THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

Office of the Prime Minister

MEDIA ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION (DRM/CCA)

Engage... or die." Author and strategist Brian Solis is famous for that nugget from his book, Engage, that started the whole social media engagement revolution. Even though we think of engagement as a principle of the conversion process, developing loyal fans will aid you in a crisis as well In his research on how advanced companies prepare for crisis.

1.0 BACKGROUND

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and the National Platform on DRR recognizes the important roles played by media in Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Climate Change Adaptation (CCA). However, it has not functionally engaged the media in the coverage of activities on DRM/CCA. The media has not been optimally engaged in DRM communication despite their personal initiatives to report on emergencies and disasters. They (media) are not engaged in planning of DRM communication, perhaps due to the lack of a reference point at the OPM to provide information on disasters and DRM/CCA Programs. Consequently, the media's involvement on issues to do with risk management, CCA, and resilience building has been limited except when invited by the media centre after a disaster has occurred

In crisis communications, the media support organization's advocacy or partnership strategies, which is important to building a positive reputation that can function as a shield in a negative event at the same time to attract interest to participate in the program. Effective crisis managers need to be savvy in media relations and social media loyalty strategies. In this digital age, a crisis manager who does not understand how to engage the media and build social media engagement is someone who cannot help organizations effectively prepare for a crisis be it natural or human-induced disasters. It is today's golden ticket to winning at mitigating a crisis faster and with less damage. Understanding the higher-level benefits of developing the media as advocates is a necessary skill for crisis managers. It is also key to understanding the difference between influence and advocacy.

1.1. Objectives of Media Engagement

This media engagement plan provides the platform for enhanced media engagement in DRR/DRM/CCA reporting and participation in Uganda.

There are several benefits of an effective media engagement that complements crisis strategies. It: -

- Builds a crop of invested ambassadors that will advocate for your program/ organization in the event of a crisis.

- Identifies and cultivates goodwill conversations with key influencers and watchdogs that can extend your reach in a crisis as well as during recovery.

- Establishes working relationships with media representatives in the social space.

- Creates a pool of experienced and instrumental media and social media strategy and staff before crisis hits, promoting mitigation measures, early warning, as well as guard the organisation's reputation even in the event of a crisis.

- Supports involvement of communities in advocacy for you in a crisis if you have nurtured the relationship already.

2.0 SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

The findings from the consultation with key partners and the media clearly revealed that there is limited and adhoc media involvement in DRM/CCA communication. The media reported that in most instances they take their own initiatives to investigate, cover and report on DRM.

Table 1: Assessment of the Media capacity to objectively cover DRM

Structural	Attitude and Perception
a) The media is not included on the national platform despite the vital roles they play in information dissemination especially to the larger community and public in raising awareness of DRM and providing the oversight monitoring roles and accountability for the resources provided. b) There is limited awareness and capacity to understand and report objectively on DRM/CAA and DRR, most journalist are not well informed and not exposed to the full cycle of DRM, hence the focus on emergencies response and events reporting c) There is limited engagement between government information officers and the media; moreover most information is channeled only through the government owned stations leaving out private stations that have wider reach. d) DRR/DRM information are sometimes too technical and not package in the format that attracts the interest of the media. The media are interested in events that impact on livelihood, and day to day life	a) The media is more interested in events other than process, consequently making the coverage of risk reduction and recovery program is considered rather dreary and not attractive for headline b) The media is not motivated and supported to take keen interest in DRR and DRM work, they do not know where to go for what information and they do not understand the roles of the various partners and actors in DRM. c) They have limited knowledge and exposure coupled with a reactionary culture geared towards events

3.0 STRATEGIC APPROACH

DRM stakeholders and partners shall invest in building the capacity of the media to objectively report on DRM/CCA initiatives through regular engagement and capacity building programs to enhance their reporting capacities and motivate them. Get the media involved in; the NP DRR planning process, in brainstorming on mitigation concepts, and establish a program for recognition of outstanding contribution by reporters on DRM mitigation and recovery programs.

In addition, NP shall involve the media in providing oversight reporting and monitoring of programs through a formalised relationship. NP shall identify competent journalists and involve them in providing independent oversight reporting on activities on the ground and accountability for the resources used in DRM/DRR as well as in advocacy to inform and educate the public. DRM NECCOC will provide marketable information to facilitate their roles in advocacy and enhance their involvement

Two key areas for engagement of the media are proposed:

1. Capacity Building

i)   Include the media through the relevant associations representation in the National Platform for DRR;

ii)   Regular media engagement based on a detailed mapping of media professionals and commentators who have the competence, potential and interest to participate in the DRM debate. A media list of journalists, program presenters, opinion formers and social commentators shall be maintained and updated annually;

iii)   A partnership with the African Centre for Media Excellence (ACME) located in Bunga[1] to provide custom made capacity building on DRM for identified media personalities. The Centre should be supported and resourced by experts from partners like UNDP, UNESCO, OXFAM and OPM to provide specialized training on DRM/CCA.

