



DOCUMENT CONTROL DETAILS	
<b>Title</b>	<p><b>Title:</b> Communications Policy</p> <p><b>Version:</b> 2.0</p> <p><b>Reference Number:</b> PP004#</p>
<b>Supersedes</b>	<p><b>Supersedes:</b> All previous Communications Policies in the organisation</p> <p><b>Significant Changes:</b> Reformatting; revision of content</p>
<b>Originator or Modifier</b>	<p><b>Originated By:</b> Evelyn Dykes</p> <p><b>Designation:</b> Chairman, APLE Cambodia</p> <p><b>Modified by:</b> Samleang Seila</p> <p><b>Designation:</b> Executive Director</p>
<b>Ratification</b>	<p><b>Referred for approval by:</b> Samleang Seila</p> <p><b>Date of Referral:</b> 15.11.19</p> <p><b>Referral Destination:</b> Evelyn Dykes</p> <p><b>Date of APLE CAMBODIA Board Approval:</b> 19.11.19</p>
<b>Application</b>	<p>All APLE Cambodia Trustees</p> <p>All APLE Cambodia Employees</p> <p>All APLE Cambodia Volunteers</p>
<b>Circulation</b>	<p><b>Issue Date:</b> 25.11.19</p> <p><b>Circulated by:</b> Samleang Seila (Executive Director)</p> <p><b>Dissemination and Implementation:</b> 25.11.19</p>
<b>Review</b>	<p><b>Review Date:</b> 25.11.19</p> <p><b>Responsibility of:</b> Admin Manager</p>

## PP004#      **Communications Policy**

### **Aim**

This policy is designed to ensure information is available and understood across the whole context of the organisation and its activities, and to establish and maintain open, clear and effective channels of internal and external communications.

The policy includes guidance on verbal, written, printed and electronic communications.

### **Guiding Principles**

The guiding principles of this Policy are:

- To communicate effectively with staff about the organisation's vision, mission, goals, activities, policies, procedure and other ongoing issues
- To ensure staff fulfill their responsibility for providing information and maintaining effective communication practices; and
- To provide easy access to essential, useful and engaging information for staff and effective methods of communication during a serious and specific incident.
- To communicate effectively with clients, external parties and other stakeholders; and
- To promote the image and quality of services of the organisation.

### **Professionalism in communication**

APPLE staff are required to be respectful, polite and professional to one another and to others at all times when communicating, regardless of the means of communication used or the purpose of the communication.

### **Definitions**

#### ***Internal communication***

This form of communication happens all the way up from staff to management and Board of Directors and vice versa within APPLE.

#### ***External communication***

This communication is between APPLE staff and clients, partners, donors, media, government and other parties outside the organisation.

#### ***Verbal communication***

This is a non-written communication form that can be carried out via:

- Handovers (internal)
- Telephone calls (internal and external)
- Meetings (internal and external)
- Skype, voice calls, video calls, etc.

#### ***Written communication***

This is any form of communication in writing and may include the following:

- Email, letters and faxes (internal and external)
- Forms, reports and memos (internal and external)
- Minutes and agendas for meetings (internal)
- Technical, operational and procedural manuals (internal)
- Information boards, booklets, fliers, newsletters (internal and external)

- Messages, comments or “likes” on social media or internet blogs
- Text messages or instant messages (including photographs) on mobile phones or other electronic devices

## **Categories of information and handling authorities**

Different pieces of information require different channels and authorities of communication and will be the responsibility of different staff to respond or disseminate. Below are the main categories of information and dissemination authorities within APLE:

1. Management and strategic direction:
2. Day-to-day operational work related information
3. Financial and administrative information
4. Project/Program development and management
5. Internal Notices

### **1. Management and Strategic Direction**

This category includes all information from the Board, senior management (Executive Director, Program Director, Finance/Admin Manager, Criminal Justice Development Leader, Community Engagement Team Leader, Court Support Team Leader and Communications Officer) and executive committees (Executive Director, Program Director, Finance/Admin Manager, and Communications Officer) of APLE regarding the overall management of the organisation and its strategic direction. This may include updates on regular activities of the Board's and executive committee, their decisions, minutes or any other information that needs to be communicated to staff in a timely and appropriate manner by Executive Director or another designated executive committee staff.

