

To retain or rename:

a report on changing the name of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC)

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February 2026

Executive summary

The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) stands at a critical strategic crossroads. Against the backdrop of an ever shrinking funding landscape and a shift in emphasis in its field of expertise from communication rights to communication justice, the organisation's current identity has become increasingly viewed as an obstacle to growth.

The communication rights and justice space is crowded with strong, clearly positioned organisations, especially 'defender' and movement-building brands such as Access Now, Article 19, Amnesty, EDRi, Privacy International and Witness, many of which use emotionally resonant, activist language and compelling narratives. While WACC is well-respected in ecumenical circles and the United Nations, its brand is underperforming compared to modern, activist-oriented organisations. Its name and messaging feel outdated, complex and unclear, making it harder to build awareness and stand out to funders and partners.

This report evaluates whether WACC should retain its existing name or rename and rebrand to better reflect, cement and build upon its position in the communications justice landscape.

Key issues with the WACC name and brand

WACC's ecumenical roots, global network, UN reputation and flagship Centre for Communication Rights and GMMP initiatives, have certainly helped it establish credibility across a range of audiences over a long period of time. However, stakeholders struggle to understand what kind of organisation WACC is: its messaging has fragmented across multiple sub-brands over time, and its long, traditional name and acronym tend to obscure its real focus on communication rights and justice.

Internal consultations have highlighted a long-standing unease with the name and identity. While there is no clear consensus on whether or how to rename, there is certainly a shared sense that both the name and broader brand do not support the new strategy and funding ambitions. We would argue that the persistence of debate itself signals a genuine structural problem, not a passing concern.

- **Misleading terminology:** The word 'Christian' can lead secular or interfaith partners to mistake WACC for a proselytising entity.
- **Ambiguity:** The term 'Communication' without qualification can encompass many things, while 'World Association' feels outdated and unwieldy and no longer reflects WACC's reach or operating model. 'Christian Communication' together creates confusion and, in some contexts, has proven to be a barrier to engagement and funding.
- **Searchability (SEO):** The acronym WACC is dominated by the financial term *Weighted Average Cost of Capital*, making the organisation difficult to find online.
- **Brand dilution:** WACC's identity is fragmented across three separate websites (WACC Global, Centre for Communication Rights, and WhoMakestheNews-GMMP), creating confusion about its core purpose.

A table in Part 2 of this report weighs up the pros and cons of four structural options: keeping the WACC name and continuing with business as usual; keeping it with a brand refresh; changing the name without a full rebrand; and changing the name alongside a full rebrand.

We have also reviewed and critiqued three internally floated options: World Association for Communications Rights (WACR), World Association for Community Communication (still WACC), and retaining WACC as a free-standing acronym. All three offer only compromises that dispel few of the existing core issues, offer little strategic differentiation and risk becoming a 'fudge'.

Headline recommendations

1. Adopt a new name

1a. Centre for Communication Justice

We believe WACC should make a firm decision now to change its name as a first step in taking strategic control of its future and brand in the communication justice space.

We recommend adopting the name **Centre for Communication Justice** which signals authority and clear purpose.

- The name positions the organisation as a **centre** of research, policy and action – an authority on communication justice issues, rather than a vague ‘association’, and also positions its digital presence, such as the website, as an online communication justice knowledge platform
- It clearly expresses WACC’s overarching goal and unifies its new strategic programme areas of digital, climate and gender justice and inclusion under a single **communication justice** umbrella.
- It builds on the existing equity of the Centre for Communication Rights sub-brand, while aligning both theological and secular understandings of justice.
- The use of the word ‘Centre’ in organisational names often signifies excellence, expertise or specialism, depth of knowledge in a particular area of work – for example, the [Centre for Social Justice](#), the [Centre for Global Equality](#), the [Centre for Women’s Justice](#) or the [Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue](#). It is a naming device also often used for academic communities of practice, university departments, fields of research and innovation and thinktanks of all persuasions, and thus tends to give a sense of thought leadership.

1b. Alliance for Communication Justice

This is a strong renaming alternative WACC could consider to emphasise its membership identity – ‘what it is’ rather than ‘what it does’.

