

HSNP Crisis Communications Strategy

1. Purpose

HSNP crisis communication strategy shares on how the programme prepares and responds during crisis situations to various audiences that are important to the programme such as employees, the media, government, law enforcement and general public at large. Crisis communications strategy is important because it will enable HSNP communicate information about crisis situations more promptly, accurately and confidently.

A situational analysis of possible emergencies that require crisis communication include:

1. **The nature of the programme-** delivering social assistance cash transfers to the poorest and most vulnerable in a context where the need far exceeds the available resources. There are known cases of communities and political leaders being disgruntled by the number of allocated beneficiaries.
2. **Context of its implementation:** - historically marginalized Arid Counties with unique and dynamic challenges such as i) Chronic poverty that make targeting a challenge because of limited resources ii) Insecurity within some Counties and between the National borders iii) Vast and difficult terrain 84% of land mass with 36% Kenya's population iv) Extreme climatic conditions e.g. drought and floods v) Poor infrastructure e.g. road network, weak markets iv) Political and religious extremists
3. **Programme Operations-** large scale and mobile intense activities such as registration, validation, bank account opening and activation etc. These activities can sometime involve scaling up and down a large number of staff on short-term basis. The programme operations sometimes also coincide with key National Government activities e.g. National ID registration, Voters registration, National Elections thus exposing the programme to risks e.g. political interference.
4. **Positioning** as a 1) Government within the Ministry of Devolution and Planning 2) As one of the four National CTs under NSNP 3) As a National programme that interacts with County Governments 4) Jubilee government flagship programme operating in political opposition stronghold Counties.

In summary, some of the identified programme risks that will shape the crisis communications strategy include issues on: i) Fraud ii) Court cases iii) Insecurity iv) Corruption iv) Conflicts (political, religious and ethnic) among others.

The above scenarios demonstrate the need for HSNP to have an effective Communications Crisis Strategy to use when a crisis situation occurs.

2. HSNP Crisis Communications Strategy

The HSNP Crisis communication strategy consists of two main components;

1. HSNP Crisis Communications Plan
2. HSNP Crisis Communications Team

2.1 HSNP Crisis Communications Plan

The core objectives of the CCP is:

1. To respond to crisis quickly.
2. To activate immediate steps to control the messages.
3. To successfully regain public trust.

Key steps for implementing the HSNP Crisis Communications Plan include:

1. Constituting a HSNP Crisis Communications Team
2. Activating the Crisis Communications Plan
3. Analysis of the Communications crisis

2.1.1 HSNP Crisis Communication Team

The programme will establish a crisis communications team.

The team will be entail the following:

1. **The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) NDMA** is the official spokesperson that will be the primary contact to all media enquiries during the crisis situation. The CEO is the senior most Government representative. The spokesperson will run all the press conferences and give most interviews during the crisis. At the County level, the CDCs will be the key person responsible to address the media as guided by the Headquarters. DFID will also establish the same to address possible question from UK media.
2. **The HSNP Communication Specialist** is the internal communications manager responsible for communicating all essential information to all involved internally. It is important for all the staff to access official communication that they can refer to if contacted by the media. This will also encourage the spirit of cohesion amongst the staff, as they will feel as part and puzzle of the managing the crisis situation.
3. **HSNP Media strategy** that will establish and maintain relationship with the local media. The strategy will also help in cultivating a relationship of openness and trust by pitching stories, ideas, expert commentary to reporters in good times, not just times of crisis. HSNP over the past year has actively engaged with both the local and national media and have established a cordial working relationship.
4. **Analyzing a list of potential weakness.** Lead by the HSNP Team Leader, HSNP will develop matrixes that document risks and mitigation measures to predict where potential crises may arise and how to effectively management the situations.
5. Develop and regularly update programme **fact-sheets and other key documents** for the press kit. This information will be distributed to reports at press conferences or during interviews.

