



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS**  
**SCHOOL OF COMMERCE**

**ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT  
PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES: THE CASE OF FAMILY  
GUIDANCE ASSOCIATION OF ETHIOPIA.**

**BY: ABEBAW ABEBE (ID. No GSE/1654/10)**

**A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO GRADUATE PROGRAM IN  
PROJECT MANAGEMENT IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS (MA)  
IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

**ADVISOR: SOLOMON MARKOS (PhD)**

**JUNE 2020**

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## DECLARATION

I, **Abebaw Abebe**, declare that this project work entitled: “**Assessment of Project Communication Management Practices and Challenges: the case of Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia**” is my original work. This project has not been presented for any other university and is not concurrently submitted in candidature of any other degree, and that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## CERTIFICATION

I hereby declare that this study entitled “Assessment of project communication management practices and challenges: the case of Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia” was conducted and presented by Abebaw Abebe for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master’s degree in Project Management.

To the best of my knowledge, it is original work carried out by him, it had not been presented for a partial fulfillment for any educational qualification at this university or any other and in any projects by any means.

Therefore, I recommend that the student has fulfilled the requirements and hence hereby can submit the project work (paper) to the department.

Advisor: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature & Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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APPROVED BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS

_____ Advisor	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ Internal Examiner	_____ Signature	_____ Date
_____ External Examiner	_____ Signature	_____ Date

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## ABSTRACT

*Effective project communication management is a key factor for the success of projects. Lack of effective communication with internal and external stakeholders increases the risk of failure of projects. This research attempted to assess the practice, challenges and process of project communication management in the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia projects. The research employed descriptive study design and a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Quantitative data were collected using Questionnaires distributed to 74 project team members that resulted in 77% response rate. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software and the qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interview and analysis was done using thematic content analysis approach. Electronic communication methods such as emails followed by oral means such as meetings and phone calls are widely used for project communication practices. Internal, external and vertical (top-down and bottom-up) communications are practiced in the FGAE projects. Lack of clarity of messages, long and hierarchical lines of communication and late or lack of responsive feedbacks is the major challenges of project communication. Majority (70.2% strongly agree and 12.3% agree) of the respondents indicated that project communication is managed properly. Project communication is monitored and controlled to meet information needs of stakeholders (49.1% agreed and 26.3% strongly agreed). The study recommends to strengthen use of in-person communications, telephone conversations and virtual online communication methods for quick responsive feedbacks, assigning dedicated project communication management focal persons at area offices, strengthen horizontal lines of communications between and among area offices and colleagues, ensure provision of timely responsive feedbacks and ensure messages are clear and easily understandable. The study has also provided recommendations for further studies.*

**Keywords:** *Communication practices, challenges of project communication, Project Communication Management*

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AACCSA	Addis Ababa Chamber of Commerce and Sectorial Association
AAU	Addis Ababa University
ADA	Amhara Development Association
AO	Area Office
CCRDA	Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Associations
CORHA	Consortium of Reproductive Health Agents
FGAE	Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia
FP	Family Planning
HO	Head Office
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PMBOK	Project Management Body of Knowledge
PMI	Project Management Institute
SNNPR	Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
WBS	Work Breakdown Structure
SBCC	Social and Behavior Change Communication
VATO	Volunteer Affairs and Training Officer
PCSC	Program and Clinical Services Coordinator

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Communication is so important to project success that it has been referred to as the lifeblood of a project (Kailash, 2016). It is the fuel that keeps a project run smoothly, and also the glue that holds a project team work together harmoniously (Jyothi, 2010).

Good communication involves high-quality information sharing and exchange. It is a system for effectively integrating the efforts of project participants and for facilitating the project management and system development processes. Inadequate project communications can be a factor for project failure (Abdurezak and Dereje, 2015).

Jyothi (2010) states that communication management process is a set of steps that needs to be adopted for every project in an organization and the process includes planning, managing and monitoring communications. Project communication management is a set of processes that are required to ensure timely and appropriate planning, collection, creation, distribution, storage, retrieval, management, control, monitoring, and the ultimate disposition of project information. Planning, managing and controlling project communication are the three main processes of project communication management (PMI, 2013). Ensuring effective project communication is not only a matter of preparing a communication plan, creating, collecting, distributing, storing project information, but also of having good personal contact with team members, developing positive relationships and obeying fundamental rules of clear and positive communication (Karolina, 2015).

Communications management is a fundamental part of any organization and needs to be treated with care and planned during the beginning of the project (Jyothi, 2010).

It is crucial to ensure that the communication requirements of all the stakeholders must be met for the success of a project.

Applying Project Communications Management processes through proper planning, managing and controlling communications is a key factor for the success of projects. FGAE, as a non-governmental organization, has been highly engaged in implementing various projects since its establishment. This study is, thus, aimed to

assess its project communication management practices, identify challenges and provide recommendations based on findings.

## 1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE ORGANIZATION

The Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE), established in 1966, is a volunteer-based association that has been working to contribute to the national effort to meet the growing demand for modern Family Planning (FP) and other Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services targeting under-served and marginalized segments of the Ethiopian population. FGAE, which pioneered Family Planning (FP) services in Ethiopia, is now registered as an Ethiopian Residents Charity Organization, is also an accredited member of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Associations (CCRDA); Consortium of Reproductive Health Associations (CORHA) and Consortium of Population, Health and Environment (COPHE). The Association has passed through more than half a century of extensive experience in the implementation of health projects targeting the underserved population of the community in rural and urban areas of the country. It has been implementing several projects to deliver Family Planning and Sexual and Reproductive Health Services in the country for more than 50 years with the partnership and support from the government, its donors, Executive Board, Management body, staff, volunteers, key partners and other important stakeholders. Over the last five decades, FGAE's services have expanded to a network of 55 integrated SRH service delivery facilities including one GynObs Specialty Clinic, eight higher, 13 Medium and eight Confidential (Sex-workers Friendly) SRH Clinics; 25 youth centers, more than 200 outreach sites and 186 franchised clinics operating in almost all regions of the country coordinated and managed by eight Area Offices throughout the country. The Association is currently implementing various projects, based in Addis Ababa (Head Office) and eight area Offices located in Addis Ababa, Oromia (Adama, Jimma and Harar), Amhara (Bahir Dar, Dessie), SNNP (Hawassa) and Tigray (Mekelle) and Addis Ababa and has more than 648 employees and 8,000 program and policy volunteers (FGAE, 2016-2020 Strategic Plan). The organization was selected for this project work as it is a project-driven organization implementing numerous projects at large geographic scope by its huge number of staffs and assessing its communication management is crucial to enhance success of its projects.

### 1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Communication is the basis for project performance in any organization and it is necessary to be constantly engaged with communication (Jana Samáková et al, 2018). It is one of the most important areas in project management, and an essential factor for project success (Karolina, 2018).

Everything in a project is based on how efficiently and effectively information is transmitted and exchanged and communication in project management is also project life blood and ensuring effective communications to all stakeholders is the most crucial factor for successful project management.

As explained in the Project Communications Body of Knowledge Guide (PMI, 2013), project communication management processes involve three phases of planning communications management (the process of developing an appropriate plan and approach for project communications based on stakeholder's information needs and requirements, and available organizational assets), managing communications (the process of creating, collecting, distributing, storing, retrieving and the ultimate disposition of project information in accordance with the communications management plan) and controlling communications (the process of monitoring and controlling communications throughout the entire project life cycle to ensure the information needs of the project stakeholders are met).

Major source of problems in projects arise due to poor communication. Research indicated 56 percent of dollars spent on projects are at risk due to ineffective communications. One out of five projects is unsuccessful due to ineffective communications (PMI, 2013).

The communication management practice of a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) is an integral component of how successfully the organization can implement its projects. While this is true for all organizations, NGOs face particularly complex issues and challenges to the management of an effective communication practice. Therefore, having effective communication management will have great impact on project implementations.

Communication is critical to any organization's success. NGOs working in health and development face many competing priorities: meeting the needs of the people they serve, motivating and retaining good staff to deliver those services, answering to their boards, fulfilling donor requirements, and, seeking financial stability and

sustainability in a world where resources seem to be growing increasingly scarce. Effective communication management for such organizations is so crucial (USAID,2013).

In order to ensure effective implementation of projects to achieve their objectives and to recommend evidence-based applicable solutions, it is very important to assess communication management practices and challenges of projects. Therefore, ensuring effective project communication management would have strong relevance and crucial contribution for success of projects.

Although it is revealed that communication is the key for project success, there are very few studies conducted on this area on non-governmental organizations implementing health projects.

The preliminary interview held with senior staff and managers identified some practical problems related to project communication which affects smooth execution of projects and their successes. These problems include but not limited to: late or lack of timely responsive feedbacks for requests from area offices, access to timely information is only to those staff having closer relationships with managers. Timely feedbacks are mostly responded faster if there is only a line management structure between the sender and receiver.

As FGAE is currently undertaking more than 8 projects (funded by different donors) through its eight area offices across Ethiopia using hundreds of staff, ensuring effective internal and external project communication practice is crucial.

The researcher was interested to undertake this study which focused on the project communication management practices of Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE) projects which is a foundation for effective implementation and success of projects.

#### 1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- How is project communication management practiced in the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE) projects?
- What are the challenges of project communication management in the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE) projects?
- How is the overall project communication management process in the projects of Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE)?

## 1.5 OBJECTIVES

### 1.5.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The general objective of the study is to assess the practice, challenges and processes of project communication management in the case of Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE) projects.

### 1.5.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- To assess how project communication management is practiced in the projects of Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia.
- To identify challenges of project communication management in the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia projects.
- To assess the project communication management processes in the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia projects.

## 1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study would benefit FGAE, project managers and project management students, other non-governmental organizations, and future researchers.

For FGAE, the findings of this study would be important in understanding how project communication is practiced and identifying challenges of project communication. This enables to take corrective measures to overcome the challenges. It would also help other NGOs to understand effective project communication practices.

Project managers and project management students would understand from this study how effective project communication practices contribute for effective implementation and success of projects.

To future researchers, the study would be important in suggesting areas requiring further research to build on the topic of project communication practices in non-governmental organizations.

### 1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The conceptual scope of this study was limited on the practices and challenges of project communication management process in the Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE) projects. The geographic scope addressed all the eight Area Offices located in four regions namely Oromia (based in Adama, Jimma & Harar), Amhara (based in Dessie & Bahir Dar), SNNP (based in Hawassa), Tigray (based in Mekelle) and in Addis Ababa. These area offices of FGAE implement various projects addressing numerous geographic areas/woredas in the country. Methodologically, the study also employed mixed (quantitative and qualitative) approaches.

