

# Credocast

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## SPEAK SO THEY HEAR

### Communicating is Governance

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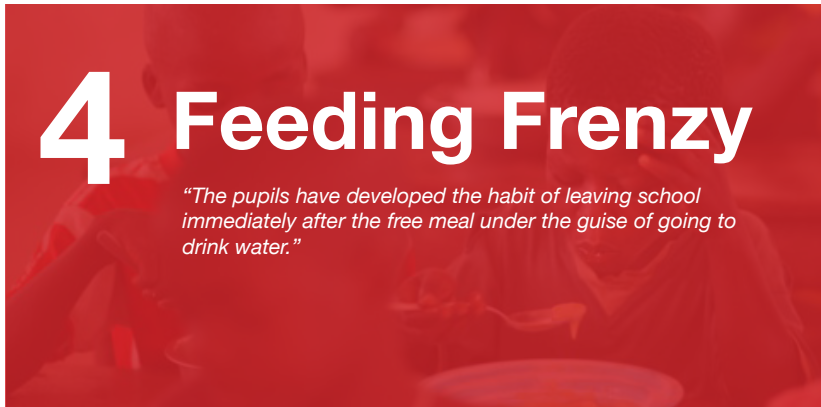
*From Word Count to Vote Count*



# Failure to Launch

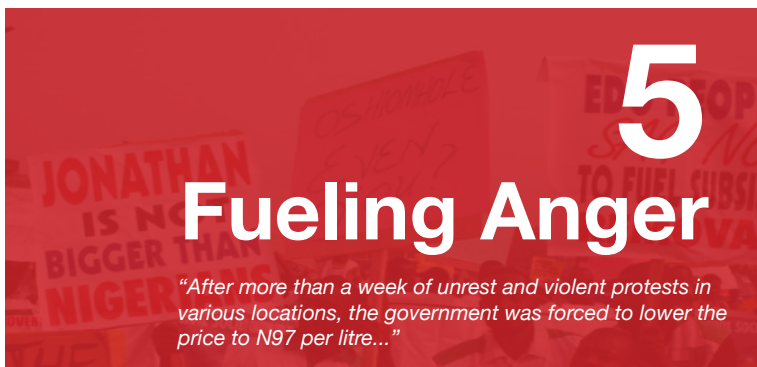
*"People are dying because we can't communicate in ways that allow us to understand one another..."*

# 3



# 4 Feeding Frenzy

*"The pupils have developed the habit of leaving school immediately after the free meal under the guise of going to drink water."*



# 5 Fueling Anger

*"After more than a week of unrest and violent protests in various locations, the government was forced to lower the price to N97 per litre..."*



# Publicizing Change

*The slogan was tailored to Nigeria's need for change particularly at a moment when the public had to decide continuity of failure or "Change" for the better.*

# 6



# Communicating is Governance

*Democracy can be marred when communication is insincere, scarce or inept.*

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## About Credo Advisory

Credo Advisory is a strategic communications firm that specializes in designing and implementing strategic, operational and tactical communications initiatives. We provide a full suite of communications support to our clients, which include public communications and advocacy, government relations, media relations, crisis communications, digital communications, and capacity building.

Our mission is to develop bespoke communications products, activities and campaigns built on knowledge, research and industry insights. With our ability to communicate effectively with diverse audiences and stakeholder groups, Credo's mission is to provide impactful strategic communications advisory from inception to implementation. At Credo, we committed to improving the way societies communicate.

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# Failure to Launch

“ Nigeria has embarked on a series of policies aimed at improving the quality of life of its citizens. However, due to many instances of flawed policy formation and implementation, the government has been unable to galvanize actions that will lead to sustainable development outcomes. ”



With the failure to launch concept of an aging rocket constrained by roots as a metaphor, the Nigerian government has been unsuccessful in “launching” programmes that can unleash Nigeria’s economic and developmental potential. Much of this owes to the inability to strategically implement communications initiatives to drive these programmes as government activities are historically miscommunicated with conflicting messaging and rhetoric perceived to be contrary to national objectives.

*“People are dying because we can’t communicate in ways that allow us to understand one another, it sounds like an exaggeration, but I don’t think it is. When patients can’t relate to their doctors and don’t follow their orders, when engineers can’t convince a town that the dam could break, when a parent can’t win the trust of a child to warn her off a lethal drug. They can all be headed for a serious ending.”* Alda, A (2017)<sup>1</sup>

This thought piece is a concise analysis of government activities in Nigeria; highlighting challenges and successes particularly in translating programme benefits into welfare improvements for citizens and economic development. Specifically, it assesses the role of strategic communications as a critical (and often under-utilized) component of government programmes.

