

Strategic Communication & Advocacy Template

Organizations that are seeking to build trust and enhance their reputation among indigenous stakeholders, or hoping to support and amplify indigenous advocacy efforts can use this template to structure their communications. The template will include guidance on setting a vision and goal, identifying target audiences and influencers, developing messaging as per the values and threats perceived by target audiences, and appointing a credible messenger to appeal to target audiences.

Setting the context

- **Define your vision:** This includes what you want to achieve in the long run. To achieve your vision, you will need to meet your goals. To meet your goals, you need to set your vision.
Eg: To achieve indigenous peoples' inclusion in the mainstream media infrastructure of Guatemala so that they can achieve political, social and economic equality and representation.

This is a vision because it will only be accomplished through a series of coordinated efforts (goals) in the long run. It is also a vision because “inclusion” can take many different forms. You need to work towards defining and achieving specific forms of inclusion (such as access to community radios, freedom from persecution, access to Mayan content) before the mainstream media infrastructure can be considered “inclusive.”

- **Set your goals:** Your goals need to be SMART - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound.
 - Specific - Goal describes exactly what needs to be accomplished and how it will be accomplished
 - Measurable - Goal describes how much needs to be accomplished and how it will be measured
 - Achievable - Goal is feasible and attainable given resources, time and other considerations
 - Relevant - Goal is related to the vision and will help achieve the vision
 - Time-Bound - Goal specifies by when it will be accomplished

Eg: To procure 3 licenses each for operating radios carrying Mayan-language programming by 2022 for 5 districts with the least amount of community radios as of 2021.

This goal is Specific, because it indicates needs to be done (procuring radio licenses for 5 districts with the least amount of community radios). It is Measurable because it describes

how much needs to be done (3 licenses each for 5 districts) and Achievable (assuming the organization has the resources to buy and set up the frequencies). It is Relevant because it addresses an important aspect of indigenous inclusivity in media (community radios). Finally, it is Time-Bound, because it specifies when the goal needs to be accomplished by (2022).

Your goal should not take more than 24 months to achieve. If you need more time to achieve your goal, consider setting it as your vision or by outlining smaller sub-goals that can be achieved sooner. If you are setting multiple goals, then develop a separate strategy for each of the goals.

Scanning the environment

SWOT Analysis: SWOT Analysis is a way for organizations to evaluate their Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. You can only build an effective communication campaign if you know your resources and constraints. A good starting point can be your annual report and focus group interviews with your employees and colleagues. You can also consult the Guidelines for Starting Conversations about Diversity and Inclusion to conduct this analysis.

- **Strengths**
 - What can you do well as a communicator or advocate for indigenous interests?
 - What unique resources do you have? (Indigenous contacts, Mayan language skills, access to data, budget, country experts etc.)
 - What skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors do you have that can increase indigenous inclusion in Guatemalan mainstream media?
 - What sets you apart from your market basket (other media outlets, non-profits, government missions, private organizations) that are working towards indigenous inclusion?
- **Weaknesses**
 - What do you need to improve as a communicator or advocate for indigenous interests?
 - What unique resources do you not have access to? (Indigenous contacts, Mayan language skills, access to data, budget, country experts etc.)
 - What skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviors do you need to increase indigenous inclusion in Guatemalan mainstream media?
 - What places you at a disadvantage compared to your market basket (other media outlets, non-profits, government missions, private organizations) that are working towards indigenous inclusion?
- **Opportunities**

- What indigenous issues or trends can you tap into for your communication and advocacy efforts?
- What skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and resources do you need but can easily acquire?
- What strengths can you leverage to cover or compensate for your weaknesses?
- What emerging issues, trends, skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and resources have your market basket not yet tapped into?
- **Threats**
 - What issues and trends can subvert your efforts to achieve indigenous inclusion?
 - What skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and resources do you need but cannot easily acquire?
 - What weaknesses do you have that can adversely affect your reputation or your communication efforts?
 - What emerging issues and trends have your market basket raised that you cannot tap into or that subvert your efforts?

