ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The ACHAP communication assessment and communication strategy preparation has been made possible through funding support from CORDAID and ICCO. We thank these partners for their continued support to ACHAP and member CHAs.

We are grateful to ACHAP members/CHAs, partners, Editorial Committee members and ACHAP Secretariat for their input in the ACHAP communication assessment and input towards the development of the Communication Strategy. Members of the ACHAP Systems Strengthening Taskforce have provided review and input to the document and they are appreciated.
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ACRONYMS

AACC ........All Africa Conference of Churches
ACHAP ........African Christian Health Association’s Platform
CCIH ..........Christian Connections for International Health
CHAK ..........Christian Health Association of Kenya
CHAs ..........Christian Health Association
Cordaid ......Catholic Organization for Development Cooperation
DFID ..........Department for International Development
EAC ..........East African Community
EU .............European Union
FBO ..........Faith-Based Organization
FGDs ..........Focus Group Discussions
HMIS ..........Health Management Information Systems
HR .............Human Resource
ICCO ........Interchurch Organization for Development Cooperation
ICT ..........Information Communication Technology
IMA ..........Interchurch Medical Assistance
IT .............Information Technology
MMI ..........Medicus Mundi International
MOH ...........Ministry of Health
NEPAD .......New Partnership for Africa’s Development
PDF ..........Portable Document Format
SADC ..........Southern Africa Development Community
SWOT ..........Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
TWG ..........Technical Working Group
UN .............United Nations
WCC ..........World Council of Churches
WHA ..........World Health Alliance
WHO ..........World Health Organization
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Africa Christian Health Associations Platform (ACHAP) is a regional organization of Christian Health Associations and networks covering several countries in Sub-saharan Africa and communication is critical in conducting its mandated roles and responsibilities.

According to the ACHAP founding mandate, reports, website and brochure, the platform’s mandate is described as that of facilitating networking, communication, experience sharing among the CHAs and creating a stronger voice in advocacy. The words used in this description clearly indicate how central communication is to ACHAP’s functions. The same documents also state that the other mandates of ACHAP secretariat are – to profile CHAs work and potential, translate important documents, publish the platform bulletin and maintain a database of CHAs on its website.

This communication strategy was developed between in March and May 2011 based on findings of a rapid assessment conducted between October 2010 and March 2011 which identified the communication capacity status, and needs. The rapid assessment used focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, questionnaires, SWOT analysis, audience analysis, and system analysis to gather data.

The purpose of this document is to help improve the effectiveness of communications at the ACHAP Secretariat by:

- Providing the context in which ACHAP carries out its communication activities (what is in place and how it’s working)
- Identifying and articulating ACHAP’s communication goals
- Identifying ACHAP’s key stakeholders and target audiences and their communication needs/expectations
- Identifying the most appropriate channels and strategies and for reaching them
- Developing an overarching positioning statement and developing messages for each audience
- Establishing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to keep communications relevant
• Providing some basic guidelines for ACHAP members to adapt the methodology used in this assessment to conduct their own internal analyses and develop communication strategies that they can use within their own organizations.

In summary the rapid assessment found that the main areas which the Platform needs to strengthen are

• Strategic promotion of CHAs work and achievements (particularly the “missed opportunities” which have happened because of poor documentation.

• Communication capacity of the CHAs (specifically skills in documentation, advocacy and how to use new media tools such as Facebook and e-discussion forums for networking).

• Weak branding and messaging.

• Lack of segmentation and targeting of ACHAP’s audiences.

• Inadequate feedback and follow up action on communications.

To address these issues a communications strategy has been developed that proposes the following remedial actions:

• Development of messages; the Platform should develop an overarching message and positioning statements that can be used for various audiences.

• Strengthening of ACHAP’s brand and identity.

• Development of promotional communications materials.

• Development of sharing and learning materials (e.g. success stories lessons learned stories, best practice stories) through documentation.

It is important to note that a communication strategy is a living document that should be reviewed periodically and adjusted to fit the organization’s evolving communication needs and priorities as time goes by. This document may therefore be amended and adjusted with time as felt appropriate to fit ACHAP’s needs. In addition, ACHAP members can use this document to assess the communication needs within their own organizations and thereafter develop communication plans for their own use. At the end of each chapter we have included some general guidelines on how to adapt the methodologies used to conduct similar exercises at the Platform members’ level.
SECTION 1: ACHAP’S CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

A strategy is a “systematic plan of action” or “a plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal”. Communication like any other activity needs to be planned before it is executed. Effective communication does not just happen, it needs to be planned. At a minimum a communication strategy should elaborate the goals, audience, the message(s), the channel or means of communication to be used, and how to evaluate effectiveness.

Faith-based health network organizations, and more specifically Christian Health Associations (CHAs), contribute significantly to the provision of health services in many African countries, particularly services that are targeted at resource poor populations as well as to underserved, remote and difficult to reach locations. The Africa Christian Health Associations Platform (ACHAP’s) Secretariat was established through a Declaration of Commitment by the third Africa Christian Health Associations Biennial Conference held in Bagamoyo, Tanzania in January 2007 as a vehicle to facilitate sharing of information, joint advocacy and networking among the Christian Health Associations (CHAs) in Africa and with other stakeholders. There are currently 31 CHAs and Church Health Networks from 26 Sub-Saharan African countries that are members of or affiliated to ACHAP.

The Christian Health Association of Kenya (CHAK) was mandated by the Bagamoyo Conference to establish and host an ACHAP Secretariat by the Conference’s declaration dubbed “The Bagamoyo Commitment Statement”. With support from the World Council of Churches (WCC) and Difaem, CHAK established the Platform Secretariat in Nairobi and recruited staff to implement the Platform’s activities.

At the time the rapid assessment was conducted ACHAP functioned as an “informal” network in as far as the organization was not a registered institution. However, following a meeting held by ACHAP’s Interim Board held on 19th-22nd October 2011 in Mombasa, Kenya, ACHAP began the process to register ACHAP as a non-profit, non-governmental, international organization, thus giving it a legal status. The structure of the Platform is shown in figure 1.
In its Constitution, ACHAP’s mission is defined as: “Inspired by Christ’s healing ministry, ACHAP supports Church-related health associations and organizations to work and advocate for health for all in Africa, guided by equity, justice, and human dignity.” The task of supporting church-related organizations to advocate calls for strong communication capacity to ensure that ACHAP can fulfill this mandate.

In addition, ACHAP’s Constitution also clearly outlines objectives that have communication at their core:

1. To facilitate networking and communication among Christian Health Associations and other Church Health Networks in Africa.
2. To facilitate joint advocacy with and for the Christian Health Associations and Church Health Networks in Africa on matters of health development.
3. To support the capacity development of Christian Health Associations and Church Health Networks to provide quality health care through Church Health Networks.
4. To establish and maintain partnerships with other institutions and organizations in support of health development in Africa.
1.2 Scope of ACHAP’s Rapid Assessment Study

In September 2010 Africa Christian Health Associations Platform (ACHAP) commissioned a rapid assessment of its Secretariat’s communication structures and capacity. Terms of reference for the assessment were to:

i. Identify priority communication needs of the ACHAP Secretariat and its stakeholders;
ii. Identify the gaps in the Secretariat’s capacity to deliver communication outputs;
iii. Develop a strategy to strengthen the capacity, effectiveness and efficiency of communications at ACHAP.