### 1.8 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

As the study was undertaken on one project driven NGO, whose projects are funded by donors, the findings may not be generalized to other similar organizations, a larger study on numerous organizations is appropriate to generalize findings to the whole NGO sector in Ethiopia.

### 1.9 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The study was organized into five chapters: The first chapter contains the introductory issues containing statement of the problem, objectives, scope, significance of the study and others. Chapter two deals with literature review in which review of literatures of the topic will be made, the third chapter is on methodology covering the research design, sampling procedures, data collection, data analysis, data quality and ethical considerations. The fourth chapter consists of results and discussion. The last chapter encompasses summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

## 1.10 DEFINITION OF TERMS

The following terms were used in this study. The meaning of each term in the context of this

study is given below:

- ◆ A project: a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result (PMI,2013)
- ◆ Project management: the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities to meet project requirements (PMI,2013).
- ◆ Project Communication: Project communication refers to information exchanges intended to create understanding among project stakeholders (Ruska, 1996)
- ◆ Project Communication Management: includes the processes that are required to ensure timely and appropriate planning, collection, creation, distribution, storage, retrieval, management, control, monitoring, and the ultimate disposition of project information (PMI,2013)
- ◆ Plan Communications Management: The process of developing an appropriate approach and plan for project communications based on stakeholder's information needs and requirements, and available organizational assets (PMI,2013).
- ◆ Manage Communications: The process of creating, collecting, distributing, storing, retrieving and the ultimate disposition of project information in accordance with the communications management plan (PMI,2013).
- ◆ Control Communications: The process of monitoring and controlling communications throughout the entire project life cycle to ensure the information needs of the project stakeholders are met (PMI,2013).
- ◆ Communication channel (Pattern): a regular and intelligible form or sequence discernible in the way in which something happens or is done” or “an excellent example for others to follow (Karolina, 2011).

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter focused on basic concepts and definition of communication, internal and external communications, formal and informal communications, challenges of project communication project communication management process and empirical reviews on the project communication management.

### 2.1 THEORETICAL REVIEW

#### 2.1.1 BASIC CONCEPTS AND DEFINITION OF PROJECT COMMUNICATION

A project is a temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service, or result (PMI,2013). Ricardo (2008) also defines a project as “a non- repetitive enterprise, characterized by a clear and logical sequence of events, limited life span, clearly defined objective, predefined parameters, conducted by people and make use of resources”.

Communication in a project is analogous to the central nervous system of a body and is the process by which information, directives and objectives are sent out, and then actual performance is monitored (Abdurezak and Dereje, 2015).

Karolina (2018) describes that communication is undoubtedly one of the most important areas in project management, and an essential factor for project success.

Rajkumar (2010) describes that nothing is more important to the success of a project than effective communication. Ricardo (2008) also states that effective communication process is necessary for projects in order to ensure that all the desired information reaches the correct people at the right time in an economically feasible way.

Types of communication can be categorized as spoken, written and nonverbal aspects of communication. Spoken communication is communicating verbally through spoken words that include face-to-face communication between individuals and groups, presentations and speeches, telephone conversations and video conferencing (Rosemary, 2002). The same author describes that written communication can be on paper in the form of letters, memos, reports, newsletters, articles, books and so on and via electronic means such as electronic mail, computer-mediated conferencing and the Internet.

Rosemary (2002) adds that non-verbal communication happens through exchange of wordless information in various forms such as body language, gestures, facial expression, hand movement and tone of voice while speaking.

Forms of communication can be classified as written formal (Memos, Project charter. Letters, e-mails, and regular communication with team members), written informal (Memos, emails, notes), oral formal (presentations, speeches, negotiations) and oral informal (Conversation with team members and project meetings), (coursehero.com,2020).

Maame (2012) describes that project communication occurs in three directions through which information passes from one source to another. Upward communication (from sub-ordinates to superior) is for communication with senior executives to highlight issues, risks and exceptions using tools like exception reports, weekly status reports, e-mail updates, face-to-face reviews. Horizontal communication (between colleagues) is through lateral channel to communicate to clients, vendors and functional managers for negotiation on resources (time, budget) allocations using tools such as of e-mail, statement of work, contracts. Downward communication (from superior to sub-ordinate) can be to provide direction to project team to highlight tasks (pending and scheduled), dates and general team briefing through tools like verbal exchange, e-mails, minutes and project brief.

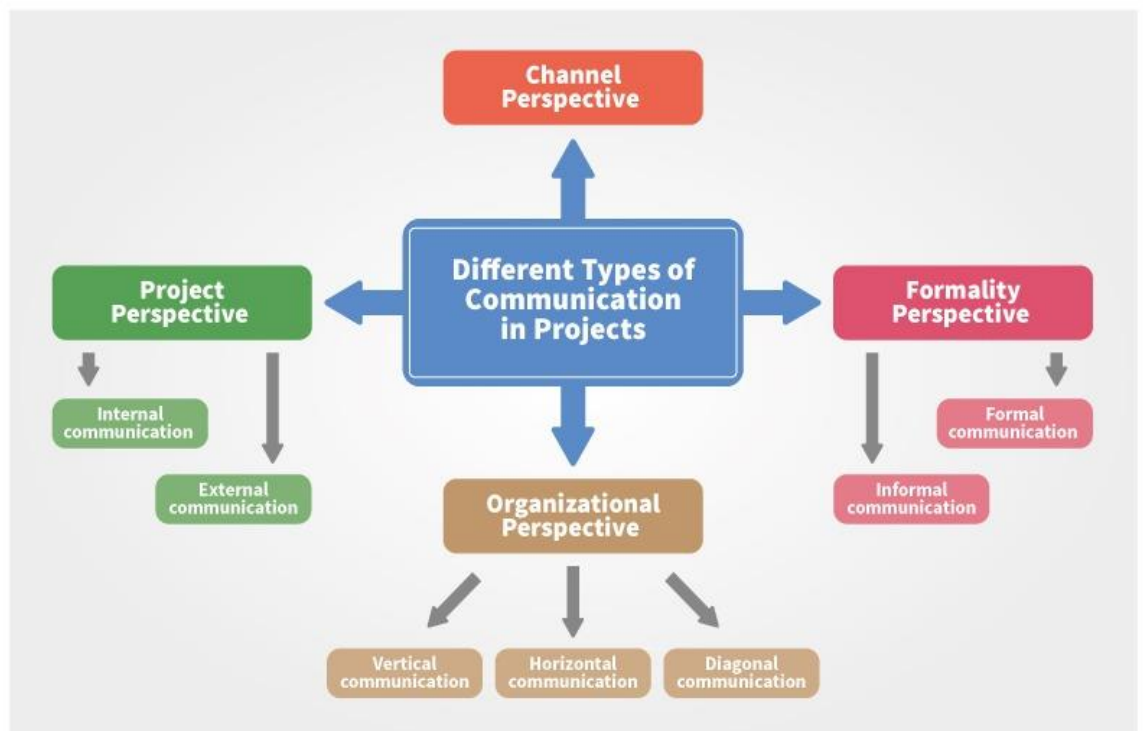
Building horizontal lines of communication and having a relatively flat hierarchy encourage direct, quick and open discussion and results in quick decision making. Meetings, telephone conversations, letters and memos, emails, noticeboards, seminars, project reports and newsletters are some of the various methods used to share project information (Abdurezak and Dereje, 2015).

Meetings are a great communications tool and should be part of any project communication plan. A meeting to be efficient, you want to have guidelines to make sure your meeting is getting the right message to the right people. Invite people to a meeting who need to be there. Make sure you have an agenda to keep you on message. Keep meeting minutes and assign action items (Stephanie, 2019)

In successful projects there tend to be frequent meetings to exchange information and communicate about projects with project teams and stakeholders. During these meetings, successful project managers listen carefully to the views of their project

teams (Abdurezak and Dereje, 2015). These authors argue that access to meetings should be open to all project team members and they should be encouraged to attend. They also describe that in project communication, whatever method is used to carry the communication, the message will basically fall into two of four principal categories: internal or external, and formal or informal.

Figure 2.1 Types of communication in projects



[www.evergopartners.com](http://www.evergopartners.com)

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Source: Evergopartners.com, (2017)

### 2.1.2 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

Internal project communication is within project team members and informal channels are solely used. These types of communications rely on team members' willingness to communicate and disseminate information openly (Abdurezak and Dereje, 2015).

Zulch (2014) describes the ways and methods that internal communication occurs as: oral communication occur face to face or over the phone (meetings, discussion groups, talks, interviews, announcements and conversations), written communication (letters, emails, circulars, memoranda and minutes of meetings), non-verbal

communication (gestures, appearance or attitudes), electronic communication (email, and fax) and visual communication (presentations and videos).

External communications involve communications between the organization and the outside world- with customers, shareholders, the media and members of the public (Zulch, 2014). They are to all other people and often conducted through explicit formal channels and require absolute control in the dissemination of information. In large projects, it is very common to nominate an highly-trained expert individual who is responsible for all external communications using the external communication channel (Abdurezak and Dereje, 2015).

### 2.1.3 FORMAL AND INFORMAL COMMUNICATIONS

Formal communication lines are an essential element for successfully collecting and disseminating project information. These communications are set up with the purpose of ensuring delivery of accurate and timely information to project stakeholders in a suitable format when and where they need it. The tools for formal communication include project reports regular project meetings, project memos, project notice-board and project newsletters. (Abdurezak and Dereje, 2015). These authors also explain that informal communications systems are much less easy to manage and control and essential to the project team. They are established in many ways, including: lunch and dinner appointments with colleagues; telephone conversations; coffee breaks; evenings in the bar after away-days; social events.

Communication methods can also be either active or passive. Active communication methods are used to communicate in the here and now, and includes face to face meetings, conference (video, audio, or telephone), webinars and stand up presentations. Passive communication methods are those which recipients can adopt in their own time, and examples include e-mails, blogs, website, and paper-based project newsletters. It is important to ensure that a mix of active and passive methods of communication is used to complement each other(projectmanagement.com,2020).

Project managers spend more than 90% of their time communicating with team members and other project stakeholders, thus, they should be able to effectively and efficiently communicate with internal and external stakeholders (coursehero.com, 2020).Communications skills such as active listening, proficient writing, excellent

speaking ability, conflict resolution, ability to recap what was heard are essential for a project manager's chances of success (Wrike.com, 2020). They are, therefore, supposed to have communication skills, besides to other desired skills, for the success of a project.

