Communicating Triratna to the World

A Report of Plenary Feedback at the IC Zoom Meeting 27-29 September 2024

Please note that this report has been prepared by Arthavadin with the assistance of AI software based on information provided at the IC meeting plenaries on the 28th and 29th September 2024 as well as feedbackers' written notes.   Please see Appendix 1 below (p12 - 30) for the original feedback that informs this report .

Executive summary

The IC wants Triratna to use external communications to:

- **Reach a wider audience:** targeting people from diverse backgrounds and cultures
- **Build a stronger Triratna community/Sangha:** fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging engagement
- **Demonstrate relevance and impact:** showcasing the benefits of Triratna's teachings and how they can address real-world concerns
- **Enhance online presence:** leveraging technology to reach a wider audience and build a strong online community

Key areas of focus include:

- **Communicating core values and teachings:** promoting Sangharakshita's vision, Triratna's values, and the benefits of Dharma practice
- **Highlighting personal transformation and community:** emphasising the potential for personal growth, community, and meaningful relationships
- **Ensuring accessibility and inclusivity:** communicating in ways that are welcoming to everyone interested in the Dharma

- **Demonstrating relevance and impact:** connecting Triratna's teachings to people's lives and promoting positive change
- **Maintaining authenticity and integrity:** remaining true to Triratna's core principles and avoiding inauthenticity

To achieve these goals, Triratna needs to:

- **Develop a strategic plan:** establish a dedicated communications leadership team, align with Triratna's overall goals, and create a comprehensive plan
- **Invest in human resources**: leverage existing digital and other communications skills within Triratna, provide training, and build a talent pool of communicators
- **Strengthen Triratna's 'brand':** develop a consistent message, establish a strong brand identity, and create targeted messaging
- **Implement a digital strategy:** enhance Triratna's online presence, create high-quality content, and utilise digital tools
- **Engage with the community beyond Triratna:** reach out to local communities, form partnerships, and involve community members

For the upcoming IC meeting in India, the focus should be on:

- **Prioritising specific communication areas:** identifying and focusing on the most impactful aspects of communications
- **Ensuring sustainability:** securing funding for communications and utilising existing resources effectively
- **Clarifying the IC's role:** defining the IC's mandate and authority in guiding communications
- **Addressing the digital divide:** educating IC members on digital trends and bridging the current knowledge gap
- **Adopting a positive approach:** focusing on building upon existing communications strengths and achievements
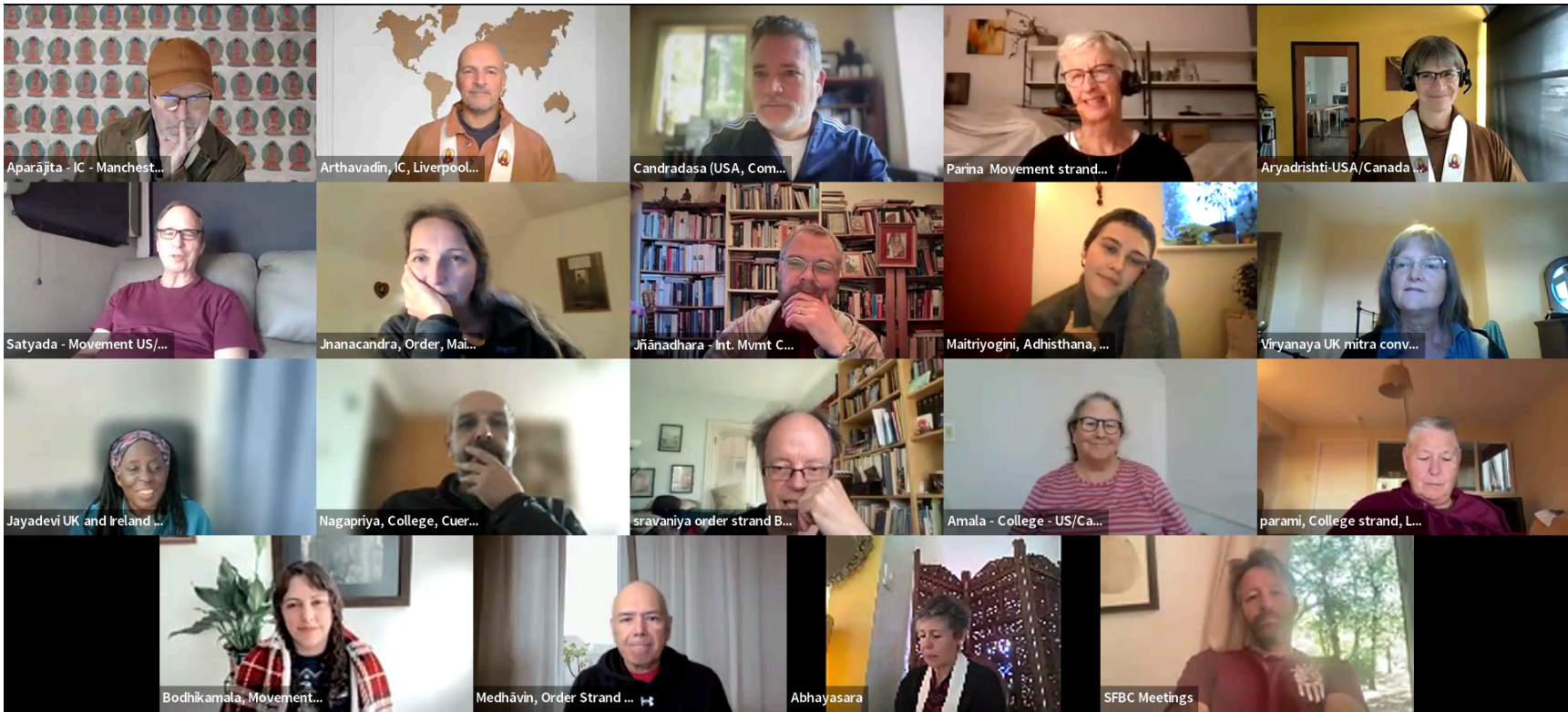
Full Report (more detailed information)

1.What exactly do we want Triratna's external communications to achieve? (What outcomes?)

The following responses are from mixed Area and Strand groupings.

