REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

Malaŵi Prisons Service Communication Strategy 2019– 2024

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Acknowledgements

Contents

Acronyms

CJS	Criminal Justice System
DGS	Democratic Governance Sector
HRO	Human Rights Organisation
MDAs	Ministries, Departments, Agencies
MoI	Ministry of Information
MISA	Media Institute of Southern Africa
MoJCA	Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
MPS	Malawi Prison Service
PASI	Paralegal Advisory Service Institute
PRO	Public Relations Office
SWAp	Sector Wide Approach
UoM	University of Malawi

Executive Summary

This Communication Strategy incorporates a draft Communication Strategy developed by Malawi Prison Service (MPS) staff in November 2014, and builds on it using findings from a Democratic Governance Programme consultancy.

The Strategy provides guidance for MPS on how to relate to and communicate its services and policies to stakeholders and partners.

These include: prisoners in custody, and former inmates, MPS staff themselves, relatives of present or former inmates, and the communities they live in. Also the strategy addresses the general public who may have no direct relation with the Prison Service.

MPS will also use the strategy to improve communication aimed at fostering better collaboration and coordination with partners in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) including Government Agencies such the Police and Courts, Civil Society Organisations, and Religious Bodies. The strategy also bears on the Media in so far as they cover prison and CJS issues.

Lastly the MPS will use the Communication Strategy to elicit the support, resources and funding that is critical for realising its goals and aspirations.

The strategy follows a logical sequence; the first chapter looks at the context MPS works within from both policy and public perception angles, the second chapter uses this analysis to identify the key areas where the Communication Strategy can assist MPS, the third chapter explain how these components can be implemented, and the final chapter sets out how, once implemented the communication strategy can be evaluated. In this way the strategy identifies problems and then suggests practical ways to address these problems through communications.

The three key issues that the Communication Strategy is designed to address are:

1. that despite the efforts of the PR office the profile of the MPS remains low and is based on stereotypical ideas of prison as a place of punishment;

2. that prisoners (and their families) have a right to information about what will happen to them whilst in gaol;

3. MPS needs to share information with its partners in the criminal justice system

The strategy therefore consists of three components, each with associated key messages and activities. The components are:

1. Awareness-raising about how MPS protects communities and reforms and rehabilitates prisoners;
2. Provision of information about being in prison;
3. Linking with criminal justice system partners

The intended outcome of the strategy is that MPS will be associated in the minds of all stakeholders with the just treatment and rehabilitation of inmates, and MPS will be widely recognised as both protecting society and helping reform, rehabilitation of prisoners. Put differently the old perception of prisons as a place of punishment would be replaced by an appreciation that MPS manages gaols as part of the governments' contribution to Malawi's well being.

1. Context

1.1 Institutional context

The Malawi Prison Service was established under Section 5 of the 1955 Malawi Prison Act. MPS acknowledges the Act is very old and needs reform to bring it in line with both the Constitution, and with international law and declarations such as the 1996 Kampala Declaration on Prison Conditions in Africa, and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

Even though the founding law may be out-dated, the Malawi Prison Service has developed a new Policy[1] that views prisons as places for reform rather than punishment. Thus, in line with contemporary prison regimes, the major objective of MPS is to ensure that prisoners are rehabilitated and reintegrated into the society so that they are able to lead a productive life after release from prison. For this reason, prison regimes should encourage prisoners' personal development and every prisoner should enjoy the basic human rights.

This is summed up well in the 2009 Annual Report:

> "For too long, prisons have been regarded as the breeding grounds of criminality, places of punitive authoritarianism and backwaters of everything despised by the society. However, it should be put on record that my Department is convinced beyond doubt that rehabilitation and reformation and the prevention of repeat offending should be and is our core business. In fact we exist to provide for safe, humane custody and rehabilitation of offenders in order to contribute to public security and socio-economic development in Malawi.

> The Department's holistic approach to rehabilitation and reintegration therefore is based on our conviction that every human being is capable of change and transformation if offered the opportunity and resources. It is appreciated in this report that repeat offending rate has tremendously declined and I have no doubt that, should resources permit, this rate will decline further in the coming years.

> The major challenge facing the Malawi Prisons Service remains the extra-ordinary growth in prison population which does not only have significant negative implications on the ability of the Department to deliver in terms of its new core business of rehabilitation and reformation, but constitutional provisions also oblige Government to act urgently on the matter.

> We will double our efforts in trying to involve all stakeholders in the Criminal Justice System so as to find and implement alternative ways of dealing with offenders apart from that of sending them to prisons as part of solving a problem of congestion.

> I further wish to acknowledge that there are women who are capable of committing heinous crimes, we are however mindful of the fact that they have a primary responsibility for the family particularly when children are involved. Some sadly serve their sentences with their infants, in an environment not conducive for a healthy early childhood development. As a society we must take a closer look at this situation and consider diversion programmes for women who have committed petty offences."

The objectives of the new policy are therefore:

- To provide effective rehabilitation, reformation and reintegration services
- To enhance observation of human rights of prisoners and members of staff

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[1] 2011 MPS Draft Policy

- To provide secure and adequate infrastructure to prisoners and members of staff
- To reduce the prison warder to prisoner ratio to conform to international standards
- To facilitate re-entry into society of released prisoners
- To improve health standards for prisoners
- To enhance linkages with partners in the criminal justice system
- To promote good image of the Service
- To promote cooperation and information sharing with the international community
- To enhance self-food sufficiency in Prisons
- To effectively mainstream issues of Gender, HIV and Aids, and Environment in prisons' activities

The policy is summed up in a new Vision, Mission and overall Goal for MPS, these are:

Vision: An excellent correctional service that contributes to enhanced public security.

Mission: To contribute to public security and socio-economic development in Malawi through the provision of safe, humane custody and rehabilitation of prisoners.

Goal: Provision of safe, humane custody, rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners.

1.2 MPS Issues

A literature review confirmed the following issues concerning MPS:

- The MPS has now moved away from punishment to reform
- There is increased understanding of the need to acknowledge human rights of prisoners
- The MPS indirect involvement in pardons create concerns about transparency
- There is an on-going effort towards resentencing condemned prisoners and this needs to be known to the general public
- Overcrowding is an ever-present issue and gets worse with the current problems in the Judiciary
- There is a tendency for the police to "dump" arrested people in prisons when holding cells are full
- In rare cases, there is uncertainty about the status of some prisoners due to "lost records"
- There is currently no single filing system on prisoners (case management system) in place, which contributes to the "lost records" above.
- In murder cases, there may be excessive periods waiting for a trial in the high court after remand by magistrates
- There is an increasing effort by MPS to meet with international and HR requirements
- There are efforts towards better linkages with partners in CJS e.g. Democratic Governance Sector Strategy and a draft DGS Communication Strategy

1.3 MPS Communication Activities

Current communications activities under MPS consist of four main threads:

- The Public Relations Office (staffed by 9 altogether) disseminates information to the general public through press releases etc.,
- The Chief Commissioner shares information with the staff through internal communications and following the chain of command
- MPS activities in the communities led by the Chaplain, the officer in charge of the prison band etc.

