

GHANA INSTITUTE OF JOURNALISM

COMMUNICATION WITHIN A GENDER EQUALITY ORGANIZATION: THE CASE  
OF THE ARK FOUNDATION, GHANA

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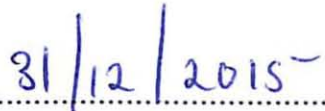
A DISEERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND  
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## DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that this work is the result of my piece of research work conducted under the supervision of Mrs. Ewuradjoa Sangmuah - Tabbica, a Senior lecturer at the Institute. This work has not been submitted in part or whole to any institution for any award. References cited here have been duly acknowledged.

Signature-----


Date.....

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## CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the preparation and presentation of this dissertation were supervised by me in accordance with the guidelines of supervision of dissertation laid down by Ghana Institute of Journalism.

  
.....

Mrs. Ewuradjoa Sangmuah – Tabbicca

(Supervisor)

..... 31/12/2015

Date

## **DEDICATION**

To all women's rights activists in Ghana, particularly The Ark Foundation, Ghana, and to all men who believe and work in the area of gender equality and women's advancement, for their quest to promote gender equality and protect women's rights in Ghana.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## List of Abbreviations

Focus Group Discussion.....	FGD
The Ark Foundation, Ghana.....	The Ark
Civil Society Organization.....	CSO
Corporate Identity Strategy Manual.....	CISM
Crisis Response Centre.....	CRC
Information, Communication and Education.....	IEC
Rights Based Approach.....	RBA
People Centered Approach.....	PCA
Leadership and Management Team.....	LMT

## ABSTRACT

The study examined the internal and external communication machinery of gender-equality organizations in Ghana. The Ark Foundation, Ghana, a women's rights organization in Ghana was used a case study for this research. The study was a qualitative research design. Subsequently, a description of events about the relationship between gender equality work and communication issues. The descriptive research method was used for the purposes of this study. The study sought to explore and explain into detail the communication system of the chosen organization, in terms of its internal and external communication. A detail description of the organization's communication was done. Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and document review both qualitative methods were the main methods used for data collection. The study revealed that the organization had a laid down communication strategy that guides all its internal and external communications. However, the organization had not fully committed itself to implementing the content of the manual. The communication strategy document was also almost dysfunctional and only remained a document sitting on the shelf of the organization. It was also realized that the organization did not have a staff who was solely responsible for issues of communication and for the implementation of the Public Relations component of the organization's corporate identity strategy manual. The study recommended that gender equality organizations, as a matter of importance should have one staff deal with communication issues of the organization; or preferably hire the services of a Communications Expert or Public Relations expert to handle communications and publicity issues. It was further recommended that in order to enhance and sustain a positive image of its self, the organization should consciously and constantly adhere to the content of the strategy manual.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **Introduction**

#### **1.0 Background to the study**

Communication is increasingly becoming important in the organisational context and recognition is given to the fact that it has a major impact on organisational success. Communication is one of the most dominant and important activities in and for organizations (Harris & Nelson, 2008). Fundamentally, relationships grow out of communication, and the functioning and survival of organizations is based on effective relationships among individuals and groups. In addition, organizational capabilities are developed and enacted through intensely social and communicative processes (Jones, 1990). Communication helps individuals and groups coordinate activities to achieve goals and is therefore vital in socialization, decision-making, problem-solving and change-management processes. The ability to communicate effectively perhaps is key for the success of any organization.

Every individual or organisation's desire to understand others and to be understood is one of humankind's most basic needs. Effective communication requires much more than grammar and vocabulary. Words such as trust, openness, respect, and empathy come to mind as qualities that must accompany the written or spoken message if it is to achieve its intended results. Duncan & Moriarty's (1998) assertion that business units often function in isolation makes it necessary for organisational management to understand that a successful organisation requires a strategic and integrated approach to communication. This allows the organisation to plan and anticipate what is required from communication as a whole; and how to gain the best value from it (Antonis, 2005).

Such a strategic approach allows a systematic and consistent application of organisational communication in an integrative framework that ultimately serves to link all aspects of business (as cited in Verwey & Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2003). Essentially, it allows the different communication efforts of the organisation, both internally and externally, to form a collective approach rather than an individual attempt to try and achieve set goals. Communication therefore plays an active role in establishing the nature of an organisation. In terms of the internal environment, this consists of the organisational culture, climate and operational processes. It involves the collaboration between units and the level of integration, and the alignment of operational activities, objectives and processes.

Further, Antonis (2005) is of the view that the impact of communication is critical. Consequently, the extent of the impact as well as the management thereof to capitalise on communication as a strategic driver in organisational success is significant. She is also of the view that it is becoming necessary for organisations such as Civil Society Organizations (CSO) to measure the effectiveness of communication within the intra organisational context. Based on Strategic Communication, the reality of the move toward integration of communication in the profession has started to filter into organisations (Antonis, 2005). It is argued in Strategic Communication that communication is becoming “more strategic”. Strategic Communication involves and requires systematic analysis, planning, execution and evaluation.

Thus, the systematic analysis, planning, execution and evaluation of organizations communication efforts, requires an in-depth consideration of the organisation’s mission, values, goals and objectives, budgeting, staffing and the environment, as well as its internal and external audiences. Similarly, Non-profit organizations are now continuously being challenged to be more strategic in their communications efforts. Communications activities

must add up to more than a series of isolated events such as the dissemination of an occasional publication or press release. Being strategic requires that non-profits be more deliberate, innovative, savvy, and less reactive in their communications practice.

Tourish and Hargie (2009) have observed that the past few years have witnessed a significant increase in the role of communication in the success of an organisation, arousing colossal concerns of experts and organisation managers worldwide. Indeed, whether a company is large or small it is a truism that, financing, talent, experience and materials are not enough to succeed unless proper internal communication system are in place that enables smooth operations and enhances business activities (Tourish & Hargie 2009). Strategic communications being a deliberate and calculated attempt to ensure that an organization's public image is positive makes it important that organizations including gender equality organizations prioritize their communications efforts and deliberately work towards enhancing their communications.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Typically, communication appears to be reserved for what is perceived as corporate communication and marketing or marketing communication in many organisations. It also appears that very little attention is paid to the fundamental principle of integration of all aspects of business, including communication (Duncan & Moriarty, 1998). The end result is that different business units tend to function in isolation without regard to the various aspects of the business, especially communication (Moriarty, 1994). Unfortunately, many organizations do not value the importance of communication and thus pay little or no

attention to communication as they are of the view that there is a high level of communication and interaction in their area of work.

It is crucial for example to have motivated employees, who work together with good inter-functional coordination, aiming to achieve organisational goals (Cornelissen, 2008). To accomplish all this, Quirke (2008) posits that an organisation must invest in effective information systems, which can render favourable and quicker organisational change. This would ensure more flexibility and innovation processes, better quality of decision making, better knowledge sharing, and a more motivated workforce. Non-profits are therefore encouraged to regard communications as essential to their overall success and to integrate it throughout their organizations. Consequently, an array of new tools, resources and trainings has been developed to help organizations better understand the concept of strategic communications. This would enable them develop their own communications strategies, and evaluate them for both accountability and learning purposes.

However, with non-profits, overall capacity to implement their strategies given their relative inexperience in the field of communications and the many priorities that often compete for scarce organizational resources remains an issue. While non-profits are learning how to develop strategies and are gaining a better understanding of their importance, questions remain about their actual follow through in practice. How then is communication within a gender equality organization?

## **1.2 Objectives of the Study**

The aim of the study is basically to evaluate the communication within a gender equality organization. The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the nature of internal communication at The Ark Foundation, Ghana;

2. Examine the nature of the external communication of The Ark Foundation, Ghana;
3. Identify how the communication can be enhanced and make recommendations.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. What is the nature of internal communication at The Ark?
2. What is the nature of external communication at The Ark?
3. How can the communication machinery be enhanced?

### **1.4 Scope of Study**

This study seeks to examine the communication machinery of gender equality organizations in Ghana. However, the study focused on one organization, The Ark Foundation, Ghana which is a renowned women's rights advocacy based organization, in Ghana. The research was done over a period of five months. During this period, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was organized with eight staff of the organization and information was also gathered from three interns of the organization. A desk review was further done to assess the content of relevant organizational documents. These documents were the organization's Corporate Identity Strategy Manual (CISM) and their manual of policies and procedure. Information gathered is based on the perceptions, beliefs, practices, experiences and knowledge of development workers on their communication machinery and how it can be enhanced through recommendations. It is imperative to note that as strategic communications audits are, at their core, an evaluation tool; it has been used as a tool in this research to evaluate the communication machinery of the gender-equality organization used for this study.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

Tynes (2008) in a “Strategic Communications guidelines for Non-profits: A Step-by-Step Guide to Working with the Media”, notes that in the world of non-profits, strategic communications is an orchestrated use of channels of communication to move and influence public policy or to promote an agenda. Green (2008), states that communication is about having a plan, not simply reacting and responding. In her opinion, it is about framing a discussion on topics and issues that are important to any one’s organization in a way that gets the organization’s name out there; this in turn builds the organization’s reputation and street credibility (Institute for Dynamic Educational Advancement (IDEA), 2015). Thus, Communication needs to reflect the contribution it makes to the organisation and thus needs to be measured (Antonis, 2005).

Due to this significant nature of organisational communication in organisations in general and more especially those as gender equality organizations in Ghana and around the world, this study would help civil society groups especially gender equality organizations assess the relevance of their communication machinery. This study would enable them adopt and use the appropriate communication strategies and tools to promote and publicize their goals and objectives and further advance their work, in general. Additionally, communication within gender equality organizations is rare, therefore this study is an attempt to fill this gap by researching into communication within gender focused organisations to enable them use participatory communication methods.

Non-profits need ways to better understand their current strategic communications strategies and performance in order to achieve their goals and objectives, and further make the impact which they so desire to make. This study would help Gender Equality workers,

more specifically The Ark Foundation, Ghana to enhance its organizational communication strategies for promoting their work. It would also help them to identify and adopt practical communication strategies to advance the promotion of Gender Equality work in Ghana. Again, the information gathered would help them re-strategize in their quest to use communication more effectively to enhance their work.