The methods used to collect data in the assessment were

i. **Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)** – Three focus groups comprising representatives of various CHAs participating in the ACHAP workshop on governance & HMIS held in Kampala, Uganda (September 2010). The workshop brought together 40 participants representing 12 CHAs from 9 countries. The FGDs discussed: (i) The identity of the Platform, (ii) The roles of the ACHAP Secretariat and CHAs (iii) Who ACHAP target audiences are (iv) What means of communication ACHAP should use.

ii. **Indepth Interviews with selected individuals** – These interviews were held with 4 individuals. They included 1 partner representative, 2 CHA representatives (one Anglophone and one Francophone), 1 staff member.

iii. **SWOT analysis** – Data was collected on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the Platform. The SWOT conducted through indepth interviews with some selected CHA representatives and the Secretariat Officer.

iv. **Stakeholders/Audience analysis** – An examination of who AHCAP’s stakeholders and key audiences are.

v. **System analysis** – This was done by examining the communication infrastructure at the Secretariat, the Platform policies and current practice at the Secretariat.

vi. **Surveys** – Online surveys were developed targeting ACHAP members, partners, and editorial committee members. The membership survey was circulated in English and French to accommodate both Francophone and Anglophone members. The other two surveys were conducted in English only.

Data was gathered between October 2010 and March 2011.
1.3 Summary of Rapid Assessment Findings

Findings from the abovementioned rapid assessment are discussed below.

1.3.1 Focus Group Discussions

Focus groups comprising representatives from the CHAs held discussions to give answer to the following questions: (1) Who or what is ACHAP? (2) What is the Platform Secretariat’s role and what is the role of its members? (3) Whom should the Platform communicate with? (4) What messages should ACHAP communicate? (5) How (which tools) should ACHAP use to communicate?

i. **Who or what is ACHAP?** - There was consensus among all discussants that ACHAP is “a forum for Christian Health Associations, networks and affiliates.” Geographically, the ACHAP’s constituency was considered to be the whole African continent, but it was noted that the Platform’s membership existed only in some countries of the continent, and it was acknowledged that there were some countries in which it would be unlikely to have CHAs present to become members of the network (e.g. in Northern African countries such as Algeria and Tunisia).

ACHAP as a “forum” was described as a place where members (CHAs) can come together periodically to “do things together” such as having a stronger combined voice to advocate for increased resources to CHAs for health systems, or sharing best practices as a way of strengthening individual institutions in the respective countries.

ii. **What is the Platform Secretariat’s role and what is the role of its members?** - The CHAs or the Platform members were identified as being the “face” and “voice” of ACHAP while the Secretariat was identified as the center that manages communications on behalf of the Platform. Discussants emphasized that the Secretariat’s role is to **facilitate**, and **not to coordinate**. Other responsibilities of the Secretariat were given as:

- Collecting, compiling and sharing advocacy materials, case studies and evidence (from the Platform members) with Platform members and external stakeholders;
- Organizing events, workshops as well as participating in regional or international activities;
• Seeking, identifying and securing opportunities for technical capacity building in advocacy for CHAs;
• Organizing south-to-south technical assistance.

The CHAs roles were given as:
• Providing data (evidence base) that can be used for advocacy;
• Participating in and contributing technical input to Platform events, working groups and ACHAP documentation;
• Participating in the advocacy and capacity enhancement activities;
• Contributing technical know-how (knowledge assets) and other resources for the purpose of pooling together the Platforms resources;
• Supporting south-south experience sharing and learning

iii. **Whom should ACHAP communicate with?** – It was noted that the Platform has both internal and external stakeholders that should be targeted for communication. The internal stakeholders are the CHAs as well as their owning churches as indirect or secondary beneficiaries that should not be ignored. External stakeholders are:

• Church related partners and networks (e.g. ICCO, CORDAID, MISEREOR, CCIH, MMI, EPN, WCC, DIFEAM)
• Development/funding partners: (e.g. World bank, USAID, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, DFID, EU)
• Continental agencies (e.g. AU, NEPAD, EAC)
• Continental church bodies (e.g. AACC)
• UN agencies and their continental offices (e.g. WHO, UNFPA, UNAIDS, UNICEF)
• Global Alliances (e.g. WHA)

iv. **What messages should ACHAP communicate?** – Discussants felt that ACHAP’s messages to both internal and external stakeholders should focus on describing and explaining 3 critical areas of interest:

• Who we are – Christian, health associations and networks (national in scope) from different sub-Saharan countries, joining forces on single advocacy platform in order to have a stronger voice – indicate the added value*
• What we do – provide health services at a national level, complement public health services provided by the state, work with the marginalized and poor and population in rural and hard to reach areas

• Issues on health that are pertinent to sub-Saharan Africa – the impact that the church health facilities are making in their individual countries in crucial areas as HIV and AIDS, maternal and child health, reproductive health, primary health care, access to health (particularly in relation to availability of resources, e.g. human resources for health, medicines and supplies, equipment and machinery, infrastructure/facilities, national budget allocations)

v. **How should ACHAP communicate?** – Discussants identified the following as the tools that the Platform should use for communicating: email; workshops, newsletter/bulletin, website, position papers. It was noted that these tools would only be effective in the case of communicating with internal stakeholders (i.e. CHAs) only if the targeted audience have the tools and know how to them well. For example, when the ACHAP Secretariat uses an e-discussion forum, the Platform’s members should have the adequate capacity at the clinics to access the forum and register for it, in addition to knowing how to use it.

Discussants also noted that it would be important to have an overall strategic plan for the Platform which in turn should inform the communication strategy so that communication actions can be implemented more effectively.

1.3.2 **Indepth Interviews**

In-depth discussions were held with four individuals. The four respondents represented different stakeholders: 1 partner representative, 2 CHA representatives (one Anglophone and one Francophone), 1 staff member. The indepth discussions were semi-structured in format and were guided by a list of discussion items which focused on: (1) What their perception of ACHAP’s mandate is (2) What tangible benefits are there for being a member of ACHAP (3) What members expect from the Secretariat, and (3) How members can participate more meaningfully in the Platform (4) Ideas for strengthening ACHAP in the future.
i. **ACHAP’s mandate** – Interviewees concurred with the official description of ACHAP’s mandate as “a platform to facilitate communication, advocacy and networking” among African CHAs. In addition they also indicated that the Platform should also link them with other stakeholders working in health, such as donor partners, regional and international organizations and other Christian networks. All interviewees felt that the CHAs are the Platform and therefore were responsible for implementing any activities that they agreed upon. Two respondents described the Secretariat role as that of “facilitating” and “coordinating” the ACHAP activities. One interviewee said that “member CHAs should demonstrate ownership, because they are ACHAP. We are doing the easy thing by leaving everything to the Secretariat, but we should be more engaged and contributing more to the activities instead of just waiting for workshops and the conference.”

ii. **Membership benefits** – In general all respondents felt that there are benefits to be gained from becoming a member of ACHAP. All of them cited networking as the main benefit of membership. One of them described it thus: “As a member of ACHAP we have been able to meet other CHAs during ACHAP workshops and learn a lot from them. The Platform even organized an exchange visit for us to learn from another CHA. These opportunities help us improve the way we work and encourage us because we know we are not the only ones facing challenges in our work.” However, all respondents felt that the members benefits need to increase beyond the networking. One of the respondents stated that “The Platform should provide the same service at continental level as the CHAs do at national level. For example, it should be engaging with policymakers in bodies like Africa Union and SADC in the same way that we engage our governments through the ministries of health.”

Another interviewee from a Francophone CHA opined that there is potential benefits to be gained from being a Platform member; he said his organization had not yet really gained that much apart from the opportunities of networking during workshops and at the biennial conference because they were usually conducted in English. He further stated that Francophone CHAs felt disadvantaged at ACHAP forums that were conducted in English, and in and most cases all presentations and papers distributed at these events were in English. “One of the staff from my organization declined to come to this meeting [ACHAP’s HMIS workshop in
Kampala, Uganda] when he heard that the workshop would be conducted in English and there would be not translation services.”

