USAID's Higher Education System Strengthening Activity

REPORT

Communications Workshop for HESSA Partner Universities

January 30, 2024
Venue: National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST), Islamabad, Pakistan

Submitted by: The University of Utah
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CONTENTS

ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
DOCS	Development, Outreach & Communications
EDI	Equity, Diversity & Inclusion
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HESSA	USAID's Higher Education System Strengthening Activity
PR	Public Relations
Q&A	Questions & Answers
SEO	Search Engine Optimization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VC	Vice Chancellor

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The USAID's Higher Education System Strengthening Activity (HESSA) received requests from the Vice Chancellors of several partner universities to help improve their communication team's skills in projecting the university's achievements effectively and improving outreach to various audiences such as parent and students, the government, private sector and industry partners, and funding agencies. Based on this request, the project conducted a brief survey with the leadership and communications focal persons at each partner institution to gauge their interest and assess needs for communications related activities. The responses identified a need for ongoing skill development in communications and outreach addressing topics from digital marketing, social media management, and digital media proficiency to understanding the latest trends in technology, AI tools, and website optimization. The complete needs assessment report is attached as Annex-VI.

This demand-driven training was jointly organized by the USAID/Pakistan office and HESSA for the public relations and communications officers of 16 partner universities. The in-person workshop was preceded by a couple of mandatory one-hour virtual sessions on January 25 and 26, 2024. The first session included an introduction to HESSA and an overview of the training as well as expectations from all participants. The second session covered concepts of equity, diversity, and inclusion in university communications and best practices at the University of Utah.

The workshop was held on January 30, 2024, hosted by National University of Sciences & Technology, Islamabad, and attended by 29 officials (7 women). This one-day activity delved into various aspects of digital and social media usage, encompassing website development, social media management, photography, and marketing campaigns. There were eight distinct sessions led by distinguished speakers like Fasi Zaka and Fahad Malik who shared their expertise, offering valuable insights to the participants. Active participation marked the sessions, with all attendees engaging in group discussion and hands-on exercises to sharpen their digital communication skills.

The training equipped them with the latest tools and knowledge needed to excel in their roles. This activity marked the formation of a community of storytellers, eager to enhance the visibility of project impact in specific, and their institutions in general. Reflecting on the training, all participants expressed their satisfaction and highlighted its relevance and significance for enhancing university communications. They acknowledged the importance of staying ahead in digital communication trends, and the learnings are expected to contribute significantly to their communication strategy.

In the final wrap and next steps of the training, all participants agreed to develop a communications action plan focusing on project visibility for the next six months and prioritize the creation of a dedicated webpage on each partner institution's official website featuring HESSA activities. The project will continue to follow up with each partner to publish content on their social media accounts and increase the frequency of relevant posts to enhance institutional profile. Another important follow up action for each participant requires them to coordinate with the project focal persons on their respective campuses to identify potential success stories from HESSA participants that can be featured on website and social media.

ACTIVITY NARRATIVE

1. Background and Workshop Focus

USAID's Higher Education System Strengthening Activity (HESSA) organized a one-day Communications Workshop for its Partner Universities on January 30, 2024. This workshop was initiated in response to requests from several Vice Chancellors (VCs) for targeted training sessions aimed at empowering their Public Relations (PR) and Communication Departments.

In collaboration with USAID's Development, Outreach & Communications Office, HESSA developed a comprehensive agenda to address the specific needs of partner universities in strengthening their PR and Communications Departments.

The training aimed to achieve several key objectives:

- **Capacity Building:** Strengthening HESSA Partner Universities' Public Relations and Communications Departments with practical skills and knowledge focusing on digital and social media marketing and campaigns.

- **Networking:** Fostering collaboration to build a cohesive HESSA Community of Communicators by encouraging engagement and knowledge-sharing among participants.

- **Communications Plan:** Developing and implementing short-term communications plan and establishing groundwork for longer-term strategies aligned with their goals.

- **Website Integration:** Outlining expectations for featuring project activities on partner universities' websites for enhancing project visibility and impact dissemination.

Overall, the workshop provided a platform for enhancing communication capabilities and facilitating effective collaboration among partner universities.

2. Expected Workshop Outcomes

1. Strengthened skills and knowledge of participants to enhance partner universities' public relations and communications departments.

2. Established a culture of active engagement and collaboration among participants, nurturing a cohesive HESSA Community of Communicators.

3. Equipped participants to formulate and execute short-term communications plans, establishing a foundation for the implementation of long-term strategies aligned with their institutional objectives.

4. Aligned partner universities with USAID/HESSA's guidelines for featuring project activities on their websites, amplifying visibility, and facilitating the effective dissemination of project impact.

3. Workshop Overview

- **Organizer:** USAID's Higher Education System Strengthening Activity (HESSA)
- **Training name:** Communications Workshop for HESSA Partner Universities
- **Structure:** Virtual and in-person
- **Location:** Islamabad, Pakistan
- **Lead instructors:** Shehla Rizwan, USAID/Pakistan and Arsal Latif, HESSA

Communications Workshop for HESSA Partner Universities featured external speakers and trainers renowned for their extensive experience in media and communications. The USAID/Pakistan Office for Development, Outreach and Communications (DOCS) actively supported and monitored the workshop, with continuous involvement from DOCS lead, Ms. Shehla Rizwan.

The workshop boasted a lineup of experienced trainers whose diverse expertise significantly enriched the training sessions. The event was attended by 29 participants, including representatives from 16 partner universities, comprising 7 women and 22 men.

With a focus on empowering university communication teams, the agenda of the in-person workshop (Annex-I) was developed by covering the essential topics such as communications strategy, digital media marketing, social and digital media, photos and videos production, social media campaigns, and digital storytelling. The vibrant learning environment created during the workshop contributed to the participants' skill development and knowledge enhancement.

4. Activity Proceedings

First Virtual Session – January 25, 2024

Learning objective: Equip participants with the project understanding and workshop expectations.

