



A PRESENT, COMPASSIONATE AND LIBERATING PAI

# RUBEN CENTRE

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## COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

<b>Policy &amp; Procedure Owner</b>	Ruben Centre	
<b>Approved by</b>	Ruben Centre Trustees	
	<b>Implementation Date</b>	<b>Next Review</b>
	1 <sup>st</sup> November, 2023	31 <sup>st</sup> October, 2025

### 1. Introduction

Ruben Centre is a non-profit making charity organization striving for an empowered and just Mukuru community by providing quality education, health, financial and social services to children and families in the informal settlement of Mukuru. It was started in 1986 by Sister Mary Killeen. It is run by the Christian Brothers African Province and is one of the eight Christian Brother's project sites across Africa.

Ruben Centre is committed to fostering, cultivating and preserving a culture of openness and responsible communication among our staff, volunteers, beneficiaries and all others acting on its behalf.

'Communication' can be succinctly defined as the process of imparting or exchanging information through speech, writing, or other mediums. Within the Ruben Centre, communication serves as the cohesive framework linking our various programs and initiatives, both within the organization and externally. Therefore, ensuring the efficacy and productivity of all Ruben Centre Communications is vital for the optimal functioning of the organization.

**Ruben Centre's Communications Policy is designed to support the organization in promoting accountability and exemplary communications practice. This Policy stands as a pivotal component of our ongoing endeavors to foster global trust and elevate brand recognition throughout the dynamic challenges within the Mukuru community and Kenya at large.**

It serves as a guide to all members within the Ruben Centre community to uphold professionalism and embrace conscientious conduct. Cultivating relationships of trust with our stakeholders has always been a priority at the Ruben Centre, and is foundational in maintaining good organizational performance, sustainability and longevity.

In the dynamic landscape of today's internet-driven society, the standards and requisites of this Communications Policy are anticipated to continuously evolve. Therefore, the Ruben Centre

management and the board of trustees will subject this Communications Policy to scrutiny and ongoing reevaluation to ensure its alignment with the shifting paradigms.

This policy **does** cover our trustees, members, directors, employees, contractors, beneficiaries, interns and volunteers of Ruben Centre and others acting on its behalf.

**For enquiries, comments and suggestions or to report any case, kindly feels free to contact;**

**Name : Gregory Otaro Barake**

**Title : Communications Officer**

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**Office : Communications Office**

## **2. Definitions**

- a) **Communication** is defined as the process of imparting or exchanging information through speech, writing, or other mediums.
- b) **Feedback** is the response, reaction or information given by the recipient of a message to the sender. It is the process of letting someone know which areas they need to improve or react on.
- c) **Inclusiveness** is the practise of providing equal access to opportunities, information and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those having physical or mental disabilities or belonging to other minority groups.

## **3. Policy Statement.**

**The purpose of this Communication Policy is to provide Ruben Centre employees, key stakeholders, and partners with a framework of principles, guidelines, practices, and procedures governing their interactions in both internal and external communications.** The Ruben Centre is dedicated to the dissemination of information that is accessible, actionable, transparent, relevant, timely and culturally sensitive. All communication endeavors should be aimed towards the ultimate realization of the Ruben Centre's vision and mission and should be in line with the Ruben Centre 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.

This Communication policy is also intended to recognize and appreciate the diversity of information amongst our staff, volunteers and beneficiaries. Ruben Centre recognizes the rights of all our stakeholders to air out their views in a respectful manner without being victimised.

We also recognise and appreciate the need for respectful communication and cooperation between our staff, volunteers and all the beneficiaries;

## **4. Policy Principles**

Ruben Centre will do the following to ensure adherence to this policy;

- Raising awareness – Ruben Centre will raise awareness through trainings amongst all our stakeholders so that all persons understands and adheres to the Ruben Centre Communications Policy;
- Keep the staff, volunteers, interns, trustees and the community informed through the appropriate channels of communication;
- Be open, honest, ethical and professional in our communication;
- Give timelines for when the communication needs to be actioned;
- Give guidelines on the methods of communication that are most effective and appropriate to the context, message and audience;
- Ensure that communication is compatible with our core values as reflected in our policies and ethos;
- Allocate the communication responsibility to one central place i.e., the Communications Officer;
- Provide remedial measures for crisis management, poor communication and complaints.