The detailed insight and knowledge that would be generated by this work would be available to strategic gender equality organizations who seek to advance their communication and work, in general. The education sector, specifically the academia can exploit the information for further expansion of the frontiers of knowledge through researchers and references, among others. The communication profession and management as a whole must be able to measure the successes, failures, weaknesses and strengths of the overall communication, and its integration in the organisation. Current communication evaluation and measurement methods are largely focused on evaluating and measuring processes, outputs and the impact of communication.

### **1.6 Limitation of the study**

A number of challenges were encountered during the period of conducting the research; challenges that may affect the findings of the study. First and foremost, the study was limited to one gender equality organization, The Ark Foundation, Ghana, which is one of many other organizations. Following this, generalization of some key findings was limited to the case of the study. Eight people in the organization were available for the Focus group discussion.

## **1.7 Organization of Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. Chapter one is an introduction and presentation of statement of the problem and the research objectives, significance and scope of the study, as well as some limitations of the study. Chapter two presents a review of literature and relevant research on the subject. Chapter three presents the research methodology. Chapter four presents the data collected and further analyzes the data for discussions. Chapter five presents the study summary and conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for future research.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the literature reviewed for the study. It comprises theories, conceptual issues and empirical studies. The Systems theory has been used for this study. A background of the key concepts for this study which are communication and communication audit would be given. These concepts and their importance to this research would be presented in this section in order to contextualise the study.

The thematic areas of the literature basically explain the subject matter of communication, and communication audit as given or defined by various writers including the procedures involved in terms of its realisation. Furthermore, the general explanation and the procedures for conducting communication audit as stated by Coffman (2004) are summarised. Empirical studies reviewed are also presented and related to this current study.

#### **2.1 Theoretical Framework**

In the classical perspectives of organizational communication, organizations are likened to machines. Hence, if you have a well- built and well-managed machine, then you will have a very productive and effective organization. Classical theories focus on organizational structure, analyzing aspects such as optimal organizational performance plans, organizational power relationships, and compartmentalizing different organizational units (Fisher, 2000). The assumption is that each employee is part of a large machine, which is the organization, hence if one part fails, then the entire machine fails. To organizational

communication scholars, these theories help us better appreciate, recognize, and comprehend interactions and behaviors (Wrench, 2013).

## **2.2 Systems theory**

The systems theory was developed to enable researchers consider the complicated processes of human interaction. It seeks to understand the interrelationship of all components and subsystems within an organisation and its environment, especially as the external environment impacts on the internal organisational context. The theory asserts that human problems in an organisation are complex and requires a lot of effort to overcome the challenge. The systems approach recognizes the interrelationships among the different components that make up and influence an organisation. This enables us to consider interactions and interrelations of components within an organisation (Mele, Pels & Polese (2010).

## **2.3 Discussion**

The systems theory views communication as a subsystem of the entire organizational system. It is observed that whereas communication influences all systems that occur within and outside the organization, these internal and external factors also influence communication. Communication is an important element that maintains the balance of the entire system and this is achieved through the co-ordination of organizational activities and functions. The interdependent nature of systems within an organization requires that all functional units within the organization have to be well coordinated through effective communication. It is also required that organizations will ensure openness and become responsive to their environment in order to respond to changes in its environment and this could also be achieved through coordinated communication.

Recognizing the complexity of human interactions in an organization, the systems theory stresses the importance of communication in an organization. Thus, it recognises the role of communication in facilitating the functioning of the various departments and units of organisations. The theory offers a background for understanding why communication processes operate the way that they do because it can be inferred from this theory that communication is the adhesive that keeps the system in balance. The study will be conducted on the basis of the systems theory which asserts that organizations function effectively as a whole and not as single units.

## **2.4 Concepts**

## **2.5 Communication**

Communication has been defined by various people across the world. Communication theorist, Dance (1970), counted over a hundred definitions of the word “communication”. However, another Communication scholar Lasswell (1948) in his model of communication, describes communication as “who said it, what was said, in what channel it was said, to whom it was said, and with what effect it was said”. This definition is regarded by many communication and public relations scholars as "one of the earliest and most influential. The idictionary also defines communication as the act or process of using words, sounds, signs, or behaviours to express or exchange information or to express your idea, thoughts, feelings, et cetera, to someone else. It also describes communication as a process by which information is exchanged between individuals through a common system of symbols, signs, or behaviour; and a system of transmitting or exchanging information.

According to Wood (2004) communication is a systematic process in which individuals interact with and through symbols to create and interpret meanings. She further

breaks down this definition into components. First and foremost, she notes that communication is a process, which means it is on-going and always changing. Secondly it is systematic which means that it occurs within systems of interrelated and interacting parts. Thirdly it is symbolic, thus, symbols are the basis of language, some of which are non-verbal. Lastly communication involves meanings, which could be at content level, where meanings are the literal meaning of messages and at the relationship level where meanings refers to what is expressed about the relationship between communicators in messages they send and receive. Furthermore, the four main types of communication Professionals use are interpersonal, non-verbal, written and oral.

The Business communication (2015) in their internet post on nature of communication, state that communication pervades every area of human existence. Communication represents the important role inside personal existence, family member's existence, cultural existence, company existence and many others. In discussing the nature of communication, they indicate that communication is related to human activity. According to them, taking pleasure in restful lifetime and acquiring person-to-person interactions, for instance; are all not possible without having communication exchanges. Communication however, involves two or more parties. At least, two parties are involved in virtually any communication exchange process. The person who communicates information is known as sender and the party who is provided with the information is known as audience. In some instances, the sender could send out a message for one to many receivers (The Business communication, 2015).

Conversation in an organization flows in a variety of styles such as way upward direction, down way, horizontal way and many others. When communication is media or channel based, then every single person communicates by means of using a selected method.

This medium or media could be composed, common and non-verbal or maybe a mixture of spoken and non-verbal media. The issue of communication and its integration in all aspects of the organisation, as well as its contribution to the achievement of organisational strategy, has become a major focus point in many discussions (Clark & Fujimoto 1991; Duncan & Moriarty's 1998; Gayeski & Woodward, 1996; Jones 1999; Moenaert, Souder, DeMeyer & Deschoolmeester 1994; Reukert & Walker 1987; and Sriram, Krapfel & Spekman 1992; Wightman 1999).

Watson and Wyatt (1993) also argue that a close tie between the business aspects of the organisation and communication is critical to support the strategic direction of the organisation and the achievement of organisational goals. Further, the Pfeiffer Book of Successful Communication Skill-Building Tools (2007) also indicates communication is the cement that holds an organization together; thus, lack of communication can cause it to fall apart. This is true whether the organization referred to is a society, an organization, a department, a work group, a marriage, a family, a club, or a social group. The impact that communication has can be seen as fundamental to the organisation since it can be argued that it plays an active role in determining the way in which the organisation operates (Wallace 1993). Communication is also in two forms namely internal and external.

Greenbaum (1974) defined organisational communication as a system in terms of purpose which relates to achieving organisational goals; operational procedures which relates to the use of functional communication networks, and the adoption of suitable communication policies and activities; and structure referring to the organisation unit, functional communication networks, and communication policies and activities. Internal communication helps to convert information into action. Frank and Brownell (1989) define internal communication as transactions between individual and groups at various levels and

in different areas of specialization. Furthermore, these transactions are intended to design and redesign organizations and coordinate day to day activities. Kalla (2005) also defines integrated internal communications as all formal and informal communication taking place internally at all levels of an organization. The term internal communications is used in the plural because the goal is to capture all the communication processes that simultaneously take place inside an organization.

With the singular form, Bovee & Thill (2000) define internal communication as the exchange of information and ideas within an organization. Argenti (2003) contends that internal communication is in essence about creating an atmosphere of respect for all employees within the organization. This notwithstanding, relevant content must be provided so that people may analyse and test it, as well as share ideas and have feedback (Quirke, 2008). Communication from management should come directly from one manager to the next and from supervisor to employee, but as companies grow larger and more complex, this often becomes more difficult, hence the need for the internal communication function. Quirke (2008) also defines external communication as the transmission of information between a business and another person or entity in the company's external environment. He further cites examples of these people and entities as to include customers, potential customers, suppliers, investors, shareholders, and society at large.

Communication could also be a one-way or two-way process; that is communication might be designed such that it would involve two-way or one-way process. With two-way communication, the receiver sends feedback to the sender after receiving the message. In the one way communication the receiver does not present his or her reaction to the sender's message. The success of communication however, depends on a proper understanding of the parties involved. If a receiver does not deliver a reaction to a sender's

message, then the sender would not be able to fully understand the receiver's view on the message. In this case, communications would be inadequate. As a result, to make communication effective the two; sender and receiver have to react to each other's message to show that they both understand each other's message or reactions (The Business Communication, 2015).

Organizational communication has to be strategic. Many people in the field of communication have described strategic communication in various ways. According to Englin (2011) strategic communication is a means of communicating the best message, through the right channels, measured against well-considered organizational and communications specific goals. In brief, it is the difference between doing communications stuff, and doing the right communications stuff. Kelleher (2011) in "What is strategic communication" indicates that putting out press releases and seeking media coverage can feel productive, but without a master plan, there's a risk of misallocating effort. As organizations become flatter to allow groups within the organization to cooperate and share among themselves, as well as key constituencies outside, such as customers and investors, in the case of publicly traded companies, helps organizations to determine where gaps exist which need to be bridged (Hall, 2010).

Hall (2010) also sees communication audit as a comprehensive evaluation of an organization's ability to send, receive and share information with various audiences, including those within the organization as well as key constituencies outside, such as customers and investors. This type of audit can be performed to evaluate an organization's external or internal communication effectiveness. The purpose of a communication audit is to uncover the strengths and weaknesses between management, typically, and employees, customers and other groups such as investors, the news media, and regulators and legislative

bodies. The objective of the audit is to improve future communications by developing a strategic plan, through a series of recommendations.

To Bonk, Griggs and Tynes (1999), a strategic communications audit involves a systematic assessment, either formal or informal, of an organization's capacity for, or performance of, essential communications practices. It determines what is working well, what is not, and what might work better if adjustments are made. Strategic communications audit therefore has both evaluative and formative value. It is evaluative in that it provides a picture of where an organization currently stands in terms of its communication capacity or performance. In being formative, it also points to areas in which the organization could strengthen its performance. The communication audit has, however, been refined over the years and has become a valid and reliable research method of appraising the communication system of an organisation (Wallace 1993).