The workshop commenced with the first virtual session of a set of two sessions organized on consecutive days, January 25, 2024, and January 26, 2024, preceding the training day on January 30. Dr. Ayesha Razzaque, Deputy Chief of Party HESSA, led the opening session on January 25, 2024, with 25 participants in attendance.

The first session involved participant introductions and sharing insights into their respective areas of expertise. Dr. Ayesha provided an overview of HESSA's approach to advancing Pakistan's higher education ecosystem, emphasizing the geographical footprint and the impact on capacity development across the 16 partner universities. She urged participants to reflect

Figure 1: First Virtual Session

on the vital role communication officers can assume in shaping a university's brand. She prompted them to see themselves as storytellers who enhance ordinary news, making it not just informative but also meaningful, creative, and personal.

This was followed by a brief overview of the findings of the needs assessment, agenda for the in-person workshop, and HESSA's expected outcomes for the workshop. Lasting for an hour, the session not only captured the participants' keen interest but also showcased their enthusiasm for the upcoming workshop. The session concluded with an interactive Q&A segment where participants actively engaged in discussions.

Learning outcome: Participants can explain the three project components and prepare for the in-person workshop.

Lead instructor reflections:
♦ The session was interactive allowing participants to discuss project initiatives.
♦ The session allowed participants to review the in-person workshop agenda prepared based on the need assessment.
♦ The session was an opportunity for the out of city participants to discuss travel and lodging.

Second Virtual Session – January 25, 2024

Learning objective: Equip participants with the understanding of incorporating equity, diversity and inclusion in university communications and marketing.

The second virtual session, conducted on January 26, 2024, focused on Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) in Communications. Dr. Mercedes Ward, Associate Director of Social Impact, Office of the Vice President for Research at the University of Utah, led the session, commencing with a definition of the key terms Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. She further explored how EDI can and should be integrated into communications, emphasizing its need at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

Dr. Ward underscored the significance of portraying diversity through images and highlighted the importance of utilizing inclusive language, particularly on websites and

Figure 2: Second Virtual Session - EDI in Communications

other content. The session concluded with a Q&A segment, providing participants with an opportunity for further engagement and clarification.
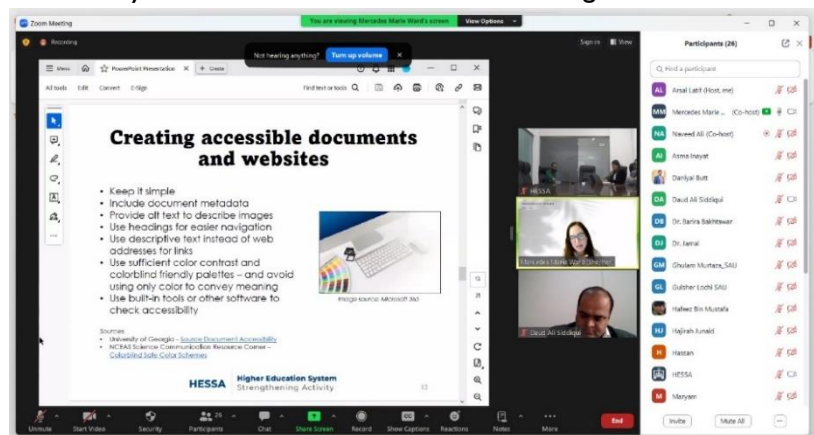
Learning outcome: Participants can incorporate EDI in university communications.

Lead instructor reflections:
♦ The session introduced EDI and its incorporation in all aspects of university communications.
♦ The session could have included more discussion on the definition and concepts of EDI in a local context.

Training Day – January 30, 2024

Following the virtual sessions, the in-person training commenced on January 30, 2024, at 09:15 am, hosted at the National University of Sciences & Technology in Islamabad. A total of 29 individuals attended the session, representing all 16 HESSA partner universities, with a balanced participation of 7 women and 22 men. The workshop was facilitated by Ms. Shehla Rizwan, USAID/Pakistan DOCS lead and Mr. Arsal Latif, HESSA Communications Specialist, and featured prominent media and communications experts in every session.

Session - 1: Creating Engaging Websites

Figure 3: Photos from the First Session

Learning objective: Use websites as a marketing tool and agree on a standard template for building the project profile on official websites.

The day began with the first session, co-led by Ms. Zoone Hasan, a digital marketing expert, and Mr. Arsal Latif, HESSA Communications Specialist. To start, Ms. Zoone Hasan highlighted the significance of having an impactful website. Drawing from experiences and examples, she discussed ways to enhance a website, emphasizing key features such as accessibility, two-way communications, and reaching a global audience. Ms. Hasan guided participants in making their websites more interactive, incorporating features like virtual tours, multilingual support, and regular updates to enhance the website's rating. Additionally, she touched upon the importance of Search Engine Optimization (SEO).

Furthermore, the session underscored the significant benefits of maintaining updated websites and student portals for both current and prospective students. Following Ms. Zoone Hasan's segment, HESSA Communications Specialist, Mr. Arsal Latif, shared a template for constructing a dedicated USAID's HESSA webpage on partner universities' websites. The purpose is to ensure more ownership by partner universities and effectively disseminate HESSA's contributions, events, and initiatives through the partner universities' websites.

Learning outcome: Participants can build HESSA webpage using the standard template.

Lead instructor reflections:
- The session provided an overview of effective website management.
- Proposed webpage standard template was agreed upon with an addition of downloads section.
- All partner HEIs will create project webpage on their official websites.

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Session - 2: Self-Assessment

Figure 4: Ms. Shehla Rizwan conducting the Self-Assessment

Learning objective: Assess social media capacities and engagement.

Following the inaugural session, Ms. Shehla Rizwan, Team Lead, DOCS, USAID/Pakistan, engaged the participants in a self-assessment session. The session began with brainstorming, during which partner universities assessed their social and digital media presence, identified challenges, and discussed their strategies. Participants shared how they manage their social media platforms. The session was highly interactive, with participants sharing their experiences. Ms. Shehla elaborated on the difference between digital media and social media, providing detailed information about the platforms that USAID focuses on. Annex-4 includes a complete list of partner universities' official social media handles.

