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**DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ENHANCED MODEL OF
INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE ORGANIZATION
AIDS HEALTH CARE FOUNDATION**

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INTRODUCTION

Many managers are familiar with the situation when mission and vision are defined, strategy and budget are set up and funds are available, team is highly motivated, but organization just cannot take off. What is wrong? There could be several reasons hiding in organizational structure, business processes, management approaches, etc. But very often the failure comes from poor communications within the team and lack of communications strategy.

Absence of clear and well-designed communications causes confusion and stress and leads to conflicts, missed deadlines, and slow decision-making processes that can have a long-term effect on the performance and efficiency of the organization. Internal communication is an important tool of effective and smooth operation, which needs specific attention and efforts in terms of its development and adaptation to the changes, defining communication flows and channels, introducing acceptable and clear “house rules”, managing and monitoring the whole system of communications.

Nowadays management needs to give the internal audience equal attention to those external to the organization, and “communications professionals have to recognize the importance of integrating the internal message with those messages communicated externally” (1, p 185).

Basic criteria for any organization or working team function lays in the collective action of people, which, on the other hand, depends a lot on how they receive (share) the information and how they communicate on different levels. Good communication inside the organization is required to achieve coordinated results and is vitally important for projects and changes management. And there is no doubt that it is essential for management to keep people informed on matters that affect them and to provide channels for them to express their views (2). As employees are often described as an organization’s most important capital, internal communication issues get more and more value. Weak liaison between the employees and the organization is a serious threat to the last one.

Internal communication is often described as a core process for organizations (3) and one that should be on the agenda for all management strategic meetings.

Thus, good quality and proper management of communication process within the organization ensures easy and due circulation of information in all directions and levels and contributes correspondingly to the quality of operational processes, employee's engagement, involvement and motivation. Yet there is still a kind of disbalance between the perceived importance of communications and actual attention, efforts and resources given towards it.

This requirement has never been more evident than at the outset of the pandemic. Businesses were suddenly forced to evaluate the effectiveness of their internal communication. Were they up to the challenge of reaching an unexpectedly remote workforce?

When talking about internal communications, the majority of the organizations, and specifically NGOs and non-profit structures, that have limited budgets, seek for comparatively quick and low budget solutions to set up and monitor the process.

This project aims to:

- study theoretical and practical approaches on the internal communication
- analyse current processes in the specific organization and understand if they contribute adequately to its operational processes and to employees' wellbeing at work
- design a modified model of internal communication for specific organization
- implement the model of internal communication in the specific organization and evaluate its effectiveness.

The project combined research and practical parts as it included study of academic resources and best practices on internal communication and further on proceeds with the examination of internal communication in the specific organization, resulting in comprehensive recommendations on how to upgrade the process and evaluate them and rounds up with the analysis of their practical implementation.

Project is implemented in a multinational NGO that operates in the public health area.

Research phenomenon: Internal Communications in Organization: ways to enhance.

Focus Areas	Research Question	Methods and Tools
Nature of internal communication in the organizations	What is internal communication, its role in the organizations, factors that influence internal communication and approaches to assess internal communication.	Literature and Case Studies
Current internal communication in the given organization	How internal communication is integrated in the organization and how it contributes to organization needs and employees' wellbeing in the organization? What are the weak and strong points of internal communication and key factors that influence it?	Observation; Analysis of internal documentation; Comparison
		Qualitative Thematic Interviews (n=12);
		Quantitative Questionnaire Surveys (n=12)
Interventions to current internal communication in the organization	How suggested interventions contribute to strengthen and streamline current internal communication processes	Data reading and analysis
		Qualitative Thematic Interviews (n=15);
		Quantitative Questionnaire Surveys (n=15)
		Data reading and analysis

II. THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE ORGANIZATION

2.1. Essence and Definition

There are numerous definitions of internal communication floating around, each of them different from the other, each pulling out a different focus and function.

Some are very simplistic in their approach; others attempt to encapsulate every element of the internal communication function. Here are some of them:

“The sharing of information within an organization for business purposes.” (4)

Tench and Yeomans look beyond the simple sharing of information and explore the possibility of positively influencing the mindset of employees: “The planned use of communication actions to systematically influence the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of current employees.” (5)

Taking into consideration that internal communication can motivate employees to improve their overall performance, Grossman proposed the following definition:

“To help leaders inform and engage employees, in a way which motivates staff to maximize their performance and deliver the business strategy most effectively.”

(6). Another crucial point is providing an opportunity for a two-way conversation between employees and management. Kevin Ruck’s definition of internal communications focuses on the importance of the employee voice being given serious consideration: “Corporate level information provided to all employees and the concurrent provision of opportunities for all employees to have a say about important matters that are taken seriously by line managers and senior managers.” (7)

Through all formulations above we can clearly see that internal communication is not only about sharing information anymore. It is a strategic tool of modern management, which establishes vibrant liaison between company management and employees, between the employees. It ensures that employees understand the overall company vision and motivates them into achieving established objectives. On the other hand, it gives red and green signals to management on processes and challenges.

Internal communication can be treated as part of production and business activities and includes all types of information exchange, instructions, reports, records, training, etc. needed to ensure effective interaction between the organizational divisions and between the employees. The most important purpose of internal communications is related to broadcasting and interpretation of goals and policies of the organization among its employees and cultivating their supportive attitude. Thus, internal communication is the basic tool to share knowledge in the organization and stimulate motivation, engagement and adherence.

Communication itself is a process through which the idea and knowledge is transmitted from the sources to recipients with the purpose to change the behavior or attitude of the recipients. Internal communication is the process through which management cultivates the system of information sharing among employees inside the organization. (8)

Though, initially the basic function of internal communications was about instructions and control, modern approaches re-focused it on challenging and stimulating employees, managing changes and gaining employee engagement and commitment. The aim of internal communications has correspondingly moved from controlling and directing people, through providing information, making announcements and supporting industrial relations, to supporting the development of a flexible work environment that is able to adapt to change, seeks improvement, shares knowledge and know-how, generates ideas and involves people in achieving strategic goals.

Internal communication supports decision making in different levels; thus, communications can flow in horizontal and vertical directions. Vertical communications are set up between management levels in both directions. Their basic function is to share information about methods and terms and distribute or delegate tasks from managers to subordinates. Feedback is used to adjust tasks, inform about challenges and opportunities, changes on the ground, etc. Horizontal internal communications are practiced by the employee of the same level and ensure coordination of activities and interaction. Majority of organizations practice

diagonal communications as well. Those are established between different levels to exchange non-linear information and perform nonlinear functions.

Depending on the environment of their existence internal communications can be formal and informal. Formal (official) internal communications are those set up by the management with the purpose to reach business goals and ensure interaction between structural elements of the organization. Informal communications are usually set up on the level of personal relations within the frames of informal groups.

Depending on the method of communication verbal and non-verbal communications should be mentioned. This division is often undervalued, however recent situations with COVID related restrictions showed that it contributes a lot to the effective interaction. Non-verbal communication is based on the exchange of unvoiced signals such as gestures, postures, mimics and other signs of behavior. Verbal communications are implemented through oral (dialogue, meetings, negotiations, presentations, etc) and written (letters, reports, instructions, policies, etc) messages. Here employees usually give 45% of their communication efforts to listening, 30% to speaking and 15% to reading. (10)

2.2. Elements and Key Factors of Internal Communication

For the further referral it should also be mentioned that internal communications, as any other communications, are invalid without four basic elements:

- Sender – a person who generates idea or collects information and sends it
- Message – an information coded in symbols
- Channel – toll for information sharing/ sending
- Receiver – a person to whom the information is addressed and who interprets it.

What are the factors influencing effectiveness of internal communications?

Daly, Teague and Daly declared the following ones:

- Communication is a fundamental part in the process of organizing.

- Understanding organizational communications can help in understanding management strategies.
- Senior management should be committed to communication.
- Effective leadership skills should contain communications skills.
- Management should be responsible for conceiving and maintaining the communications system.
- Effective communication should include both written and face-to-face communications.
- Employees should perceive the messages as relevant to them.
- The messages should be consistent with actions.
- Communication skills training can lead to increased effectiveness of the communications system.
- The communications system should always be monitored and evaluated regularly.
- A better understanding of employees' perceptions of communications problems in their organizations would help managers communicate more effectively and improve their ability to promote more effective communications throughout the organization. (11)

It should also be mentioned that the size of the organization and its structure are obviously among the key factors. Interaction depends a lot on the organizational structure, which defines communication outlines.

Below are presented factors influencing the effectiveness of internal communications as defined by Michał Chmielecki. (12)

On Micro Level:

- Employee's communications competence and style (as the most specific and substantial aspect of any human communications system), conditions the effectiveness of interpersonal communications and consequently decides the efficiency of major organizational processes.
- Relevant messaging or information perception in line with feedback.

- Effective choice of either formal or informal communications networks with the participation of communicators from all hierarchical levels of an organization
- Proficient and conscious use of a verbal, non-verbal kind(s) of communication, or both of them.
- Relevant organizational communications means, used and known by individual communicators, is a crucial factor at all organizational communications stages and in wider applications.
- Identifying and overcoming personal communications barriers.

On Mezzo Level:

- Integration of the communications system and all its subsystems with the goals of the organization.
- Leadership and management style, which directly fosters or inhibits communications, especially nurturing real-time communications as opposed to technology-mediated communications.
- Successful selection of a relevant channel directly facilitates successful reaching of company objectives.
- Effective conflict management.
- Effective group communications [skills], such as relevant supply of information, effective listening, knowledgeable information analysis, efficient enquiry and synergy, which allow efficient horizontal communications flows in an organization.