Communication Audit first developed in 1954, was used by Odiorne as a means of studying communication flow. It was used as a way of establishing the level of accuracy and direction of communication in a particular organisation. Though the techniques he used were not substantiated through testing, they did produce valuable information. It resulted in a general improvement of communication within the organisation (Antonis 2005). Coffman (2014) indicates that a strategic communication audit involves a systematic assessment, either formal or informal, of an organization's capacity for, or performance of, essential communications practices. It determines what is working well, what is not, and what might work better if adjustments are made.

Communication audit places emphasis on issues related to efficiency and effectiveness of communication structure and processes as well as the importance of people. Communications audits are a relatively common practice, though they are more common

among for-profits than non-profits, and not familiar to most non-communications professionals. Audits are most often performed by external communications or evaluation experts, but can also be performed internally.

A communications audit may be undertaken by corporate communications team or by outside consultants who are retained by management. Both assess the company's communications effectiveness in accordance with the business objectives, compare the company versus competitors, and identify target audience perceptions and motivators. The resulting strategic positioning and corresponding communications plan is focused on achieving strategic communications objectives, which may include assessing whether they are to achieve brand recognition, modify perceptions, maximize sales, encourage community support or establish leadership. If an outside auditor is retained, the auditor may also include an evaluation of the corporate communications staff and the activities of the corporate communications department. This would facilitate the designing of recommendations to management aimed to streamline departmental communications and inter-company communications effectiveness (Hall, 2010).

Audits should also be considered after an organization experiences a critical incident that might affect communications, such as when the organization changes mission, changes leadership, or experiences a crisis. Several audits have shown that poor interdepartmental communication generates feelings of isolation and dissatisfaction, which in turn are correlated with low levels of engagement in the decisions making process (Hargie & Tourish, 2000). Hence, it is highly important to assess the quality of organizational communication, focusing on both internal and external information. Strategic communications audits are therefore at their core, an evaluation tool. Unlike most evaluation tools or practices, however, communication audits do not focus on the results or outcomes of

an organization's communications practices after they are implemented or among their target audiences. Rather, they focus on the organization itself, its practice and capacity, and how the organization has positioned the communications function.

In terms of frequency, formal communications audits should be conducted in about every five years. Informal audits on which organizations internally revisit their strategic communications capacity and performance levels may be done more frequently. In conclusion, communications audits are a relatively common practice, though they are more common among for-profits than non-profits, and not familiar to most non-communications professionals. Audits are most often performed by external communications or evaluation experts, but can also be performed internally. If it is undertaken by the non-profit organizations, then it is appropriate when the organisations involved want to better understand strategic communications audits and the main steps involved. It can be used by nonprofits that either want to self-assess and perform their own audit, or hire an external expert to conduct it. For non-profit organizations that want to better understand strategic communications audits, some steps are involved. These steps can be used by non-profits that either want to self-assess and perform their own audit, or hire an external expert to conduct it. The audit can be applied to an organization overall, or to a specific project or campaign within the organization.

### **Steps for conducting a Communication Audit**

Coffman (2014) outlines five basic steps in a strategic communications audit. Step one: ***Know Critical Strategic Communications Practices***

Knowing the specific practices associated with strategic communications is the first step to assessing an organization's performance and capacity with respect to those

practices. These are practices that every non-profit trying to implement strategic communications should be performing at some level, whether by a single individual or by many staff members throughout the organization. It identifies sixteen essential strategic communications practices which are grouped into three categories namely Strategy, Implementation, and Support and alignment. Strategy includes core tasks of communications planning and strategy development.

Implementation includes practices most common to an organization with an active communications function. Support and Alignment includes non-communications-specific practices within the organizations that help to ensure the communications function is successful. Support and alignment also offers quality standards or criteria for each practice. They describe in brief what the practices should look like. The standards and criteria just on its own has substantial value in the audit process. They can be used as a checklist to help determine whether an organization is actually performing each strategic communications practice. More importantly, the audit process can reveal if quality criteria are being met, and if not where improvements can be made in how the practice is performed.

### ***Step Two: Identify Possible Levels of Practice***

To assess an organization's communication practices, it is important to have a gauge that helps to measure and illustrate where the organization currently stands in terms of its performance. That gauge is offered here in the form of a "practice maturity scale". This offers a continuum of possible performance levels for any given practice. It illustrates the scale's five levels. Higher levels in the scale represent higher levels of organizational commitment to, integration of, and performance on the practice. Each practice may be classified as ad hoc, planned, institutionalized, evaluated, and optimized. During an audit, an organization's current performance on each strategic communications practice can be

assessed using this scale. However, it is first important to understand the distinctions between the five levels.

During an audit, an organization's current performance on each strategic Communications practice can be assessed using the five level scale. The distinctions between the five levels are as follows: at level one the communications practice is ad hoc and unorganized. Few if any staff and financial resources are dedicated to it. Success is based on the competence of an effort of one or two "heroic" individuals. Despite this chaotic environment, however the communications practice may be implemented successfully. However, because it is uncoordinated, efforts are often inefficient and go over budget and schedule.

At level two, the practice is planned and deliberate as opposed to being performed on a reactive or "as needed" basis. Resources are therefore, allocated to the practice, and responsibilities are assigned, as the process is managed. However, the practice does not occur regularly, and may still be performed by one or two individuals. At level three, which is referred to as institutionalized, the practice is routine and part of the organization's "fabric." It is performed regularly, consistently across staff members, and has been performed enough that the organization has gained a certain level of proficiency at it. The organization has qualitatively determined the "best" way to approach the practice and has institutionalized it. Practices are known and coordinated within and outside the organization. At level four, the practice is evaluated and analyzed. Measures of performance and progress are collected and analyzed. Often a quantitative understanding of success is known and tracked, and the organization has a better ability to predict or estimate performance. Also, at this level the organization has committed to tracking the practice for purposes of better understanding how to improve performance. The organization is also monitoring the quality of the practice.

At level five, practice is optimized because of its recognized importance to the organization. Consequently, practice is continuously reflected on and improvements incorporated. Distinctions between levels one and two are based on the degree to which an organization is reactive and disorganized (level one) versus purposeful and proactive (level two). Level five also demonstrates an even higher level of organizational commitment to the practice, as the organization cares enough about it to learn from and improve performance over time.

### **Step Three: Assess Current Performance and Capacity**

The main tasks for step three as discussed by Downs and Adrian (2004) are to collect data about communications practices, and to use that data to make assessments about organizational performance and capacity. It involves actually using the scale described earlier to gauge where the organization stands on all essential strategic communications practices. It illustrates in matrix form how this assessment might be structured. The audit step could also involve looking at actual communications strategy content or materials and making assessments about their quality. At this stage, it is important to determine whether assessments about organizational practices will be made internally or by outside experts. The advantages of doing it internally are that direct costs are likely to be lower. Further, the process may become an engaging organizational exercise that builds communications capacity in and of itself.

On the other hand, the advantages to using outside experts are their objectivity, time and availability, the knowledge they bring from other organizations for comparison purposes and the credibility that may accompany their credentials and expertise. However, regardless of whether the audit is done internally or externally, a common set of methods can

be used to gather data needed to make assessments about practices. These include interviews; surveys; critical incident analysis; network analysis; participants' observation, document review. Considering the indepth knowledge and information that these audit tools can derive, the researcher used the interview, critical incidence analysis and focus group discussion and document review for collecting data for the purposes of this study. Interviews are probably the most common audit method; interviews allow the person conducting the audit to better understand communications-related work processes. Interviews allow respondents to provide a rich qualitative sense of how practices are performed and how the organization treats communications. Interviews can also be conducted with the organization's external stakeholders or target audiences (Coffman, 2014).

Surveys or questionnaires are second most common audit method. They can be administered cheaply to all organizational staff within a short timeframe, and they allow for a standardization and comparison of responses. With regard to Critical Incident Analysis, staff are asked to describe, through an interview or questionnaire, specific effective and ineffective experiences with communications. The purpose is to collect examples of experiences that staff find memorable in order to see how communications practices are performed within situational contexts. *The Network Analysis* is another method that has gained much popularity in recent years as a method for examining information flow, or the channels and relationships through which information is exchanged. Network analysis involves asking individuals who they communicate with and for what purpose. It reveals an organization's communication structure, which may be very different from its organizational structure. It also reveals where blockages are occurring and possible routes that are currently untapped Coffman (2004).

Additionally, participant observation can be used in the Communication Audit. In this instance the individual conducting the audit participates in organizational activities involving communications in order to see how and when practices are performed. *Document Review* is used; when Communications documents such as publications, campaign materials, press releases, and the like are reviewed to assess the development and targeting of materials as a communications practice. Finally, with focus groups, discussions can also be used. In this instance, groups of five to fifteen people meet together in a moderated discussion and respond to open-ended questions about communications practices and organizational capacity. Their main advantage is the group interaction that takes place as participants react to and build on one another's responses (Downs & Adrian 2004).

#### **Step Four: *Identify Areas for Improvement***

Once the assessments are made, the next step is to identify areas in which the organization can improve. Here non-profit organizations are not expected to be at level five on all strategic communications practices. Rather, the assessment of where the organization should be must be based on an accounting of the organization's realistic capabilities with respect to communications. For example, it may not be reasonable to expect that all funding that comes into an organization will have dollars earmarked for communications. While an organization can make communications a priority and request specific resources for it, the outcome also depends on what funders are willing to support. Completing an audit questionnaire therefore provides an immediate assessment of areas in which to improve. (Coffman, 2004)

### **Step Five: *Refine Practice and Repeat the Process as Needed***

The strategic communications audit should result in more than just an identification of areas or practices that need to be improved. To maximize the chances that audit findings would be used and actual practice improved as a result, the audit should demonstrate through data how communications problems are causing problems in the present, as opposed to speculating about their future impact. At the same time, the audit should reinforce practices that are current organizational strengths; and generate specific recommendations for how actual communication practice can be enhanced. The audit should also make transparent the organizational benefits of adopting those actions; in addition to the weaknesses the strategies are designed to address and must prioritize recommendations so organizations are not immobilized by the prospect of implementing them.

