Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
Communication Policy and

National Headquarters
Dhaka, Bangladesh
Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
Communication Policy 2012

Introduction
The mission of Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) 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. Therefore, BDRCS, by its trained and committed members, volunteers and staff, make continuous efforts for making advocacy on behalf of the Society at individual and collective levels through effective communication system. Those efforts will promote BDRCS neutral and impartial image in the competitive humanitarian environment.

Scope
The communication policy applies to all members, volunteers and staff of the Society. It serves as a basis for providing clarity and direction for BDRCS communication activities at national, regional and district level units of the Society. The policy will ensure consistency in decision making throughout the BDRCS structure as well as defining the boundaries for the conduct of BDRCS staff. With a clear policy, members, volunteers and staff of the BDRCS will act as credible advocates and humanitarian representatives to bring positive changes in the lives of vulnerable people in Bangladesh.

All BDRCS members, volunteers and staff should receive, understand and follow the Communication Policy. Through wider dissemination, stakeholders - central and local authorities, movement and non-movement partners including UN agencies with whom the BDRCS works and cooperates, will be aware of the policy.

Communication Policy Statement:
1. BDRCS continues upgrading knowledge and skills of the members, volunteers and staff about Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, Fundamental Principles, BDRCS long term goal, objective, policy, plan and programmes.
2. BDRCS members, volunteers and staff have a due role in the dissemination of Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, Fundamental Principles, BDRCS long term goal, objective, policy, plan and programmes.
3. BDRCS members, volunteers and staff make continuous efforts for making advocacy regarding the priority areas set by Bangladesh Red Crescent Society at individual and collective levels.
4. BDRCS formulates a comprehensive Communication Strategy and manages implementation mechanism.
5. BDRCS develops certain programmes to promote knowledge and skills of communication at all levels of its organization.
6. BDRCS attempts to develop professional relation with all media.
7. BDRCS attempts at maintaining consistency in information and communication system at all organisational levels.
8. BDRCS attempts to employ modern technology at all organisational units for effective communication system.
Bangladesh Red Crescent Society
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY
2013-2015

"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."

The Identity Statement for the Movement

In 1989, the Council of Delegates adopted the Identity Statement for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. This statement sought to promote and to carry the messages we need to be communicating. By clearly stating who we are and what we do, the identity statement underscored the mission and the fundamental principles of the Movement.

It will be an important responsibility of the Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) to disseminate the Movement’s Identity Statement both internally within the National Society’s governance and staff in the National Headquarters, members and volunteers in the Units and externally among all the stakeholders of the Society.

Internal Communication

Regular internal communication within a National Society helps the staff, members and volunteers to keep them informed about the major events resulting in high morale and teamwork. The BDRCS will, therefore, establish and maintain a systematic and regular internal communication. This internal communication will cover :-

a. National Headquarters
b. Governance of the Society—General Body, Managing Board and Unit Executive Committees.
c. All Unit Staff
d. Life Members
e. Volunteers of major programmes, like CPP, CBDP and Red Crescent Youth.

Internal communication will be carried out by :-

a. Displaying BDRCS, Federation, ICRC and other National Society’s news in Bulletin Boards in NHQ and all Units and Field Offices.

b. Distributing short, simple and regular fact sheets about important events that the Society observes, like World Red Cross & Red Crescent Day, World Disaster Day, International Volunteers Day, World AIDS Day and Annual General Meeting, elections and also on important activities of the Society including disaster response.

c. Including the NHQ departments, members of the governance, Units and field offices of all programmes in the Distribution List of the BDRCS News Bulletin “the Message”.

[Signature]
External Communication
The overall responsibility for external communication of BDRCS will continue to lie with the Secretary General. The Information Department will normally be responsible for implementing the Society’s communication and public relations activities based on the Society’s communication strategy. The external communication under the BDRCS’ communication strategy will consist of:--

a. Dissemination of BDRCS activities. Although, the name and emblem of BDRCS is fairly known within the country, much still needs to be done to make the people aware of its full activities and the difference between the BDRCS and just another voluntary Organisation. The BDRCS will, therefore, make concerted efforts to publicise its activities among the civil society and younger generation in Bangladesh.

b. Raising the profile of BDRCS. Unfortunately, the profile of BDRCS within Bangladesh is not yet upto the expected level. Profile-raising will, therefore, be a major component of BDRCS Communication Strategy. Advantage will be taken in this regard from both the print and electronic media.

c. Promoting BDRCS by everybody. All BDRCS staff, members and volunteers will be motivated to act in some way a “spokespersons” for the Society. Each and every one of them has a responsibility to represent and explain the Society’s role, functions and activities at any time. It is everybody’s solemn duty to promote the Society, as its stories are not told enough.

