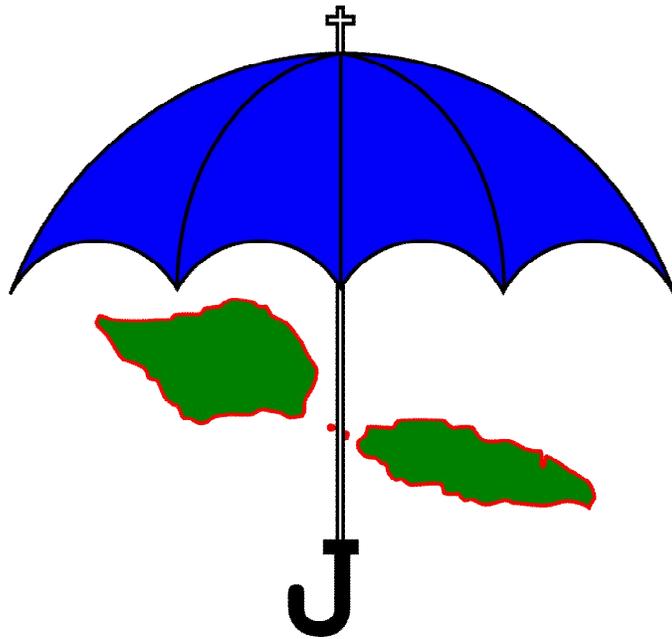


# SUNGO Communication Strategy

2011



The Samoa Umbrella for Non-Governmental Organisations  
Inc.

**To be implemented from June 2011**

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## **Glossary**

<b>AGM</b>	Annual General Meeting
<b>AYAD</b>	Australian Youth Ambassador for Development
<b>CBO</b>	Community Based Organisation
<b>CBO</b>	Capacity Building Officer
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>CSSP</b>	Civil Society Support Programme
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>ICO</b>	Information Communication Officer
<b>ICTP</b>	In-Country Training Program
<b>NGO</b>	Non Governmental Organisation
<b>NSA</b>	Non-State Actor
<b>NZAID</b>	New Zealand Agency for International Development
<b>PIANGO</b>	Pacific Island Association for Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>SUNGO</b>	Samoa Umbrella of Non Government Organisations

## **Aim of the Strategy**

The aim of this communication strategy is to create a stronger focus for SUNGO's internal and external communication. With a clear voice, consistency in our messages and a professional brand, SUNGO can grow as a leader and an advocate for Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in Samoa. Communication is an integral part of an effective organisation and this document aims to ensure that all SUNGO staff and Executive Council members have a clear understanding of the direction, mission and vision of the organisation.

## **Current Strategy and Desired Changes/Improvements**

SUNGO does not currently have an official communication strategy. This strategy aims to address this gap and provide guidance in matters of internal and external communication.

### ***Historic Communication***

#### **Internal**

Methods of communication in the SUNGO office in the past have included: a sign-in book for recording work hours, a notice board for meetings etc, a notice board for staff movements, an internal phone system, a policies and procedures manual, monthly staff meetings and email circulation of urgent issues to staff/board members

However there is still a lack of communication in some areas. The way SUNGO communicates between staff members and between staff and board



members should be clear. The correct processes for internal communication are outlined in the 2009 SUNGO Management Manual which can be viewed on the server at: \\SERVER\Data\Management\Mgmt0-Policy & Procedures\Mgmt0.3-Office Mgmt. It is important that staff use these processes as they provide the foundation for a successful and professional working environment.

The basics of communication can be neglected, even though they are the most essential part of good staff relations. Simple things can make a huge difference like ensuring you keep the office updated on your movements; letting staff know whether you are going to be late, you have a meeting or you are out visiting member organisations; taking the time to ensure messages from phone calls or other staff get through to the person for whom they were intended. Effective verbal communication in the office prevents misunderstandings, allows better organise of work schedules and improves contact between staff members in case of emergency. Keep talking to each other; let people know what you are doing!