- Inmate and visitor communications through the Officer in Charge and other staff

General publicity for MPS produced through the PRO includes:

- Malawi Prison Magazine (annual full colour)
- Malawi Prison Annual Report (last published in 2009)
- Press releases
- Occasional video documentaries
- Open days (with press invited, at least once annually)
- Website (designed but not hosted)

The main constraint to all communication activities is funding, for example, *Malawi Prison* was last published in 2013. But other issues are also in play, for example, open days although attended by the press, have not necessarily resulted in coverage in the newspapers (probably because the editors have not deemed the event newsworthy).

Also misreporting or misrepresentation, or underrepresentation of the MPS in the Press is not unusual. This is for a number of reasons; sometimes the PRO is unable to respond swiftly to press enquiries because MPS needs to conduct its own internal investigations before making a statement. Indeed investigations that include confidential information may take so long that the journalists can loose interest, and stories will go "cold". Or alternatively the story will go to press without being properly checked. Although MPS tends to work with the same group of journalists, the press have not been strategically involved in MPS PR efforts through structured policy briefings and provision of opportunities to get "exclusive stories".

On the other hand a press inquiry about the impact of the recent judicial strike on prison capacity was covered effectively.

The Prison Service has made occasional use of radio and TV to raise issues through dramatisations followed by expert panel discussions. There may be scope for joint initiatives with the Police and other CJS organisations that have used similar approaches.

The MPS website, although being designed is not functioning at all, so topical items can easily be publicised. And because *Malawi Prison Magazine* is infrequently published, the news items it carries are quickly made irrelevant by events.

Thus the many topical successes of MPS do not consistently find their way into the public domain.

Observations:

Financial constraints are the main limiting factor for MPS communications

MPS needs to find cost effective ways to develop better and more positive press relations, this should include cultivating press contacts and building understanding of issues through policy briefings

MPS needs to have a procedure ready for dealing quickly with press inquiries that responds effectively to unauthenticated stories without releasing incomplete information

Malawi Prison magazine should be relaunched with more in-depth articles and a wider circulation to include partners beyond the immediate criminal justice system

MPS needs to get their website finalized, continuously updated and hosted

Outreach activities include:

- Prisoners/staff bands (that play at internal and external functions)
- Drama groups (that act out reform scenarios)

- Involvement in inter-denominational prayer meetings in churches and mosques
- Prison choirs
- Inmates testimony at prayer meetings

These very interesting activities mean that there is more interaction between communities and the prison (staff and inmates) than would otherwise be the case and this goes some way to breaking down prejudice and misconceptions about prisons. It also demonstrates to communities that reform of prisoners is central to the prison experience (rather than punishment).

The main constraint to these activities is finding transport to take staff and inmates out of gaols, for example the Chaplain relies on the churches' own vehicles to transport inmates to services. Also by their very nature any outreach activity will only impact on communities in proximity to a prison. Furthermore not all prisons may have the same capacity for outreach. However the PRO has not taken full advantage of these community outreach activities to publicise the MPS reform programme to a wider audience.

Observations:

MPS should find ways to include outreach activities in its formal communication strategy so that impact on communities can be amplified, and the story of the interaction between prisoners and local communities can be used to demonstrate the positive aspects of MPS to a still wider audience

The Prison Service does not have an explicit civic education dimension to either its PR or outreach activities.

Institutional communications include:

- Administrative communications between HQ and the 30 prison and reform establishments (most prisons have computers but far fewer have a functioning internet connection)
- Use of MPS email addresses (used in parallel to personal email addresses)
- Instructions to staff following the chain of command and the standing orders
- Generation of quarterly reports that are submitted to the MoJCA
- Briefings to Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
- Generation of Annual Reports (last one published in 2009)
- Liaison with Prison Inspectorate, Malawi Human Rights Commission (MHRC), National Council for Criminal Investigations (a joint committee that deals amongst other things with pardons), Law Commission (for issues regarding sentencing, daily interactions with Police Service (concerning admissions, remand), Joint Permanent Committee on Defence and Security, PASI
- Engagement with district community police committees
- Pilot programmes such as *Be Unique* that eases young offenders back into communities in partnership with social welfare and the DC's offices.
- Announcements regarding prison escapes

These institutional interactions are the main ways in which MPS uses institutional communication to function as organisation, and some of these have implications for the communication strategy. These are:

- There is an inherent need for communications to take account of the sensitive nature of many prison operations, some which need to remain confidential. Details of

individual prisoners cases can cause alarm in the general public and also make it difficult for inmates to be re-assimilated into society

- Quarterly and annual reports are not readily accessible to the general public, or to stakeholders, so it is difficult to show how effective MPS is being given the resources it has at its disposal. A key indicator, the rate of reoffending is not readily available, so it becomes difficult to substantiate the success of the MPS reform programme other than through anecdotal evidence from community outreach activities
- The procedure regarding pardons is not well known (recommendations originate from district level and are considered by a joint national committee) so the Presidential prerogative may appear arbitrary leading to accusations of favouritism
- Because prisons can operate as "a country in itself" the links between correctional institutions, the criminal justice system and social welfare need to be strengthened. The Minister of Justice takes a good lead in this respect by mentioning the different aspects of the criminal justice system whenever he is given a public platform but this can be further extended to include a more holistic approach to resource allocation across the sector. For example if the police are better resourced, and better able to bring criminals to trail, this has a knock-on effect on MPS because it leads to more strain on prison capacity
- The links between MPS, the criminal justice system and social welfare are hampered by a lack of a working case management system
- There is a lack of awareness about how prison services can supply other government bodies that need uniforms (Zambia and Namibia prisons make garments for all uniformed services) so MPS needs to build confidence to encourage investment in its facilities
- Because MPS needs to work with other government bodies to run the prisons, delays in releasing of funds can negatively impact on prisoner welfare. In this way occasional missed meals rapidly becomes a story about how MPS is starving its prisoners
- Despite the important strides that the prison service has taken in moving from a punishment regime to a reformatory and rehabilitation programme, the public perception of MPS is still framed in terms of overcrowding, and punishment
- Although MPS keeps arguing for more resources its place in government remains relatively neglected

Observations:

The communication strategy needs to articulate the relevance of the MPS to society within the context of the criminal justice system and in line with the MPS strategic plan

The communication strategy needs to respect the confidential and sensitive nature of some MPS information

The communication strategy needs to demonstrate transparency regarding pardons, and human rights issues but without compromising confidentiality

The communication strategy needs to build broad understanding of how MPS delivers its services so that its reformatory purpose is better understood

Access to information about prison performance needs to be improved so that MPS contribution can be recognised and its operational constraints can be taken into account

The communication strategy needs to recognise that MPS works with a range of partners, and they need to be kept well informed about MPS activities and needs, and practical services it can provide

1.4 User and Stakeholder Perceptions

Prison users: Discussions with two small groups of prison visitors (3 men and 3 women) revealed that there was confidence in Zomba Central Prison (ZCP) as a reforming institution since their relations in prison had sincerely changed their attitudes and were sure that they would not reoffend once released. Each visitor told touching stories about their particular circumstances but a common theme emerged about the educational value of prison, for example one inmate had learnt about tailoring, another how to cut hair, and another had moved from a basic primary school education up to secondary level 2.