#### 2.1.4 THE PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Project communication management is the process to ensure timely and appropriate planning, collection, creation, distribution, storage, retrieval, management, control, monitoring, and the ultimate disposition of project information (PMI, 2013)

Karolina (2015) states that effective communication management within virtual project teams is of paramount importance and a fundamental competency that, if properly executed, connects every member of a project team, so that they can work together to achieve the project's objectives.

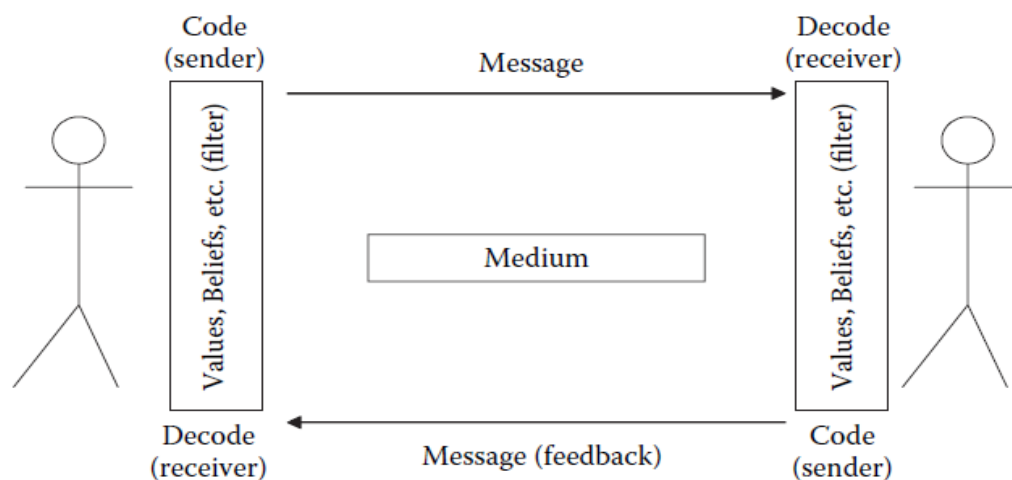
According to the division by Ricardo (2008), the project communication management process is subdivided into four processes namely communications planning (determination of project stakeholders' information and communication needs), information distribution (making necessary information available to project stakeholders at the required point in time), performance reporting (gathering and distributing performance information, including the progress report, progress measurement, and forecast and managing stakeholders (managing communications to meet project stakeholders' requirements and making use of these to solve problems). The first and the second processes occur during the planning and execution phases of a project respectively and both the third and fourth processes happen in the control phase. According to the fifth edition Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMI, 2013). Project communications management process is divided into three main processes as planning communication management, managing communications and controlling communications.

**Planning Communications Management** is the process of developing an appropriate approach and plan for project communications based on stakeholders' information needs and requirements, and available organizational assets. The project management plan that should be developed by a project manager, is the input that provides information on how the project will be executed, monitored, controlled, and closed (PMI, 2013). Messages, purpose of communication, means of communication and responsible person are the key elements the plan contains (stint-project.net, 2020).

While developing project communication plan, there are some important considerations that may need to be considered. This includes determining who needs what information, and who is authorized to access that information, when they will need the information is needed and, where it should be stored in what format and how the information can be retrieved. Nicholas (2017) explains that communication is central to the successful completion of any project. Communication channels are paths of communication between team members or stakeholders working on the project. The total number of communication channels is calculated by a formula  $n(n - 1)/2$ , where  $n$  represents the number of stakeholders or people involved in the communication.

In a communication model, the sender encodes the message, which is transmitted through a communication channel called the medium of communication. There are factors like distance, cultural differences and whatever is disturbing the communication is called noise. The receiver decodes the message and understood, a feedback is sent to the sender. (Jainendrakumar,2015). The sequence of steps in a basic communication model includes encoding (thoughts or ideas are translated/encoded) into language by the sender), transmitting message by sender through medium/channel, decoding (the message is translated by the receiver back into meaningful thoughts or ideas), acknowledge/signal (the receiver may signal receipt of the message) and feed backing (the receiver understands the message and responds to the original sender).

Figure2.2Communication model



Source: Kliem (2007)

Jainendrakumar (2015) explains three communication methods (interactive, push and pull) that are used to share information among project stakeholders. Interactive communication is a multi-directional exchange of information between two or more parties. It is also the most efficient way to ensure a common understanding by all participants on specified topics, and includes meetings, phone calls, instant messaging, video conferencing, etc. Push communication is a means to send information to specific recipients who need to receive the information. This ensures that the information is distributed but does not ensure that it actually reached or was understood by the intended audience. Letters, memos, reports, emails, faxes, voice mails, blogs, press releases, etc. are some examples. Pull communication. Used for very large volumes of information, or for very large audiences, and this method includes intranet sites, e-learning, lessons learned databases, knowledge repositories, etc

**Managing Project Communications** is the next process that comes in execution phase of a project and the PMBOK 5<sup>th</sup> edition describes this process as the process of creating, collecting, distributing, storing, retrieving, and the ultimate disposition of project information in accordance to the communications management plan. This process goes beyond the distribution of relevant information and seeks to ensure that the information being communicated to project stakeholders has been appropriately generated, as well as received and understood. The key benefit of this process is that it enables an efficient and effective communications flow between project stakeholders. It also provides opportunities for stakeholders to make requests for further information, clarification, and discussion. The guide narrates that project communications are influenced by factors such as, the urgency and impact of the message, its method of delivery, and level of confidentiality. This guide also lists a variety of tools used to manage and distribute project information. Hard-copy document management (letters, memos, reports, and press releases), electronic communications management (e-mail, fax, voice mail, telephone, video and web conferencing, websites); and electronic project management tools (web interfaces, meeting and virtual office support software and portals) are some of the tools with examples (PMI, 2013).

Project communications should be carefully controlled and evaluated to ensure that the right message is delivered to the right audience at the right time.

**Controlling project communication management** is the third process. Jainendrakumar (2015) describes this process as “...the third and final process which comes for monitoring and controlling communication throughout the entire project life cycle to ensure the information needs of the project stakeholders are met. That is to ensure that the right information is reached to right persons on right time...” PMI(2013)explains that this process is an iteration of the other two processes which illustrates the continuous nature of the project communications management processes. This process involves the activities that are required for information and communications to be monitored, acted upon, and released to stakeholders.

The control communications process is done via meetings that require discussion and dialogue with the project team to determine the most appropriate way to update and communicate project performance, and to respond to requests from stakeholders for information (PMI, 2013).

Table 2.1 Inputs, tools & techniques and outputs of project communication management processes.

<b>Plan Communications</b>		
<b>Inputs</b>	<b>Tools and Techniques</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Management Plan</li> <li>• Stakeholder Register</li> <li>• Enterprise Environmental Factors:</li> <li>• Organizational Process Assets:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication Requirements Analysis:</li> <li>• Communication Technology:</li> <li>• Communication Models.</li> <li>• Communication Methods:</li> <li>• Meetings:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications Management Plan:</li> <li>• Project Documents Updates.</li> </ul>
<b>Manage Communications</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication Management Plan.</li> <li>• Work Performance Reports</li> <li>• Enterprise Environmental Factors</li> <li>• Organizational Process Assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication Technology</li> <li>• Communication Models</li> <li>• Communication Methods:</li> <li>• Performance Reporting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Communication</li> <li>• Project Management Plan Updates</li> <li>• Project Document Updates</li> <li>• Organizational Process Assets Updates;</li> </ul>
<b>Control Communications</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Management Plan</li> <li>• Project Communications</li> <li>• Issue Log</li> <li>• Work Performance Data</li> <li>• Organizational Process Assets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information Management Systems</li> <li>• Expert Judgment</li> <li>• Meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work Performance Information</li> <li>• Change Requests:</li> <li>• Project Management Plan Updates</li> <li>• Project Document Updates</li> <li>• Organizational Process Assets Updates</li> </ul>

Source: own survey, 2020

### 2.1.5 CHALLENGES AND BARRIERS OF COMMUNICATION

Inadequate project communications is a common cause of many project failures. Problems often stem from poor-quality information, inaccuracies, or being out of date

or from information that is ineffectively collected or distributed (Abdurezak and Dereje, 2015).

Challenges of project management communication include communication inconsistency (lack of clarity creates inconsistencies incorrect information), use of the right technology (email and intranet are faceless communication routes), not enough feedback, not having the right processes, inefficiency in leadership (zero communication by the leadership.), (Oragescrum.org,2020).

Communications in a project can be affected by a number of factors. Cultural background, language barriers, and different cultures & norms affect the project communications. Moreover; the receiver may not interpret a message exactly as the sender intended.

It is said that people remember: 10 % of what they read, 20 % of what they hear, 30 % of what they see, 50 % of what they see and hear, 70 % of what they say, and 90 % of what they say as they perform the task (Project Management Training Module, 2018).

Jainendrakumar(2015) lists some of the communication barriers as distance (geographic distance between the sender and receiver/s), noise, language, culture, personality and interest, lack of responsive feedback, withholding information, mixed messages and stereotyping.

Language barrier does not necessarily only mean communicating with various languages, the terminology used in a message even when communicating in the same language may act as a barrier to communication if it is not fully understood by the receiver. How the message is received is also influenced by the psychological state of the receiver. For example, if one is preoccupied by personal concerns and has personal worries and stress, thus becomes not as receptive to the message as if not stressed.

## 2.2 EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Communication with stakeholders is the means to build smooth relationships and helps to meet objectives such as to gain commitment to the project, reduce opposition, promote two-way communication, creating awareness for common understanding of the project (Hailemichael, 2012). This author's findings show that besides to meetings

which enable sharing of project information and facilitate decision making, telephone calls, seminars, project portals are the means mostly used for project communications.

It was confirmed by many researchers that communication plays a major role for projects, and effective communication is an essential factor of project success (Zulch, 2014).

One out of five projects is unsuccessful due to ineffective communication. This means that 80% of projects are unsuccessful because of ineffective communication (Oragescrum.org, 2020). According to PMI's Pulse research, 55 percent of project managers agree that effective communication with all stakeholders is the most critical success factor in project management (PMI, 2013).

Findings of a study (Zulch,2014) show that written communication is ranked as the most important communication method followed by electronic, oral, visual and non-verbal communication methods. This study also revealed that electronic communication is ranked the highest as effective communication method and written and oral communication methods ranking second and third respectively.