1.1. Accessibility and Inclusivity:

- reaching a diverse audience: targeting people from various backgrounds, ages, and cultures
- using accessible language: employing secular terms and avoiding jargon to ensure broad understanding
- offering multiple communication channels: utilising various platforms and methods to cater to different preferences
- considering cultural nuances: adapting communications to resonate with different cultural contexts
- promoting inclusivity: creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone interested in the Dharma

1.2. Community/sangha Building:

- encouraging engagement: inviting individuals to join the Triratna community
- fostering a sense of belonging: creating a welcoming and supportive environment
- building relationships: emphasising the importance of kalyana mitrata, personal connection and community
- supporting local centres: promoting the role of Triratna centres in building community
- encouraging peer-to-peer connections: facilitating interactions among community members

1.3. Relevance and Impact:

- offering a transformative path: presenting Triratna's teachings as a meaningful and life-changing journey
- highlighting the benefits of Triratna practice: emphasising the positive outcomes of engaging with Sangharakhita's/Triratna's teachings and community
- demonstrating impact: sharing stories of individuals who have benefited from Triratna
- addressing real-world concerns: responding to people's suffering and offering solutions
- promoting positive change: contributing to a more ethical and compassionate world

1.4. Online Presence and Focused Digital Approach:

- leveraging technology: utilising online platforms to reach a wider audience
- building a strong online community: fostering engagement and interaction online

- complementing in-person experiences: using online resources to support and enhance physical gatherings
- developing a comprehensive digital strategy: creating a cohesive plan for online communications
- ensuring quality online content: producing engaging and informative materials for digital platforms

2. What exactly do we want Triratna to communicate and why:

The following responses are from mixed Area and Strand groupings.

2.1. Core Values and Teachings:

- Sangharakshita's vision: communicating the essence of Sangharakshita's teachings and philosophy
- Triratna's values: emphasising the values of metta, kalyana mitrata, meaning, adventure, and aliveness
- Dharma practice: promoting the benefits and transformative potential of Dharma practice
- human values: connecting Triratna's teachings with universal human values
- ethical framework: offering a framework for ethical living and decision-making
- spiritual path: presenting Triratna as a path towards spiritual growth and enlightenment

2.2. Personal Transformation and Community/Sangha:

- personal growth: offering a path for personal development and transformation
- community and friendship: highlighting the importance of community, connection, and kalyana mitrata
- a sense of belonging: creating a welcoming and supportive environment
- shared purpose: inspiring a sense of shared purpose and meaning
- meaningful relationships: fostering deep and meaningful connections with others
- personal fulfilment: helping individuals find fulfilment and satisfaction in their lives

2.3. Accessibility and Inclusivity:

- attractive to all: communicate in ways that overcome biases against caste, nationality, class, age, and race
- reaching a diverse audience: targeting people from various backgrounds and perspectives
- using accessible language: employing clear and understandable language
- avoiding exclusivity: avoiding language or practices that may exclude certain individuals
- culturally sensitive communication: adapting communication styles to resonate with different cultural contexts
- inclusive practices: ensuring that Triratna's practices and communities are welcoming to everyone interested in the Dharma

2.4. Relevance and Impact:

- addressing real-world concerns: connecting Triratna's teachings to people's everyday lives and challenges
- offering practical solutions: providing guidance on how to apply Dharma principles in daily life
- demonstrating impact: sharing stories of personal transformation and positive change
- inspiring others: encouraging individuals to embark on their own transformative journeys
- contributing to a better world: promoting positive social change and a more compassionate society
- making a difference: inspiring individuals to make a positive impact on their communities and the world in line with the Dharma

2.5. Authenticity and Integrity:

- staying true to core principles: remaining committed to Triratna's foundational principles
- embodying values: living and exemplifying the values that Triratna wishes to communicate
- avoiding inauthenticity: avoiding superficial or scripted communication
- avoiding commercialisation: maintaining a focus on spiritual and ethical values rather than commercial interests
- authenticity in communication: communicating honestly and openly, without pretence or exaggeration
- integrity in practice: demonstrating integrity and ethical behaviour in all aspects of Triratna's activities

3. What actions need to be taken and by whom?

The following responses are from mixed Area and Strand groupings:

3.1. Strategic Planning and Coordination:

- definite communications leadership: establishing a dedicated team or coordinator to oversee external communications efforts
- alignment with Triratna's overall goals: ensuring that communications efforts are aligned with Triratna's broader mission and objectives
- strategic planning: developing a comprehensive communications strategy with clear goals and objectives
- regular evaluation and adjustment: continuously monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of communications efforts and making necessary adjustments
- cooperation: collaboration and coordination between and across Triratna structures and institutions to ensure a cohesive and integrated approach to communications
- shared best practices: creating a platform for sharing successful communications strategies and outcomes
- clear guidelines and resources: developing resources and training materials to support communications efforts

3.2. Human Resource and Skill Development:

- leveraging existing skills: identifying and utilising the communication skills of Triratna members
- training and development: providing training and resources to enhance communication skills, including writing, public speaking, social media, and digital marketing
- building a talent pool: identifying and nurturing potential communicators within the Triratna community, such as individuals with strong writing, storytelling, or design skills
- recognizing expertise: acknowledging and appreciating the contributions of skilled communicators, and providing

opportunities for their development
- creating a culture of communication: fostering a culture within Triratna that values effective communication and encourages open dialogue
- mentorship programs: establishing mentorship programs to pair experienced communicators with newer members, providing opportunities for knowledge transfer and skill development
- skill-based volunteering: encouraging members to volunteer their communication skills to support Triratna's efforts

3.3. Clear and Distinctive Triratna Identity ('Branding') and Messaging:

- consistent messaging: developing a clear and consistent message about Triratna's values, offerings, and 'unique selling points'
- effective branding: establishing a strong and recognizable Triratna brand identity, including a logo, tagline, and visual style
- brand guidelines: developing comprehensive brand guidelines to ensure consistency across all communication channels
- brand awareness campaigns: launching targeted campaigns to increase awareness of Triratna's brand and message
- targeted messaging: tailoring messages to specific audiences and contexts, using data-driven insights to identify the most effective messaging strategies
- storytelling: using storytelling techniques to convey Triratna's message in a compelling and engaging way