None of the visitors felt that there would be substantial problems with the reintegration of their relatives into their communities upon release. Although they were aware that some communities were prone to prejudice and that might even develop into mob justice, they did believe this would happen in their own villages. None of those interviewed felt that their community stigmatised them personally as a result of their association with convicted criminals, rather they had the sympathy of their neighbours. One person was now on good terms with the victims now that much of their stolen property had been recovered.

All visitors felt they received adequate information from MPS regarding prison procedures.

A brief visit to ZCP revealed that some privileged prisoners are able to access tailoring workshops, a well equipped musical rehearsal room, art and craft production facilities and wood and iron working workshops. The inmate rock band sang a reggae song about the benefits of prison reform.

The induction process for inmates is conducted by the Officer in Charge at the relevant gaol. The OIC verbally explains the prison rules and sentencing conditions when the prisoner is admitted, subsequently prisoners can raise concerns through the prison Chaplain, through PASI (Paralegal Advisory Service Institute), or through warder social welfare officers. Most prisoners are allowed daily visits without appointments from 9 – 3pm. The ease of access means that visitors can travel big distances assured they will see their relation.

Observations:

Prison can have a positive impact on offenders, and does not necessarily lead to ostracisation, neither is the community attitude towards prison and inmates necessarily hostile or suspicious. There is scope for sharing these kinds of experiences with a wider public to counter instances of mob justice

There are opportunities to demonstrate the positive educational value of prisons by showing the facilities available to inmates, and by showing how prisoners do appear to genuinely reform as a result of the gaol experience.

MPS have a model prison at Mzimba. This provides an opportunity for showing how good practice is both humanising and effective.

Although MPS secures prisoners this does not necessarily mean that it is closed to society, there are multiple ways in which MPS engages with the public on a daily basis and this engagement has the potential for being used as "stories" about both reform and rehabilitation.

Media: According to the press, the MPS is not a high profile institution and rarely takes the initiative in raising prison issues, these usually emerge from NGOs or through the Malawi Commission for Human Rights Commission (MCHR), and this sometimes makes it appear that the MPS is "hiding". It is recognised however that gaols have changed, it is no longer a question of hard labour for convicted criminals, and there is now a reform agenda [Times].

Nonetheless the public (thinking back to the years of the one party state) may still associate prisons as a place of incarceration or they may still think that it is primarily a place for punishment; and so the positive aspects of prison are not emerging sufficiently.

Also there are questions concerning the procedure behind the Presidential pardon. And the poor state of prisons should be made into a public issue so that it can be addressed; currently however MPS has a tendency to go quiet when confronted with problems. Thus MPS could do a lot more to address the general public's lack of knowledge about what goes on in prisons [Nation].

According to broadcasters, the prison service is surprisingly open to the media when approached and allows radio reporters to go into prisons to interview inmates, the Chief Commissioner is also media friendly. Although MPS is not keen on cameras in prisons they are evidently trying to be open as far as they can, and their communications department is helpful [MBC]. In general, MPS does little to raise its profile though on occasion prison issues are raised on commercial radio, for example some special programming has allowed interaction with inmates for example interviews with women prisoners, on Mother's or Valentines day, or through youth programmes, so the MPS is good inasmuch as its grants access to the media. In contrast the Police Service have been more proactive including participating in phone-in programmes. Although this means that an organisation may take "a battering", the benefit of admitting that there are problems is that you get more support for the improvements you want to make, By being candid you can share the problems and start to do something about them [Zodiak].

According to media monitors, the MPS profile is low, although they have a PRO they still appear to be closed organisation with low transparency, in general MPS only appears in the media when there is a problem, so they need to be more proactive to raise their profile, and interest the media in their programmes. In general all organisations should adopt a policy of replying to press inquiries within 48 hours, and have in place a procedure for choosing spokespeople to represent them. No press questions should be answered with an unqualified "no comment" [MISA].

Observations:

The public profile of MPS (as expressed in the media) is low, although MPS is fairly responsive to media interest, this does not translate into coverage.

The terms of the public debate still revolve around stereotypes of prisons as unsanitary, overcrowded and unsafe. On the other hand it is recognised that MPS is trying to improve its image and accessibility and this can only be for the good.

MPS needs to find ways to more consistently get its side of the story across and promote the reform and rehabilitation policy.

NGOs: MPS has a low profile amongst some NGOs, who may therefore know very little about its activities Some NGOs believed that although prisoners have right to dignity, proper food and environment, there are likely to be few rehabilitation chances in gaol especially concerning education.

CSOs: The Paralegal Advisory Service Institute aims to provide access to legal services for convicted and arrested. PASI works very closely with MPS and hopes to improve the legal system through engagement rather than simply criticism. The key issue from PASI's perspective is that the process of trial and imprisonment is not working as well as it should with the result that MPS ends up with overcrowded prisons. Capacity is around 800 but there something like 2000+ actually in gaol. Often the reason for overcrowding is due to people

being held on remand pending trial, the police will often request to renew the remand order repeatedly, and without sufficient scrutiny from magistrates. PASI supports "camp" courts in prisons so that remand prisoners can be tried, quicker. By holding case management meetings between paralegals, police, magistrates other cases can be dealt with one by one, leading to release when appropriate.

PASI has a newsletter published with MPS participation, initially MPS rejected some of the articles because they were critical of MPS but now with the Head of Prisons on the board of PASI, there is much better understanding that PASI and MPS are both trying to improve the system. PASI now gives lectures to new prison officers so this collaboration is built into new recruits' understanding.

PASI has a new website.

The key agencies involved in the CJ system are: MPS, judiciary, Malawi Police, paralegals, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Ministry of Health and prison reform CSOs

The Prison Reform Fellowship has a halfway home that helps reintegrate prisoners after the sentence has been served.

A new Prison Act is currently being reformulated that will look at issues such as parole, access, day release, education and work in prisons.

More generally the issues that face the criminal justice system include:

- victims unable or unwilling to come to court leading to failed prosecutions, and then subsequent complaints that the legal system is not working
- costs of appearing in court mean the magistrate may not hear all the evidence
- reprisals from the community when individuals are released, especially when they come out looking well (meaning they have not been punished properly).
- misunderstanding that when someone is arrested then it means that they are necessarily guilty
- the MPS is still sometimes considered a tool of the regime – even years after one party rule has finished
- the issue of the Presidential pardon needs to be more transparent, as sometimes releases are perceived to be for political reasons

According to NICE (National Institute for Civic Education), a task that faces MPS is to legitimise prison sentences in such a way that it stops communities turning to mob justice when prisoners are released; the thinking being that the punishment was not severe enough. Another issue is that prisoners should not be allowed to rot in gaol without bringing charges. The MPS benefited from the Rule of Law Programme before DGP.

Observations:

Prisons are far more engaged with prisoner access to justice, to welfare and to the social role of prison then previously but prisoners, the CJ system and communities need to have much better understanding of how MPS plays its part.

MPS cannot be considered in isolation from the other agencies in CJS since issues like overcrowding and time on remand are affected by the performance of the courts and police. Public understanding of the CJS as a whole may be weak since "punishment" is still the main way in which criminality is considered.