- This name or – or the slight variation **Communication Justice Alliance** – implies a values-driven active and dynamic membership network.
- The word ‘Alliance’ is highly preferable to using the somewhat passive, institutional, looser and somewhat outdated term ‘Association’ or the more technical, less human ‘Network’, which both feel more focused around the goals of organisations rather than the needs of people.
- ‘Alliance’ portrays a much more people-centred and active side to the relationship between the member organisations and the work they do together. It would be a significant cultural statement, signalling a move towards transformational belonging and deep and lasting contributions. ‘Alliance’ would be more than a word choice, it would evoke a sense of shared responsibility, of commitment and purpose, in working towards the organisation’s goals together.
- Alliances are often formed to achieve a specific challenge or goal – implying that the organisation’s goal is *indeed* achievable – tackle complex issues or take opportunities that would be too much for individual organisations alone.

2. Invest in a full rebrand

We believe the recommended name change alone would be insufficient. WACC must invest – to a greater or lesser degree – in a redefined vision and mission, straplines, messaging framework, a clear tone of voice and new visual identity and brand assets that reflects its role as an expert

voice and a forward-thinking enabler of communication justice in the age of AI and digital transformation.

3. Consolidate the digital presence

WACC should merge its three separate identities – WACC, the Centre for Communication Rights (CCR), and WhoMakestheNews-GMMP – into a single, cohesive digital presence under the new name.

4. Implementation and transition

We recommend careful internal and external communication about the change, potentially including a time-bound transition period where the new brand is explicitly linked to WACC, and definitely parallel efforts to honour WACC's history and ecumenical legacy in core narratives and web content.

Conclusion

The organisation's current name has long been a distraction, forcing staff to explain what WACC is *not*, rather than what it *is* or what it *does*. Rebranding to **Centre for Communication Justice**, or the strong, viable alternative **Alliance for Communication Justice**, while honouring WACC's heritage, offers a clean break that allows the organisation to step confidently into a future where it is findable and fundable.

This is a strategic opportunity to clarify the organisation's identity, modernise its brand and strengthen funding and partnership prospects in a rapidly evolving communication justice landscape.

Notes

1a. Based on Google search results, there is no single prominent entity titled exactly the **Centre for Communication Justice**. However, several UK-based organisations focus on similar themes of justice, reform and policy communication:

- [Centre for Social Justice \(CSJ\)](#): An independent, cross-party think tank focused on putting social justice at the heart of British politics to help disadvantaged communities.
- [Centre for Justice Innovation](#): A charity that works to create a fairer, more effective justice system, focusing on problem-solving courts, youth justice, and evidence-based practice.
- [Centre for Crime and Justice Studies](#): An independent educational charity that advances public understanding of crime and criminal justice, challenging conventional thinking.
- [Centre for People's Justice](#): A research center focusing on how law affects daily life, operating through community-led research.

1b. Based on Google search results, there is no single prominent organisation called the **Alliance for Communication Justice**, but there are several similarly named organisations focused on justice, policy, and advocacy. The most closely related entities, based on the context of advocacy and communication, are:

- The **Criminal Justice Alliance (CJA)**: A UK-based network of over 180 (or 200+) member organisations, including charities, think tanks, and researchers. They work to make the criminal justice system in England and Wales more fair and effective. They notably promote and amplify constructive criminal justice journalism to shift narratives and work with the media to ensure better representation of criminal justice issues.
- The **Alliance for Youth Justice (AYJ)**: This UK organisation works to drive positive change in the youth justice system, with a focus on advocacy and communication to support children.
- The **Alliance for Communications Democracy (ACD)** is an organisation focused on protecting and advancing public interest in media, specifically by supporting public, educational, and governmental access channels.
- **Alliance for Justice (AFJ)**: A US-based progressive advocacy group focusing on the federal judiciary, civil rights, and public policy.

2. In terms of translation into other languages such as French, Spanish and Arabic, we believe the Centre for Communication Justice and the Alliance for Communication/Communication Justice Alliance would translate clearly but this would need to be tested in different territories and contexts.