Stakeholder map:

- Identify your target/decision maker: This is the stakeholder who will help your goal become a reality. This stakeholder has the power to pass your desired legislation, provide funds, set up a committee or anything else that is instrumental in achieving your goal.
- Identify priority audiences: These are the stakeholders who have the most influence over your target/decision maker. List 1-3 of the most important audiences whom your stakeholder listens to.
- Develop a message box: For each of these audiences and targets, list how you perceive yourself, how you perceive the audience/target, how the audience/target perceives themselves and how the audience/target perceives you. This will help you decide what kind of a relationship you have.
- Identify level of relationship: Based on the perceptions identified in the message box, color code the audiences/targets. Mark them in:
 1. **Green** if you have a strong relationship (you view each other in positively or have worked together previously);
 2. **Yellow** if you have a moderate relationship (you view each other in mostly favorable or lukewarm terms but key differences exist or you have loosely worked together in the past); and
 3. **Red** if you have weak or no relationship (you view each other negatively or have not yet established a relationship).

This will indicate your likely hard supporters (those in green), likely soft supporters or soft opponents (those in yellow) and likely hard opponents (those in red).

As a communication or advocacy professional, you need to create or reinforce your hard supporters' commitment towards indigenous inclusion and create your soft supporters' or soft opponents' commitment towards indigenous inclusion. It is not helpful to focus on hard opponents while meeting your goal - instead, you should focus on turning them into soft opponents over the long term as you work towards your vision.

Identifying partners

Build your coalition: The more stakeholders you can partner with, the bigger your support base will be. With a bigger support base, you will also have a bigger resource pool and a more persuasive appeal. Look at the audiences you marked as green/hard supporters and consider approaching them to partner with you in your campaign.

Note: No matter whether the specific indigenous community you are working with is a hard supporter, you need to have an indigenous organization or action group or community as part of your coalition. This will ensure your campaign remains committed to indigenous inclusivity as envisioned by the community itself.

Appoint your messenger: Your messenger will be a source whom your target and/or audiences find credible, reliable, relatable and likable. Your messenger will not just disseminate your message, but will also persuade audiences to influence your target/decision maker and influence the target to enact the desired change. Each of your priority audiences may require a different messenger.

Consult your indigenous partner organizations or groups while appointing your messenger(s). Ask them who should and should not be the messenger, and if they would like to appoint a messenger themselves. Remember, the messenger is as important as the message. Your choice of a messenger speaks as much about indigenous inclusivity as the message about the matter, if not more.

Creating the message

Evaluate the position: Before you can apply these values and barriers, you need to understand what messaging and narratives are already existing.

- **No frames:** In the rare instance in which your issue of choice is so niche, recent or unique that no frames exist, you get to set the initial frame. This is common when your audiences need knowledge or clarification before they can move along the ladder of change. It can also be when the ladder of change does not yet exist - that is, audiences do not know enough about the issue to need to enact change.
- **Favorable frames:** In this case, the issue has already been framed in a favorable manner. Your job is to reinforce these frames to be able to move your audiences

along the ladder of change. You may even consider creating knowledge, shaping attitudes and enabling behaviors for new audiences.

- **Unfavorable frames:** In this case, the issue has already been framed - but in a manner unfavorable to you. Your job is to reframe the issue by deploying another frame that appeals more to your audience and target/decision maker.

Evaluate readiness and position on the Ladder of Change: After identifying whether you need to frame the issue anew, reinforce existing frames or reframe the issue, you need to identify whether your audiences need knowledge, attitude, behavior or reinforcement.

Stage I - Creating knowledge: Do your audiences need knowledge and awareness about the issue before they can start caring about enacting change? If so, you will need to build awareness before you can get them to start questioning the status quo.

Stage II - Shaping attitudes: Are they questioning the status quo and aware of what is wrong, but unwilling or unable to take action? If so, you need to shape their attitudes by tapping into their values, overcoming their barriers and introducing alternatives to the status quo.

Stage III - Enabling behavior: Does your audience know the alternatives to the status quo but is still unwilling or unable to take action? If so, you need to enable them to enact the alternatives by tapping into their values and overcoming their barriers.