Greater transparency, even over sensitive issues like pardons will improve public confidence in MPS

Government partners: The impression is that prisons lack water and proper sanitation, and it is unclear whether they are for punishment or reform. There is a need to know what prisons are like. Some good stories do emerge (e.g. a prisoner qualifying for university but the overall profile is low. The MoI could help MPS raise awareness. MPS and the Law Commission do not always work hand in hand for example MPS developed a new prisons bill in 2003 and the LC is now doing the same thing in 2014.

According to the Malawi Commission for Human Rights, the main message that should come out of MPS is "hope of change" although at the moment the picture that emerges through the newspapers is one of overcrowding, lack of food, poor sanitation and this creates a scary picture of gaol. A good aspect of prisoner services is the Prison Reform Fellowship, this offers counselling and rehabilitation services. Although MPS is doing some innovative things, the public picture of gaol is still mainly negative.

Of particular concern to MHRC is how mothers with babies are treated, how children can find themselves in prison through police errors, and overcrowding. There needs to be more collaboration between organisations in the criminal justice system, cases can get stuck between institutions and require outside intervention to resolve.

Two key issues need to be addressed, overcrowding and the prison's role in pardoning. For the first, MPS needs to be steadfast in arguing for more resources for improving conditions; they can make use of recent court judgements to argue their case. For the second, there is a need for transparency about how the Prison service makes its decisions, or contributes to the decision making process. This will validate the process and depoliticise it at the same time [UoM].

There are opportunities for law students to get a better understanding of prisons through visits to do law clinics inside gaol, however MPS does not reach out itself to universities

MPS can build its links with government partners and also with communities and the general public. The many innovative and progressive activities MPS is engaged with are not being publicised sufficiently to dispel uniformed negative impressions.

MPS needs to show how it works with NGOs and institution partners to get good outcomes for prisoners and their families.

MPS can use its publications to reach out to a specialist audience interest in the CJS

1.5 Summary of Findings

MPS communication successes and opportunities:

- MPS already has a PR unit with 9 staff with a background or training in journalism or media, together they have been able to produce magazines, leaflets, press releases and organise Open Days and events
- MPS is confident in treating requests for information or in granting media access to prisons
- MPS has many engaging tales to tell about how it has decisively moved from a punishment to a reformatory regime, and there are multiple ways to tell this story from the perspective of prisoner, visitor, prison officer and CJS partners
- There is an opportunity to focus publications more tightly so they fulfil a particular communication function

- MPS already has in place a community outreach dimension based on faith, music and drama activities
- MPS has a procedure in place for briefing prisoners about what to expect during their custodial sentence and access to support services, and visitors are aware about access arrangements
- There is an opportunity to demonstrate a more holistic approach by showing how MPS works with other Government Agencies (GA) and CSO partners to improve the CJS. The introduction of a case management system, and making better links to the police and welfare services would put MPS community outreach into context.
- Promoting holistic approaches to CJS also implies advocacy for balanced funding across the sector.
- The media is apparently open to covering more stories about MPS and the criminal justice system

MPS communication weaknesses and threats:

- MPS profile is still perceived to be low amongst media
- The public perception of prisons is still defined by overcrowding and poor conditions rather than by a reform agenda
- Attempts to offset the negative image of prisons in the media through open days have not always been successful, and the media have not been briefed on MPS policy direction, so they may not be able to put the events and activities into context for themselves or their readers
- Financial constraints mean that publicity materials are not produced or not fully developed, in particular the MPS website is not functional.
- Decisions about the format and content of messaging needs to be more strategic and recognise the financial envelope the PRO has to operate within
- MPS PRO has not explored how it can work with government media partners to heighten its profile and get its message across
- It is difficult to access basic information about MPS such as current numbers, reoffending rates etc. and this makes it hard to demonstrate MPS effectiveness, and thus advocate for better funding
- MPS has not entirely lost its political associations, partly because of an historical connection with the one-party state, and partly because of contemporary misgivings about their role in the "Presidential" pardon.
- There is a threat that MPS reform approach is overshadowed by negative public perceptions supported by media coverage of bad news stories. Not only would this impact on MPS public profile but it might also effect how inmates are treated in their communities and by potential employers
- Information on prisoner and visitor rights and service provision depends mostly on information provided directly by MPS staff rather than on more widely accessible print or internet

1.6 Situational Analysis

The **first** point that emerges is that despite the communication activities that have been undertaken by the prison service PRO, the MPS profile has remained low amongst the media organisations, MDAs and CSOs that are not directly involved with the Prison Service as part of their work. From this it can be inferred that awareness about MPS in the general public is also low. Thus it is not surprising that the public perception regarding prison reverts to

stereotypes concerning overcrowding, poor sanitation and the threat that prisoners (released or escaped) may pose. Although these stereotypes are founded on real issues that MPS has to deal with (as acknowledged in the MPS Policy) it is important that these negative perceptions do not define the public profile of MPS. The communication strategy therefore needs to make sure it enhances public and community understanding of MPS as a corrective institution that keeps the public safe but at the same time reforms and rehabilitates prisoners.

The **second** point that emerges is that MPS needs to make sure that inmates, visitors and staff have a good understanding of the procedures, opportunities and outcomes that can be expected for prisoners. This implies making sure that the prison experience is as transparent as possible, and that the way in which decisions about inmates are reached is broadly understood. Thus this aspect includes explaining how prisoners are considered for pardons, or early parole, how prisoners can get access to enhanced training or development opportunities, what happens to prisoners during resentencing etc. There is a human rights dimension to this point but it also refers to improved governance within the CJS. Once more, to the extent that providing better information to users and stakeholders involves a public dimension this will also help change the low or negative perception of MPS.

The **third** point that emerges is that increasingly MPS is working <u>with</u> partners from the CJS, and beyond, to provide a better quality service to users (prisoners but also the families and communities that they come from and will ultimately return). The planned introduction of a case management system, and current pilot focussed on reintegration of youth prisoners into communities both show that the Prison Service is no longer limited by walls but is defined by linkages with partners and communities. The communication strategy therefore needs to make sure that information about how MPS operates and its approaches and initiatives are well understood by the partners it works with. Positioning the MPS as an agency within the CJS will encourage a more holistic approach to offender funding and so will benefit MPS resource mobilisation. To the extent that these linkages can also be given a public dimension this will also help change the low or negative public perception of MPS.

1.7 MPS Communication and MPS Policy

The situational analysis suggests that the challenges to be addressed through the communication strategy can be usefully separated into three main strands:

1: A need to raise awareness about the Malawi Prison Service as an institution that not only keeps the public safe but also actively strives to implement a programme of reform and rehabilitation for its inmates

This would speak to the following MPS policy statements:

- 1: Prisoner Rehabilitation and Reformation
- 3: Provide secure and adequate infrastructure for prisoners and members of staff
- 4: Recruit and maintain disciplined and professional staff
- 5: Release from Prison
- 6: Provision of optimal welfare standards
- 10: Enhancing food self-sufficiency in Prisons

2: A need to provide consistent and accurate information to inmates, staff, visitors and citizens about the prison process, decision-making and opportunities

This would speak to the following MPS policy statements:

- 1: Prisoner Rehabilitation and Reformation
- 2: Observe human rights of prisoners and members of staff

- 4: Recruit and maintain disciplined and professional staff
- 5: Release from Prison
- 6: Provision of optimal welfare standards

3: A need to enhance communication linkages with partners in the CJS

This would speak to the following MPS policy statements:

- 1: Prisoner Rehabilitation and Reformation
- 2: Observe human rights of prisoners and members of staff
- 3: Provide secure and adequate infrastructure for prisoners and members of staff
- 5: Release from Prison
- 6: Provision of optimal welfare standards
- 7: Enhance linkages with partners in the CJS
- 9: Strengthening international relations
- 10: Enhancing food self-sufficiency in Prisons

Taken together addressing these three strands would speak to the remaining MPS policy statement: *8 Improve Public Image*. Throughout, the communication strategy would also need to demonstrate Policy Statement 11: *To effectively maintain issues of gender, HIV and AIDS as well as environment in prisons' activities*

Thus the communication strategy is not solely confined to promoting the public image of MPS but also has a bearing on all aspects of MPS.