3.4. Digital Strategy and Technology:

- enhanced online presence: improving Triratna's website, social media, and other digital platforms to make them more user-friendly, visually appealing, and informative
- content creation: producing high-quality content, including videos, articles, podcasts, and infographics, that is relevant, engaging, and shareable
- digital tools and platforms: utilising effective digital tools and platforms to reach a wider audience, such as email marketing, social media advertising, and content management systems
- translation and localisation: ensuring that content is accessible in multiple languages to reach a global audience

- virtual events and communities: expanding the use of virtual events and online communities to connect with people who may not be able to attend in-person events
- data analytics: using data analytics to track website traffic, social media engagement, and other key metrics to inform communications strategies

3.5. Community Engagement and Partnerships:

- local outreach: engaging with local communities and organisations to build relationships and raise awareness of Triratna
- partnerships: collaborating with other organisations and individuals to amplify Triratna's message and reach a wider audience
- grassroots initiatives: supporting grassroots efforts and initiatives that align with Triratna's values and goals
- community-driven content: encouraging community members to create and share content, fostering a sense of ownership and engagement
- public relations: developing a proactive public relations strategy to build positive relationships with media outlets and key influencers
- community events: organising community events and activities to bring people together and build a sense of belonging
- volunteer programs: offering volunteer opportunities to involve community members in Triratna's activities and initiatives

4. How should the IC take forward its exploration of the theme of external communications at its meeting in India in 2025?

4.1.College Strand

- prioritise communication and collaboration: effective communication and collaboration among all stakeholders are

essential for progress

- address resource and funding issues: resolve challenges related to funding and resource allocation is crucial
- ensure transparency in decision-making: clear and transparent processes for decision-making, particularly regarding funding, are necessary
- align strategic priorities and funding: funding decisions should be aligned with the organisation's strategic goals
- build a positive online presence: continue efforts to create and maintain a positive online image for Sangharakshita
- learn from best practices: share and implement successful strategies from both movement and centre levels

4.2. Order Strand

- prioritise internal communication: strengthen communication within the Order to enhance understanding, support, and collaboration
- share resources and support: provide resources and support for chapters, members, and Centers to facilitate their work
- address funding and financial sustainability: explore ways to generate revenue and ensure adequate funding for communications and other initiatives
- adapt to evolving needs: recognize and address emerging needs within the Order and the wider world
- ensure accurate representation: promote a clear, positive, and accurate image of Sangharakshita and the Order, addressing misrepresentations
- leverage existing resources: utilise existing resources and combine them effectively to maximise impact
- foster a global perspective: consider the diverse needs and perspectives of different regions and cultures

4.3. Movement Strand

4.3.1. Prioritization and Focus:

- need for clear focus and direction to avoid repetitive discussions about communications
- prioritise communication areas based on impact and feasibility ("radically doable")
- focus on one or two key communication areas to make significant progress
- allocate resources strategically to the prioritised areas for maximum impact
- consider prioritising the various elements of the communications priority ("prioritisation within a prioritisation") by identifying resources already available and areas needing new resources

4.3.2. Sustainability and Resources:

- secure sustainable funding for prioritised communication activities
- utilise existing resources effectively, like TBCO

4.3.3. The Role and Influence of the International Council (IC):

- clarify the IC's mandate and authority in guiding Triratna's communications
- consider refining the IC communication priority to provide clearer direction for funding decisions
- explore whether to accept the IC's limited role in communication direction or pursue increased coordination

4.3.4.TBCO (Triratna Buddhist Community Website):

- evaluate the TBCO's funding and effectiveness
- decide whether or not to endorse and improve funding for TBCO

4.3.5. Preparation for IC Meeting in India:

- encourage preliminary thinking on communication issues within the IC membership to optimise meeting time
- frame the conversation with a clear starting point and concrete discussion topics

4.3.6.Communication Strategy:

- clearly define the problem with communication that needs addressing
- differentiate between various communication needs and propose solutions accordingly

- acknowledge the irony of not having an online/remote involvement for those not physically attending the IC meeting in India

4.3.7.Resource Management:

- strike a balance between funding new communication projects and maintaining existing valued activities
- explore how to maximise impact ("get more bang for our buck") with existing resources
- consider "what is more radically doable now" with available resources

4.3.8. Bridging the Digital Divide:

- educate IC members unfamiliar with the digital world on future trends in technology (AI) so that they are informed to make better decisions around communications

4.3.9. Addressing Tensions:

- identify and use existing tensions around communications as starting points for discussions and solutions at the meeting in India

4.3.10. Positive Approach:

- focus on how to build upon existing strengths and achievements, rather than dwelling on problems

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Appendix 1: Full Report with Original Plenary Feedback Data

Communicating Triratna to the World

A Summary Report of Plenary Feedback at the IC Zoom Meeting 27-29 September 2024.

Please note that this report has been prepared by Arthavadin with the assistance of AI software based on information provided at the IC meeting plenaries on the 28th and 29th September.

Executive summary

The IC wants Triratna to use external communications to:

- Reach a wider audience: Targeting people from diverse backgrounds and cultures.
- Build a stronger Triratna community/sangha: Fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging engagement.
- Demonstrate relevance and impact: Showcasing the benefits of Triratna's teachings and how they can address real-world concerns.
- Enhance online presence: Leveraging technology to reach a wider audience and build a strong online community.

Key areas of focus include:

- Communicating core values and teachings: Promoting Sangharakshita's vision, Triratna's values, and the benefits of Dharma practice.
- Highlighting personal transformation and community: Emphasising the potential for personal growth, community, and meaningful relationships.
- Ensuring accessibility and inclusivity: Communicating in ways that are welcoming to everyone.
- Demonstrating relevance and impact: Connecting Triratna's teachings to people's lives and promoting positive change.
- Maintaining authenticity and integrity: Remaining true to Triratna's core principles and avoiding inauthenticity.

To achieve these goals, Triratna needs to:

- Develop a strategic plan: Establish a dedicated team, align with Triratna's overall goals, and create a comprehensive plan.

- Invest in human resources: Leverage existing digital and other communications skills, provide training, and build a talent pool of communicators.
- Strengthen Triratna's brand: Develop a consistent message, establish a strong brand identity, and create targeted messaging.
- Implement a digital strategy: Enhance online presence, create high-quality content, and utilise digital tools.
- Engage with the community: Reach out to local communities, form partnerships, and involve community members.