Some suggestions for improvements from staff and board members include:

- A comprehensive introduction and induction for paid and volunteer staff members to ensure they are familiar with office communication and procedures.
- Better organisation of the office server to ensure documents can be found quickly and easily.
- More frequent staff meetings to improve communication and avoid a build-up of issues.
- A consistent system for phone messages, internal messages, memos etc.
- A weekly brief of planned events, training workshops and meetings distributed to all staff/board members to ensure everyone knows what is happening each week.
- Reintroduce a sign in/sign out notice board to ensure the office knows where to reach each staff member.

## **External**

### *Positive Aspects*

Over the past 14 years SUNGO has built a reputation as an advocate for NGOs, CBOs and the Samoan public. SUNGO has positively intervened on behalf of many voices which were not being heard. Issues have included the casino and gambling bill, the road switch - People Against Switching Sides (PASS) and the Land Registration Bill.

Also the staff and board members have built strong relationships with different member organisations, developing greater interest and participation in training workshops and SUNGO events and encouraging ongoing involvement. These links will be sustained and broadened through effective communication. Staff and board members should be encouraged to keep in contact with NGOs and CBOs through email, telephone, letters and visits when possible.

### *Negative Aspects*

In the past SUNGO has been falsely perceived as anti-government, the organisation is working to change this image. SUNGO is working alongside government to improve the lives of Samoan people, although they are taking a different approach.



While the government often focuses on what has been achieved, SUNGO is looking at what can still be achieved for NGOs, CBOs and civil society. Another issue is that many Samoan people are still unaware of SUNGO and what the organisation does. Brand recognition must be improved. There is a lot of work to be done in order to improve our engagement with our members and the Samoan public and boost our reputation as a valuable source of support and representation. The small number of staff at SUNGO creates an issue with representation of the organisation as there are a large number of conferences, meetings, events etc. at which SUNGO should be represented. Board members often attend these events but when they are not available it is necessary for a staff member to attend. The issue here lies in scheduling, as every staff member has their own workload and meetings to attend. In the past staff and board members have often been given very little notice of upcoming events. This means they are forced to rearrange their schedules and attend meetings/events with little to no preparation. In order to represent SUNGO on the most professional level possible, it is crucial that staff and board members be given adequate notice if they are required to attend an event or meeting on behalf of SUNGO. At least a weeks notice would be ideal, to give staff time to research, prepare and plan around their own work schedule.

### ***New Avenues for Communication***

Several new ideas to improve communication to SUNGO members, donors, the Government and the general public were suggested by the staff and board members at the 2011 Annual Retreat, for. These include:

- A SUNGO calendar, including important dates and events, information about SUNGO and photos of training workshops and member organisations.
- Quarterly reports to the government to improve understanding of SUNGO's role and strengthen our relationship with the government ministries.
- A promotional DVD for use on overseas trips, conferences etc.
- School awareness programs.
- Member profiles on the website and in SUNGO records.
- Media releases to overseas organisations such as donors and organisations/media outlets with an interest in NGO work in developing countries.

### ***Overall Communication Goal***

SUNGO's aim is to be a strong and professional umbrella for the NGOs and CBOs of Samoa. Our overall communication goal is to relay our messages clearly and effectively to our members, our donors, the Government, the Samoan public and other parties with an interest in our work. We need to develop and maintain a positive and recognisable brand for SUNGO. We also plan to have strong internal communication in order to strengthen our organisation and our professional image.



## **Key Messages**

SUNGO's key messages, as workshopped by the Executive Council in the September 2010 SUNGO Communications and Advocacy Workshop, are as follows:

- SUNGO is the voice of the people.
- Working in partnership and networks with the Government, regional groups, members, donors, religious organisations and communities.
- Protecting the integrity and wellbeing of civil society.
- Offering advocacy on government bills.
- Advocating for those impacted by poverty, domestic violence, crime etc.
- Acknowledging positive achievements.

Other messages include: human rights based issues, advocacy for sustainable development, capacity building for development and good governance.