Non-profit organizations, however, often overlook this type of assessment as a possibility when asked to evaluate their communications strategies or activities. Experiencing the strategic communications audit process, using the approach described here or another designed toward a similar end, can be a critical part of an organization's progression toward more strategic, and ultimately more effective, communications.

### **2.7 Empirical Studies**

Antonis (2005) sought to establish how an integrated communication audit served as an effective measurement instrument for intra-organizational communication. In her study entitled "*Communication Audit as an Integrated Communication Measurement Instrument: A Case Study*", she looked at Communication Audit as an Integrated Communication Measurement Instrument. In a case study on the National Development Agency in South

Africa, Antonis (2005) used a study population of 121. She employed the method of triangulation by using focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and survey questionnaire to illicit information from participants. The Focus group discussions in particular involved eight senior staff members who included regional managers and senior project managers within the Agency.

The results of the study showed that there were levels of communication failure and the National Development Agency needed to prioritize their intra-organizational communication. This notwithstanding, the reviewed literature and empirical evidence gathered, indicated that an improvement in the interaction and collaboration between the various individuals and groups. This resulted in an improved organizational culture and climate and employee satisfaction. Her study also found that as a strategic process, internal communication could motivate and empower a company's employee. Thus, employees know what their company's objectives are and their part in reaching those goals, if they do not receive feedback about their work, they may lose motivation and interest and the company's performance may also be negatively affected.

Carvalho (2013) studied "*The crucial role of internal communication audit to improve internal and general market orientation*". The study was conducted in a 20 year old private university which had a population of over 5000 students, made up of 260 teachers and 65 non-teaching staff. The fast growing population of the institution placed a demand on management and its internal communication system, hence, the study assessed communication performance at the university. By assessing people's perception about strength and weaknesses of internal communication; quality and quantity of information received from several sources; how fast the communication flow is and what the preferences

were in terms of communication channels, the sampled population involved 111 students, 41 teachers and 8 non-academic staff members.

Carvalho employed the mixed methods - using interviews, questionnaires and critical incident analysis at a Higher Education Institution in Portugal. The results of the study showed that there was a clear and direct relationship among the different levels of internal communication, internal market and general market orientations which impacted on job satisfaction. He also observed that internal communication helps to know what to do to improve both internal and general market orientations. The study emphasized that all internal stakeholders such as managers, teachers, non-academic staff and students agreed with the need to institutionalize formal rules and procedures to regulate internal communication access and flow. Carvalho concluded that establishing these clear rules and procedures will reflect on improved job satisfaction and better results for the organization.

Systems theory and external relations strategic planning theories were used in an External Communication Audit conducted by Murdock (2003) on the National Tropical Botanical Garden (NTBG), a congressionally chartered non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of tropical plant diversity. Interviews with NTBG's key decision makers, content analyses of NTBG's primary publications, and a questionnaire measuring the public organization relationship, was used to study NTBG's external communication policies, practices, capabilities, and needs. The findings of the audit identified who NTBG considers its target publics and how well they were reaching certain audiences. The results further indicated the areas where NTBG's current communication system was meeting or not meeting the objectives of the organization. The study concluded with a series of recommendations for how NTBG could improve its external communication system.

## **2.8 Discussion**

From the empirical studies reviewed above, it can be seen that all the researches employed mixed methods for their study. Antonis (2005) used the method of triangulation which included focus group discussions, in-depth interviews and survey questionnaire to illicit information from participants. Her focus group discussion, particularly involved eight senior staff members who included regional managers and senior project managers within the Agency. Carvalho (2013) employed the mixed methods using interviews, questionnaires and critical incident analysis in her study; whereas Murdock (2003) used interviews, content analyses, document review and a questionnaire to conduct her study. It is also evident that all the researchers used the interview and questionnaire methods to gather data for their various studies. With regards to the methods used by the researchers and considering the nature of this study being conducted, the researcher adopted the triangulation or mixed methods for data gathering.

More specifically, the researcher used the focus groups discussion, critical incidence analysis and document review data collection methods. Similarly, as Murdock (2003) reviewed organizational communication policy, the researcher for this study also did a review of the The Ark's Corporate Identity Strategy Manual. From the literature it is also clear that researchers such as Booth (1986), Baker (1979), Checkland (1981) and Rensburg and Bredekamp (1991) saw the communication audit as an important instrument for assessing communication within the organisation. In conclusion, it must be noted that the literature above, though generic about the communication audit in other organisations, the strategy is appropriate for this research titled "Communication audit in a gender based organisation".

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION**

This chapter illustrates the methodology that was used in conducting the study. It covers the research design population, sample and sampling procedures and data collection methods and instruments. It also indicates data sources and methods of data collection and analyses. The choice of these methods was to explore and explain into detail the communication system of the Ark Foundation.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

Descriptive Research describes what exists and may help to uncover new facts and meaning. The purpose of descriptive research is to observe, describe and document aspects of a situation as it naturally occurs (Polit & Hungler 1999). This involves the collection of data that will provide an account or description of individuals, groups or situations. Some of the common data collection methods applied to questions within the realm of descriptive research includes interviews, observations, and portfolios. There is no experimental manipulation or any random selection to groups, as there is in experimental research. The characteristics of individuals and groups may be the focus of descriptive research. It can provide a knowledge base which can act as a springboard for other types of quantitative research methods (Polit & Hungler, 1999). Descriptive research also involves gathering data that describe events and then organizes, tabulates, depicts, and describes the data collection (Glass & Hopkins, 1984).

Descriptive research refers to the type of research question, design, and data analysis that will be applied to a given topic. When in-depth, narrative descriptions of small numbers of cases are involved, the research uses description as a tool to organize data into patterns that emerge during analysis. Those patterns aid the mind in comprehending a

qualitative study and its implications. Descriptive studies are aimed at finding out "what is," so observational and survey methods are frequently used to collect descriptive data (Borg & Gall, 1989). Though some information about readers' preferences is better than no information at all, Murdock, (2003) posits that a survey alone does not provide a complete picture of employees' communication wants and needs, and it would not help business leaders know where to invest their communication resources for the greatest effect. Descriptive studies can yield rich data that lead to important recommendations. The descriptive research design has been used for this study. The study sought to explore and explain into detail the communication system of the chosen organization. Hence, it presents a detail description of the organization's internal and external communication.

### **3.2 Study Population and Sampling Procedure**

The study population is Gender-based organizations in Ghana. The Ark, which is an advocacy-based, women's human rights not-for-profit, independent, non-governmental organization was purposively sampled. The choice of The Ark Foundation, Ghana, (The Ark) for this particular case study was partially based on the researcher's past relationship with the organisation and the organisations desire to improve its organisational communication strategies. Eight staff, interns and volunteers from the target population were also purposively chosen and engaged as a group. Purposive sampling is a non-probability sampling technique. Purposive sampling relies on the judgement of the researcher when it comes to selecting the units; such as people, cases/organisations, events, pieces of data that are to be studied (Laerd Dissertation, 2012).

Usually, the sample being investigated is quite small, especially when compared with probability sampling techniques. The main goal of purposive sampling is to focus on

particular characteristics of a population that are of interest, which will best enable one to answer his/her research questions. The sample being studied is not representative of the population, but for researchers pursuing qualitative or mixed methods research designs, this is not considered to be a weakness. Rather, it is a choice, the purpose of which varies depending on the type of purposive sampling technique that is used (Leard Dissertation, 2012).

### **3.3 Profile of study organization**

The Ark Foundation, Ghana, a women's rights organization was founded, registered and is based in Ghana. Registered in 1995 and originally called Care Foundation Ghana, The Ark began to operate on a full-time basis in February 1999. In 1998, its name was changed to The Ark Foundation, Ghana, with the same registration status. The Ark is an advocacy-based human rights organization founded on Biblical Christian principles of love, mercy and justice. The Ark recognizes the ideals enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other major United Nations treaties and Conventions speaking to equality, dignity and social justice for all women and men (The Ark Organizational Brochure, 2012). Its primary purpose is to seek the protection and promotion of the human rights of women, and children. Its vision is a society in which women and men are truly equal in all spheres and endeavors of life; and its mission is providing a refuge and strength to many through advocacy, training, public education and service delivery,

The philosophy undergirding the work of The Ark is two dimensional; the quest to be both proactive and reactive, to prevent and to cure, to attack the roots and at the same time to deal with the fruits. The Ark's programs and activities seek to rid society of attitudes and practices which nurture and tolerate discrimination, abuse and violence against women, and children. These include abuse of rights to dignity, security and liberty, and the right not to be

subjected to cruel, inhuman degrading treatment or punishment, which is the lot of many women and children in our society today. Hence, the strong emphasis on advocacy, training and public education under the organisation's Women's Leadership and Human Rights Institute (WLHRI) Program.

The Ark strives to create empowering spaces for individuals to rise above gender inequality, violence and oppression. The broad goals and objectives of The Ark Foundation are to ensure respect for, and protection of the human rights of persons, particularly women, and children. These are done through advocacy, public education and training; to bring about the dismantling of systems, practices and attitudes that dehumanize persons, particularly women, and children, through policy advocacy and engagement with active civil society groups that have similar goals; and to support women, and children who are survivors of gender-based violence and abuse within the domestic or public sphere through the provision of integrated services to such survivors (The Ark Corporate Strategy, 2010).

The Ark Foundation, Ghana, works from a woman-centered perspective and considers itself primarily as a women's human rights organization. Its policy is to be primarily women led with a majority of employees being women. The Ark works with men, albeit in lesser proportion in relation to women, and will actively promote engagement with men as partners in the quest for gender equality and women's advancement. The organization's values are equality of all persons; gender equality, respect for the fundamental human rights of all persons, empowerment of the disadvantaged; and excellence in leadership and work practice. To achieve its objectives, The Ark runs two broad programs the Women's Law and Human Rights Institute (WLHRI) Program that engages in capacity building through Training and Advocacy on the themes of Women's Human Rights, Women's Leadership Development and Social Development (The Ark Corporate Strategy, 2010)..