Learning outcome: Participants can use self-assessment to improve social media engagement.

Lead instructor reflections:
♦ The session was important for participants to reflect on their capacities of managing social media presence effectively.

Session - 3: Digital Media Programming

Figure 5: Fahad Malik sharing Digital Media Tips

Learning objective: Equip participants with comprehensive knowledge and practical skills in digital and social media management, fostering effective online presence and engagement.

The third session of the day, led by Mr. Fahad Malik, delved into the topic of "Why Social Media Surpasses Conventional Media." The session primarily focused on highlighting the advantages of social media, including its ability to facilitate enhanced outreach, real-time engagement, sentiment analysis, content dissemination, and virality. Mr. Malik emphasized the importance of prioritizing social media platforms based on the type of content being shared. He provided insights into various social media activities across platforms and discussed best practices for content creation and dissemination on social media. Additionally, an overview of algorithms governing social media platforms was shared with the participants to help them understand how content visibility is determined and can be enhanced. The session garnered significant interest from the participants, prompting an extensive Q&A session to further explore the discussed topics.

Towards the end of the session, representatives from UET Lahore and IBA Karachi were asked to display their websites and social media platforms for an analysis of strengths and weaknesses facilitated by Mr. Malik.

Learning outcome: Participants can identify target audiences and develop an effective marketing mix for their audience.

Lead instructor reflections:
♦   The session was highly interactive and focused on real time solutions to the communications challenges faced by public sector universities.
♦   Participants could be further engaged through group work and hands-on activities.
♦   Analysis of websites was an opportunity to understand how to improve digital marketing.

Session - 4: Digital Storytelling

Figure 6: Session 4 - Digital Storytelling

Learning objective: Develop understanding of crafting innovative stories to engage audiences creatively and reporting impact.

The fourth session of the day delved into the art of digital storytelling, led by Jawad Sharif, an award-winning filmmaker. Mr. Sharif began the session by showcasing trailers of his short films and documentaries, while skillfully aligning storytelling with the dynamics of higher education. Addressing concerns about budget constraints and limited equipment, he emphasized that effective storytelling could transcend such limitations, even utilizing smartphones for filming. Mr. Sharif captivated the participants by highlighting that storytelling extends beyond mere filming, emphasizing the importance of a thoughtful script and execution. Throughout the session, attendees were engaged and enlightened on the intricacies of impactful storytelling in various contexts.

Learning outcome: Participants can visualize and develop success stories in their respective institutions.

Lead instructor reflections:
- The session focused more on video story samples from various sectors giving an opportunity to the participants to think creatively.
- Due to time constraints, the session could not cover the project's perspective on storytelling in more detail.

Session - 5: Photography

Figure 7: Photography Exercise

Learning objective: Equip participants with basic tips and tools for photography and create posts for social media.

In the fifth session of the day, Mr. Ali Najam, a distinguished visual expert, led an engaging activity on smartphone photography. Mr. Najam kicked off the session by highlighting the remarkable capabilities and convenience offered by smartphone photography, including the ease of capturing, editing, and sharing images on social media platforms. As the session progressed, he delved into the intricacies of photography, discussing various techniques to capture compelling images.

Exercise: One notable aspect of the session was the hands-on activity, where participants were encouraged to put their newfound knowledge into practice. They were tasked with venturing outdoors to capture photographs, applying the techniques learned during the session. This practical component provided participants with an opportunity to immediately apply what they had learned and gain valuable experience in real-world photography scenarios. Overall, Mr. Najam's

Figure 8: Photography Exercise

session offered invaluable insights and practical skills that empowered participants to enhance their photography abilities using smartphone applications.

Learning outcome: Participants can apply optimum photography rules and classify the best photos for social media posts.

Lead instructor reflections:
♦   The session provided both theoretical and hands-on knowledge of photography.
♦   Recommended free photo editing apps: Snapseed; Lightroom.

Session - 6: Social Media Campaigns

Figure 9: Fasih Zaka talking about social media campaigns

Learning objective: Equip participants with the knowledge to effectively implement online campaigns.

In the sixth session of the day, Mr. Fasih Zaka, a distinguished columnist and communicator, took the lead in discussing social media campaigning from the perspective of higher education. With his expertise in the field, Mr. Zaka conducted a focused session aimed at providing insights into crafting effective social media campaigns tailored specifically for higher education. Throughout the half-hour session, he highlighted the essential Do's and Don'ts of social media campaigning, ensuring that participants remained engaged in an interactive and dynamic learning environment.

Mr. Zaka's presentation not only offered valuable guidance on navigating the nuances of social media campaigns but also provided practical strategies for optimizing engagement and impact within the higher education sector.

Learning outcome: Participants can utilize social media for different target audiences in their respective institutions.

Lead instructor reflections:
♦   The session covered challenges of university communications and their possible solutions.
♦   Participants were encouraged to advocate appropriate budget allocation for their departments.
♦   Some institutions showed interest in launching podcasts and similar initiatives.

Session - 7: USAID's Social Media Platforms

Figure 10: Shehla Rizwan conducting the session

Learning objective: Develop an understanding of USAID communications strategy.

During this session, Ms. Shehla Rizwan provided insights into USAID's approach to social media management and campaign implementation. In addition to discussing various campaigns, she expanded the scope to encompass electronic and print media initiatives. Ms. Rizwan emphasized the significance of innovative marketing strategies for higher education, illustrating with examples such as USAID's "Seeing is Believing" campaign and "Cook's Challenge" adventure series.

Furthermore, she acquainted participants with storytelling platforms such as medium and exposure and offered practical suggestions by sharing beneficial apps and tools for content creation, monitoring, blogging, and file sharing, thereby enhancing their understanding of effective marketing practices.

Learning outcome: Participants can explore and experiment with different storytelling platforms to enhance visibility.

Lead instructor reflections:
♦ The session covered various USAID communications tools and digital platforms including USAID global website.
♦ Participants could be further engaged through group work and hands-on activities.

