

Digital Communication for NGOs

IMPACT-ORIENTED COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY IN THE DIGITAL AGE



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the European Union





Let's Discuss

Why do NGOs often fail to create impact in digital communication?

What Will We Talk About?

**What is Digital
Communication?**

**Why Do NGOs
Communicate?**

**Impact-based
Communication**

**Impact-based
Communication
Examples**

**Right-based
Digital
Communication**

On Communication...

"Human life can only gain meaning through communication."

— *Paulo Freire*

"The goal of communication is to provide inspiring information that moves people."

— *Guy Kawasaki*

"The fundamental building block of good communication is the feeling that every human being is unique and valuable."

— *Anonymous*

Key Concepts

Digital Communication is used to bring people together, create community, and build networks.

Digital communication is the communication carried out over **internet-based applications** for the purpose of producing, developing, and disseminating ideas, information, and messages.

Communication in digital takes place using various digital contents (digital media) such as video, audio, text, or animation, using digital devices such as computers, tablets, smartphones, game consoles, etc.



Key Concepts

Digital advocacy can be summarized as the dissemination of digital content aimed at a specific target audience in line with a goal, within a certain plan and time interval, through specific digital communication tools, the effort to create a dialogue, and getting feedback.

The digital communication maintained by NGOs should be social impact-oriented.

Social impact-oriented communication is an approach based on **strategic, planned, holistic, and continuous communication.**



Key Concepts

Impact is the change that NGOs aim to create in society as a result of their activities. Impact can be a positive change in the lives of disadvantaged groups, reducing the damage given to nature, enriching the cultural life in a city, etc.

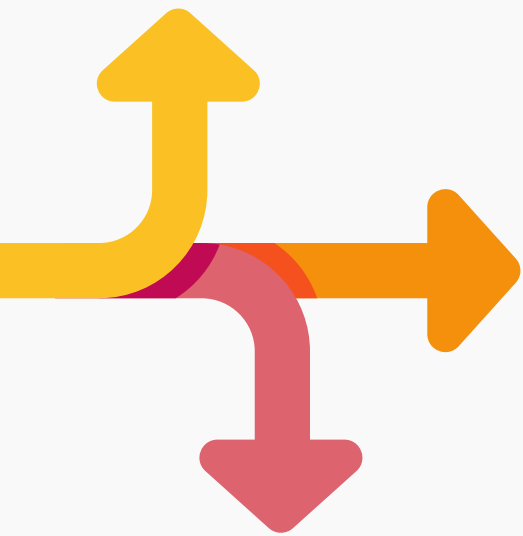
Impact-Oriented Communication is the design and implementation of NGOs' communication activities with the aim of creating the greatest possible impact to improve and advance society.

In this framework, 'communication' is a main field of activity that cuts across all activities of the NGO.

Communication strategy aims to establish deep relationships for permanent changes, not scores.



Communication Goals



Learning the demands and expectations of the organization's stakeholders.

Determining the direction, field of work, and policies of the organization.

Improving the organization's human resources.

Being able to attract qualified employees, volunteers, and supporters.



Improving internal organizational harmony.

Participation, dialogue, unity of purpose, compromise-oriented internal communication.



Building trust in the public for the organization.

Being able to create a strong and positive impression in the public.

Increasing the organization's impact on state policies in its field.

Relations with the government and lobbying..



Being able to create an agenda regarding the demands and expectations in the organization's field.

