COMMUNICATION & VISIBILITY STRATEGY
2025-2029

CHARM

Consortium for Human Rights and Media in Sub-Saharan Africa

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Foreword

This Communications and Visibility Strategy was developed in a context of a dynamic national and transnational environment and outlook in the human rights and media milieu in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), the focal terrain of CHARM's work. The dynamism inherent in the region is constantly being shaped and defined by socio-political, economic, legal, technological, and environmental factors that invariably interact with human rights and media. As our name suggests, a key part of CHARM's raison d'être is the recognition that multi-stakeholder consortiums and regional and international networks are an essential pathway to identify and deliver solutions to the complex challenges of human rights, civic freedoms and media development in sub-Saharan Africa. Our commitment has been towards enhanced stakeholder consortiums and networks across the region, an initiative that has involved supporting the creation of new consortiums and strengthening existing ones.

A significant outcome of our strategic compass has been the increased formalisation of partnerships with organisations that work on diverse issues of civic participation and journalism. This has helped to strengthen the ecosystem that creates an enabling environment for the media and civil society to provide citizens with the information, analysis, and support they need to realise their human rights and civic freedoms. CHARM's mandate, as enunciated elsewhere in this document, mainstreams media and communications as powerful tools of community service and empowerment. However, it was acknowledged in our strategy and agenda-setting forums that we needed to do more as a consortium to enhance our internal and external communication, a principle that found expression in our guiding strategic framework.

This Communication & Visibility Strategy is part of our endeavour to professionalise and upscale the communication function to bridge any gaps with our stakeholders. Our special thanks to stakeholders who participated in our survey that, to a significant extent, shaped the form and content of this strategy. Similar thanks to our consultants, Rooks Consulting Ltd., who put this document together. It is our earnest hope and belief that the outcomes of our engagement as guided by this communication strategy will augment our work in the domains of human rights and media development.

With gratitude,

Hassan Shire

Executive Director, DefendDefenders

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACERWC	African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
ACHPR	African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights
AGA	African Governance Architecture
AIJC	African Investigative Journalism Conference
AJEN	African Journalism Educators Network
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CGTN	China Global Television Network
CHARM	Consortium to Promote Human Rights, Civic Freedoms, and Media Development in SSA
CNDD-FDD	National Council for the Defence of Democracy
COP	Conference of the Parties
CRD	Civil Rights Defenders
CSO	Civil Society Organisations
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women
CT	Coordination Team
DD	Defend Defenders
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EHAHRD-Net	East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network
EU	European Union
GBV	Gender-based violence

GESI	Gender equality and social inclusion
HRDs:	Human rights defenders
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority for Development
ITP	Media Development in a Democratic Framework
LT-Outcome	Long-term outcome
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-governmental organisations
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Pan-Dem	Pandemic Violations of Democratic Standards Index
PLWDs	People living with disabilities
PSD	African Union Peace and Security Department
PSEA	Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse
PSHEA	Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation, and Abuse
RFLD	Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDA,	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
ST-Outcome	Short-term outcome
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
UPR	Universal Periodic Review
V-Dem	Varieties of Democracy
VOA	Voice of America
WCJ	Wits Centre for Journalism (formerly Wits Journalism)
WHRDs	Women human rights defenders

Executive Summary

This document explains and contextualises the policy, strategic, and operational action plan that the Consortium for Human Rights and Media (CHARM) adopted in 2024 to guide the communication processes in the consortium. The blueprint is premised on CHARM's acknowledgement and appreciation of the centrality of effective communications in its advocacy programmes around human rights and media development, themes that underpin its mandate as a consortium of like-minded partners. Upon identifying and embarking on its overarching strategic goals and objectives, it became necessary for the consortium to develop key policy documents to institutionalise and guide its work and interaction with the wide spectrum of stakeholders it relates to or impacts. This policy and strategy handbook outlines CHARM's communication goals, objectives, stakeholders, and target audiences, including the communication channels and processes that it employs in its dynamic approach to outreach programmes. CHARM dedicates a special focus on how it shall develop and propagate its message framework targeting the diversity of publics it serves. Further, the document sets out the policy and guidelines that govern multiple dimensions of its communications. Apart from being the product of a robust CHARM-wide engagement process, the document has consolidated input from its external stakeholders who were part of an insightful and purposive survey administered during the formulation exercise. The document was further enriched by perspectives from regional and international best practices in communication.

1 Introduction And Background

About CHARM

The Consortium for Human Rights and Media in Sub-Saharan Africa (CHARM) aims to promote and protect human rights and media freedoms in Sub-Saharan Africa. The partnership as of mid-2024 comprised CIVICUS, Civil Rights Defenders, DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project), Fojo Media Institute, The Wits Centre for Journalism, Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement, and Magamba Network. The Consortium was established in October 2019 with the overarching objective of promoting and enhancing human rights, civic space, and media in Sub-Saharan Africa. The synergies and value proposition of CHARM are detailed in **Annex 1.**

The consortium acknowledges the role that free and active media and civil society have in the protection of robust and inclusive democracies and the promotion of sustainable national development. This network of organisations offers a strong and unique contribution in the following areas:

Civil society building and civic space advocacy

by emboldening of local, national, regional, and global alliances of civil society organisations (CSOs) and activists to bolster citizen action and civil society throughout sub-Saharan Africa. CHARM protects and safeguards civic space, in particular through enhanced access to the national, regional, and international decision-making processes of civil society and journalists working at grassroots and local levels. The consortium strengthens civil society by reaching out to marginalised groups, including those who are part of small informal groups, unregistered collectives/networks, and individual human rights defenders.

Safety and protection of human rights defenders (HRDs) and activists

through protecting the work of HRDs and other activists by reducing their vulnerability to the risk of persecution. We also enhance their capacity to effectively defend human rights through advocacy, litigation, public campaigns, and protection support.

Integration of gender and social inclusion

by utilising an intersectional approach to designing and implementing our interventions. We ensure that the partners and sub-grantees who we work with practice a gender-transformative and inclusive approach and reach out to the most marginalised and discriminated in their own communities.

Media development and protecting/expanding media freedoms

by strengthening free, independent, and inclusive journalism, especially by under-represented groups such as female journalists, through fostering alliances, exchanging expertise, building media literacy and bringing together community media, larger media houses, alternative media, content creators, and advocacy and international reporting networks.

Technology, innovation, and digital activism

advancements through working on the cutting edge of technology, arts, digital media, activism, and innovation through supporting and incubating a myriad of young content creators, artists, and activists who speak truth to power, open space for free expression online, and amplify counter-narratives.

Inter-state and regional collaboration through consortium synergy effects. Together, consortium members can reach all countries in SSA and a diverse spectrum of stakeholders, from grassroots activists and journalists to international policymakers. We leverage and amplify local and national insights, opportunities, and advocacy efforts to make regional contributions. Together, we tackle large-scale challenges that can be overwhelming for a single partner organisation.

CHARM engages with civil society and media who support W/HRDs and their organisations and journalists, particularly those that represent constituencies with the most limited access to resources and opportunities in their unique contexts (such as women, young people, sexual minorities, people living with disabilities, racial and ethnic minority groups, Indigenous people, amongst others).

The consortium has set out to contribute to change across four strategic outcome areas through the six pathways of change outlined above related to civic space, public support to marginalised and traditionally excluded groups, consortium building, and access to better resources to sustain the work of civil society and media in SSA.

The Need for a Communication Strategy

The communication function in CHARM was articulated in the Governance and Transition Co-Design Final Mission Report process and the establishment of the Communications Working Group (CWG) as one of six working groups identified under the ambit of the overall governance model of the consortium. This communication strategy is built upon the conceptual communication paradigm advanced by the CWG, whose primary mandate was to help ensure that messaging within the consortium was consistent and aligned to the consortium's overall goals and objectives. Specifically, the CWG was tasked to actualise CHARM's internal communications.

Specific Objectives

Further steps towards this Communication Policy and Strategy Handbook took shape during the pilot phase of CHARM. The consortium made significant strides, including a reported 60 percent success rate in achieving its set objectives, even during disruptions occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdowns. Consortium members were able to strengthen their capacities as they effectively advocated for more democratic policies and laws that promote civic and media freedoms and government accountability.

A vital approach for advocacy has been the investment by the consortium in research and building an evidence base alongside active relationship-building with reputable media organisations and personalities. Specific activities that have yielded significant outcomes included campaigns, investigative journalism initiatives, capacity strengthening of sub-grantees, and digital security training of trainers for HRDs.