Learning from the success stories and best practices of other CHAs was another important benefit cited by three of the interviewees. However, it was noted by one of them that it would be helpful to have these learning experiences documented so that they could be shared with the ACHAP network instead of just being made as a presentation during meetings and workshops.

iii. **CHA participation/role in ACHAP** – Interviewees all stated that CHAs need to be engaged more actively in the Platform’s activities. All of them felt that there was room for more active participation by the membership in general. One of the respondents noted that member CHAs faced many challenges within their own organizations and in the country context which sometimes hindered their participation. He cited limited financial and human resources, political instability, and language (ACHIAP meetings that are organized and conducted in English without provision of translation for Francophone speakers) as some of the obstacles hindering members participation.

Another participant observed that the onus of engaging actively in the Platform was on the members themselves. According to this interviewee, CHAs should show their commitment and take ownership of the Platform: “We should show our commitment by responding to requests from the Secretariat. Sometimes all that is being asked for is for us to reply to an email or to propose or suggest an idea. Our participation doesn’t have to be measured only in the big things attending a workshop, we can also be responsible in the small issues that still need to done to keep the Platform going.” She also suggested that the Platform as a whole should become more proactive in advocacy work and involve the CHAs through technical working groups.

iv. **Way forward for ACHAP** – Suggestion from the interviewee regarding the way forward for ACHAP included the following:

- That there is need to find ways to accommodate and engage with Francophone members more. This would include ensuring that French speaking participants can follow the proceedings of meetings/workshops/conferences and the resource materials such as
presentations, reports, etc should be made available in English as well as in French.
That there is need to formalize the network and register it so that it can be a legal entity.
That there is need to mobilize financial resources to run the Secretariat and to facilitate running programmes with the CHAs. Related to this, there is need to find partners that can provide support for capacity building and technical assistance to CHAs in areas of weakness.
That there is need for the Platform to seek to increase its visibility and recognition regionally and globally and to establish strategic partnerships.

1.3.3 Communications SWOT Analysis

*Table 1: SWOT of ACHAP*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The location in Nairobi, Kenya, is advantageous because of Kenya’s centrality on the continent – it is easy to connect to from all parts of the continent from this location.</td>
<td>Limited financial resources which in turn limits kind of tools that the Secretariat can use. For example, although receiving print publications is preferred by some (for the Platform bulletin) the cost of printing and posting hard copies to various countries is prohibitive. Communication options of the Secretariat mainly limited to electronic format which incur less cost compared to the more traditional types of communication such as face to face meetings (workshops) or hard copy documentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Secretariat has good communication infrastructure at the Secretariat office. This includes the fact that the Secretariat staff have good computing equipment and accessories including access to wireless internet connectivity and good technical IT support from the host organization.</td>
<td>The CHAs have different communication capacities. Most CHAs do not have a dedicated communication staff within the institution. The CEO / the head of institution is usually the main link between the CHA and the Platform Secretariat, but this can present a problem because that high level may not be have much time to dedicate for frequent response and feedback on</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is regular communication from the Secretariat to the CHAs. This includes the quarterly e-bulletin, and regular emails to members.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilingual staff – The Secretariat is able to serve and communicate with Anglophone and Francophone because of having bi-lingual</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
staff.

- Human Resource expertise on the secretariat staff means that the Secretariat is able to support members and work with them in this critical area.
- Committed leadership and support from the host organization provides a conducive environment for the Secretariat to operate in.
- The platform produces and disseminates a monthly HRH Bulletin with the support of IMA World Health

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invitations from Development Partners and other stakeholders in the health sector to attend national, regional and international meetings, workshops, conferences. These fora are opportunities for the Platform to showcase its own and member CHAs achievements and impact as well as being opportunities to mobilize resources for programs.</td>
<td>Diminishing funding base for faith-based organizations. Many funding agencies that traditionally funded FBOs have changed funding policies, shifted away from funding certain types of projects, or reduced the amount of support. This limits the potential avenues of support for the Platform and CHAs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General goodwill for faith-based health care institutions in the countries where the CHAs operate. In most countries CHAs have earned a high reputation due to their mission of providing health services to the most vulnerable sections of the society</td>
<td>Staff movement within CHAs resulting in loss of relationship (for the Platform) with individual CHAs when the focal contact staff leaves the organization or loss of organizational memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current trend of international agencies and global funding mechanisms to partner and fund faith-based organizations in development work especially to address health issues such as the HIV and AIDS pandemic. This is an opportunity for the Platform, for example the Secretariat could</td>
<td>Little or poor feedback from the Platform members in response to communication from the secretariat. International partners and donors who collaborate with the Platform or CHAs and have their own agenda which sometimes are not the same as or in the interest or aims of the Platform.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ACHAP issues. Furthermore, electronic communication of some of the CHAs is limited and this results in delayed feedback or non-response to communication from the Secretariat.

- Delayed feedback or non-response to requests for information (experiences, best practices, success stories, news) to the members from the Secretariat.
- Poor documentation among CHAs of their achievements, lessons learned and models of best practice. This means there is lack of supportive evidence to back-up claims of successes and achievements by CHAs.

- Lack of technical capacity (in the CHAs) or know-how to deal with certain issues which impact on their institutions.
develop concept paper to showcase strengths and achievements of particular CHAs.

- Some CHAs have strengths in certain areas that can serve as models of best practice to other members of the Platform or even to institutions that are not members of the Platform.
- Partner organizations committed to supporting ACHAP systems strengthening

In general, the SWOT analysis leads to an overall broad conclusion that the communication undertaken by the Secretariat staff has generally been good within the constraints of finances and human resource, but there is need to strengthen the feedback and participation by member CHAs.

1.3.4 Stakeholder/Audience Analysis

Stakeholders are defined as people or organizations which have the ability to help or hinder the achievement of the Platform goals. During the rapid assessment a stakeholder analysis was conducted to gain a better understanding of the stakeholders and their relationship to the Platform, summarized in the table below.

*Table 2: ACHAP’s stakeholders*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Relationship to ACHAP (or how they can affect ACHAP)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CHAs</td>
<td>They are the constituting members of the Platform and are the primary beneficiary of the Platform’s services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church related partners</td>
<td>They share the same values as the Platform and they provide technical and financial support to the Platform and its members.  The Platform relies on their resources and partnership to keep operating and to implement its activities.  They can link the Platform and its members to secular international development funding agencies or help them raise funds from other secular sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development/funding partners</strong></td>
<td>They can provide technical and financial support to the Platform and its members. They look for credible and reliable partners to work with on national level programs and therefore they have specific interest in working with FBOs (thus the Platform members because of their nationwide networks) to broaden the scope of programmes implemented at country level. The Platform relies on the resources and partnership with these stakeholders to establish, implement and expand health projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Owning churches</strong></td>
<td>They wield power and influence within the governance structures of member CHAs. They can influence whether a CHA should take up membership in the Platform or not. In some cases they determine the priorities of CHAs and control resources of the CHA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>International organizations</strong></td>
<td>They have technical expertise and are respected by development and funding agencies. They are possible partners for the Platform or individual CHAs to collaborate with on advocacy, technical assistance or resource mobilization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continental church bodies</strong></td>
<td>They are respected by owning churches. They have some influence over policymaking in church-related issues. They can influence (CHA) owning churches. They have an interest in the churches response to health issues which is the core business of CHAs and the Platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continental agencies</strong></td>
<td>They influence policymaking of development issues (including health) at regional level. They can influence policy at national level in member countries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>UN agencies and their continental offices</strong></td>
<td>They have expertise and are influential in policy making at global and regional level. They are potential partners for capacity building, technical assistance and resource mobilization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>International FBO networks</strong></td>
<td>They are potential partners, some are peers, and they share the same values as the Platform, are peers. Some implement programs/projects with some of the CHAs. They can help raise ACHAP’s profile within FBO circles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Global Alliances and networks

They have expertise and offer opportunity for networking and learning. They are potential partners for collaboration in advocacy, technical assistance, capacity building and resource mobilization. They can help raise ACHAP and CHAs profile globally.