For the upcoming IC meeting in India, the focus should be on:

- Prioritising specific communication areas: Identifying and focusing on the most impactful areas.
- Ensuring sustainability: Securing funding and utilising existing resources effectively.
- Clarifying the IC's role: Defining the IC's mandate and authority in guiding communications.
- Addressing the digital divide: Educating IC members on digital trends and bridging the gap.
- Adopting a positive approach: Focusing on building upon existing strengths and achievements.

What follows is a more detailed explanation of the above summary:

Mixed strand/area plenary feedback	Summary of reported themes
Amoghavajra's group: - We want to respond to people's suffering and their potential. - People are losing moral values and suffering because of that. Ethics helps us to be happier. - We can free ourselves from suffering - this is the law of karma. - We have found a purpose for life and we would like to offer it to others. - People in families are suffering because of a lack of good communication.	**1.What exactly do we want Triratna's external communications to achieve? (What outcomes?)** The following responses are from mixed Area and Strand groupings.

- Worldly things do not free us from suffering. Buddhism is a real alternative to capitalism, patriarchy and caste.
- We want communications that will meet the needs of all people of all ages and across all cultures.
- We would like to use secular words to communicate our values.
- We want to communicate in a variety of ways so that we can be understood by many different audiences.

Vajrashura's group:

- Attract people to practise with us, and those people helping us to change the world through sharing the Dharma.
  - Helping people who will commit to the vision of the Order.
- Changing the world just by affecting people through what we do.
  - Propagating messages of mindfulness and awareness to people, even if those people don't actually come along to our Centres.

Amogharatna:
- To get people into our Buddhist Centres – through the doors!
- Not possible to really have Sangha online. Online stuff points people to real concrete Buddhist Centres.

Suvarnadhi:
- Worth nurturing people who can do online Dharma teaching / debates online and then linking those people to Buddhist Centres.

Varadhi:
- Building Sangha online:
- Turkish Sangha have to meet largely online. Online can work well if people know people already, or if it's very regular over time. It doesn't fully replace in-person meetings. Online is a good support though.
- Sometimes the harder the conditions, the more the determination to practise and go to things (e.g. conditions in Turkey for spreading Dharma). Adversity can create really strong conditions for practice.

1.1. Accessibility and Inclusivity:

- Reaching a diverse audience: Targeting people from various backgrounds, ages, and cultures.
- Using accessible language: Employing secular terms and avoiding jargon to ensure broad understanding.
- Offering multiple communication channels: Utilising various platforms and methods to cater to different preferences.
- Considering cultural nuances: Adapting communications to resonate with different cultural contexts.
- Promoting inclusivity: Creating a welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone interested in the Dharma.

1.2. Community/sangha Building:

- Encouraging engagement: Inviting individuals to join the Triratna community.
- Fostering a sense of belonging: Creating a welcoming and supportive environment.
- Building relationships: Emphasising the importance of kalyana mitrata, personal connection and community.
- Supporting local centres: Promoting the role of Triratna centres in building community.
- Encouraging peer-to-peer connections: Facilitating interactions among community members.

Bodhivamsa:
- In Ipswich we employed someone in our Buddhist Centre for two years to work on attracting people through TikTok..
- Surveyed people who came along and the online presence hadn't made very much difference at all in people coming along.
  - Almost made no difference what we put out on social media.
  - Sangha tends to be younger and male.
- Changed our advertising and website to be more focused on men – e.g. images.
- Main pathway was word of mouth and then people looking at the website.
- Noticed what turns people off and changed how people experience the Centre – e.g. glass doors so people can see what's happening in the Centre.
- I got one of my young people to go around and conduct 30-minute interviews with all the newcomers (around for 3 months or so), asking them how they found the place and why they came along. Great to have volunteers do conduct this – good for people, good for the volunteer.
- We recently closed our Young Buddhist events as the YB team didn't feel it was needed in the Centre anymore!
- Did Buddhism events at the local universities, e.g. day retreats in a secular setting. Sent survey to several hundred young people to engage with them, with a draw for some prizes, e.g. tickets to festivals, vegan meals, loyalty card.Stood around at the university handing out flyers for the survey.

Vajrashura:
- Problems have emerged in Dublin with people coming across negative portrayals of Bhante online and not committing to being a Mitra or asking for ordination. Think it's more common than we realise.

Suvarnadhi:
- Good to have much more positive material online to counter this, e.g. podcasts and the like.

Suvarnadhi:
- Who do we want to talk to online? How do you best reach those people?

1.3. Relevance and Impact:

- Offering a transformative path: Presenting Triratna's teachings as a meaningful and life-changing journey.
- Highlighting the benefits of Triratna practice: Emphasising the positive outcomes of engaging with Sangharakshita's/Triratna's teachings and community.
- Demonstrating impact: Sharing stories of individuals who have benefited from Triratna.
- Addressing real-world concerns: Responding to people's suffering and offering solutions.
- Promoting positive change: Contributing to a more ethical and compassionate world.

1.4. Online Presence and Focused Digital Approach :

- Leveraging technology: Utilising online platforms to reach a wider audience.
- Building a strong online community: Fostering engagement and interaction online.
- Complementing in-person experiences: Using online resources to support and enhance physical gatherings.
- Developing a comprehensive digital strategy: Creating a cohesive plan for online communications.
- Ensuring quality online content: Producing engaging and informative materials for digital platforms.

- Walking on university handing out flyers, or getting a better TikTok / Instagram account?
- What questions do we need to ask to get to the right kind of answers to find out what works?

Vajrajyoti:
- Media liaison – creating a supportive context for Triratna, spreading a positive presence online.