The consortium aims to improve, expand, and sustain its impact in the region. Among the key recommendations was to develop a comprehensive communication strategy to serve as a roadmap for effective communication throughout the lifecycle of the consortium. An effective communication strategy is essential for conveying the consortium's mission, progress, and achievements to both internal and external stakeholders.

This communication strategy aims to effectively promote more awareness and understanding of the impact of CHARM with the following specific objectives.

- Developing a communication and media strategy and action plan to guide the CHARM project implementation in the sub-Saharan African countries it operates in.
- Developing a strategy for enhancing visibility of the project and its outcomes—especially in relation to the new approach to strengthening and capacity-

building human rights defenders in the region.

- To increase the awareness and understanding of the CHARM brand through engagement of information through various channels and platforms.
- To strengthen consortium-wide communication by improving CHARM internal communication and collaboration across partners.
- To help come up with more coordinated, evidence-based advocacy and communication efforts.

From the foregoing objectives, CHARM's Communication Policy and Strategy seeks, therefore, to outline the overall framework for general awareness creation and understanding of the consortium's mandate, as interpreted and articulated in various policy and strategy documents. The strategy seeks to facilitate a mechanism for widespread public and stakeholder understanding of the consortium's role and contribution to human rights and media development in SSA.

Further, the strategy provides the communication framework for mobilising key stakeholders to ensure a more robust understanding and appreciation of human rights and media in the region. It follows that the strategy will create and enhance the corporate visibility of CHARM, its partners, and the consortium's activities in the protection and promotion of human rights and media freedoms.

Importantly, this document provides a harmonised policy and strategy direction to serve as an integral referral compass for essential communication guidelines for CHARM and its partners.

2 Situation Analysis

Introduction

The development of an effective communication strategy requires a solid understanding of several critical factors that may ultimately affect or influence implementation and outcomes. It was therefore necessary for the team to immerse itself in the human rights and media development realms of the consortium's strategic agenda.

The work involved two approaches. Firstly, gaining insights into the political, environmental, social, technological, economic, and legal (PESTEL) topography of CHARM in the Sub-Saharan region. The second was an assessment of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) around the consortium's activities.

The first step was a detailed review of the consortium's strategic and operational documents. The second involved interacting with the internal and external stakeholder spectrum of the consortium by administering questionnaires followed by interviews.

CHARM's Strategic Framework that overarches this communication strategy clearly sets out the human rights and media agenda for the consortium. It elaborately outlines the operating terrain in Sub-Saharan Africa. CHARM sees civil society and media as critical actors in protecting and expanding the civic space and democratic freedoms to jointly uphold human rights in the region.

The strategy is emphatic that CHARM's collaborative programme is designed to support the construction of the necessary collective power, strategic leadership, advocacy strategies, and sustainability of civil society, media organisations, and individual actors to lead change.

Central to this vision is the partners' capacity to sustain pressure and influence policies, resources, institutions, and narratives that are essential to the advancement of civic and democratic freedoms at all levels in the region.

The *Revised CHARM Consortium Proposal 2023* outlines the key elements of its purpose. These include its vision in the region; strategic objectives around human rights and media; long-term outcomes, impact groups, and pathways to this change; a specific action plan; and a detailed assessment of its operating terrain.

The Political and Socio-economic Context: A Murky Landscape

CHARM has documented its perspective on the human rights and media landscape in the region, highlighting concerns that resonate with the findings of the survey among individual stakeholders. The consortium has identified seven critical challenges and emergent opportunities in Sub-Saharan Africa that will shape the programme and invariably interact with this communication strategy.

- Shrinking democratic freedoms due to authoritarian façades of legitimacy.
- Increasing restrictions on civic space and freedoms of assembly and expression.
- Violations of human rights resulting from shrinking civic space and discriminatory narratives.
- Growth in threats and instability in the digital civic space, such as the prolific spread of misinformation, polarisation, and hate speech.
- Disproportionate discrimination against specific marginalised groups, especially women.

- Gaps in resourcing for grassroots and marginalised civil society and media.
- Growth in technology and inclusive policy frameworks to support civil society and media advocacy.

The information gathered from stakeholders through the survey highlighted both the challenges and opportunities for CHARM. Consequently, this document has incorporated the findings of the analyses. The emergent scenario highlights the need for effective communication using a well-structured approach to enhance and advance the work of CHARM in SSA.

Samples of the principal perspectives on human rights and media freedoms in the region as assessed and articulated by stakeholders are in **Annex 3.** As we shall discern later in this document, the issues raised underpin the thematic framework of CHARM's communication agenda, especially the messaging component of this strategy as highlighted in CHARM's *Revised Consortium Proposal, 2023.*

1. CHARM operates in a time of shrinking space for media and human rights in Africa. The scene is characterised by instances of political instability, electoral violence, arbitrary arrests and detention of human rights defenders, shrinking donor funding, and donor dependency.

2. The growth of investigative journalism in uncovering corruption, money laundering, organised crime, and other trends that are holding sitting regimes to account is receiving pushback amid attacks on journalists and civil society actors. In addition, it is a season associated with the spread of misinformation and disinformation, hence the need for media and CSOs to step in with measures to debunk lies and ensure citizens are well informed to impact their decision-making.

3. The socio-political environment in which CHARM partners operate is characterised by a range of factors, including political instability, restrictive media laws, and threats to journalists and human rights defenders. For example, restrictions on freedom of expression and threats to journalists may create a climate of fear that discourages bold communication.

4. The civic space is shrinking due to constrained social and political environments: conflicts are increasing, and human rights are restricted. It makes the space CHARM smaller, and all work related to political or politicised topics has to be done more carefully. These situations have an impact on the consortium's external communication and, therefore, CHARM's visibility.

5. CHARM operates in countries in which the civic space is considered to be repressed, closed, and obstructed, according to the CIVICUS Monitor1. This means that civic activism takes place, but in a restricted, obstructed, or closed environment.

6. The environment that CHARM partners operate in is diverse when it comes to the environmental factors affecting communication. In general, some commonalities include political restrictions of social media channels in some countries, internet shutdowns, etc. The legal environment, when it comes to freedom of expression online, is sometimes restricted, including vague laws on "computer misuse." Technological factors to take into account are internet coverage and connectivity, which vary especially in urban and rural areas. Economic factors such as the cost of data being high are also important to take into account in our communication.

1   Available at: https://www.civicus.org/documents/PeoplePowerUnderAttack.Report.27 November.pdf
     6 CIVICUS. (8 December 2021). "Global Press Release." CIVICUS Monitor. Available at: https://findings2021.monitor.civicus.org/ratings.htm

7. CHARM works in a context of shrinking civic space on the African continent. Nonetheless, African civil society remains vibrant, and it is thus key to find ways for CHARM to communicate in a manner that makes it stand out.

8. The diverse socio-political environments in which CHARM partners operate significantly impact their ability to communicate and enhance their visibility. The challenges include political instability, economic disparities, technological limitations, and restrictive legal frameworks that require adaptive and culturally sensitive communication strategies.

9. Africa's socio-political landscape varies. In restrictive countries, certain messages, such as the assertion of certain forms of sexual rights, could cause challenges for the organisation and for the rights holders.

10. Most of CHARM's partners operate in a volatile environment associated with a shrinking civic space. Most African governments have been using lawfare to clamp against civil society organisations that are deemed hostile or against the ruling governments, and this has resulted in most organisations adopting self-censorship before they communicate and implement their activities. For example. In Zimbabwe, there is ongoing consultation on the Private Voluntary Amendment Bill, which seeks to regulate the operations of CSOs. If enacted into law, some CSOs risk being deregistered. As a result, most CSOs lack the freedom to express themselves. This context affects CHARM partners' ability to communicate effectively for fear of being targeted.

11. Stakeholders may perceive CHARM and its members in various ways, depending on their interests and perspectives. Some stakeholders may view CHARM as a valuable ally in the fight for human rights and media freedom, while others may see it as a threat or as biased towards certain political or social agendas.

A consolidated assessment of the strategic focus and operational environment of CHARM as detailed above establishes the basis and rationale for the formulation of this communication strategy to guide the consortium in its public and multi-stakeholder engagement process in the region. In particular, the communication strategy will facilitate CHARM in raising awareness, enhancing knowledge, and building support among its various stakeholders and target audience segments. The strategy also speaks to the need to create a more robust programme for the continuous sharing and exchange of information among internal and external actors engaged directly or indirectly in the wider human rights and media development purview in SSA.

