



Virtual Short Course: Effective (Issue-based) Communications for Caribbean Civil Society Organisations

Caribbean Natural Resources Institute (CANARI)
November 2022



Contact Info

- Course Facilitator: Michele Matthews-Morancie – micheleamattthews@gmail.com or michele@agitate-media.com
- Course Technical Support: Aditi Thanoo – aditi@canari.org



Welcome to Virtual Short Course: "Effective Communications for Caribbean Civil Society Organisations"



LOADING
PLEASE WAIT...

and, while you wait, please...

1. Fill out the pre-course survey (link in the chat box).
1. TYPE an intro into the chat box (anything you'd like us all to know about you...must include the org(s) you represent), followed by ellipses (...) but **DO NOT HIT SEND**
1. Take in the vibes/vibe to the music playing...get in the mood for learning + sharing!



What you can expect during this course...

You can expect to learn how to craft engaging, relatable, easy-to-understand and meaningful communications that moves people to take ACTION in six class sessions, covering the following topics:

- "The ABC's of an Effective Communications Strategy"
- "All about Data"
- "Implementing Tools"
- "Communications Teams, Timing and Resources"
- "Monitoring and Evaluation"
- "Putting Our Communications Action Plans to Work"



What you can expect during this course...

In "The ABC's of an Effective Communications Strategy," we will cover...

- The parts (KEY ELEMENTS) of an EFFECTIVE communications strategy
- How to develop and use/implement each part of a communications strategy
- The difference between an EFFECTIVE and an ineffective communications strategy
- Strategic targeting: what it is and why it's important



What you can expect during this course...

In "All about Data," we will cover using the data available to us to...

- Strengthen/bolster/legitimise/lend credibility to our messaging
- Guide which stakeholders we target and when
- Inform what communications products and platforms we choose and ultimately use to reach our stakeholders
- Measure the impact of our communications messages



What you can expect during this course...

In "Implementing Tools," we will cover...

- The action tools (from the course texts) that we can use to implement our communications strategies
- Why these tools are needed and how they will help us prepare ourselves and our teams/groups immediately begin acting on our communications strategies



What you can expect during this course...

In "Communications Teams, Timing and Resources," we will cover...

- The essential roles on our communications team
- The attributes and skills necessary to fill those roles
- Who on our team is equipped/best suited to fill what roles
- Filling gaps in capacity on our existing teams to effectively develop and implement our communications strategies
- Optimal timing to action our communications strategies based on our goals
- Leveraging the resources available to us to maximise our communications efforts



What you can expect during this course...

In "Monitoring and Evaluation," we will cover...

- Why M&E is mission critical to a successful communications strategy and action/implementation plan
- Tools we can use to measure our campaigns' impact
- Success indicators for our communications campaigns



What you can expect during this course...

In "Putting Our Communications Action Plans to Work," we will cover...

- Practical tips to get our communications strategies off the ground IMMEDIATELY
- Working through anticipated challenges
- Using the data from our M&E tracking to adjust and pivot during the implementation phase.



Our course texts and resource materials...

The main texts, both created by CANARI, that we will be referencing for this course are:

- "An advocacy toolkit for Caribbean civil society organisations"
- "Communicating for Conservation: A communication toolkit for Caribbean civil society organisations working in biodiversity"

Additional Resource:

- "COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT: A GUIDE to Navigating Communications for Social Impact" (Created and published by Cause Communications)



Our learning platform...

The learning platform we will use to house all of the slides, guest presentations, course texts, reference and resource materials is...

THINKIFIC
(www.thinkific.com)



On tap for today...

In today's class, we will cover...

- Our community agreements
- The parts (KEY ELEMENTS) of an EFFECTIVE communications strategy
- The difference between an EFFECTIVE and an ineffective communications strategy
- What to consider when developing a communications strategy/taking a strategic approach to our communications



Our community agreements...

Let's agree to do the following in order to maximise our class time...

- Participate actively/fully by sharing our experiences and/or answering questions
- Limiting our contributions to 2-3 minutes in plenary discussions when possible to allow everyone to actively participate
- Limiting distractions near us
- Communicating when we have to step away from our computers (especially in small group breakouts)
- Listening to our colleagues for understanding
- Being respectful even when we disagree
- Anything else we need to add?



Laying the foundation: **What are the building blocks of an effective communications strategy?**

- Goal(s) and objectives
- Target audiences
- Messages
- Products and platforms (also known as pathways)
- Monitoring and evaluation



We've all heard/used those terms before, but what do they really mean/what defines them in the context of the work we've set out to do?

Let's explore that for each element of an effective communications strategy...

**What do we know about
our goal(s) and
objectives?**



Goals and objectives

Our broader, desired outcome-What we hope to achieve

The smaller milestones/ actions taken to achieve the outcome

SMART-
Specific,
Measurable,
Attainable, Results-
oriented, Realistic,
Time-bound





What do we need to consider when devising/developing our goal(s) and objectives?

- What do we want to accomplish?
- Why do we want to accomplish this?
- Is it specific? (Does it say exactly what end you are seeking, clearly and precisely?)
- Is it measurable? (Does it provide numbers that you can use to evaluate progress?)
- Is it attainable? (Is the desired accomplishment reasonably possible to accomplish without extraordinary or superhuman effort?)
- Is it results-oriented and realistic? (Within the context of our work schedule and organisational priorities, is it likely that this goal or objective will be accomplished?)
- Is it time-bound? (Does it specify a reasonable timeframe?)
- In short, is it a SMART goal or objective?

**What do we know about
target audiences?**



Target audiences

The stakeholders we want to influence/sway; people/institutions we want to reach

Should be selected for a specific reason

Need to be researched before being targeted.

