

# Proposed Organizational Communications Plan for Service Civil International

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## Section 1: Overview

### What is a Communications Plan?

Since communications itself is a broad topic and touches nearly every component of what makes an organization operate, it can take on different meanings to different people. Therefore, it is important we look at a definition to have a starting point:

- Communications: The exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, signals, writing, or behavior.
- Communications Plan: Provides an organization with a focused direction to effectively exchange thoughts, messages and information – both internally and externally – and is aligned with the strategic direction and core mission/values.

### Creating a Communications Plan for SCI

Currently, SCI does not have a formalized communication plan but it is included as an action item in the Strategic Plan. Therefore, it is essential that the proposed plan is aligned with and carried out according to the goals of this greater Strategic Plan initiative. Additionally, the plan needs to address both internal and external components of how an organization operates. For SCI, these components could include:

- Internal Meetings
- Working Groups/Committees
- Education / Training
- Technology Plans
- Sharing Ideas
- Decision-making
- Proposals and concepts
- Email communications
- Overall Outreach
- Media Relations
- Public Speaking

The IEC will be responsible for overseeing the effort and reporting back to the movement on important updates related to the plan. In order to develop a realistic plan for SCI that focuses on accountability, there should be a small team with one project lead from IEC that will develop the plan, gather feedback from key SCI contacts and oversee implementation. Below is the recommended approach to launching a Communications Plan.

1. COMPLETED: Define a team who will develop the plan and oversee the implementation (Sonya – Lead; Pietro, Louise)
2. IN PROGRESS: Define the plan based on needs assessments from ICM 2004 and SCI's Strategic Plan, and input from key SCI contacts
3. IN PROGRESS: Assign key points of contacts to each category
4. Announce the Communications Plan (via e-mail to SCI; in person at Summer University; and with Parwez for East Asian region)
5. Key points of contact begin implementation
6. Evaluate what's working/what's not
7. Revise plans or move to closure

## Section 2: SCI Communications Assessment

Below are the Needs, Obstacles and Goals that will act as a roadmap and steer the direction of the communications plan.

### Key Needs

- Means to open up communications between branches, groups and activists
- Provide information for branches, working groups and other relevant SCI contacts to access resources and documents in password protected area of website
- Make more effective use of e-mail group and individual communications
- Improve access to information and resources to assist SCI's overall work, especially in East Asia region
- Ongoing Learning Programs that provide branches, groups and activists with communication tools and resources to assist their work
- Consistent messaging on SCI's story throughout movement
- Determine what kind of information needs to go to which group

### Obstacles/Challenges

- Geographically dispersed, multi-cultural organization
- Minimal resources, limited funding
- Time to implement new concepts can be lengthy due to minimal resource and mainly volunteer-run organization
- Limited accessibility to and training on Computer and Internet Resources, especially in East Asia region
- Fragmented dissemination of information

### Overall Goals

- Incorporate communication strategies that are aligned with SCI's strategic plan
- Build an ongoing, dynamic communications foundation that supports the work of SCI
- Open the lines of communication across a global grassroots multi-cultural organization
- Provide training and tools on effective communication techniques to enhance internal and external communications
- Improve the use of web-based mediums (e.g. e-mails, Skype usage) to communicate with working teams and the larger organization
- Develop standard messaging that unifies SCI and strengthens SCI's mission and work

## Section 3: Proposed Communications Plan

Cat. (in title column) = Category

TBD = To Be Determined

| <b>INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS</b> |  |  |                             |                 |
|--------------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Cat.</b>                    | <b>Steps</b>   | <b>Actions / Deliverables</b>  | <b>Lead</b>                 | <b>Date</b>     |
| A                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch educational workshops to empower volunteers with communication tools &amp; techniques</li> <li>• Package up courses and resources to provide ongoing access to learning (see “Communications Resource Center” below)</li> </ul>                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Launch Communications Training at Summer Univ.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Post resource materials on web in secured area</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explore methods to launch ongoing learning programs via e-mail and web-based collaboration tools</li> </ul>                | Sonya with Tech Team        | July – Dec 2005 |
| B                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an ongoing forum for IS to communicate with branches and large groups in real time</li> <li>• Assist branches implement collaboration tools to improve communications with team-based projects</li> <li>• Providing training on how to use the tools</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explore viable, cost-effective collaboration technology solutions that allow for more open and frequent communications</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Provide training on installing and using Skype</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Begin pilot of online meetings with IEC</li> </ul> | Sonya with help from others | Aug – Sept 2005 |
| C                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop regular Communications with SCI movement on updates in International Structure</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> IS and IEC president send monthly updates</li> </ul>   | Kristina, Isabelle          | Underway        |
| D                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Streamline e-mail lists</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Assess existing e-mail groups to determine what’s working, what’s not</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Restructure e-mails lists and launch</li> </ul>  | Pietro, Sonya               | July - Sept     |
| E                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce amount large documents sent through e-mail lists</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Post documents for branches and volunteers to download files from password-protected area</li> </ul>   | Pietro, Tech Team           | TBD             |
| F                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build out internal website to create forums that allow activist and branches to connect with each other and share information</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Explore feasibility of adding bulletin boards, Volunteer Database Search Function, etc...</li> </ul>   | TBD                         | TBD             |
| G                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a strategy for East Asia region to get access to computers and Internet</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify issues, key needs, obstacles</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop an action plan</li> </ul>  | TBD with Tech Team          | TBD             |

## EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

| Cat.  | Steps   | Actions / Deliverables  | Lead               | Date            |
|-------|---|---|--------------------|-----------------|
| AA    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure SCI's messaging is consistent</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> Provide branches with standard verbiage to use to describe SCI and tell the story of SCI       | Sonya              | Sept 2005       |
| BB    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use PR to tell the SCI story</li> </ul>  | <input type="checkbox"/> Develop international media list<br><input type="checkbox"/> Provide branches with PR Toolkits | Sonya              | Aug – Sept 2005 |
| CC    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure website content and information is timely, easy to locate and provides a clear picture of SCI</li> </ul>                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Work with Tech Team on content development   | TBD with Tech Team | TBD             |
| EE ** | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a separate marketing strategy for that includes a more in-depth external communications plan at the international level</li> </ul> | <input type="checkbox"/> TBD  | TBD                | TBD             |

### \*\* IMPORTANT!!! Note about Category EE

During the needs assessment phase of developing this communications plan, one need is clear: *to develop a unified strategy to promote SCI on an international level*. This type of initiative cannot be accomplished in a communications plan. This needs to be a separate “marketing strategy” in order to encompass the many areas of launching a larger scale effort. The marketing strategy should include plans for brochures, website, PR, fundraising, identifying audiences, developing relationships, building alliances, writing standard messaging, etc.. etc... etc...

Since the need for “internal communications” solutions is much greater, this plan focuses on “internal” only. Then, in a separate effort (to be determined who, how and what this plan will look like) will be proposed, developed and launch at a later date... hopefully by the end of 2005.

Another note ... Many people in SCI refer to examples of “external communications” strategies used by Amnesty or Greenpeace to use for an SCI. While these organizations have an effective global promotional strategy, they are also much larger, have bigger budgets and dedicated marketing, PR and development staffs. So, we should be careful when comparing SCI to organizations such as these. We can use their promotional tactics as models and incorporate them somehow, but we should not expect to have a strategy that looks like theirs. We have to first SCI promotional needs on an international level, evaluate what’s doable and take it from there.

## Section 4: Proposed Topics for “Communications Resource Center”

The “Communications Resource Center” is the *working title* for a proposed initiative of the Communications Plan to provide activists and branches with knowledge, tools and resources to communicate internally and externally. The “Communications Resource Center” is available both online in a secured area and through learning initiatives both in person and eventually web-based methods.

The content for the “Communications Resource Center” will start with topics covered in the Summer University training and eventually evolve to include information needed by the movement. The resource center will be announced during the Communications Training in Madrid.

Below is the working outline for the Communications Training in Summer University. Some of the topics may be revised prior to the actual training.

### **Stimulating Effective Communications in Multi-Cultural Groups**

- A Look at Communication Styles
- Cultural Communication Models
- Interpersonal Communications
- Holding Brainstorming Sessions
- Presenting Your Ideas on e-mail for International Audience

### **Communication Strategies for Internal Conflict Management**

- Conflict Management Communication Strategies
- Problem Solving and Decision-making
- Listening Skills
- Building Understanding

### **Meeting & Networking Techniques**

- Holding Effective Multicultural Meetings
- Using web-based tool to connect with remote teams
- Working with Remote Teams
- Facilitating Open Discussions

### **Communicating Your Message Outside of SCI**

- Simple Media Relations Strategies
- Communicating Your Message after the SCI project

## Section 5: Follow Up Status for Communications Plan Action Items from IEC Meeting -- Spring 2005

| IEC Action Plan Spring 2005  | Steps Underway   | Section in Comm. Plan |
|--|--|-----------------------|
| Send Monthly IEC and IS update via e-mail to all lists   | <input type="checkbox"/> Kristina sending monthly<br><input type="checkbox"/> Isabelle sending monthly       | C                     |
| Open up communications between branches, groups and activists by holding a Web Conference Call every three months  | <input type="checkbox"/> Determine best conferencing solution to meet needs of SCI worldwide                 | B                     |
| Hold monthly web conferences for IEC members to discuss issues and make decisions  | <input type="checkbox"/> Determine best collaboration solution   | B                     |
| Distribute guidelines on using e-mail effectively on a monthly basis   | <input type="checkbox"/> Sent "Email Guidelines" in May<br><input type="checkbox"/> Determine follow up plan | A                     |
| Update overview of all SCI e-mail lists and their purpose  | <input type="checkbox"/> In review now   | D                     |
| Restructure the SCI e-mail lists to reduce amount of confusion of what e-mail list to use  | <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing until plan is finalized   | D                     |
| Develop a method to post and archive materials in a password-protected area on the web, which minimizes the need to send large documents and make the information easier to locate | <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing until plan is finalized   | E                     |
| Develop a plan to structure and streamline communications with branches groups   | <input type="checkbox"/> Test Collaboration Solutions  | B                     |
| Outline a plan to launch a Bulletin Board on the web categorized by topic area   | <input type="checkbox"/> Nothing until comm. plan is finalized   | F                     |
| Provide training on how to use communication tools effectively   | <input type="checkbox"/> Launch at Summer University   | A                     |
| Develop a database of international activists that includes their area of interest and skills so SCI can stay in touch with active volunteers                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Tie in with efforts of Volunteer Management   | F                     |