2. Communication Strategy

2.1 Outcomes and Objectives

The MPS has made tremendous efforts in realising the new policy objectives. However, these efforts are not fully recognized and acknowledged in the public domain. *The general perception is that prisoners are condemned people and prison is there to punish them.* The direction of the MPS Communication Strategy is therefore to eliminate the general negative perception of the community towards MPS and to foster greater public knowledge and understanding of its reform and rehabilitation role. The eventual outcomes of the strategy would be that MPS is primarily associated with the just treatment and rehabilitation of prisoners.

In order to ensure that all the stakeholders play their respective roles in the rehabilitation process, the communication strategy will focus on three key objectives as follows:

1. Enhanced community and public awareness about the Malawi Prison Service as it safeguards the general public and reforms, rehabilitates and reintegrates prisoners

2. Improved information provision to inmates, staff, visitors and citizens about the prison process, decision-making and opportunities

3. Enhanced communication linkages with partners in the CJS

The three communication objectives can be understood as contributing to the 11 Policy Statements as outlined above in 1.7.

They are also in line with the communication objectives identified by the MPS PRO, in its draft strategy, namely:

- To mitigate stigmatisation of ex prisoners

- To form a forum for reconciliation between the inmates and those offended

- To reduce recidivism

- To reduce escape of prisoners

- To show prisoners' skills learnt inside prison

- Bridging the communication gap between the department and society

Each of the communications objectives can be expressed as components of the MPS communication strategy.

2.2 Communication Components

1. Awareness-raising about how MPS protects communities and reforms and rehabilitates prisoners

This component focuses on the public profile of MPS and will demonstrate how it has definitively moved from punishment to a reform and rehabilitation agenda. The component also seeks to position MPS in the public mind as one of the agencies in the CJS. It therefore targets a wider audience beyond only prison users or CJS partners.

This component might include information[2] about:

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[2] The suggestions for content are mostly derived from the 2011 MPS Draft Policy document and MPS preliminary communication strategy

- skills development centres
- better formal education in prisons
- how prisoners stay healthy
- psycho social service provision
- sports and recreation in prisons
- better farming activities in MPS gaols and how prison farm productivity is being increased
- how government funding is spent on improving prison buildings
- how MPS raises money to run its own operations
- how MPS has professionally trained staff
- how staff are promoted on merit
- on-going staff training keeps MPS moving with the times
- holistic sentence planning process
- how MPS interacts with other CJS agencies
- how MPS works with NGOs and human rights organisations to provide welfare services in prisons how MPS tracks prisoners once they leave gaol
- how restorative justice is being introduced

2. Provision of information about being in prison

This component focuses on providing information about what to expect when an individual goes to gaol. As the MPS own preliminary communication strategy puts it "Prisoners have got the right to information. This helps them reform fully and get the information update that could keep them ... at par with people from outside and helps them easily reintegrate into society."

The central core of this component would be to provide a prison users' "roadmap" about the conditions attached to a sentence, the welfare conditions to be expected inside gaol, how to access legal support, and how to make complaints, parole arrangements, information for visitors, and the procedure and arrangements concerning release and reintegration into society. The information would be made available to prisoners, their immediate family and welfare services. It would answer the question "how exactly will time spent in prison help reform?"

This component might also include information about:

- the sentence planning process for prisoners
- how MPS respects international conventions and protocols in its prisons
- how MPS provides access to prisons to NGOs and HROs to provide civilian oversight
- how prisoners and relations can access paralegal services
- how MP staff work to professional standards
- how prison records detail each inmate and is used to make decisions on release, and on rehabilitation options
- how MPS engages with NGOs and HROs to provide welfare services in prisons

3. Linking with CJS partners

This component focuses on building SWAp into MPS communication practice. It will show how MPS needs to work with other agencies in order to deliver reform and rehabilitation for prisoners. Secondarily it will also make the case for an holistic CJS funding approach so that

MPS can better cope with the demand for prison places created through more effective policing. The component would answer the question "how best can we work with MPS?"

This component might include information about:

- the holistic sentence panning process
- how to access prisoner information so prisoner release back into the community goes smoothly
- how NGOs and CSOs have access to prisons to provide oversight
- how MPS needs funding to renovate old prisons and build new structures
- how MPS can generate more funds internally to support its activities
- how MPS works with external health service providers
- how MPS works with NGOs and HROs welfare service providers
- establishment of formal education in prisons
- demonstrate MPS participation in JSC group meetings, CUC meeting and CSO programmes
- dialogues to find ways to reduce congestion in prisons
- participation in and publicise international fora, agreements and activities
- lobby for funding to improve food self-sufficiency in prisons

This component is consistent with the Democratic Governance Sector Strategy, as the DGDS Communication and Visibility Strategy points out; the DGSS calls for "an improvement in cross-sectoral communication and information sharing as a reform option to support the SWAp process". The DGSS C&V Strategy also points out that "the lack inter-agency communications across the [DG] sector represents a very tenuous link within a framework of an evolving SWAp". This component therefore contributes the sharing regular information on democratic governance in the country among development partners, the Malawi government and democratic institutions, Civil Society and citizens.

2.3 Key Messages

A key message should both speak to stakeholder perceptions as identified in the findings and also relate to the institution's communication needs.

Key messages are not the same as the content (outlined in the section above), rather the key message provides the context in which the detail should be understood. In this sense the key message provides the core idea from which to construct a narrative about a particular aspect of what the institution does.

Because the key message is intended to set the framework within which MPS "tells its story", it is formulated as if it were addressing a real individual, and so therefore uses "we" and "you". It is useful to formulate the message this way because it implies that MPS is engaging with the target audience rather than simply putting information into the public domain.

Each of the three components has its own key message, they are:

For component 1: Awareness-raising about how MPS protects communities and reforms prisoners:

"MPS provides a modernised correctional service, so that the public is protected from criminals but at the same time prisoners are given an opportunity to get their lives back on track. This is how we do it."

For component 2: Provision of information about being in prison:

"When you go to prison, this is what you can expect"

For component 3: Linking with CJS partners:

"MPS recognises the importance of working together with partners in the CJS, and beyond. By working effectively with each other we can get the best outcomes for communities and for criminals"

2.4 Target audiences

Key messages for any communication strategy need to be nuanced for the target audience. This entails adjusting the complexity of the language, including if necessary making translations into the vernacular, making the content more or less complex, adding examples that people can identify with or producing a purely technical document etc.