This engagement will have the added benefit of raising the profile and visibility of CHARM as an institution, together with its activities and outputs. It thus stands to reason that this policy and strategy document reflects both the strategic and operational direction that the CHARM programme has set for itself.

Assessing the core elements of CHARM's communication policy and strategy

In preparing this Communication Policy & Strategy Handbook, the approach involved a review of key CHARM policy, strategy, and operational documents; an iterative engagement process with CHARM members; and the administration of a purposive survey among the consortium's internal and external stakeholders. The information gathered informed the analysis undertaken to establish the communication needs and practices of the consortium. The internal and external situation analysis relating to communication orbited the six core elements of an effective communication policy and strategy, namely: policy and strategic goals; target audiences and stakeholders; messaging; communication channels; implementation and monitoring & evaluation.

Communication Goals of CHARM

The communication goals are well articulated in CHARM's policy and strategy documents. The goals in effect are to improve, expand, and sustain the impact of the consortium in Sub-Saharan Africa. The goal of this communication strategy is to serve as a roadmap for effective communication throughout the lifecycle of the consortium. The communication strategy is essential for conveying the consortium's mission, progress, and achievements to both internal and external stakeholders. The goals align with the specific objectives of CHARM's communication agenda as outlined elsewhere in this document. In the Key Informant Survey administered among members of CHARM and its partners, in which over 200 responses received were analysed, it is evident that the goals and objectives of the consortium are well understood by the CHARM community. Through the survey, respondents highlighted the following core elements of CHARM's primary mission:

- Protecting and defending human rights
- Protecting and advancing media freedoms
- Advocacy for social justice
- Advocacy for social change and legal reforms
- Defence of the civic space
- Empowerment of marginalised communities
- Collaborative partnerships
- Evidence-based advocacy
- Promotion of transparency and accountability
- Innovation, adaptability, and pan-African solidarity

The second part of the survey was undertaken among CHARM's external stakeholders who included project managers, legal practitioners, journalists, communication personnel and development workers. As part of the inquiry, the survey team sought to establish the awareness on CHARM's work.

Figure 1: Awareness level of CHARM among external stakeholders

On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate your awareness of CHARM's programs and initiates
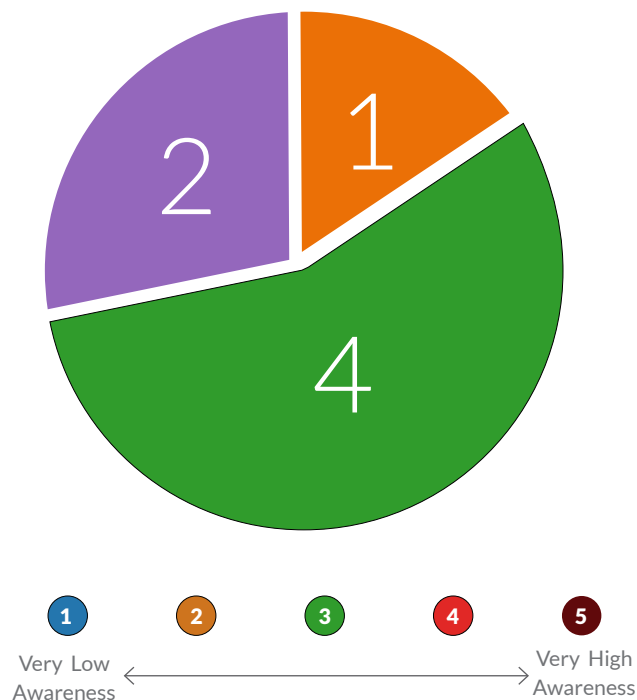
Source: Rooks Consulting Survey, 2024

The majority demonstrated an average awareness level (Figure 1), clearly highlighting the need to mainstream and target key external stakeholders of the consortium in the messaging campaign.

Target audiences and stakeholders

Key informant interviews with members of CHARM were useful in establishing the primary and secondary range of the consortium's stakeholders and target audiences in its communication initiatives. While there may be overlaps

with target audiences and stakeholders, the latter are groups or individuals who are directly impacted by the decisions and actions of an organization. Audiences may have a one-sided relationship with an organization, but stakeholders can impact the organization with their decisions and actions. In the communication context, stakeholders can be consolidated with primary target audiences as receivers of messages.

Besides a review of the consortium's policy and strategy documents, a two-tier survey was administered among CHARM's internal and selected external partners for the purposes of this communication strategy. Among areas of interest in this approach was to establish the internal and external stakeholders of the consortium and how the consortium interacted with these stakeholders in the prosecution of its mandate.

While the seven partner organisations that constitute the primary internal stakeholders of CHARM are well known, the consortium's Impact Reflection Report of 2021 identifies some key external target stakeholders in the Sub-Saharan Africa region as the wider media spectrum, the donor community, assorted content producers, human rights defenders, civil society, marginalised groups, and environmental and indigenous rights activists.

A document review buttressed by key informant interviews focusing on CHARM's stakeholders and target audiences in its advocacy yielded the clusters presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: CHARM External Stakeholders / Target Audiences

| Cluster	Affiliated entities
Civil Society	Human Rights Defenders, Social movements, Community Based Organisations (CBOs)
Governments	National, Local, Legislatures, Judiciary, Specific agencies
Public	Youth, Women Indigenous communities, Special groups,
Media	Print, Electronic, New media, Content creators / producers
International / Regional Agencies	Donors, United Nations, African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC) Southern African Development Community (SADC), Inter-Governmental Authority for Development (IGAD)
Educational institutions	Schools, Colleges, Academia, Researchers
Policy makers	Public sector, Private sector

Enhanced stakeholder alliances and networks across the region are recognised as essential in building relationships and expanding the networking and resource mobilisation capabilities of the consortium.

A stakeholder mapping exercise is also identified here as a critical tool to help the programme understand key actors and how they interact with CHARM's activities. Such an approach will augment the consortium's efforts in strengthening the effectiveness and resilience of stakeholders such as human rights defenders, the wider civil society, journalists, social media content producers, and other proponents of social change.

It is clear from CHARM's 2023 Programme Proposal to SIDA that the consortium intends to forge interstate and regional collaborations among a diverse spectrum of stakeholders in SSA for its advocacy.

Figure 2: Wider Spectrum of CHARM Publics
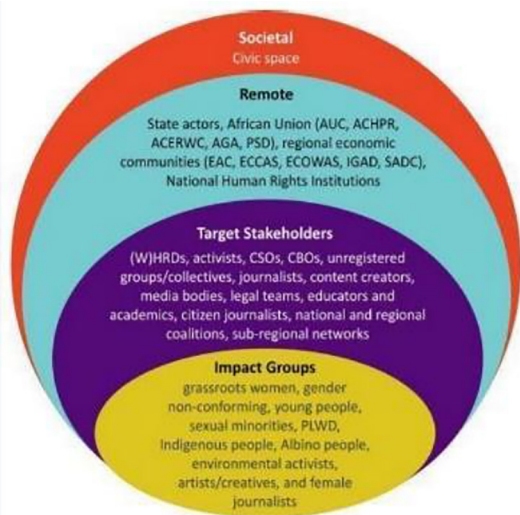
Source: Revised CHARM Consortium Proposal, 2023

The survey underpinning this strategy sampled internal and external stakeholder perceptions on CHARM. Although the overall perception is positive, there were hints of ambivalence among some stakeholders, especially governments in the region. One observation from an internal stakeholder sums it up:

> *While we have not yet conducted a formal survey to gauge stakeholder perceptions, our interactions and feedback from those we empower suggest a positive view of CHARM and its members. Stakeholders such as journalists, media practitioners, social media producers, human rights defenders, and civil society activists likely value our contributions, seeing us as allies and supporters in strengthening their resilience and effectiveness. This perception is reinforced by our ongoing commitment to providing resources, advocacy, and support tailored to their needs in the Sub-Saharan region. However, government and policymakers in the Sub-Saharan region might have different perceptions.*

Among external stakeholders, an overwhelming majority give the consortium a resounding thumbs-up, as illustrated below.

Figure 3: Perceptions About CHARM

6	0	0
Positively	Negatively	Other

Source: Rooks Consulting Survey, 2024

From a strategic perspective, it was notable that the consortium aims to build public trust in civil society and media that promote inclusion, accountability, and equal rights, particularly for women and marginalised groups. By partnering with these stakeholders, CHARM seeks to strengthen its advocacy programs across the region.