1.3.5 System Analysis

The system analysis examined the communication infrastructure, policies and current practice at the Secretariat. The findings of this analysis are summarized below.

i. Equipment and staff – The Secretariat has two full time staff and one part-time staff:
   - Coordinator - part-time voluntary service from the host organization provides overall guidance to the Secretariat
   - Secretariat officer – full time staff, focal contact person, responsible for the Secretariat’s communications
   - Human Resource Specialist – Seconded from IMA World Health through funding from USAID in the Capacityplus project who provides support to CHAs on HR issues

ii. Communication products – The Secretariat currently produces the following:
   - Bulletin: A quarterly electronic bulletin called “Africa Christian Health Associations Update” is produced quarterly. The content of this publication includes news from members and partners, best practices and success stories from CHAs, information on health-related topics of interest to the Platform. Each edition focuses on a particular thematic area. Production is done in-house by ACHAP staff

Communication gaps occur when what is being said is not been communicated to the addressee properly or completely. The causes of communication gap depend on where it exists. Communication gaps are major obstacles to achieving organizational goals. It may mean that the goals and objectives of the organization are either not communicated to all levels of the organization or if communicated they have not been understood properly. The same applies when the organization fails to effectively communicate its goals to external audiences. This can be caused by using improper communication channels, setting unrealistic goals, or using inappropriate language.
with support from an Editorial Committee. The publication is produced electronically in English and French and is circulated by email and through the Platform’s website. Production of this newsletter is regular and fairly timely. It is distributed via email in Portable Document Format (PDF) and is also accessible on the ACHAP website.

The Secretariat has been responsible for the production of one edition of Contact magazine (a publication of the World Council of Churches). This has entailed compiling an issue that focuses on and showcases the work of Africa CHAs.

- **Website**: ACHAP has its own domain and a well-developed website www.africachap.org. It features information about the Platform and its members including news posts as well as reference/resource documents. The website has some open access areas as well as restricted access areas which require the user to register and provide user information before they are allowed access. There is an interactive discussion forum for online discussion and comment, and a members contact database. It also provides links to member CHAs websites. The website is maintained by Secretariat staff who is responsible for updating and refreshing website content as well as uploading documents and images to the site. Technical backend support is provided by the internet service provider (ISP) and web-host. Although the Platform has its own domain, the official email address uses the host organization’s domain, i.e. (chas@chak.or.ke).

- **Promotional items**: These are produced periodically for Platform events, mainly for the biennial conference. They include banners, t-shirts, pens and brochure. The design origination is usually done in-house by the Secretariat staff.

- **Reports**: Six months report to funding partners (ICCO, Cordaid, Misereor, Difeam and WCC) and an annual report of the Platform’s work are produced are produced by the Platform. Both reports are produced and circulated in soft copy. The annual report content is prepared in English and French and is circulated to ACHAP members, partners and other interested stakeholders, as well as being available on the website. The six months report are prepared for the relevant funding partners.
iii. **Databases** – The ACHAP Secretariat maintains an electronic database of its members in Microsoft Excel. The database is maintained and updated by the Secretariat staff. Data is organized by country. It is a simple database with basic information such as the name of the institution, name of a contact person at the institution and address details. In addition to this, the Secretariat has organized mailing lists on its mail client (Outlook Express). The lists are clustered in various target groups such as: conference facilitators, Technical Working Group members, Editorial Committee members, Advisory committee members, partners, Francophone members, etc.

iv. **Archiving** – The Secretariat archives most of its documents in electronic format. While there is no systematic archiving of documents, most are easily accessible and fairly quickly retrieved when needed. There is not a systematic back-up of documents and files, or filing system, but multiple copies of all important documents are kept. The electronic archives of documents that are on the website provides sort of back-up in the absence of an organized storage and retrieval system.

v. **Branding** – The Platform’s formalization of branding and marking is limited mainly at present because it is a formal network that is not registered as a legal entity but which operates under the legal housing of CHAK. Where a legal entity is required for certain transactions or operations then the Platform works under the aegis of the host organization. There have been some inconsistencies with the name and official acronym of the Platform. It has referred to itself as *Africa Christian Health Associations - ACHA* and *Africa Christian Health Associations Platform – ACHAP*. The ACHAP acronym has been more frequently used in the last 12 months by the Secretariat, CHAs and Partners and is the acronym used in this report.

The Platform has a well designed logo that serves as a clear identifying emblem of the organization. Use of the logo is limited mainly to reports, the website and promotional materials that are used a the Platforms events. The brand and identity are important considerations and need to be strengthened because they are critical for establishing ownership for those who belong to the Association (Platform members should not feel that the identity of the Association is subsumed by the host organization’s identity) and secondly as for external stakeholders (especially potential partners whom the Platform targets to establish relationships with) to clearly recognize and know whom they are dealing with.
1.3.6 Surveys

Three online survey tools were developed targeting ACHAP members, partners, and Editorial Committee members. The membership survey was circulated in English and French to accommodate both Francophone and Anglophone members. The partners survey and the Editorial Committee surveys were both conducted in English only.

The response rate for two out of three surveys was low. For the membership survey, 9 out of 26 anglophone member organizations completed the survey tool compared to 6 out of the 6 targeted Francophone organizations. This means that the responses may not be representative of the target group (except with respect to Francophone members responses) although they can serve as useful indicators of what some of the target group members think.

i. **Members survey** (English and French) – The English and French questionnaires were similar and consisted of 15 questions. The members assessment of the Secretariat’s communication capacity, their assessment of their own communication capacity, how they rated different communication products from the Platform Secretariat (namely, the website, bulletin and email communication), and which communication channels they thought were most appropriate for the Platform to use for its communications.

The responses indicated that most of the respondents had designated staff within their organizations that were responsible for communicating with the Platform and other partners. However, for most of the organizations the designated person was the head of the organization. Only 3 respondents indicated that their organization had a dedicated communications staff.

All respondents said they had reliable internet connection at their organization and 11 out of 15 respondents said their organization had a website.

Email was indicated as the most convenient way for receiving communication from the Platform. Other media considered to be convenient ways of accessing Platform information that scored highly were the website, face-to-face meetings, workshops and conferencing through the computer (e.g. skype, yahoo messenger).

All respondents were aware of the Secretariat’s communication products, i.e. the website and the bulletin. Less than half of them contributed content frequently and did not know if the ACHAP website carried information about their organization. To the
question on what type of communication materials that they would like to receive from the Secretariat, the most highly rated items (in order of highest preference) were: (1) Success stories and lessons learned, (2) hardcopy print publications, (3) position papers, conference and event summaries, fact sheets, other electronic newsletters, other CHAs newsletters.

In rating the performance of the Secretariat (ranging from poor to excellent) the website, bulletin and email communication were the most highly rated types of communication. Event reporting was the lowest scoring performance area with 10 out of 15 respondents rating the Secretariat’s performance in these areas as either satisfactory or poor.

ii. **Partner’s survey** – This was a short survey in English consisting of 6 questions. There was only one respondent to this survey. Response to the question on the what the role of ACHAP described it as being “a platform for joint advocacy” and one that should “provide learning and sharing”. The respondent described the Secretariat’s responsibility as being “to inform them about ongoing activities and to link ACHAP and its members with international advocacy and know-how sharing.” In rating the quality of ACHAP’s communication materials, the website, bulletin and conference reports were rated as satisfactory (could improve). Other materials such as the annual report, brochure and promotional materials were not rated.

