



Stakeholders together adapting ideas to readjust  
local systems to promote inclusive education

# CHANGE MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT

## Tool No.2.

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Lisbon, March, 2022



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union



## Tool #2. Communication Plan

### Target group (who can use it)

Change leaders

### Short description

This tool orients change leaders to draw a „Communication Plan“ for the „[National Adaption Plan](#)“ (NAP) be presented to policy makers, professionals, and stakeholders who either must carry change out or support it. For that purpose, change leaders should follow two main steps:

1. To read carefully the „Detailed description of the tool and required material, attachments“
2. To fill in the provided templates, by the order they are mentioned below, bearing in mind the principles, key points and essential blocks referred. It is important not to neglect and/or miss any point.

### Detailed description of the tool and required material, attachments

In a system/organisation, communication is not only keeping professionals/stakeholders informed, but to fostering greater engagement and maintaining a sense of belonging. So, the following principles must be kept in mind, while drawing a Communication Plan (Bates, 2021):

#### **1.Connect the dots**

Therein, communication connects the dots between values and behaviour; strategy and results; and change promises and professional experiences. Putting a values/strategy/change option lens on decisions made provide important connections that can be communicated through key messages. Throughout a transition, it is increasingly important that professionals and stakeholders feel connected, productive and with access to the tools they need to be informed and aligned from any device or location.

#### **2.Influence culture**

In managing a change, it's important to look at the common threads (highlighted by the Empathy Map). What beliefs do leaders of the change process and professionals have in common (information provided by the content analysis of the Empathy Maps)? How do they live or come to life in that process? Are some one losing out on that experience? Are some one losing out on helping to shape the culture? And if the answer is yes, how do change leaders think differently to drive those same shared beliefs and values? While the simple act of communicating puts people at ease, providing flexible rules and regular routines will help everyone feel comfortable, and will help promote a positive culture, regardless of where your professionals work.

#### **3.Provide clarity**

The most important role communication professionals can provide, in the beginning of a change process, is making what is complex clearer. They need to think about how to communicate changes in a way that will resonate with and be understood by professionals/stakeholders. It's important not to add to the noise. It's also okay to communicate these changes in bite-sized pieces. The old way of thinking was that we need to have all the answers before we say anything. Think instead about the conversation you are having with professionals/stakeholders. What do they need to know right now and set expectations on what decisions will be made next? Instead of writing the novel, provide information they need now with a promise of more information being shared at relevant times.

#### **4.Build community**

When thinking about community building, the role of communication is to both share the organisation's stories and help professionals/stakeholders tell their own. For implementing a change, think about whether everyone is getting the same community experience and whether new opportunities need to be adopted to build community so no one feels left out.

#### **5. Showcase care and compassion**

'People don't remember what you said. They remember how you made them feel' (Maya Angelou, cit. in Bates, 2021). Recently, new words emerged to describe successful organisations and leaders. The words empathy, honesty, authenticity, truth, compassion started to be used more often, especially when professionals needed to feel safe and stable in what felt like a scary world. Communication played an important role supporting leaders in providing information to followers and helping them feel valued and cared for.

#### **6. Celebrate**

Recognition has been an important part of feeling valued and communication plays an important role in celebrating success for the organisation and its people. It is important to think about representation. Leaders of change should pay attention to who gets recognised. Are there people that get missed or forgotten? One must be careful with the out-of-site, out-of-mind potential that makes those who have access to leaders and managers seem more valuable than those who don't.

#### **7. Personalise, customise, and target communication content**

The reality is that depending on the professional/stakeholder, and where they're based, the messages may simply have to be different. Centralised communication structures may need to adapt. Leaders must regularly pulse check professional sentiment throughout the transition, regardless of where they're working.

#### **8. Manage channels**

A channel strategy has always been important for communication in a process of change and is even more important as ways of working become more complex. What are the best channels to use to communicate with professionals/stakeholders? How often should the organisation communicate? How do these channels change based on the professional's matrix (see Channel Matrix Template below)? Are there channels or platforms that need to be added to help communicate more effectively and efficiently? This is the time to have these conversations and identify any gaps that may exist so that leaders can proactively fix them. Today's organisations communication technology allows us to customise information based on who needs to know what so that leaders create less noise.

### **The essential building blocks of a Communication Plan**

#### **1. Be careful with definitions**

Many terms have been talked about when describing educational inclusive good practices. It's important that change leaders begin by getting correct definitions for their organisations. Change leaders must keep in mind that every phase of change will require an accurate description. What's important to keep in mind is that the new means it's important to get professionals analysis created to drive consistency across the organisation and clarity of how individuals will be referred to including an understanding of their unique needs.

#### **2. Create a team**

Change leaders must have access to information regularly. The best teams include an executive sponsor and representation from key departments including people in charge for internal and

external communication, IT, and Facilities/Operations. It's important to have the right people to consider all scenarios.

### **3. Ask for the operations plan**

For the STAIRS' learning partners to create the NAP communication plan, they should have an operations plan (Project Plan – tool 5, which is different from the Change Plan – the set of the tools herein presented), which most likely does not exist, considering the development of the project. So, it's important that those change leaders ask some key questions about what is coming so that they can communicate clearly.