An important strategic gain from a strong and viable stakeholder base for CHARM is the potential to harness such collaborations and linkages to develop a stronger voice capable of influencing and rallying policymakers at national and regional levels to the consortium's human rights and media freedoms advocacy.

This capacity would go a long way in potentiating the attainment of Short-Term Outcome 4 of the consortium, which seeks to leverage increased access to diverse support and resources to advance the cause of women, other socially excluded groups in civil society, and media actors on the frontlines of the human rights agenda. The goal is to ensure that these stakeholders are afforded sufficient funding, necessary protections, and access to professional development and networks to contribute to freer and more democratic societies.

It is discernible from the consortium's engagement with stakeholders that the media constituency, as a target stakeholder, needs specific support to grow a regional collaborative footprint as it seeks to broaden counter-narratives, address global sustainability challenges, and give voice to excluded groups in SSA. On the media development front, Wits Centre for Journalists (WCJ) and FOJO are leading with long-term training and support for fact-checking, environmental reporting, online journalism, community radio, storytelling, and investigative journalism, amongst other topics as needed, including specific offerings for target stakeholders like women journalists.

CHARM's focus on media development in SSA is an important step towards bridging the information gap and misrepresentation of Africa in general and SSA in particular by leading global media outlets. The *Global Media Index for Africa Report*[2], released in 2024 found that the voices of ordinary Africans were missing in the stories because global reporting still privileges the voices of powerful elites, both local and international. These include experts, politicians, national leaders, international organisations, and others. Scant attention is given to ordinary citizens and other traditionally marginalised voices like young people, women, and traditional leaders, among others.

The *Global Media Index for Africa* assessed and ranked news stories of the 20 leading news providers that offer primary coverage of Africa for the world. It is also sought to establish how Africa is framed in the media. The outlets selected were the digital platforms of: *CNN*, *Deutsche Welle*, *Russia Today*, *Bloomberg*, *Xinhua*, *Le Monde*, *The Guardian*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Associated Press*, *Al Jazeera*, *The Economist*, *New York Times*, *VOA News*, *AFP*, *Reuters*, *BBC*, *CGTN*, *Financial Times*, *RFI*, and *Washington Post*.

Empowering SSA media organisations to cover human rights and related issues in the region is advanced as an important function for various stakeholders, hence the timeliness of the CHARM initiative.

The report by The Africa Centre and Africa No Filter advocates collaboration between media outlets, regulatory bodies, researchers, and civil society organisations to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of African narratives. It warns that global media operates on certain values that inform selection and coverage of news. These values privilege power holders within both local and global spaces.

> *In their coverage of Africa, global media recycle frames and stereotypes that have been used in the past to keep their familiar audiences. Global coverage of Africa is informed by the geopolitical realities of the time. It is also informed by the historical colonial relations between the continent and the West. Race and class influence how Africa, a 'Black continent', is covered compared to, say, Europe, in the global media. This skewed coverage also applies to other former colonies in the Global South.*

The Global Media Index for Africa Report, 2024

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2   https://africanofilter.org/our-research/global-media-index-for-africa

This strategy supports the media as a Special Target Audience for CHARM. Ordinarily, the media constitutes a most important target audience for any public-facing advocacy. For this reason, elsewhere in this strategy are elaborate guidelines for more fruitful engagement with the media, which is essential as the consortium seeks to create mass awareness of its activities and raise its profile and visibility around the human rights and media development mission.

Further, it is important for CHARM to mainstream the donor community as a Special Stakeholder, by virtue of the central position donors occupy as enablers of the consortium's human rights and media development agenda. By harnessing the power of the media in the generation and dissemination of information, CHARM should privilege development communication as a necessary strategy to showcase the impact of donors in the advancement of the mandate of the consortium.

Existing communication channels and processes

An assessment was conducted through document reviews and the administration of two surveys among the consortium's internal and external stakeholders to evaluate the communication channels, processes, practices, and structures within the consortium, focussing on their effectiveness in advancing CHARM's advocacy for human rights and media development.
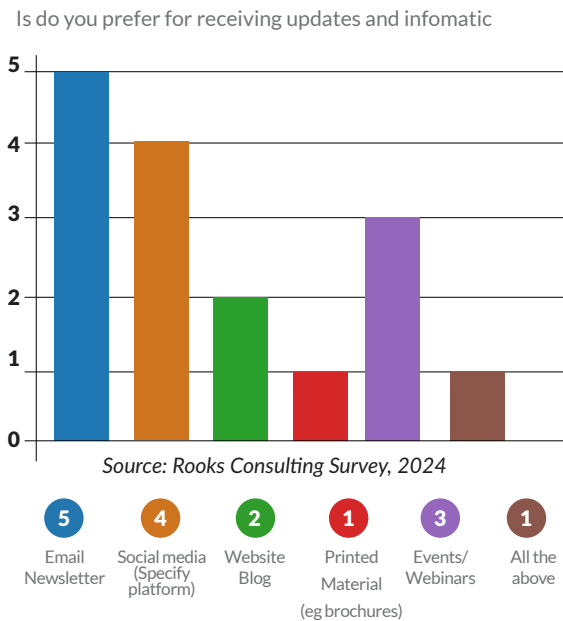
While the findings were more indicative than definitive, key preponderant positions emerged, pointing to the need for a more structured and effective approach to determining and adopting more effective and target-audience-focused communication channels.

Among the viewpoints harnessed from the literature review and the cross-cutting structured and unstructured interviews were as presented below:

- CHARM faces economic disparities, technological limitations, and restrictive legal frameworks in SSA, requiring adaptive and culturally sensitive communication strategies.

- CHARM's past ineffective engagement with target audiences was due to a lack of a communication strategy, full-time communication personnel, understanding of audience needs and preferences, resource challenges, and socio-political constraints.

- CHARM partners have traditionally targeted their audiences with tailored content and activities through specific channels.

- Advocacy campaigns, including public rallies, demonstrations, petitions, and direct media engagement, have been used to mobilise support and influence policymakers.

- CHARM partners use various communication channels, including social media, websites, email newsletters, community meetings, workshops, public events, and traditional media outlets. Direct engagement with stakeholders remains a crucial tool for enhancing CHARM's profile and visibility in the region.

The table below presents representative data, highlighting areas that require special attention in the consortium's publicity strategy.

Table 3: Channels of Communication

Is do you prefer for receiving updates and infomatic

Source: Rooks Consulting Survey, 2024

5	4	2	1	3	1
Email Newsletter	Social media (Specify platform)	Website Blog	Printed Material (eg brochures)	Events/ Webinars	All the above

Source: Rooks Consulting Survey, 2024

- Social media has become a powerful communication channel, complementing traditional media.

- Using digital platforms like WhatsApp, email, X, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok is highly recommended for effective communication.

- Social media channels with easily digestible content are more popular for reaching wide audiences than traditional methods and website articles.

- Consortium partners have successfully used social media for impactful campaigns, especially when well-planned and packaged.

- This has prompted CHARM to explore innovative ways to amplify the voices of activists, influencers, and content creators in advocacy campaigns.

- The effectiveness of these channels depends on the target audience and message.

- The CHARM website should be professionally designed and regularly updated as an information repository, but it is not the primary platform for visibility.

- An email newsletter is an effective way to communicate with stakeholders, as supported by survey findings indicating its popularity alongside social media for engagement.

While digital platforms offer broad reach and accessibility, it is worth noting that traditional forms of communication, such as radio, remain highly effective in the region. Radio, in particular, is the most accessible format in the SSA region, reaching diverse audiences, including those in remote areas with limited internet access. The table below, based on sample data from the Communications Authority of Kenya, illustrates media consumption dynamics between radio, television, newspapers, and digital media over a period of nine year

Table 4: Dynamics of Communication Channels

Which communication channels do you prefer to receive public inofrmation?