Stage IV - Reinforcing behavior: Once your audience has tried an alternative and enacted change, you need to reward their effort, thank them, and show how they have enabled change. You can also reinforce and supplement their knowledge and attitude.

Identify values and barriers: Based on whether your audience needs a shift in knowledge, attitude or behavior, or reinforcement, you need to tap into their values (what they care about) and barriers (what stops or hinders them) from moving along the Ladder of Change. Use the following questions to get started:

- What are some commonly told stories or commonly held traditions? What are some commonly observed holidays and events? What are some significant places, objects, monuments or symbols?
- What do the answers to these questions say about your audiences' struggles and triumphs?
- What do they say about their journey, story and history?
- How do individual members of the audience equate their personal story or personal events with the story or events of their community? How does the community

include individual stories and isolated events into the story and history of the wider community?

- How does the audience view itself? How would it describe itself? How does it view other groups?
- How does the audience view the world/nation order? How do they view the system through which policies are formed? What changes - if any - do they envision?
- What qualities do they think are essential to make a good person or a just order? What qualities make a person or order bad? What challenges do they envision for retaining the desirable qualities to be a good person or create a just order?

Frame the issue: Based on the stage of readiness, values and barriers of the audience, you need to form your messaging and talking points. Think about your messaging in terms of problem, cause, evaluation, solution and call to action.

Problem: Define why the issue is a problem, or what specifically about the issue is a problem.

Cause: Define who or what has caused the problem.

Evaluation: Define why the issue needs to be addressed, why it deserves attention, or what the impact of the problem is.

Solution: Define how the problem can be solved or what steps must be taken.

Call to action: Define what immediate steps the audience can take or what resources they can consult.

Each of these portions must be backed by proof points or data that support your messaging. Each of these portions should also draw upon your audience's values and barriers and an understanding of where they are on the ladder of change.

Tactics | So far, you have focused on conceptualizing your strategy. Now, you need to enact your strategy. Assign each of the planned activities to your messenger, staff, volunteers and/or partners, due by a certain date.

Sample tactics include:

- Blogs, Op-Eds, press releases, newsletters, mailers, petitions
 - Social media posts, graphics, hashtags and livestreams
 - Conferences, exchanges, press tours, interviews, panel discussions, debates, networking events
 - Film festivals, podcasts, radio programs, short films, documentaries, vlogs, web applications, games
 - Workshops, vocational training, skill coaching, mentor events
- Set your objectives: Once you have decided what tactics you want to implement, you need to set smaller, tactical goals - objectives - that will indicate your desired level of

tactics to enact your strategy. Your objectives should also be SMART - Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound - just like your goal.

Evaluation | At the end of your assigned time for achieving your goal, you need to measure if you were successful and to what extent. This will help you establish whether you need to change your goal or how much more needs to be done before you can achieve your vision.

Evaluate your outputs - Your outputs are your tactical activities that you used to disseminate your messaging, enact your strategy and achieve your goal.

- Did you achieve your desired objectives?
- What could have been done differently?
- Did they get the desired level of attention and viewership in digital/traditional media?

Which messages were most viewed/liked/shared? Which messages were least viewed/liked/shared?

Evaluate your outcome - The outcome is the change made because of your outputs. Outcomes indicate whether you have achieved your goal.

- Did you achieve your goal to the desired level? What could have been done differently?
- What remains to be done to achieve your goal?
- What messaging was successful? What messaging was unsuccessful?
- Which audience did you manage to persuade the most?
- Did your target help you achieve your goal?
- Were the outputs relevant to your strategy? Did you need to implement more activities?
- Did your audiences move along the ladder of change?
- Did you remove your audience's barriers to enact change?
- Was there a change in your audience's knowledge and/or attitudes and/or behavior?
- Was your messenger successful? How do you define success?
- Did you leverage your Strengths? Did you make up for your Weaknesses? Did you take advantage of your Opportunities? Did you eliminate your Threats?
- Did you turn relationships in red to yellow and/or relationships in yellow to green?
- How many people approve of your frame? How many people disapprove? How critical is that for realizing your goal/vision?