For external communication, only the Board Chairman and Executive Director are allowed to share or disseminate such information within their area of responsibility and functions. Other staff or Communications Officer may be assigned to communicate this information on behalf of the Board or Executive Director or as a spokesperson.

### **2. Day-to-day operational work related information**

This means the information of all the field operations (Criminal Justice Development, Community Engagement, Court Support, and Advocacy & Research) that staff members require to carry out their day-to-day work. Staff may freely communicate or share such information as part of their daily operations with caution. However, sharing of information across all the departments must be treated at manager-to-manager level.

For external communication, Program Director is authorised to disseminate information at high level or to national authorities. Department Team Leaders/ Managers can share or disseminate information at client, partner and under-provincial levels.

### **3. Financial and administrative information**

This category includes any information of finance and administration such as financial statement, budget, salaries, audit report, tax, cash flow, bank accounts, staff appointments, meetings, memos, recruitment, leaves, warnings, etc. that the Finance and Admin Department may disseminate or share internally. It is the responsibility of the Finance and Admin manager to disseminate internally and externally in consideration of the confidentiality rules.

#### **4. Project/Program development and management**

This category includes all information about the projects and programs or intervention structures, strategies, activities, logical framework (goals, outcomes, outputs, indicators), M&E, reports and any justifications. It is the responsibility of the Project Manager to manage and disseminate such information. All other staff who are required to disseminate this information should be fully informed by the Program Director and know how to effectively convey the information.

Any inquiries about the above-mentioned information should be referred to the Program Director. For external communication, the Program Director must consult with or seek approval from the Executive Director before disseminating information about any program framework, proposals and strategic plan.

#### **5. Internal notices**

This includes information that staff will benefit from and it can be generated by any channel within the organisation. Such information may include press releases, news items, press summary, external relevant information, upcoming public or organisational events. It is the responsibility of the Communications Officer and Administrator to disseminate to all the staff in accordance with this policy and other internal regulations.

### **Methods of communication**

There are several types of communication channels available to staff when communicating information of the above-mentioned categories. APLE policy on communication methods is outlined below.

#### **Face-to-face communication**

Communicating in person or face-to-face with colleagues is considered to be the most beneficial method of ensuring information and knowledge are shared.

APLE staff are encouraged to conduct face-to-face communication whenever possible.

In some circumstances, senior management will require information to be disseminated via the managers/leaders as quickly as possible and, as far as possible, via face-to-face meetings where understanding of the information can be assured and feedback can be gathered and discussed. It is vital that all the staff receive this information within a given timescale and that all the staff understand the intent and the outcomes of the information and are given an opportunity to discuss, comment and provide feedback.

In all other circumstances as part of the working relationship, APLE staff are encouraged as often as possible to meet with colleagues or use the telephone, Skype, video conferencing facility to discuss issues verbally, rather than relying on text message, email or printed material. Whilst it is important to manage the amount of time spent in meetings, well-managed meetings or discussions are an effective and efficient way of sharing knowledge, solving problems and ensuring common understanding and appreciation of issues.

#### **Information boards**

There are information boards in the office displaying information for staff. Administrator has the responsibility for the content and maintenance of information boards in the office and should ensure that information is advertised in a timely manner and, importantly, is removed when out of date.

## **Written public communication materials**

These include the organisation's leaflets, brochures, information cards, booklets, newsletter, research reports, etc. distributed to all staff or displayed in an office for reading.

The Communications officer is responsible for the content of such materials and should ensure these materials are available, accessible and placed in an orderly manner. Staff should be informed of placement of any new items in the office.

Despite their effectiveness in some situations, APLE is conscious of the negative environmental effect of printed publicity and information materials. To this end, any printed written material proposed must be discussed with and approved by the Senior Management Team, and alternative methods used if at all possible. This is particularly important when materials may require to be duplicated in Khmer and English.