Source: Rooks Consulting Survey, 2024

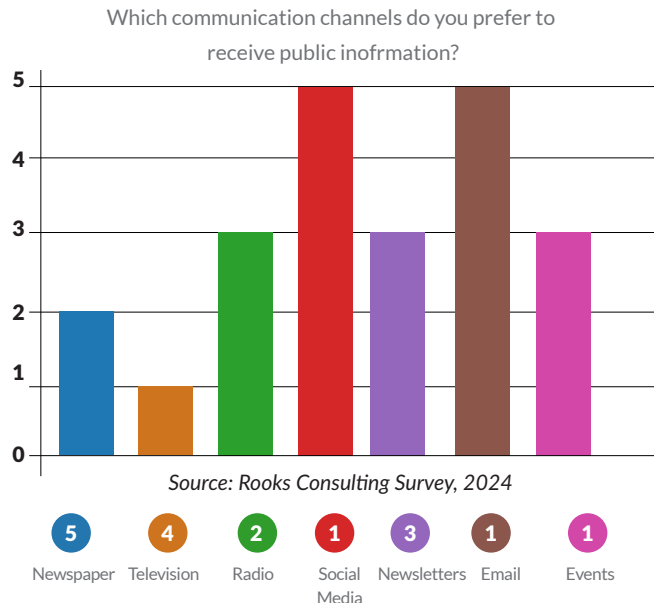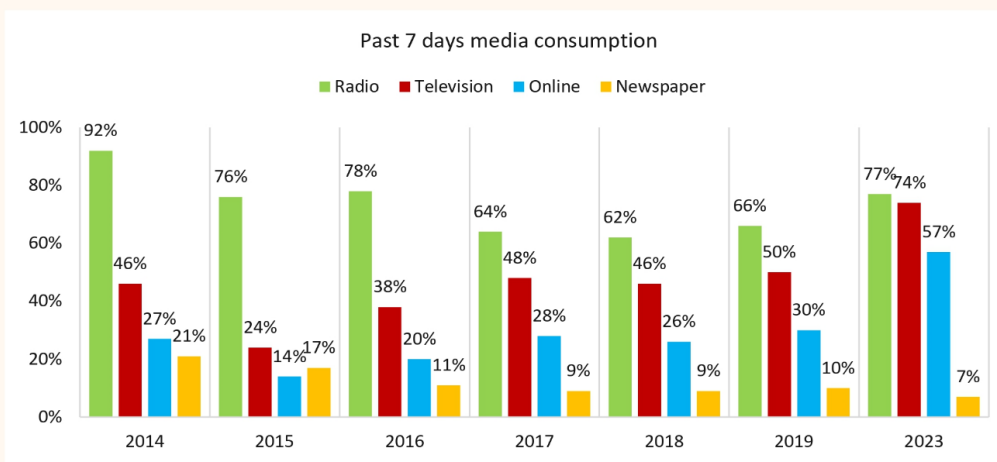| 5	4	2	1	3	1	1
Newspaper	Television	Radio	Social Media	Newsletters	Email	Events

Table 5: Sample of Media Consumption Habits in Kenya

2.2. Media Consumption Habits

In 2014, radio dominated the media landscape in Kenya, with more than 90% of the population tuning in. However, there has been a notable decline, with radio listenership now standing at 77%. In contrast, TV viewership and online access have experienced a significant surge, more than doubling between 2014 and 2023. This shift in preferences suggests a dynamic transformation in the way Kenyans engage with media, with television and online platforms playing an increasingly prominent role in shaping the country's media consumption habits.

Past 7 days media consumption

■ Radio ■ Television ■ Online ■ Newspaper

Year	Radio	Television	Online	Newspaper
2014	92%	46%	27%	21%
2015	76%	24%	14%	17%
2016	78%	38%	20%	11%
2017	64%	48%	28%	9%
2018	62%	46%	26%	9%
2019	66%	50%	30%	10%
2023	77%	74%	57%	7%

Source: 2014 to 2091 KARF | 2023 CA National Surveys - July - October 2023 Survey

Radio and television viewership surpasses other communication mediums in all regions except the North Eastern region, where internet usage takes the lead. Meanwhile, newspaper readership reaches its peak in the Nairobi and Western regions.

Source: Communications Authority of Kenya, 2023

The situation with regard to the effectiveness of CHARM's communications as assessed by internal and external publics of the consortium is above average but can be more robust, to align with the eight objectives of the Communications Working Group (CWG). The external stakeholder assessment is presented in the Table below.

Table 6: Preferred Mode of Information Dissemination

17. Through which communication channels do you prefer to receive public information? Tick as appropriate
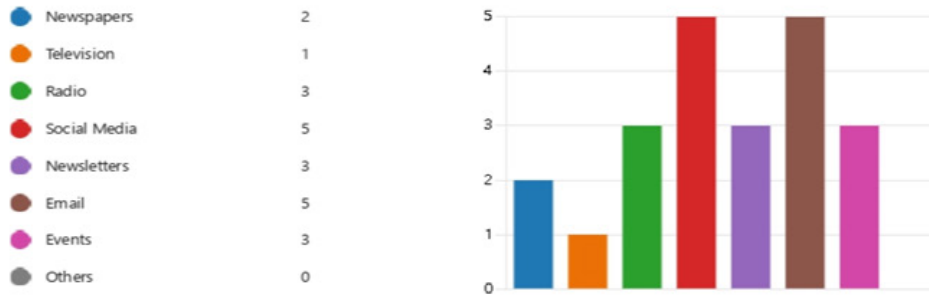
Channel	Count
Newspapers	2
Television	1
Radio	3
Social Media	5
Newsletters	3
Email	5
Events	3
Others	0

18. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the clarity and effectiveness of CHARM's communication materials (e.g., website content, social media posts)? - 1 (Very poor) - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 (Excellent)

Rating	Count
1	0
2	0
3	4
4	3
5	0

19. Have you ever taken any action, e.g., attended an event, shared content, donated etc, as a result of engaging with CHARM's communication messages?

Response	Count
Yes	4
No	3
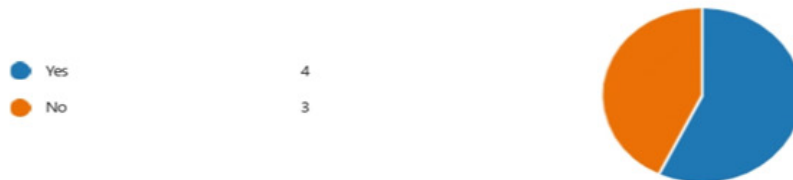
Source: Rooks Consulting Survey, 2024

Messaging

A two-pronged survey was administered among the consortium's internal and external stakeholders to gather perspectives on the current and ideal messages around CHARM's advocacy. Salient viewpoints from internal consortium stakeholders regarding areas that should be addressed through targeted messaging are shared below.

- Target audiences need to know more about the consortium and its partners and why we came together.
- Some people have heard of CHARM but cannot place it or know what the consortium does.
- There are those who see CHARM as useful and helpful, but more clarity is needed on how exactly it functions and what it aims to achieve.
- Individual members of CHARM will have to deliberately profile CHARM in their campaigns and activities.
- We need to be strong in engaging with audiences, being active and visible on social media platforms, and a strong website. Also incorporate an annual campaign perhaps.
- CHARM has participated in a number of meetings at the ACHPR, regional meetings, among others. CHARM has also brought together a number of HRDs to engage with diplomatic missions from various countries. What has not worked well is promoting and enhancing CHARM as a brand.
- In our experience, when it comes to social media engagements, it's important to use storytelling as a way to showcase what the consortium achieves and who we work with and reach.
- There is more marketing at this point and less advocacy. The latter would help for audiences to understand our work more.
- In the recent past, messages tended to be fragmented, lacking cohesive strategies and centralized oversight. A notable challenge for CHARM has been centralizing communications and cross-posting our work as well as monitoring what success looks like. Currently, there lacks a cohesive system for sharing and coordinating efforts across the consortium.

- CHARM has managed to engage with the audiences mainly offline through training, meetings, sub-granting and this has worked well. Online engagements via Zoom, Teams and other platforms have worked well, but social media is still lagging behind because CHARM did not have a presence online until recently.

As explained above, a key component of message development is the content itself. In the case of CHARM, we asked stakeholders what substantive issues should inform the content of the consortium's communications. The main themes listed were as follows:

Human rights	Social justice campaigns
Media freedoms	Threats by the state
Arbitrary arrests and detention of HRDs	Internet shutdown
Death	Petitions to pressure policymakers for change
Discrimination on the basis of race or gender	Legal Assistance and counselling-related activities
Threats against journalists, CSOs, and HRDs.	Harassment
Advocacy campaigns	Community Outreach and Education Activities
Public demonstrations or campaigns	Free and Fair Elections
Investigative journalism	Conflict and Post-Conflict
Climate justice	Accountability

The second leg of the survey targeted external stakeholders of CHARM in the SSA region. The survey sought to gauge the expectations of target audiences regarding the consortium's advocacy. Participants highlighted issues straddling tonality, clarity, frequency of messages, lucidity, and consistency, among others.