Another study conducted among Amhara Development Association (ADA) water projects in Ethiopia revealed that impact of communication has significant impact on cost, time and quality of projects. In this study, oral, electronic and visual project communication methods are the top three methods that are perceived to be predominantly being used followed by written and non-verbal communication (Abraham, 2009). Moreover, Bottom-Up flow of information is the predominant pattern of communication, followed by horizontal flow of information. This may suggest that top-down information flow is ineffective in ADA water projects in Ethiopia. The finding of this study reveals that practice of project communication management has a statistically significant influence on project performance and lack of trust among project team members. Shortness and wellness of established lines of communication in the project, selective perceptions and absence of revealing information by project manager are the commonest rated barriers to effective project communication in ADA water project in Ethiopia

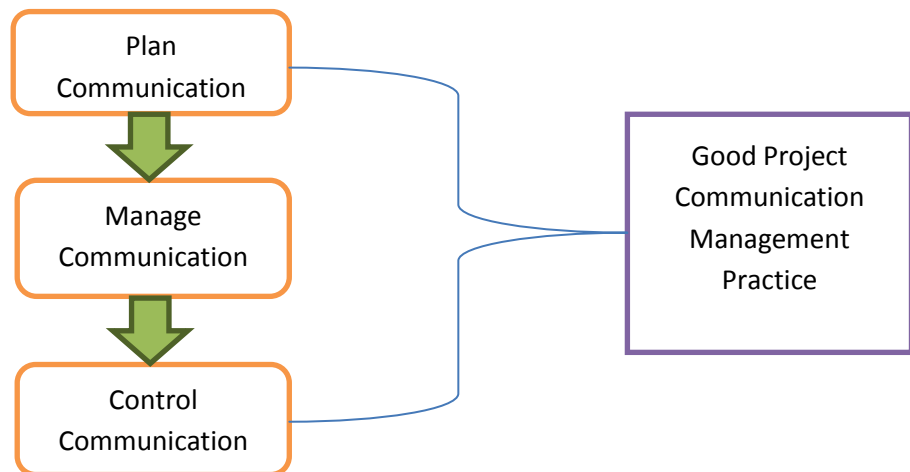
The project communication practice with stakeholders (Biruk, 2009), shows that there is presence of follow up meetings (which enables the project to go smoothly), presence of dedicated own communication media, good working relationship with the government and their members, and the time-to-time improvement in the awareness

of the stakeholder on the benefit of communication. Difficulties in the use of communication technologies by stakeholders, limited communication skills of stakeholders; receiving and/or sending of incomplete information by stakeholders and low response rate for any kind of communication enquiry or invitation are the challenges in the project communication. These study findings show that the project communication practice is found to be effective. Even though there are projects failed (in terms of scope, time and budget overrun) it is not related to the project communication management and communication management is not to be blamed for project failure in AACCSA projects. (Biruk,2009).

A study done in Ghana revealed that out of a total of 20 respondents, 13 of them said that an on-going communication between the team and its stakeholders is very important in improving project success. And meetings are very important in overcoming communication barrier and increasing performance level of a project. Eleven of them responded that it is very important for a project manager(s) to have excellent communication skills in order oversee/deliver effective communication on a project. 17 of the 27 respondents reported that on-going communication between the project team and its stakeholders is very important in improving project success (Maame,2012). The same author listed poor listening, poor leadership, unclear communication objectives, unclear communication channels, ineffective communication between stakeholders on the project, lack of necessary communication skills, language difficulties as barrier to communication management on construction projects. This study also indicated that meetings (project meetings, general meetings, team meetings), notice boards, formal communication (email, telephone, fax, letter), face to face discussions are the mostly used channels/ of communication in relation to projects. Azeb (2019) pointed out that 75% of respondents strongly agree and 20% agree that communication skill is more appropriate to enhance project success. Majority of the respondent (84 %) agreed and said that clear communication is strongly important for project success. Majority of the respondents also believe that communication is associated with project success.

### 2.3 CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

The conceptual framework below depicts how the three processes lead to good project communication management. Effective project communication management is based on the interaction of the three processes of planning communication; managing communication and controlling communication. Accordingly, the project communication management practice of FGAE is conceptualized as being dependent on the three processes.



Source: Own survey, 2020

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This section describes the methodology used in carrying out the study. It covers description of the organization, research design, study population, sample size & procedures, data collection tools & methods, data quality & analysis and ethical considerations.

### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND APPROACH**

The research employed cross-sectional descriptive study design and a mixed method of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The descriptive design helped to answer the research questions and enabled the researcher to assess and describe the practice and challenges of project communication management in the case of FGAE projects.

The qualitative study was designed to complement the quantitative study. As Creswell (2009) describes applying a mix of both quantitative and qualitative data has an advantage of enhancing strengths of the study.

### **3.3 STUDY VARIABLES**

The independent variables of the study include:

- Sociodemographic characteristics of respondents such as: age, gender, educational status, year of work experience, duty station and position title.
- Practice on project communications in the FGAE projects
- Challenges on project communication management in the FGAE projects
- Processes of project communication management in the FGAE projects

The dependent variables include:

- Effective project communication management in the FGAE projects

### **3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

In this research, both secondary and primary data were collected. An extensive search of articles, reports and professional information related to the study, using the internet and academic databases was done.

The primary data were collected from project team members at both head office and area offices. Quantitative data were collected through email using questionnaires and the qualitative data were collected through telephone using semi-structure interview guide.

Secondary data were collected by reviewing relevant communication documents such as emails, meeting minutes, letters, notices, reports, memos and others available in the office. The reason for doing this was because the researcher believed that these documents could disclose the current state of affairs concerning the project communication practices of FGAE.

### 3.5. TARGET POPULATION

The target population of the study included purposively selected FGAE staff who were involved in project communications and working on projects based in head office and eight area offices located in Addis Ababa, Oromia (Adama, Jimma and Harar), Amhara (Bahir Dar, Dessie), SNNP (Hawassa) and Tigray (Mekelle) regions of the country.

### 3.6 SAMPLE SIZE AND SAMPLING PROCEDURES

Purposive sampling was employed for the study. FGAE project staffs who are involved in both internal and external project communications at head office and eight area offices located in four regions and Addis Ababa were the study units.

First, key personnel at Head Office (program director, coordinators, managers, project team leaders, project managers) were selected.

Then, at Area Office level, Area managers and key staff (Area Managers, Program Coordinators, M&E Officers, Volunteers Affair and Training Officers and Finance & Admin Officers and Heads of Clinics) were selected.

Thus, in order to obtain reliable and representative information, all the study subjects were selected from all eight area offices and the head office.

For the quantitative part, 64 study participants (8 from each of the eight area offices) were identified to participate in the study questionnaire. Study participants selected from each area office included area managers, program & clinical coordinators, project coordinators, monitoring & evaluation officers and volunteers and training affairs officers and heads of clinics, ten study participants that included project team leaders, program coordinator, M&E manager, project managers, public relation and SBCC

managers were drawn from the head office. Therefore, the total sample size of the study was 74 participants.

For the qualitative study design, data were collected from key informants entitled for communication of projects both at head office and randomly selected four area offices. These individuals included, project managers, project team leaders, area managers and program and clinical coordinators and monitoring and evaluation personnel.

### 3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

The collected data from questionnaire were changed to excel spreadsheet, coded and imported into the computer using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) for analysis. Descriptive analysis such as, mean, standard deviation, frequencies and percentages were used to present results in form of charts/tables and graphs and textual presentations.

For the qualitative part open ended questions, analysis of the collected data were done using the thematic content analysis approach.

### 3.8 DATA QUALITY ASSURANCE

For data quality assurance of the study, properly designed data collection instrument was developed and checked for any defect. The collected data were checked for completeness and relevance before entering them for analysis. The highest possible cares were taken during interview sessions to record response correctly and completely and without bias. Informed consent and confidentiality of data were ensured from respondents. Respondents were not asked to mention their names and they were urged to respond to the questions as sincerely and genuinely as possible.

#### 3.8.1 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

This study took into consideration the validity and reliability issues. Validity is the consistency to which a measurement actually measures what is intended to measure and provide information relevant to the question being asked. Some of the questions were adopted from previous studies and validity of the questionnaire was done through review and consultations with the advisor in order to establish any built-in errors in the measurement of the questionnaire.

Reliability is the extent to which measurement is repeatable and consistent. i.e each time in repeated observation of the same phenomena, the same data will be collected. Cronbach's coefficient alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is the most widely used objective measure of reliability. Alpha values between the range 0.70 to 0.95 are regarded as an adequate confirmation of the reliability of a questionnaire instrument (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Cronbach's alpha test was done to check reliability of the questionnaire. George and Mallery (2003) provides rule of thumb: "Excellent ( $\geq .9$ ), Good ( $\geq .8$ ), Acceptable ( $\geq .7$ ), Questionable ( $\geq .6$ ), Poor ( $\geq .5$ ) and Unacceptable ( $\leq .5$ ) (p. 231)". According to this rule, Cronbach's alpha value for this research is 0.766 considered acceptable. Cronbach's alpha value for this research is acceptable because alpha value for each variable is greater than 0.7. The reliability of the questionnaire for each section is presented in the table 2.2

Table 2.2 Reliability Statistics for all variables

Variable	Cronbach alpha
Project Communication Management Practice	0.740
Project Communication Management Challenges	0.715
Project Communication Management Processes	0.826
Overall	0.766

Source: own survey, 2020

### 3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study did not involve any experiment on human population subjects. Before starting data collection, ethical clearance was obtained from Addis Ababa University Research Ethics Committee. The Executive Director and Program Director of FGAE were informed about the study and permission was obtained. Before enrolling any of the eligible study participants, the purpose and the benefit of the study was discussed with each respondent.

Informed consent of the respondents was obtained first. Their right to refuse to respond the questions was also respected. All participants were asked for their willingness to voluntarily participate in the data collection. Their views were kept very confidential and anonymous; names and address of respondents were not recorded. Moreover, the questionnaires did not have any connection with the respondents since the research was done for academic purpose.

## CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Assessing the practice and challenges of project communication management process in the case of Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE) projects has been the general objective of this study. Findings and discussion of the study are presented in this chapter. The chapter consists of addressing the major findings of the study in relation to the study questions and objectives. The results were obtained based on analysis of the data collected using a questionnaire. The quantitative questionnaire consisted of 26 questions and five open ended interview questions. These questions fall in to four sections: Section1: the background and demographic information of the respondents, Section2: Practice of Project Communication Management, Section3: Challenges of Project Communication Management, Section 4: Assessment of the Project Communication Management processes

A total of 74 respondents were targeted in this study, 64 from the area offices and 10 from head office of FGAE. Of them, 57 respondents returned the responses making the response rate 77%.