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Session - 8: Videography

Figure 11: Hands-on exercise on Videography

Learning objective: Equip participants with basic tips and techniques for videography and create posts for social media.

Continuing with the photography session conducted earlier in the day, Mr. Ali Najam continued with an interactive videography exercise with the participants. Mr. Najam highlighted the convenience of smartphones, including the ease of recording and editing videos. He covered various techniques to record compelling videos and shared best practices of storylines. Each participant was given the opportunity to create a brief video clip using their smartphones or other available devices. Following the creation of these clips, they were collectively reviewed and discussed.

This exercise not only allowed participants to apply the concepts learned during the session but also provided them with valuable feedback and insights into the art of videography and editing. By engaging in this hands-on activity, participants gained practical experience and confidence in their ability to conceptualize, shoot, and edit videos effectively.

Learning outcome: Participants can apply optimum videography rules and classify best shots for social media posts.

Lead instructor reflections:
♦   The session provided both theoretical and hands-on knowledge of videography.
♦   Recommended free video editing apps: Capcut; Inshot.

Session - 9: Expectations & Next Steps

HESSA Communications Specialist outlined the expectations and next steps for the participants. This included sharing a template for an Implementation Plan and activity planner, which HESSA partner universities are expected to utilize moving forward. A detailed briefing was provided on measuring project success at different levels—institution level, individual level, and learners' level. All participants were encouraged to return to their respective institutions, actively involve HESSA focal persons and beneficiaries, and collaborate on generating HESSA-related stories for dissemination across their platforms. This task aims to foster greater engagement and visibility for project initiatives while empowering partner institutions to contribute to the broader project objectives.

5. Reflections and Commitments

"*Importance of marketing, importance of storytelling and the benefits of networking*" said Ms. Hajirah Junaid, a participant from NUST when asked the question "What have you learned from this Workshop" during the concluding session.

Figure 12: Reflections

Responding to the same question, participants shared insightful reflections highlighting valuable lessons and practical knowledge acquired. They emphasized the significance of effective social media strategies, website development, and storytelling in promoting their institutions.

Key takeaways included tips for content creation, understanding the importance of marketing in limited resources, and the role of PR teams. The hands-on experience in digital and social media, photography, and videography techniques received positive recognition.

Participants expressed a deeper understanding of marketing mix alignment, organic growth on social media, and the art of engaging storytelling.

The participants were also asked what they would do differently after going back to their institution.

"*Implementing videography and photography skills learned would elevate the university's digital communication, making it more visually appealing and resonant with the target audience*" said Mr. Khalid Amin from Karakoram International University.

Key takeaways included leveraging social media and digital marketing to enhance their institution's visibility. Strategies included website revamps, creating engaging social media content, and aligning efforts with HESSA's standards. They aimed at exploring new storytelling methods, and boost community engagement.

6. Participant's Feedback

Participants expressed their appreciation for the informative and well-organized workshop conducted by HESSA. While commending the relevance and expertise of the speakers, participants suggested extending the workshop duration to at least two or three days for more effective learning.

Some felt that the condensed one-day format limited the depth of the training and hindered their ability to absorb and engage with the content fully. Requests were made for more breaks during sessions, interactive exercises, and practical activities.

Participants also highlighted the need for official transportation for female participants to and from the airport for safety reasons. Overall, while acknowledging the valuable insights gained, there was a consistent call for an extended duration, additional practical exercises, and more frequent workshops to cover advanced topics and enhance the learning experience.

7. Best Practices & Lessons Learned

Nomination Relevance: Before the workshop, nominations from partner universities were thoroughly reviewed to ensure they aligned with the workshop's objectives. Some nominees were replaced with more relevant individuals to maximize the training's effectiveness.

Supporting Virtual Sessions: Splitting the workshop into two virtual sessions before the training day proved to be a successful approach. It allowed participants to gain valuable insights into HESSA and its expected outcomes beforehand, ensuring they were well-prepared for the training day.

Hands-on Activities and Diverse Training Team: The workshop's hands-on activities and diverse range of trainers were particularly noteworthy. They facilitated interaction amongst participants and provided a well-rounded learning experience.

Venue & Logistics: The venue provided a conducive learning environment. However, the seating arrangement made it challenging to see the screen from certain angles. The hotel accommodation and transportation services were comfortable. Transportation schedule should be communicated clearly. The lunch and tea arrangements were satisfactory and could be improved with the clear mention of 15-20 minutes tea breaks in the agenda instead of serving working tea.

8. Next Steps/Way Forward

Participants provided their sincere appreciation for the well-structured and informative program. Overall, the workshop has laid the groundwork for a dynamic community of storytellers within each partner institution. This initiative promises to enhance institutional communication and elevate HESSA's visibility effectively. Next steps include:

- Developing a communications action plan focusing on project visibility for the next six months.
- Prioritizing the creation of a dedicated webpage on each partner institution's official website featuring HESSA activities.
- Activating social media accounts and increasing the frequency of relevant posts to enhance institutional profile.
- Identifying potential success stories from HESSA participants to be featured on websites and social media.
- Continuous follow up with universities for publishing content on websites and social media.
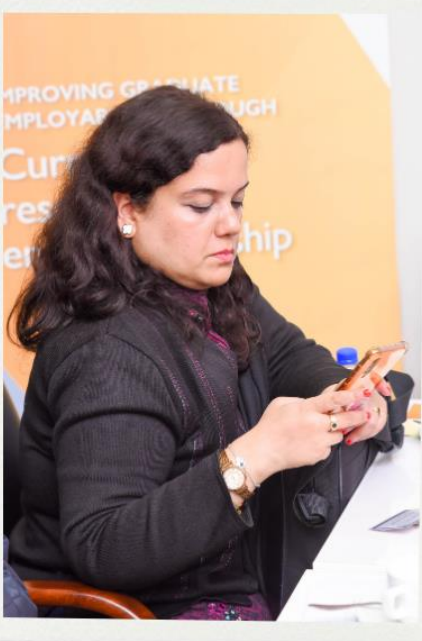
ANNEXURES