Jnanadhara's group

- Visibility: - We can make Dharma available - Be a response to Dukkha in the world
- To attract more people from all kinds of areas to a Dharmalife to come through the door and stay. (Not just getting more bodies through the door)
- We have a form of the Dharma that can really help people to connect with others, find a community and change their life. Good at translating into other culture
- We have chance of becoming default online that reaches a lot of people and being a community based transformational context
- Take our place in the culture - Influence culture.
- More fruitful decent life available to everybody - Don't have to be a monk to practise
- Help more people meet our Sangha - Mainly through Buddhist centres. Online being a prelude to deeper communication

Nagapriya's group

- Enable people to find us
- Have communications that are available to everyone
- Reach different economic/racial groups
- Build on and expand translation efforts
- Different means of communication
- Broad range of communication channels

- Achieve: favourable, friendly image of our community
- Presentation of ourselves
- Personal:
- Human beings
- What difference has it made?
- Who are we?
- Inspiring Dharma
- Communicating joy
- Generic Buddhism vs Triratna buddhism
- We rest on Bhante's presentation of the Dharma - Teach general Buddhist concepts and our particular approach
- What have we got from Triratna?
- A vision of personal development through the Dharma
- Everyone can do it
- Joy - compared with misery, spiritual practice is joyful. Joy transcends dukkha
- Not to communicate that we are overly serious
- How people can engage with us
- What is your pathway? - steps people could take to get involved
- Ways of engaging if you don't have a local centre
- We have been centre centric!

Aryadrishti's group

- Extend an invitation to live a meaningful and transformative life in the Triratna context.
- Be visible- what we do and what we become, offering ourselves. Embody the transformation. So that those who want to live the Dharma and transform their lives can find this context.
- Attract young people.
- What attracts in the end is the depth of experience.
- Enough in that world to communicate with it but different enough to offer an alternative.

Amoghavajra's group:

- We want to communicate the values of peace, love, meaning, adventure, and aliveness.
- We want to communicate Sangharakshita's teaching.
- We want to exemplify the values that we wish to communicate And that really matter to people.
- We want to communicate in a way that overcomes bias against Buddhism, religion, caste, nationality, class, age difference, and race.
- We want to communicate through friendship.
- We do not want to always use explicitly Buddhist activities EG karate, culture, Asvagohosa project in India.
- We want to communicate how to achieve Peace of Mind, we want to communicate common sense.
- We want to communicate how human values that people have already learned in their life align with the Dharma.
- We want to provide a bridge where people realise that what we are talking about is what they value most deeply.
- We want to communicate openness and care because these are our core values.
- We want to go out to people and their world and not expect them to come to us all the time.
- We should be way more bolder in our communication.

Vajrashura's group

- We want to communicate a sense of community, lineage, meaning, values.

    Survarnadhi:
- Need to be able to speak to as many people as possible and communicate what the Dharma can do for them, in terms of their challenges and struggles in the world.

    Vajrashura:
- Friendship and community.

2. What exactly do we want Triratna to communicate and why?:

The following responses are from mixed Area and Strand groupings.

2.1. Core Values and Teachings:

- Sangharakshita's vision: Communicating the essence of Sangharakshita's teachings and philosophy.
- Triratna's values: Emphasising the values of metta, kalyana mitrata, meaning, adventure, and aliveness.
- Dharma practice: Promoting the benefits and transformative potential of Dharma practice.
- Human values: Connecting Triratna's teachings with universal human values.
- Ethical framework: Offering a framework for ethical living and decision-making.
- Spiritual path: Presenting Triratna as a path towards spiritual growth and enlightenment.

2.2. Personal Transformation and Community/Sangha:

- Personal growth: Offering a path for personal development and transformation.
- Community and friendship: Highlighting the importance of community, connection, and kalyana mitrata.
- A sense of belonging: Creating a welcoming and supportive

- Triratna as a valid path of practice. From Bhante talk – 'western', 'Buddhist', 'Order'.
  - o Western: modern / culturally relevant / diverse.
  - o Buddhist: meaning and value / transformation.
  - o Order: community and friendship.

Suvarnadhi:
- A committed path of practice, that doesn't need monasticism, available in modern life. A full-time Buddhist in a full-time modern life.
- It's hard, but not practising is harder!
- Challenge-based language can be better at attracting men (and everyone!)

<u>Jnanadhara's Group</u>

- Our teacher's vision of the Dharma: Background. Values. What we offer – systems. Community & Spiritual Friendship
- Ruchiramati's - Why how what
- Dharma practice can transform your life for greater positivity connection & meaning
- If you want to be happier in your own life or help make the world a better place we can show you how
- Communicate our practice and the fruits of our practice: A Vision of Human Existence. A Method of Personal Development.   A Nucleus of a New Society. A Blueprint for a New World

<u>Aryadristhi's group</u>

- Audience- People need the Dharma. Both and let's do everything. We need to be more visible to benefit the world. Those who want to transform self and world. If we limit what the world is we are not doing ourselves a favour. Therefore, don't just appeal to privilege – happy healthy human or confident, educated males. Inspiring to see people completely transform

environment.
- Shared purpose: Inspiring a sense of shared purpose and meaning.
- Meaningful relationships: Fostering deep and meaningful connections with others.
- Personal fulfilment: Helping individuals find fulfilment and satisfaction in their lives.

2.3. Accessibility and Inclusivity:

- Attractive to all: Communicate in ways that overcome biases against caste, nationality, class, age, and race.
- Reaching a diverse audience: Targeting people from various backgrounds and perspectives.
- Using accessible language: Employing clear and understandable language.
- Avoiding exclusivity: Avoiding language or practices that may exclude certain individuals.
- Culturally sensitive communication: Adapting communication styles to resonate with different cultural contexts.
- Inclusive practices: Ensuring that Triratna's practices and communities are welcoming to everyone interested in the Dharma.

2.4. Relevance and Impact:

- Addressing real-world concerns: Connecting Triratna's teachings to people's everyday lives and challenges.

their lives. We are offering transformation for those who are up for it. We are not a well-being organisation. Longing to transform your lives, the lives around you and the world.

- Invitation to anyone and everyone and completely uncompromising!
- Dangers of influencers – the seduction of crowd appeal to influencers themselves, The strength of Triratna community is in the diversity and depth of practice which influencers could only touch on. Don't want to attract people for the wrong reasons. Already controversy about what is and isn't Triratna. What happens when an influencer goes "off script" or is so tightly held to script and it is parroting rather than real authentic communication.
- We can change ourselves and the world.
- Not just for monks. Lifestyle is secondary. Friend with any other human being,
- New vision of what it means to be human. Looking for new ideals, an ethical framework in practice
- Equal ordination
- Total context for living in accordance with the Dharma.