Table 7: Rating CHARM's Messaging Efficacy

18. On a scale of 1 to 5, how would you rate the clarity and effectiveness of CHARM's communication materials (e.g., website content, social media posts)? - 1 (Very poor) - 2 ...

7 Responses

ID ↓	Name	Responses
7	anonymous	4
6	anonymous	4
5	anonymous	4
4	anonymous	3
3	anonymous	3
2	anonymous	3
1	anonymous	3

Table 8: Messaging Impact

19. Have you ever taken any action, e.g., attended an event, shared content, donated etc, as a result of engaging with CHARM's communication messages?

7 Responses

ID ↓	Name	Responses
7	anonymous	No
6	anonymous	Yes
5	anonymous	Yes
4	anonymous	Yes
3	anonymous	No
2	anonymous	Yes
1	anonymous	No

Table 9: Messaging Viewpoints

22. What actions would you suggest to enhance the CHARM's communication and visibility?

5 Responses

ID ↓	Name	Responses
5	anonymous	Use humour and influencers.
4	anonymous	Organize regular activities (webinars, podcasts, X Space chats, etc) where the organizations CHARM supports discuss and share information about the work they do. Also, leverage the network of the organizations CHARM supports to amplify CHARM's own meessages.
3	anonymous	Post more about its projects and opportunities on social media
2	anonymous	More frequent messaging
1	anonymous	Keep it short and simple, avoid M&E language and make the reading more interesting and interactive

CHARM's key messages
The core messages or information that the consortium must consistently and clearly communicate include:
- The consortium's overriding mission, vision, role, goals, and objectives
- Broad-based publicity of activities and the rationale for each of these
- Special activities such as campaigns and opportunities for engagement
- Public-facing information to raise visibility, such as partners, work locations, and contact details of CHARM and its affiliates.

3 Charm's Communication And Visibility Strategy

Overall Goal

This communication strategy aims to support CHARM in its initiatives towards achieving a protected and expanded civic space and democratic freedoms for civil society and media to jointly uphold human rights for vulnerable populations. The strategy serves several purposes:

- To support activities of CHARM's programme outcome areas dealing with policy and civic space, representative information, resilient coalitions, and sustainable civil societies.
- To provide guidance and coordination to internal and external communication initiatives of the consortium.
- Enhance the consortium's visibility and credibility.
- Foster public engagement and support for human rights advocacy.

Specific objectives

- Increase media coverage of CHARM activities in all media by 5%.
- Enhance CHARM's thought leadership through contributions in media, articles, and interviews.
- Support and amplify initiatives aimed at reshaping narratives.

- Strengthen relationships with partner organisations through targeted communication efforts for coalition building.
- initiate, highlight, and promote media literacy initiatives
- Provide a platform for CBOs, CSOs, and content creators to tell stories and showcase their work globally.
- Strengthen capacity for human rights advocacy in media

Target audiences

For a communication strategy to be effective, it is essential to identify and understand its key audiences and target them with the relevant communication. In this strategy, we have grouped these audiences into two categories: internal and external. For internal audiences (CIVICUS, Civil Rights Defenders, DefendDefenders, Fojo Media Institute, The Wits Centre for Journalism, Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement, and Magamba Network), a communication structure along with guidelines for its operationalisation has been developed to facilitate seamless communication among them for improved collaboration and a cohesive approach to achieving objectives.

Table 10 CHARM partners (internal audiences)

NO.	ORGANISATION	ROLE /SPHERE
1	DefendDefenders,	Host to the CHARM consortium, working on the safety and protection of human rights defenders through short- and medium-term protection support, capacity building, advocacy, research, and communication.
2	CIVICUS	Strengthening citizen action and civil society, advocacy, and public campaigns.
3	Civil Rights Defenders	advocacy, litigation, and public campaigns for people's rights, gender equality, and social inclusion
4	Fojo Media Institute	Strengthen journalism, enabling democracy and sustainability.
5	The Wits Centre for Journalism	Training, research, and advocacy,
6	Reseau des Femmes Leaders pour le développement	Links to CSO and women-led member organisations for inclusion in decision-making processes
7	Magamba Network	Activism through tech and digital media. Connecting with young people to get involved

The external audiences have been characterised based on their sphere and level of influence as follows: primary, secondary, and tertiary. The strategy recognises the varying degrees of influence that external stakeholders have on the consortium's success and thus tailors its communication approach accordingly. The goal is to reach all key audiences with important communications on the consortium's mission, values, and initiatives to ensure their support and engagement.

Figure 1: Audience segmentation matrix

Primary Audiences	Role	Message	Channel
Human rights defenders	Defending human rights	To be relentless in defending human rights	Multiple
Journalists	Investigating, fact checking, and highlining HR violations	They have a duty to tell stories that support HR protectors	Traditional and modern media
Activists	Monitoring and highlighting HR issues	They have a responsibility to collect and share accurate information.	Multiple

Primary Audiences	Role	Message	Channel
Content creators	Story tellers	Available resources, support, and opportunities	Multiple
General public in Sub-Saharan Africa	Beneficiaries/victims/Culprits	Rights awareness	Multiple, mainly radio
Historically marginalised persons	Beneficiaries/victims/Culprits	Awareness and availability ofs for recourse	Multiple channels
Secondary audiences			
Civil society organisations (CSOs)	Mobilisation	Available support, collaborations	Multiple
Community-based organisations (CBOs)	Grassroot work	Awareness	Multiple
Educational Institutions	Capacity building Re-inventing new knowledge bases	Capacity development needs Textbook production	Formal/letters emails/meetings
Media organisations	Highlighting issues	Deeper insights on HR and media issues	
National coalitions of HRDs	Joint action	They need to leverage their strengths for civic space protection.	Multiple channels
African human rights defenders/	Technical support and strengthening of capacities	Existing needs/resource utilisation/success stories	Formal /multiple
Tertiary audience:			
International development agencies	Technical and financial support		
Local and national governments	Enablers/Policies & Laws	To create a conducive environment that allows the full enjoyment of civic liberties.	Advocacy/Formal channels

Key messages and positioning

The key message of the strategy is that *a free and active media and civil society are crucial for protecting robust, inclusive democracies and promoting sustainable national development, where human rights are upheld*. Therefore, all key players should work to ensure an expanded civic space exists that allows for the full enjoyment of rights. Further, the messaging should position CHARM as the entity, dedicated, and with the capacity of ensuring this.

Visibility Strategy

In order to realise the above, a multifaceted approach that entails the application and exploitation of multimedia channels will be adopted in executing the strategy. The intention is to position the consortium as an authority in matters surrounding the defence and enjoyment of expanded civic liberties and spaces.

For visibility, the seven partners that make up CHARM have played and should continue to play a central role in enhancing its visibility. Additionally, CHARM will leverage all exposure opportunities, including TV and radio interviews and opinion pages. and commentaries, radio talk shows, with social and digital media playing a leading role.

Other visibility opportunities include tailored training sessions for journalists to understand CHARM. Additionally, a comprehensive training for all partners on communication plans and strategies to boost CHARM's presence is envisaged.

An internal communication structure is proposed that will provide a seamless link of the CHARM brand to regional events by partners to expand visibility. This includes maintaining the current link with each consortium partner's website, expanding partnerships with local media organisations, leveraging social media influencers and digital activists, and engaging with youth and student groups. Collaborating with other human rights organisations for joint campaigns should also be explored to amplify the messaging.

Furthermore, the internal communication structure developed under this strategy to enhance effective communication channels within the consortium will help in consolidating and amplifying existing communication efforts.

Activities to promote visibility

The following activities are recommended to further CHARM's objectives and enhance its visibility:
- Joint campaigns
- Profiling exceptional work that expands civic space in the region (ordinary citizens, civic leaders, journalists, and public officials)
- To enhance thought leadership, profiling individuals doing exceptional work across the region can boost CHARM's visibility.
- Increased participation of CHARM's communication representatives in-person meetings and strategic planning sessions.
- Face-to-face interactions will be used to improve collaboration, align efforts, and develop cohesive communication strategies. These interactions also help socialise the communications strategy, ensuring a shared understanding and fostering innovation.
- Participating in high-level AU events, media, and civil society conferences and sponsoring initiatives can further enhance CHARM's visibility.
- Joint branded briefing notes and unified templates, as well as promotional materials   such as banners, shirts, and satchels, and consistent updates on social media platforms, will be used to boost visibility.

