

# **Nepal Red Cross Society Communications Strategy 2008-2010**

*“We will progressively improve our ability to publicize the activities and enhance the image not only of our own National Societies but of the Movement as a whole, thereby building public, corporate and government support to our national and international operations.”*

- Final Declaration, The Asia-Pacific Regional RCRC Conference, Hanoi, 1998

## **Background**

The mission of Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) is to relieve human suffering and to reduce vulnerability through community participation and mobilization of an increased number of volunteers, by mobilizing the power of humanity through expansion and strengthening of the organizational structure of the society and by building links with governmental and non-governmental organization.

Likewise, the aim of the NRCS is to alleviate or reduce human sufferings without discrimination on the grounds of religion, race, sex, class, caste, tribe, nationality or political belief.

For contributing to the organizational mission and aim, NRCS has developed communication policy. Accordingly, this document "Nepal Red Cross Society, Communication Strategy 2008-2010" has been formulated to materialize NRCS Communication Policy 2002 (Revised 2008). Accordingly, the goal of communication strategy has been set as: Nepal Red Cross Society develops as a well-functioning national society with optimum inclusion, gender, integrity, visibility, credibility, cooperation and increased participation of diverse communities.

## **Rationale of the Communication Strategy**

Having a large network, NRCS needs to deal with its multiple internal and external audiences. It has nationwide network of its chapters, sub-chapters and Junior/Youth circles with about a million members and thousands of volunteers.

As a component of the RCRC Movement, NRCS has a regular communication largely with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of RCRC Societies and the participating national societies both in the time of peace and conflict.

Similarly, NRCS has been working with diverse communities from Governments, Non-Governmental Organizations, international governmental organizations, civil societies, general public and the media.

Therefore, effective communication has been imperative to make the internal and external audience understand NRCS identity, functions, values and principles. For this purpose, it is necessary to raise awareness among members, volunteers and staff to build their capacity to make them follow Red Cross Fundamental Principles and values in their actions. They will also be able to foster advocacy on the part of vulnerability and humanitarian crisis.

Divergent and inconsistent interpretations of Red Cross by NRCS members, volunteers and staff create uncertainty among partners and other audience. That might influence relationships with donors, governments, as well as the general public.

NRCS is accountable to its beneficiaries for and with whom it works, and to its partners who contribute to and work with. It expects a proper mechanism in place for obtaining feedback from all stakeholders and the general public.

Public relation is equally important that helps NRCS maintain good relations with the public that the Society depends upon for carrying out humanitarian services.

It needs to communicate for advocacy. It should make advocacy on why people should support the NRCS in its humanitarian functions.

Be it either development or emergency work, in time of either peace or conflict, NRCS always commits itself to promote humanitarian values respecting the beneficiaries and affected people as human being, rather than object, through inclusion and participation. It also works for promoting tolerance, non-discrimination and promotion of human dignity.

The Society has involved in the efforts to strengthen its capacity of preparation and response to the situation of armed conflict since the last decade. The spirit of the Seville Agreement and Supplementary Measures are to be made through the local sub-chapters.

It is essential to build good image to generate resources in the competitive world. Pro-active and planned communication activities have direct impact on building a positive image of the Society and the Movement and their ability to mobilize financial and technical resources required for the programmes and emergency operations.

In times of emergency either through natural disaster or social conflict, NRCS has received wider publicity in the national and international media- in electronic, print, and quite often in the online media. These practices should be more planned than spontaneous and professional rather than academic at all units of the NRCS.

As the Right to Information and Right to Privacy bills have been endorsed by the Nepal Government, management of access to information to the public has become necessary. So, NRCS as an organization registered under Nepal law, for dealing with the public, has legal and social obligations to ensure mechanism for better access to information at all levels.

### **NRCS Communication Capacity Analysis: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT analysis)**

NRCS has been carrying out all its emergency and normal services across the country through its 75 district chapters, 1,344 sub chapters and 8, 58,879 junior/youth Red Cross volunteers. Red Cross Volunteers and members are the first to carry Red Cross message to the general public. As general public have accepted Red Cross impartial and neutral services, the numbers of life and ordinary members have been increasing every year. As a result, NRCS leadership has been accepted in the community while reaching to the vulnerable community. Coordination and cooperation have been improved with the Government and non-government humanitarian actors. Communication capacity of the NRCS has also improved simultaneously.