The Ark's activities under this program are carefully crafted with the aim of drawing attention to the human rights and human development issues of women, and children in Ghana. Additionally, the activities are to engender the necessary policy, legislative or societal action for change; and to offer Support to Survivors of Gender Violence and Child Abuse Program. Through the Crises Response Centre (CRC) Project, The Ark responds to violence against women, and children through the provision of integrated services support to survivors of such violence. These services include counselling, legal aid, temporary shelter and rehabilitation services. The organization also runs special projects such as Campaign 101 which is an Institutional Capacity-Building program for responding to violence against women and children, with a focus on the local police, health, educational and market/artisans institutions for sensitization and networking (The Ark Corporate Strategy, 2010).

Community Outreach also targets people in markets, streets, transport stations and general public areas for dissemination of information and distribution of Information, Education and Communication (I,E&C) materials on gender violence and child abuse prevention and protection. Gender, Gender Violence and HIV/AIDS Project targets drivers' unions and local Churches to respond to HIV/AIDS from a gender perspective and address impacts on women's lives and families. The other special projects of the organizations are the Churches' Project on Domestic Violence, which raises awareness and builds capacity of Churches to establish action-oriented support systems for survivors of domestic violence and child abuse (The Ark Corporate Strategy, 2010).

The Rights, Empowerment, Access and Participation Project which works with 10 community-based organizations in the Eastern Region on Right Based Approach (RBA) and People Centre Approach (PCA) approaches; Ambassador Girls' Scholarship and Mentoring Project, which supports 1000 girls in school in the Eastern Region. The organization also

engages in the development of Manuals and Toolkit Development for Service Providers on domestic violence, child abuse and Gender Violence and HIV/AIDS (The Ark Corporate Strategy, 2010). Dealing with the reality that one out of three women has suffered physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner, and child abuse in all its forms is prevalent in Ghana (Gender Centre National Research, 1999), the Crises Response Centre (CRC) Project offers the kind of services necessary to respond to flagrant abuse of human rights (The Ark Corporate Strategy, 2010).

### **3.4 Data Collection Methods and Instruments**

Focus groups, interviews and document review have been used for collecting data. Focus Groups, a qualitative method was used for data collection. Focus Group Discussions are a research strategy for understanding audience attitudes and behaviour. A number of six to 12 people are interviewed simultaneously, with a moderator leading the respondents in a relatively unstructured discussion about the focal topic (Gill, Stewart, Chadwick, 2008). This method was chosen to ensure that the researcher is able to gather useful information, as FGDs provided in-depth information about issues under investigations. According to Krueger and Casey (2000) FGDs technique has four defining characteristics. It involves people known as participants; the people possess certain characteristics and are recruited to share a common quality or characteristic of interest to the researcher. Focus groups provide qualitative data which when are used enhances understanding and to reveal a wide range of opinions, some of which the researcher might not expect.

Further, as the name implies, focus groups have a focused discussion. Most of the questions to ask are predetermined, the sequence of questions is established and the questions are structured to further the goal of research. However, the moderator is free to depart from

the structure if relevant information is presented by the participants. Since FGDs samples are small in size, other data collection tools such as interviews and document review method were used to collect additional data. The actual information needed would be based on their perceptions, beliefs, practices, experiences and knowledge about the benefits of effective communication. Under this study, the Focus group discussion comprised of eight (8) staff and interns. These respondents occupied leadership and managerial positions in the organization. The discussion sought to discover the perceptions, beliefs, practices, experiences and knowledge of staff about the nature of the organization's internal and external communication.

Individual interviews through the administration of questionnaires were also used to allow respondents provide their opinions of how practices are performed and how the organization treats communications. This has helped the researcher better understand communications related work processes. Critical incidence analysis was also be used. Staff were asked to describe through questions, specific effective and ineffective experiences with communications. The purpose was to collect examples of experiences that staff find memorable in order to see how communications practices are performed within situational contexts. The document review method was also used in collecting data. Communications documents such as publications, campaign materials, press releases and policies would be reviewed to assess the development and targeting of materials as a communications practice. The methods mentioned above when used provide an immediate assessment of communication areas in which to improve and helps the organization put in place strategic mechanisms to improve its communications.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Analysis of the Findings**

This chapter analyses the information gathered from the focus group discussions, survey interview with respondents from The Ark Foundation and findings from the review of the organization's corporate identity strategy manual. It further analyses specific documents from the organization.

#### **4.1 The Communication Strategy Manual of The Ark**

The organization has a logo which is a replica of The Ark of the Covenant as described in the Holy Bible. The Ark is a one piece rectangular shaped chest comprising of two parts; the Ark of the Covenant and the atonement cover or "mercy seat" on top of it. The mercy seat or 'cover' has two cherubim (angels) at the two ends of the Ark. The Angels; in a kneeling position, face downward towards the Ark with outstretched wings that cover the atonement cover. Spiritually, the Ark is the manifestation of God's physical presence on earth. The logo is captured in an outline color of blue/gold/brown and must be replicated as such. However, in some cases it may be replicated in black.

According to the organization, the logo as described above must always be treated as a full image that may not be touched by any other image or text nor can it be changed. It must be replicated in full and not in parts or halves. Any changes to the logo may be in size. Any reduction in size must be relative to the size of the product being created. In reducing the size of the logo, care must be taken not to compromise the integrity, clarity and readability of the image.

#### **Logo with tagline**

The tagline accompanying the logo is the phrase; 'The Ark Foundation, Ghana', written in Comic Sans MS font and the logo and tagline are both treated as one image.

The tagline is captured in a filled color of royal blue and is placed at all times to the right of the logo. The tagline may be captured in white when it is placed on a black background and in certain instances maybe captured in black, however, the tagline according to the document must not be placed on top of or under the logo. More importantly, no changes can be made to The Ark logo or the tagline and no text or image is to be placed above or below the Ark logo and tagline within a reasonable distance in order to maintain the integrity of the Ark logo with tagline. The Ark logo with tagline may not be changed by adding any other elements; nothing may touch the Ark logo and/or the tagline.

The Ark tagline must be replicated in full and not in parts or halves anytime it is used with the logo (This does not preclude the use of the phrase 'The Ark' in reports and other documents for purposes of brevity). Any changes to the tagline may be in size. Any reduction in size must be relative to the size of the product being created and relative to any reduction in the size of the logo. In reducing the size of the tagline, care must be taken not to compromise its integrity, clarity and readability.

The Ark logo and tagline must both appear in the colors that are allowed; and must be replicated as such at all times. However, in some cases it may be replicated in black.

### **Color Pallete**

In order to give its products, marketing and communications materials a consistent look, the organization has a color palette. The primary color identified with The Ark is Royal Blue. This is usually contrasted against a white background. In certain instances the royal blue may be contrasted with the color gold and or brown. This combination may be used in the

production of materials such as t-shirts, public event decorations, policy briefs, annual reports, websites to be put in the public domain.

### **Programs - icons/images associated with them**

To maintain consistency in the cover design of documents, brochures and other materials of the two major programs of The Ark, the CISM has guidelines that need to be strictly followed. For example, with regards the Women's Law and Human Right's Institute (WLHRI) Program, the images of a scale and a scroll must be maintained in all materials produced specifically for the purposes of the WLHRI, in addition to the logo and tagline associated with The Ark,. These two images are consistent with the vision and purpose of the Institute. Thus, the two images must be treated as one and replicated as one. None must appear without the other; however, they may be captured as filled or outlined images in black. Notwithstanding this, care must be taken not to compromise their integrity, clarity and readability, in reducing the sizes of the images.

With regards the second program, Crises Response Centre Project (CRCP) the image of a woman carrying a child at her back depicting a picture of pain with tears running down her cheeks in side profile must be maintained in all materials, brochures etc produced specifically for the purposes of the CRCP in addition to the logo and tagline associated with the organization. This image seeks to capture the pain of women and children in our communities who suffer the effects of domestic violence to and for whom services in this Project are targeted.

### **Font**

The organization has two sets of fonts for all its print communications; the primary font of Baskerville Old Face contrasted with TW Cen MT for official and public use; and Comic

Sans MS contrasting with Trebuchet for internal use. These fonts are used in all printed communications, including but not limited to brochures, flyers, advertisements, reports, presentations and letters. Contrasting fonts are not allowed to be used more than the primary fonts. However, it may only be used in instances where there may be the need to use a different font from the primary font to create a highlight or contrast in written materials. The minimum size for all official communication is 12; headings may be the same size but formatted or a size or two bigger and formatted.

### **Use of photographs and images**

The organization's CISM further says that the images used in the organization's marketing materials, on its Web site and in its presentations should be professional, with crisp photographs that complement the color palette. In general, no clip art or cartoons should be used. Images make a very strong statement and should therefore be chosen with the corporate identity of The Ark in mind.

### **Corporate Stationery System**

All official correspondence of the organization are written on an official letter head displaying the logo and tagline and any other information by which the organization could be identified and captured on white paper. Addresses on envelopes to be mailed or delivered for official purposes are captured in the official font and placed at the lower right hand of the envelope. All call cards carried by officers of the organization are designed to reflect the corporate image as mentioned above. Thus requirements relating to font, color palette combination, placement of the logo and tagline must be adhered to.

In terms of internal communication between the various units and programs within the organization memo stationery designed to meet the design specification of the corporate

image, are to be used. Reports and other documents which are produced in the office and comb-bound must be captured with the primary colors of white and royal blue. The front cover as is the general practice is always to be captured in transparent film/cover.

For easy identification, staff members set out their names, designation and other details by which they can be identified when sending official emails and these details can be set out by default to appear at the end of all email that is sent.

### **World Wide Web**

The CISM requires the organization's website to be captured in the font of Arial and the colors of the website must consistently reflect the color and image choices and overall communication strategy geared at presenting a uniform image of the organization.

### **Presentations**

To maintain uniformity in presentations thereby reinforcing the image of the organization, presentations in powerpoint, word or any other computer programs as much as possible are to use the colors, fonts and images consistently identified with the organization. PowerPoint presentations are expected to have a background of white with royal blue text or royal blue background with white text. There must always be a footnote with contact information of the organization and the presenter's details may be captured on the first and last pages. Presentations in Microsoft word however, may be captured in the traditional colors of white background and black text. Any choice of colors that a presenter may use must however conform to the primary colors of the organization.