Annex – I: Agenda

Communications Workshop for HESSA Partner Universities

Date: Tuesday, January 30, 2024
Time: 0915 – 1700 hrs
Venue: Central Library, National University of Sciences & Technology, H-12, Islamabad

Time	Agenda	Objective	Notes
0915 (15 minutes)	Opening • Welcome remarks • Meeting/ Workshop objectives • Introductions	Finding inspiration and innovation through conversations	
0930 (30 minutes)	Creating engaging websites Populating project info on your webpage	Using websites as a marketing tool Agreeing on a standard template for building the project profile on official websites	
1000 (60 minutes)	Digital and Social Media • Understanding the marketing mix • The Five P's and social media	Equipping participants with comprehensive knowledge and practical skills in digital and social media management, fostering effective online presence and engagement.	*This session includes group exercise*
1100 (60 minutes)	Using social media for marketing plans • Using LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Insta, and YouTube		
1200 (60 minutes)	Capturing and reporting stories/successes • Building your story • Writing your story	Developing skills in crafting stories to engage audiences creatively and reporting outcomes.	*This session includes an exercise*
1300	**Lunch break**		
1400 (60 minutes)	How to capture photos and short videos *(part 1)*	Equipping participants with basic tips and tools for recording sessions and create posts for social media.	*This session includes an exercise*
1500 (60 minutes)	Creating social media campaigns	Equipping participants with the skills and tools necessary for effectively capturing successes within their respective contexts.	
1600 (20 minutes)	How to capture photos and short videos *(part 2)*	Equipping participants with basic tips and tools for recording sessions and create posts for social media.	*This session includes an exercise*

Time	Agenda	Objective	Notes
1620 (10 minutes)	Overview of USAID social media platforms, campaigns, drama serials, and story telling	Developing an understanding of USAID communications strategy	
1630 (10 minutes)	Creating action plans	Defining activities and milestones to evaluate follow up of the workshop.	*This session includes an exercise*
1640 (10 minutes)	Reflections and Commitments Open forum for the participants to ask questions	What was useful today and how can we improve?	*Walking away from the workshop with this thought on my mind... Looking ahead: Set an intention for 2024 that will be part of your commitments for this workshop*
1650 (10 minutes)	Closing remarks and group photo		*Group photo on back entrance steps of central library NUST*

Annex – II (A): List of Participants

Institution	Participant	Designation	Email
Women University Swabi	Dr. Abdul Waheed	Head/Incharge IT, Dept of Computer Science	abdul@wus.edu.pk
	Waseem Khattak	Director Public relations and publications	hod.jmc@wus.edu.pk
National University of Technology	Syeda Hajira Junaid	Acting Director Marketing & Communications	dmnc@nust.edu.pk
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University of Peshawar	Muhammad Noman Khan	Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Comm	noman@uop.edu.pk
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Annex – II (B): Attendance Sheet (original)

USAID's Higher Education System Strengthening Activity

Communications Workshop for HESSA Partner Universities
January 30, 2024 (Tuesday)
Venue: Central Library, National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST), H-12, Islamabad

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18	Momin Sheikh	NUTECH, Islamabad	DME	dme.mediastudio@nutech.edu.pk	0339-4143454	
19	Zara Zafar	NUTech, Islamabad	Deputy Assistant Director Meetis	zarazafar46@gmail.com	0301-577000	

USAID's Higher Education System Strengthening Activity

Communications Workshop for HESSA Partner Universities
January 30, 2024 (Tuesday)
Venue: Central Library, National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST), H-12, Islamabad

Sr. No	Name	Institution	Title/ Designation	Email	Contact Number	Signature's
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23	Dr. Jamal ud Din	University of Swat	HOD/PRO.	jamaluddin@uswat.edu.pk	0333-9140993	
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27	S. Haider Ali	NUST	AD Digital Comms	haider-adcomms@nust.edu.pk	0300-5174144	
28	Dr. M. Ali	FJWU	HOD/Social Media	m.ali@fjwu.edu.pk	0334-507368	
29	Surrya Samin Kavalian	PJWU	PS to VC.	surryasamin@fjwu.edu.pk	0302-544158	

Annex – III: Trainers' Profiles

Shehla Rizwan is a communications and development professional with over twenty-seven years of work experience providing strategic marketing and communications services to development sector organizations, donor agencies including USAID, World Bank, JICA, INGO's; CARE International and MEDA. Notable strategic vision, creativity, and ability to mix traditional communication and digital media are her strong attributes. Her other strengths include solid knowledge of communications, marketing and promotional tools, project management, budgeting skills, leadership in team as well as teaching and training.

Fahad Malik is a digital media practitioner with experience of over a decade. Fahad is currently working as Group Head Digital for ABN News & Ausaaf Group. Previously, he headed Hum News's Digital Media for 5 years. Fahad has extensive experience of managing digital assets, establishing digital identities, and branding. Fahad helped different government institutions, including the office of Chief Secretary Punjab, IG Punjab, District Administration Islamabad, Islamabad Police, National IT Board and others. Fahad is the author of Balochistan's first Digital Media Policy. Fahad helped government offices in bridging gaps with public, and for his contributions President of Pakistan has conferred Tamgha-e-Imtiaz upon him, on 14th August, making him youngest Pakistani in category of Digital Media / Technology. Fahad's work in mental health has been covered by TEDx.

Ali Najam is a versatile professional with a unique blend of expertise encompassing event management, professional photo and videography, and media and communications skills within the development sector. With a keen eye for detail and a passion for crafting unforgettable experiences, Ali excels in orchestrating diverse events and capturing impactful visual narratives. His collaborative approach and effective communication with clients enable him to translate their unique visions into exceptional occasions, while his expertise in photography and videography allows him to capture the essence and stories within the development sector with finesse. Ali's media and communications skills further enhance his ability to promote and document these events and stories, ensuring a seamless fusion of creativity and professionalism.