On Macro Level:

- Organizational objectives, namely its mission statements valuing communications and communicators, as well as an overall communications strategy, constitute the baseline of communications in an organization.
- Strong communications ethics, manifesting itself as harmony between an organization's external and internal communications, positive affiliations

with all interest groups, etiquette knowledge for employees and management also form a communications system background.

- Identifying and overcoming organizational communications barriers
- Proper feedback in communications processes is of paramount importance when securing the effectiveness and dynamics of all parameters in the communications system, especially along the lines of vertical communications.
- Organizational structure needs to be revised as it is to enable the flow of information, allowing the circulation of messages among communicators and prompt feedback on all the levels of interaction.
- The determination to create a communications system itself, allowing synergy in interaction, is one of the seminal factors when seeking effective communications.

For internal communication defining the main factors, which potentially decrease its effectiveness, is even more essential in stopping them from growing out of control. It would be wise to divide the barriers into those which arise from communication between individuals and from the organizational communications.

Barriers on Individual Level:

- perception.
- semantic barriers;
- non-verbal barriers;
- poor/ insufficient feedback;
- poor listening skills.

Barriers on Organizational Level:

- Misinterpretation/ misunderstanding of messages;
- Informational overload;
- Inadequate organizational structure.

2.3. Structure and Implementation

Internal communication in the organization is implemented through the communication strategy. “Communication Strategy” is a widely and often used term when it comes to management practices, however there are not so many definitions of it yet. Thus, it is interpreted differently depending on the areas of its application and management schools. Nevertheless, there is a clear trace of two basic things in the majority of cases where authors speak about communication strategy. First of all, they refer to it as to the plan of communications for a definite (usually long-term) period, and secondly, they mention definite principles of structuring communications within a definite communication act (plan).

What is needed to create a well-structured and comprehensive communication strategy?

For the purposes of this paper “Communication Strategy” is understood as a plan for a definite period of time, which is used by the organization to communicate with different target audiences on different topics. Communication strategy is always purposed to form definite perception and attitude, cultivate support, and increase loyalty to the organization and its product. Any communication strategy is based on the idea and concept/ position with which organization wants to reach its key auditory.

As practice shows, the need for internal communication strategy usually appears at the very initial stage of organizational development, when there is a need to multiply efforts and incomes, while external communication strategy comes at the later stages of organizational development, when there are achievements which should be multiplied.

Communication strategies can be different in structures however they should answer the following basic questions:

- Goals and tasks of the communication strategy should correlate with those of the organization
- Analysis of the current communication issues (through focus groups, interviews, surveys, etc);
- Segmentation of the target auditoria and groups and targeted messaging

- Positioning – what we have now and what we want to have
- Selection of channels
- Risks evaluation;
- KPIs (Communication strategies are usually set up for a year because it is difficult for trace KPIs for the shorter period);
- Budget;
- Implementation and evaluation plan.

It should be mentioned that for the majority of organizations setting up quantitative KPIs for Internal communications strategy is hardly possible. Thus, it is recommended to apply qualitative criteria at the initial stages (14)

2.4. Assessment of Internal Communication

Though there are enough methods for internal communications assessment, organizations often neglect this part.

Most of the approaches recommended for internal communication assessment are based on formative research and communication objectives that are output, out-take and outcome-based.

Assessment is understood here as defining characteristics of the research subject on the basis of measurable data. Thus, assessment starts with measurement, and developing measurable communication objectives is important from the very beginning. One of the earliest approaches to the assessment of internal communication was suggested by An International Communication Association (ICA). Its assessment package includes a standardized survey questionnaire, interview guides, observations, network analysis, critical incidents and a communication diary. (17)

The Communication Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ) takes a different approach to the internal communication assessment and concentrates on eight primary dimensions of communication satisfaction that include: a general organizational perspective, organizational integration, personal feedback, relationship with

supervisor, horizontal-informal communication, relationship with subordinates, media quality, and communication climate. (18)

The International Association for the Measurement and Evaluation of Communication (AMEC) has developed an Integrated Evaluation Framework as a guide for good measurement practice. It covers 7 criteria:

- Objectives –clear organizational objectives .
- Inputs – Target audiences of the campaign, the strategic plan and other inputs such as describing some of the situation analysis, resources required and budgets.
- Activities – What activities were carried out, any testing or research, content production and so forth.
- Outputs – What was the reach of the paid advertising, how many visitors to the website, how many posts, tweets or retweets, how many people attended the event, and how many potential readers of the media coverage. This is quantitative and qualitative measures of outputs.
- Out-takes – The response and reactions of your target audiences to the activity. How attentive were they to the content, what was their recall, how well understood is the topic, did the audience engage with the content or did the audience subscribe to more information?
- Outcomes – Has the target audience increased understanding, has it changed their attitude to the topic, has it increased trust and/or preference, has it had an impact on the intention to do something (e.g. trial, subscribe, register) or increased online advocacy? Impact – Reputation improvement, relationships improved or established, increase in sales or donations, change in policy, or improved social change. (19)

The Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR) Internal Communication group, known as CIPR Inside, developed an Inside Measurement Matrix. It set up a rationale for internal communication measurement based on following criteria:

- Establish the value of practice for organizational reputation and success
- Generate insights that inform professional practice

- Support insightful business decisions
- Check progress against plans
- Assess overall efficacy. (20)

Internal communication questionnaire, the ICQ10, was based on ten simple scales, and adapted from the Internal Communication and Organizational Engagement Questionnaire (ICOEQ) developed by Welch. (21)

Questionnaires such as the ICQ10 would be useful in analysis of the situation in a given point in time.

Assessment method should consider the assessment of communication that happens on different levels and in different channels, correlation between level of needs satisfaction and range of reaching the expected goal.

Methodology should contain description of tools and actions but should not tend to strict formality and should allow some variances and replacements.

Thus, qualitative assessment could be chosen as the primary research method because it explores attitudes, behaviors, and experiences and attempts to get an in-depth opinion from participants. Qualitative assessment may come up with suggestive ideas for further research.

CHAPTER III. INTERNAL COMMUNICATION IN AHF EUROPE

3.1. Description of AHF Europe: mission, goals, structure

AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF, established in 1987 in the USA) is a global non-profit organization providing cutting-edge medicine and advocacy to people with HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases in 45 countries worldwide.

AHF Europe, the European Bureau of the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, was established in 2009 in Amsterdam (The Netherlands).

Its basic strategy is to ensure access to free and high-quality prevention and treatment services for people in need and implement and promote AHF's models of care on national and international levels.

AHF Europe runs its programs in 9 countries in Western and Eastern Europe. Its basic goal is to develop and implement sustainable and cost-effective models which can be used as a bridge between healthcare facilities and patients and communities and, correspondingly, ensure convenient and timely access to diagnostics and treatment. Thus, the organization leads its programs in three directions: testing and prevention, treatment, and advocacy for the rights of patients. All of them are supported with marketing.

Being a non-profit foundation AHF is strongly mindful and accountable in terms of its organizational structure, administrative and operational processes. Its staff is not numerous (15 people - bureau management and executive level; 30 - people regional teams in 4 countries), nevertheless, task shifting approaches, cooperative corporate culture and mutual support help to cover operational needs with available resources. Team is international and the third part of it works remotely on a permanent basis.

The organizational structure of AHF Europe was mirrored from its head office. To some extent it is based on functional approach and tasks division, thus it clearly defines chain of commands (an unbroken line of authority between the top management and the employees at the lowest level (22)). However, organization uses multifunctional approach, as many other NGOs that are limited in budgets, and departments formalization is loose, which strongly promotes collaboration. In practice, remote mode of work which is accepted in the organization due to its specific of hiring specialist from different countries, gives sufficient freedom to the

staff to shape their work based on their preferences, abilities, and performance. This enables employees to look beyond their proverbial horizons and to orient and educate themselves in other departments. However, interaction between the employees is not regulated, which leads to overload with tasks, information and ineffective communication in some cases. Based on the chart given in *Annex 1*, we can conclude that all employees are in two instructional/ reporting relationships at the same time: with the region director responsible for them and the respective direction/product manager. In the organizational chart, these relationships are reflected by means of vertical and horizontal lines. Thus, we can say that AHF Europe has matrix organizational chart with two dimensions of relations. (22) Such structure helps to better cope with fluctuations in capacity utilization and shortage of resources in the organization, but on the other hand its multidimensional complexity needs well developed communication strategy to prevent confusions among the employees.

AHF Europe inherited basic approaches to internal communication from its head office in the USA and adjusted them to its specific and operational goals, however the formalized strategy of internal communication was not set up. Such a situation might be very common for the organizations with small and multifunctional staff where all the processes seem to be clear and on the surface, and do not need too much intervention. Nevertheless, from time-to-time employees report that they face challenges with information flows, and it affects the operations and understanding within the team that is projected to slow the pulse of fresh ideas, extended period of project implementation, broken timelines, insufficient understanding of policies and procedures, missed opportunities.

AHF Europe is reaching its maturity stage and continues to perform well against its KPIs. The initial focus is shifting from scaling up the numbers to fine-tuning the services and models and finding new sources to promote them and act strongly on the international stage. On the other hand, there is a risk that the period of stability might have a bit of an adverse effect on operations and programs management, employees' engagement, and motivation. To prevent internal processes from

devaluation and out-of-date state, management took several approaches to update them accordingly in order to support current organizational goals and hold the tonus, attention and engagement of employees. Thus, it is a good time and an opportunity for the organization to look deeper into its internal communication with the focus on current organizational needs, lessons learned from recent COVID experience, employees' engagement and collaboration and facilitation of basic operations.

