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**DEFINITION, ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF
DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT COMMUNICATION FOR
EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE
DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Paper prepared by ECA

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1. Introduction

1.1. To present a paper on Development Support Communication

Presenting a paper on Development Support communication (DSC) gives rise to a number of questions related to both form and contents. My understanding is that the readers or audience of this paper are people actively engaged in development work, but not necessarily communication specialists. The content shall therefore include a fairly broad description of how communication works and how we can make use of our human resources to communicate. The emphasis shall be on how communication works in, and can enhance, participation, especially in development work. My aim has been to prepare a paper which can provide something of a "know-how", a "know-why" and a "do how" (as stated by Jerome Keating in an article on Technology Transfer in Development Communication Report 93/4) i.e. understanding the process, know why certain things have to be done, and learning the skills to do them.

I have organized my paper to include:

1. A brief overview of the history of communication in development,
2. A definition of Development Support Communication
3. Communication and its role in participatory development
4. The role of communication in increasing the efficiency and sustainability of development work.

In regard to "form", the writing of a technical paper is not a very participatory exercise, neither is the reading of such a paper. But it can still serve as one of the inputs in a process which will depend on contributions by all participants.

The sources to this paper are primarily my own and my colleagues' and based on our experiences in development work as documented in Smith - Lundstrom "Communication for Development, The Research Report," Lundstrom - Smith - Kenyi - Frerichs: "Communicating for Development A Practical Guide" and Lundstrom: "The Lotuko and the Verona Fathers - A Case Study of Communication in Development." Other sources are documented in the paper.

1.2. The History of Communication in Development

Communication has concerned scholars since the time of ancient Greece. The topic was, however, usually treated under other disciplines and taken for granted as a natural process inherent in each. We find communication as part of the studies of literature, psychology, medicine, education, religion, just to mention a few.

The social scientific study of human communication began during the late 1930s in the USA. The study centered almost exclusively on the impact of mass media on public information and attitudes. It was at that time also related to development efforts e.g. on information to the American farmers. During the Second World War the main interest shifted to the area of persuasion, especially the written or radio transmitted message to friends and foes.

Following the war the interest in communication, especially mass-communication, shifted to the commercial effects of persuasion, the use of communication in advertising etc.

But the early experience of communication efforts to boost social and economic development created an interest in finding out how best to use communication technology to promote agriculture, health etc. There was at this time, a preoccupation with effects such as increase in sales, change of attitudes etc. Mass-media was seen as an important agent of change. The result was that "due to the pressure of economic goals, the size and dispersion of the audience; and the availability of modern equipment..." The interest came to focus on quick changes which discarded the more profound approaches. (Bordenave, 1977).

This view on the role of communication in development has to a large extent remained the same up to this day. The stress is still on persuasion. The development projects call on us to come up with 'effective' programmes on radio or television, programmes which can change people.

In the meantime, however, much has changed in the studies of communication.

In the 1960s communication scholars began to apply the idea of process, and looked at the great number of variables. The communication situation came into focus.

From the area of sociology they borrowed the concept of social systems and the interactive social structure. They were also deeply influenced by the theories on the diffusion of innovations which were linked to questions regarding personal antecedents, social characteristics, the process of change, characteristics of new ideas and personal roles (Bordenave 1977).

Also, political actors appeared on the scene and affected the views of the role of communicators. One such actor, was the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire who stressed on participative education. He worked on the basis of interchangeable teacher/learner relationships, the teacher also learning from the student. He stressed that education should be a process of 'conscientization', in which the community was helped to articulate its own problems, then provide the solution to those problems. A human being, he stressed, was not an empty vessel to be filled with knowledge from "above, but a knowing being. The task of the educator was to activate people to express their needs, formulate solutions and organize themselves to achieve their goals" (Berrigan 1979 p. 13).

Freire's views on the strength of people to study their own situation, find solutions and carry them out, immediately took on a political character, and led to political action especially in Latin America during the 1960s.

In the 1970's many social scientists began investigating the potential for even traditional rural communities to shoulder the responsibility for their own development using their own resources. In 1983 Day Hammarskjöld Foundation initiated a project to study the role of communication in participatory development. While a great number of scholars contributed inputs, most papers dealt with the resources of knowledge and skills that a community has. They spoke eloquently in favour of participation but only a few gave practical advice on how participation could function and what specific role communication could play in that process. The final result of this very ambitious project was published (or at least prepared for publishing) under the name of "In Search of a Process". While thus the idea of participation was generally accepted, practitioners still grappled with the question of how it could be done.

According to Freire a developer's role is that of a facilitator. This contrasted sharply with the role that dominated in the large scale 'Integrated Rural Development Projects' which were initiated in many places. In these projects the communities were largely seen as lacking much of education and experience and thus unable to understand the complex and difficult situation which faced them in development. Involving a larger group of people in decision making was also seen as slow and cumbersome.