Their needs/wants /preferences should be considered when planning.

Cannot all be reached using the same means (products and pathways).

Require nuanced messaging that speaks specifically to their unique qualities that led to their selection.





What do we need to consider when deciding who to target?

- How can this person/group of persons/institution impact our goal(s)?
- How much do we know about them?
- Do we have the resources to access the information needed to potentially sway them?
- Is their liberation tied to our liberation, meaning do they benefit in anyway from the change we are trying to make?
- How do they benefit and is it enough to move them to act?
- What might motivate them to take action?

**What do we know about
messages/messaging?**



Messages

What we are trying
to convey to
stakeholders

There are key
messages and
tailored messages.

Clear, concise
and reference
the goal(s) and
objectives.

Based
on/rooted in
data and
evidence.

Have a clear
call to action
or an ask

Can be
flexed/nuanced
depending on who
we are trying to
reach





What do we need to consider when developing our communications campaign messages?

- What is the issue at hand?
- Why is it important to us?
- Why should it be important to others?
- How does it impact their lives and experiences?
- What do we want stakeholders to do?
- What language will strike a chord with them and inspire them to do that?
- How can we use it (that language) in the most succinct and relatable way possible?

**What do we know about
products and platforms
(pathways)?**



Products and platforms (pathways)

Products are the communications tools that encompass or messages

Platforms are the pathways/channels we use to disseminate the products

Dependent on who is being targeted and what they best respond to.

Based on/rooted in data and evidence about target audiences.

Podcasts, policy briefs, blogs, vlogs, newsletters, films, etc. are product examples

Platform/pathways are social media channels, email, in-person meetings, trainings/workshops, presentations, media appearances, etc.





What do we need to consider when deciding what products to develop and platforms (pathways) to use to disseminate them?

- How do the people we are targeting receive the kind of information we are sharing?
- What platforms do they frequent?
- When are they most open/receptive to receiving information?

**What do we know about
monitoring and
evaluation (M&E)?**



Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Critical to impact measurement.

Indicators of success/failure need to be decided at the beginning.

Can provide the necessary information to justify pivoting or reworking elements of the strategy and plan.

Needs to happen during every part of the campaign (tracking).

Metrics such as mentions of key messages, # of meetings held with targets, etc can be indicators.

Is a form of important data gathering.





What do we need to consider when deciding what M&E measures to put in place for our efforts?

- What do we consider success(es) for our efforts?
- What can we realistically track on a consistent basis with the resources available to us?
- Who will be responsible for monitoring and evaluating our efforts, or different aspects of our efforts?
- How often will we review our M&E data and use it to inform our next steps?



What does an effective communications strategy look like? Can we tell the difference?

Let's take a look at two simple sample communications strategies developed for CANARI's regional campaign to champion and encourage the signing and ratification of The Regional Agreement on Access to Information, Public Participation and Justice in Environmental Matters in Latin America and the Caribbean (Escazú Agreement) in late 2020 and early 2021...



Simple Communications Strategy A

Goal: To influence the governments of Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and Antigua and Barbuda to sign and/or ratify the Escazú Agreement.

Objective:

To equip and empower established, environmentally-focused and well-networked CSOs in the aforementioned countries with skills to develop and implement persuasive/effective communications campaigns (strategies and action plans) to inspire their government officials to sign and/or ratify the Escazú Agreement.

Target Audiences: CSO leaders of established, environmentally-focused and well-networked CSOs in all of the listed island nations; CSO communications staffers at established, environmentally-focused and well-networked CSOs in all of the listed island nations; Local advocates and activists interested in environmental justice in all of the listed island nations

Messages: Key Message: *"Forward movement on Escazú starts with YOU"*

1. **Tailored for CSO leaders:** "Equip and empower your staff to sway influencers today. *Forward movement on Escazú Starts with You*"
2. **Tailored for CSO communications staffers:** "Sharpen your skills to set the Caribbean up for a brighter future. *Forward movement on Escazú Starts with You*"

Product(s): Newsletters; Communications strategy and actions tool packaged into a toolkit.

Platforms: Email; Communications course/workshop

M&E Indicators: # of clicks on newsletter articles, # of registrations, # of people who participated in the entire workshop/course, # of groups who launched campaigns



Simple Communications Strategy B

Goal: To influence regional governments to sign on to and/or ratify the Escazú Agreement.

Objective: To empower regional CSOs to develop communications campaigns to influence their government officials to act on the Escazú Agreement.

Target Audiences: CSO leaders advocates and activists

Messages: Key Message: *"Forward movement on Escazú starts with YOU"*

- 1. Tailored for CSO leaders:** "Send Staff to CANARI's communications course. *Forward movement on Escazú Starts with You*"
- 2. Tailored for advocates:** "Come to CANARI's communications training. *Forward movement on Escazú Starts with You*"

Product(s): Communications toolkit

Platforms: Email invite

M&E Indicators: # of clicks on email, # of registrations,



What makes Strategy A more EFFECTIVE than Strategy B?

- It was more detailed
- It provided more insight and could be more easily understood
- The messages varied based on who was being targeted
- It utilised varied products and platforms
- There were several, clear indicators for monitoring and evaluation
- Anything else?



What can we learn about strategy from Brandon Stanton, founder/content creator/author, Humans of New York?



On how I approach strangers in the street | Humans of New York creator Brandon Stanton | UCD, Dublin



UCD - University College Dublin
43.8K subscribers

Subscribe

9.1K



Share

Clip





In Thursday's Class...

We'll be covering...

- Strategic targeting and tools available to make it much easier
- **Crafting effective messaging**
- Leveraging data to strengthen/bolster our messages