## **5. Policy in Action**

### **a) Publication of policy**

This policy or an appropriate extract will be made available to the public through the website, by verbally informing stakeholders of the policy where appropriate and by providing copies of the policy on request. The policy will be explained in local language if requested by the local community.

## **6. Obligations**

Ruben Centre will strive to ensure our commitment to be clear, openly communicate and be transparent. High levels of professional confidentiality must be maintained to ensure confidence in the Centre communications.

The Communications Department in conjunction with relevant departments should ensure that communication with all the Ruben Centre stakeholders is effective, consistent, clear, professional, timely and appropriate at all times.

## **7. Audience**

### **a) Primary audience**

#### **i. Mukuru Residents**

The primary audience for our communications efforts is the residents of the Mukuru kwa Reuben. Our communications aim to directly engage, inform, and empower them with relevant and timely information about our programs, services, and initiatives. We strive to make our messages accessible, actionable, and culturally sensitive, reflecting their needs and concerns.

ii. **Ruben Centre Staff**

Our internal communication ensures that all staff members are well-informed about organizational updates, developments, and important announcements. This helps in maintaining a unified approach and a shared understanding of our mission and goals. This will be done through weekly memos and as appropriate.

iii. **Donors**

We consider donors, both individuals, and organizations, as vital primary audiences. Our communications aim to demonstrate the impact of their support, share success stories, and provide transparency about how their contributions are utilized to uplift the community. This will be done quarterly and also in consideration with our donor requirements

b) **Secondary Audience**

i. **Local Government and Authorities**

Engaging with local authorities and government officials is essential for collaborative efforts and policy advocacy. Our communications to this audience focus on showcasing our initiatives' positive influence on the community and seeking opportunities for support and collaboration.

ii. **Educational Institutions**

We consider educational institutions as valuable stakeholders in our efforts. Our communications to this audience focus on sharing educational resources, promoting skill-building opportunities, and fostering connections for mutual benefit.

iii. **Media and Press**

Media outlets and the press are channels for amplifying our message. Our communications to the media provide accurate and compelling information about our programs, events, and initiatives to ensure accurate and responsible reporting.

iv. **Non-governmental Organizations and Community-based Organizations**

Other organizations working in the development and humanitarian sectors that may collaborate with the Ruben Centre to address broader social issues.

c) **General Public**

While not directly involved, the general public plays a role in supporting our mission.

Our communications aim to raise awareness about the challenges faced by the Mukuru community and inspire engagement, whether through volunteering, donations, or advocacy.

## **8. Principles for Good Communication Practice**

a) **Accessibility**

We strive to make our communications accessible to all members of the community. We will use diverse communication channels and formats to ensure that information is easily available to everyone, regardless of their circumstances or background.

b) **Actionable**

Our communications will focus on providing clear and practical information that leads to meaningful outcomes. We will share actionable insights, resources, and updates that empower the community to make informed decisions and take positive actions.

c) **Transparency and Trust**

Transparency is at the heart of our communication. We commit to open and honest communication, sharing information about our programs, activities, and use of resources. By maintaining transparency, we build and nurture trust within the community and among our stakeholders.

d) **Relevance**

Our communications will be related to the specific needs and challenges of the Mukuru community. We will tailor our messages to address the most pressing concerns, ensuring that our content resonates with the community's unique circumstances.

e) **Timely**

We recognize the importance of prompt communication. We will stay informed about developments in the community and respond promptly to emerging issues. Our communication will be dynamic, adapting to changes to provide the most current and relevant information.

f) **Cultural awareness, Responsibility and Integrity**

Cultural awareness is paramount in our communication efforts. We will engage with the community in a culturally sensitive manner, respecting their norms and values. We take responsibility for the impact of our communication and uphold the highest standards of integrity and ethics.