In addition, interviews were also conducted with 8 randomly selected participants from both head office and four area offices. The quantitative data were collected virtually using emails and phone interviews were used to collect the qualitative data so as to reduce the risk of transmission of corona virus infection.

### 4.2 RESPONDENTS' DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

In this study, information on respondents' age, gender, educational status and their position in the project/ organization were collected to see their profile. Table 4.1 below, reveals that nearly half 28(49.1%) of the study participants fall in the age interval 26-35 years of age. Most are males accounting for 48(84.2%). This shows that the number of male participants of the study was much higher than female participants. This gender variation had no impact on findings of the study. Participants were also asked the level of their academic qualification and more than half 32(56.1%) of them have Master's degree and the rest 25(43.9%) acquired first degree.

Concerning their organizational function (position), nearly one third (31.6%) are heads of clinics, area managers and Monitoring and Evaluation personnel each accounting for 12.3%. Project managers and program and clinical service coordinators hold 8.8% and 10.5% respectively. The rest participants of the study include program director, Volunteer Affairs and Training Officers, Finance and admin personnel, SBCC manager...etc. Concerning years of work experience of the study participants, the result indicates that 21(36.8%) of them have 1-5 years of experience and 15(26.3%) have more than 15 years of experience on project.

Implication of these results indicate that significant number of the study participants are in the age interval 26-35 and most were males. This gender imbalance did not have any impact on the study findings. Besides, most are in good academic qualification having Master's degree.

Table4.1. Respondents' profile

Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Age of respondents</b>				
26- 35	28	45.9	49.1	49.1
36-45	21	34.4	36.8	86
Above 45	8	13.1	14	100
<b>Gender of respondents</b>				
Female	9	14.8	15.8	15.8
Male	48	78.7	84.2	100
<b>Educational status</b>				
Bachelor's Degree	25	41	43.9	43.9
Master's Degree	32	52.5	56.1	100
<b>Position Title</b>				
Area Managers	7	9.9	12.3	12.3
Heads of Clinics	18	25.4	31.6	43.9
M&E personnel	7	9.9	12.3	56.1
Program & clinical coordinators	6	8.5	10.5	66.7
Project Manager	5	7.0	8.8	78.9
Others	14	19.7	24.6	100
<b>Work experience</b>				
1-5 years	21	34.4	36.8	36.8
6-10 years	12	19.7	21.1	57.9
11-15 Years	9	14.8	15.8	73.7
Above 15 Years	15	24.6	26.3	100

Source: own survey, 2020

### 4.3 PRACTICES ON PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

Participants of the study were asked if they had project communication plan and majority of the respondents 53(93%) reported that they have project communication plan in place (Table4.2). This indicates that FGAE projects have communication plan for the projects.

Table 4.2 Project communication practice

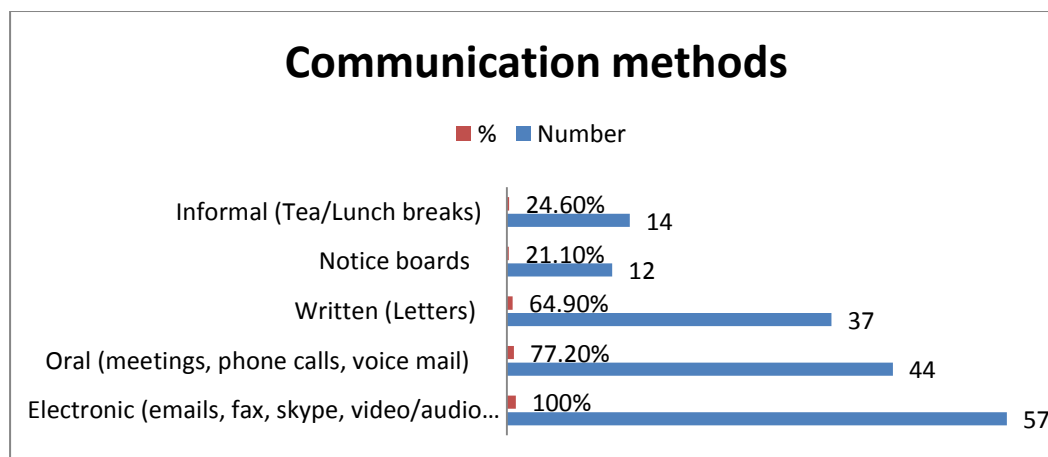
Variable	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
<b>Have project Communication plan</b>				
Yes	53	86.9	93	93
No	4	6.6	7	100

Source: own survey, 2020

The table below (Table 4.3) illustrates that three issues (types of communication methods used, directions of project communication and meetings on projects) were addressed to assess the practice of project communication in FGAE projects.

The first issue was to identify which communication methods(s) are being used for the projects. The result show that electronic (emails, fax, skype, video/audio conference, web site) methods for project communication followed by oral 44(77.2%) (meetings, phone calls, voice mail) and written 37(64.9%) (letters) are the most widely used communication methods. This finding is also confirmed by the results from the interviews.

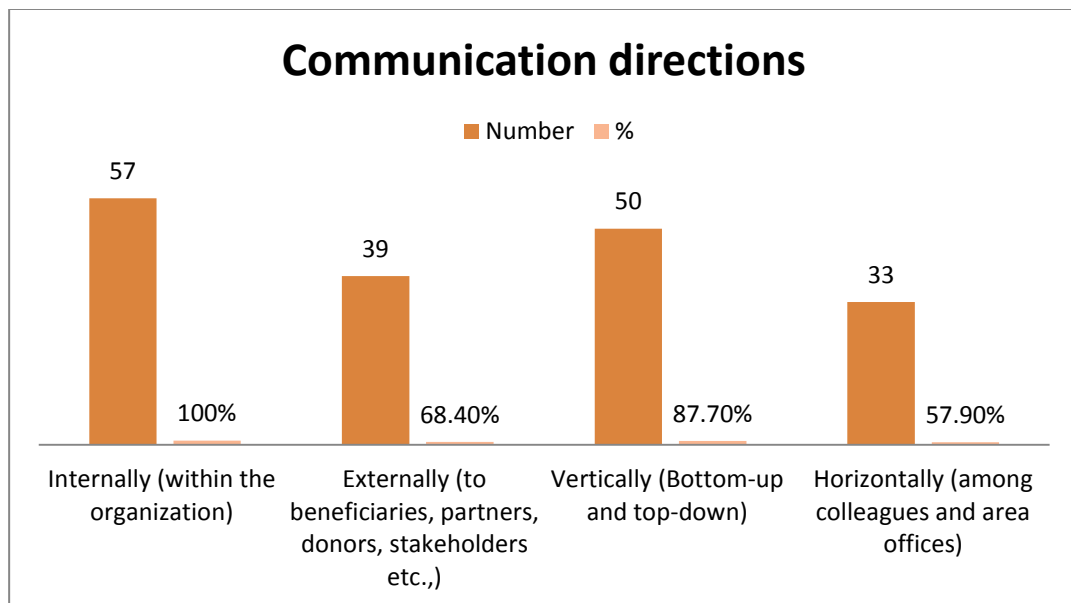
Figure 3 Communication methods used for FGAE projects



Source : own survey, 2020

For the second issue, the study participants were also asked the direction of how project information flow in FGAE. The result shows that information is transmitted through various directions as internally within the organization between head office and area offices, vertically 50(87.7%) (top down and bottom up to and from area offices). External communication 39(68.4%) also happens with various stakeholders (community, government bodies, partners, donors..etc) by the area offices and the head office. FGAE projects practice internal, external and vertical communications with stakeholders and horizontal communication among area offices is less common than others. This result is also supported by the interviews results, but horizontal communication between and among the area offices is the least 33(57.9%) when compared with others,

Figure 4 Directions of Project communication



Source : own survey, 2020

Thirdly, the study also tried to investigate if there was periodic meeting to discuss, share information and communicate on project issues with internal and external stakeholders. The responses from the respondents indicate that regular periodic meetings are held to share information on project status. For example, meetings are held at area office and head office level on monthly 33(62.3%), quarterly 48(90.6%), bi-annually basis 27(50.9%) and annually 28(52.8%) basis. Besides to e-mail

communications, meetings are also often used periodically to share information and communicate on issues related to projects.

Results from the interviews also confirm the result obtained through questionnaire in showing that all the respondents use periodic meetings for project communications with stakeholders. Besides, project status review meetings are held with teams from head office and area offices on regular basis.

Table 4.3 Communication methods, information flow and meeting schedules

Types of communication method used	Responses		Percent of cases
	N	Per cent	
Electronic (emails, fax, skype, video/audio conference, web site)	57	34.8	100.0
Oral (meetings, phone calls, voice mail)	44	26.8	77.2
Written (Letters)	37	22.6	64.9
Notice boards	12	7.3	21.1
Informal (Tea/Lunch breaks)	14	8.5	24.6
How does information flow in you project?			
Internally (within the organization)	57	31.8	100.0
Externally (to beneficiaries, partners, donors, stakeholders etc.,)	39	21.8	68.4
Vertically (Bottom-up and top-down)	50	27.9	87.7
Horizontally (among colleagues and area offices)	33	18.4	57.9
How often do you have formal scheduled meetings on issues related to projects.			
Weekly	19	12.3	35.8
Monthly	33	21.3	62.3
Quarterly	48	31.0	90.6
Bi-annually	27	17.4	50.9
Annually	28	18.1	52.8

Source: own survey, 2020

All concerned stakeholders who affect and can be affected by a project should be communicated consistently at all stages in the project life cycle. In order to enrich the finding on the project communication management practice of FGAE, respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement, based on five point Likert scale, for statements related to project communication practices. These questions included communication with stakeholders (internal and external) during phases of a project, periodic updating of project team on project status and how top managers are reachable by lower level staff to be communicated.

Table 4.4 below depicts project communication management practices in FGAE projects as per responses from study participants expressed in terms of frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation of each from strongly disagree (SD) to strongly agree (SA) in terms of percentage of the total respondents.

As the below table shows, more than half 64.9% (agreed) and 16.4% (strongly agreed) of the respondents reported that project stakeholders (internal and external) are communicated during a project’s life cycle. Thirty two(56.1%) of the respondents agreed and 17(29.8%) of them strongly agreed that project teams are periodically communicated on project status updates. In addition, the study participants were asked if managers (at head office and area offices) were easily reachable to be communicated by lower level staff. Results for this question show that more than half 32 (56.1%) of the respondents disagreed while 20 (35.1%) of them agreed to the same statement.