Let me present a typical example of how developers saw the role of communication in such a project. The time was 1984. A project in Sudan had got a new and 'efficient' project leader who decided that the communication office, which up to then had handled community contacts, should become a workshop, administratively linked to the maintenance department and limited to producing flip-charts and other media materials. Communication according to this project, was seen as the preparation of media for persuasion and not as an activity in which the community should be involved.

We are all aware of the changes in the view of development that have occurred in the last 20 years. The leading role of the communities themselves has (at least in words) been recognized. How has this affected communication?

The need of a participatory approach in development has by and large been accepted. Today community participation is almost universally accepted as the proper ideology. But the stress has often been on the community participating in the 'projects' rather than the outside agencies (or government) participating in the communities. Those who have aimed at the latter have used the term participation in 'community-based' projects to indicate that the community members are the prime actors, and that outsiders have a supportive role.

2. What is Development Supportive Communication (DSC)

Communication has been recognized as an essential part in development. Let us at this stage attempt to define what we mean by DSC and what role it can play. But first, what is communication?

2.1. Defining Communication

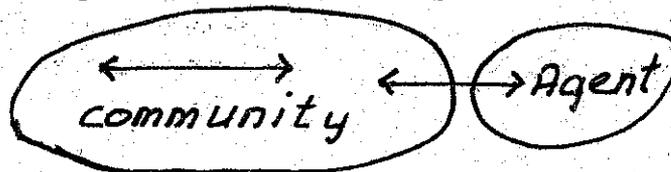
A definition of communication states:

"Communication takes place when one mind so acts upon its environment that another mind is influenced and in that other mind an experience occurs which is like the experience in the first mind and is caused in part by that experience".

(I.A. Richards Quoted in New Encyclopedia Britannica 1986. (16:685))

This means in short that the first mind influences the second mind so that it can understand what the first one experienced. 'Understand' is the keyword. The purpose and function of a communicator is not to secure a certain response from the other mind, but to create understanding. The process continues with the other mind influencing the first one, again with the purpose of being understood.

Communication in a development situation refers mostly to the communication between a community and an outside agent.



It is, however, being recognized that equally, if not more important is the communication within the community:

2.2 Defining DSC

The expression Development Support Communication is in my opinion not quite adequate. It tends to define communication as an additional element which may or may not be applied to give an additional 'push' to a development effort.

If we however, believe that development is a participatory process, then development can by definition not occur without communications. I would therefore prefer to use the term Communication in Development or Development Communication.

My definition of the term would thus read:

Development Communication refers to a situation where certain innovations (technical, social, financial, spiritual etc.) are being introduced either from within a community or from outside. Communication is the process by which ideas can be shared and understood. Development Communication is thus the process by which the actors in a development situation share ideas, a process which has the potential to lead to concrete development action.

3. Communication and its Role in Participatory Development

3.1. Our human equipments for communication

It is clear that communication is a social action, developed in the interaction between human beings, and sustained and further developed in this process. But at the same time, it is made possible by the fact that humans are so well equipped for communication, and through the many ways they have developed and enhanced it.

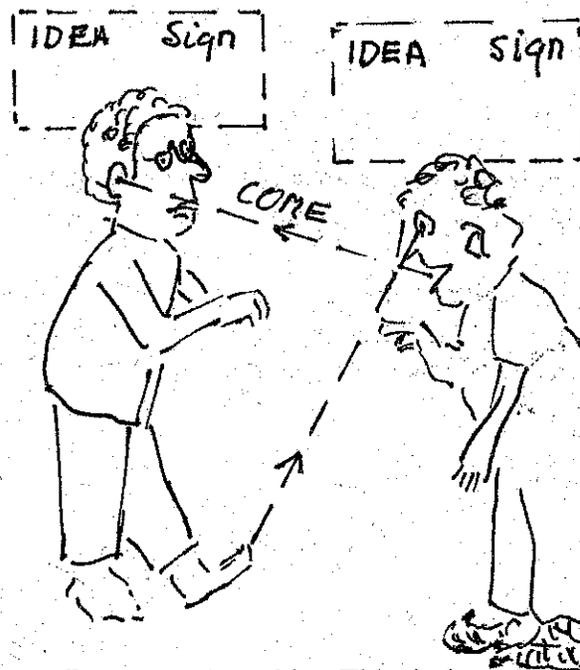
Let us take a brief look at the way the human body is equipped to communicate. The purpose of this is to introduce the terminology I will be using, but also to understand how our communication faculties develop and operate and how they impose constraints on us.

We have our five senses to receive signals from other human beings. We are also equipped to produce signals that can be received and understood by other humans. Our brain has in addition the ability to store information for future use.

The human brain stores this information in the form of mental images or models. Such a model is linked to a sign, also in the brain, which in turn is linked to an outward signal. This signal can be produced by our body and perceived and understood by another person. As an example: The concept of 'cow' is stored as a mental model linked to a sign which can be the word 'cow', and the signal, the spoken or written word 'cow'. The signal could also be expressed in other ways, as a picture sound, gesture etc. The signs and connecting signals can thus be of many types, but what has made them particularly versatile is that they can appear as symbols. A certain combination of sounds; a word, or muscular movements; a gesture, can e.g. be given almost any meaning. This meaning can be understood only by those who have access to the code of meaning, that is those who e.g. speak the same language and are of the same culture. The formation of concepts and sense images and the learning of language, are all done within a certain defined cultural context and thus specific for that culture.