These key messages should be communicated to our members, donors, the government and the Samoan public, clearly and on a regular basis.

## ***SUNGO's Vision and Mission Statements***

*Vision: SUNGO - working in partnership with civil society and government to promote sustainable development and quality of life for the people of Samoa*

*Mission: The Umbrella Organisation for Samoan NGOs providing information, programmes, opportunities, and advocacy for civil society in Samoa*

These vision and mission statements have recently been reviewed by the SUNGO executive council and it has been agreed that they reflect the image SUNGO is trying to portray. These statements should be reviewed each year along with this communication strategy, to ensure they continue to accurately represent SUNGO's direction.

## **Target Audience**

### ***Who is our audience?***

SUNGO's audience is made up of several groups, these include:

- Member NGOs and CBOs
- SUNGO donors
- The Samoan public
- Other Samoan organisations and businesses
- The Government of Samoa



## ***How are they receiving information/training/help?***

Information is communicated with SUNGO's audience in several ways. The primary source of information is a newsletter which is published quarterly and provides articles about past training workshops and events, as well as staff updates, upcoming training schedules, comments from the president, contact details and photos. Another information source which is being developed is the SUNGO website ([www.sungo.ws](http://www.sungo.ws)). It has recently been updated but requires regular input from staff, in the form of articles and training updates, to ensure the site stays current. Another form of information includes an information pack which is offered to new members or those who want to know more about SUNGO which is made up of a brochure, newsletters, a strategic plan and the current training schedule. The folder for this information pack is in need of updating.

One of SUNGO's key roles is to provide training to members and non-members to encourage skills development and capacity building. SUNGO's training workshops are funded through three different sources; the Samoa In-Country Training Programme (ICTP), the Civil Society Support Programme (CSSP) and EU Non-State Actors (NSA). These workshops are open to SUNGO members and other interested parties. Details, schedules and updates on training are provided through several outlets; a training brochure which is updated every three months, a training schedule in each SUNGO newsletter, schedules and updates on the SUNGO website and regular email contact to members from the Capacity Building Officer (CBO) and Peace Corps volunteer (CBO).

SUNGO board and staff members have travelled out to villages around Samoa on various occasions to conduct needs analysis and to visit member organisations. This financial year SUNGO conducted a needs analysis across Upolu to work out the fairest way to distribute the remaining tsunami relief container. Board members and staff also travelled around Upolu in late 2010 to visit members, discuss any issues they were facing and invite them to the SUNGO Annual General Meeting (AGM).

SUNGO offers help and advice to members on how to source funding. We also provide a support network for NGOs and CBOs. SUNGO acts as an advocate for those unable to make their voice heard on important issues concerning the future of Samoa. Also, as demonstrated after the devastation of the 2009 tsunami, SUNGO provides support and aid to the Samoan public in times of crisis, organising relief efforts and ensuring foreign aid reaches its intended destination.

## ***Improving SUNGO's Relationship with Members***

Although SUNGO has developed a strong relationship with many of our members, there are still members who are not satisfied with the role of SUNGO in their organisations, are reluctant to pay their annual membership fee and/or are not actively participating in activities organised by SUNGO. Relationships with members were discussed in the 2011 Board and Staff retreat and it was agreed that more could be done to improve interaction with members. The main suggestions were: conducting membership drives and having more involved and comprehensive member inductions. This is an area which needs more attention and development over the next few years. Further input and action in improving SUNGO's relationships



with members would result in a healthier umbrella organisation with more support and interest in all areas of our work.

### ***International Audience***

Currently our international audience is made up primarily of our donor organisations. We are also in contact with other international bodies such as the Pacific Islands Association of Non-Government Organisations (PIANGO), World Alliance for Citizen Participation (CIVICUS) etc. It is important to remain in contact with these organisations as they spread the word about SUNGO's plight and the positive developments we are making in Samoa. The most effective ways of communicating with these groups is through regular media releases and updates on SUNGO's achievements. This should be undertaken by the Information Communication Officer (ICO).