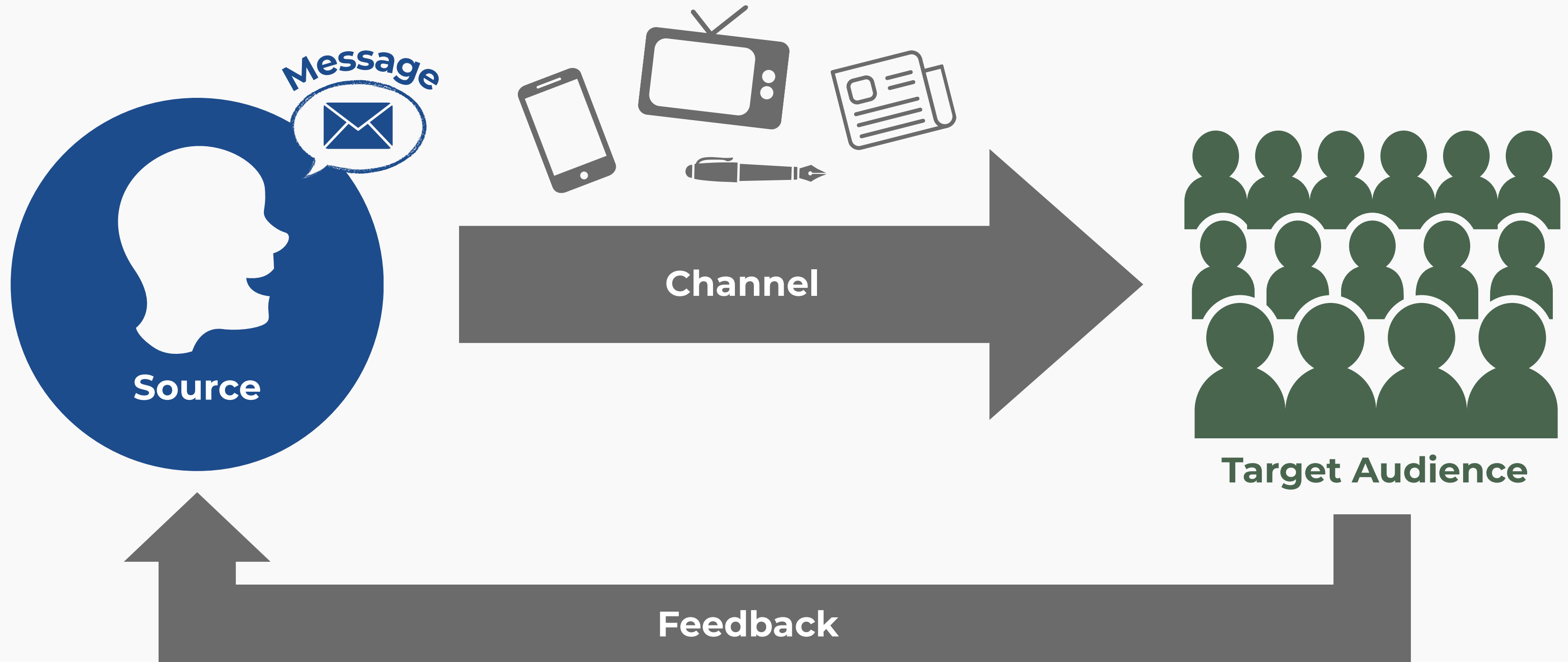
Media relations and activity in social media.



Obtaining financial power

through strong donor support, sponsorship, and donations.

Traditional Communication



Digital Communication



Traditional Communication

Delivering the message to the target audience.

Making the target audiences aware with the message.

Raising awareness, teaching, providing awareness...

Impact-based Digital Comm.

Transforming the target audience into an active community.

Calling the target audiences to action with the message.

Increasing participation, learning, acting together...

Four Pillars of Impact-Based Communication

Solution Communication

A communication focused on solutions,
not problems.

1

2

Dialogue Communication

Two-way or multi-way communication,
not one-way.

3

4

Participation Communication

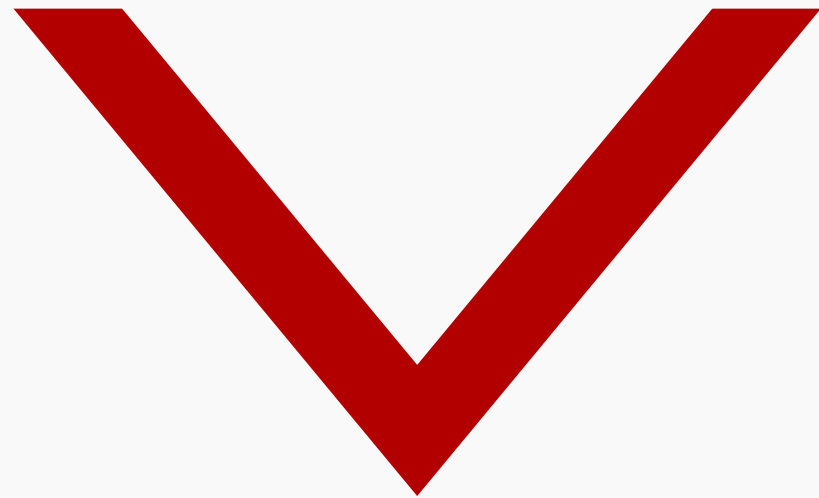
A communication that aims at taking
action, not just raising awareness.

Community Communication

Communication aiming to establish
permanent relationships, not just scores.

Solution Communication

"Children who do not receive education have no chance!"



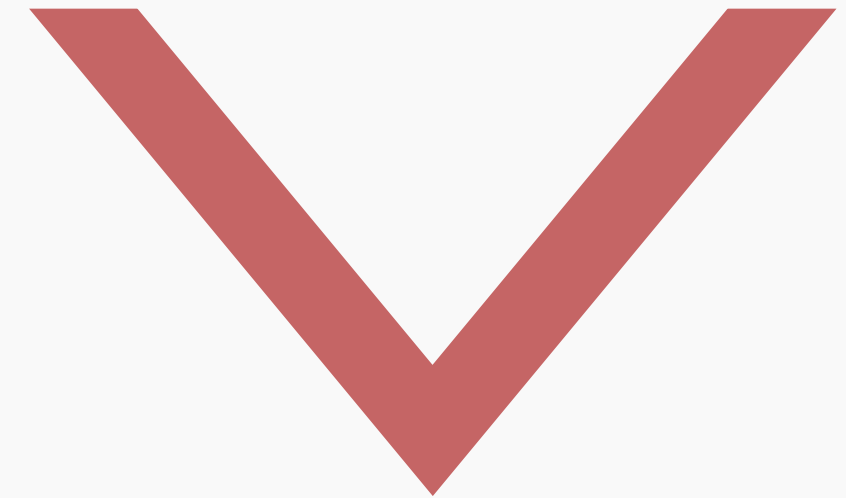
"Children can have a better future with equal opportunity in education."