## 9. Types and Methods of Communications

a) **Internal Guidelines**

To maintain a good working environment for the realization of our vision and mission, the Ruben Centre aims to facilitate efficient and effective internal communications. The Ruben Centre places a key focus on establishing seamless and purposeful internal communication channels for our dedicated staff and valued stakeholders. To achieve this, we harness a range of communications mediums, which include, though are not confined to;

- Official WhatsApp Group
- Email
- Face to Face Meetings
- Written memos
- Mobile Phones and extension lines
- Text messages (SMS)
- Official letter
- Spoken communication
- Posters & drawings (IEC materials)

The subsequent directives are obligatory for adherence by all staff during the course of internal communications:

- i. *The communications department is entrusted with the operational responsibility for managing all aspects of internal communications;*

- ii. *All communication should exhibit clarity and should refrain from the use of slang, offensive language, discriminatory remarks, ethnic slurs, or sexist undertones;*
- iii. *The Ruben Centre shall foster an environment of openness in internal communication, promoting the sharing of information, with exception to cases when the content possesses the potential to compromise the organization's interests.*
- iv. *The Ruben Centre will ensure the clear and comprehensive communication of organizational objectives, policies and guidelines;*
- v. *The Ruben Centre will endeavor to provide staff with pertinent information when required, facilitating comprehension, commitment, motivation, and alignment with our strategies;*
- vi. *The Ruben Centre will communicate with staff regarding decisions and events that have an impact on them, prior to external dissemination whenever feasible;*
- vii. *Communications department will ensure of Ruben Centre staff comprehension of organizational objectives, strategies, and values, offering up-to-date information on policies and branding identity;*
- viii. *The Ruben Centre will internally circulate success stories and effective business solutions throughout the organization to foster creativity and encourage cross-departmental cooperation;*
- ix. *The Communications department is responsible for devising internal communication structures that ensure swift and efficient dissemination of information to all staff members through the most effective communication channels available;*
- x. *All staff members are expected to uphold strict confidentiality standards when dealing with sensitive information and to adhere to established data security protocols to safeguard organizational data;*
- xi. *The Ruben Centre encourages a culture of open feedback and two-way communication, allowing staff to voice concerns, suggestions, and ideas to foster continuous improvement. No staff should be victimized for this and respect must be upheld at all times;*
- xii. *Internal communication strategies will be continually monitored and adapted based on feedback, evolving organizational needs, and advancements in communication technologies.*

## **b. External Guidelines**

*To maintain a positive relationship with our supporters and the community and strengthen confidence in our network, brand and programs, the Ruben Centre aims to facilitate timely and effective external communications. In this respect, we will utilize, but are not limited to, the following communications channels;*

- *Website and blog posts*
- *Facebook*
- *Twitter*
- *LinkedIn*
- *Instagram*
- *Email*
- *Written reports*
- *Radio*
- *IEC materials*

*The following guidelines are to be employed by all staff throughout external communications:*

- i. *The Communications Department is solely responsible for crafting and maintaining our brand identity, social media guidelines, and graphical presentation in all external communications;*
- ii. *Regularly share pertinent updates concerning stakeholder interactions and program advancements. This ensures transparency and keeps our supporters informed about our initiatives;*
- iii. *Be transparent by disclosing all necessary information that our stakeholders would find valuable;*
- iv. *Always offer precise assessments of our resources and financial status, providing an accurate picture of our financial position. Accountability is paramount, and any financial information shared must be entirely accurate;*
- v. *Foster engagement by promoting two-way communication in all interactions. Respond promptly to inquiries, listen attentively, and encourage feedback from stakeholders;*
- vi. *Maintain professionalism and respect in all external communications. Avoid offensive, inappropriate, or disrespectful language or content;*
- vii. *If unsure about the appropriateness of content or communication, seek guidance from the Communications department before sharing any information*

## **10. Media Relations**

The Communications Officer is the designated Media Relations Personnel.

## **11. Communications Privacy**

### **a. Data and Information Protection.**

The Ruben Centre management aims to ensure that all personal data regarding staff, trustees, visitors and other individuals is collected, stored and processed in the strictest confidence.