### **Marketing / Advertising Materials**

In the production of Information, Educational and Communication (I, E & C) materials, the practice of using various images to portray the various messages to be communicated must be maintained. However, the banner running along the bottom of the material must be captured in the primary colors of the organization i.e. royal blue and the fonts on white.

The organization also has a Public Relations Policy which aims to help The Ark build, maintain and manage its reputation to ensure that the organization is able to build and maintain a strong image for itself.

The policy makes it clear that any and all public relations activities and strategies must be with the aim of ensuring the building of a relationship of trust and understanding that would benefit the organization; explaining the organization's policies and services to the local community; communicating important public information messages; invigorating local interest in the thematic areas of the organization's activities and gradually changing the society's perception about women and children's rights; finally enhancing the reputation of the organization using its Values as the cornerstone.

In the interest of orderly, consistent management of the information released to the media, its network partners and the general public the policy puts out procedures to that effect. As part of its procedures there is a spokesperson in the person of the advocacy officer whose mandate is to provide information to and respond to inquiries from the news media regarding official organization's policies, positions, announcements, personnel issues, crisis management, emergency situations, fiscal operations, and other matters which reflect on the standing of the organization. The spokesperson is also responsible for keeping Management informed of all relevant media situations and inquiries in consultation with the Executive Director and any person the Executive Director may direct, prepare statements to be released to the media;

coordinate, edit and distribute all organizational news releases, including those prepared by other members of Staff checking them for accuracy and appropriateness with the Executive Director, Director of Programs, and designated Staff, ensuring that they are phrased in the appropriate style and manner; retain and file copies of all news releases emanating from the organization including those released by the various units, establishing a central locale for all organizational communication with the media and ensure copies of all news releases are posted on the organizational website. Also, all inquiries received from the news media by staff members should be forwarded to the spokesperson, promptly.

With regards procedures and guidelines of the public relations policy, activities of the organization are to be conducted through the following media such as newspapers, television, radio, newsletters, organizational website, I.E & C materials, annual reports, brochures, organizational community awareness project, street campaigns, network meetings and public events.

Furthermore, the organizational PR activities are to include but not be limited to liaising with colleagues and key spokespeople; liaising with and answering enquiries from media, individuals and other organizations, often via telephone and email; researching, writing and distributing press releases and feature articles to targeted media; collating and analyzing media coverage; writing and editing in-house magazines, case studies, speeches, articles and annual reports; and preparing and supervising the production of publicity brochures, handouts, direct mail leaflets, promotional videos, photographs, films and multimedia programs.

Other PR activities include devising and coordinating photo opportunities; organizing events including press conferences, exhibitions, open days and press tours; maintaining and updating

information on the organization's website; sourcing and managing speaking and sponsorship opportunities; and commissioning market research.

From the above review, it is evident that the organization has a well laid down communication document which describes the organization and further gives it an identity. However, the focus group discussion and survey interviews revealed that the organization does not consciously adhere to the guidelines spelt out in its strategy manual.

#### **4.2 Internal Communication Strategies**

The study revealed that in terms of internal communication between the various units and programs within the organization, business memo, skype, yahoo messenger, text message, whatsapp, viber, meetings and face to face interactions are used, so far. With regard accessing and sharing information in the organisation, the organization operates a flexible system where everybody has access to the Executive Director and the Leadership and Management Team (LMT) and can reach them through various communication means depending on where she is at any given period. However, the organization has a hierarchal structure which only comes to play when there are issues of contention regarding organizational leadership reporting lines. The organization has a conflict resolution mechanism, constructive feedback sessions and staff motivational programs.

The organization also has organizational values derived from its organizational culture. These values are respect for all persons, openness, transparency, accountability, respect for fundamental human rights of all persons, non-discrimination and gender equality among others. These are to ensure respect, positive interactions, behaviours and relationships among staff, interns, volunteers and managers and to constantly ensure good interpersonal relations in the organization. The organizational value of respect translates into the

participatory approach, where for example, all staff, interns and volunteers are roped into decision making processes of the organization at all times. The organization also has a capacity building, mentoring and coaching system to help enhance staff personal and career growth and development as a way of motivating staff.

The focus group discussion confirmed that the organization communicates internally through the use of memos, telephone calls and text messages, whatsapp, emails, meetings. Their best source of news and information in and about the organisation are the media, particularly, newspapers, radio, emails and internet. In terms of the effectiveness of the channels they use in receiving information in the organisation, respondents were of the view that the channels were effective to a large extent since the organization buys newspapers on a daily basis, cuts and files relevant stories for future purposes. They also indicated the organization has a radio for monitoring issues in the media as well as regular and easy access to internet. However, in instances where there was power outage which also affects internet connectivity, information flow in and about the organization becomes a challenge which affects their work.

With regard accessing and sharing information in the organisation, the organization operates a flexible system where everybody as indicated earlier has access to the Executive Director 24/7. Additionally, there is unfettered access to organizational information such as accounts and official documents and files in general. In terms of the organization's typical conflict resolution methods used in the organisation, staff are as a first measure tasked to confront fellow colleagues without being "confrontational" as a way of resolving conflicts amicably amongst themselves. Periodic constructive feedback sessions are also organized for staff by management to provide a platform for staff, interns and volunteers to deal with any outstanding conflicts that may be existent

Staff motivation in the organisation ranges from monetary, internal awards such as best staff awards organized on quarterly basis; international travels to participate in an international program; official days off; open declarations and commendations at meetings. Decision making in the organization is participatory and all staff, interns and volunteers are roped into decision making processes. They fully take part in organizational decisions as a way of making them feel a sense of ownership of the organization. Any staff can raise an issue of concern after which it is discussed at a meeting/s and an agreement or consensus reached. The Executive Director's ideas and suggestions are not cast in stones, therefore the acceptance of her ideas and suggestions are subject to staff scrutiny and discussions. The organization encourages change periodically, and builds the capacity of staff and also prepares the minds of staff to be able to deal with the change whether conducive to them or not.

Management also strengthens the capacity of all program and other key staff to contribute to organizational objectives through active learning, in-house and other training programs, feedback sessions. Others include enhanced participation of staff in strategic meetings, coaching and direction from Executive Director and the Leadership and Management Team of the organization. With regards the type of participation that takes place in the development of the organisational strategy and operational plans of the organization, staff engage in brainstorming sessions; review organization's work together as a team; engage in retreats and several meetings in the organization to develop organizational strategy and operational plans. Staff plan and work together all through the process of developing organizational strategy, operational plans and units and department plan. The different departments and units do not have different operational processes and procedures.

Organizational processes and procedures are standardized and apply to all departments and units as well as staff.

The organisational culture impacts communication and the organisation as a whole. Invariably, it serves as a check and a tool to avoid violence and conflict among staff at work. In the event of conflict, staff are expected to work and operate in conformity to the values and general culture of the organization such as behaving as leaders; giving constructive feedback to fellow staff; respecting people irrespective of tribe, colour, social status, among others. The organizations strengths, according to the respondents, are that the organization has strong ability to assess target audience and provide relevant information through appropriate communication means. Additionally, the organization is also good at determining what medium of communication such as IE&C materials, media, emails and website, reports and other information pack would be relevant to which stakeholder. Respondents also said the organization is good in using the print media, engaging in community interaction and stakeholder meetings.

### **4.3 Discussion**

The study findings revealed that though the organization had a well-orchestrated communication plan, its implementation was poor. Although the organization engages in communication on a day to day basis, it did not follow the guidelines spelt out in the strategy manual. As with level two under step two of Coffman (2014) five step communication process outlined under chapter two, communication strategy is planned; deliberate as opposed to being performed on a reactive basis; however this study discovered that the organization's communication was performed on a more reactive basis although it had a well-planned and deliberate communication strategy. According to the classical perspective of organizational communication, organizations are similar to machines. Therefore if one has a well-built and

well-managed machines, it would translate into productive and effective organizations. Inferring from this, having a good communication system and adhering to the content of the communication strategy could lead to effective organizations. Considered from the other way round, it can be concluded that an organization's productiveness and effectiveness in terms of building a good and sustainable image for itself would be close to impossible, if it does not have a well laid down communication strategy or policy.

It was further revealed that conversation in the organizations flows in a variety of styles such as way upward direction, down way, horizontal way and many others. However, at The Ark it was observed that information flow was more of horizontal. It has no rigid or hierarchical systems or procedures and occurs among the various human rights units and specialized departments within the organization as well as staff, interns and volunteers. Tynes (2008) observation that in the world of nonprofits, strategic communications is an orchestrated use of channels of communication to move and influence public policy or to promote an agenda was evident in the operations of The Ark as it communicates with its audiences through different channels of communication, at any given time considering the target and impact it hoped to achieve at the time. Following step four of the communication audit, it is important that the organization is able to identify its key communication areas that need improvement. It should also be able to reflect and make decisions on its communication strengths and weaknesses so as to determine areas for improvement as well as determine how much resources to allocate toward enhancing organizational communication.

#### **4.4 External Communication System of The Ark Foundation**

A review of the documents revealed that the organization has a logo, which happens to be an important symbol for its external communication and whose presentation is

off utmost concern to the organization. The logo is a replica of The Ark of the Covenant as described in the Holy Bible and is captured in an outline color of blue/gold/brown and must be replicated as such. However, in some cases it may be replicated in black. According to staff of the organization, the logo must always be treated as a full image that may not be touched by any other image or text nor can it be changed. In cases where it is replicated, it must be done in full and not in parts or halves. Any changes to the logo may only be in size and any reduction in size must be relative to the size of the product being created. In reducing the size of the logo, the integrity, clarity and readability of the image must not be compromised.

The tagline accompanying the logo is the always phrase; ***'The Ark Foundation, Ghana'***, written in Comic Sans MS font and the logo and tagline are both treated as one image. All official correspondence of the organization are written on an official letter head displaying the logo and tagline and any other information by which the organization could be identified and captured on white paper. Addresses on envelopes to be mailed or delivered for official purposes are captured in the official font and placed at the lower right hand of the envelope. All call cards carried by officers of the organization are designed to reflect the corporate image as mentioned earlier. Thus, requirements relating to font, color palette combination, placement of the logo and tagline must be adhered to. For easy identification, staff members set out their names, designation and other details by which they can be identified when sending official emails and these details can be set out by default to appear at the end of all email that is sent.