It would greatly benefit SUNGO to broaden the international audience. One way to do this would be to submit articles to publications with a development focus, more like-minded organisations and major international news outlets (in Aus, NZ etc.), profiling major events and news in which we are involved. A perfect opportunity to create these contacts lies in staff, board and member trips overseas for conferences, workshops and events. Individuals who attend these events should be encouraged to liaise with the ICO on their return and share any contacts they have made. This gives the ICO a chance to communicate with new outlets and organisations and assess whether they will be useful as media contacts for SUNGO.

## **Communication Tools and Promotion/Dissemination**

### ***Current Communication Tools and Products***

- **Newsletter** – The SUNGO ICO produces a quarterly, bilingual newsletter. It contains news, photographs, staff updates and a three month training schedule.
- **Website** – the SUNGO website ([www.sungo.ws](http://www.sungo.ws)) was created in 2009. Maintenance of and technical assistance with the website is provided by Karl Adam who is based at iPasifika in Apia. He can be contacted through iPasifika. The site should be regularly updated with articles and news by the ICO, while the CBO should post up training schedules.
- **Brochures** – There are three brochures published by SUNGO. The first is a general brochure on the history and role of SUNGO, which has been updated for 2011 and should be updated each year by the ICO. The other two are training brochures which provide information and dates about upcoming training workshops through ICTP and CSSP. They should be updated and published on a quarterly basis by the CBO. The brochures can be found on the server at:  
\\SERVER\Data\Publications & Media\ICO 1- External Relations\SUNGO Promotional Pack
- **Membership Database** – it is the role of the ICO to keep the membership database updated. The current database can be found on the server at:



\\SERVER\Data\Publications & Media\ICO 3 - Members Information\Members Database

- **Annual Report** – The annual report is written each year by the CEO of SUNGO with the assistance of the ICO. It provides an account of the previous financial year's events, achievements and the financial workings of SUNGO. The Annual Report for 2009-2010 can be found on the server at: \\SERVER\Data\Publications & Media\ICO 4 - Publications\Annual Reports\2009-2010

## ***Methods of Dissemination***

The SUNGO newsletter is delivered to members without email contacts, government ministries and donor organisations by hand. An electronic copy is sent to those who have a regular email contact. The website is advertised on the newsletter to make people aware of its existence. Once the website gains more recognition from members, donors, the government and the general public it will be important to keep it regularly updated.

SUNGO brochures are given out to new members and others by request. They are presented in the aforementioned information pack.

The Annual Report is handed out at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) to all those who attend. It is also available from the SUNGO office.

## ***Media Outlets***

Currently the most prominent media outlet used to communicate our message is the Samoa Observer. We also send news and media releases to various newspapers, radio stations and news stations TV1 and TV3. A full list of current media contacts can be found on the server at: \\SERVER\Data\Publications & Media\ICO 2 - MEDIA\MEDIA CONTACTS

Although these contacts successfully convey the messages SUNGO is trying to communicate now, the media landscape in Samoa is constantly changing and we must keep up to date with these changes. It is the role of the ICO to be in regular contact with media circles, identify new outlets and ensure the outlets we are using are accurately representing our views.

It is also crucial to know the daily/weekly deadlines for each media outlet and to meet these each time a media release is distributed. Missing deadlines for newspapers and other publications means losing valuable opportunities for promotion and advocacy.

## **Communication Roles and Responsibilities of Staff and Board Members**

### ***Who is our spokesperson?***

SUNGO should maintain a clear and united voice when dealing with the media. Although, in times of crisis or other demanding circumstances, it can often be difficult



to keep a strong focus on key messages, it is important to avoid sending negative, counterproductive or inaccurate messages regarding the organisation. In all media matters relating to the work and affairs of SUNGO, the National President is to be the first point of contact. The President is charged with the responsibility of representing the voice of SUNGO and sending consistent messages to the people of Samoa through various media outlets.

