

Communication Strategies for Nonviolent Organizing in Kenya for tax justice

LIN 2016

Kenya for Tax Justice

Talking points

- Understanding communication
- Why communicate in a movement?
- Effective communication in a nonviolent resistance
- Added value of communications to movements
- Social media and nonviolent movements

I - Understanding communication

- Strategic communication enables movements to engage audiences.
- It is important for such communication to be done with a clear purpose and make use of the appropriate tools to achieve tangible results.
- Communication must add value to a movement, helping it to achieve its goal and targets.
- Thus, communication must build on the overall strategy of the movement.
- To achieve this movements need to align their communication activities with its overall purpose, priorities and targets.

II - Why communicate in a movement?



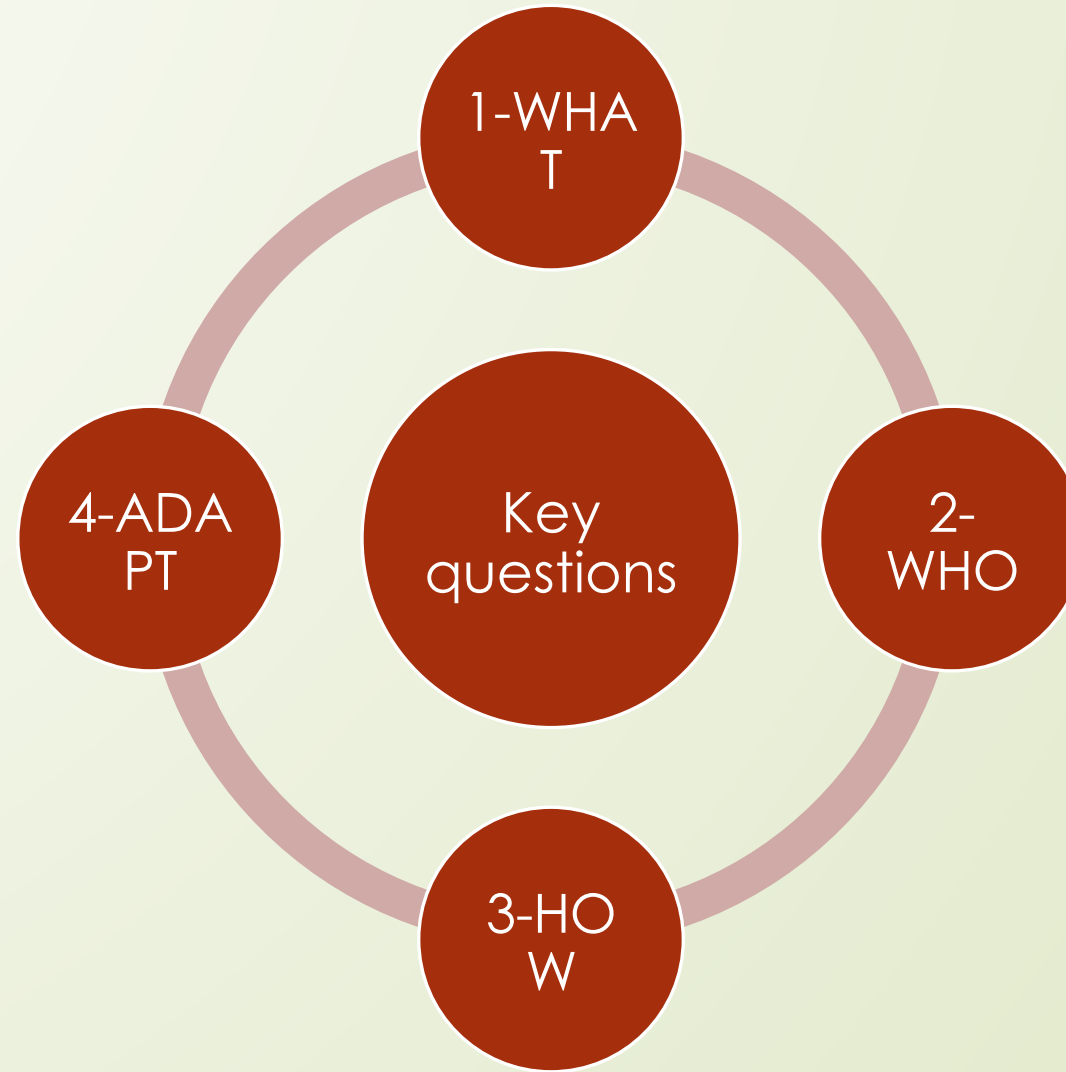
III - Effective communication in a nonviolent resistance

- Communication is only effective when it is well planned.
- Strategizing all communication efforts will yield more results for the campaign.
- The essence of a communications strategy is to make more informed choices about how to deploy one's resources to achieve a clear set of targets.
- To use your limited resources to achieve the maximum impact, you must consider your skills, assets and the context of the movement or campaign.
- Only then can you make difficult choices about where to invest your time and resources to achieve your goals.

