



# AHDS' Communication Policy

## Definition

Communication is defined as the sending and receiving of messages among related people in a specific environment or setting to achieve individual and shared goals. Communication in an organization is highly dependent on context and culture. Messages are exchanged between people through conversation, writing, signs, or behavior.

## Goal

The purpose of the communication policy is to ensure a clear understanding of the organization's goals, better coherence and coordination, effective communication during crisis, and creating knowledge.

## Principles

1. AHDS considers cultural and social sensitivities in its communication and respects all the people it works with.
2. Every communication of AHDS is clear, concise, targeted and appropriate to the capacity of the receiver of the message.
3. The information provided to relevant departments and people is timely, reliable and transparent.
4. The Board of Directors and employees are aware of the official positions on the issues and can distinguish between their personal opinions and the organizational position.
5. All employees have the necessary insight in their work area, are well aware of the limits of their authority and will communicate accordingly.
6. Only designated persons will be allowed to have official interaction with external stakeholders and the media.
7. No internal or external communication is left unanswered. The receiver is assured that his/her message has been received and he/she will receive the necessary response as soon as possible.
8. Complaints from internal and external sources are responded to in a timely and respectful manner.
9. The information provided AHDS by another institution in a confidential manner will not be published without written permission.
10. Personal information that may endanger a person's security or interests will not be given to another person or authority, except for the information stipulated by the laws in force.
11. When taking photos and documenting someone's story, religious and cultural values are taken into consideration and the consent of the person or his/her caregiver is obtained.
12. Copyright: All materials created by the employees, volunteers and consultants of the organization in official affairs belong to AHDS.

## Procedures

The organization should continuously improve internal and external communication. This requires training, retraining and searching for new ways to communicate.

## Internal communication

1. AHDS' position as a non-political, independent and impartial organization is explained to all members of the Board of Directors, employees, consultants and volunteers.

2. It is the responsibility of human resource officer to explain the communication policy to each staff along with its job description.
3. Each office holds a meeting between employees at least once a week for information updates, exchange of ideas and coordination of affairs.
4. The meetings of the Management Committee and the Board of Directors are held regularly according to their terms of references.
5. Good internal dialogue creates commitment, job satisfaction and responsibility.
6. In order to obtain diverse views and better results, communication is first established with employees in every matter, especially regarding decisions that affect them.
7. Hierarchy is taken into account for the procedures of official affairs.
8. Employees have the necessary opportunities to interact with the Board of Directors and the Management Committee to provide comments and express complaints.
9. Complaints are responded to in accordance with the AHDS' anti-corruption and whistleblower policy in a timely and respectful manner.

### **External communication**

1. The standard logo and slogan of the organization are used in every external communication.
2. The Management Committee secures external relations and appoints other employees for this matter, taking into account the competence.
3. In every oral or written communication, dignity of the other party and mutual respect is considered.
4. Before sharing any information or decisions with external stakeholders, colleagues are consulted; its wording, correctness and reasonableness are ensured.
5. AHDS' annual report includes the following details: a) mission, activities and results; b) how individuals may access the services; c) financial information, including income, budget and expenditure statements; d) current members of the Board of Directors, executive staff, partners and donors.

### **Social media**

1. The media is an important source of information about the activities of the institutions to the public, employees, government and non-government departments, policy makers, leaders and other interested parties.
2. The use of various means of mass media is very important for public awareness from the goals, strategies, plans and results of activities, as well as for the reputation of an organization.
3. The Management Committee regularly reviews and updates its information and messaging to accurately reflect AHDS services, advocacy, changes and innovations.
4. Efforts are made to attract more users to the organization's social pages.
5. Administrative and program managers create and develop good relations with the media.
6. The Management Committee shall ensure that appropriate information is made available to the public, and communicated clearly and in a timely manner to those requesting information.
7. Authorized spokespersons are the members of the Management Committee; they may appoint other employees for this matter considering their competency.
8. An employee who is not designated as an authorized spokesperson cannot answer questions from the media or anyone else. Unless he/she makes it clear that the statements are his/her personal opinions and not the answer or position of AHDS.

### **Rumors**

1. AHDS welcomes constructive criticism and tries to respond to comments as soon as possible.
2. AHDS will not comment on any positive or negative rumor until it has obtained the necessary information.

3. As soon as the information is analyzed, the unfavorable rumors are rejected in an appropriate and reasoned tone.
4. AHDS reserves the right to remove inappropriate comments due to inappropriate language or baseless allegations. It can also remove people who do not follow these values from their social media pages and report them to social media admins (like Facebook etc.).

### **Confidentiality of information**

1. Documents and files containing confidential information should be kept in a safe and appropriate place.
2. It should be ensured that the computers are protected and their data reserves are safe.
3. Official documents and files should not be kept in the meeting rooms.
4. Conversations related to confidential matters should not be held in a place where it may be noticed.
5. When sending or replying to e-mails, it should be noted that the original recipients and those who receive copies are carefully selected and their e-mail addresses are correct.
6. An employee who has unnecessary confidential documents or their copies must personally destroy them using a shredder.

### **Crisis Management**

1. In times of crisis, normal communication regulations may be suspended and crisis communication procedures become effective.
2. In critical situations, the safety of the employees, the organization and its beneficiaries have priority. Information should not be in a way that puts them at risk.
3. The organization's security policy is considered for information in critical situations.

This policy was approved in the meeting of the Management Committee on October 4, 2020, and it was approved unanimously in the meeting of the Board of Directors on April 12, 2021.