Zoone Hasan *is a seasoned marketing professional known for her innovative approach and creative flair in the digital marketing realm. With a career spanning over a decade, Zoone has established herself as a disruptor in the marketing industry, consistently pushing the boundaries of traditional marketing practices. Zoone brings a wealth of experience from her diverse background in both corporate and nonprofit sectors. She has successfully led marketing campaigns for leading corporations, driving brand growth and customer engagement.*

Fasi Zaka *is a columnist, radio talk show host, and television anchor. Zaka is currently a weekly opinion editorial writer for The Express Tribune. He has been as a columnist for the leading Pakistani newspaper, The News International, where he wrote the weekly political opinion editorial column, The Pakistan Report Card and the pop culture criticism column titled His Bigness in the Instep segment of the Sunday edition. As a writer some of his prominent themes have included bringing back rationality into civil dialogue, political satire, debunking conspiracy theories that affect the national discourse in Pakistan.*

Jawad Sharif *is an award-winning filmmaker and National Geographic Explorer, who has come into prominence for exploring the often-ignored social subjects. His work focuses on the interface between the dominant culture and the real impact on people, society, and the environment. Jawad is a Ted Fellow and an alumnus of the UCLA, Swedish Institute and Institut Fur Auslandsbeziehunge, Germany. He is the Festival Director of Asia Peace Film Festival and jury member of the Jaipur Library Academy Awards. Jawad is also a founding member of Climate Kahani & Cinema for Change.*

Annex – IV: List of Social Media Handles

S.No.	Partner University	Facebook	Twitter (X)
1.	Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUITEMS)	https://www.facebook.com/BUITEMSLIVE/	@BUITEMS_edu
2.	Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University (SBKWU)	https://www.facebook.com/SBKWomensUniversity/	@sbkwu
3.	Lahore College for Women University (LCWU)	https://www.facebook.com/lcwu.official https://www.facebook.com/webtvlcwu	@webtvlcwu
4.	University of Engineering and Technology (UET), Lahore	https://www.facebook.com/UETLahore.official/	@UET_official
5.	Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU)	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100064821875633	@FJWU_official
6.	National University of Science & Technology (NUST)	https://www.facebook.com/nustofficial	@DefiningFutures @Research_NUST
7.	National University of Technology (NUTECH)	https://www.facebook.com/NUTECHPAK/	@NUTechPak
8.	University of Peshawar	https://www.facebook.com/UniversityOfPeshawarOfficialPage/	@upeshpakistan
9.	University of Swat	https://www.facebook.com/universityofswat/	@UniversitySwat
10.	Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan (AWKUM)	https://www.facebook.com/awkumofficial/	@AWKUMofficial
11.	Women University, Swabi	https://www.facebook.com/wuswabi/	@wuswabi
12.	Peoples University for Medical & Health Sciences for Women, Nawabshah	https://www.facebook.com/pumhs.edu.pk/	@officialpumhs
13.	Sindh Agriculture University, Tandojam	https://www.facebook.com/SAU.Tandojam.Official	@sau_official
14.	Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi	https://www.facebook.com/IBAKHIPK/	@ibakarachi
15.	Karakoram International University	https://www.facebook.com/OfficialKIU/	@OfficialKIU
16.	Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST), Mirpur	https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100079274237254	@ajk_must

Annex – V: Post Workshop Social Media Posts

S.No.	Partner University	Published Links
1.	Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Management Sciences (BUITEMS)	https://www.facebook.com/share/p/yP6FnGJV1jFYK1if/?mibextid=xfxF2i https://x.com/BUITEMS_edu/status/1754445033946976625?t=JaZZAxFQOU7j8fXzKtdecg&s=08
2.	Lahore College for Women University (LCWU)	https://www.facebook.com/share/bA5oSFT633Y54MbQ/?mibextid=xfxF2i
3.	National University of Science & Technology (NUST)	https://www.facebook.com/share/p/ZWmB4D9TcLKbpyid/?mibextid=qi2Omg
4.	National University of Technology (NUTECH)	https://www.facebook.com/share/dxNgBnKLwC2Kf1Fh/?mibextid=WC7FNe
5.	University of Peshawar	https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0T2FreRb4ueTqdQiDBRY7eP4Q1b4hvTj19VTnMngECgPgU HakJtUEWP8yQd6agikAl&id=100077277501446&mibextid=Nif5oz
6.	University of Swat	https://www.facebook.com/share/p/vt9JzTXvAYZmPo9g/?mibextid=xfxF2i
7.	Abdul Wali Khan University, Mardan (AWKUM)	https://www.linkedin.com/posts/abdul-wali-khan-university-mardan_hessa-usaid-awkum-activity-7159176988535013376-lf-i?utm_source=share&utm_medium=member_android https://twitter.com/AWKUMofficial/status/1753412608915394745?t=hP_6JTNevWCiUggnZIebFQ&s=08 https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0tu2AqnEh3iWFuxTANvALCq8wp7KsZpRpFmxpp2SS1c3nn aTXrCgbapV5KGfqjAGSl&id=100057499658095&sfnsn=scwspwa&mibextid=RUbZ1f
8.	Women University, Swabi	https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02bjTeHoXvkuExPVQzkWSngcYHh1XmDUtPTJVrmy9Z3D9 mnqnAo2s8TRg596DsmbSSl&id=100057142462332&mibextid=CDWPTG
9.	Peoples University for Medical & Health Sciences for Women, Nawabshah	https://www.facebook.com/100057393320447/posts/pfbid033C6BC5JfEyzjNDiG8Fz9WDAtCFmbpsWdXcuNut wyi3sdkvGqNdqGB3n69vnQEA8Ll/
10.	Sindh Agriculture University, Tandojam	https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid02psXbW25GvS34bJDfTBnJ1bP6wJBoENNDdtX28vjFymfPu R82AyTTkqaQqaqv7JNgl&id=100066625333351&mibextid=Nif5oz
11.	Karakoram International University	https://www.facebook.com/OfficialKIU/posts/pfbid02fM36W8i3LMv84Doopr7nFfGmQbP2Fho6LAqAB2ddya8CS MsDVFh84g4UVE4GmWFKl
12.	Mirpur University of Science and Technology (MUST), Mirpur	https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=pfbid0eRxbKSy8YSxVw9MiWQnGfeQE5LuAagBBpS5YnkmeSuMA LJmHeMZ6XwpXTpNBgsRol&id=100064528518942&sfnsn=scwspwa&mibextid=RUbZ1f
13.	Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU)	https://www.facebook.com/share/p/af6PvVjkdEyT4eKG/?mibextid=xfxF2i https://x.com/FJWU_official/status/1758444862897021152?s=20