With regards procedures and guidelines of the public relations policy, activities of the organization are conducted through the following media such as newspapers, television, radio, newsletters, organizational website, I.E & C materials, annual reports, brochures,

organizational community awareness project, street campaigns, network meetings and public events. The organizational PR activities include but is not limited to liaising with colleagues and key spokespeople; liaising with and answering enquiries from media, individuals and other organizations, often via telephone and email; researching, writing and distributing press releases and feature articles to targeted media; collating and analyzing media coverage; writing and editing in-house magazines, case studies, speeches, articles and annual reports.

Other PR materials include preparing and supervising the production of publicity brochures, handouts, direct mail leaflets, promotional videos, photographs, films and multimedia programs. Other PR activities include devising and coordinating photo opportunities; organizing events including press conferences, exhibitions, open days and press tours; maintaining and updating information on the organization's website; sourcing and managing speaking and sponsorship opportunities; and commissioning market research. Participants in the Focus groups indicated they communicated externally about the vision, mission and programs of the organization to their partners and the public as a whole. The staff also stated that their external communication message usually sought to explain projects implemented by the organization or in partnership with other organizations.

Staff members also communicate activities specific to their units to the public. The discussion revealed that the media had been one of the main external channels of communication of The Ark. The organization additionally communicates through publications, posters; fliers; stickers; and paraphernalia such as customized mugs, book rulers, pens, and badges, at both the international and local levels through meetings, dialogues, community engagements, trainings, and public education platforms. The study further gathered that the organization also communicates to the public about its past and

present achievements and its challenges especially in the area of logistical supports and financial needs.

It was observed that The Ark had an informal and formal way of communicating with its partners and the general public. One respondent stated that “there is not only one person who speaks on behalf of the organization. All staff speak for the organization depending on the issue at stake”. The Ark Foundation has the vision to create a positive public image for itself; build sustainable relationship with its stakeholders; and make itself well known across Ghana and the rest of the world. The study also observed that the organization had a corporate identity as an advocacy based organization that promotes and protects the human rights of women and children in Ghana. As a result, the organization engages with numerous clients including external partners and the wider Ghanaian public.

The Focus group discussion further explored communication strategies employed by the organization. The study gathered that the organization had a laid down communication strategy that guides all its interactions. However, the organization had not fully committed itself to implementing it. The communication strategy document was almost dysfunctional and only remains a document sitting on the shelf of the organization. Respondents admitted that majority of them had no idea of its content. With regard to the effectiveness of this form of communication, the participants argued that although they lacked a well-coordinated method of communicating with external partners, they were able to get the needed information across at every point in time. One participant had observed that their method of communication was very active because, “the ripple effect of educating the community on what the organization does results in more calls to the hotline telephone number as well as higher number of reported cases at the office by clients who walk into the office, to report

abuse”. However, majority of the respondents stated that the organization had been very ineffective in the use of the various social media platforms to reach out to its external clients.

The respondents however argued that their inability to adequately follow a formal communications strategy was a major weakness. They noted that the unavailability of a dedicated personnel in the form of a Public Relations, Communications or media Officer for public relations activities and media relations sometimes resulted in unstructured communications and the organization sometimes experienced inconsistencies in its communication. In addressing the strengths and weaknesses of the organization’s communication strategies, respondents were fully convinced that their reliance on IE&C materials such as fliers, posters, banners had successfully helped them to communicate with its external partners and the public as a whole. Furthermore, The Ark also published annual reports, briefs and other information packs for its relevant stakeholders. All the respondents argued that the organization relies on radio and television through talk shows, articles/features, advertisement, training programs, public campaigns and community interaction, adding that these had adequately represented the organization in a positive manner.

In the discussion of the image of the organization in the eyes of the community and the country as a whole, respondents argued that although that would be a question to be answered by the community and the public as whole, they strongly believed that the organization was credible in terms of human rights defense especially for women and children in Ghana. This was attributed to the positive feedback they received from community members and the country as a whole through the organization’s hotline communication system.

Respondents spoke about the major communication weaknesses of the organisation. They mentioned inadequate use of social media, not adhering to a formal communications strategy and not having a dedicated personnel for PR activities and media relations, as their weaknesses. They were also of the view that having a central point or a central person to do more of the communication work could better enhance the image of the organization and also make it easy for the public to know who to go to on issues of the organization. In terms of what the organisation could do to improve internal and external communication, they mentioned the use of new media such as facebook, twitter, blogging, business softwares which enable staff to share ideas and review documents online, as examples.

#### **4.5 Discussion**

The systems theory emphasizes on the importance of effective communication in an organization. It recognises the role of communication in facilitating the functioning of the various departments and units of organisations. The theory posits that communication influences all systems that occur within and outside an organization. Similarly, internal and external factors also influence communication. Proponents of this theory share the common view that the interdependent nature of systems within an organization requires that all functional units within the organization have to be well coordinated through effective communication.

The study established that The Ark Foundation had due regard for the importance of effective communication and how this had a role to play in the performance of its various units and departments, its stakeholders and external customers. The Ark also draws from the entire theoretical discussion that organizational communication has to be strategic. Englin (2011) for instance observed that strategic communication involves communicating the best

message, through the right channels, measured against well-considered organizational and communications specific goals. Similarly, we could draw inferences from Kelleher (2011) in “What is strategic communication” and argue that putting out press releases and seeking media coverage can feel productive, but without a master plan, there’s a risk of misallocating effort.

The study observed that The Ark recognized the importance of strategic communication especially in its interactions with clients. This was evident in the organization’s communication strategy manual. The strategy manual spelt out all the processes that guide the organizations internal and external communication system. Indeed, participants asserted that the organization’s communication strategy had yielded some positive results more especially with regard the high level of recognition attributed to the organization in its defence of human rights of women and children. However, evidence from Kelleher (2011) reveals that strategic communication involves systematic analysis, planning, execution and evaluation which involves in-depth consideration of the mission, values, goals, objectives, budgeting, staffing and the environment, as well as its internal and external audiences. Participants from The Ark admitted that although the organization had its communication strategy manual, its communication processes did not go through the cycle as prescribed by Kelleher.

With reference to the five basic steps in a strategic communication audit by Coffman (2014), he states at level two, that the practice is planned and deliberate as opposed to being performed on a reactive or “as needed” basis. However, this was not so with the organization. Though its communication strategies are properly laid down in its corporate strategy manual, its communication was done more on a reactive basis and on very few occasions, on a needed basis. This however, seemed to be in line with their own policy on

media monitoring where the organization monitors the media with regards to its thematic areas and reacts to those issues of concern as and when identified. Also, Coffman (2014) states that the practice of communication does not occur regularly, and may still be performed by one or two individuals; this was the case of The Ark. The practice does not occur regularly in the organization and is still performed by more than one person, which was evident during the Focus group discussion.

On a whole, respondents believed that their communication strategy had yielded positive results. However, the researcher could not agree less with Kelleher (2011) assertion that putting out press releases and seeking media coverage can feel productive, but without a master plan, there's a risk of misallocating effort. Strategic Communication involves systematic analysis, planning, execution and evaluation which require an in-depth consideration of the organization's mission, values, goals and objectives, budgeting, staffing and the environment, as well as its internal and external audiences.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.1 Summary and Conclusion

It was evident as a result of the study that communication in and to the organization is key as it had a well laid strategy manual that spells out the processes of its communications and guides the organization's operations. Besides this, the two main programs of the organization also have their own mini communication plans which were developed based on the content of the strategy manual. Again, smaller but much more specific communication plans were developed for specific activities under these programs. This reinforced the systems theory assertion that an organization's entire system and subsystems are dependent on communication to function.

The study gathered that the organization had a strong internal communication system with the aim of giving staff, interns and volunteers a feeling of a sense of ownership and inclusiveness to ensure efficiency, effectiveness and productivity of staff, in particular.

Just as Quirke (2008) posits that an organisation must invest in effective information systems as it can render favourable and quicker organisational change. To ensure more flexibility and innovation processes, better quality of decision making, better knowledge sharing, and a more motivated workforce, it is important that gender equality organizations prioritize their communications efforts and deliberately work towards enhancing their communications.

The external communication of the organization has generally been with local and international development partners and the wider Ghanaian public. An examination of how The Ark implements its communication strategy document revealed that although the organization had a laid down communication strategy that guides its communication. This is in line with Green (2008) assertion that communication is about having a well thought

through laid down plan, instead of merely reacting and responding to issues of interest to an organization in the media. However, the organization has not fully committed itself to implementing it. The communication strategy document is almost dysfunctional and only remains a document sitting on the shelf of the organization. Respondents admitted that majority of them had no idea of its content. Communication system within the organization seemed uncoordinated with no specific person or department being solely responsible for the organization's communication system.

There was the consensus among all respondents that the organization needed to strictly adhere to the guidelines of its communication strategy to enable it establish meaningful and sustainable partnership with its stakeholders especially with its external partners and the general public. A respondent argued that "fully implementing the communication strategy of the foundation could help promote and sustain the vision, mission and the programs of the organization; thus reinforcing the assertion of the classical perspective that a well-built organization, thus in this context a well-built communication system could lead to a productive and effective organization.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

- The Ark should give priority to their communications to enable them create a positive image of them; establish positive relationships with the public; be more visible in order to make the kind of impact they hope to make.
- The Ark as a matter of importance should have one staff deal with communication issues of the organization; or preferably hire the services of a

Communications expert or Public Relations expert to handle communications and publicity issues.

- The Ark as part of their external communication strategies should engage in story telling by creating brief documentaries of their work and as a way of documenting their work for future purposes.
- The Ark should endeavour to consistently engage with social media tools such as face book, twitter, blogging and create and maintain interactive websites for their organizations.
- The Ark should also introduce staff to business software which enable them to share ideas and review documents online, also as a way of enhancing internal communication systems.
- The Ark beyond having planned and deliberate communication strategies as Coffman (2014) suggests every organization should have; The Ark should endeavor not only to perform communication on a reactive or “as needed” basis, but rather on a more consistent basis.
- Other gender equality organizations should learn lessons from The Ark example.