"Not enough importance is given to education!"



"What can we do together to fix the education system?"

"The education system is giving an alarm!"



"We can build the solution together!"

Dialogue Communication

Monologue vs. Dialogue

Digital communication is not just a one-sided message transmission from experts to large masses, from institutions to individuals, or from the center to the periphery.

Digital communication is two-way or multi-way.

Dialogue is not just receiving feedback. It is a conversation between equals.

"Look at what I'm doing?"



"What do you think about this issue?"

Participation Communication

Call to Action

Communication focused on the call-to-action beyond creating awareness.

Being aware of the problem is not enough to take action.

Strategic communication that uses concrete calls to action to create change, creating space for users to take action.

"Look, there is such a problem!"



"What can we do together?"

Community Communication

From Expert to Facilitator

Moving from the position of practitioner or expert to the position of facilitator, partner, or inspirer.

Encouraging how many people share by producing, changing, and transforming their own content; how many more people partner in the issue.

Seeing supporters not as simple numerical data, but as individuals who will contribute to change with their unique talents.

"I know this job best.
I provide the solution."



**"We are all stakeholders
in the solution."**

Don'ts and Dos in Impact-Based Communication



General and broad topics.



Abstract and unclear messages.



Targets where the goal is "everyone" instead of "someone."



Confusing, subjective/personal content.



Unrealistically comprehensive or imaginary goals.



Focus on a single target/solution; long demand lists cannot be an advocacy proposal.



Give messages where what is requested is easy to understand.



Target individuals and institutions with decision-making power directly.



Determine your suggestions/goals specifically and clearly.



Ensure your suggestion/goal is based on information and data.

Rights-Based Communication

"Assistance" vs. "Rights": You must transform the perception of "we are doing a kindness" into "we are seeking/advocating for rights."

Needs vs. Rights: Needs are temporary and create a hierarchy (a hand gives, a hand takes). However; rights are universal, demandable, and an obligation of the state/society.

Justice, Not Charity: Emphasize that the work is a search for justice, not a "grace" or "charity."

"Who is the Subject?": Establish the concept of "Rights-Holder" instead of "Needy" (passive beneficiary).



Rights-Based Communication

The language we use constructs reality.
Avoid hurtful, stigmatizing, or pitying language.

Labeling: Avoid defining people by only one characteristic. (e.g., "Individuals with disabilities" instead of "The disabled," "Persons with refugee rights" instead of "Refugees").

Victimization Language: Use expressions like "Survivor" or "Subjected to" instead of "Victim." Show the person as a subject who struggles, not a passive victim.

Dramatization: Get rid of adjectives containing agitation such as "living in misery" or "heart-wrenching."

Rights-Based Communication

Do not use pain just to find funds or draw attention.

Dignity and Honor: Does the photo hurt that person's dignity? How would they feel if they saw it?

Representation: Show strong individuals who are part of the solution, not just crying, dirty-faced children. (*Look at: "poverty porn"*).

Consent: Is there "informed consent" from the person (or guardian) whose visual is used?



Rights-Based Communication

Leaving No One Behind:

Rights-based communication requires total inclusion.

Invisibility: Ensure all colors of society (different ages, genders, disability status) are in visuals and texts.

Accessible Formats: Ask yourself: "Is our communication accessible to everyone?" (Visual descriptions, subtitles, plain language).



Rights-Based Communication

Stories Over Data:

We communicate with stories, but who tells the story matters.

Handing Over the Microphone: Open space for the rights-holder to tell their own story in their own words.

Solution Orientation: Show not just the problem, but how that person deals with it and their solution suggestion.

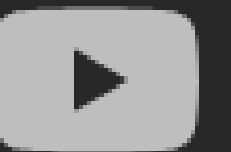




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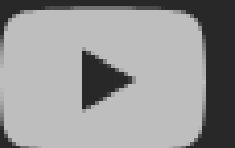




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Key Reminders for Impact-Based Communication



Users are **not passive** consumers; they are producers, planners, disseminators, and owners.



Users' **own words, visuals, and messages** are more effective, persuasive, and original.



Use a language between **equals** instead of a top-down approach.



Aim to **catch** the agenda, not just set it.





the presentation is over

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