Annex – VI: Needs Assessment Report

Responses Summary

HEIs with responses from neither VC nor focal person
1. NUST
2. BUITMS
3. UOP

HEIs with responses from both VC and focal person
1. FJWU
2. WUS
3. KIU
4. SBKWU
5. NUTECH

University Response	Focal Person Responded?	VC Responded?	At least 1 response?
Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan	NO	YES	YES
Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering, and Management Sciences	NO	NO	NO
Fatima Jinnah Women University	YES	YES	YES
Institute of Business Administration Karachi	NO	YES	YES
Karakoram International University	YES	YES	YES
Lahore College for Women University	YES	NO	YES
Mirpur University of Science and Technology	NO	YES	YES
National University of Science and Technology	NO	NO	NO
National University of Technology	YES	YES	YES
Peoples University of Medical and Health Sciences For Women	YES	NO	YES
Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University	YES	YES	YES
Sindh Agriculture University, Tando Jam	NO	YES	YES
University of Engineering and Technology Lahore	NO	YES	YES
University of Peshawar	NO	NO	NO
University of Swat	YES	NO	YES
Women University Swabi	YES	YES	YES

Narrative on Analysis of Focal Persons Feedback

Comms Role Status at HEIs

University Response	Comms Role Status
Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan	No response
Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering, and Management Sciences	No response
Fatima Jinnah Women University	Additional Charge
Institute of Business Administration Karachi	No response
Karakoram International University	Full-time
Lahore College for Women University*	Full-time Additional Charge
Mirpur University of Science and Technology	No response
National University of Science and Technology	No response
National University of Technology	Full-time
Peoples University of Medical and Health Sciences For Women	Additional Charge
Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University	Full-time
Sindh Agriculture University, Tando Jam	No response
University of Engineering and Technology Lahore	No response
University of Peshawar	No response
University of Swat	Additional Charge
Women University Swabi	Additional Charge

*LCWU: one respondent said "full-time" and another respondent said "additional charge"

Key Responsibilities & Current Skills

The analysis of the training needs assessment survey conducted with focal persons of communications at various universities reveals a diverse range of responsibilities and key skills within the field of communication and PR. At **Women University Swabi**, the responsibilities include compiling news, fostering media relations, and managing multiple social media platforms, while key skills encompass script writing and journalistic translations. **Lahore College for Women University's** focal person serves as a liaison between internal and external stakeholders, emphasizing excellent communication and conflict management skills. **Fatima Jinnah Women University** focuses on social media management, videography, and content writing. **Lahore College for Women University's** second respondent highlights media management skills and an understanding of organizational needs. **Sardar Bahadur Khan**

Women's University emphasizes linkages and communication between stakeholders. **Karakoram International University** emphasizes disseminating information to media outlets, with skills in news writing and photography. The **Peoples University of Medical & Health Sciences for Women** centers its role around HESSA activities, involving stakeholder collaboration. The **University of Swat** is responsible for various promotional activities and misinformation management, requiring flexibility and a willingness to learn. Lastly, the **National University of Technology** emphasizes press releases, video review, and a wide array of skills, including communication, leadership, and time management. Overall, these responses underscore the multifaceted nature of communications and PR roles in higher education institutions, with a diverse skill set being essential for success in this field.

Training Needs

The responses regarding the skills needed to excel in their roles as communication/PR officials highlight the evolving nature of the field. **Women University Swabi** underscores the importance of digital marketing, videography, and social media management. **Lahore College for Women University** emphasizes social media management, digital media proficiency, strategic thinking, and crisis communication skills. **Fatima Jinnah Women University** places an emphasis on staying updated with the latest trends in social media, SEO, and AI tools. **Sardar Bahadur Khan Women**'s University highlights proposal writing and handling high-profile meetings. **Karakoram International University** mentions the need for awareness of modern communication tools like Photoshop and video editing. **Peoples University of Medical & Health Sciences for Women** seeks advanced and contemporary communication approaches. The **University of Swat** focuses on adopting new technology, AI, marketing, and PR practices with a strong emphasis on content development. Lastly, the **National University of Technology** expresses the need for continuous learning across a wide range of skills, including communication, research, leadership, and time management, reflecting the dynamic and multifaceted nature of the communications and PR field in the modern era.

Summary

In summary, the responses from communication/PR officials across various universities underscore the imperative need for ongoing skill development to thrive in their roles. The key skills that training programs should address encompass a broad spectrum, ranging from mastering the intricacies of digital marketing, social media management, and digital media proficiency to understanding the latest trends in technology, AI tools, and SEO. Additionally, the importance of strategic thinking, crisis communication, and proposal writing skills cannot be underestimated. The field of communication and PR continues to evolve, requiring professionals to adapt to new technology, embrace modern tools, and keep pace with advanced communication approaches and practices. Effective training initiatives should, therefore, encompass a holistic approach that fosters proficiency in communication, interpersonal skills, research, organizational and management abilities, leadership qualities, creative thinking, and time management, reflecting the multifaceted nature of this dynamic profession in the contemporary landscape.

Narrative on Analysis of VC Feedback

Current Structure and Expectations

The analysis of the survey responses from various university vice chancellors reveals both commonalities and distinctions in the structure and expectations of their respective communication/PR units.

In terms of structure, some universities, such as Abdul Wali Khan University, Mirpur University of Science and Technology, University of Engineering and Technology, and Sindh Agriculture University, have opted for a full-time staff dedicated to communication/PR roles. This approach suggests a commitment to maintaining a professional and specialized team for managing their institutional image and communication efforts. On the other hand, universities like Fatima Jinnah Women University, Women University Swabi, Karakoram International University, and National University of Technology have assigned these responsibilities to officials with additional charges. This indicates a more decentralized structure where communication and PR duties are integrated into existing roles.