If staff or board members are approached by the media for interviews or comment, the media outlet should be referred in the first instance to the SUNGO National President. If the media need to speak to a specific staff member, permission should be sought from the president and the CEO before going ahead with the interview.

### ***Information Communication Officer***

The Information Communication Officer (ICO) plays an important role in ensuring SUNGO's key messages reach the Samoan public and in upholding our image/brand. The ICO should liaise with staff, board members, NGOs, CBOs, donors and media outlets to ensure that everyone knows what is going on within the organisation and everyone is on the same page. This role includes producing regular media releases as well as other publications such as the newsletter and online articles. It also involves keeping media outlets up-to-date on what is happening within SUNGO and any upcoming events which are newsworthy.

A media project was commenced by the Australian Youth Ambassador for Development in 2011, which ideally will be continued by the ICO. This project involves identifying SUNGO members who have started interesting and valuable projects or who are doing good work in the community and writing an article about them for the Samoa Observer. The aim of this project is to have a story published every fortnight on Sunday which highlights the great work NGO and CBOs are doing in Samoan communities. Samoa Observer editor, Keni Lesa, has been helping out to ensure these articles get published.

### ***Accountability***

Accountability refers to taking responsibility for the actions or statements of an individual or organisation. It involves being answerable to the consequences of these actions or statements. If SUNGO wants to maintain the reputation of a transparent organisation, we must take responsibility for any issues, positive or negative, which arise from the actions of our staff and board members. By approaching mistakes or disputes constructively, rather than trying to cover or dismiss them, we are displaying our integrity and transparency as an organisation.



## **Internal and External Structures for Communication**

### ***Media Releases***

It is the responsibility of the ICO to ensure regular media releases reach each media outlet before their deadlines. These releases must be well-written, accurate and true to the views of the organisation. Media releases should cover training workshops, notable achievements, changes in the organisation and any other newsworthy events. All media releases written in English should be given to another staff member to review the spelling and grammar before release. Failing to do this gives SUNGO an unprofessional reputation for distributing poorly written documents. There is a template for media releases which includes the SUNGO letterhead and approved formatting; it can be found on the server at: \\SERVER\Data\Publications & Media\ICO 7 - Templates & Logos\Publication Templates.

Media releases must be written in Arial font, size 11. Each media release must first be sent to the National President for approval, then to the appropriate media outlets.

### ***Approval of External Communication***

During the 2011 Board and Staff Retreat concern was raised about the need for media releases and other external communication to be reviewed before being sent out. While it is unrealistic for every board member to approve each release, there are a couple of options which could solve this issue. The first option is to stay with the current arrangement of having the releases approved by the National President before release. This method would need enforcing in the future to ensure it happens on every occasion. It also has a flaw, in that the National President may not be available to check every release. The second suggested method is to form a Communication Committee within the board made up of around three people who would be given the authority to approve media releases and other external communication. This method would ensure the messages being sent out are balanced and would resolve the issue of unavailability, as there would usually be at least one member available.

### ***The Server***

The SUNGO server is organised into different folders for work areas and projects. Each staff member has a folder related to their work area which contains their working files, records and other documents. For example the ICO files their documents in the folder 'Publications & Media', the CBO files their documents in 'Training' etc. Within these folders, documents are separated into different areas according to the nature of their role. There is also a folder called 'ZZ Photos' which contains an archive of all of SUNGO's professional and social photographs. The server is secured by a username and password which is disclosed to SUNGO staff when they start work. The server is regularly backed up to ensure all files are



protected. When this back-up is done staff members are advised to tidy up their folders and make sure they are up-to-date.

Despite this the server is still quite unorganised. It is recommended that one or more staff members take the time to reorganise the layout and contents of the server to make it easier to navigate, they must first be given authority to do so by the CEO and National President.