iii)   Organize capacity building programs to equip the media on their roles, especially on reporting on risk reduction and building resilience at least once every year, with an annual theme evolving around emerging issues at that time. This may include media study and field tours to expose them to the practicality of and to gain better understanding and appreciation of DRM;

iv)   Regular media engagement on a monthly basis shall be organized by the OPM/NECOC to provide briefs and updates on DRM activities, milestones besides during emergencies.

v)   To provide useful information and retain the interest of the media, a database on DRM covering the national risks register, data on impacts and trends made available online for easy access to the media for reference.

vi)   Special dialogue program on professionalism and ethical reporting on disasters shall be organized in partnership with partners ACME.

iii)   The forum shall dwell on issues of sensitivity of reporting on DRM and how to maintain balance, sensitivity, impartiality and neutrality when reporting.

2.   Motivation of Media to Participate

To attract and retain the interest of the media on DRM, the following shall be applied in addition to increasing the use of social media as a key tool for media engagement: First, information should be packaged in an attractive format that include human interest angles, livelihood indicators, images and impacts to attract the media to cover DRM/CCA initiatives.

i)   A formalized partnership with relevant media associations for increased participation in monitoring progress, follow-up of the activities by giving the media an expanded role in oversight and accountability for resources allocated to DRM at the various levels.

ii)   Formally engage the media in technical/operational work, for instance, in the monitoring and evaluation of response and preparedness, raising the issue on international media and providing accountability and assessment for resources provided for risk management especially things like relief, funds and community

involvement activities. Through the associations, OPMNECCOC and partners for such assignment shall accredit competent media individuals on the team

iii) Establish an online forum for social media (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn) or media and partners to generate discussion to help raise awareness and network with international peers on DRM reporting at the same time ease access to information of media partners. The online resources and a discussion forum on emerging issues keep the media involved, motivated and updated on emergency triggers along the DRM cycle.

iv) Partner with media organizations like ACME, PANOS EA and the newly formed Water and Environment Media Network, Uganda (WEMNET_U) which provide capacity building programs for journalists in reporting on climate change, environment and other natural resources issues to design and deliver training to the media in the interpretation of the impact of scientific information and scenarios on daily life and livelihoods.

v) Introduce an award program to recognize journalists for outstanding performance and reporting on DRM/CCA to increase their interest and motivation.

3.1 Guidelines to Management of Media Engagement

There are six steps to building media/social media engagement strategies that build advocacy. Internal competence and capacity to effect everyday social media strategies and media relations that partner with effective crisis plans is an imperative. The bottom line is it makes the job easier when a crisis comes knocking.

i) **Identify Engagement Goals:** What are the end goals? There are several that start from the basics reach and extending towards building strong partnership and loyalty on the other extreme. The goal for media engagement is to increase quantity (reports, discussions, and hits) and quality (correctness, details and verified facts).

ii) **Use personalities that portray desired engagement levels:** Who are the people you are trying to reach? If it is a community then use a respected community leader. If it is a professional, then use an expert. If it is the youth, find someone they admire and respect. Build a database of several personas that include demographic, sociographic, and online behavior data.

iii) **Identify your target traditional media and social media channels:** Using research from your sector and followers, identify the channels that best suit your needs. Remember, more isn't always better.

iv) **Develop content segmentation strategies that add value:** Consider established online fan behaviors (from #2) when developing content strategies for specific levels of engagement and personas. Remember giving is better than asking. In terms of content, how can you meet your stakeholders' needs? Provide content, leads, and access to experts for interviews.

v) **Employ appropriate calls to action:** As people move through the stages of engagement, value-added calls to action move them to the next stage. Have calls to action for all engagement levels. One size doesn't fit all.

vi) **Track, measure, and correct.** If you've set out your goals correctly, you will have appropriate metrics in place. Here you are tracking, analyzing, and making mid-course corrections, if needed

4.0 Work Plan for Media Engagement (Jan-Dec.)

Capacity Building	Units	Targeted Groups
Launch of media partnership workshop	One Breakfast event	Media Reports, Editors, management of media houses, representatives of partners and MDAs in DRM
Specific training programs on DRM reporting	Semi annual (2 times a year)	Reporters. Editors, program presenters, opinion writers and features and DJs.
Media Forum in partnership with CEMEX and relevant Association	Quarterly	All media practitioners covering DRM, partners, featuring a DRM Expert and/or leadership
Motivational Programs	**Units**	**Targeted Groups**
Tours of other DRM programs		For Selected representatives
Sites visits and Tours	Events specific	Local and international media
Assessment, Monitoring and Follow-ups	Event Specific	As above
Media Briefings	Monthly	Reporters from the various media houses
Annual Award	Annual	Competition based on submission of work done