The term “strategic communications” has become increasingly relevant over the past two decades.<sup>2</sup> While it has no single universal meaning, Steve. T (2008) defines strategic communications as a “systematic series of sustained and coherent activities, conducted across strategic, operational and tactical levels, that enables understanding of target audiences and, identifies effective conduits to promote and sustain particular types of behaviour.”<sup>3</sup> To properly define strategic communications in the context of governance, it is a blueprint of procedures aimed at influencing a change in stakeholder behaviour by raising awareness on policy and programme activities.<sup>4</sup> Strategic communications also refers to the process of addressing alignment challenges with key stakeholders or hostile public opinion.<sup>5</sup>

Globally, the overarching objective of government programmes is to drive the human resource development process, foster sustainable economic growth and social infrastructure.<sup>6</sup> Following years of economic stagnation, Nigeria has embarked on a series of policies aimed at improving the quality of life of its citizens. However, due to many instances of flawed policy formation and implementation, the government has been unable to galvanize actions that will lead to sustainable development outcomes.

<sup>1</sup> Alda, A (2017) Helping Scientists Learn to Talk to the Rest of us. Available from: <https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2017/06/04/531271710/alan-aldas-experiment-helping-scientists-learn-to-talk-to-the-rest-of-us>

<sup>2</sup> IDEA. What is strategic communications? Available from: <http://www.idea.org/blog/2011/03/16/what-is-strategic-communications/>

<sup>3</sup> Steve, T (2008) Strategic Communications: A Primer, ARAG Special Series 8/28, Defence Academy of the United Kingdom

<sup>4</sup> Cecilia, C.V (2009) Building Commitment to Reform through Strategic Communication: The Five Key Decisions. Available from: <https://issuu.com/world.bank.publications/docs/9780821376218>

<sup>5</sup> Huma, H, Claire, M, Zoe, S (2011) Communication and Governance. Available from: <http://gsdrc.org/topic-guides/communication-and-governance/communication-for-governance-reform/>

<sup>6</sup> World Finance (2016) Public Sector Reforms in Nigeria. Available from: <http://www.eiiff.com/economy-reform/nigeria/public-sector.html>



# Feeding Frenzy

## The Kaduna State School Feeding Programme

“ Kaduna state decided against the majority decision to pilot the SFP in a few schools before launching it across all government schools. ”

In 2016, the Kaduna State government launched the School Feeding Programme (SFP) as an ambitious and speedy attempt to increase access to education in the state. Many questioned the motive behind this programme as the state lacks the capacity to sustainably implement the programme to meet its core objectives. More so, the state's education sector has critical challenges (i.e. teachers low capacity and motivation, substandard infrastructural facilities, etc.) that were deprioritized for the SFP<sup>7</sup>.

The programme's objective was to provide free, compulsory education using free food as an incentive across all the state government schools in Kaduna. At programme inception, the state spent over N300 million weekly on food.<sup>8</sup> Needless to say, the scheme to increase school enrolment by incentivizing children with food worked beyond expectations in the beginning with record attendance all over the state. However, it was short lived as it was later reported by Vanguard Newspaper on the March 15, 2016; “*The Kaduna State Government expresses concern over the desertion of schools by primary pupils after taking the free meal offered them. The pupils have developed the habit of leaving school immediately after the free meal under the guise of going to drink water.*”

To implement the SFP, the Kaduna State Government reserved 35% of its budget for the primary tenants of the programme, which include; teachers training, provision of books and infrastructural facilities for schools, free and compulsory education for all. As part of the consultative process for the policy development, the state government conducted engagements with high-level government officials, particularly, the Vice President and assessed the challenges and successes of the SFP in Osun state where the programme had also been implemented.

However, Kaduna state decided against the majority decision to pilot the SFP in a few schools before launching it across all government schools in Kaduna State.<sup>9</sup> Upon commencement, the SFP boosted pupil enrolment to 1,590,859 from the initial 1,007,096 prior to the programme launch.<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, success was transient as the Kaduna SFP is currently on temporary suspension due to financial constraints while over 65% of pupils have stopped attending school.<sup>11</sup>

### *Is Food Enough Motivation to Learn?*

Significant strategic communications gaps in Kaduna's SFP design contributed to its failure. First, the programme's inability to achieve its strategic goals could have been circumvented by conducting extensive analysis of other school feeding programmes, advantages, risks, best practices, and then assessing the best option for implementation in Kaduna. Second, consensus building stakeholder engagements should have been scaled down to local communities, opposition groups, parent and teacher groups to better support policy efforts and align vested interests in the value of education. Third, conducting town halls mediated by third party advocates, focus groups and anonymous surveys with the parents to determine their level of commitment, their own parenting goals and if they supported Government efforts to increase literacy - for example. Fourth, designing and implementing an inclusive feeding programme (with a supporting communications campaign) in phases with close alignment with of civil society groups, religious organizations, parent and student groups and key influencers in Northern Nigeria.