## ***Templates, Lists and Logos***

All the templates, lists and logos necessary to make external communication possible are available on the server in the 'Publications & Media' folder. These tools should be used at all times to ensure consistency and professionalism. Examples of the most important tools include:

- **Media Release Template** – this is a vital tool for external communication, as it is the document which will be seen regularly by all relevant media outlets. Keeping our documents consistent and at a high-standard gives SUNGO a professional image and ensures media outlets take us seriously and treat us with respect. This template can be found at: \\SERVER\Data\Publications & Media\ICO 7 - Templates & Logos\Publication Templates
- **Newsletter Template** – the newsletter template can be found at the above address also. It is designed to make the publication of the newsletter a simple and fast process. The template includes all the necessary elements and how they should be laid out.
- **Logo** – the SUNGO logo was updated recently to improve the quality of the image. The current version, which should be used for ALL documents, is called 'new\_sungo\_logo.png' and can be found at: \\SERVER\Data\Publications & Media\ICO 7 - Templates & Logos\Logos\SUNGO.
- **Contact Lists** – A current media contact list, entitled 'MEDIA CONTACTS 2011 – UPDATED.doc' can be found at: \\SERVER\Data\Publications & Media\ICO 2 - MEDIA\MEDIA CONTACTS. Other lists are available on the server, but this is the main one to be used for distribution of media releases etc.

## **Communication Budget**

### ***Budget***

The amount of funds allocated to the communication area in the budget for the current financial year includes:

- \$2000 for website update costs
- \$3200 for the four quarterly newsletters
- \$2000 for data collection
- \$2000 for a logo for the new vehicle



There are several other miscellaneous costs associated with the communication sector which need to be accounted for in some way. Examples of these costs are printing of brochures, batteries and equipment for photography, travel costs for visiting members etc. The ICO needs to keep track of expenses in order to get a more accurate idea of the amount of funds required.

## **Brand**

### ***What is SUNGO's Brand/Image?***

The brand of SUNGO is the image people get of the organisation through the publications, pictures and messages we make public. Currently SUNGO has a professional yet approachable brand which fits our role as an umbrella organisation for NGOs.

The most immediate and visible element of our brand, the SUNGO logo, is recognised by many Samoan people. However SUNGO needs the majority of Samoan people recognise our logo and know what it stands for. This can be achieved by making it visible at public events, meetings, conferences and training workshops to ensure that when people think of SUNGO they think of our logo. The logo is in need of further updating and discussions are currently underway to achieve this. It is recommended that the name of the organisation is incorporated into the logo in some way as this eliminates issues with font, grammar etc.

Small elements of presentation can affect the brand of an organisation in significant ways. One example of this is consistency with layout and presentation of all publications. Ensuring the font style and size are correct and that the layout of documents is consistent will give SUNGO a highly-professional image.

**The correct font to use for ALL SUNGO documents is Arial, size 11.**

## **Evaluation**

### ***Measures of Success***

With such a broad strategy it is difficult to record specific measures of success, however success can be measured through positive changes in the workplace, the media's portrayal of SUNGO and the public's perception of the organisation. Other signs that the strategy has been successful could include: a rise in membership due to positive publicity, more members becoming financial and/or attending training workshops and other events, more media coverage, stronger brand recognition, a healthier and more professional work environment and more interest being shown in the organisation from outside sources.

The ICO should keep track of changes both internally and externally; this could be in the form of a journal which records observations or regular reports by the ICO to the CEO and National President which outline the changes taking place.



### ***Follow-up***

Follow-up is an important part of implementing SUNGO's new communication strategy. As SUNGO changes and improves its brand, the process must be documented in order to show our members, the public, the government and our donors the progress we have made. Follow-up should include sending media releases out to publicise important events or changes, documenting progress in reports for use internally or to present to donors/government and revising activities and actions according to the outcomes of those previously implemented. Also media coverage and achievements should be tracked; this can be done by scanning articles etc and keeping them in a folder on the server.

### ***Review of Communication Strategy***

This Communication Strategy should be reviewed on a yearly basis. Reviewing the strategy includes: evaluating SUNGO's success in implementing the strategy over the previous 12 month period, documenting changes that have been made, and updating the strategy for the next 12 months by setting new goals for SUNGO's communication.