Also the communication methods used to reach the target audience also need to be selected according to the targets ease of access to the medium.

The MPS communication strategy needs to reach a variety of target groups.

It is important to profile the different audiences so that the Commission can develop and target its messages effectively.

Segment	Profile
Media	Malawi has a well-developed press with at least two serious newspapers widely read by urban middle classes including individuals working in government. Newspapers reach a bigger audience than immediate buyers because the radio stations read out articles over air. The serious newspapers have a governance supplement to which the MPS could contribute. Newspapers help set the terms of debate on governance issues. Senior editors uphold the independence of the press (including financial independence) but correspondents usually require "facilitation" to cover stories. Journalists in general are unlikely to have a good grasp of penal policy.
	Radio is popular, commercial music stations dominate but talk radio and news through MBC is also important. Most Malawians have access to the radio. Fewer Malawians have access to TV thought the penetration is growing. Many government offices use email and internet though the service can be unpredictable. Dongles are widely used to supplement institutional networks
CSOs	The CSO sector in Malawi is important for institutions that want to work with local communities or want to use CSO structure to disseminate information. Major CSOs include the development arms of FBOs such as CCJP but civil education organisations such as NICE are also important for outreach. Specialist CSOs and NGOs exist for the CJS including the Prison Reform Fellowship
Religious bodies	Mosques and Churches play an important role in Malawi communities in both rural and urban settings. FBOs run their own schools as well as holding prayers for their congregations. There are opportunities to make use of prayer gatherings for CVE including prison issues
GoM:	

Ministry of Finance Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs	Government agencies with a specific technical or administrative interest in MPS and CJS issues. GoM may not view the sector holistically leading to funding imbalances between the MPS and Police
GoM: Ministry of Information	The MoI can facilitate any government agency to get its message across to the general public. It can do this locally through its officers and mobile video vans, through its monthly newsletter delivered to all Dos, or through organising press conferences in its provincial centres. Government agencies need only cover the MoI costs for doing outreach work.
CJS: Police Courts Lawyers PASI	Partners in the criminal justice system may not always act together due to their own imperatives and funding constraints. The CJS is a major audience for the Communication Strategy.
The Public	The CJS is not a high profile issue for the general public and thus there is little public pressure behind the prison reform policy. Prisons have a higher profile when from time to time penal issues make the national news e.g. pardons, mob justice, escapes, judiciary strikes etc. Prisons are still largely associated with punishment except both those who have direct experience with MPS

3. Implementation Plan

The strategy will be implemented through applying communication *approaches* appropriate for each component. A communications approach is a package of different communication activities that are mutually compatible and supportive.

Such a communications approach may use the mass media, such as TV, radio and the press, social media, and electronic communication through websites and the internet, or may use direct communications through print or in various community settings, or may use inter- and intra-organisation communications such as meetings, workshops, conferences, and business correspondence.

Although these communication approaches are broadly grouped together by context or types of communication tool, sometimes the same communication activity may appear in different approaches.

The choice of which tools to deploy from each approach depends on the budget available, access to expertise and, of course, the target audience.

Some generic approaches and their elements are described below. From these general approaches the Communication Strategy selects the ones most applicable to MPS in section 3.2.

3.1 Generic Communication Approaches

Branding (to include development partner visibility requirements as necessary)	Organisation service statement/mandate
	Organisation event identification (banners, pop-ups, desk-top name plaques)
	Organisation visibility materials (caps, badges, T-shirts etc.)
	Client reminders (calendars, pens and pads)
	Logo and contact details
	Logo on all major assets (vehicles, offices)
Marketing	Organisation brochure to market services for users
	Organisation mission statement and vision in publicly accessible offices
	Business cards
	Proposals for projects
	Website marketing pages
Advocacy	Organisation Reports
	Policy statements
	Task Forces
	Media briefings
	Representations to parliamentary committees
	Presentations at trade and business events
	Independent opinion leaders
	Elder statesman
	Pressure groups and NGOs
Media partnerships	Conduct assessment of media channels including online channels
	Build contact list of journalists including online and foreign correspondents
	Orientation events for Malawi journalists
	Select key journalists as special contacts
	Offer exclusive access to stories

	Press conferences
	Press opportunities and coverage
Access to information	User guide to organisation procedures (print)
	Online list of organisation documents
	Downloadable versions of publications for users
	Library
	Requests for Information Policy
Participatory communication and public debate	Radio and TV discussion and debate programmes
	Radio and TV documentaries
	Town hall debates
	Posts to social media and online forums
	Website feedback forms
	Helpline
Community sensitisation	Regional broadcast public service announcements
	Geographic SMS
	Communications using CSO local networks and outreach
	Communications using MoI local networks and outreach
	Open days for local communities
	Road shows and pop-up advice centres
	Outreach activities from institution
	Village meetings organised by chief
	Announcements at funeral gatherings
	Announcements at faith gatherings
State-citizen communication	National broadcast radio and TV public service announcements
	Bulk SMS
	Newspaper notices
	Notices in public government offices
	Media houses briefings and engagement
	Open days for public and the media
	Press releases and national news items
	Printed information (leaflets, booklets)
	Posters in public locations
	Website activities pages
	Visibility materials
Stakeholder consultation	Joint committees
	Workshops
	Consultative conferences
	Calls for written representations
	Formal hearings
	Media coverage of consultations
	Social media reportage of consultations
Stakeholder awareness	Training workshops
	Training materials
	Publications for use with stakeholder clients/users
	Website access to training materials
	Sector newsletters
	Social media reportage of training activities
Crisis management	Prepare agreed "scripts" for possible scenarios including response where all facts not known
	Designate spokesperson(s) for 24/7 press access, and agree protocols including a "no comment" policy for non-designated individuals
	Circulate communication policy within organisation and

	brief staff and associates
	Press statements within 24 hours in response to issues
	Press conferences within 24 hours in response to issues
	Pre-inform partner stakeholders before statements released and conferences held
	Update Website constantly with "news"
	Update Twitter feed constantly with "news" and reference other hashtags
Formal education	Curricula for schools and colleges
	Presentations from organisation in schools and colleges
	Teaching materials
	Student competitions
Organisational communications	Mission statements
	Staff meetings
	Emails
	Internal newsletters
	Communications policy guidelines
	Service charters
	Data and statistics pages on website

3.2 Selected communication approaches for the Malawi Prison Service

For the implementation of the MPS communication strategy the following selection and specific application of the approaches described above is recommended.