In summary:

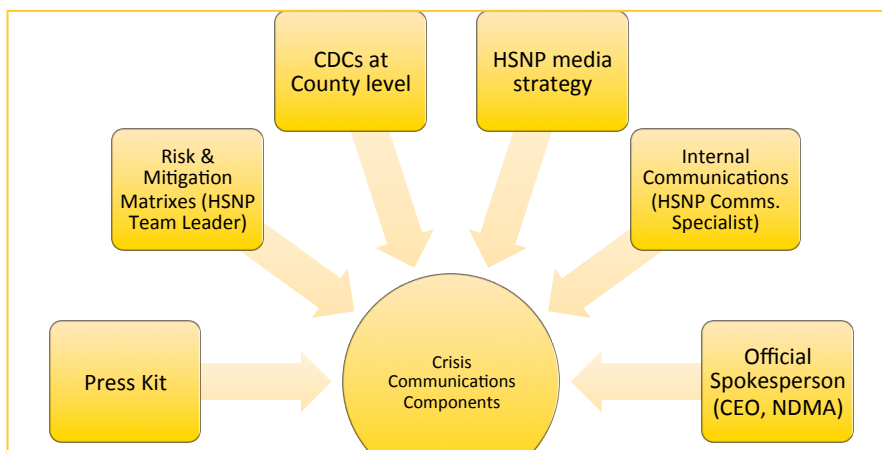


Figure 1: HSNP Crisis Communications Components

2.1.2 Activating the HSNP Crisis Communications Plan

1. **Step 1: Activate Emergency Notification System.** At first sign of a crisis situation, the HSNP senior management will determine the best approach to take in addressing the crisis situation. At the same time, the HSNP team leader?? will activate emergency notification system (official email, SMS, Phone tree). The Communications specialist will share internal statements with staff to read if contacted by the media. At the County level, the CDCs will be the key person to address the media. However, if the questions asked are highly sensitive where wrong response can either i) further damage the reputation of HSNP or ii) worsen the situation by making it more difficult to manage the crisis, the CDCs and HSNP staff will be advised to refer the media to the CEO, NDMA who is the official spokesperson. A press release expressing concern and steps the programme will undertake to address the crisis will be sent to the local media houses. The press release will also provide details of upcoming press conference, if any. The aim of the press release is to share as much accurate information as possible within the shortest period.
2. **Step 2: Assemble the press kit** that has i) all the press releases that summarizes the crisis stories ii) Fact sheets iii) Press lines iv) Bios and photos of key players v) Copies of important HSNP graphs, maps, handbooks etc. v) Contact information. The press kit will be uploaded on HSNP website www.hsnp.or.ke and where needed, there will be some hard copies.
3. **Step 3: Press Conference** will be the best channel to control the messages. The need for holding press conference will be determined by the timeliness, significance, and scale of the crisis situation. Usually, the media publish the latest information they access, thus HSNP should be the primary source of such information. Press conferences will be used as a good opportunity to share press kits with the media. The programme will have developed statements and answers to possible questions. It is recommended that the CEO rehearse and be prepared to answer the “tough” questions before the actual press conference. *Note: HSNP needs to carry out a spokespersons training for key staff that will/might engage with the media both at National and County level. The training will enable staff better understand how to effectively engage with the media e.g. what to say, how to address tough/trick questions, build confidence in answering questions on camera or during live radio sessions etc.*

In summary:

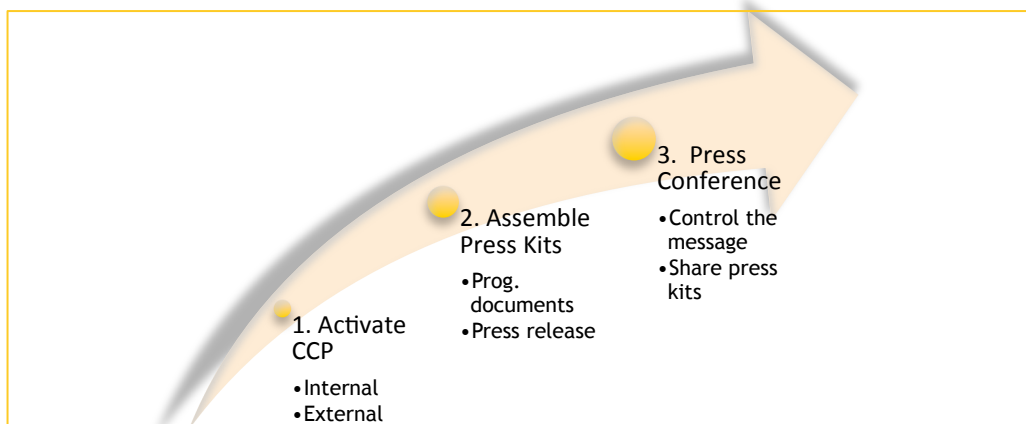


Figure 2: Steps to activating the HSNP Communications Crisis Plan

2.1.3 Analysis of the after Communications crisis

After the crisis has successfully been managed, HSNP senior management will carry out a self-analysis of the crisis situation. The findings will help in informing how to mitigate potential crisis or better manage future crisis.