Strategic organizational information such as Annual Reports, Impact Reports and other organizational publications, should be disseminated electronically wherever possible to minimize excess resource utilization for printing documents. Small numbers of printed copies may be authorized by the SMT for specific purposes.

## **ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS**

### **Email**

Email is one of the most common methods of communicating within APLE, however it is often considered to be overused and time-intensive.

APLE staff are required to use APLEs' authorised email account "work email" ([example@aplecambodia.org](mailto:example@aplecambodia.org)) only when communicating work-related information with other staff and external parties. Work email accounts should not be used to communicate social or personal information.

Staff are reminded that general email communication remains the subject of the organisation's internal regulations, communication policy, computer use regulations and code of conduct, which provide details of appropriate use, email management, security and confidentiality.

It is the responsibility of the IT staff to create and manage all the email accounts of APLE Cambodia. However, staff should be mindful about password change, email security, spyware, hacking, lost identity, etc. It is required that staff change their email password/keyword twice a month and keep it safe for themselves. Only the Executive Director and IT staff have access to all the APLE email account login details.

Remember that electronic means of communication are not always safe and secure and thus sensitive information should not be transmitted over the Internet. If you can't avoid this means, always make sure your Internet and computer devices used are protected by strong password, anti-virus software, spam filtering tool and firewall.

The ED has the right to screen and monitor individual or all incoming and outgoing work emails to ensure no personal communication is received or delivered on staff's work account and confidential information is communicated rightfully.

For general external communication with APLE Cambodia, a dedicated email account has been created ([info@aplecambodia.org](mailto:info@aplecambodia.org)) for official use. The Communications Officer maintains and manages this email account to receive and answer incoming emails and to disseminate approved information. General inquiries, media requests, internship/volunteer proposals, service contacts, PayPal notifications etc. are received via this email.

The Communications Officer is responsible for drafting email responses and seeking approval from the Board Chairman, Executive Director or Departmental Managers/Leaders for any information relating to their responsibilities before disseminating. For good practices, the Communications Officer should always verify information he/she holds with the responsible officer before sending out the message.

The Communications Officer will forward any incoming emails that do not fall under his/her expertise or areas of responsibilities timely to the other staff for their response. However, it will be the responsibility of the Communications Officer to follow up with the forwarded emails to ensure there is no delay in responding to the senders.

APLE also operates *report abuse* email ([reportabuse@aplecambodia.org](mailto:reportabuse@aplecambodia.org)) to receive reports from the public concerning suspicious child sexual abuse/exploitation. Hotline Analyst handles this email and ensures that senders are informed of the receipt and reports are disseminated to the right staff for action. Staff receiving reports of child abuse to their email should promptly forward it to [reportabuse@aplecambodia.org](mailto:reportabuse@aplecambodia.org) and contact the Hotline Analyst to inform them of the report.

### **Website communications**

APLE official website ([www.aplecambodia.org](http://www.aplecambodia.org)) contains information about the organisation, programs, contact, news items, events and links to useful information for staff and the general public.

The Communications Officer is responsible for keeping the website's contents up to date, maintains its quality and accuracy of information, increases traffic, and takes action to ensure it is hack-free. Contents will be drafted by the Communications Officer with information sufficiently and correctly supplied by Department Managers/Leaders, and approved by Executive Director before publishing or disseminating. If possible, drafts should be edited or proofread by an English native speaker.

Should there be any possible hacking notions or technical problems affecting the website, the Communications Officer should promptly bring to the attention of the IT staff or seek immediate action by Executive Director.

APLE does not take any responsibility for contents of any external websites linked to [www.aplecambodia.org](http://www.aplecambodia.org), but the Communications Officer should diligently evaluate any linked external content and obtain permission before linking or approving linkage.

Child Protection Policy should prevail over all communications via the website or any other social media publicity.