### **5.3 Suggestions for future research**

Future research can be done in this same area but expanded to cover more gender equality organizations across the country. The study on their communication machinery can be broken down into various segments to enable researchers thoroughly study different areas of it. Possible areas that could be studied as single research studies are “internal

communication of gender equality organizations”; “external communication of gender equality organizations” and “gender equality organizations and new media”.

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## **APPENDIX (A)**

### **FGD Question Guide – Internal Communication**

- 1. Through what channels of communication do you normally receive and give information in the organisation?**
- 2. What is your best source of news and information in and about the organisation?**
- 3. In terms of content, how effective are these channels through which you receive information in the organisation?**
- 4. How would you describe the current situation with regard to accessing and sharing information in the organisation?**
- 5. What is the typical conflict resolution method or methods used in the organisation?**
- 6. How are staff motivated in the organisation?**
- 7. Describe the way decisions are typically made in the organisation and how this affects organisational and staff effectiveness.**
- 8. How responsive is the organisation to change and how does it manage change initiatives?**
- 9. What type of participation takes place in the development of the organisational strategy and operational plans?**
- 10. Do the different departmental / units have operational processes and procedures that are obstacles to the achievement of your department/unit goals and in what way are they obstacles?**
- 11. How does the organisational culture impact on communication and the organisation as a whole?**
- 12. What are the major communication strengths of the organisation?**
- 13. What are the major communication weaknesses of the organisation?**
- 14. What can the organisation do to improve internal and external communication?**

## **APPENDIX (B)**

### **FGD Question Guide – External Communication**

1. What information about your organization do you communicate?
2. How has your organization's communications been handled in the past?
3. In your view, how much and what information do your audience currently know / have about your organization?
4. Are your communications effective? Please explain
5. Do you have a communications person in the organization? If no, who serves as the spokesperson for your organization? Position/Rank
6. What communication strategies do you use in communicating information about your organization?
7. In your opinion, what are your organization's strengths and weaknesses in current communications programs?
8. What are your current goals and objectives for communications?
9. Do you have a communications and / or PR plan? If no; why? If yes; how well is it working?
10. Are your messages clear and consistent? Yes / No. Please explain
11. Do you have a corporate identity as an organization? Yes / No. Please explain
12. How do you know you are reaching your key audience with your messages and moving them to action?
13. What does the community know and perceive about your organization?
14. How does your communication support your overall strategic plan for your organization?
15. What would make your communications more effective in the future?
16. Which kinds of social media tools do you engage with? And how effective have they been for your organization?
17. Any Comments

## **APPENDIX (C) Question Guide Transcript– Internal Communication**

Memos; telephone calls and text messages; whatsapp; emails; meetings;

Media – newspapers; radio; emails; internet

To an extent since the organization buys newspapers every day, cuts and files relevant stories and also because it has a radio for monitoring issues in the media. The organization also has regular and easy access to internet. However, when the lights go off the internet also goes off; sometimes the service providers technical hitches also make the internet go off. When these happen staff loose access to the internet and emails which affects their work.

The organization operates a flexible system where everybody has access to the Executive Director 24/7, access to organizational information be it accounts, official documents and files in general.

Confronting fellow colleagues without being confrontational; organize period constructive feedback sessions where staff are able to deal with any outstanding issues, if any.

Monetary, internal awards eg best staff on quarterly basis; international travels to participate in an international program; official days off; open declarations at meetings, etc.

Staff fully take part in organizational decisions as a way of making them feel ownership of the organization. Any staff can raise an issue, it is discussed at a meeting/s and an agreement or consensus reached at the meeting. The EDs ideas and suggestions are not cast in stones, therefore the acceptance of her ideas and suggestions are subject to staff scrutiny and discussions.

Organization encourages change periodically, and builds the capacity of staff and also prepares the minds of staff to be able to deal with the change whether conducive to them or not.

Organization also strengthens all program and other key staff capacity to contribute to organizational objectives through active learning, in-house and other training programs, feedback sessions, enhanced participation of staff in strategic meetings, coaching and direction from Executive Director and the Leadership and Management Team of the organization.

Staff engage in brainstorming sessions; review organization's work together as a team; engage in retreats and several meetings in the organization to develop organizational strategy and operational plans. Staff plan and work together all through the process of developing organizational strategy, operational plans and units and department plan.

Note at all. Organizational processes and procedures are standardized and apply to all departments and units as well as staff.

It serves as a check and a tool to avoid violence and conflict at work among staff as staff are expected to work and operate in conformity to the values and general culture of the organization such as behaving as leaders; giving constructive feedback to fellow staff; respecting people irrespective of tribe, colour, social status, etc.

Being able to assess target audience and providing the relevant information through appropriate communication means. The use of IE&C materials, use of emails and website, sending reports and other information pack to relevant stakeholders. Using the print media, community interaction and stakeholder meetings. Weaknesses: inadequate use of social media, not following a formal communications strategy and not having dedicated personnel for PR activities and media relations. Having a central point or a central person to do more of the communication work could better enhance the image of the organization and also make it easy for the public to know who to go to on issues of the organization.

Use of new media such as business softwares which enable staff to share ideas and review documents online.

## **APPENDIX (D) Question Guide – Transcript – External Communication**

- 1.** We basically communicate the vision, mission and programs of the organisation. We sometimes talk about our partnership with other organizations especially regarding projects we implement together. Staff members also communicate on activities specific to their units or a particular project they are working on. We also talk about the organisations past and present achievements, sometimes; the organisations financial challenges, the need for more logistics for work enhancement and the why philanthropists should help support the work of the organization.
- 2.** The organization has a very informal way of communicating among staff and the general public. The Ark does not really follow any particular or formal way of interacting or communicating with the general public. We mostly rely on individuals discretion to manage a particular issue and / or information. There is not only one person who speaks on behalf of the organization. All staff speak for the organization depending on the issue at stake. We also communicate very much through our publications, posters, fliers, stickers, paraphernalia such as customized mugs, book rulers, pens, badges, both at the international and local levels through meetings, dialogues, community engagements, trainings, public education platforms.
- 3.** Generally, a lot of people know about The Ark being a human rights NGO that basically seeks to promote women's issues. However, due to the different projects the organization runs, other people have different information about us depending on the nature of the project and what interests them. So you find a lot of people identify The Ark with a particular project simply because that is probably the only information they have about the organization. Some people know we run a shelter; some know that we provide support services to women and children; a few people have their perceptions about the organizations. For instance some people believe that the organization basically works to dissolve marriages.
- 4.** Yes, to a large extent. We are able to get the needed information across at every point in time even though I recognize that there are other mediums the organization can explore to enhance its communication. Looking at the achievements of the organization and all the media noise we have made, some people continue to think that we are marriage breakers. Very effective because the ripple effect of educating the community on what we do results in more calls to the hotline as well as higher number of reported cases at the office by clients who walk.
- 5.** No. Based on the issue at stake or the information that needs to be communicated to the public, a staff is identified to do that by the Executive Director or members of the leadership and management team. However, it is usually program managers and or project coordinators who represent the organization's communication issues. There have been times when the organization has assigned interns/volunteers to handle some aspect of our communication activities depending on their skills or projects they are attached to. We don't have a communication person for the organisation. What we do have is the Deputy Executive Director or Director of program with support from the leadership and

management team who as and when there is a need to communicate a particular information to the public or a stakeholder, is assigned to do so.

6. Mainly IE&C materials such as fliers, posters, banners etc. The Ark also sends annual reports, briefs and other information packs to relevant stakeholders. There is also the use of radio and television through talk shows, articles/features and sometimes adverts for specific programs. We also use training programs, public campaigns, representation of the organisation on international platforms, community interaction. We also use a little bit of our website, which is close to dysfunctional and a bit of facebook which is used on a very inconsistent basis.
7. **Strengths:** the use of IE&C materials, use of emails and website, sending reports and other information pack to relevant stakeholders. Using the print media, community interaction and stakeholder meetings.  
**Weaknesses:** inadequate use of social media, not following a formal communications strategy and not having a dedicated personnel for PR activities and media relations. Having a central point or a central person to do more of the communication work could better enhance the image of the organization and also make it easy for the public to know who to go to on issues of the organization.
8. To create a positive public image of the organization; create a relationship with our stakeholders; and make ourself well known across the country and beyond and be accessible to all through whatever communication channel that may be available to them wherever they find themselves.
9. The Ark has a communication/PR strategy document. The only challenge is ensuring full implementation. It is almost dysfunctional and only remains a document sitting on a shelf and saved safely somewhere on the office computers. Most staff have no idea of its content.
10. Yes. In as much as the organization runs different programs, it tries to stay within its thematic areas in all interaction with the public. Projects are also designed to be consistent with the organization's goals.
11. Yes. The Ark describes itself as an advocacy based organisation that promotes and protects the human rights of women and children.
12. The organization usually receives feedback from its stakeholders; clients, partners, service providers, donors etc. Thus we know mainly through feedback. By evaluation and also physical response from the audience. Some report case of abuse and others call the hotline. We also have local and foreign students opting to intern or volunteer with the organization.
13. Targeted communities where the organization implements its activities have information regarding the specific projects being implemented in their community. However, the general public knows The Ark to be a credible women's rights organization.
14. Effective communication is the wheel upon which the organization can run. Without it we cannot establish any meaningful partnership with the various stakeholders. So it helps in establishing rapport/partnership with partners. It also helps in promoting the vision, mission and the programs of the organization. It also helps in sustaining the relevance of the organization. Communication helps us reach the public to educate them on the

recognition and acceptance of women and children's rights. Basically, it helps us to make people understand the work of the organization.

15. There is the need to fully implement the organizations communications strategy and also commit to using social media platforms to enhance our communication. The Ark can also commit some time and money to develop IE&C materials to aid its communication We also need a PR/Central Communication Point person; our website has to be functional and interactive; IEC materials needs to be in many other local languages.
16. We are missing out on the use of the various social media platforms.
17. The Ark has only a facebook page, not used consistently. This was effective when we had interns/volunteers to manage it. It has been dormant for sometime now since there is nobody managing the page.
18. From this discussion, it is evident that we need to show more seriousness to our communications. I think the strategies used by NGO's in general are good but there is still room for improvement in terms of adopting other effective approaches and modes of communication in order to achieve maximum impact. I have never witnessed a specific PR plan of an NGO before. What I see them do is to come up with some forms of communications stuff as and when they have projects.