<sup>7</sup> Vahyala, A.T (2016) The Opportunity Cost of Public Expenditure of Kaduna State: A Case of Free Feeding Policy in Public Primary Schools. Global Journal of Human-Social Science: E Economics Volume 16 Issue 2 Version 1.0

<sup>8</sup> Vahyala, A.T (2016) The Opportunity Cost of Public Expenditure of Kaduna State: A Case of Free Feeding Policy in Public Primary Schools. Global Journal of Human-Social Science: E Economics Volume 16 Issue 2 Version 1.0

<sup>9</sup> Bar Baric (2016) Governor El-Rufai Analyzes The Kaduna State School Feeding Programme Available from: <https://www.barbaric.com.ng/governor-el-rufai-analyzes-kaduna-state-school-feeding-programme/>

<sup>10</sup> Bar Baric (2016) Governor El-Rufai Analyzes The Kaduna State School Feeding Programme Available from: <https://www.barbaric.com.ng/governor-el-rufai-analyzes-kaduna-state-school-feeding-programme/>

<sup>11</sup> Africa Prime News (2017) Over 65% Of pupils in Kaduna school quit schooling after government suspended free feeding program. Available from: <https://www.africaprimenews.com/2017/02/23/news/nigeria-over-65-of-pupils-in-kaduna-school-quit-schooling-after-government-suspended-free-feeding-program/>



# Fueling Anger

## Fuel Subsidy Removal, 2012

“ While this government policy and its justification were deemed valid and long overdue by economists in Nigeria and abroad, the policy formulation process and implementation were not sufficiently transparent, inclusive and lacked empathy; hence the resultant public discord. ”

In January 2012, the Federal Government under the Goodluck Jonathan administration announced the removal of the fuel subsidy without giving the citizens sufficient warning. The announcement was welcomed with national and international protests that birthed several non-conformist movements, notably, Occupy Nigeria, with nearly all economic activity stopped in Lagos, Ibadan, and Kano.<sup>12</sup>

While this government policy and its justification were deemed valid and long overdue by economists in Nigeria and abroad, the policy formulation process and implementation were not sufficiently transparent, inclusive and lacked empathy; hence the resultant public discord. In reaction to the nationwide protests and strikes, the government explained (after the fact) that the fuel subsidy removal would free up funds for health and infrastructure projects, and by extension benefit the economy.<sup>13</sup>

After more than a week of unrest and violent protests in various locations, the government was forced to lower the price to N97 per litre instead of the N114 that was initially planned. This was a clear defeat for the government as its attempt to stimulate economic growth by diverting needed funding to key sectors failed fantastically.

Situating this from a communications perspective; the impromptu, opaque and non-consultative removal of the subsidy removal was a political risk that further aggravated the erosion of support for Jonathan's administration<sup>14</sup>. Considering public perception, past fuel subsidy removals have yielded no benefits to the country due to corruption and misappropriation, as a result, Nigerians distrust that government can responsibly spend the funds on other public services as claimed.

### Communicating More to Cost Less

The Federal Government should have initiated the policy process by first engaging and including key stakeholders in the policy design. This would have enabled the government to foresee and mitigate the global protests that followed the announcement. Second, communicating the policy objective through extensive awareness sensitization by facilitating consensus building consultations and participatory workshops with key influencers would enable Nigerians to understand, align and even support government's strategic decision. Third, publicizing the policy's key performance indicators, transparently measuring progress and ensuring accountability would demonstrate the government's commitment to proper governance; something that it has historically failed to do.<sup>15</sup>

These measures would over time help build the eroded trust in government and in the medium term alleviate the economic strain of having to pay more for diesel as the impact of diverted funds become more tangible and evident. A fourth strategy would be to reduce the subsidy incrementally to minimize the immediate economic shock on the public – based on data driven national surveys and research-based consultations. Incremental approaches work well in democratic political contexts to build up support and mitigate opposition.<sup>16</sup> This approach could have been welcome grudgingly by the public, however, conducting critical consultations and data driven public surveying would have provided greater insight on the most viable way forward.