Regarding expectations, there is a consensus among the universities on the importance of improving their institutions' image and expanding outreach. They seek to project their achievements effectively and engage with a wide range of stakeholders, including students, the community, and external partners. However, some universities, like Fatima Jinnah Women University and Karakoram International University, specifically mention the need to enhance their existing systems and create a positive image for socioeconomic development in their regions. Sindh Agriculture University highlights a desire for effective communication with multiple stakeholders beyond traditional handouts and media lobbying. Meanwhile, Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University emphasizes the communication of HEI policies and initiatives to various stakeholders.

In conclusion, while there are variations in the structure and expectations of communication/PR units among these universities, there is a shared recognition of the unit's vital role in enhancing the institution's image and facilitating effective communication with a diverse range of stakeholders. Whether through full-time specialized staff or officials with additional charges, the aim remains to create a positive image for the university and ensure comprehensive communication and PR efforts to support the institution's mission and goals.

Strengths, Gaps, and Strategy

Strengths

Abdul Wali Khan University mentions having full-time staff as a strength, indicating a dedicated and professional team. **Fatima Jinnah Women University** emphasizes improving their existing system, suggesting a commitment to continuous improvement. **Institute of Business Administration** highlights their unit's ability to manage the institution's image and disseminate information effectively. **Mirpur University of Science and Technology** focuses on projecting their achievements and improving outreach. The **University of Engineering and Technology** underscores the importance of understanding various media platforms and effective communication techniques. **Sindh Agriculture University** aims to have effective communication with various stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, and industry partners. **Karakoram International** University aims to develop a positive image and disseminate information about their contribution to socioeconomic development. **Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University** focuses on communicating HEI policies, initiatives, and developments to stakeholders. **National University of Technology** seeks to become an effective source of information with a comprehensive communication and PR plan.

Gaps

Abdul Wali Khan University does not mention specific gaps in their response. **Fatima Jinnah Women University** aims to improve their existing system, implying room for enhancement. The **Institute of Business Administration** does not explicitly mention gaps but may have unaddressed areas for improvement. **Mirpur University of Science and Technology** emphasizes the need to improve outreach, suggesting that it may currently have limitations in this regard. The **University of Engineering and Technology** aims to know various media platforms and effective communication techniques, indicating a potential gap in these areas. **Sindh Agriculture University** highlights the traditional work of their PR units, suggesting a gap in adopting modern communication strategies. **Karakoram International University** aims to develop a positive image and disseminate information about their contributions, implying a current gap in their image and outreach efforts. **Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University** emphasizes the need to communicate HEI policies and initiatives, indicating a potential gap in effectively conveying this information. **National University of Technology** seeks to establish a comprehensive communication and PR plan, suggesting a current absence of such a strategy.

Communication/Outreach Plan Strategy

Responses regarding the presence of a communication/outreach plan strategy vary. Some universities, such as Abdul Wali Khan University and Institute of Business Administration, do not explicitly mention having such a plan. In contrast, Fatima Jinnah Women University mentions the need to improve their existing system, implying a potential plan in place. Mirpur University of Science and Technology does not explicitly state the presence of a plan but emphasizes the goal of improving outreach. The University of Engineering and Technology mentions a need to understand various media platforms, which may imply the absence of a comprehensive strategy. Sindh Agriculture University acknowledges the PR units' traditional work and may not have a modern communication plan in place. Karakoram International University aims to

develop a positive image and disseminate information, indicating a potential plan in progress. Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University seeks to communicate HEI policies and initiatives, suggesting the presence of a specific plan for this purpose. National University of Technology aims to establish a comprehensive plan, indicating the absence of such a strategy at the moment.

In summary, while universities generally recognize the strengths of their communication/PR units and have identified areas for improvement, there is variability in the presence and extent of communication/outreach plan strategies. Some institutions may have more established plans, while others are in the process of developing them. Addressing gaps and implementing effective strategies will be crucial for enhancing the communication and outreach efforts of these universities.

Summary

In summary, the analysis of responses from various universities regarding their communication/PR units reveals a range of strengths, gaps, and the presence of communication/outreach plan strategies. While strengths include dedicated staff, a focus on improvement, and an emphasis on managing institutional image, identified gaps encompass areas such as outreach, understanding media platforms, and adopting modern communication strategies. The presence of communication/outreach plans varies across universities, with some having established strategies, others in the process of developing them, and a few not explicitly mentioning their existence. Addressing these gaps and implementing effective strategies will be essential for enhancing communication and outreach efforts across these institutions.

Questionnaires

Communications Needs of Partner HEIs

<u>Questions for Vice Chancellors /Rectors</u>
1. Institution: _____
2. What are your communication objectives?
3. What are your key communication needs?
4. What gaps do you see in your communications and outreach activities?
5. What are your expectations from the communication and media team?
6. What latest tools do you propose to achieve your communication objectives?

<u>Questions for University Communication Focal Persons</u>
1. Name: _____
2. Designation: _____
3. Qualification: _____
4. Institution: _____
5. Your key responsibilities: _____
6. Your key tasks as a communications person at your HEI: _____
7. How long have you been performing the above-mentioned tasks?
   - Less than one year
   - 1-2 years
   - 3-4 years
   - 5+ years
8. Your key skills: _____
9. What skills do you need to acquire to succeed in your role?
10. Have you participated in any communications training previously?
11. If yes, name the training(s): _____
12. If HESSA organizes communications training, what would be your preferred topics? (select up to 3 topics)
    - Communication and marketing plan development
    - Brand book development
    - Digital marketing & advertising
    - Social media management & campaigns
    - Story telling /writing
    - Basic designing and infographic
    - Photography / videography and editing
    - Public relation and media management training
    - Event management & promotion training
    - Other: _____
13. Does your department have its own communication or outreach strategy?
14. Does your institution have its own communication strategy?
15. Other comments: _____