Considering Deloitte reports that nearly two-thirds of professionals would take a lower-paying job if they could work away from the office, we can see why it is so important to maintain an infrastructure that makes remote work easy.

Thus, in this project we will aim at

- analyzing current internal communications processes in the organization and understanding their basic functional, role and place in its operational processes and performance;
- setting up evaluation criteria and techniques for internal communication in the organization;
- identifying gaps and challenges in current internal communications and measures to address them
- provide recommendations on setting up internal communications strategy and ways/ plan to implement and evaluate it.

3.2. Analysis of Currents Status of internal communication functional in AHF Europe

3.2.1. Methods and approaches

Based on the aforesaid, at this stage the project follows an intention to better analyze internal communication in AHF Europe, comprehend the factors that are crucial for its proper function, identify the gaps and suggest practical approaches to manage them and suggest the most beneficial communication structure for the employees and the organization. The specific aim is to review internal communication, formalize it and implement the revisions in such a way which will

not disrupt the basic operation processes and will go smoothly for employees and contribute to their work-wellbeing and organizational needs as well. Thus, the following steps were pre-planned:

- Analyse current internal communications processes in the organization and understand their basic functional, role and place in its operational processes and performance;
- Determine evaluation criteria and techniques for internal communication in the organization;
- Identify gaps and challenges in current internal communications and measures to address them;
- Provide recommendations on setting up internal communications strategy and ways/ plan to implement and evaluate it.

Through the above steps the following results were expected:

- a) set of tools and plan to analyze current internal communications in the given organization
- b) clear description of current internal communications in the organization, of its strong and weak points and key factors that influence internal communication
- c) description of means to address bottlenecks and systematize success factors for their further development
- d) set of criteria of effective internal communications for the given organization
- e) planning and implementation of improvement process
- f) initial evaluation of improvement process.

The starting point here was diagnostics of the current state of internal communications in AHF Europe through qualitative and quantitative assessment. Data were collected through: Observation of internal processes; analysis of internal documentation; qualitative thematic interviews; quantitative questionnaire surveys. Information analysis was done through comparison; qualitative and quantitative analysis; grouping and summarizing of study findings.

Thus, the interview was selected as a first part of project study. The task was to collect quantitative information and to look at the current state of internal

communication in AHF Europe and its perception by management and employees and drill down into the key factors that influence internal communication and criteria of their effectiveness.

The selected group for the interview included 15 people (6 senior managers and 9 linear managers) employed by the organization's head office in Europe. Respondents were located in 6 countries in Eastern and Western Europe.

Structured interviews were designed to elicit their insights and experiences on the subject through the open-ended questions. This approach enabled more time and space for the respondents to reflect and open and share more details about internal communication practices in the organization.

Due to quarantine restrictions and geographical distancing the interviews were done through protected channels of communication by means of teleconference systems and were recorded for further analysis.

Interview Protocol and questions are available in *Annex 2*.

Survey was selected as a second stage of the study as a source of quantitative data, to support qualitative analysis gained through the interview stage.

The task was to go deeper into the assessment of internal communication in AHF Europe and analyze the process quantitatively through the set of criteria of effective internal communications.

To set up the survey, one should be clear what the organization is interested in terms of outputs, outcomes or impact. Thus, we selected the approach designed by Kevin Ruck. (23)

The Alignment-Voice-Identification-Dialogue (AVID) model aims to explore employee channel preferences, information flow and awareness, communication satisfaction levels and organizational engagement levels through Alignment-Voice-Identification-Dialogue criteria. AVID model also incorporates an explicit ethical dimension putting an emphasis on employee's voice, which criteria is crucial for NGOs as it supports employee-centered approach to internal communication, and it is valuable for the organizations like AHF that are coming from communities and non-commercial sectors.

The basic elements of effective internal communications as set up by Kevin Ruck are:

- Alignment - connecting teamwork to organizational objectives
- Voice – giving an employee a space to speak up
- Identification – understanding and belief in the organizational purpose and objective
- Dialogue – informing, listening, discussing. (23)

The survey is correspondingly divided into blocks focusing on:

- Channels (which channels employees find most helpful)
- Information accessibility and awareness (how well employees are informed on a range of topics)
- Employee voice (opportunity employees are given to have a say about what goes on)
- Dialogue (interaction through communication)
- Organizational engagement (changing behaviors and connection with the wider organization).

Survey questionnaire was sent out to 15 employees (6 senior managers and 9 linear managers) located in 6 countries in eastern and Western Europe. Completed forms were collected through email. Collected data were analyzed through MS Excel. Provisional results will be communicated to participants. Survey Protocol is available in *Annex 3*.

Observation was done through direct participation in strategic and working meetings within a 6 months period. Additional information for analysts was collected from internal documentation such as minutes and action items of the meetings/ calls, internal performance reports, KPIs, trip reports and communication through emails and internal data sources.

3.2.2. Reading, interpretation and reporting of results of analysis

Information gained through the interview demonstrated that current functional of internal communication in AHF Europe could be described as sharing of information within an organization for business purposes, however team

demonstrated that they would rather prefer to have it extended and enforced with planned use of communication actions and systematically influence in the area of knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of team members. (5)

Respondents commented that the structure of internal communication should be flexible and adjustable to fast changes and new challenges and should meet the following goals:

- a) share information (ensuring employees are kept fully informed);
- b) give employees a voice (offering employees a platform to share ideas and concerns);
- c) set company culture (adding the values and ethics behind strategic decisions).

Responders also stated that b) and c) were not in place and reported that they had a few cases of missed timelines, missed opportunities, misunderstanding, which they refer to the signs of inefficient communication.

Respondents reported specific barriers in sharing and getting information within the team:

- unclear responsibilities of the other participants of communication
- detached or dominating position of some colleagues
- culture, language, distances
- lack of trust and understanding
- wrong interpretation of the information
- lack of non-verbal communication
- wrong interpretation of the information
- lack of dialogue and insufficient reactivity.

Responders suggested the following principles and benchmarks of internal communications

Principles

- communication that ensures proper circulation of the information in all directions

Benchmarks

- structured, regular and planned communication interactions on all levels

- communication that persuades, rather than commands: change and influence through examples and learning
- communication with careful thought and consideration behind it: pre-designed and planned
- communications that follow a logical and organized approach: systematic and regular
- transparent and safe communication channels and motivating environment
- objective, purposeful and clear content
- dynamic two-way dialogues
- high engagement and responsiveness of participants

Apart from that, interviewing contributed a lot to the identification of behavioral trends, personal needs and key activists within the team who demonstrated their readiness to promote and support the implementation of redesigned internal communication. Detailed presentation and analysis of data is provided in *Annex 4*. Survey was the main source of quantitative data. Answers were analyzed using the Likert scale that was adjusted for each block. (24)

Based on Alignment-Voice-Identification-Dialogue (AVID) model (23, blocks were focused on evaluation of the following elements of internal communication in AHF Europe: Block A. Channels and tools; Block B. Information Accessibility and Awareness; Block C. Employee Voice; Block D. Dialogue; Block E. Organizational Engagement and Involvement

Overall picture of quantitative assessment of suggested criteria is given in Chart 1

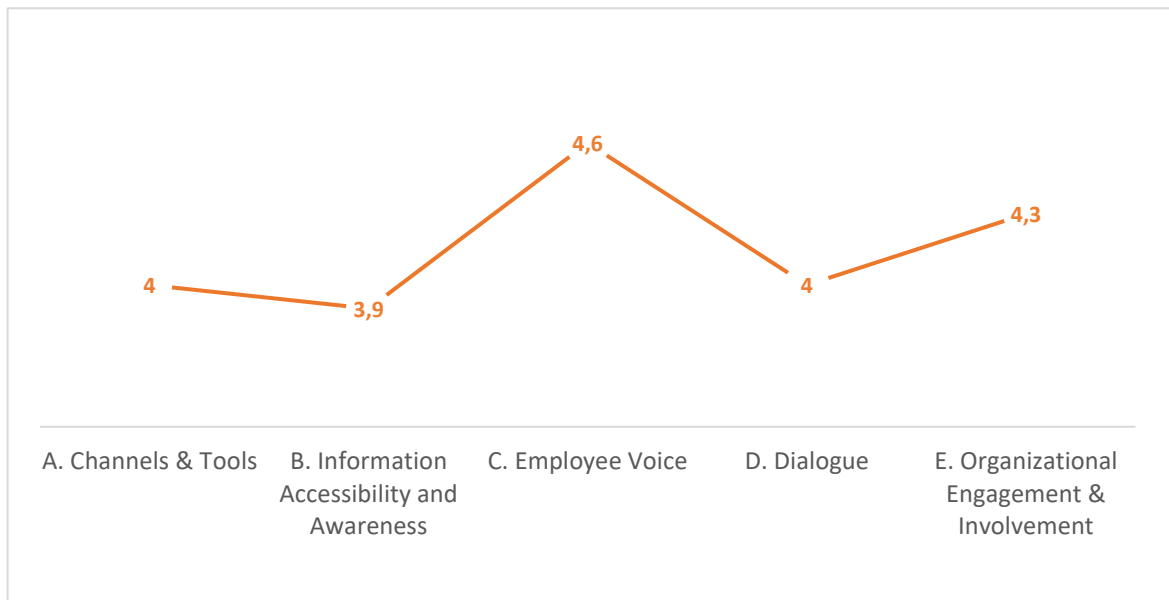


Chart 1 Assessment of internal communication through basic AVID criteria

The biggest difference in responses on individual level were shown in blocks A and B. Lowest difference in responses on individual level was shown in Blocks C,D,E. Areas with the most inhomogeneous scores show comparatively bigger numbers of scores “3” and lower. It gives ground for more in-deep analysis in these areas and potential for revision and improvement in Channels and Tools and Information Accessibility and Awareness.