The respondent pointed out a weakness in feedback from the Secretariat, giving the example that an attempt to register on the website’s discussion forum and to subscribe online for the newsletter both failed.

iii. **Editorial Committee survey** – This questionnaire was targeted at the 12 editorial committee members. Only two respondents completed this survey, therefore the following summary can only be considered as an indicator of the views of only a small portion (17%) of the target group. Respondents indicated that some of the responsibilities of the editorial committee are to: contribute ideas and review the publication, contribute articles, and encourage and mobilize resources for the bulletin.

In rating the Secretariat’s performance, the website, bulletin, brochure and promotional items were rated as good, while the annual report and event reports were rated as being of satisfactory standard but could be improved. One of the respondents noted that email
communication on the part of the Secretariat was very good, but there was a weakness in getting feedback/responses. Both respondents pointed at staff overload as one of the Secretariat’s weakness, describing it as “overwhelmed Secretariat” and “limited HR capacity”. One of the main challenges identified was the diversity of members and stakeholders that the Platform has which complicates the demand for information. Other challenges cited were inadequate financial resources and weak communication facilities within some of the CHAs. The Platform’s strengths and opportunities were given as: dedicated staff, access to a knowledgeable and professional editorial team, supportive development partners, bilingual staff capacity, a supportive host organization and membership in international networks.

1.4 Recommendations

Areas of concern and gaps in ACHAP’s communications that were identified through the rapid assessment are outlined in the table below. The table also lists recommendations to address each of the issues.

Table 3: Recommendations for addressing identified gaps

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issues/Gaps</th>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Recommendations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACHAP identity</td>
<td>• The Platform has been referred to as <strong>African Christian Health Associations</strong> and <strong>Africa Christian Health Associations Platform</strong> and two acronyms have been used: ACHA and ACHAP. • ACHAP is not a legal entity. Does its identity get overshadowed by that of the host organization because of this? Does this affect “ownership” of the Platform by CHAs? • Ownership by members - that “they” are ACHAP and speak for ACHAP.</td>
<td>• Resolve this through the General Assembly by making a decision on the name of the organization and whether or not to pursue legal registration. • Increase engagement with membership in the ACHAP activities beyond participation in workshops and attending the biennial conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positioning of ACHAP</td>
<td>• Potential development partners and collaborators in the health sector do not know or do not properly understand what ACHAP is</td>
<td>• Develop an overarching message that clearly states what ACHAP is and does. • Develop positioning messages</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Documentation** | • CHAs have a lot of rich experiences that are not documented and these are missed opportunities for learning and sharing achievements and best practices that are unique to the church health sector  
• Documentation provides important evidence to support CHA claims about their contribution to the health sector  
• Need for support at the CHA level to build capacity in documentation. | • Develop simple templates that CHAs can use to provide information to the Secretariat to facilitate documentation at central level.  
• Collect and archive achievements and best practice models at the Secretariat.  
• Seek for opportunities and partners that can facilitate building capacity within CHAs. |
| **Advocacy** | • Need for a more proactive approach to advocacy to address issues of common concern facing CHAs  
• Although there is much potential of having a joint voice, there is need for more concrete steps to be made in engaging advocacy at regional and international level  
• Need to set up mechanisms within ACHAP that will propel advocacy actions. | • Draw up a list of priority issues that ACHAP will address within a given time frame, and develop position statements for the issues identified for action.  
• Set up thematic technical working groups (made up of CHAs) that will spearhead or take the lead on specific advocacy issues on behalf of ACHAP  
• Link up with on-going advocacy debates, and actively participate by providing the African CHAs perspective |
| **Resources** | • Capacity at the Secretariat and within CHAs is limited by inadequate resources (human and financial)  
• Limited financial resources at ACHAP and in CHAs and consequently there are little or no funds designated for | • Identify possible partners and seek opportunities that can support communication activities in ACHAP and CHAs  
• Include communication activities in ACHAP and ACHAs workplans and strategic plans with dedicated budget |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effectiveness of current communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The Secretariat regularly communicates with members through email and through the quarterly e-bulletin, however, this communication is not totally effective. There is poor feedback and/or poor follow up on communication actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need communication that has impact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication systems at some CHAs is weak. How can this be strengthened?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>lines for communication activities.</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Encourage CHAs to have strategic communication within their workplans and budgets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• When information is requested from CHAs, the Secretariat should always provide follow up feedback to the membership on the issue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop simple templates or sample responses when requesting information from CHAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seek opportunities and/or partners and resources (e.g. toolkits, small grants, fellowships, etc) that will provide capacity building at CHAs for different communication skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1.5 Conducting a simple rapid assessment of your organization’s communications

Conduct a quick survey to establish your organization’s: (i) communications capacity (ii) establish audiences and/or stakeholders (iii) Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

1. **To assess the communication capacity**
   
   Prepare a list of questions to get information about:
   * who is responsible for communication at the organization
   * whom does the organization communicate with (i.e. audience and stakeholders) and how (tools or media used)
   * the frequency and effectiveness of communication
   * Include questions that will inform on perceived strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT)

   The target respondents for these questions may include your organization’s staff, members of organization’s governance structures (e.g. board members), members from some of the organization’s committees or other internal structures.

   The questions may be used as a self-administered questionnaire (you can give out printed copies or send as an email survey) or as an administered questionnaire (where respondents are asked the questions face-to-face or on telephone)

   **Tip 1**: Keep the list of questions short (about 5-10 questions) so that responding to the questionnaire only takes 10-15 minutes. This will help to make respondents more willing to participate in the survey because it does not take up too much time.

   **Tip 2**: To prepare the list of questions, you may adapt the Members Survey Questionnaire (Annex I) or develop your own questions if these are not relevant for your situation.

2. **To assess stakeholders and audiences**

   As above, prepare a list of questions aimed targeted at individuals and organizations that your organization interacts with. The questions should get information about:
   * how (means, as well frequency) they communicate with your organization
   * what kind of information they receive from your organization and what they expect, as well as what information they share with you
   * how rate your communication with them
   * Include questions that will inform on perceived SWOT

   The target respondents could include representatives from affiliate organizations, partner/donor organizations, member institutions (if your organization is an association or network) and peer organizations.

3. **SWOT**

   Synthesize responses to SWOT questions in the two abovementioned surveys to get a SWOT analysis from both internal and external stakeholders.

   The data provided from the two surveys and the SWOT analysis will provide a overview of the organization’s communications system: outlining the strengths (what already exists that works well or is an advantage), the weaknesses (what hinders or slows down progress), the opportunities (what you could capitalize on), and the threats (what you need to watch out for). Draw up a list of recommendations to address each of issue outlined, this may be done with the help of a small team/committee that will brainstorm on how each issue can be addressed. This will be your starting point for developing your action plan.
Section 2: COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

2.1 Stakeholders’ Expectations

The overall goal of the ACHAP communication strategy is to strengthen the Secretariat as well as the Platform members’ communication. From the rapid assessment findings the expectations of ACHAP’s stakeholders are summarized below.

- Facilitate networking among the network members of the Platform and with other stakeholders.
- Facilitate information sharing within and without the Platform.
- Establish strategic partnerships for technical assistance, resource mobilization and advocacy.
- Promote and document ACHAP/CHAs’ capacity, achievements and help build up an evidence base of information about Africa CHAs to support profiling, lobby and advocacy.
- Identify and facilitate implementation of advocacy actions targeted at priority issues.
- Raise the profile and increase visibility of ACHAP on the continental and global arena.
- Facilitate capacity building of CHAs in communication and advocacy.