<sup>12</sup> Global Non-Violent Action Database (2012) Nigerians Protest the Removal of Fuel Subsidy 2012. Available from: <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/nigerians-protest-removal-fuel-subsidy-2012>

<sup>13</sup> Global Non-Violent Action Database (2012) Nigerians Protest the Removal of Fuel Subsidy 2012. Available from: <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/nigerians-protest-removal-fuel-subsidy-2012>

<sup>14</sup> Global Non-Violent Action Database (2012) Nigerians Protest the Removal of Fuel Subsidy 2012. Available from: <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/nigerians-protest-removal-fuel-subsidy-2012>

<sup>15</sup> Vanguard (2012) Fuel subsidy removal: A Nigerian Dilemma Available from: <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2012/01/fuel-subsidy-removal-a-nigerian-dilemma/>

<sup>16</sup> Mark, R (2005) Managing Successful Governance Reforms. Lessons of Design and Implementation Prem Learning Week Presentation



All Progressives Congress (APC) rally



People's Democratic Party (PDP) rally

# Publicizing Change

## The 2015 Presidential Elections

“ APC utilized both traditional and digital media to consistently sensitize Nigerians with the “change messaging” and disseminated their ideas through extensive stakeholder engagements, social media campaigns and zonal sensitization rallies with youths, artisans, business leaders, religious leaders, women associations and community leaders, including meeting with a former British Prime Minister and getting his endorsement. ”

For the first time in the history of elections in Nigeria, an incumbent president (President Goodluck Jonathan) was defeated by the opposition candidate (President Muhammadu Buhari). This was no easy feat, as President Goodluck’s party, People’s Democratic Party (PDP), had been the ruling party since the restoration of Nigeria’s democracy in 2000. Notwithstanding, President Buhari’s party, All Progressives Congress (APC), achieved the near impossible. How? Many political scientists contend by unleashing the power of communicating strategically with a disenfranchised populace looking for a viable alternative.

Interestingly, it was Buhari’s fourth attempt running for the highest political office in Nigeria. This time around, learning from previous unsuccessful bids and past mistakes, his team infused younger politically and technologically savvy delegates to drive his campaign.<sup>17</sup> The APC campaign leveraged digital communications to disseminate a narrative that Nigerians were all too happy to accept because it appeared to be the only narrative. PDP’s campaigning wasn’t nearly as robust or aggressive – many felt it was non-existent. In actuality, public perception was that the incumbent wasn’t fully committed to retaining his presidency or was relying too much on the power of his incumbency to win votes.

### From Word Count to Vote Count

The APC media machinery ran a memorable and dynamic “Change” campaign, which ran over 9 months. Their campaign slogan fit perfectly with their mandate to dethrone the incumbent party’s 16 years rule with little to show in over a decade and a half<sup>18</sup>. The slogan was tailored to Nigeria’s need for change particularly at a moment when the public had to decide continuity of failure or “Change” for the better. The presidential candidate was branded as the people’s General, “Sai Baba” who will curb the incessant corruption and indiscipline in the country.

The campaign team fostered a collaboration of key political players, influencers, youth representatives, international pressure groups, party members with strong financial and technical support, etc. who joined forces with the opposition party, making it the biggest opposition party in Nigeria. APC utilized both traditional and digital media to consistently sensitize Nigerians with the “change messaging” and disseminated their ideas through extensive stakeholder engagements, social media campaigns and zonal sensitization rallies with youths, artisans, business leaders, religious leaders, women associations and community leaders, including meeting with a former British Prime Minister and getting his endorsement.

These strategic communications efforts paid off on election day, when Nigerians exercised their right to vote by voting for “Change” which they deemed as the only option to move Nigeria forward.

<sup>17</sup> African Start Up (2015) Win it like Buhari: 5 startup lessons to take away from Nigerian elections. Available from: <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/09/africa/startup-lessons-nigerian-election-buhari-campaign/index.html>

<sup>18</sup> Muhammed, M (2015) Reasons Why APC Won The 2015 Presidential Elections. Available from: <https://www.abusidiqu.com/reasons-why-apc-won-the-2015-presidential-elections-by-muhammad-malumfashi/>