However, NRCS feels more to communicate and demystify its different forms of identity perceptions among different group of people. In addition, the humanitarian work has become more competitive every day. So, the NRCS needs a clear strategy, programme and funding to build up its better image. In order to make advocacy in favour of vulnerable people, NRCS needs to build concerned capacity at different levels. Relationship management with public and private sectors, national and international organizations would bring better opportunities for the NRCS. More importantly, improving communication and coordination to work with Movement partners like the ICRC and International Federation and Participating National Societies, NRCS can work together for social marketing of its programmes and strengthening humanitarian representation.

### **Strategy**

#### **1. Guiding Principles**

- Communication as standard institutional Red Cross Movement strategy;
- Communication as a common service to enable the NRCS as an institution and programmes, and to enable to play a lead role in its core programme areas;
- Communication as an advocacy strategy for the protection and promotion of human dignity;
- Communication capacity building and optimum mobilization of members, volunteers and staff;
- Promotion of beneficiary communication and public relations;
- Communication as a tool for image building;
- Communication as an instrument for partnership building;
- Communication for emergency updates and appeal.

## **2 Goal**

NRCS develops an effective communication system for well-functioning national society with integrity, credibility and increased participation of diverse communities.

## **3 Objectives**

1. Built up communication capacity at all level for better access and image;
2. Established strategic links with local, national and international media for better coverage of humanitarian needs and organizational services;
3. Enhanced capacity of diverse beneficiaries in the communities for accessing humanitarian services;
4. Maintained institutional integrity and uniformity among Red Cross members, volunteers and staff;
5. Increased cooperation with Government and other stakeholders for quality and scaled up services.

## **4. Expected Results**

Objective 1: Built up communication capacity at all level for better access and image

- Communication system at all level improved
- Respect and safer access of volunteers and services enhanced
- Capacity of focal points built up

Objective: 2 Established strategic links with local, national and international media for better coverage of humanitarian needs and organizational services

- Fund for humanitarian services, emergency in particular, increased
- Relationship with media enhanced

Objective: 3 Enhanced capacities of diverse beneficiaries in the communities for accessing humanitarian services

- Community awareness on RC services increased
- Public relation enhanced

Objective: 4 Maintained institutional integrity and uniformity among Red Cross members, volunteers and staff

- Visibility of RC persons and objects standardized
- Neutral and impartial behavior of RC members and volunteers promoted

Objective 5: Increased cooperation with government and other stakeholders for quality and scaled up services

- Communication with external audience improved
- Partnership at local, national and international level increased
- Understanding of authority about RC knowledge and IHL increased

## **5. Implementation Strategies**

- HRD (Trainings, induction courses, workshops)
- Development and use of diverse programs and IEC materials
- Enhance infrastructural capacity including IT
- Public relations
- Media relations
- Sharing community voices
- Use of traditional and nontraditional channels
- Local community participation
- Press visits
- Awards and recognitions
- Management of standard communication channel
- Standard Operation Procedure
- Partnership for financial and human resources development,

- Advocacy and networking
- Different modalities for dissemination and IHL

## 6. Activities

Objective 1: Built up communication capacity at all level for better access and image

- Broadcasting radio, TV program
- Production system
- Designing different programmes for the coverage of NRCS service and delivery
- Exhibitions
- Knowledge sharing about success practice and programmes
- Public hearing and social auditing

Objective 2: Established strategic links with local, national and international media for better coverage of humanitarian needs and organizational services

- Build programmes for radio, FM, TV
- Capacity building of the district chapters
- Establish IEC material production unit
- Exhibition
- Knowledge sharing about success practice and programmes

Objective 3 Enhanced capacities of diverse beneficiaries in the communities for accessing humanitarian services

- Measures of reaching vulnerable communities
- Effective mechanism for communication and participatory PMER.
- Focal point development

Objective 4 Maintained institutional integrity and uniformity among Red Cross members, volunteers and staff

- Trainings, workshops
- Implementation of motivational activities
- Integration of RC knowledge in NRCS programmes
- Dissemination of code of conduct among RC workers
- Standard publication guidelines
- Development of guidelines for publications like, Letterhead certificate ID card and visiting card

Objective 5 Increased cooperation with Government and other stakeholders for quality and scaled up services

- Networking mechanism development with like-minded organizations
- System for resource tapping ( guideline development for external resources)
- Defining external communication channel (defining focal point, their roles and code of conduct through communication guideline)
- **Knowledge Sharing within and outside Red Cross Movement**

## 6. Evaluation

The implementation of the communication strategy and its implications will be evaluated every year and necessary corrective measures will be adopted through Communication and Humanitarian Values Promotion Committee by the Central Executive Committee. Evaluation process and mechanism will be defined by the concerned body.