### **Media communication (including social media)**

The purpose of media communications is to promote APLE Cambodia's mandates, mission and successes, and inform the public about its casework, lessons learnt, case studies, situations, emerging trends, stats, etc. with its local, national and international audiences in the media.

All official communication with the media (especially television, radio, newspaper) on behalf of APLE Cambodia shall be coordinated and supported by the Communications Officer with approval of the Executive Director.

Board Chairman and Executive Director shall be the primary official spokespersons for APLE Cambodia. For specific requests and subject matter, Department Managers/Leaders or Communications Officer may be called upon and authorised to interact with the media within their expertise. The Board Chairman and Executive Director will appoint a substitute spokesperson in the event of his/her absence.

The Communications Officer is responsible for drafting and disseminating official press releases as required. Press releases will be disseminated to the approved lists of recipients or journalists only and posted in APLE Cambodia's social media sites.

The Communications Officer is responsible for planning and providing necessary training and support on media communication to APLE staff, to enhance their communications skills.

Any staff member who is contacted by a representative of the media shall refer the requests to the Communications Officer to handle.

## **Photography**

The use of photographs may be part of media communications. The Communications Officer is responsible for deciding whether photography is needed. Photography may be permissible but the following procedures must be observed:

- a) Anyone may decline an opportunity to be photographed for the media print and/or online materials.
- b) Photographer must obtain consent of the individual participant before shooting and publicising.
- c) Participants must sign a release form giving permission to publish their photograph.
- d) No identifiable information or image of a child victim will be publicized for any purpose (see Child Protection Policy)

## **Social media**

Social media is an increasingly popular means of communication.

APLE uses the following official social media sites to enhance its worldwide communication by disseminating updates, knowledge, information, expertise, etc. through:

Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/aplecambodia.org](http://www.facebook.com/aplecambodia.org)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/PROTECTCambodia](http://www.twitter.com/PROTECTCambodia)

YouTube: [www.youtube.com/apleorg](http://www.youtube.com/apleorg)

Mail Chimp: [www.mailchimp.com](http://www.mailchimp.com)

Others (Google+, RSS, Bing, LinkedIn etc)

It is the responsibility of the Communications officer to maintain, update, protect and promote these official APLE social media sites.

Using official APLE social media sites for personal communication is strictly prohibited.

The Communications Officer should use APLE Child Protection Policy, Code of Conduct and personal judgment to handle comments or questions on official social media sites within a reasonable timespan

and retain control of contents posted about APLE, and if required, seek editorial rights to correct or fine-tune the content.

It is also the Communications Officer's job to monitor positive and negative feedback about the organisation and identify actions to promote or resolve any issues which may arise.

Child Protection Policy and national laws shall prevail over the use of social media sites.

The Communications Officer should post social media items as soon as the content is checked and verified by the Department Manager/Leaders.

Each Department Manager/Leader will provide the content in a preset form to the Communications Officer who will draft texts for social media posting.

### **Individual/personal communications including social media and blogs**

Although staff are free to send "letters to the editor", comment on blogs or provide opinions on bloggers as private citizens, they should not do so using APLE Cambodia stationery or express their title or position with APLE Cambodia.

APLE staff or associated personnel found to be in breach of this code will face disciplinary action and may be dismissed.

APLE staff using personal social media sites for posting, commenting, liking, replying, adding friends, sharing and following should ensure they use utmost diligence and caution.

APLE staff must not use social media platforms to disseminate, discuss or divulge any information about the organization or its work.

Notwithstanding the rights to freedom of individual opinion and speech, APLE staff are cautioned against responding directly (even as private citizens) to bloggers or media comments or criticisms (verbally or in writing) without discussion with and agreement of the Communications Officer and Executive Director, since they may unwittingly identify themselves, their position within APLE or their knowledge of a particular case, and as such, could be in breach of the code of conduct in relation to confidentiality.

APLE staff or associated personnel should not use press or social media sites to express dissatisfaction with APLE activities or practice; other internal channels are available for such concerns (see Grievance Policy).