Results on Block A (Channels and Tools) showed that executive team meetings with bureau management and one to one calls were reported as the most helpful, corporate websites and corporate social media are comparatively helpful, and printed materials were unhelpful.

Additionally, the majority of respondents added that group video calls are much more helpful in comparison to group audio calls.

Results on Block B (Information Accessibility and Awareness) showed that the majority of basic topics were sufficiently communicated to the employees and “Progress against goals and KPIs” was the most successfully communicated topic. Awareness on such topics as “Expected changes and innovations in the organization”, “Potential for professional development” and “What your colleagues are doing” should be improved.

The frequencies for answers in Block c (Employee Voice) showed that employees’ voices were taken seriously and heard better at communication with direct

management and colleagues, while in open discussions and brainstorming they had lower chances to be heard. The results of this block also showed some slight disbalance between the opportunity employees were given to have a say about what goes on and chances that they were listened to and heard, which were reported as insufficient.

Responses in Block D (Dialogue) provided data on interaction through informing, listening and discussing, i.e. on two ways communication. Data showed that team members believed they were efficient enough in terms of “Responsiveness and mutual support”, “Providing and receiving feedback”, “Language and culture issues”, “Being mindful about information flows”, etc., however they would gain even more if they could do better in “Being clear and purposeful”

Responses in Block E (Organizational Engagement and Involvement) showed that internal communication contributed sufficiently to engagement and involvement supported connection with the wider organization.

Detailed presentation and analysis of data from the interview is provided in *Annex 4*.

Results of the observation and documentation analysis demonstrate that

- organization has a formalized system of internal communication that was inherited from the head office in line with basic principles and rules of communication
- organization management had several “single point” approaches to revise and restructure some of the tools
- management raised concerns about effectiveness of communication in terms of its purposefulness, dynamics, timely and essential feedbacks, and notifications

Quantitative results are shown in Table 1.

*Table 1.***15 people in Bureau Executive Team**

Trips (before COVID)	688 days	59 per person
	on travel per year	
	168 trips per year	12 per person
Admin budget overspending due to trips	20%	
Unplanned (last day planned) trips	17%	
Calls/ meetings	354 per month	25 per person
	(380 hours per month)	
Unfinished / postponed projects	12%	
Executive and program meetings/ calls agendas were not fulfilled (not completed with decision making or definite outcomes)	25%	
Action items set up during the executive team meetings/ calls were delayed	35%	

As a result of study we were able to identify string and weak points of internal communications in AHF Europe, which were summarized in Table2.

*Table 2***Strong**

- Willingness and understanding of common goals and vision
- Flexibility
- Trust

Weak

- Competitiveness
- Compartmental approach
- Non-admittance of problems and challenges

- Availability of diverse and stable channels
- Easily accessible management
- Regularity
- Nimble in urgent situations
- Slow reaction and overloaded messages
- Overloaded channels and inadequate use of channels
- Multi Language environment

To summarize, the study shows that internal communication in AHF Europe, as precepted by the management and employees, is basically serving to share and exchange the information within an organization for business purposes, however in close future majority of staff would like to have this function extended and supported with the systematically influence of the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of employees. It is interpreted as a request for extensive, planned and systematized functionality of internal communication, which will meet the principles and benchmarks defined in the process of study. New system should also develop strong points and address weak points and barriers.

3.3. Development and implementation of interventions to enhance internal communication

Based on practical observation from inside the organization and results of study and taking into consideration the specificity of the organization and its structure, we conclude that it needs an extensive, planned and systematized function of internal communication with a flexible and adjustable structure.

Management of internal communication in the organizations can be successfully achieved through communication strategies. Internal communication strategy development is complicated and time-consuming, but it is essentially important to ensure its integration with values, mission and operations of the organization. (25)

In case of AHF Europe internal communication strategy should ensure:

- wide understanding of mission, vision and goals in line with influence of knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of employees
- timely identifying and solving problems and streamlined making decisions resulting in fast response to changes and new challenges

- pre-planned approach and sufficient resources and technical support
- balance between routine operational issues and long-term goals.

Specific interventions should be defined for each objective correspondingly.

Wide understanding of mission, vision and goals in line with influence of knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of employees can be achieved through intensive messaging on all levels, which may be realized through preplanned important events or strategic planning sessions done under the same informative umbrella in all regions, with publicity and recognition. Such events should be organized at list once each year and in each region. Messaging should be focused on:

- Joint Vision: mission, vision, strategy, successes, achievements, expected results.
- Creation of Identity: individual results and their contribution to organizational goals; stories from staff; respect and value; each voice is heard.
- Promotion: our mission is vitally important; our models are unique and effective; we have the history behind our results.

Timely identifying and solving problems and streamlined making decisions resulting in fast response to changes and new challenges can be improved through better management of contents, participation value and technical support.

- Contents: time-wise agendas; sharing best practices and knowledge; challenges and ways to address them; issues that need attention of all involved/ present.
- Participation value: short and focused discussions; physical presence or “all with video”; only analytical and practical information.
- Technical support: preliminary planning and invitations; all needed information should be in one message/ invitation; home-work/ pre-reading done; efficient facilitation and follow up.

Pre-planned approach and sufficient resources and technical support can be ensured through communication planning, which should be done in advance for each wide

campaign/ project with the participation of all positions involved into it. Chart 2 shows outlines of a communication plan suggested for AHF Europe.

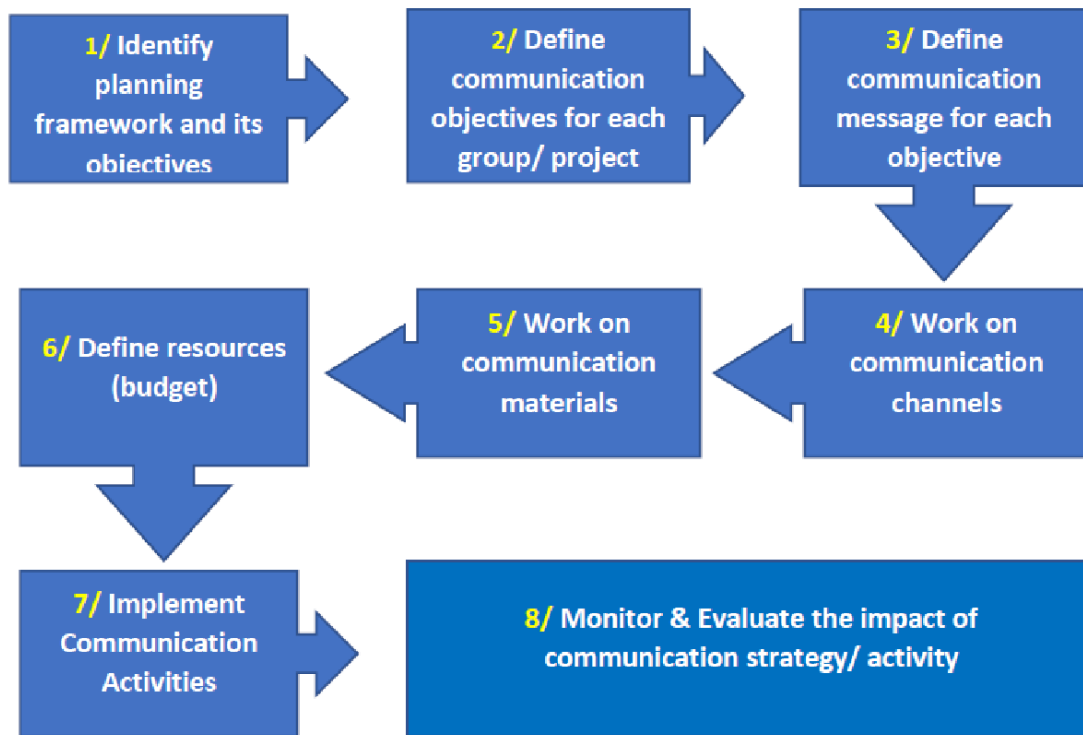


Chart 2. Outlines of communication plan.

Balance between routine operational issues and long-term goals should be reached through “well-done” agendas and communication planning. Follow up tools will also be valuable here.

Since the organization cannot allow separate divisions or staff for the development and management of internal communication strategy this function could be shared between the executive team members. Roles should be divided based on the matrix of stakeholders as given in Chart 3.

Stakeholders	Power	Interest	Involvement
Bureau Chief	+++	++	+
Administrative	+	+++	+++
Marketing and Advocacy	+	++	+++
Program Managers	++	++	+
Sites / Field Staff		+	

Chart 3. Matrix of Stakeholders in Internal Communication

The more stakeholders are involved into it, the longer the process, but it guarantees better results and a well-tailored strategy, which will be accepted on all levels.

Detailed strategy on internal communications for AHF Europe, which was developed with the consideration of above-mentioned findings and recommendations, is available in *Annex 5*.

Evaluation of effectiveness of interventions and strategy should be done on a regular basis each 6 months. Depending on the results, internal communication strategy should be revised and amended if needed.

By the moment of this writing strategy implementation has been seven months already, however it was interrupted due to war in Ukraine and necessity to address other urgent needs.

3.4. Evaluating the Results of Interventions

Evaluation of effectiveness of interventions and strategy should be done on a regular basis each 6 months. Depending on the results, internal communication strategy should be revised and amended if needed.