Table4.4Project communication management practice frequency by percent

Question item	Indicator	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean	SD
All concerned project stakeholders (inside FGAE including Project teams) and (Outside stakeholders) are communicated about the project at planning, implementation and monitoring and evaluation stage of a project.	Strongly Disagree	4	6.6	7	7.0	3.82	1.002
	Disagree	2	3.3	3.5	10.5		
	Neutral	4	6.6	7	17.5		
	Agree	37	60.7	64.9	82.5		
	Strongly Agree	10	16.4	17.5	100		

Question item	Indicator	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	Mean	SD
Project progress status update is communicated periodically with the project team.	Strongly Disagree	4	5.6	7.0	8.8	3.86	1.082
	Neutral	3	4.2	5.3	14.0		
	Agree	32	45.1	56.1	70.2		
	Strongly Agree	17	23.9	29.8	100.0		
Top managers at Head Office level and Area Managers are easily reachable to be communicated by the lower level staff	Strongly Disagree	5	8.2	8.8	8.8	4.09	1.074
	Disagree	32	52.5	56.1	64.9		
	Agree	20	32.8	35.1	100		

Source: own survey, 2020

Results from the interviews also reflected that there are good project communication practices using various communication methods (mostly electronic and oral) for internal and external communications on regular basis

#### 4.4 CHALLENGES OF PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

A number of factors challenge effective project communication management. These challenges may stem from untimely, ineffectively collected and poor-quality information. (Abdurezak and Dereje,2015). Moreover, inconsistency of information, lack of clarity, language, distance and lack of responsive feedbacks are some of common challenges in project communication (Jainendrakumar, 2015)

This section sought to determine the main challenges of project communication management in the FGAE projects. Participants of the study were asked to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement based on a five-point Likert scale (1 from strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree) on proposed list of challenges.

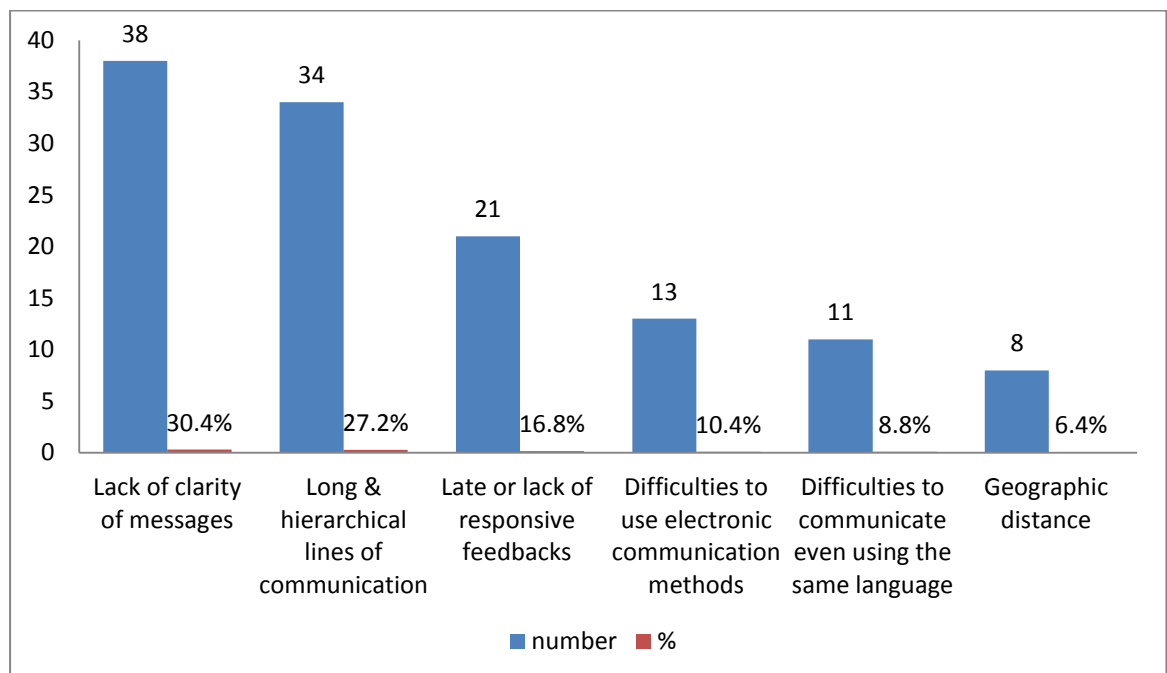
Although the preliminary interviews held with a few senior staffs and managers identified some problems of project communication, the project work results identified more challenges of project communication in the FGAE projects.

As shown below by Table 4.5, the most common challenges in project communication management in the FGAE projects, as per responses from the respondents, are lack of clarity of messages with mean value of 3.65 is the first top challenge, followed by long and hierarchical lines of communication with mean value 3.35. Late or lack of responsive feedbacks is one of the common challenges in project communication management. This is true for this study with mean value 2.75.

Difficulties to use electronic communication methods, difficulties to communicate even using the same language and geographic distance between communicating bodies are the other next three challenges with mean values 2.46, 2.37 and 2.18 respectively. This may be due to lack of skill to use virtual communication means, failure to use simple languages and physical distances between sender and receiver/s and other communication barriers

Besides, the respondents in the open ended question mentioned interruption of internet connection, poor experience in using advanced virtual audio/video communication means (zoom, google meet, skype, Microsoft teams. etc), communicating message to unconcerned receiver, paying less attention to communication by some individuals as the other challenges.

Figure 5:Challenges of project communication



Source: own survey, 2020

Table 4.5 Challenges of project communication management

Value	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number
	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)	f (%)			
Late or lack of responsive feedbacks	6(10.5)	24(42.1)	6(10.5)	20(35.1)	1(1.8)	2.75	1.106	57
Difficulties to use electronic communication methods	8(14)	28(49.1)	8(14)	13(22.8)		2.46	1.001	57
Difficulties to communicate even using the same language	7(12.3)	33(57.9)	6(10.5)	11(19.3)		2.37	0.938	57
Long and hierarchical lines of communication	2(3.5)	13(22.8)	8(14)	31(54.4)	3(5.3)	3.35	1.009	57
Language barrier such as poor English language fluency	17(29.8)	30(52.6)	5(8.8)	5(8.8)		1.96	0.865	57
Poor communication skills in speaking and writing	11(19.3)	36(63.2)	3(5.3)	7(12.3)		2.11	0.859	57
Geographic distance between the sender and receiver(s).	9(15.8)	37(64.9)	3(5.3)	8(14)		2.18	0.869	57
Lack of clarity of messages	4(7)	4(7)	11(19.3)	27(47.4)	11(19.3)	3.65	1.094	57
	Average mean and standard deviation					2.6038	0.9677	

Source: Own survey, 2020, f= frequency

In the interview part, respondents also pointed out some other challenges include lack of dedicated communication focal person for project communication at the area offices and less attention given to communication compared to other aspects of a project such as budget, weak horizontal communication especially among the area offices, and interruption of internet connection at few sites.

In addition, result from interviews indicate that there were some challenges such as access to information was not equal to all staff and area offices and only those having close relationships were the first to have updated information and communication. Besides, responsive feedbacks were given timely if requests are from line managers. The organization has recently replaced top managers and these challenges are being improved.

Generally, the challenges identified in this study are crucial and they need to be overcome to enhance success of projects.

#### 4.5 PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

This study also attempted to assess the project communication management processes (planning, managing and controlling communication management) as per the division by PMBOK 5<sup>th</sup> edition. Participants were asked a set of questions on each process.

##### 4.5.1 PLANNING PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

As below table 4.6 depicts, majority 28(49.1%) of the respondents disagreed that project communication plan that enhances smooth communication and information flow regarding a project is established for the project. However, 20(35.1%) of them agreed to the statement.

25(43.9%) of the participants agreed that communication plans are established at outset of projects and 11(19.3%) strongly agreed. Yet, 11(19.3%) of them undecided or uncertain. This also shows that project communication plans that are crucial inputs highly required for effect project communication were not clearly established at outset of projects.

The first thing to establish project communication plan is to believe in its importance. In this regard, more than half 31(54.4%) (i.e 42.1% agreed and 12.3% strongly agreed)

of the respondents reported that they agree on the importance of communication for project success.

Results from the interviews also confirmed that all the respondents agreed on the importance of communication.

Table4.6 Planning project communication Management

Question item	Indicator	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	mean	SD
An appropriate communication plan that enhances smooth communication and information flow regarding a project is established for the project.	Strongly Disagree	4	6.6	7	2.79	1.114
	Disagree	28	45.9	49.1		
	Neutral	3	4.9	5.3		
	Agree	20	32.8	35.1		
	Strongly Agree	2	3.3	3.5		
Communication plans and strategies are determined /established at the outset of projects	Strongly Disagree	3	4.9	5.3	3.60	1.100
	Disagree	7	11.5	12.3		
	Neutral	11	18	19.3		
	Agree	25	41	43.9		
	Strongly Agree	11	18	19.3		
How much do you agree on the importance communication for project success?	Strongly Disagree	1	1.6	1.8	3.40	0.33
	Disagree	13	21.3	22.8		
	Neutral	12	19.7	21.1		
	Agree	24	39.3	42.1		
	Strongly Agree	7	11.5	12.3		

Source: own survey, 2020

#### 4.5.2 MANAGING PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

As shown below in the table 4.7, the survey result report indicates that 40(70.2%) of the respondents strongly agree and 7(12.3%) of them agree that project communication is managed properly. However, 8(14%) strongly disagreed. This shows that 82.5 % of the respondents indicated their agreement on proper management of communication; this may lead to conclude that project communication is properly managed at FGAE projects.

Respondents were also asked whether information on projects is easily available to project team members and half of them 29(50.9%) agreed and nearly quarter of them 14(24.6%) strongly agreed. This leads to 75.4% of the study participants indicated their level of agreement that project teams have access to project information.

Moreover, the result shows that two-way communication is encouraged in FGAE as 32(56.1%) and 13(22.8%) of the study participants responded agreed and strongly agreed respectively. This leads to confirm that two-way communication is encouraged in FGAE projects as per responses from 78.9% of the respondents.