### **b. Child Safeguarding and Protection**

All information about individual pupils and children is private and should only be shared with any staff on a need-to-know basis.

#### **i. Personal information**

All medical and personal information about a child and/or pupil should be held in a safe and secure place which cannot be accessed by individuals other than administrative and teaching staff. All children have a right to the same level of confidentiality irrespective of gender, race, religion, medical concerns or special educational needs. Any data that is generated in school by these categories should not identify an individual pupil

#### **ii. Photo release**

All parents will be asked to sign a photo release form. Following consent, photographs of pupils and children can be used by Ruben Centre on social media and in an image archive. At no time should the Child/pupils' name be used with a photograph so that they can be identified. The Centre will take great care in respecting the wishes of parents and guardians in regards to child privacy and safety. Staff members as well hold rights to when a photo they feature can be used and where.

## **12. Crisis Communications**

## a) **Crisis Communications Values**

### **i. Monitoring**

We recognize the importance of monitoring the community's dynamics, emerging challenges, and potential issues. Regular monitoring allows us to stay informed about changes and developments that may require immediate attention. By actively tracking developments, we can identify potential crises early and respond effectively.

### **ii. Being Proactive**

In crisis communication, being proactive is essential. We commit to anticipating potential issues and planning ahead to mitigate risks. Our proactive approach involves preparing contingency plans, establishing communication protocols, and equipping our team to respond swiftly in times of crisis.

### **iii. Taking Action**

When a crisis arises, we are dedicated to taking swift and decisive action. We understand that timely communication is critical in crisis situations. Our communication efforts will prioritize transparency, honesty, and accuracy to address concerns, share information, and provide reassurance to the community.

### **iv. Reviewing and Learning**

After the crisis is managed, we are committed to conducting a thorough review of our response. We believe in continuous improvement, and this value guides us to analyze the effectiveness of our crisis communication strategy. By identifying strengths and areas for improvement, we ensure that we are better prepared to handle future crises.

## **13. Policy Implementation & Awareness raising**

Ruben Centre will adopt this policy with appropriate adaptations through creating awareness in the community and include it in its Human Resource Manual. This policy guides the handling of all community matters in Ruben Centre.

We will adopt the following to raise awareness amongst all stakeholders in Ruben Centre;

- a) Raise awareness in the society by making the policy public;
- b) Nurture respectful communication and cooperation between all our stakeholders;
- c) Promote awareness of the capabilities, abilities and contributions of all persons associated with Ruben Centre;
- d) Promote positive perceptions and greater social awareness;
- e) Foster at all levels of our education system, including all children and youth, a positive attitude of respect for all;

The **Communications Officer – Mr. Gregory Barake** is responsible for overseeing the development of educational/training materials about this policy, expected behaviours and accessible reporting processes.



This policy applies to all our projects and therefore, its implementation is a responsibility of everyone in Ruben Centre. Each department is expected to draw up a specific rollout plan showing how it will put commitments outlined in this policy into practise.

#### **14. Monitoring and Evaluation**

It's the primary responsibility of the Communications Officer in Ruben Centre to evaluate the implementation of this policy, but requires the participation of all Ruben Centre staff.

Also, each project within Ruben Centre will be responsible for monitoring its own implementation of this policy at least once every year.

This requires specific engagement on the part of the respective project head with his/her own team members.

The practical guide and its tools, including the marker, will therefore be improved upon with the help of regular contributions to the Mukuru community of our practices.

As with all institutional policies, verifications may be carried out on the effective implementation of this Policy at the request of management and in accordance with the internal control requirements.

#### **15. Consequences of Breach of this Policy**

In line with Ruben Centre's commitment to be clear, openly communicate professional and be transparent, we consider any breach of this Policy to be serious misconduct and, as such, will result in disciplinary measures being taken against any person or entity in breach. These disciplinary measures include, but are not limited to, termination of employment or engagement depending on the severity of breach.

#### **16. Policy Review**

The framework proposed in this policy is flexible and evolving, and will be updated to take account of experience and lessons learned following its implementation.

This Policy will be reviewed periodically, but at least every 2 years to take account of emerging issues and trends.