** last—once you fully consider your audience (their priorities), define your value to that audience, and determine the appropriate message(s) to communicate that value.
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**Audience**

**Desired Action**




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**EVERYONE** is responsible for communicating as an organization.

Practice your “elevator speech” regularly to prepare yourself to help your organization achieve its strategic goals. Take advantage of opportunities to introduce others to your organization—including its value to them—to mobilize new resources.

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And most importantly—a  
communications strategy is  
just a piece of paper if it is  
not **IMPLEMENTED.**



**HRSA**  
Health Resources & Services Administration

