External Relations Working Group

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1. Identify our key strengths and how we can build on them in the future

- Good to look at what has been indicated as our key strengths by external reviewers → reputation, reliability, independence
- Analysis and commentary
- Contribution to greater discussion
- Our brand (note that it helps to reinforce our reputation, but it needs a foundation)
- Dedicated and qualified staff
- Our high ranking among other similar organizations; this is a powerful position that needs to be preserved
- A global network of more than 22 000 contacts in our contact database, over 4000 followers on both Facebook and Twitter and over 300 partners in our library exchange programme
- Our global spanning partnerships with other institutions and their desire to cooperate with us.

2. Identify key challenges in how we operate today and identify concrete and constructive ways of addressing them

- Financing and its implications for external relations:
  - Keeping our SIPRI identity in the face of having to seek external funding and comply with donor wishes is a big challenge
  - How do we preserve our position at the top of the list of global think tanks (i.e. preserve our reputation)? This costs money. How do we do this most efficiently? Short-term financial gain shouldn't be detrimental to long-term brand name
  - Financial constraints sometime limit us to free ware in several of our technical solutions.
  - Too little funding to make the Yearbook travel the world with more onsite events in the regions
- Our governing board is today not utilized to its full capacity – needs to be improved in the future.
- Our lack of an alumni network makes out a challenge for SIPRI.

- o What is the ideal way of utilizing our alumni network? Big potential both for using them as communication agents as well as feeding back into our research; potential partners for fundraising
- Accessibility of publications (i.e. being able to access long history of SIPRI work and not just the most recent stuff with a lot of hits)
  - o Consider possibilities to integrate with larger, more accessed/more accessible databases
  - o However, important to note that SIPRI publications tend to have a longer shelf life – many books that are years old are still being sold
  - o Many seem to actively seek out SIPRI publications due to our reputation, but for those whom don't, how can we better ensure that our stuff falls into their laps?

- A lot of times the message we're sending out is very fragmented and we need to focus on which audiences we are trying to reach and refine our strategies accordingly
- Our low rankings in the Global Think Tank Index for 'use of media' and 'significant impact on policy'. Their methodology is unclear, but it's important to understand how we're perceived. Given that one of the goals of SIPRI publications is policy-relevance, and given that the two areas where we are ranked relatively low (media and policy impact) are related, how can we improve?

3. Suggest two-three key actions that could be part of the activities of this theme during the next six-twelve months. Continue a list of activities and list them in order of priority

1. Devise an external relations strategy with staff buy in, containing:

- Keeping 'external relations' in mind from the very beginning to the end of a project to increase overall impact
  - o Encourage Researchers to try to incorporate enough funding into an initial grant proposal to promote the final work products in relevant forums that would help increase the impact of the project and also strengthen SIPRI's external relations (i.e. treaty review meetings and side-events, topical conferences, SIPRI-led seminars, etc)

  - o Devise "template" publication/communication plans for prospective projects --- not a single, one-size-fits-all plan, but a variety that depend on the project type and the intended audience. The plans would suggest a rough timetable for publication and communication activity through the life of the project, and should be easily integrated into project proposals.

  - o Programmes should be responsible for content but Communications should have control for leading the strategy in how we promote this

content, i.e. via media, website, etc.

- o Investigate how SIPRI publications can be made more visible and accessible in channels not yet used - perhaps with a focus on universities as we seem to have some work to do in that area. Are there databases/portals etc where SIPRI's publications could be uploaded - Worldcat, Repec/Swopec, others. Costs, workload to be taken into account
- o Our publically accessible databases make us distinctive from our competitors. Can we do more to promote this core SIPRI work? Can we demonstrate this data more visually on our website? How about making a promotional video on our databases and adding it to our website and SIPRI YouTube channel?
    - Our library's resources could be made further available to external researchers
    - Digitalizing of library archive?