Communication channels and tactics

Implementing this communication strategy involves several key activities, each applying different tactics and targeting different media channels and audiences to effectively spread awareness of CHARM and its activities. The proposed channels and tactics include traditional media channels, digital and social media, and community outreaches.

Traditional media

1. *Press releases and media pitches***:** Press and media pitches will be used to announce newsworthy events, updates, or achievements related to CHARM's work. This could include new campaigns, significant legal victories, or partnerships. The information in the press releases should be clear, concise, and engaging. CHARM's database of media outlets and journalists who cover human rights, legal affairs, and social justice issues will guide the distribution. This can be done via email, press release distribution services, or through direct relationships with journalists.

Media pitches are an important way of suggesting story ideas to journalists and editors to secure coverage in news articles, features, and broadcast segments. The pitches will be tailored to align CHARM's activities with the interests of the media outlet's audience.

2. *Op-eds and guest articles* should be used to express expert opinions, perspectives, or advocacy positions on current human rights issues, aiming to influence public opinion and policy. Ideally, these should be well- written and argued articles by CHARM representatives or allies and placed in reputable newspapers, online news platforms, and specialised human rights publications. Relevant CHARM representatives should be taken through a capacity-building programme to prepare them for this task.

In addition to OPEDs, guest articles will be commissioned to provide in-depth analysis, case studies, or narratives on human rights issues to give prominence to lesser-known stories or successes. Opportunities for collaboration with online platforms, blogs, and magazines that focus on human rights, social justice, and related fields should be exploited.

3. *Interviews with journalists and media appearances*: These should be organised to provide expert commentary, personal stories, and updates on human rights issues, enhancing CHARM's visibility and credibility. For this purpose, it is important to identify and prepare potential spokespersons with key messages, data, and anecdotes. Media appearances through TV, radio, podcasts, and online video platforms should be considered in reaching broader audiences and providing a face and voice to CHARM's advocacy.

Digital and social media

Digital and social media tactics will focus on creating engaging, informative, and impactful content across various platforms as follows:

1. Website content
Website content will be fronted by a mission statement, news on recent and ongoing events, and easy navigation to other sections with important information about the consortium. Blog posts: weekly or biweekly blog posts on recent developments in human rights and media. All the consortium's social media pages will have links to the website.

In addition, it will:

- Feature guest posts from experts, activists, and academics to provide diverse perspectives.
- Case studies of successful campaigns or significant events in the human rights arena.
- Conduct and publish interviews with influential figures in the human rights and media fields.
- Provide guides and toolkits for activists and journalists on topics like digital security, advocacy strategies, and legal rights.

2. Social media platforms

Platform	Description
X (Twitter):	This is currently in use for daily updates on events, campaign information, and consortium activities. The *X-Spaces* can also be great for engaging on topical issues around human rights and civic spaces.
	Trending hashtags should be used to increase visibility.
LinkedIn:	This should be used for sharing consortium updates, research findings, and professional insights. The CHARM page should have links to other link-minded networks.
	CHARM should leverage the opportunity for publishing articles that the platform provides by posting at least one article per month. (Ideal for thought leadership)
YouTube	Nearly 200million users in Africa and an estimated 2.70 billion active users. Is ideal for testimonials and campaign videos.
Tik-Tok	Provides great opportunities for storytelling and mobilisation around human rights issues. CHARM should maximise the app's potential by going live regularly to engage around topical issues and campaigns.
Instagram	This platform has massive opportunities for visual story-telling, use of IGTV-long videos, and discussions on topical issues around HR. IG stories can be a good avenue for CHARM updates. (Always post high-quality video and photo images.)
Facebook	Facebook has many possibilities, but CHARM could use it for community building and engagement with stakeholders.

3. Infographics: Will be used to simplify and present complex data. Charm can use this to present research findings and campaign digests.

4. Podcasts: CHARM could develop a podcast series with episodes featuring interviews, discussions, and stories on programme areas and components.

Guidelines on the use of social media

Social media's unparalleled reach, real-time interaction capabilities, and affordability make it a critical component that must be included in any viable communication plan. Its power to promote community development, strengthen brand messaging, and enable direct engagement with a variety of audiences along with its analytics that offer insightful information make ideal for the realisation of CHARM's strategic communication goals.

Purpose

These guidelines have been developed as part of the CHARM communication strategy to provide a reference point for effective communication on social media that ensures all CHARM-related content aligns with the consortium's values and strategic goals.

The guidelines take into account the unique nature of social media and seeking to ensure that CHARM:

- Engages the target audience meaningfully.
- Maintains a positive online reputation.
- Maintains consistency in messaging across platforms.

The audiences and platforms have been elaborately listed in the earlier part of this strategy document. They include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and YouTube, among others. Ideally, platform selection should be selected based on audience presence and content type.

Content guidelines on social media

Tone and Voice: All postings should maintain a professional, empathetic, and informative tone. The voice should be consistent with CHARM's mission of expanding civic space and protecting rights defenders.

Content types and posting guidelines:

- Share educational information on human rights issues, community action to expand and protect civic space reporting human rights issues, and updates on CHARM initiatives.
- Encourage interaction through polls, Q&A sessions, and community stories.
- High-quality images, infographics, and videos should be used to increase engagement and understanding.
- Highlight success stories and testimonials from the community to build credibility and inspire others.
- Adherence to the listed posting schedule (e.g., daily, weekly) should be observed to keep the audience engaged.
- Post content when the target audience is most active to maximise reach and engagement.
- Use relevant hashtags and tag partners, stakeholders, and influencers to broaden the content's reach.

Engagement and Interaction

Respond to comments, messages, and enquiries in the shortest time possible, ideally within 24 hours to sustain engagement. The effort should be made to encourage positive dialogue that addresses concerns respectfully and promptly. The CHARM Digital Communications Person (Social Media Manager) should continuously monitor comments and interactions to ensure that discussions remain constructive. Content that violates the community guidelines should be removed promptly.

Events and outreach activities

CHARM could organise at least one annual conference, quarterly workshops, and events around the array of topics in the consortium's area of focus. Along with this, CHARM could leverage webinars and online forums to reach a global audience.

Legal and ethical considerations

- All necessary steps should be taken to protect the privacy of individuals. Personal information should not be shared without consent.
- All content (images, videos, text) on CHARM social media platforms must comply with copyright laws and must be properly credited.
- High ethical standards should be the hallmark of all communications. Misleading or false information should be avoided.

Evaluation and Improvement

The section on social media in the overall strategy contains a matrix that enables you to regularly monitor social media performance using analytics tools to track engagement, reach, and impact. Additionally:

- Encourage feedback from the audience and team members to continuously improve content and strategies.
- Stay updated on social media trends and adjust the guidelines as necessary to remain effective.

Social Media Management

The roles and responsibilities of the social media management portfolio are elaborated in the overall strategy document and cover content creation, posting, monitoring, and engagement. The ideal setup should consist of:

1. A social media manager: responsible for content creation, posting, and monitoring.

2. A community manager: responsible for engaging with the audience, responding to comments, and moderating discussions.

3. Crisis Team: Responsible for handling crisis management and escalating issues when necessary.

It is noteworthy that social media is a dynamic field. As such, a provision should be made for continuous training of all team members on the latest social media trends, tools, and best practices to sustain their effectiveness.

4 Strategy Implementation

The main objective of the implementation of the strategy is to enhance the visibility of the consortium by promoting its work and impact, thereby strengthening its influence and reach within the human rights and media sectors. Thus, efforts should be made to ensure that the consortium's communication goals are adhered to, including increasing public awareness, building partnerships, and influencing policy.

Messages should consistently highlight the consortium's mission and achievements, as well as impact and align with the consortium's values and goals.

The key activities

These will entail content creation and distribution. For this, a content calendar that includes regular updates, success stories, and news about the consortium's activities will be developed. The various formats, such as press releases, blog posts, infographics, and videos recommended earlier in this document, should be used.

Building and maintaining relationships with journalists and media outlets will also play an important part in the strategy implementation. CHARM's communication team should continuously pitch stories, offer expert commentary, and organise press briefings to secure media coverage while leveraging traditional and digital media channels to disseminate information effectively.