By the moment of this writing strategy implementation has been in process for a few months already, however it was interrupted due to war in Ukraine and necessity to address other urgent needs.

To evaluate effectiveness, it was planned to use the same method which was applied to assess the pre-intervention status of internal communications in AHF Europe and extend it with one more survey, which was set up based on the principles and benchmarks listed upon the result of initial assessment interviews with the employees and with the consideration of internal communication strategy objectives listed above.

Apart from that in the process of strategy implementation the executive team was invited to provide their feedback on a regular basis and share their comments if any. Such an approach allows us to collect more information and prepare adjustments in advance and implement them smoothly. Thus, provisional

evaluations and follow up on strategy implementation would be preferable each quarter, especially in the first 6 months of strategy implementation.

Based on the results of feedback and provisional evaluations through short surveys, the executive team managed to revise the system of calls and online meetings and reduced their number and time. Team agreed to move more to one-to-one and program calls, which were more productive as pre the results of study.

Executive team also revised approaches to agenda formation and calls / facilitation. This function was given to agenda committees. Each committee includes three employees from different departments, which helps to make the agenda more diverse and essential. To ensure experience and practices exchange, regions and countries were invited to present reports on their achievements and challenges to the bureau executive team on quarterly basis (one country/region per quarter, so each of them can report once during a year).

As during the initial interviews respondents reported that they were not sure that their feedback was heard and taken into consideration, bureau management dedicated one of the executive meetings to feedback issues, revised organizational approaches to it and introduced updated “house rules” giving more space for peer-to-peer feedback and feedback upon request, which was important for remote work. Further on, items about internal communication became more often in the executive team agenda. In 2022 one of the strategic meetings of the executive team was fully focused on managerial issues and challenges, including internal communication as one of the managerial tools, which had never been the case before. Active discussions during the meeting and many insights demonstrated that interventions aimed at working processes were well accepted and employees were ready to share their experience and vision on them and to contribute their efforts to the revision of processes.

During COVID related restrictions and quarantines AHF Europe team gradually developed crisis communication rules that helped to keep communications short and to the point, to encourage small groups discussions for routine issues, quick

decision-taking and develop ways for informal communication which helped to keep the tonus and engagement of the team.

To ensure better access to information and its availability, online folders were created for each program and direction, where employees could easily reach the latest versions of documents, reports, and records in 24/7 mode.

However, due to war in Ukraine which caused disruption in programs and operations, increased workload and added new functions and countries of operations, there was no possibility to do full-scale evaluation of internal communication strategy implementation.

Nevertheless, the fact that organization had not faced any critical gaps in communication during most difficult and challenging period of the first week of war and was able to reorient within a few days and take quick decisions about operations and relocation of staff, programs, and patients, could be used as a proof that internal communication was in place and worked up its functional and goals.

For the near future there is a plan to continue ongoing provisional evaluations through short surveys and interviews whenever there is appropriate time for such activities. Further on it is expected that internal communication strategy should be expanded and developed at the level of regional teams and contractors with corresponding amendments.

IV. CONCLUSION

This project was focused on the phenomenon of internal communications in the organization with the purpose to study theoretical and practical approaches to it, to evaluate current internal communication in the specific organization and to suggest interventions to enhance it with further analysis of the success of intervention.

Theoretical study showed the evolution of definitions and approaches to internal communication that were changing depending on the purpose, for which internal communication was used: from the tool of control and instruction to the tool of culture development, engagement and motivation.

Observations and studies done during the project give ground to conclude that in modern context internal communication is a dynamic and vivid process within the organization, that results in the interaction between the employees and in the exchange of information and signals, knowledge, experience and attitudes through various, mainly two ways, channels in all the directions. Its basic feature provides for more flexibility as internal communication is significantly affected by such vibrant factors as internal environment and culture in the organization as well as by the human factor through the individual qualities and attitudes of employees. On the other hand, it needs strong alignment with such constant elements as organizational mission and goals, organizational structure, and procedures.

Internal communication is an integral part of management in the organization, however it has its own objectives, which derive from the operational and managerial needs.

Study results show that internal communication is most effective and successful if organization has it systematized, structured and planned. Otherwise, its functional will be limited to transmitting instructions, commands and exchanging working information. Having internal communication strategy in place helps organizations to better manage and monitor communications and enrich their functional with sharing knowledges, ideas and concerns (platform for employees' voice), adding values and ethics behind strategic decisions and cultivating attitudes and behaviors (company culture). Thus, implementation of strategic approach to internal communication and a focus on the employee is getting widely accepted. However,

organizations still need to keep adapting to a fact that internal communication is not only managerial area, but also a phenomenon dependent on the inputs of the employees.

As flexibility is one of the main features of internal communication in modern organizations, internal communication strategies/ plans need assessment and evaluation through the whole process of implementation.

Most of the approaches recommended for internal communication assessment are based on formative research and communication objectives that are output, out-take and outcome-based. As any evaluation starts with measurement, developing measurable communication objectives is important. Assessment packages usually include a standardized survey questionnaire, interview guides, observations, network analysis, documents analysis and a communication diary.

Search for ideas, theories, models, approaches to internal communication assessment, which was done through the project, showed that this area still had enough space for contributions. Measurement of internal communications seemed to be complicated due to a short list of quantitative criteria. Assessment is recommended for the communication that happens on different levels and in different channels, as correlation between level of needs satisfaction and range of reaching the expected goal. Thus, qualitative assessment through interview was chosen as the primary research method because it gave the way to explore attitudes, behaviors, and experiences and to get an in-depth opinion from participants, resulting with more suggestive ideas for the further planning on interventions. Being a source of quantitative data, survey was preceding the interview and gave the initial symptoms and assumptions which were verified during interviews.

Results of initial assessment were analyzed and presented to the organization management and to the executive team giving the space for the comments and discussions. Such an approach helped to get major stakeholders involved into development and implementation of interventions aimed to enforce weak points and to use better strong points of the internal communication.

Provisional assessment of the new model and documentation of provisional results and feedback was done in the process of its implementation and it was helpful and important as the new model required adjustments, the need for which was identified through provisional assessment. It should be mentioned that in the initial study external factor was under-estimated, however in practice it appeared to be one of the key ones and a significant source of turbulence. The basic conclusion from this is that external influence is hardly predictable and it is important to communicate to the organization management and the team that internal communication model/strategy cannot be done once and forever, it should be open for changes and adjustments.

This project contributes to the field of internal communication by giving the template and suggesting approaches to assess what is available and design what is needed in terms of internal communication with a specific organization.

In general, results of this project would be helpful in developing strategic actions aimed to enhance the internal communication in the organization and evaluate the effectiveness of such actions.

One of the challenges of this process is related to the fact that describing and evaluating internal communications through quantitative economical tools is hardly possible. Thus, there are no appropriate economical models which could be applied to internal communication and used for their description. That is why the budget component of the project was not done.

And one more simple conclusion should be mentioned. Each organization is vulnerable towards a crisis irrespective of how big it is and how long it is present in the market. The way management and employees communicate can be critical in such situations and can change the situation and turn it into temporary difficulty, even if it seems out of control. Giving enough energy, attention and spaces for internal communication in times of crisis can save a lot.

In the times of crisis and chaos, when events are fast, and when we see many threats, there is a risk to forget that employees are the most important auditory. While in times of crisis employees need to see internal communication as a reliable

source of information and interaction tool. Giving enough energy, attention and spaces for internal communication in times of crisis can save a lot.

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Annex 2. Interview Protocol and Questions

Interview Protocol

Research title:

**INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE ORGANIZATION:
ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PROCESSES**

Organization: AHF Europe**Researcher:** Oksana Lozytska Oksana.Lozytska@aidhealth.org**Respondents:** AHF Europe Executive Team (15 people)**Time Period:** December 7-15, 2020

This Interview is a part of Project Study on the Revision and Improvement of Internals Communications in the Organization.

In this Interview we take a look at the current state of Internal Communication (IC) in the organization and their perception by management and drill down into the key factors that influence IC and criteria of their effectiveness.

Thus, the aim of the Interview is to collect qualitative information on the current approaches to IC practiced in the organization and define basic factors that influence IC processes in line with the understanding of needs and effectiveness of IC.

The selected group for the interview included 15 people (6 senior managers and 9 linear managers) employed by the organization's head office in Europe. Respondents are located in 6 countries in Eastern and Western Europe.

Structured interviews were designed to elicit their insights and experiences on the Subject through the open-ended questions. This approach will enable more time and space for the respondents to reflect and open up and share more details about IC practices in the organization.

Respondents will receive assurances that the research would be conducted responsibly, as outlined in the Belmont Report (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1979).

Interviews will be done through protected channels of communication by means of teleconference systems and will be recorded for further analysis.

Researcher is solely responsible for the collection and analysis of data and reporting the results. No results will be reported until the Project Study is done in full scope, which also includes observation of behaviour and processes, organization documentation and survey questionnaire.

Interview with AHF Europe Bureau Executive Team about role, place and effectiveness of internal communications within the organization

Like a human being, a company has to have an internal communication mechanism, a 'nervous system', to coordinate its actions.

Bill Gates

Introduction

We are going to talk today about internal communications in our organization because you are one of the people who are directly involved into communication processes and your experience and observations about internal communications would be valuable for the study. This research project as a whole focuses on the improvement of internal communication process, with particular interest in understanding its key factors and criteria of effectiveness. The study in no way aims to evaluate your techniques, skills or experiences. Rather, we are trying together to learn more about what we have in place and what we need in terms of internal communications and how to address the challenges and streamline the process. Thus, in this Interview we take a look at the perception of internal communication by the organization management and drill down into the key purposes and behind them and factors that influence them.