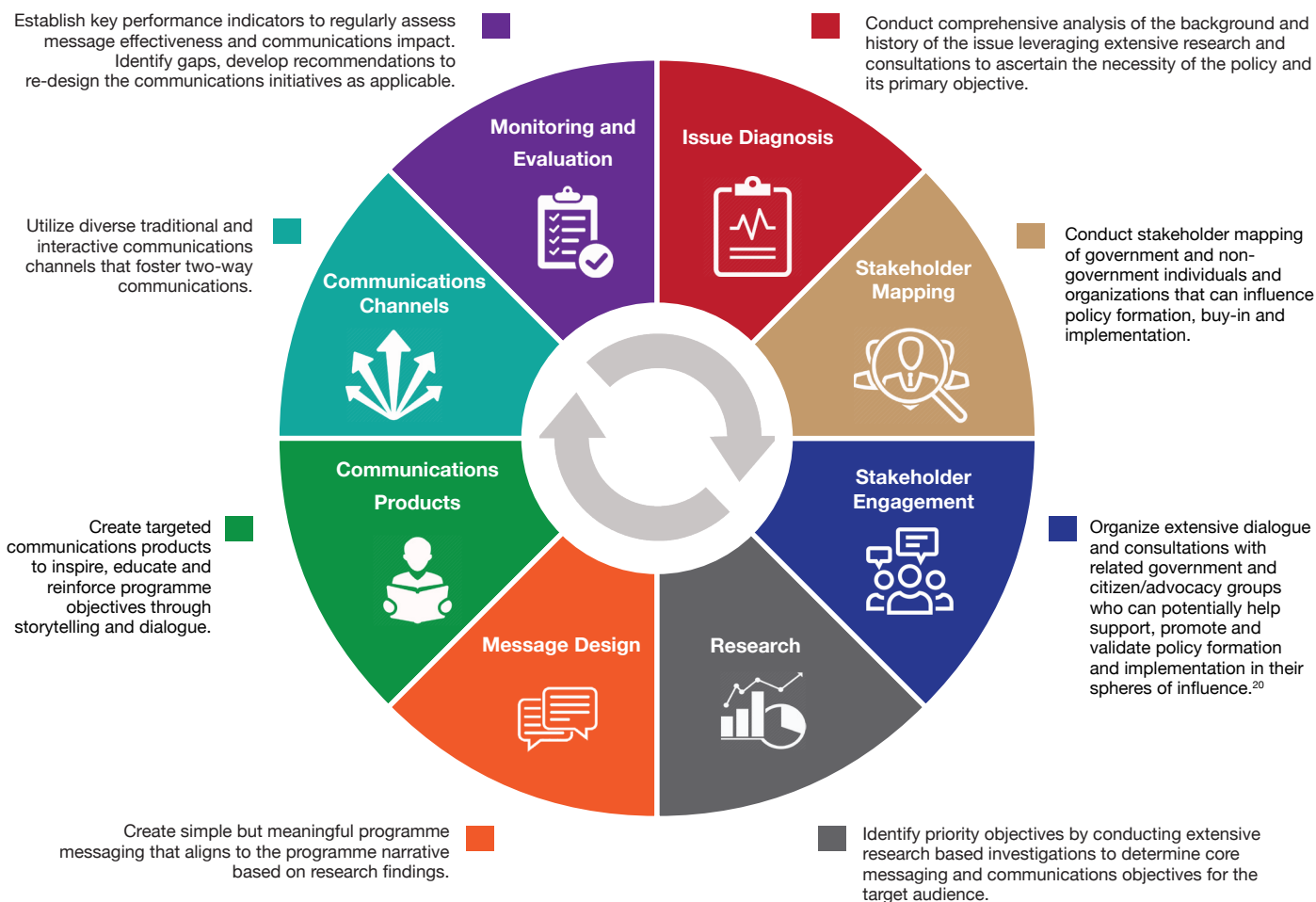
# Communicating is Governance

“ *What approaches exist for shaping programme narratives to build sustained, productive relationships between the government and the people?* ”

Democracy can be marred when communication is insincere, scarce or inept<sup>19</sup>. So, how can the government transcend the traditional framework of target audiences and messaging to address the complex structures at the centre of our societal problems? What approaches exist for shaping programme narratives to build sustained, productive relationships between the government and the people?

Drawing from the case studies discussed here, it is safe to say that transparency in public administration and stakeholder involvement in policy formation and implementation are tenets of good governance. These elements require strong and decisive communications approaches to successfully implement policies to national and international stakeholders.

## Credo Communications Cycle



Credo Advisory does not conclude that strategic communications is a silver bullet for government policy and governance challenges. Rather, it advocates for a much-needed proactive and integrated communications framework for every government initiative and at every stage of national policy formation and implementation.

<sup>19</sup> Paul, C; Julian, L. F; Claire, Y (2011) Strategic Communications and National Strategy. A Chatham House Report.

<sup>20</sup> Ravi, K(2015) Good communication strategy is essential for good governance. Available from: <http://blogs.worldbank.org/governance/good-communication-strategy-essential-good-governance>