d. Redefining Role of Information Department. The BDRCS Information Department, being overall responsible for the information and communication, the Society will re-define its role and responsibility. The Information department or its responsible staff should be able to “tell the story well” to convey strong, consistent and newsworthy messages. In other words, they should be well-trained in good communication techniques.

e. Maintaining regular contacts with the national and international media. The BDRCS should, maintain regular and effective contact with the national and international media, not only on ad-hoc or on “as required” basis, but as a matter of routine. Such contacts should take the form of press briefing and press conference at least once every three months, including the media in the distribution list of BDRCS publications, news letter, Annual Report, souvenirs and brochures. Media representatives must be routinely invited to all major events of the BDRCS.

f. Country-wide promotion of the Movement’s Components. Neither the name and logo of ICRC and the Federation, nor their respective roles and functions are very well known in Bangladesh. The BDRCS Communication Strategy will, therefore, include diffusion about the components of the Movement and how they relate to each Other.

BDRCS Visibility
For a nation-wide organisation like BDRCS, having 68 Units at district and metropolitan city levels and Cyclone Preparedness Programme in 30 coastal Thanas(Sub-districts), the BDRCS needs to become more visible. The BDRCS will, therefore, make every possible effort to become visible by:--
a. **Being a consistent source of information.** The BDRCS will become a reliable and consistent source of information on matters like disaster preparedness, disaster response, public health, HIV/AIDS, International Humanitarian Law etc.

b. **Organising and Reaching Community Groups.** The BDRCS must get to know the people in the community and organise and sponsor community support groups. It should try to reach the community groups using photographs, design and art work.

c. **Using the Emblem.** The BDRCS will make vigorous efforts to increase its visibility by making prominent and proper use of the Red Crescent emblem wherever Red Crescent staff, members and volunteers work—first aid posts, relief centres, blood collection places, vehicles and buildings. All official correspondence and dissemination materials should display the emblem. When appearing on a video or in a photo, the person belonging the the BDRCS must wear the Society’s insignia.

**Guideline for the Implementing process**

1. **Objective**
   
   Adopt effective Humanitarian Diplomacy to promote BDRCS activities and enhancing effective partnership with broader humanitarian community and attracting donors and acquire more international support for fulfilling humanitarian mandate in Bangladesh.

   **Possible regular / activities**
   
   - Website maintaining international standard (with regular updates)
   - Monthly e-newsletter
   - Quarterly Newsletter
   - Compiling Annual BDRCS Report
   - Audio-visual materials (ex. Documentaries, Skits for Disaster preparedness!, jingles)
   - Relationship building drive with media (ex. write up press release, meet the press)
   - Promotion items/activities (flyers, brochures, personal first aid kit etc.)
   - Archiving / e-library – audio materials, visual materials, printed materials

   **Possible tools / methods**
   
   - Adequate and proper representation at the relevant international forums
   - Proper utilisation of social media (ex. Facebook, twitter, flicker, youtube, blogs) to reach more
   - Developing policy for use of social media
   - Developing audio-visual communication materials
   - Developing Red Cross Red Crescent Ambassadors nationally and internationally
   - Utilising global-corporate partnerships
   - Efficient use of the global beneficiary communication tools

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SWOT Analysis: BDRCS Information Department

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<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weakness</th>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Some experienced staffs in place with overall perspective of BDRCS activities</td>
<td>• Office space</td>
<td>• President of Bangladesh being NS President can be brought to attract media</td>
<td>• Traditional mindset</td>
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<td>• Movement partners</td>
<td>• Enough skilled (IT, language etc.) personnel</td>
<td>• Image building of BDRCS</td>
<td>• Detailed and appropriate skills and qualification required against staff position</td>
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<td>• Publishing regular news bulletin</td>
<td>• IT equipments</td>
<td>• Capacity development of dept. staffs</td>
<td>• No mechanism in place to appreciate the good works</td>
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<td>• Some ICT materials in place</td>
<td>• Logistic capacity of NS</td>
<td>• E-library for efficient dissemination of resources/information</td>
<td>• Not getting equipment support timely</td>
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<td>• Some audio-visual materials</td>
<td>• Fund scarcity</td>
<td>• Ease of access into national as well as international media</td>
<td>• Inter-department gap in information sharing and communication</td>
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<td>• Not enough capacity in relation building with media</td>
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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.

Seven Golden Rules for Communication

In order to become a highly visible and vibrant humanitarian organisation to enjoy the confidence of all, the BDRCS should observe the following seven golden rules in the field of communication:

a. Train a number of key communicators in National and Unit levels.

b. Hold Annual Meeting of all communicators.

c. Be proactive rather than reactive in all communication work.

d. Prepare detailed communication plans and budgets for important events, campaigns and projects and produce an Annual Calendar of Communication Events.

e. Create a few key messages which the BDRCS wishes to convey.

f. Establish a list of audience.

g. Evaluate results and adapt the Communication Plan to conform to realities.