- Offering practical solutions: Providing guidance on how to apply Dharma principles in daily life.
- Demonstrating impact: Sharing stories of personal transformation and positive change.
- Inspiring others: Encouraging individuals to embark on their own transformative journeys.
- Contributing to a better world: Promoting positive social change and a more compassionate society.
- Making a difference: Inspiring individuals to make a positive impact on their communities and the world in line with the Dharma.

2.5. Authenticity and Integrity:

- Staying true to core principles: Remaining committed to Triratna's foundational principles.
- Embodying values: Living and exemplifying the values that Triratna wishes to communicate.
- Avoiding inauthenticity: Avoiding superficial or scripted communication.
- Avoiding commercialisation: Maintaining a focus on spiritual and ethical values rather than commercial interests.
- Authenticity in communication: Communicating honestly and openly, without pretence or exaggeration.
- Integrity in practice: Demonstrating integrity and ethical behaviour in all aspects of Triratna's activities.

Amoghavajra's group:

- Everyone needs to share their best practice and outcomes that have been achieved. A platform for this, and a coordinator to propagate the ideas (e.g. movement coordinator!)
- A one-page of bullet points which communicates what Triratna is, so that people in Centres can keep reminding themselves of this. It can then inform our language about how we communicate. Include existing training, e.g. Sikkha project.
- Learning to rely on people's expertise in the Sangha – there are people, but we may not know their skills and talents. Appreciating people's social media or graphic design or communication skills and using them. It's ok to use people's worldly expertise and skills.
- Lean into the person who is leading the events / courses, their worldly credentials, to attract more people. 'Bigging up' our teachers as a skillful means to attract means.
- Branding: Looking at ways in which we name our Centres and websites that actually communicate that we are part of a tradition / community. It might be that emphasising our tradition communicates something more of what we're about.
- Team of influencers: Support good looking, articulate, Triratna Order Members to have conversations online. A social media team to do this with influencers out front. Noted that *The Nature of Mind* project did already try to do this (but it didn't really give a sense of what Triratna). Really just trying to communicate what Triratna is. E.g. having good Dharma talks on our website, or examples of how Triratna people engage.
- Triratna media liaison person: consult external expert about how we might deepen our communication of a positive sense of Triratna as a whole online. Could we support a media liaison person?
- Translations: Need more translations and more resources there.

Jnanadhara's group

- What is already being done – continue to do it

3. What actions need to be taken and by whom?

The following responses are from mixed Area and Strand groupings:

3.1. Strategic Planning and Coordination:

- Definite communications leadership: Establishing a dedicated team or coordinator to oversee external communications efforts.
- Alignment with Triratna's overall goals: Ensuring that communications efforts are aligned with Triratna's broader mission and objectives.
- Strategic planning: Developing a comprehensive communications strategy with clear goals and objectives.
- Regular evaluation and adjustment: Continuously monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of communications efforts and making necessary adjustments.
- Cooperation: Collaboration and coordination between and across Triratna structures and institutions to ensure a cohesive and integrated approach to communications.
- Shared best practices: Creating a platform for sharing successful communications strategies and outcomes.
- Clear guidelines and resources: Developing resources and training materials to support communications efforts.

3.2. Human Resource and Skill Development:

- Leveraging existing skills: Identifying and utilising the

- Approach younger generations
- Careful to not go to extremes
- Having some guidance / training with some creative people / tech workshop people put together and made available to help brainstorm
- Might be conventional print material
- We need to have grown up conversation about funding. At moment we are not doing it
- Need to creative vision
- We need to show up

Nagapriya's group

- A communications team to produce content
- Training, resources, guides
- Put it on Sikkha
- Subtitling
- Use of AI
- Find funds for more translation
- Put more resources behind virtual activities
- Triratna video library
- Curating information better, according to languages
- Spot good people and let them run with stuff…

Aryadristhi's group

- The importance of translators. Translating Bhante's vision is not easy. Cultural translation – i.e. indigenous people in Mexico and those with less education. Ambedkar a resource for reaching beyond middle class.
- Create an Elevator intro – what is Triratna. For people to fall back on.
- Interested in an app. Can we build on Life with full attention app?
- TBC is one of the biggest assets we have in Triratna but need Spanish to reach more people. In the Americas we are few and there are limited resources. Of course, we want in person contact and the online is critical. Remote order members and groups. Resources in Spanish critical.

communication skills of Triratna members.
- Training and development: Providing training and resources to enhance communication skills, including writing, public speaking, social media, and digital marketing.
- Building a talent pool: Identifying and nurturing potential communicators within the Triratna community, such as individuals with strong writing, storytelling, or design skills.
- Recognizing expertise: Acknowledging and appreciating the contributions of skilled communicators, and providing opportunities for their development.
- Creating a culture of communication: Fostering a culture within Triratna that values effective communication and encourages open dialogue.
- Mentorship programs: Establishing mentorship programs to pair experienced communicators with newer members, providing opportunities for knowledge transfer and skill development.
- Skill-based volunteering: Encouraging members to volunteer their communication skills to support Triratna's efforts.

3.3. Clear and Distinctive Triratna Identity ('Branding') and Messaging:

- Consistent messaging: Developing a clear and consistent message about Triratna's values, offerings, and 'unique selling points'.
- Effective branding: Establishing a strong and recognizable Triratna brand identity, including a logo, tagline, and visual style.

- Can we build the Buddhist Center online as an actual Buddhist Center where people can take courses, attend Sangha night, different languages and different cultures? Online events host centre events that are already hybrid. An avenue for local centres to reach a wider audience and share income/resources. The TBC already has a huge user base. Can we make it more international? A way to find talks/resources on specific topics being presented anywhere in the world. i.e. Who is talking about Milarepa?
- Blue sky thinking – four events a day in various languages on TBC.
- We are already doing a lot. Maybe what we need to do better is link it all up.
- Support bursaries for translators to get to Sangharakshita study course. – Bhante's words a priority for translation

- Brand guidelines: Developing comprehensive brand guidelines to ensure consistency across all communication channels.
- Brand awareness campaigns: Launching targeted campaigns to increase awareness of Triratna's brand and message.
- Targeted messaging: Tailoring messages to specific audiences and contexts, using data-driven insights to identify the most effective messaging strategies.
- Storytelling: Using storytelling techniques to convey Triratna's message in a compelling and engaging way.