2.2 Serving the Stakeholders

The day-to-day work of the ACHAP Secretariat is oriented around communication – either sharing information with stakeholders, gathering/requesting information from stakeholders, or developing communication products for stakeholders. And while the general assessment is that the Secretariat has performed well in its

Most development communication strategies are developed as follows:

- Establishing what the goals of the organization are - every organization has a mandate that it needs to fulfill, communication should be geared towards fulfilling this mandate.
- Assessing the communication infrastructure needs – What is in place? What resources (human, financial, technical) are available for communication?
- Identifying and understanding the organizations stakeholders and audiences - Whom are we communicating with and why? What information do they need or expect from the organization?
- Developing appropriate messages - It is important for the organization to have an overarching message that reflects its mission and values. Different messages can then be developed out of this to address the organization’s audiences and to suit various fora or situations that the organization may participate in.
- Selecting appropriate communication tools - The medium of communication should be selected with the target audience and message in mind. This includes considering the language used by the audience, the geographical location and technological capacity (using a technology that is compatible and acceptable to the audience).
- Integrating monitoring and evaluation into the system - This allows assessment to be made on how effective the communication is and signals in the organization where adjustments need to be made, for example it may indicate whether the message has been understood as intended or it is being misinterpreted or if a particular channel of communication is effective or not.
communications given the context in which it is operating in, there is need for ACHAP to become more strategic in order for its communications to be effective and impactful.

While there are challenges (mainly financial) that may restrict frequency at which the Platform can issue communications, the type of communication products it can produce and the choice of channels to be used, the first step towards increasing effectiveness of communication will be to develop a clear overarching message that articulates ACHAP’s mission. Out of this overarching message, targeted positioning statements addressing the needs of each stakeholder group can be developed.

As ACHAP embarks on the process of formalizing the legal registration of the Platform this is an opportune time for the ACHAP membership to also consider and develop the Platform’s overall message. The overarching message is an important part of the Platform’s identity and should therefore ideally be developed with the consensus of the Platform’s members. It is important that the overarching message accurately presents how ACHAP would like itself to be perceived and is “owned” by the members as a description of who they are. For the purpose of this document a sample overarching message is suggested below as a starting point.

Suggested overarching message:

“Christian Health Associations in Africa play a critical role in the provision of quality essential health care services which constitute a large proportion of the national health services and with notable strength in the remote and underserved rural areas. In addition, they play a key role in the training of professional human resources for health (HRH) and community health workers.

The following positioning statements are suggested to underpin and guide communications targeting various stakeholders:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
<th>Positioning Statement/Key Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internal stakeholders</strong></td>
<td>We make a significant and important contribution to the health sector. We can learn from each others experiences and strengths. When we work together we learn from each other. When we speak as one body we have a stronger voice that can influence and impact on health policy and resource allocation and enable us to provide better services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>External stakeholders</strong></td>
<td>Churches, through the work of Christian Health Associations in Africa, make an important contribution to the health sector. They have a unique way of working that targets the poor, vulnerable and underserved populations and their work complements the services provided by the government and private for profit and not-for-profit health care providers. They are good and reliable partners to work with and are indispensable in ensuring that good quality and sustainable health services are available and accessible to all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Partners/Funders</strong></td>
<td>Christian Health Associations provide a significant proportion of health services in the countries they work in. They play an important role and are indispensable partners to national health care systems. Their services target poor, vulnerable and underserved communities. They are viable, reliable and good partners to work with to ensure that health services reach these communities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When communication products are developed to target any of the above mentioned audiences, the positioning statement should serve as the framework for that product. For example, a the write up for a proposal or concept paper addressed to potential funding partners should reflect the position that “Christian Health Associations provide a significant proportion of health services in the countries they work in. They play an important role and are indispensable partners to national health care systems. Their services target poor, vulnerable and underserved communities. They are viable, reliable and good partners to work with to ensure that health services reach these communities.”
2.3 Communication Objectives

In this strategy ACHAP’s broad communication objectives are

i. To raise the profile and increase visibility of ACHAP through strategic and targeted communications that help to establish new relationships and enrich existing ones

ii. To develop and support mechanisms within ACHAP to implement advocacy actions

iii. To strengthen ACHAP’s documentation of CHAs achievements, lessons learned and best practices

iv. Strengthen regular communication and engagement among CHAs for sharing information, experiences, best practices and lessons learnt

2.4 Communications Tools, Products and Activities

Selected communication tools and products will be us to achieve ACHAP’s communication objectives. The tools and products will be used strategically to target internal and external stakeholders.

The following tools will be used:

i. Elevator speech / pitch

ii. Branding - Consistently, and attractively branded letterhead, business cards, envelopes, and folders to stamp the identity and brand of ACHAP.

iii. Site visits

iv. Documentation:
   a. Success stories
   b. Best practice stories
   c. Case studies
   d. Event reports
   e. Brochure

v. Promotional materials – t-shirts, pens, banners, bunting

vi. New media – website, e-discussion groups, instant messaging and chat, social networking forums (Twitter, Facebook, etc), teleconferencing and video conferencing (e.g. go-to-meeting, skype, google talk, etc.)
### Table 5: Communication tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Positioning statement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>A brief and clear statement that describes what ACHAP is, what ACHAP does, whom ACHAP serves, what makes ACHAP different or unique from other actors, and unique benefits are offered by ACHAP’s services. Note that the positioning statement will be the foundation upon which the elevator speech will be developed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong></td>
<td>All stakeholder audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distribution</strong></td>
<td>Used on all ACHAP documentation and stationery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Elevator speech</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>A short, simple blurb that concisely explains ACHAP’s mission and work in a way that underscores key benefits to the target audience. The elevator speech will answer the question: “What is ACHAP?,” and provides direction or focus to a business or organization. The pitch has the positioning statement as its foundation. It attempts to expound on the principles mentioned in the positioning statement within a short speech that can be said within 2-3 minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong></td>
<td>All stakeholder audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distribution</strong></td>
<td>All Secretariat staff, committee and TWG members, and other ACHAP representatives need to know and have copies of the elevator speech and be able to pitch it when appropriate opportunities present themselves. The elevator pitch should be made available and be familiar to member CHAs as well.</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Branding and marking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>Consistently, and attractively branding stationary, business cards and promotional materials with ACHAP’s logo and corporate colors. The marking and branding should also extend to electronic communication, for example including an official signature at the end of each email, branding the website with the logo and corporate colors, as well as branding electronic documents like the e-bulletin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong></td>
<td>All stakeholder audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distribution</strong></td>
<td>The branding affects all communications products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tool</td>
<td>Brochure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>This is a 1-pager document that describes the fundamentals of ACHAP in an attractive, easy to digest, “magazine style” layout. The brochure should be revised and updated regularly (possibly every 6 months) especially when significant changes have occurred e.g. the addition of new members or countries into the network, new achievements/successes, new partnerships established, change in the organization structure, or change of address or other contact details.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong></td>
<td>All stakeholder audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distribution</strong></td>
<td>The brochure can be distributed in meetings, during events, etc. All staff members will have copies of brochure to distribute to guests, during introductory meetings, etc.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Position/Viewpoint Papers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>It describes a position on an issue and the rationale for holding that position. The purpose of a position paper is to generate support on an issue. It should be based on facts that provide a solid foundation for the argument. Therefore, there should be evidence to support the position, such as statistical evidence or dates and events. These should be validated with authoritative references or primary source quotations. The position paper should propose possible solutions and suggest courses of action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target</strong></td>
<td>International organizations, international and continental church bodies, UN agencies and their continental offices, global alliances and national governments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Distribution</strong></td>
<td>Presentation at regional and international fora</td>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Information Communication Technology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Description** | **Website:** The website should be updated and redesigned to reflect the positioning statements established in this plan. This update is underway.  
**E-mail updates:** On issues of interest that the ACHAP may be interested in pursuing, of information received from member CHAs and partners, or providing feedback and followup on issues that the Secretariat or working groups have been assigned. |
| **e-bulletin**: | Produced quarterly and used to share information about the Platform and members. The size should be kept user friendly and |
| **Twitter**: | A simple social networking tool, easy to manage and moderate, requiring only 120 characters for each post. Alternatively a Facebook profile could be established. |
| **Electronic Discussion Group**: | (For example d-groups or a simple members discussion area on website) This e-discussion forum can be moderated by a staff member at the Secretariat and/or be co-moderated by nominated CHA representative. |
| **Tele-video conferencing via web** | Online telephone conferencing can be conducted using programs such as Go-to-Meeting or freeware such as Skype, google talk or Yahoo Messenger. The use of freeware can help overcome the challenge of cost of teleconferencing using terrestrial or satellite telephone connections. Chat and Instant messaging also provide a cheap alternative when time is of essence and quick feedback is required. |