A. Interviewee Background

What is your current position? _____

How long have you been with AHF in your present position _____?

In general _____?

What is your educational background/ degree? _____

Where is your workplace located? _____

B. Description and Perception of current Internal Communication

1. How would you describe Internal Communications in your organization?
2. When it comes to Internal Communication, the clarity of definition and purpose can be difficult to describe. It doesn't help that there are numerous definitions floating around, each of them different from the other, each pulling out a different focus and function. I have three definitions at hand:

“The sharing of information within an organization for business purposes.” The Business Dictionary

“The function responsible for effective communications among participants within an organization.” Wikipedia

The planned use of communication actions to systematically influence the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of current employees.” Tench, R and Yeomans, L Exploring Public Relations

3. May I ask you to give a definition of internal communication which would fit better into your organization?

C. Role and Place of Internal Communications in the Organizational Structure

4. Where do you see place of Internal Communications in your organization?
5. What organizational needs are served by Internal Communications?
6. How Internal Communications contribute to the performance of your organization/ colleagues?

D. Goals of Internal Communications in the Organization

7. Usually organizations use internal communications to meet the following goals: share information (ensuring employees are kept fully informed); to set company culture (adding the values and ethics behind strategic decisions); give employees a voice (offering employees a platform to share ideas and concerns). What would you say about those in your organization?

E. Structure of Internal Communications in the Organization

8. Please, try to compare your organizational structure and structure of internal communications?
9. How do you differentiate between horizontal, vertical and diagonal communication within the organization?
10. Do you think that upwards and downward information flows should be equal (from your position)?
11. What communication channels do you have?
12. Are all of them used in their full capacity?

F. Effectiveness of Internal Communications in the Organization

I believe you will agree that effective Internal Communications have a set of basic principles, for instance, they serve the needs of the organization and ensure proper circulation of the information in all directions; change and influence (communications that persuade, rather than command); apart from that the process should be pre-designed and planned (communications with careful thought and consideration behind them); systematic and regular (communications that follow a logical and organised approach).

13. Which of them you see in your organization? What is missing?

14. What benchmarks you would suggest to assess the effectiveness of Internal Communications in your organization?

G. Key Factors and Barriers to Internal Communications in the organization

15. What are the key factors that influence Internal Communications in your organization?

16. What are the barriers in information flow in your organization?

Round Up

18. What additional information or strategies would you like to share about the effectiveness of internal communication in your organization?

Thank you for participation in the Interview. I will keep you informed on the progress of project and all results and finding will be communicated to you duly.

Annex 3. Survey Protocol and Questionnaire

Survey Protocol

Research title:

**INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS IN THE ORGANIZATION:
ANALYSIS OF CURRENT PROCESSES**

Organization: AHF Europe

Researcher: Oksana Lozytska Oksana.Lozytska@aidhealth.org

Respondents: AHF Europe Executive Team

Time Period: February 2021

Survey is a first stage of the Study Project on the Revision and Improvement of Internals Communications in the Organization.

It is a source of quantitative data, which will support qualitative analysis gained through the Interview stage.

The purpose of the survey is to go deeper into the assessment of Internal Communication in the organization and analyze IC quantitatively through the set of criteria of effective Internal Communications.

To set up the survey, one should be clear what the organization is interested in terms of outputs, outcomes or impact. Thus, I selected the approach designed by Kevin Ruck (Kevin Ruck, 2018).

The AVID model aims to explore employee channel preferences, information flow and awareness, communication satisfaction levels and organizational engagement levels through Alignment-Voice-Identification-Dialogue criteria. I would strongly stand for AVID model as it also incorporates an explicit ethical dimension putting an emphasis on employee's voice. This is an important criteria that supports employee-centered approach to internal communication and it is valuable for the organizations liked AHF that are coming from communities and non-commercial sector.

The basic elements of effective internal communications as set up by Kevin Ruck are:

- Alignment - connecting teamwork to organizational objectives
- Voice – giving an employee a space to speak up
- Identification – understanding and belief in the organizational purpose and objective
- Dialogue – informing, listening, discussing

The survey will be correspondingly divided into blocks focusing on:

- Channels (it is still important to know which channels employees find most helpful)
- Information accessibility and awareness (how well employees are informed on a range of topics)
- Employee voice (opportunity employees are given to have a say about what goes on)
- Dialogue (interaction through communication)
- Organizational engagement (changing behaviors and connection with the wider organization).

Survey questionnaire will be sent out to 15 employees (6 senior managers and 9 linear managers) located in 6 countries in eastern and Western Europe. Completed forms will be collected through e-mail. Collected data will be analyzed through MS Excel. Provisional results will be communicated to participants.

Explanatory note and Introduction to the respondents

Dear.....

You are kindly invited to participate in the second stage of the Study Project on Internal Communications in our organization.

Suggested Survey will be a source of quantitative data that will support qualitative analysis gained through the Interview stage and contribute to the diagnostics of Internal Communication processes in our organization.

Thus, the purpose of the survey is to go deeper into the assessment of Internal Communication in the organizations and analyze them quantitatively through the set of criteria of effective

Internal Communications. Criteria are set up based on best practices available in assessing effectiveness of Internal Communications and include:

- Alignment - connecting teamwork to organizational objectives
- Voice – giving an employee a space to speak up
- Identification – understanding and belief in the organizational purpose and objective
- Dialogue – informing, listening, discussing

Survey is divided into blocks so you can reflect on each of the elements.

Your contribution will be highly appreciated. Completed questionnaire is expected by

For any additional information or questions, please, contact me at

Oksana.Lozytska@aidhealth.org

Questionnaire

A. Channels

How helpful do you find current communication tools available in the organization? (please, rate from 1 to 5)	1	2	3	4	5
E-mail					
Intranet					
Team meetings with Bureau Management					
Team Meetings with Global Management					
Town-hall events with Bureau Management					
Regular Programmatic Conference Calls in LoopUp (audio)					
Regular Programmatic Conference Calls in Zoom (video + audio)					
Online chats (Skype, Viber)					
Printed materials (brochures, booklets, leaflets, etc.)					
Brainstorming and Briefing on specific issues					
Lectures and trainings					
Text Messages					
Mobile Apps					
Posters, banners					
Corporate social networks					
Corporate web-sites					
Other (<i>please, specify</i>)					

B. Information Accessibility and Awareness

Do you receive regular and sufficient information or have adequate access to information on (please, rate from 1 to 5)	1	2	3	4	5

Mission, vision and core values of the organization					
Key strategies and objectives of the organization					
Progress against goals and KPI					
Current financial performance					
Emergency situations that might affect programs and staff safety					
Expected changes and innovations in the organization					
Policies and Procedures					
What other divisions are doing					
How Europe Bureau contributes to the global goals					
Recent developments and initiatives at Global Office that are related to Bureau work					
Events and special activities implemented in the organization					
Recognition of teamwork					
Analysis of your personal performance					
Potential for professional development					
Recognition of individual work					
Compensations and benefits					
Other information (<i>please, specify</i>)					

C. Employee Voice

Do you have sufficient opportunities to speak up (please, rate from 1 to 5)	1	2	3	4	5
Face to face with direct management					
Face to face with colleagues					
During open discussions and brainstorming					
Through e-mails and reports					
Through other channels (please, specify)					
How seriously/ attentively your views are taken after voiced at (please, rate from 1 to 5)	1	2	3	4	5
Face to face with direct management					
Face to face with colleagues					
During open discussions and brainstorming					
Through e-mails and reports					
Through other channels (please, specify)					

C. Dialogue

How efficient is your routine communication within the team in terms of (please, rate from 1 to 5)	1	2	3	4	5
Interaction and mutual support					
Providing information (feedback)					
Receiving information (feedback)					
Timely reactions and reply					
Accessibility and availability of team members					
Tone and manner of communication					
Being mindful about information flow (number of e-mails, calls, CCs, etc.)					
Being clear and purposeful					
Language issues					
Cultural issues					

D. Organizational Engagement and Involvement

Do you receive enough motivation / inspiration at your work environment? (please, rate from 1 to 5)					
Do you have enough communication/ directions/ support from your management/ colleagues?					
Do you have enough opportunities/ tools/ skills to straightforward communications at your workplace?					
Do you receive enough support from organization in arranging your remote work?					
Do you feel strong identity with your organization?					
Are you ready to put extra energy to help your organization to achieve the goals?					

Anything else you want to mention _____

Thank you!

Please, forward your filled questionnaire to Oksana Lozytska at

Oksana.Lozytska@aidshhealth.org

Annex 4. Presentation and Analysis of Data

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Observation

To collect qualitative characteristics of the IC in the organization, observation and analysis of internal documentation and processes was applied in line with the survey and interviewing of employees. Observer was a participant of the processes with the purpose to describe IC characteristics in their natural working environment in order to arrive at objective conclusions about their developments and functional. Review all communications published in the last 12 months.

Results of the observation and documentation analysis:

- Organization has a formalized system of internal communication that was inherited from the head office in line with basic principles and rules of communication.
- Organization management had several “single point” approaches to revise and restructure some of the tools
- Management raised concerns about effectiveness of communication in terms of its purposefulness, dynamics, timely and essential feedbacks, and notifications

Quantitative data

The following is the analysis of that data framed in the context of the study’s research survey. Answers were analyzed using the Likert scale that was adjusted for each block.

Block A. Channels and tools

Research question: How satisfactory do you find current communication tools available in the organization for the BE team?

Scale: 1 useless, 2-unhelpful, 3- rather helpful than unhelpful; 4- helpful, 5 – very helpful.