For component 1: Awareness-raising about how MPS protects communities and reforms prisoners

Approach	*Application*
Branding	
Organisation service statement/mandate	Include on all publications and messages
Organisation event identification (banners, pop-ups, desk-top name plaques)	Pull-ups and banners for use at MPS media events, conferences and meetings and at open days
Organisation visibility materials (caps, badges, T-shirts etc.)	Already in place through wearing the MPS uniform
Logo and contact details (email, website, social media)	Use on all messaging, include website address
Logo on all major assets	Signage on offices, stickers on vehicles
Advocacy	
Organisation Reports	Develop and keep updated a searchable e-mail contact database, and send copies of reports to selected groups of contacts
Policy statements	as above
Media briefings	Identify select group of journalists from media and build on-going relationship through annual briefing and subsequent regular contact
Media Partnerships	
Conduct assessment of media channels including online channels	PRO to make list of all media channels for Malawi and identify reach, strengths and weaknesses, and possible costs
Build contact list of journalists including online and foreign correspondents	Get all contact details, and maintain list
Orientation events for Malawi journalists	Annual event following on from MPS work plan, presentation on MPS policy regarding reform and rehabiliation
Select key journalists as special contacts	Identify journalists most likely to be able to place articles (journalists and newspapers are in competition with each other) – use this cadre for support in other components
Offer exclusive access to stories	Identify particular stories that the press and public might take an interest in and facilitate visit of a single journalist.
Press conferences	Invite core journalists and facilitate them and others only if necessary
Press opportunities	Identify photo opportunities that the press can cover in an image and a short paragraph (e.g. former prisoner excels in education or in business, and other human interest stories). Interesting photos in Malawi newspapers are not common so make the organisation stand out. Focus on what MPS does for Malawi not who runs the organisation.

Approach	Application
Access to information	
Online list of organisation documents	page on website listing public documents for download
Downloadable versions of publications for users	as above
Requests for Information Policy	Develop and publish guidelines on what kinds of information MPS is able to provide to general public
Participatory communications and public debate	
Radio and TV discussion and debate programmes	Investigate partnering with other CJS agencies to contribute to regular DGS radio or TV programme on Prisons policy and approach
Posts to social media and online forums	Create Facebook page for MPS and add newsworthy items on regular basis, send links to contact database
Community sensitisation	
Open days for local communities	Provide schedule of open days to media well in advance, and tie in with DG column in press, and joint radio/TV programme Cover through social media and invite comments
Outreach activities from institution	Continue with current community musical, faith and work outreach activities, and invite journalists to cover when successful human interest stories are identified
Announcements at faith gatherings	Continue with existing faith based outreach
State-citizen communication	
Media houses briefings and engagement	See media briefings above
Open days for public and the media	See open days above
Press releases and national news items	As necessary
Printed information (leaflets, booklets)	Simple print guide to MPS, policies and establishments – 16pp colour
Website activities pages	Develop website to include all information in print publications and policies, and data. Keep the new activities page updated regularly
Organisational communications	
Emails	use web package with staff email capability
Internal newsletters	post news items directly to Facebook and to all individual staff
Communications policy guidelines	PR department develops guidelines about who should talk to media, and visibility guidelines for all publications and media

For component 2: Provision of information about being in prison

Approach	Application
Access to information	
User guide to organisation procedures (print)	Simple guide to prison experience and rights for inmates

Approach	Application
	and visitors, also available on website
Online list of organisation documents	as above
Downloadable versions of publications for users	as above
Requests for Information Policy	as above

For component 3: Linking with CJS partners

Approach	Application
Advocacy	
Organisation Reports	Develop and keep updated a searchable e-mail contact database, and send copies of reports to selected groups of contacts
Policy statements	as above
Media briefings	Identify select group of journalists from media and build on-going relationship through annual briefing and subsequent regular contact
Representations to parliamentary committees	Presentations to defend budget allocation to refer to positive media coverage of MPS, as examples of good practice, and make use of branding (see above)
CSOs	Keep CSOs aware of MPS policies and constraints through use of contact database to update on current activities
Stakeholder consultation	
Joint committees	Pursue joint CJS initiatives through joint committees that take holistic approaches to offending
Workshops	as above
Media coverage of consultations	use journalists to publicise joint initiative between MPS and CJS partners
Social media reportage of consultations	post developments on social media
Stakeholder awareness	
Publications for use with stakeholder clients/users	Rework MPS magazine as discursive magazine that explains how MPS is following its policies on reform, rehabilitation and reintegration. (News items now covered through social media, and e-flashes) Distribute print version to key stakeholders, selected from contact database, but send pdf version to all contacts
Organisational Communications	
Internal newsletters	send e-flashes to CJS partners
Website data and statistics pages	make selected prison data available to CJS partners through online access

3.3 Implementation Schedule

Component 1: Awareness-raising about how MPS protects communities and reforms prisoners *(Objective: Enhanced community and public awareness about the Malawi Prison Service as it safeguards the general public and reforms, rehabilitates and reintegrates prisoners)*

Communication Approach	Responsibility	Priority	2019	'16	'17	'18	'19
Branding	MPS PR unit	M[3]		…	…	…	…
Advocacy	MPS senior management and PR unit	M		…	…	…	…
Media partnerships	MPS PR unit	H		…	…	…	…
Access to Information	MPS PR unit	H		…	…	…	…
Participatory Communications and Public Debate	MPS PR unit with other CJS partners	L			…	…	…
Community Sensitisation	MPS prisoner care and education	M		…	…	…	…
State-citizen communication	MPS PR unit	H		…	…	…	…
Organisational communication	MPS PR unit and ICT	M		…	…	…	…

Component 2: Provision of information about being in prison *(Objective: Improved information provision to inmates, staff, visitors and citizens about the prison process, decision-making and opportunities)*

Communication Approach	Responsibility	Priority	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19
Access to information	MPS PR unit with MPS staff	H		…	…	…	…

Component 3: Linking with CJS partners *(Objective: Enhanced communication linkages with partners in the CJS)*

Communication Approach	Responsibility	Priority	'15	'16	'17	'18	'19
Advocacy	MPS senior management and PR unit	M		…	…	…	…
Stakeholder consultation	MPS senior management and PR unit	M		…	…	…	…
Stakeholder awareness	MPS senior management and PR unit	M		…	…	…	…

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[3] VH = immediate, H = high, M = medium, L = low, … continues through this period

| Organisational communications | MPS PR unit and ICT | M | | … | … | … | … |

3.4 Costing tables

The following table provides indicative costs for typical activities under each communication approach. The table can be used to develop a detailed budget to implement the Communication Strategy for each component.

Communications Approach	Units / specification	MK each	Total	FY15/16	FY 16/17	FY17/18	FY18/19	FY19/20
Branding								
Organisation event identification (banners, pop-ups, desk-top name plaques)								
Organisation visibility materials (caps, badges, T-shirts etc.)								
Client reminders (calendars, pens and pads)								
Logo and contact details on all messaging								
Logo on all major assets (vehicles, offices)								
Subtotal				0	0	0	0	0
Marketing								
Organisation brochure to market services for users								
Organisation mission statement and vision roll-up banners								
Business cards								
Proposals for projects								
Subtotal				0	0	0	0	0
Advocacy								
Organisation Reports								
Policy statements								
Task Forces								
Media briefings								

Communications Approach	Units / specification	MK each	Total	FY15/16	FY 16/17	FY17/18	FY18/19	FY19/20
Representations to parliamentary committees								
Independent opinion leaders								
Elder statesman								
Pressure groups and NGOs								
Subtotal				0	0	0	0	0
Media Partnerships								
Conduct assessment of media channels including online channels								
Build contact list of journalists including online and foreign correspondents								
Orientation events for Malawi journalists								
Select key journalists as special contacts								
Offer exclusive access to stories								
Press conferences								
Press opportunities and coverage								
Subtotal								
Access to information								
User guide to organisation procedures (print)								
Online list of organisation documents								
Downloadable versions of publications for users								
Library								
Requests for Information Policy								
Subtotal				0	0	0	0	0