| **Target** | All stakeholder groups – strategic targeting would be required for each type of ICT |
| **Distribution** | To encourage visits to the website, the site should be referenced on all project materials, business cards, stationary, and e-mail sign-off. |
| | There should be links to any social networking forums (Twitter, Facebook) that the Platform has established and members should be encouraged to join, “follow” or “like” the ACHAP profile. |
| | E-mail updates should be sent to a partner/stakeholder and a listserv maintained for such announcements. |
| | Note that e-bulletin and email updates to external stakeholders should be offered on voluntary subscription (opt-in) and must have an opt-out option so as to avoid ACHAP’s e-products being flagged as spam or junk mail. |
### Events: Participation in National Events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participate in the planning of, and contribute resources to national, regional and international events such as conferences, workshops that provide opportunities to promote ACHAP and CHAs.</td>
<td>ACHAP members, development partners, peer networks, global alliances</td>
<td>Proactively seek to participate in members, partners and peers’ events as well as inviting them to ACHAP events. Submit abstracts to conferences, and apply for participation scholarships to regional and international events.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Documentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tool</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Target</th>
<th>Distribution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
|      | • Success Story. A 500-800 word story with a picture highlighting a concise achievement.  
• Case Study. Documents success with three short sections: “Challenge,” “Initiative,” and “Results.”  
• Photo and Caption. A compelling photograph with a short caption and a 250-word narrative.  
• Before and After. Made up of two photos, showing the situation before and after improvements, accompanied by a 350-word narrative. **NOTE: The biggest challenge with this activity is generating content. Use of creative mechanisms such as contests, rewards for the best answer to a prompt or best photograph, can help generate a pool of ideas.** | All stakeholders, but to achieve different purposes | One per quarter. Should be distributed through the e-bulletin as articles, featured on the website as success stories of the members, used in position document to support arguments, printed and used at events a promotional/display give-away fliers. |
### 2.5 Developing your organization’s communication strategy

Your communication strategy should lay out an overall plan of activities for the longer term which will serve as the framework for making shorter-term (action) plans and decisions. The strategy should describe: (i) the organization’s communications goals (vis-à-vis the organization’s overall goal) and (ii) the objectives that will help the organization achieve these goals.

Your organization most probably has already defined these statements; they may use alternative labels such as of a ‘vision’ and ‘mission’ statement, or as ‘purpose’ and ‘objects’ of the organization. Use these existing statements to draw up the communication objectives, keeping in mind that communication should ultimately reflect and support the organization’s overall goals. The objectives should also address the needs and gaps that were identified during the assessment.

Once the communication objectives are defined, identify the tools that may be used. These tools should make the most of the organizations strengths, take advantage of opportunities identified and avoid/work round threats. A number of tools are discussed in this section of the report, which can provide ideas or be adapted to your situation if applicable.
Section 3: COMMUNICATIONS GUIDELINES

This section details basic guidelines for ACHAP’s routine communications to its stakeholders. It offers detailed guidance on how to implement the tools mentioned in section 2 as well as suggesting a means to monitor and evaluate the ACHAP’s communications efforts. It also delineates roles and responsibilities for ACHAP’s communications activities.

3.1 Communications with Stakeholders

As noted above, ACHAP communications with stakeholders will be through email, website, e-bulletin, workshops and conferences and face-to-face. To prepare for these interactions, staff should prepare key positioning statements for each type of stakeholder, and seek opportunities to subtly emphasize positioning points.

3.2 Branding and Marking Plan

Branding and marking ACHAP’s work and products is an important way of reinforcing the Platform’s identity. In addition to branding and marking ACHAP’s products, it is important for the Secretariat staff to reflect the ACHAP brand in all of their communications efforts. For example, all e-communications should be channeled through ACHAP’s domain africachap.org (thus the Secretariat address could be chas@africachap.org instead of chas@chak.or.ke) and an e-signature that bears the ACHAP’s name should be used on all emails. A sample e-signature is provided below.

Micheal Mugweru
-----------------------------------------
Secretariat Officer
Africa Christian Health Associations Platform (ACHAP)
P.O. Box 30690, 00100 Nairobi
Tel. +254 (02) 4441920 / 4445160
Mobile lines: +254-722-203617, +254-733-334419
mugweru@africachap.org
chas@africachap.org
3.3 Photography

Visual documentation of ACHAP’s work can be a compelling way to show its impact. For example, a photo of medicines being delivered at a remote health facility in Chad from MEDS in Kenya can be used to illustrate the collaboration between CHAs in different countries to ensure that health services reach communities even in the most challenging conditions. ACHAP’s photography efforts should move beyond documenting workshops, trainings, and seek to illustrate the impact of the Platform member’s work. ACHAP members should be encouraged to document their work visually as well as in written form. Occasional field visits present opportunities for the Secretariat to gather its own photo stories of what is going on within members’ countries.

3.4 Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluating (M&E) and communications go hand in hand. The Communication Strategy will assist to improve dissemination of M&E results and lessons. In addition to indicating the success of communications efforts, M&E would help the ACHAP to identify weaknesses and areas where more intensive communications efforts could help improve technical outcomes. ACHAP’s communications efforts should be integrated into its performance monitoring plan, and the indicators should be tracked regularly. An illustrative list includes:

- Number of success stories generated.
- Number of case studies generated.
- Number of site visits to the ACHAP website, disaggregated by page views and amount of time spent on each page.
- Number of position papers developed in response to a particular advocacy issue.
- Number of publications produced and disseminated
### 3.5 Proposed Year-1 Action Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Month</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Distribute communication strategy to members</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop/refine overarching and positioning messages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Define/develop branding identity (colours/logo/fonts)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repackage e-newsletter with brand and messages</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repackage package website with the brand messages</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Establish social networking profiles (accounts) for ACHAP</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop re promotional branded items</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set up Communication TWG</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify potential case study source from member CHA</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Case study details documented (by CHA)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refine &amp; brand case study information for dissemination</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### 3.6 Drawing up your communication action plan

Drawing up your action plan means turning ideas raised during the rapid assessment and strategy planning, into reality. It means identifying the steps that need to be taken to achieve the organization’s aims. Ideally the organization’s communication manager or supervisor or other staff charged with responsibility for communications, the principal persons that develop the action plan, in consultation with staff members or advisory resource persons that are involved in the organization’s communications. This is important because they are best placed to provide details on resources required, timeframe (when and how long tasks are likely to take) and responsibility (who would be best placed to do particular tasks and who should be involved).

