

Report on the communications training delivered to the Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation (CREEC), Uganda, 2- 5 March 2020.

The aim is to increase communications capacity in the team, with specific reference to the output stage of the ACERA project.

Current communications support at CREEC

CREEC has one part time Public Relations Officer. Her role evolved from an internship into paid employment in 2015. Her responsibilities include managing social media channels, website administration, and content creation. She also looks after media relations, event organisation, designs printed publications, and writes newsletters.

In advance, I had sight of CREEC's social media and website, and a film produced as part of the project. These informed the bespoke training package.

The training took place over four days in Kampala. It included meetings with the team, 121 time with the PR officer, and a workshop. The latter modelled how to use co-design methodology to create a communications strategy, and therefore build capacity within the wider CREEC team.

Current communications support at CREEC

CREEC has one part time Public Relations Officer. Her role evolved from an internship into paid employment in 2015. Her responsibilities include managing social media channels, website administration, and content creation. She also looks after media relations, event organisation, designs printed publications, and writes newsletters.

Workshop

The workshop covered three main areas; the principles of good communications, the principles of good writing, and effective advocacy. See attached PowerPoint and photographs.

Face to Face with the PRO

Subjects discussed supported by additional materials:

- Making the most of integrated digital channels.
- Advising on website structure and content.
- Crafting webpages for specific audiences, and strategic user journeys.
- Measuring audience acquisition, behaviour, and conversion rates.
- How to create a media pack - process and content to engage journalists.
- Using images and infographics to reach audiences that are more diverse.

General Meetings

- Advised on contract for potential film partnership.
- Discussed how to measure impact using digital analytics.
- Discussed clarity of purpose, audience definition, and simplifying messages.
- Discussed use of multi lingual content to reflect CREEC's beneficiaries.

Recommendations

1. Shorten and clarify CREEC 's mission statement.
2. With wider team:
 - co-design the CREEC tone of voice, and use of consistent language/s. This will strengthen understanding of CREEC 's brand and aid Search Engine Optimisation.
 - Practice CREEC's elevator pitch and key messages
 - Practice writing in Plain English – with a focus on short sentences, non-technical words, and using an active rather than a passive voice.
3. Website:
 - Decide the purpose of each page.
 - Define audience and assign to each page.
 - Repurpose content using plain English, including subtitles to increase accessibility for diverse audiences
 - Use analytics regularly to check if content is achieving its purpose.
4. Social Media (SM):
 - Use SM to push people to deeper website content
 - Use SM to promote new content as it is published on the website.
 - Aim to double Twitter reach by tweeting more regularly and using relevant hash tags.
 - On Facebook, feature case studies aiming for a greater conversion rate to the website.
 - Open up LinkedIn account as public
5. Media engagement
 - Create a pool of case studies relating to the project.
 - Develop a media pack to disseminate project impact.

Longer term

1. Create a communications planner for external content publication.
2. Develop a prioritisation plan for communications interventions in CREEC.

To support and motivate the CREEC team to integrate communications into their work, I have offered two virtual follow up sessions during March.

Jane Dawson
Public Engagement Consultant