Communications Strategy

- A communications strategy defines the direction and focus of a movement's communications efforts so that they can best support the movement's goal and help it realise its overall strategy.
- The communications strategy is a product of the movement's overall strategy.
- It is important to define WHY you want/need to communicate in the movement.
- A good communications strategy will help a movement to achieve its overall objective
- Thus, it is a means to an end, not an end in itself!

Guide to strategic communications in social movements



Strategic Questions

- WHAT: what does the movement want to achieve? [**goal**]
- WHO: whom do you need to reach, influence, engage? [**stakeholders: internal and external**]
- HOW: What tools and channels will you use and with what information? [**tools**]
- ADAPT: Analyse what's working and what's not. How can you adapt to create the desired impact? [**monitor**]

What does the movement want to achieve?

- This helps you to clearly define the **message** of the campaign.
- Every good campaign message should address the following:
 - 1) Who is it addressed to? Your audience should determine the message...
 - 2) Does it address the root problem faced by the people? This must connect to your audience
 - 3) How emotional is it? It must be appealing/sensational and arouse your audience's interest to connect with the message
 - 4) Is it being conveyed by the right messenger? *Why do you think Mhkuseli Jack was the right messenger in South Africa?*

Some examples of messengers in movements across Africa

- **Wole Soyinka** (Nigerian writer): In 2010 he led Nigerians to seek accountability of the Nigerian government to Nigerians on the state of health of the Late President Musa Yar'Adua
- **Patience Ozorkwor** (Nollywood actress): Has often been at the forefront of the #Bringbackourgirls campaign that demands the release of the Chibok girls captured by Boko Haram.
- **Yvonne Nelson** (Ghanaian actress): Led a movement to demand for the government to provide better power supply to Ghanaians.
- **Leymah Gbowee** (Liberian peace activist who later became a Nobel Peace Prize winner): Spearheaded a women's movement that non-violently fought for an end to 14 years of civil war in Liberia.

IV - Added value of communications to movements

- Communications can help a movement to achieve the following:
- Build collaborations
- Engage with key constituents
- Influence policies and decision making
- Educate and mobilise stakeholders
- Recruit more followers
- Expand networks and partnerships
- Secure funding
- Function smoothly

3 Qualities of an effective message

- Your message must be **appropriate**: Consider the audience, subject, needs of the receiver and environment.
- Your message must be **useful**: Ask yourself “Is my information needed by my audience? How much do they know? How much might they want to know?”
- Your message must be **persuasive**. It must appeal to your audience. First, know your objective for communicating; then, analyze the audience according to what we know about them as individuals or as a group; and then choose the proper organization of your information according to the type of audience they are.

Without taking these into account, your messages can get lost (mis-communication) in the mind of your receiver (audience)

Communication Tools

- Communication tools are channels through which messages are transmitted.
- Each tool should be selected and deployed once it is clear what the purpose, audience(s) and message(s) are.
- Some communication tools include the following:

Communication Tools

- Forums and meetings
- One-to-one meetings
- Infographics
- Phone calls
- Word of mouth
- Broadcast media
- Journals, magazines, newspapers
- Digital or online media: Social media (Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, Google plus) webs, blogs, videos,

V - Social media and nonviolent movements

- Food for thought to activists in Kenya!
- With over 21 million internet users in Kenya, what does this mean to you and your campaign?

V - Social media and nonviolent movements

- Online organizing, when combined with offline activism and organizing, can and should be mutually reinforcing.
- Campaigns need to assess which technologies people (followers, potential followers and opponents) are currently using, how they are using them, and what they are capable of using.
- Social media allow organizers to involve like-minded people in a movement at a very low cost, but they do not necessarily make these people move.
- It offers advantages in disseminating messages quickly and broadly, but they also are vulnerable to government counter-protest tactics.
- For a social media-driven protest movement to be successful, it has to translate social media membership into street action.

Case Study:

Dumsor Must stop - Ghana

- **What:** A campaign organised in 2015 that aimed at urging the Government of Ghana of work towards an end to the incessant power crisis.
- **Who:** Yvonne Nelson (messenger) and other Ghanaian 'stars' led the campaign that involved thousands of Ghanaians in one of Accra's major streets.
- **How:** Media campaigns and appearances, meetings with key leaders, It culminated with a vigil march

Case Study 1: Dumsor Must stop - Ghana

- Adapt: No adaptation mechanism. After the march in May 2015 no significant action has taken place.

No action to push the agenda forward

- **Outcome**

The turnout was massive (owing to effective communication)

Impact vis-à-vis the goal of the campaign was 'poor' because *dumsor* worsened and exists till date.

Lessons learned

- Effective communication can pull people into a movement.
- Get your message across in an easily understandable manner. It should be 'appropriate'.
- The use of different medium of communication is inevitable.
- Consider social media in nonviolent movements as a worthy medium.

- **Most importantly**, effective communication will help a movement to achieve **realistic objectives**. Remember that communication is a means to an end!

Thank you

Questions?