The preparatory work for the action plan is done when you have developed your strategy. Using the objectives outlined in the strategy, define the action required to meet the objectives, working out how a time-frame for each action, identifying the resources (human, financial and technical) needed and, finalising the plan, and evaluating the results.

It maybe is useful to have action plans for each area or issue concerned, for example: an action plan for fundraising, another for promoting the organization, yet another for networking and cooperation.
ANNEXES
Annex I: Members Survey Questionnaire

1. Does your organization have a designated communications officer/staff responsible for communication activities/tasks?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

2. If you answered YES to question 1, please tell us the name(s) and contact details of the communications staff
   __________________________________________

3. If you answered NO to question 1, then who is responsible for communication activities/tasks at your organization?
   ☐ No one
   ☐ Consultant / communication tasks are outsourced
   ☐ Volunteer(s)
   ☐ Don’t know
   ☐ other _______________________________

4. How your organization has responds to the following requests from the ACHAP secretariat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Request</th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes/once in a while</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provide information on lessons learned/best practices</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reply to communication/emails from the Secretariat</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Attend/participate in ACHAP events</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pay membership fee</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Does your organization have reliable internet connection?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

6. Does your organization have a website?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
7. Have you ever downloaded information/document(s) from the ACHAP website?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

8. Is there any information about your organization on the ACHAP website?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No
   ☐ Don’t know
   ☐ Other ____________________________

9. Have you ever read the ACHAP bulletin (AFRICA CHRISTIAN HEALTH ASSOCIATION'S UPDATE)?
   ☐ Yes
   ☐ No

10. If you answered NO to question 9, then please select the response that most accurately describes why you haven’t read the ACHAP bulletin
    ☐ Don't receive it / Have never received it
    ☐ Not interested
    ☐ Don't have time
    ☐ Don't like the way its presented
    ☐ Other (please specify) ____________________________

11. What kind of information can your organization easily send or share with the Secretariat for publication in the ACHAP bulletin?
    ☐ Updates of news and events within your organization
    ☐ Updates of news and events within your country
    ☐ Photographs
    ☐ Reports (eg annual reports/event reports) published by your organization
    ☐ Success stories/lessons learned/best practices of your organization
    ☐ Other (please specify) ____________________________

12. If ACHAP started a social networking page (e.g. on FACEBOOK or TWITTER) would you join it?
    ☐ Yes, definitely
    ☐ Possibly
    ☐ No, not interested
    ☐ No, my organization does not allow the use of social networking forums like Facebook, Twitter at the workplace
    ☐ Don't know
    ☐ Other (please specify) ____________________________
13. Which communication format is most useful / convenient for your organization to receive information? (Tick as many as are relevant for you)

☐ Through email
☐ Through the ACHAP website
☐ Blog
☐ Electronic social networking forums (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, discussion groups, etc.)
☐ Teleconferences through a telephone link
☐ Conferencing through computer (e.g. using skype, GoToMeeting)
☐ Workshops
☐ Face-to-face meetings
☐ Other (please specify) __________________________________________

14. What other communication materials would you like to receive from ACHAP?

☐ Other electronic newsletters
☐ Position papers
☐ Fact sheets
☐ Other CHAs newsletters
☐ Conference/event summaries
☐ Success stories & lessons learned summaries
☐ Printed publications
☐ Other (please specify) __________________________________________

15. Please rate ACHAP Secretariat's performance in the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulletin (newsletter)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email communication</td>
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<tr>
<td>Event reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organizing meetings/workshops</td>
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</table>

THANK YOU for taking time to complete our survey. We appreciate your participation.
Annex II: Editorial Committee Questionnaire

1. How long have you served on the ACHAP Editorial Committee?  
_______________________________________________________

2. What do you perceive as your role (or the role of an editorial team member) in supporting ACHAP communications?  
_______________________________________________________

3. Can you suggest ways that the editorial committee's way of functioning can be improved to enhance its support to the ACHAP secretariat and also to make the committee members participation easier?  
_______________________________________________________

4. How do you rate the quality of ACHAP's communication materials?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory (but could improve)</th>
<th>Poor / substandard</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulletin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conference/meeting reports</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flyer/Brochure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotional items (banner/t-shirts)</td>
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</table>

Other (please specify)  _________________________________________________________

5. State what you think ACHAP's communication weaknesses or challenges are  if any.  
_______________________________________________________

6. State what you think are ACHAP's communication strengths or opportunities, if any.  
_______________________________________________________

THANK YOU  for taking time to complete this survey! Your input is appreciated.
Annex III: Partners Survey Questionnaire

1. What do you see as the role of ACHAP with regards to its members (i.e. the Christian Health Associations)?

_____________________________________________________________________

2. What do you see as the role of ACHAP Secretariat with regards to its partners (funding and other collaborations)?

_____________________________________________________________________

3. How would you describe your communication with the ACHAP Secretariat? (Please tick as many as are appropriate)

☐ Frequent (more than once a week)

☐ Regular

☐ Infrequent (less than once every 4 months)

☐ Never (I don't communicate with ACHAP secretariat)

☐ Timely (I get a quick response)

☐ Delayed (responses come late)

4. How do you rate the quality of ACHAP's communication materials?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory (could improve)</th>
<th>Poor / unsatisfactory</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Bulletin/newsletter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annual Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Progress report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conference/meeting reports</td>
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<td>Flyer/brochure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotional materials (e.g. banners, t-shirts)</td>
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</table>

Other (please specify) _______________________________________________________

5. What areas do you think ACHAP needs to strengthen with regards to its communications?

_____________________________________________________________________

Thank you for your time and feedback!
Annex IV Indepth Interviews Question Guide

1. What role do you think ACHAP and its Secretariat play/serve for the members?
   Is ACHAP fulfilling this role?
   What gaps are there?

2. What role should member CHAs play in ACHAP?
   Do you feel your organization is playing this role?
   How can your organization or other CHAs play a more meaningful role in ACHAP?

3. Have you experienced any challenges communicating with the ACHAP Secretariat?
   How would you rate the ACHAP’s communication with its members?

4. Which key areas should ACHAP address?

5. Are there tangible benefits of being a member of ACHAP?
   How would you like to see them addressed?

6. Do you have any ideas on how ACHAP can be strengthened?
Annex V System Analysis Issues

A. Communication products:
1. What communication products/outputs does the ACHAP secretariat deliver (and at what intervals?)
2. Who is/are involved in the delivery of these products (indicate both internal and external and the role played in the process)?
3. How are these products scheduled? / Are these products scheduled or do they overlap?

B. Branding
1. Is there a branding policy (formal or informal)?
2. Is there a house style for communication products?
3. When/where is the ACHAP logo used? Are there any specific guidelines on its use (e.g. who can use it, when to use, format of use (e.g. color specs, size, orientation etc)?
4. If ACHAP has a brand what are the brand elements (e.g. color, fonts, etc)?

C. Databases
1. What databases do you have in place?
2. What format are they in? How are they organized?
3. Who has access to these databases
4. Do you have a backup of your databases in case of data loss

D. Equipment and staff
1. What communication equipment and accessories do you have in place? What is/are their capacity?
2. Does ACHAP have a domain? How is it used? (does it serve secretariat only or also the membership?)
3. What staff and staff support does the ACHAP communication functions have? (what percentage time for the staff is given to ACHAP/communication tasks?)
4. What kind of back up system and protection/security system do you have in place for the electronic resources available?
5. What equipment do you use that is owned by host organization? How does this work out?

E. Archiving
1. Do you archive any items? Which ones?
2. What format are the archives stored?
3. Who (can) access the archives?
4. Is there back-up for these archives?