The mean response to this question was 4 (a value equal to helpful).

The frequencies for answers to this item are found in Table

Table: General satisfaction with current communication tools

		<i>frequency</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Valid	very helpful	0	0%
	helpful	8	67%
	rather helpful than		
	unhelpful	4	33%
	unhelpful	0	0%
	useless	0	0%
Missing		0	
Total		12	100%

It is still important to know which channels employees find most helpful and lowest useful. The frequencies for answers on each channel are presented in Graph A. They show that Team meetings with Bureau Management and one to one calls are the most helpful, corporate websites and corporate social media are comparatively helpful, and printed materials are unhelpful.

Additionally, majority of respondents added that group video calls are much more helpful in comparison to group audio calls.

Block B. Information Accessibility and Awareness

Research question: Do you receive regular and sufficient information or have adequate access to information?

Responses to this question provide data on Information accessibility and awareness, i.e. how well employees are informed on a range of topics.

Scale: 1 – absolutely insufficient; 2- insufficient; 3-rather sufficient than insufficient; 4- sufficient enough, 5 – absolutely sufficient.

The mean response to this question was 4 (a value equal to sufficient enough).

The frequencies for answers to this item are found in Table

Table: Information accessibility and awareness

		<i>frequency</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Valid	absolutely sufficient	3	25%
	sufficient enough	6	50%
	rather sufficient than		
	insufficient	3	25%
	insufficient	0	0%
	absolutely insufficient	0	0%
Missin		0	
g			
Total		12	100%

The frequencies for answers on awareness on a range of basic topics are presented in Graph B. They show that majority of basic topics are sufficiently communicated to the employees and “Progress against goals and KPIs” is the most successfully communicated topic. Awareness on such topics as “Expected changes and innovations in the organization”; “Potential for professional development” and “What your colleagues are doing” could be improved.

Block C. Employee Voice

This block is divided into two questions, responses to which show to which extend organization is giving its employees a space to speak up and how seriously their voices are taken.

Research Question C.1. You have sufficient opportunities to speak up?

Scale: 1 – strongly disagree; 2- disagree; 3-rather agree than disagree; 4- agree, 5 – strongly agree.

The mean response to this question was 5 (a value equal to “strongly agree”).

The frequencies for answers to this item are found in Table

Table: Information on opportunities to speak up

		<i>frequency</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Valid	strongly agree	8	67%
	agree	4	33%
	rather agree than disagree	0	0%
	disagree	0	0%
	strongly disagree	0	0%
Missing		0	
Total		12	100%

The frequencies for answers on where the employees can realized their opportunity to speak up showed that it was at communication with direct management.

Research Question C.2. Your views taken seriously/ attentively after being voiced?

Scale: 1 – strongly disagree; 2- disagree; 3-rather agree than disagree; 4- agree, 5 – strongly agree.

The mean response to this question was 4 (a value equal to “agree”).

The frequencies for answers to this item are found in Table

Table: Information on how attentively employees’ voices are listened to

		<i>frequency</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Valid	strongly agree	5	42%
	agree	5	42%
	rather agree than disagree	2	17%
	disagree	0	0%
	strongly disagree	0	0%

Missing	0	
Total	12	100%

The frequencies for answers on where the employees' voices are taken seriously and heard better showed that it was at communication with direct management and colleagues, while in open discussions and brainstorming they had lower chances to be heard.

The results of this block show some slight disbalance between the opportunity employees are given to have a say about what goes on and chances that they are listened to and heard.

Block D. Dialogue

Research Question: How efficient is your routine communication within the BE team?

Responses to this question provide data on interaction through informing, listening and discussing, i.e. on two ways communication.

Scale: 1 – absolutely inefficient; 2- inefficient; 3-rather efficient than inefficient; 4- efficient enough, 5 – absolutely sufficient.

The mean response to this question was 4 (a value equal to efficient enough).

The frequencies for answers to this item are found in Table

Table: Information on dialogue and two ways communication

		<i>frequency</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Valid	absolutely efficient	2	17%
	efficient enough	9	75%
	rather efficient than		
	inefficient	1	8%
	inefficient	0	0%
	absolutely inefficient	0	0%
Missing		0	

Total	12	100%
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The frequencies for answers on effectiveness of interaction and two-way communication realized in through a range of factors show that team members believe they are efficient enough in terms of “Responsiveness and mutual support”, “Providing and receiving feedback”, “Language and culture issues”, “Being mindful about information flows”, etc., however they would gain even more if they can do better in “Being clear and purposeful”.

Block E. Organizational Engagement and Involvement

Research Question: Do you receive enough motivation / inspiration at your work environment??

Responses to this question provide data and evidence of Internal Communication contribution to engagement and involvement supports connection with the wider organization.

Scale: 1 – strongly disagree; 2- disagree; 3-rather agree than disagree; 4- agree, 5 – strongly agree.

The mean response to this question was 5 (a value equal to strongly).

The frequencies for answers to this item are found in Table

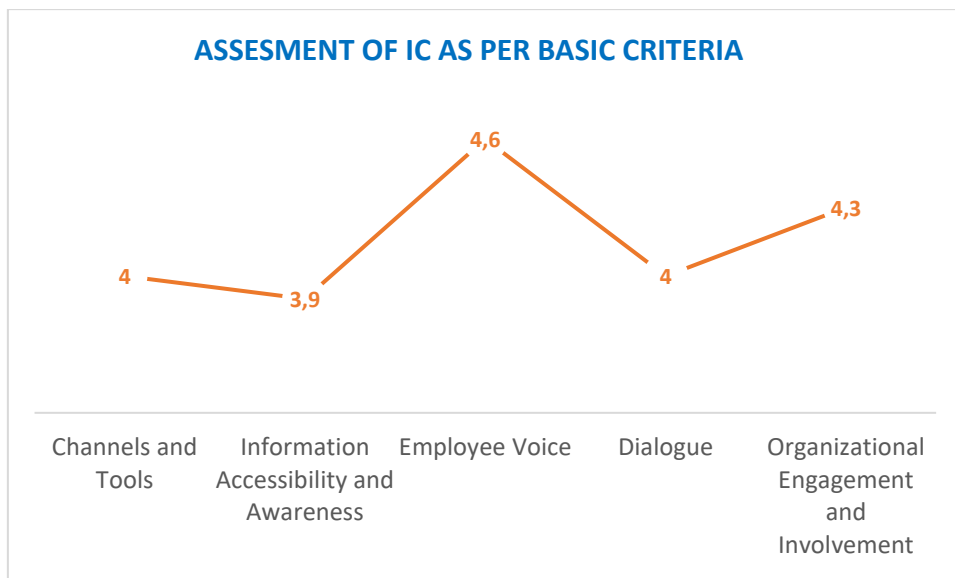
Table: Information on the activation of motivation and inspiration at workplace

		<i>frequency</i>	<i>percentage</i>
Valid	strongly agree	6	50%
	agree	5	42%
	rather agree than disagree	1	8%
	disagree	0	0%
	strongly disagree	0	0%
Missin		0	
g			
Total		12	100%

The frequencies for answers on motivation and inspiration factors that can be influenced through internal communications show that they all are activated, and team members agree that they receive communication/ directions/ support from your management/ colleagues have enough opportunities/ tools/ skills to straightforward communications at your workplace receive enough support from organization in arranging your remote work feel strong identity with your organization are ready to put extra energy to help your organization to achieve the goals.

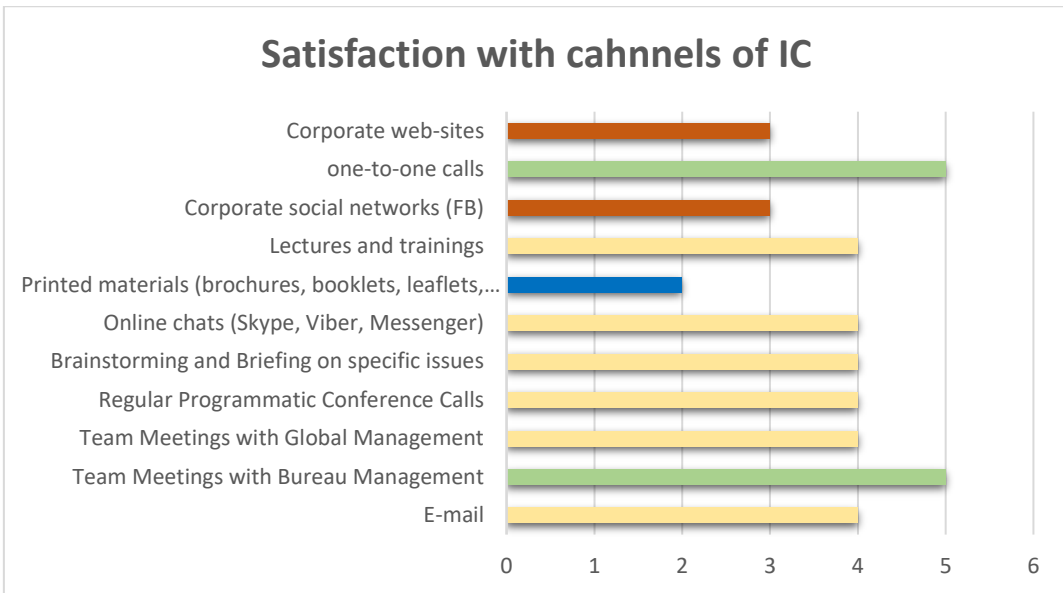
Conclusion:

Survey results demonstrated that IC in the organization meets suggested criteria of effectiveness in terms of channel preferences, information flow and awareness, and organizational engagement levels.