Table 4.7 Managing project communication Management

Value	Project communication and information are properly managed		Project information are easily available to project team		Two-way communications are encouraged on projects	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly Disagree	8	14	2	3.5	2	3.5
Disagree			5	8.8	2	3.5
Neutral	2	3.5	7	12.3	8	14
Agree	7	12.3	29	50.9	32	56.1
Strongly Agree	40	70.2	14	24.6	13	22.8
mean	4.25		3.84		3.91	
SD	1.405		1.014		0.912	

Source: Own survey, 2020

#### 4.5.3 CONTROLLING PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

Regarding controlling project communication, as shown in table 4.8, the majority of the research respondents 28(49.1%) agreed and 15(26.3%) strongly agreed that communication is monitored and controlled in the project life cycle to meet the

information needs of the project stakeholders. This analysis indicates that 75.4% of the respondents indicated their agreement levels (3.88 mean and 1.001 standard deviation) that there is proper controlling of project communication. Here, the resultant of agreed and response rate is greater compared to others, which implies controlling of project communication management is well applied for FGAE projects.

In addition of the respondents (40(70.2%) agreed and 4(7%) strongly agreed (with mean value of 3.67 and 0.893 standard deviation) that the right message is delivered to the right audience at the right time by carefully controlling and evaluating project communications. 72% (50.9% agreed and 21% strongly agreed) of the respondents also agreed that Every project team member is encouraged to communicate freely with all other members (3.74 mean and 1.027 standard deviation).

Regarding lines of communications in the FGAE project, responses show 28(49.1%) agreed and 15(26.3%) strongly agreed that Lines of communications in the project is short and well established.

Concerning communication skills of project managers, 35(61.4%) of the respondents mentioned their agreement (27(47.4%) agreed and 8(14.8%) strongly agreed) that project managers of FGAE have communication skills and they should take trainings on project communication management. Findings from interviews confirm this result that it is also good to have trainings on communication management for project managers for project managers. However, nearly quarter of them (24.6%) preferred not to indicate their agreement or disagreement level. Interview results also indicate that various trainings on various topics are given to the staff except on communication. Trainings on project communication are very important. Those staffs who are engaged in project communications, such as project managers should take trainings on effective communications and update themselves.

The overall result on controlling project communication shows that project communications in FGAE are controlled and monitored properly (with average 3.75 mean and 0.978 standard deviation).

Table 4.8 Controlling project communication management

Indicator	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		mean	SD	N
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%			
Communications are monitored and controlled throughout the entire project life cycle to ensure the information needs of the project stakeholders are met	2	3.5	4	7	8	14	28	49.1	15	26.3	3.88	1.001	57
Project communications are carefully controlled and evaluated to ensure that the right message is delivered to the right audience at the right time.	2	3.5	6	10.5	5	8.8	40	70.2	4	7	3.67	0.893	57
Every project team member is encouraged to communicate freely with all other members	1	1.8	9	15.8	6	10.5	29	50.9	12	21.1	3.74	1.027	57
Lines of communications in the project is short and well established.	2	3.5	5	8.8	7	12.3	28	49.1	15	26.3	3.86	1.025	57
Project managers of FGAE have communication skills and they should take trainings on Project Communication management.	1	1.8	7	12.3	14	24.6	27	47.4	8	14	3.60	0.942	57
Average mean and SD											3.75	0.978	

Where; f = frequency, SD= Standard Deviation, N = total population of the research. Source: Own survey, 2020

## CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. Summary of major findings based on findings in relation to the study objectives is stated. Moreover, it also addresses major conclusions drawn from the discussion of findings and results (of the data analysis) of the study and recommendations to address the identified challenges and enhance effective project communication management in FGAE projects.

### 5.2 SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

#### 5.2.1 PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT PRACTICE

Electronic communication methods (email-most of the time, fax, skype, video/audio conference,) followed by oral (meetings, phone calls, verbal) means are widely used for project communication practice. Interviews also confirm these findings.

FGAE staffs perceive the importance of communication for project success. Concerning project communication with stakeholders, 82% of the study participants reported that stakeholders (internal and external) are communicated during project phases. Internal, external and vertical (top-down and bottom-up) communications are practiced in the FGAE projects. Periodic meetings are held to communicate and discuss on issues related to projects.

#### 5.2.2 CHALLENGES OF PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

This study identified major challenges of project communication management in the FGAE projects. As a result, the top three challenges are lack of clarity of messages, late or lack of responsive feedbacks and long and hierarchical lines of communication. Besides the other challenges include lack of dedicated communication focal person for project communication at the area offices.

### 5.2.3 PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

Concerning perception on importance of communication, 51 (89.5%) of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that communication is important for project success. This is also confirmed by the interview results. Communication plans are established at outset of projects as agreed by 43.9% of participants.

Project communication in the FGAE projects is properly managed as agreed by 47 (82.5 %) of respondents (70.2% strongly agreed and 12.3% agreed)

The right project messages are delivered to the right audiences at the right time due to good controlling of project communications (3.67 mean and 0.893 standard deviation). The overall result on controlling project communication controlling in the FGAE projects properly applied (with average 3.75 mean and 0.978 standard deviation).

### 5.3 CONCLUSIONS

Assessing the practice and challenges of project communication management in the case of FGAE projects was the focus of this study. The study also assessed the three processes (planning, managing and controlling) of project communication management in the FGAE projects.

FGAE projects practice various forms of project communications and electronic (mostly emails) and oral communication methods such as meetings are widely practiced. Besides to external communications with various stakeholders, vertical (top down and bottom up) internal communications (within FGAE) and horizontal communications (among project staffs) are practiced in the FGAE projects.

The project work has identified a number of challenges of project communications in the FGAE projects and lack of clarity of messages, late or lack of responsive feedbacks and lack of dedicated project communication focal persons are some of them.

In general, the overall project communication management process (planning, managing and controlling communications) of FGAE projects is good despite a few challenges that need to be overcome so as to enhance successful implementation for success of projects.

## 5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following major recommendations are forwarded based on the findings and conclusions of the study.

- FGAE should work to ensure timely responsive feedbacks are given to messages conveyed by internal and external stakeholders.
- Messages should also be clear and easy to understand by all using simple languages and confirming they are understood by receivers as expected
- Besides to the email communications, FGAE should strengthen use of in-person communications, telephone conversations and virtual online communications. These methods enhance provision of timely responsive feedbacks and ensure message is well-understood by receiver (s).
- In order to ensure effective communication with internal and external audiences, dedicated project communication management focal persons should be assigned at area offices.
- Horizontal lines of communication and having a relatively flat hierarchy encourage direct, quick and open discussion and results in quick decision making. Thus, besides to the vertical communications, horizontal lines of communications should also be strengthened between and among area offices and colleagues.

### RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY

Due to time constraints, this study was limited to assess practices and challenges focusing on basic elements of project communication management.

- Project manager spends 90% of their time on communication. A project manager is expected to have essential skills of effective project communication. Thus, a study on project management communication skills of project managers is recommended.
- Communication involves everyone in a project. Further detailed study focusing on assessing impacts of communication on projects and association with project success encompassing large volume of respondents should be carried out.

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ANNEXES

Annex A : Questionnaire

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS**  
**SCHOOL OF COMMERCE**

Dear participant,

My name is Abebaw Abebe, I am a Project Management student at Addis Ababa University, School of Commerce. As a partial requirement for my MA Degree, I am conducting a research on “Assessment of project communication management practices and challenges: the case of Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia”.

I have received permission letter from AAU and FGAE to conduct this study. I would very much appreciate your participation in this survey by filling this questionnaire which takes a few minutes.

I confirm that your answers will remain confidential, and your name and address will not be recorded, so your answers will be anonymous.

As your views on the questionnaire are very important, your participation is highly appreciated.

If in case, you have any questions or need more clarifications on the questionnaire or study, please feel free to contact me at mobile: 0912982447 or e-mail: a.abebe@hi.org

**Instructions:**

- For the multiple choice questions, please answer the questions by putting circle or underlining the appropriate choice for each question. More than two choices is possible for some questions.
- For the level of agreement (from strongly disagree to strongly agree) questions, Please put “X’ at the corresponding column.

## PART1: SOCIO DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

1. What is your age in completed full years? -----
2. What is your sex? A. Male B. Female
3. **What is your educational status?**
  - A. Below Diploma
  - B. Diploma
  - C. Bachelor's Degree
  - D. Master's Degree
  - E. Doctorate Degree
4. To Which project are you working for? -----
5. What is your position in the project/Organization?
  - A. Project Manager
  - B. Area Manager
  - C. Program Director
  - D. Clinical Services Director
  - E. Training Director
  - F. Finance & Admin,
  - G. Executive Director
  - H. Head of Clinic
  - I. Volunteer and Training Affairs Officer
  - J. Other/specify-----
6. Total years of experience in project works?
  - A. One - Five years
  - B. Six- Tern years
  - C. Eleven - Fifteen years
  - D. More than 15 years

## PART 2: PRACTICE PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT

7. Do you have communication plan for your project?
  - A. Yes
  - B. No
8. Do you have periodic meetings to communicate on issues related to projects?

B. Yes                    B. No

9. Which communication method are you using in your project/s?

- A. Written (Letters)
- B. Electronic (emails, fax, skype, video/audio conference, web site)
- C. Oral (meetings, phone calls, voice mail)
- D. Non-verbal
- E. Notice boards
- F. Tea/lunch break
- G. Other/specify-----

10. How is information flow in you project?

- A. Internally (within the organization)
- B. Externally (to beneficiaries, partners, stakeholders, donors etc.,)
- C. Vertically ( Bottom-up and top-down)
- D. Horizontally (among colleagues and area offices)

11. How often do you have formal scheduled meetings on issues related to projects?

- A. Weekly
- B. Every two weeks
- C. Monthly
- D. Quarterly.
- E. Bi-annually
- F. Annually

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with the following statements which relate to project communication practice in your projects. Please put “X” in front of each statement among the given scale in the provided space.

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
11	All concerned project stakeholders (inside FGAE including Project teams) and (Outside stakeholders) are communicated about the project at planning,					

		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	implementation, monitoring and evaluation stage of a project.					
12	Project progress status update is communicated periodically with the project team					
13	Top managers at Head Office level and Area Managers are easily reachable to be communicated by the lower level staff					

### **PART3: CHALLENGES OF PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT**

Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement about challenges of communication in FGAE Projects. Please put “X” For each of the following statements among the given scale in the provided space.

14	How much do you agree or disagree that the following are Challenges of project communication in FGAE?					
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
14.1	Lack of clarity of messages					
14.2	Difficulties to communicate even using the same language					
14.3	Language barrier such as poor English language fluency					
14.4	Difficulties to use electronic communication methods					
14.5	Poor communication skills in speaking and writing					
14.6	Geographic distance between the sender and receiver(s).					