Communications Approach	Units / specification	MK each	Total	FY15/16	FY 16/17	FY17/18	FY18/19	FY19/20
Participatory communication and public debate								
Radio and TV discussion and debate programmes								
Radio and TV documentaries								
Town hall debates								
Posts to social media and online forums								
Website feedback forms								
Helpline								
Subtotal				0	0	0	0	0
Community sensitisation								
Regional broadcast public service announcements								
Communications using CSO local networks and outreach								
Road shows and pop-up advice centres								
Village meetings organised by chief								
Announcements at funeral gatherings								
Announcements at faith gatherings								
Subtotal				0	0	0	0	0
State-citizen communication								
National broadcast radio and TV public service announcements								
Newspaper notices								
Notices in public government offices								
Press releases and national news items								
Printed information (leaflets, booklets)								

Communications Approach	Units / specification	MK each	Total	FY15/16	FY 16/17	FY17/18	FY18/19	FY19/20
Posters in public locations								
Website								
Visibility materials								
Subtotal				0	0	0	0	0
Stakeholder consultation								
Joint committees								
Workshops								
Consultative conferences								
Calls for written representations								
Formal hearings								
Media coverage of consultations								
Social media reportage of consultations								
Subtotal				0	0	0	0	0
Stakeholder awareness								
Training workshops								
Training materials								
Publications for use with stakeholder clients/users								
Website access to training materials								
Social media reportage of training activities								
Subtotal				0	0	0	0	0
Formal education								
Curricula for schools and colleges								

Communications Approach	Units / specification	MK each	Total	FY15/16	FY 16/17	FY17/18	FY18/19	FY19/20
Presentations from organisation								
Teaching materials								
Student competitions								
Subtotal				0	0	0	0	0
Organisational communications								
Mission statements								
Staff meetings								
Emails								
Internal newsletters								
Communications policy guidelines								
Service charters								
Data and statistics pages on website								
Subtotal				0	0	0	0	0
Total MK								

4. Monitoring and Evaluation

4.1 M&E for communications

In the classic model of communications that seeks to address: knowledge, attitude and practice (KAP), monitoring can be equated to making sure that the target audience has been made aware of the issues, i.e. dissemination of messages has taken place.

Monitoring of the Communication Strategy consists of checking implementation of the Communication Approaches outlined in the Implementation Schedule, 3.3. This is relatively straightforward and can be done through periodical activity reports from the MPS itself.

However being made aware is not necessarily sufficient to show that the Communication Strategy has been effective, so evaluation is also required.

This can be done at level of the combined outcome of the three communication components, if the components have been successful, MPS will be associated with the just treatment and rehabilitation of inmates by all stakeholders, and the specific contribution that communications has made can be measured by increases in media enquiries, requests for prison services after being provided with initial information, and requests for technical information from CJS partners.

Ultimately the impact of the strategy can be assessed by the extent to which MPS is recognised as both protecting society and helping reform, rehabilitation of prisoners. An indication of this can be obtained through feedback from stakeholder and media monitoring[4]. Put differently the old perception of MP with punishment would be replaced by an appreciation that MPS contributes to Malawi well being.

These elements can be brought together in the monitoring and evaluation framework below.

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[4] Media monitoring refers to checking newspapers, radio, TV and the Internet for the number of stories about MPS and then making a simple assessment of how MPS is presented. If the communication strategy is effective, MPS should not be in the news "for the wrong reasons". Media monitoring usually falls to the Public Relations Office.

4.2 MPS Communication Strategy Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

MPS Communication Strategy 2015 — 2019						
Impact	**Indicator**	**Baseline**	**Milestone**	**Milestone**	**Target**	**Assumptions**
MPS recognised as contributing to public security and socio-economic development of Malawi through the provision of safe humane custody and rehabilitation of offenders	1. Number of items in media that refer to MPS's security, reform and rehabilitation agenda					Media briefings and engagement results in publicity for MPS MPS is able to partner with other CJS agencies to promote SWAp
	Source: MPS PRO media monitoring					
	2. Extent to which MPS is acknowledged as part of an integrated criminal justice system					
	Source: MPS and CJS partner annual reports					

Outcome	**Indicator**	**Baseline**	**Milestone**	**Milestone**	**Target**	**Assumptions**
MPS associated with just treatment and rehabilitation of prisoners	1. Number of enquiries from media about prisons and prisoners					MPS treatment of prisoners produces sufficient positive results to publicise Prison users have confidence that MPS services are available and worthwhile MPS is able to produce useable information on inmates for other agencies
	Source: MPS PRO progress reports					
	2. Number of prison users that request services after reading users guide					
	Source: MPS Operations progress reports					
	3. Number of requests for information from registered MPS users					
	Source: MPS PRO progress reports					

Component	**Indicator**	**Baseline**	**Milestone**	**Milestone**	**Target**	**Assumptions**
1. Awareness-raising about how MPS protects communities and reforms prisoners	Number of elements from each communication approach that are implemented					MPS can identify sufficient resources to implement the communications plan
	Source: set in annual plan					
2. Provision of information about being in prison	Number of elements from each communication approach that are implemented					
	Source: set in annual plan					
3. Linking with CJS partners	Number of elements from each communication approach that are implemented					
	Source: set in annual plan					

Annex 1. Selecting approaches and activities to implement

The MPS Communication Strategy recommends three components intended to address the communication needs of the organisation according its Strategic Plan and the perceptual context it operates within. Each component consists of several communication approaches (see 4.1) that should address the issues at hand.

However the implementation of the Communication Strategy has to deal with the realities of financial resources, institutional capacity, and available time, so it may not be possible to implement *all* the elements of each approach. The following decision tree can be use to help decide which activities should be prioritised.

For each component:

1.	Is the selected approach appropriate?	No!	Consider an alternative approach or only use the other approaches
	Yes!		
2.	Is each activity within the approach within the capacity of the organisation?	No!	Not do-able, try a different activity
	Yes!		
3.	Is each achievable activity well suited for reaching the target audience for this component	No!	Not appropriate here, try a different activity
	Yes!		
4.	Is each selected activity affordable bearing in mind the size and type of target audience	No!	Too costly for this objective, try a different activity
	Yes!		
5.	Can the activity be implemented within the time available?	No!	Too long to produce and disseminate, use this method at a better time
	Yes!		
6.	Is there a simple way of checking if it the activity is achieving the desired result?	No!	Impossible to monitor impact and value for money, use another activity
	Yes!		
7.	Commission the activity!	-	

Annex 2. People Consulted

Malawi Prison Service Management and Staff

NAME	POSITION	CONTACT DETAILS
W. Phiri	Commissioner of Prisons - Administration	0884004219 levietillidie@yahoo.com info@mps.gov.mw
Masauko Wiscot	Commissioner of Prisons - Operations	0888874191 mwiscot@yahoo.com
Clement Kainja	Commissioner of Prisons – F/I	0888306873 ckaiujo@yahoo.com
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C.A. Kapala	Chaplain	0999688123
J.M. Kamenya	S/Sup(QM)	0884273246
T. Binawo	Prison Band Leader	0888291615

External Stakeholders

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