3.4. Digital Strategy and Technology:

- Enhanced online presence: Improving Triratna's website, social media, and other digital platforms to make them more user-friendly, visually appealing, and informative.
- Content creation: Producing high-quality content, including videos, articles, podcasts, and infographics, that is relevant, engaging, and shareable.
- Digital tools and platforms: Utilising effective digital tools and platforms to reach a wider audience, such as email marketing, social media advertising, and content management systems.
- Translation and localisation: Ensuring that content is accessible in multiple languages to reach a global audience.
- Virtual events and communities: Expanding the use of virtual events and online communities to connect with people who may not be able to attend in-person events.
- Data analytics: Using data analytics to track website traffic, social media engagement, and other key metrics to inform communications strategies.

Strand plenary feedback	Summary of key themes
	3.5. Community Engagement and Partnerships: ● Local outreach: Engaging with local communities and organisations to build relationships and raise awareness of Triratna. ● Partnerships: Collaborating with other organisations and individuals to amplify Triratna's message and reach a wider audience. ● Grassroots initiatives: Supporting grassroots efforts and initiatives that align with Triratna's values and goals. ● Community-driven content: Encouraging community members to create and share content, fostering a sense of ownership and engagement. ● Public relations: Developing a proactive public relations strategy to build positive relationships with media outlets and key influencers. ● Community events: Organising community events and activities to bring people together and build a sense of belonging. ● Volunteer programs: Offering volunteer opportunities to involve community members in Triratna's activities and initiatives.

Vajrashura's College group:

- We want to communicate the uniqueness of Triratna and what we can offer to people in the world today, and to attract people to come and practice with us.
- Lineage, tradition, meaning.
- Concerned with the reputation of Triratna in a general way.
- Order Members being unethical online, especially in a way that brings the Order into disrepute.
- Aiming our publicity towards people who are 'easily obtainable', to use Prajnaketu's language.
  - o Given resources are tight, where are we focusing those resources?
  - o What kind of language are we using to attract these people, and what kind of people are we attracting with our language?

- Concern – are we getting overly focused on small numbers of people being ordained or engaged, whereas focusing on local Centres outwards facing communications may well bring far more people in.

- Do we need more information?
- Continue communicating!
- Take forward collating best practices from movement / Centre levels?
- Continue to create a positive profile of Sangharakshita online, countering the negative ones.
- Who is doing this and what do they need from the IC?
- Is this being prioritised (say, over building an app)?

Amala's College group (plus Candradasa):

- There are questions mainly about resourcing and funding that we haven't looked at this weekend that we think is key.
- There are so many brilliant ideas but funding for existing communications platforms is being cut so why are we talking about more great ideas to

4. How should the IC take forward its exploration of the theme of external communications at its meeting in India in 2025?

4.1. College Strand

- Prioritise communication and collaboration: Effective communication and collaboration among all stakeholders are essential for progress.
- Address resource and funding issues: Resolve challenges related to funding and resource allocation is crucial.
- Ensure transparency in decision-making: Clear and transparent processes for decision-making, particularly regarding funding, are necessary.
- Align strategic priorities and funding: Funding decisions should be aligned with the organisation's strategic goals.
- Build a positive online presence: Continue efforts to create and maintain a positive online image for Sangharakshita.
- Learn from best practices: Share and implement successful strategies from both movement and centre levels.

4.2. Order Strand

- Prioritise internal communication: Strengthen communication within the Order to enhance understanding, support, and collaboration.
- Share resources and support: Provide resources and support

develop?

- We thought about how each strand, the College in particular, but all of the strands need to have really clear and balanced input into the allocation of funding and resources. The current situation is confusing and unclear about how choices are made.
- Let's come from a place of appreciating and continuing to support what we are doing.
- It needs to be clear to everyone what resources we have, how to access them and how to build them.
- It would be good to be clear about how funding decisions are made. We won't be able to continue the current platform or develop new things because Dharmachakra's team is already overstretched. We need an urgent conversation in India about who sets strategy and funds it. There's no shortage of vision but there is a shortage of funding.
- We set strategic priorities but we don't have the funding for them and the people who make the decisions about funding don't seem to be completely in line with the strategic priorities that we've set.

Amoghavajra's Order group:

- We consider that internal communications are more important for us than external communications.
- We would like to be able to communicate resources for chapters, established order members and newer order members.
- We would like to communicate that there are many different lifestyles for order members.
- We would like to join together a lot of things that already exist and piggyback onto existing resources.
- We would like to communicate existentially deep practice in both an individual and a collective way.
- We want to represent who we are clearly, positively, and accurately - and address misrepresentations in different areas such as the media and other Buddhist movements.
- We want to link up and make visible existing resources such as 50 voices and Suryaprabha's films.

for chapters, members, and Centers to facilitate their work.

- Address funding and financial sustainability: Explore ways to generate revenue and ensure adequate funding for communications and other initiatives.
- Adapt to evolving needs: Recognize and address emerging needs within the Order and the wider world.
- Ensure accurate representation: Promote a clear, positive, and accurate image of Sangharakshita and the Order, addressing misrepresentations.
- Leverage existing resources: Utilise existing resources and combine them effectively to maximise impact.
- Foster a global perspective: Consider the diverse needs and perspectives of different regions and cultures.

4.3. Movement Strand

4.3.1. Prioritization and Focus:

- Need for clear focus and direction to avoid repetitive discussions about communications.
- Prioritise communication areas based on impact and feasibility ("radically doable").
- Focus on one or two key communication areas to make significant progress.
- Allocate resources strategically to the prioritised areas for maximum impact.
- Consider prioritising the various elements of the

- We want translations to be fully and adequately funded.