The social media engagement plan proposed in this document should be applied to bolster the consortium's social media presence through strategic posts, interactive content, and engagement with followers. Use platforms like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram to reach a wider audience and foster online communities.

Capacity building for consortium partners will be executed through workshops to train consortium partners in effective communication strategies, media relations, and social media management. The critical skills such as writing press releases, creating engaging content, and handling media enquiries will be prioritised. Additionally, efforts should be made to provide partners with communication toolkits, including guidelines for branding, messaging, and media engagement. Templates for press releases, social media posts, and reports should be shared to ensure consistency and professionalism.

Implementation Process

This will begin with the rollout of the content calendar, media outreach, and social media campaigns. Progress will be monitored and adjustments made where necessary based on initial response and performance metrics.

Coordination and communication among the principal partners will be critical to the effective execution of the strategy. As such, regular communication among consortium partners to coordinate efforts and share updates will be of paramount importance.

Strategy Implementation Plan

The CHARM secretariat will oversee the implementation with support from partners. The focal person will prepare regular reports on the progress of the communication strategy using insights from evaluations to refine the approach, address challenges, and exploit arising opportunities for greater visibility and impact. Below is the matrix of implementation

Objective	TASK	ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE					
				24	25	26	27	28	29
Enhance CHARM's thought leadership through contributions in media, articles interview	Launch of the strategy/Media training	Final production and distribution. Formal Ceremony? Organise training	CHARM						
	Branding	Design and approval of branding material and touch points.	CHARM						
	website development and maintenance	Construct website and upload content	CHARM						
	Podcast Social media platforms	Design and launch	CHARM						
	Attend Key strategic media & human rights advocacy engagements	Attend (by invitation or otherwise) key events and moments	CHARM						
Increase media coverage ion of CHARM activities in all media by 5%	Media engagement	Undertake diverse media activities- press conferences, TV shows, adverts; social media posts							
Support and amplify initiatives aimed at reshaping narrative	Public awareness campaigns	Coalesce around topical issues	CHARM partners						
	Participating in High level meetings at AU	Preparation of position papers/ research reports or Issue briefs							

Objective	TASK	ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBLE	TIMELINE					
				24	25	26	27	28	29
Provide a platform for CBOs, CSOs and content creators to tell stories and showcase their work globally	Profiling Exceptional work	Press conferences and media Briefings							
promote media literacy initiatives	Educational Workshops and webinars	civil society organizations (CSOs) on human rights, civic engagement, and media literacy.	CHARM & partners						
Strengthen capacity for human rights advocacy in media	Capacity Building	Training programmes for journalists, activists, & civil society members on digital security, investigative journalism, and human rights advocacy.	CHARM partners						
	Monitoring and Reporting	Produce annual reports on the state of civic space and democratic freedoms, highlighting progress and areas needing improvement							

5 Monitoring And Evaluation

Charm Shall Ensure Progress Towards Achieving The Specific And Overall Objectives Is Closely Tracked, Measured And Emerging Lessons Carefully Documented To Inform Decision-Making And Course Corrections. Below Is A M&E Framework, Containing Indicators, Sources Of Data, Frequency Of Collection And Reporting As Well As Organizational Responsibilities For The Same.

Objective	Indicator	Source of data	Frequency of collection	Responsibility
Objective 1: Enhance CHARM's thought leadership through contributions in media, articles interview engagement events	**1.1.** No of invitations to high profile human rights & media engagements by key stakeholders	Emails/ correspondences	Monthly	CHARM M&E Officer supported by Comms Officer
	1.2. No of website visits	Web analytics	Monthly	CHARM M&E Officer supported by Comms Officer
	1.3. No of downloads of CHARM's media content	Web analytics	Monthly	CHARM M&E Officer supported by Comms Officer
Objective 2: Increase media coverage ion of CHARM activities in all media by 5%	**2.1.** No of articles or stories in mainstream media that cover CHARM's work in target countries	Media monitoring survey	Quarterly	CHARM M&E officer supported by Comms Officer & focal points
	2.2. No of media houses covering CHARM's work in target countries	Media monitoring survey	Quarterly	CHARM M&E officer supported by Comms Officer & focal points
	2.3. No of social media posts and reach by CHARM stories	Social media analytics	Monthly	CHARM M&E officer supported by Comms Officer & focal points
Objective 3: Support and amplify initiatives aimed at reshaping narrative	**3.1.** No of people (disaggregated) reached by CHARM media activities in target countries	Activity reports	Monthly	CHARM M&E officer supported by Comms Officer & focal points
	3.2. No of policy processes that CHARM makes an input in target countries	Activity reports Field visits	Quarterly	CHARM M&E officer supported by Comms Officer & focal points
	3.3. No of policy processes that CHARM makes an input at regional and continental levels	Activity reports	Quarterly	CHARM M&E Officer supported by Comms Officer

Objective	Indicator	Source of data	Frequency of collection	Responsibility
Objective 4: Provide a platform for CBOs, CSOs and content creators to tell stories and showcase their work globally	**4.1.** No of CSO actors and content creators supported to show case their works in target countries	Activity reports Field visits	Monthly	CHARM M&E officer supported by Comms Officer & focal points
	4.2. No of stories developed and disseminated in target countries	Activity reports	Monthly	CHARM M&E officer supported by Comms Officer & focal points
Objective 5: enhance media literacy	**5.1.** No of persons trained under the programme in target countries	Activity reports Field visits	Quarterly	CHARM M&E officer supported by Comms Officer & focal points
	5.2. No of organizations impacted by the training in target countries	Activity reports Field visits	Quarterly	CHARM M&E officer supported by Comms Officer & focal points
Objective 6: Strengthen capacity for human rights advocacy in media	**6.1.** No of persons (and organizations) trained under the programme in target countries	Activity reports Field visits	Quarterly	CHARM M&E officer supported by Comms Officer & focal points
	6.2. No of policy changes attributed to CHARM's monitoring work in target countries and regionally	Media stakeholder interviews	Annually	CHARM M&E officer supported by Comms Officer & focal points

To Measures Specific Activities, The Following Key Performance Indicators Will Be Used:

NO	Activity	Indicator
1.	Press releases and media pitches	No. of releases per month
		% Of media outlets that publish/cover releases on CHARM activities
2.	Op-eds and Guest Articles	Reach and engagement metrics
		Number of op-eds and guest articles published per quarter
		Variety of publication platforms
3.	Capacity-building program	Number of people trained
4.	Collaborative activities	Number of partnerships with online platforms, blogs, and magazines)

NO	Activity	Indicator
5.	Interviews and media appearances	Number of interviews and media appearances per month
		- Number of identified and trained spokespersons
		- Audience reach for each media appearance (e.g., TV ratings, radio listeners, podcast downloads)
		- Media engagement metrics (e.g., mentions, shares, comments)
		- Qualitative feedback from media professionals on spokesperson performance
DIGITAL MEDIA		
6.	Website content	Monthly unique visitors, No. of blog posts published, Engagement matrix for posts,
		No. of posts by guest experts, academics
		Downloads or access metrics for guides and toolkits
Social Media Platforms		
7.	X(Twitter)	No. of tweets & retweets per day
		Growth of followers per month
		visibility in trending hashtags
8.	LinkedIn	No. of posts and articles published per month
		Likes, comments, shares, and re-shares
		Growth in connections & followers
9.	YouTube	Uploaded videos per month.
		Engagement metrics: views, comments, and shares per video
10.	TikTok	# of campaign videos uploaded per month
		# Views, likes, comments, and shares per video
		Growth in followers per month
11.	Instagram	#of calls perm

NO	Activity	Indicator
12.	Facebook	Number of followers, likes, and engagements.
13.	Infographics	# of infographics created and shared quarterly
		Monthly engagement metrics (shares, likes, comments)
		Reach metrics (views, downloads)
		- Qualitative feedback from target audiences
14.	Podcasts	# Episodes produced per month
		# Downloads and listen metrics per episode
		# Of reviews, ratings, and comments
		# Guest diversity (e.g., experts, activists, influencers)
		#Qualitative feedback from listeners (Impact)
Events and outreach activities		
15.	Conferences, workshops, and seminars	#of events organised per quarter
		Number of attendees per event
		# Participant feedback and satisfaction ratings
		# Of collaborations with likeminded organisations
		# Media coverage of events
16.	Webinars and online forums	# Webinars and online forums per quarter
		Participants and registrants
		# Feedback and satisfaction ratings post event
		# Views and downloads post-event

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