14.7	Late or lack of responsive feedbacks					
14.8	Long and hierarchical lines of communication					

15. Please mention challenges of project communication in FGAE. -----  
-----  
-----

Indicate your level of agreement or disagreement for the questions from 16-26.

The questions in the below table address three thematic issues:

Part 4: Project Communication Management Plan,

Part 5: Manage Project Communication Management and

Part 6: Control Project Communication Management.

Think of the communications in your project and choose the number that best describes your agreement and disagreement about the following.

For each question under the three themes, please choose one among the five choices (1=Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, and 5=Strongly Agree) and put “X” mark in front of the question under the appropriate column of your answer.

**1=Strongly Disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree**

	<b>PART4: PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT PLAN</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
16	An appropriate communication plan that enhances smooth communication and information flow regarding a project is established for the project.					
17	Communication plans and strategies are determined /established at the outset of projects					
18	How much do you agree on the importance communication for project success?					

	<b>PART5: MANAGE PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
19	Project information are created, collected, distributed, stored, and retrieved, properly for the project.					
20	Information on the project is easily available to the project team members.					
21	Two way communications are encouraged on projects in FGAE					
	<b>PART6: CONTROL PROJECT COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>
22	Communications are monitored and controlled throughout the entire project life cycle to ensure the information needs of the project stakeholders are met.					
23	Project communications are carefully controlled and evaluated to ensure that the right message is delivered to the right audience at the right time.					
24	Every project team member is encouraged to communicate freely with all other members.					
25	Lines of communications in the project is short and well established.					
26	Project managers of FGAE have communication skill gaps and they should take trainings on Project Communication management.					

Thank you so much!

## Annex B: Interview Questions

Hello! My name is ----- I am a Master of project management student at Addis Ababa University. Today I am here to have an interview with you about Project communication management practices and challenges of FGAE. Please note that the information collected from you is confidential. There is no correct or wrong answer. You can definitely express your ideas and attitudes freely. You are also expected to be honest while giving your ideas.

Do you want to ask me anything about the interview? Can I begin the interview now?

1. In your opinion, How do you perceive the importance of communication for project success and project management? -----  
-----  
-----
2. How do you explain the practice of (internal & external) project communication management in FGAE? -----  
-----  
-----
3. What are the major challenges that FGAE is facing regarding its project communication management?-----  
-----
4. Do you think FGAE staff involved in project communications Management should take trainings/capacity building activities on the issue? If so what type of? -----  
-----
5. What comments or recommendations do you suggest, from your own opinion, to ensure effective project communication management? -----

Thank You So Much!

## Annex C: Sample internal email communication

**From:** [getachewh@fgaeet.org](mailto:getachewh@fgaeet.org) <[getachewh@fgaeet.org](mailto:getachewh@fgaeet.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, March 18, 2020 9:29 AM

**To:** 'dessalegnw@fgaeet.org' <[dessalegnw@fgaeet.org](mailto:dessalegnw@fgaeet.org)>; 'gashahung@fgaeet.org' <[gashahung@fgaeet.org](mailto:gashahung@fgaeet.org)>; 'mohammedy@fgaeet.org' <[mohammedy@fgaeet.org](mailto:mohammedy@fgaeet.org)>; 'GashawKebede' <[gashawk@fgaeet.org](mailto:gashawk@fgaeet.org)>; 'negashs@fgaeet.org' <[negashs@fgaeet.org](mailto:negashs@fgaeet.org)>; 'MekonnenTadeaae' <[mekonnent@fgaeet.org](mailto:mekonnent@fgaeet.org)>; 'solomona@fgaeet.org' <[solomona@fgaeet.org](mailto:solomona@fgaeet.org)>; 'destaki@fgaeet.org' <[destaki@fgaeet.org](mailto:destaki@fgaeet.org)>

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**Subject:** FW: Recruitment of CMs

Good Morning Dear Colleagues,

After a thorough consultation with IPPF & WISH hub in Nairobi, the FGAE SMT has now decided to expand the WISH project to additional 154(+or-) sites in the existing WISH regions and to some 90 HFs in non-WISH regions/AOs. The decision is made based on a theme of delivering pertinent results on time; this took us out to other potential sites in non-WISH regions and even non-FGAE operation areas. Here, number of expansion sites the current WISH regions are depicted in the attached sheet. and the number of HFs to be enrolled in @ non-WISH regions will be as follows:

- NEAO, shall plan for 2 clusters each having 15 HFs. 1 cluster around Dessie and another 1 @ Waghimra Zone.
- NAO, shall plan for 1 cluster around Mekele
- NWAo, shall plan for 1 cluster around Bahirdar

Inline with the above, I want to kindly urge you to:

1. Announce vacancies for the cluster Managers till Friday per the details in the attached ...
2. Do a rapid assessment, the brief one, and submit profiles of the expansion sites not later than next Wednesday.

\*\*\* failing to do the above 1 & 2 ... would result in deducting number of sites and moving the chance to other AOs; hope you heard that WISH HO is attempting to cut some budget and shift it to other better performing countries/MAs if we fail to deliver . Do not hesitate to contact me or Girma in case you need any clarification on ways forward. Blessed Day,

**Getachew Habtie**, Program Director

**Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia (FGAE)**

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## Annex D: Sample external communication-Meeting Minute

### Minute for a meeting between FGAE (Program Director/Acting Executive Director) and Donor representative (IPPF Country Manager)

**From:** Alemayehu Habtamu <[AHabtamu@ippf.org](mailto:AHabtamu@ippf.org)>

**Sent:** Thursday, March 19, 2020 3:06 PM

**To:** [getachewh@fgaeet.org](mailto:getachewh@fgaeet.org)

**Subject:** Meeting minutes

Date: 19/03/2020

Venue: Executive Director Office

- Agenda of the meeting
  1. Update sharing on WISH project extension
  2. MOU country manager hosting arrangement (office set up, furniture's, stationaries, printers and office utilities)
  3. Low budget utilization for instance in February forecast is around 134,000 USD but only 34,000 USD utilized (this needs his immediate action)
  4. WISH project sites expansion and consolidation measures
  5. Additional project staff recruitment Cluster managers and community engagement officer
  6. The new restructuring measures and accountability line set may have negative impact on the project performance needs immediate corrective measures

#### Points from my side

1. As per the follow up advise from the hub, there is no need to get supportive letter from MOH, rather we should focus on updating the decision makers at MOH and organizing the event for performance presentation with partners
2. The MOU sent 7 months ago, but it is not finalized yet kindly address it the soonest possible, the country manager office needs to be equipped with document shelf, printer, table and chair, stationaries and water
3. As discussed earlier the budget utilization is still the main concern, in addition to the ongoing effort the finance team and the WISH project management team should sit together to revise the budget and advise the area offices accordingly
4. Concerning WISH project sites expansion, the general understanding from the IPPF side is, expansion is possible outside the existing WISH sites, but priority should be given to consolidate where we are now and the proposed potential sites planned in phase II and nearby potential sites should get a priority before we move to other regions
5. One major out put left without adequate staffing, this has been communicated to FGAE by the hub, it is not possible to justify the value for money while we have only one staff under this output and he is also detached from the actual field activities, for this reason it is difficult to say we have clear demand creation activities at the field level
6. There was a communication shared from the head office about systemic structuring of the WISH project with the existing FGAE structure, the team looks offended about this the below are the points raised

- This exercise was not done in consultation with the WISH management team
- The accountability line put in percentage, but this is not acceptable, the WISH team (program and support) at area office level should report to the WISH coordinator as before
- The SBCC manager accountability line is not clear, when the COP has only administrative line of responsibility
- The accountability line between the technical advisor/manager and the clinical advisor should be clarified, basically the TA reporting to the COP, at this stage of the project it will be difficult to the clinical director to handle WISH project it will be more advisable if their relationship is dot line and Negash should continue reporting to the COP, however Negash and the Clinical director can discuss and propose anything they feel relevant for better integration
- The accountability line between COP and other program and support team should not be limited to administrative line(administration is one of the operation support function) but the COP role is overall management of program and operation support function, it will be better if we keep it as it is. Additionally, the technical link between SBCC, Finance and M&E should be maintained in dot line for better integration
- There is a general feeling that the existing project structure should be maintained

### Concerns from my side

#### Option 1(May be missed opportunity)

- If the project was designed as a standalone project under FGAE up to field level, however not sure the possibility at the commencement of the project.

#### Option 2(again missed opportunity)

- If there was clear integration of WISH under FGAE existing system from the very beginning (Not sure this is applicable at this time)

#### Option 3

- There should be systemic integration, through consultative process (This is happening now)
- This exercise should consider the following
  - It should be consultative
  - The exercise should have added value to show FGAE better capacity
  - Should increase our level of competency and performance
  - Should address the current need at area office level, some of them
    - There is a confusion on accountability, in line with FGAE SOP
    - There is huge potential at area office level but not utilized properly
    - The project activity also needs close follow up in addition to remote support, in this case area office management engagement is highly needed
    - Some area offices already have their own experience, this can be taken as a lesson
    - All related decisions should focus on project deliverables and strengthening the system

Note: There is a possibility to approach the hub to organize experience sharing visit with other MAs(Uganda), after Corona

## Agreed points after the meeting

1. In the 1<sup>st</sup> agenda it is agreed on the following
  - Organizing a brief meeting with MCH Directorate director by next week
  - Facilitating the agreement issues with PCD department MOH (Girma and Adenew)
  - Contacting the Oromia health bureau and facilitate the agreement issues, the operational plan specific to Oromia is ready
2. The Ed already discuss this issue with Girma, the document to be shared to him for his final decision
3. The budget utilization has been a concern, this is already discussed with Girma. There are some efforts under progress however Girma and finance team should work on the detailed budget consumption and developing tracking system. (This was a discussion point with Abok, he will share the action points)
4. The SMT decided to expand to new regions, in area offices where FGAE is operational, the following are agreed
  - To consolidate our action first in the existing sites including sites planned in phase II and the nearby locations, this will be supported by immediate hiring of the cluster managers and community engagement officers and supporting of the private and public health facilities
  - The agreed sites for new regions by SMT and WISH project management will be in action in consultation with the respective area offices management
5. Girma already submitted the cluster manager's needs, but the one for youth and community engagement officer was not requested after discussion the ED agreed to hire staff for this post at least for central and South area offices. Girma should follow up on this
6. For the systemic restructuring, if there is a concern from the team the SMT is willing to look at it, the following are action points
  - To brainstorm with the SMT and area management about the decision and mainly its importance
  - To work on the clarification of the shared letter and addressing team concerns in a consultative manner
  - There will be team and individual meeting as needed, however the team should understand the need