Jayadevi's - Order group:

- We talked about funding. Funding around communications needs to be part of any conversation we have.
- We need to generate revenue streams for our online communications which is potentially very important in some parts of the world.
- BCO could charge for online events to generate revenue.
- Create resources for Centres to use but this also needs to be funded.
- We are aware of how different it looks from different parts of the world so resources need to be designed with them in mind.
- If something is UK centric, the rest of the world can't hear it. There are so many countries and cultures involved.
- We need to recognise that new needs are arising that we need training on. The Order needs to be trained around these new needs.
- We are fully behind supporting translators and we believe the whole Order would be behind this. They should be given special status.
- Some of the controversies come from the idea that we don't need online things because we can go to local centres. Are we talking about how we communicate Triratna to the rest of the world or how we communicate to the people who come to our centres? They are very different things and this needs to be made crystal clear. We aren't necessarily talking to people who already go along to the London Buddhist Centre. We are talking to the rest of the world (who don't already attend a Buddhist centre). In the UK and Ireland are we even aware of the rest of the world?

Jnanadhara's Movement group (a.m.)

Focusing our activities in relation to communications
- One member said *'I would be loath to stay this vague!'* We need to bring some clarity and focus to the conversation in India so that we don't just go 'round the houses' again. We also need to enter into the meeting with a conviction that our deliberations and discussions will have real outcomes. One way of doing this is to split out all the different areas that come under

communications priority ("prioritisation within a prioritisation") by identifying resources already available and areas needing new resources.

4.3.2. Sustainability and Resources:

- Secure sustainable funding for prioritised communication activities.
- Utilise existing resources effectively, like TBCO.

4.3.3. The Role and Influence of the International Council (IC):

- Clarify the IC's mandate and authority in guiding Triratna's communications.
- Consider refining the IC communication priority to provide clearer direction for funding decisions.
- Explore whether to accept the IC's limited role in communication direction or pursue increased coordination.

4.3.4. TBCO (Triratna Buddhist Community Website):

- Evaluate the TBCO's funding and effectiveness.
- Decide whether or not to endorse and improve funding for TBCO.

4.3.5. Preparation for IC Meeting in India:

- Encourage preliminary thinking on communication issues within the IC membership to optimise meeting time.
- Frame the conversation with a clear starting point and concrete discussion topics.

the heading of comms. We can then look at the question: What is the most important area? i.e. what should get the most attention first? What will have the biggest impact?

- [This wasn't discussed but it occurs to me that another approach would be to ask: what would be the easiest action that would have the biggest impact? i.e. what would be 'radically doable'? Or you could ask what could we focus on first that will most readily facilitate the development of other areas?] We could then prioritise the different areas and, crucially, only decide to focus on one, or perhaps two, of them so that we can make significant inroads in that area. It's not that the other ones would be binned, rather they would be put aside to be picked up at a later date after there has been significant activity and impact in the prioritised area. Approaching it in this way will save us doing detailed time consuming work that won't have an impact and instead focus our energy on areas that will.
- As part of this it is crucial to consider how sustainable funding can be made available to progress the area. If that is not in place then any work done will not amount to anything.
- We would also need to consider what resources we already have – e.g. TCBO – and where new resources need to be established.In effect this would be a prioritisation within a prioritisation.
- [I wonder, and this wasn't discussed in the group today, if the Comms Working Group could do some preliminary work in identifying what the different communications areas are. I'd be surprised if Chandradasa for example hasn't done this kind of exercise before.]

The Role & Influence of the IC
- We talked about what mandate/authority the IC has in relation to communications. We asked to what extent can it direct communications activities in the whole of Triratna.
- At present the IC communications priority that guides FDF funding decisions is quite general*. In India, could we hone that priority so that it

4.3.6. Communication Strategy:

- Clearly define the problem with communication that needs addressing.
- Differentiate between various communication needs and propose solutions accordingly.
- Acknowledge the irony of not having an online/remote involvement for those not physically attending the IC meeting in India.

4.3.7. Resource Management:

- Strike a balance between funding new communication projects and maintaining existing valued activities.
- Explore how to maximise impact ("get more bang for our buck") with existing resources.
- Consider "what is more radically doable now" with available resources.

4.3.8. Bridging the Digital Divide:

- Educate IC members unfamiliar with the digital world on future trends in technology (AI) so that they are informed to make better decisions around communications.

4.3.9. Addressing Tensions:

- Identify and use existing tensions around communications as starting points for discussions and solutions at the meeting in India.

gives clearer guidance to FDF when making their funding decisions. Again this would amount to a 'prioritisation within a prioritisation'.

- From a different angle: do we need to make a decision to accept that the IC hasn't the means to guide the direction of Comms in Triratna and just accept that it will be piecemeal and uncoordinated? i.e. just let people get on with whatever they want.

TBCO
- Consider how the TBCO is funded. Make a decision to strongly endorse TBCO or make a decision to scrap it. If we want it, what can we do to make sure that it is adequately funded/resourced?

Preparation for IC in India
- Lay the ground for India and enable the membership to do preliminary thinking so that the time we have together is spent in the best possible way?

Jnanadhara's Movement Group (p.m.)

- Have a really positive conversation about communications.
- Go into the conversation with a clearly worked out starting point and concrete idea about exactly what we will be discussing.
- Be clear and explicit about the problem with communications that we want to address.
- As part of this, there could be a clarification of the categories of communications - separate out the different aspects of the topic and have proposals addressing the different topics.
- Given that we've been discussing communications, it's ironic that there won't be a way of connecting with the India meeting online for those who won't be present.
- There needs to be an intelligent conversation about where the resources will come from to implement any projects that we want and for those resources not to be taken away from other things that we also value.

4.3.10. Positive Approach:

- Focus on how to build upon existing strengths and achievements, rather than dwelling on problems.

- We talked about the possibility of talking from the starting position of what more we want from communications initiatives or we could talk from the position of what more we can do with the resources that we currently have. Basically, how can we get more bang for our buck? - What is more radically doable now? - Some of us are involved in the digital world and some of us aren't. For those of us who are not we find it difficult to imagine how the digital and AI world will develop so it would be good to hear from people who know more so we can be more informed and make decisions with a better understanding. - Some of the tensions we've identified over this weekend could be taken into the India meeting and used as starting points for conversations and explore how they could be resolved. - We talked about how we could improve the Wikipedia pages so they are more balanced. - Share some of the good things about Triratna so that we cultivate a better reputation. - Approach the whole conversation with an attitude that we are already doing really, really well and how could we do even better as opposed to we've got all these awful problems to fix. Enter into it in that kind of spirit	