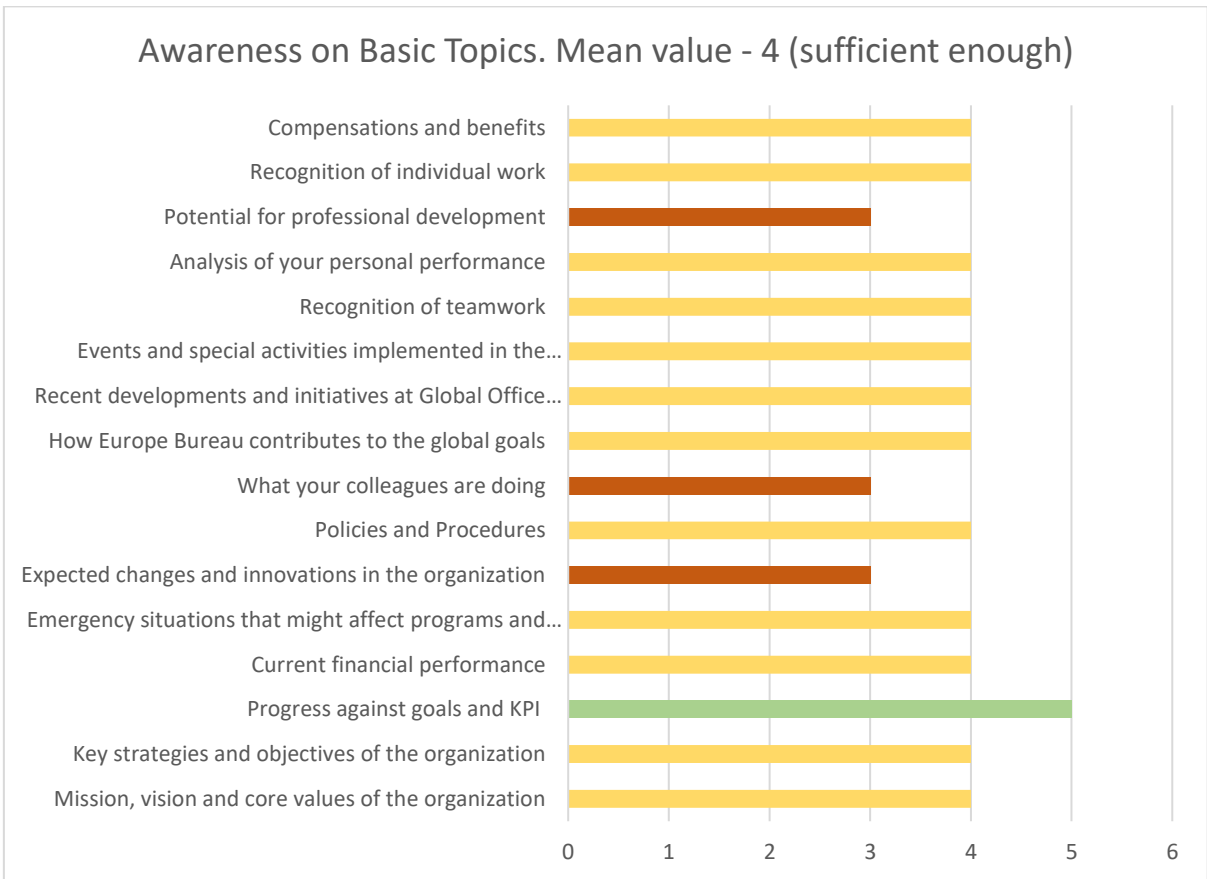


The biggest difference in responses on individual level were shown in blocks A and B. Lowest difference in responses on individual level was shown in Blocks C,D,E. Areas with the most inhomogeneous scores show comparatively bigger number of scores “3” and lower. It gives ground for more in-deep analysis in these areas and potential for revision and improvement in Channels and Tools and Information Accessibility and Awareness.

Graph A



Graph B



Qualitative Data

All of the respondents provided qualitative data via the Interview (Interview Protocol is given in Annex _). Overall responses were similar and dealt with communication within the organization. Comments were made regarding the

definition of IC, its goals and place in the organization, principles and benchmarks of effectiveness, barriers, string and weak points of IC in the organization.

The primary focus of the Interview is to collect qualitative information on the current approaches to IC practiced in the organization and define basic factors that influence IC processes in line with the understanding of needs and effectiveness of IC.

Definition and perception of current Internal Communication. Majority of respondents stated the current situation with IC in the organization meets the definition given in the Business Dictionary - “The sharing of information within an organization for business purposes.”, but they would rather prefer to have it to be combined with “The planned use of communication actions to systematically influence the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of current employees.”

Goal of Internal Communications and place among the other organizational processes. Respondents agree that IC should be aligned with organizational structure and arranged so that they support effectively operations of programs and relations within the team. However, the structure of IC should be flexible and adjustable to fast changes and new challenges. IC should meet the following goals: share information (ensuring employees are kept fully informed); give employees a voice (offering employees a platform to share ideas and concerns) to set company culture (adding the values and ethics behind strategic decisions); In current situation the second and third are not fully implemented, especially the third one.

Missed timelines, missed opportunities, misunderstanding are reported as the signs of inefficient communications that happen from time to time in the team.

Majority of respondent stated they are ready to contribute more to the improvement of IC subject that they are supported by the senior management and see the involvement from the colleagues. There were a lot of discussions on the improvement of communications but there was no sufficient follow up on the results and decisions.

50% of respondents believe they can influence IC from their current position through personal example and implementation of effective behaviors, keeping dynamic two-way communication, improving personal style of communication and personal communication skills.

The following barriers in getting/ sharing the information were observed:

- detached or dominating position of some colleagues
- unclear responsibilities of the other participants of communication
- culture, language, distances
- lack of trust and understanding
- wrong interpretation of the information
- lack of non-verbal communication
- wrong interpretation of the information
- lack of dialogue and insufficient reactivity

Respondents report that organization has a well-balanced ratio of horizontal and vertical communications, though horizontal need to be more stimulated. Upwards and downwards directions are also balanced well.

Principles of effective IC:

- they serve the needs of the organization and ensure proper circulation of the information in all directions;
- change and influence (communications that persuade, rather than command);
- apart from that the process should be pre-designed and planned (communications with careful thought and consideration behind them);
- systematic and regular (communications that follow a logical and organized approach)
- transparent and open

Benchmarks of effective IC for the organization

- open, structured, regular and planned, transparent and safe communication
- objective, purposeful and clear content
- dynamic two-way dialogue

- high engagement and responsiveness of participants

Strong and Weak points of IC in the organization

Strong	Weak
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Willingness and understanding of common goals and vision ● Flexibility ● Trust ● Availability of diverse and stable channels ● Easily accessible management ● Regularity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Competitiveness ● Compartmental approach ● Non-admittance of problems and challenges ● Slow reaction and overloaded messages ● Overloaded channels and inadequate use of channels ● Multilanguage environment

Conclusion:

Information gained through the Interview showed that

- IC in the organizations, as precepted by the employees, are basically serving to share and exchange the information within an organization for business purposes, however in close future majority of staff would like to have this function supported with the systematic influence of the knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of employees. It was interpreted as a request for extensive, planned and systematized functionality of IC with a flexible and adjustable structure that ensures fast response to changes and new challenges.
 - Employees faced specific barriers in sharing and getting information within the team that should be addressed in the revised structure of IC in line with the benchmarks and principles of effective IC shared by the respondents
- Apart from that, Interviewing contributed a lot to the identification of behavioral trends, personal needs and key activists within the team who demonstrated their readiness to promote and support the implementation of redesigned IC.

Objective	Messages/ Contents	Channels/ means	Auditory/ Level	Activities	Responsibility	Benchmark
<p>☉ wide understanding of mission, vision and goals in line with influence of knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of employees</p>	<p>Joint Vision Identity Promotion of AHF models Recognition</p>	<p>Oral and written messages, Messages from management es Digests, e-blasts Social media</p>	<p>All employees Contractors, Potential employees Partners</p>	<p>Public events Strategic planning sessions Retreats Team building Trainings Stories Informal meetings</p>	<p>Bureau Chief Executive Manager Regional Directors Marketing and Advocacy Managers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • unity, adherence and engagement of employees • interest for learning and development • loyal attitudes • adherence to organization culture • mutual support between employees
<p>☉ timely identifying of opportunities and solving problems; streamlined decision-making and fast response to changes and new challenges</p>	<p>Best practices and knowledge Challenges and ways to address them Analytical and practical information</p>	<p>In-person meetings Zoom meetings Teams e-mails Ideas/ innovations bank</p>	<p>Bureau Executive Team Regional coordinators</p>	<p>Strategic planning meetings Bureau Executive monthly meetings One-to-one meetings Working groups Pre-meeting materials and homework</p>	<p>Regional Directors Program Managers and Coordinators Deputy Bureau Manager Executive Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • admittance of ideas, problems and challenges • discussions finished with decisions or recommendations • preparedness of meetings • summaries and follow up • facilitation
<p>☉ technical support of information exchange, communications decision-making activities, formal and informal communication with the organization</p>		<p>Online sources of internal information/ documents</p>		<p>Pre-meeting materials and homework After-meeting notes and action – items Follow up Meetings / calls “barometer”</p>	<p>Executive Manager Facilitators and hosts Data Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • preparedness of meetings • summaries and follow up • facilitation • number of communications on routine issues vs number of fruitful and successful communications on routine issues • awareness and accessibility of needed information/ knowledge

Annex
5.