#### Questions to ask:

What does success look like with the NAP implementation?

What are the education goals of this transition?

What is changing compared the present situation?

What is staying the same for professionals compared to the present situation?

Does this change impact everyone the same way? What are the differences?

What are the various groups/scenarios we will have to consider with the NAP implementation?

Will professionals have a choice to adhere or not to the changes?

Why did the learning partners make the decisions they did?

What do these decisions mean for the educational system?

What do these decisions mean for professionals/stakeholders?

What will professionals celebrate about these changes?

What will professionals struggle with?

Will changes happen all at once or in phases?

What role will each department play from a communication perspective for the program?

- Who will lead (executive spokesperson)?
- IT related items
- Day-to-day educational changes

### **4. Control what can be controlled**

A leader of change should focus on his/her communication plan. Identify common terms, the various professionals, and phases, create his/hers plan and continue to ask questions. Know that his/her communication plan may change as the organisation learns more and updates decisions.

### **5. Think about ALL professionals**

Change leaders should take the time to identify ALL his/her professionals. It is important to describe every professional and identify their communication needs and channels. Once these groups are defined, there is an opportunity to understand what and if anything changes for them. Leaders must use definitions to provide consistency with how everyone communicates moving forward. It's also important to understand how changes impact the various groups differently. As part of a change framework previously mentioned, it's important to clearly define what starts (new because of this change); what stops (is no longer done) and continues (stays the same as before). Some people forget to communicate what stays the same and it's a missed opportunity to create comfort with the change leader audience since often, with any change communicated, there are a lot of things that remain the same (see All Professionals/Stakeholders Template).

### **6. Now, create the Communications Plan**

Everyone will have their own version of a strategic plan that works for them, but the following should help get the change leader start with key elements necessary as he/she manages this important change for his/her organisations and professionals (see Communication Planning Template).

**Users' guide, equipment**

Equipment	Quantity
Channel Matrix Template	1 (filled in as many times as necessary)
All Professionals/Stakeholders Template	1
Communication Planning Template	1 (revised as many times as necessary)

**Level of difficulty (easy, medium, advanced)**

Advanced
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**Tags**

Communicate; Be heard; Be understood; Be followed
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*Channel Matrix Template*

Vehicle	Purpose	Audience	Direction	Frequency	Owner	Custom
...						

*Check all tools that you are interested in using for your project communications. Most audiences require multiple communication channels to be reached effectively.*

**MESSAGING FROM EXECUTIVES**

- Educational Authorities
- Project Leadership
- ...

**EMAIL**

- Cal Message (broadcast email)
- Cal Message (subscription lists)
- Other email lists

**EDUCATIONAL TOOLS**

- FAQs
- Infographics
- Information Kits
- Job Aids
- Training Manuals
- Training Workshops

**MEETINGS**

- 1:1
- Department Staff Meetings
- Unit Staff Meetings
- Team Meetings
- ...

**ELECTRONIC MEDIA**

- Departmental Website
- Presentation Slide Deck
- Project Blog
- Project Website
- Project WIKI
- Partner Website
- System Notifications
- Videos

**PUBLICATIONS**

- ...

**EVENTS**

- Project Launch
- Project Road Show
- Town Hall Meetings
- ...

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

- Instagram
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Slack
- Snapchat
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Virtual Chat Rooms
- Wisdom Café

**PRINT MEDIA**

- Banners
- Brochures
- Fact Sheets
- Newsletters
- Post Cards
- Posters

**STAFF GROUP PRESENTATION**

- Chief Administrative Officers
- HR Network
- Manager/Supervisor Forum
- ...

*All Professionals/Stakeholders Template*

<b>Professional/ Stakeholder Type</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Communication Needs</b>	<b>Preferred Channels</b>	<b>What Starts</b>	<b>What Stops</b>	<b>What Continues</b>
<b>Students</b>						
<b>Parents/Families</b>						
<b>Community</b> (in general and/or any stakeholder in particular; this block may need to be divided)						
<b>Teachers</b> (this block may need to be divided)						
<b>Non-teaching staff</b> (this block may need to be divided)						
<b>School leaders</b> (this block may need to be divided)						
<b>Educational technicians</b> (such as Psychologists; this block may need to be divided)						
<b>Education authorities</b> (this block may need to be divided)						
...						

*Communication Plan Template*

	<b>Phase 2 – presentation of the NAP</b>	<b>Phase 3 – change starts</b>	<b>Phase 4 – change fully operational</b>
<b>Goals/Objectives</b>			
Educational Goals			

<b>Professionals/Stakeholders Analysis</b>			
Professionals/Stakeholders impacted			
<b>Key messages</b>			
<b>Tactical Plan</b>			
. Implementation/tactical plan . Timelines . Resources			
<b>Evaluation</b>			
. Measuring success linked to goals and objectives  . How will they be measured?  . When will they be measured?			

*Adapted from Bates (2021)*