2. Creation of an alumni network:

- Develop better contact with the SIPRI Alumni - set up a LinkedIn group...but only after we have a solid "maintenance" plan for how to handle and develop this in a way that is meaningful both to SIPRI and to the alumni.
    - o Send at least one introductory email to all former colleagues inviting them to connect
    - o Task a group of 3 volunteers to map our peers alumni programme in detail until end of 2013

CAR PARK IDEAS
- Many high profile diplomatic and political figures visit Sweden every year and in the past SIPRI has had some high profile visits but not any more. Could SIPRI on a regular basis invite such visitors to give a talk here at SIPRI and indeed learn about the work we do? Can we co-operate more with the Swedish MFA about this?
- Appoint a "network liason officer" in each research team (programme or project) who will be connecting with the communications team, these network liason officers will:
    - o Bridge the new contacts / networks of their teams to the com team to make sure these contacts and networks are part of the overall SIPRI output systems
    - o Contribute ideas of relevant networks to the com team to include in their output channels
    - o Meet monthly among themselves to discuss global and group coverage of the networks
    - o These people are junior research staff and their assignment would be on a 5% basis i.e. 2 hours a week / 1 day a month working time.

- Profile each member of the SIPRI Governing Board via social media and the

SIPRI website (interviews, videos, essays, statements, photos, tweets)

4. Explain how your theme relates to the vision of SIPRI – comment on the vision from our point of view – and – draft a text that could go into a 3-5 year work plan.

Draft text for a 3-5 year work plan:
SIPRI will continuously work on improving and enlarging its external relations.

Concrete 1-year aims:
- Encourage Researchers to try to incorporate enough funding into an initial grant proposal to promote the final work products in relevant forums that would help increase the impact of the project and also strengthen SIPRI's external relations
- Devise "template" publication/communication plans for prospective projects --- not a single, one-size-fits-all plan, but a variety that depend on the project type and the intended audience.
- Develop better contact with the SIPRI Alumni - set up a LinkedIn group...but only after we have a solid "maintenance" plan for how to handle and develop this in a way that is meaningful both to SIPRI and to the alumni.
    - o Send at least one introductory email to all former colleagues inviting them to connect – within two months
    - o Task a group of 3 volunteers to map our peers alumni programme in detail until end of 2013 – within two months

3-5 year aims:
- Investigate how SIPRI publications can be made more visible and accessible in channels not yet used - perhaps with a focus on universities as we seem to have some work to do in that area.
- Our publically accessible databases make us distinctive from our competitors.
    - o How about making a promotional video on our databases and adding it to our website and SIPRI YouTube channel?
        - ▪ Our library's resources could be made further available to external researchers
        - ▪ Digitalizing of library archive?
- Car park Ideas

5. Report a few 'crazy' ideas

- SIPRI should approach an artist, painter, singer or similar as a carrier of its vision. This person needs to be carefully chosen but the idea would be that the artist work of that person embodies and carries across SIPRI's values.

- Researchers could present to a remote audience via webinar on recently completed publications/projects, or they could simply give topical

presentations related to current events. These presentations could be 'invite only' if we want to reach a more targeted audience, or they could be open to the public. For open sessions, we could possibly post announcements for upcoming webinars on the website to allow participants to register in advance. This could be a good way for us to reach a wider audience with our work/messages,

- o Low cost in terms of software solutions
- o Examples: Anymeeting (http://www.anymeeting.com/) or Global Meet (https://www.globalmeet.com/).

Appendix – SIPRI External Relations Map

SIPRI External Relations Map

- Who gets the message *(number of +'s indicates how effective we are in reaching that audience)*
    - Researchers +++
    - Governments, policymakers, & diplomats +++
    - Media +++
    - Public ++
    - Funders +
    - Competitors ++
    - Partners (NGOs ect) +?
    - Teachers and students ++
    - Governing board +
    - Alumni

- Who communicates
    - Researchers
    - Communicators and Editors
    - Governing board
    - Director and Deputy Director
    - Associated Researchers
    - Alumni

- Where the message goes
    - *Sweden*
    - *USA*
    - *China*
    - Europe
    - English-speaking world
    - Other yearbook audiences (Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Ukrainian)
    - Rest

- How we communicate
    - Website
    - Publications
    - Media – Newspapers-TV
    - Social Media
    - Mailings
    - Workshops
        - Researcher to researcher
        - In-house events
    - Governing board