3.2. The Process of Communication

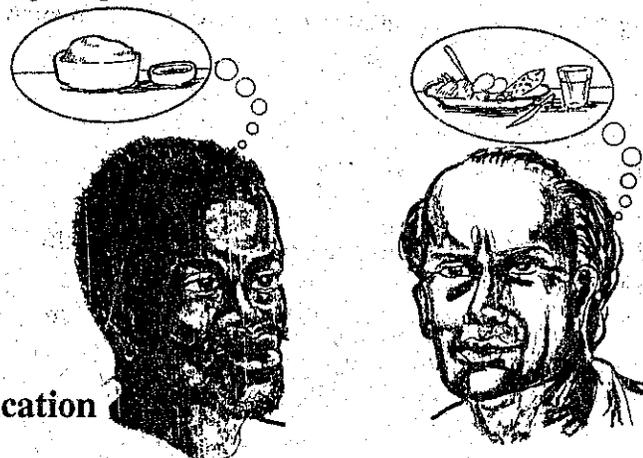
Let us use an example.



One person A, would like another person B to come up to him. This desire calls up the idea "come to me," which can be expressed in a sign by his hand or by the word 'come'. The sign is observed by " B". It 'travels' as a signal to B. There it reaches B's mind and is interpreted. If B has the same background as A he will understand the sign "Come". If so he moves up to A. The movement is observed by A who interprets this to mean that B has understood his message.

Most signs/signals are specific for a certain culture, and the result of an agreement within that culture to assign a certain meaning to a sign. Such signs are called symbols. There are, however, a few common signs which carry the same meaning every where, e.g. smoke as a sign of fire. The words we use are almost all symbols. People who speak the same language usually assign the same meaning to any given word. In the same way people of the same culture can easily understand the various signs and their meaning when they communicate with one another.

People from different cultures may, however, grossly misunderstand one another as their signs/signals do not carry the same meaning. The receiver of a message may in this way interpret it very differently from what the sender had intended. As a person always interprets the meaning of a certain sign/signal or a whole message in accordance with his/her own mental models, it is the receiver of a message who determines the meaning of that message (as far as he/she is concerned) and not the sender. A typical example of how people of different cultures can misunderstand one another is demonstrated in the picture below. The two people were told that they were to receive 'very good food': While the Kenyan immediately thought of 'ugali' the Irishman associated it to potatoes and perhaps fish.



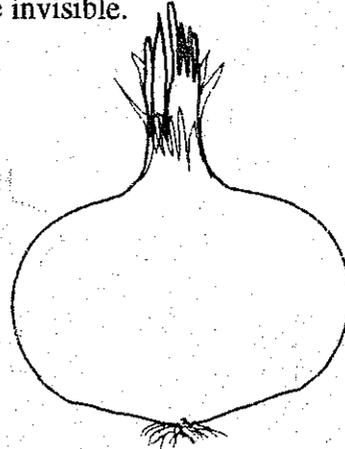
3.3. The Role of Culture in Communication

Communication is part of culture, of course. In fact, communication is one of the principal means by which culture is created, shaped and expressed. It is, for example, the means of shaping the reality within which

decisions are made and put into effect. Therefore, if communication is intermixed with culture, a model for understanding culture will help in guiding communication.

Culture can be likened to an onion. It has many layers or levels. This model is divided into visible and invisible levels of culture. Only the uttermost level, behavior, is fully visible. The authority level is largely invisible, and both personal experience and core beliefs are invisible.

Behaviour



The behavior level includes objects made and used in culture, and the manners, customs and rituals guiding people in their outward actions. Everything else about culture must be deduced from this visible behavior. Consequently, understanding a culture begins with careful observation of what people do, what things and what methods they use, in what places and what times. Thus, watching and then participating in the culture helps to answer the questions of what and how, as well as when and where.

To answer the question of 'why' requires more than observation of the visible. If each culture is like a well-woven fabric, it is necessary to find the common threads which hold the fabric together.

To sort through a great variety of impressions and experiences, the guest observing an unfamiliar culture may ask certain general questions. When is a particular action repeated? Under what circumstances? Does there appear to be a common factor on each occasion when this action is repeated, or when a particular object is used? Informal notes should be made of what is seen and heard. Notes will help in discovering repetitions and tracing their patterns. These patterns will slowly emerge and reveal underlying themes.

In the Matabele culture of Zimbabwe, for example, an underlying theme is mediatorship. A mediator is involved in virtually every major affair, whether it be settling damages in a quarrel between groups, or arranging bride price and the marriage ceremony. In such cases, they ask departed ancestors to carry requests to the Great God on their behalf.

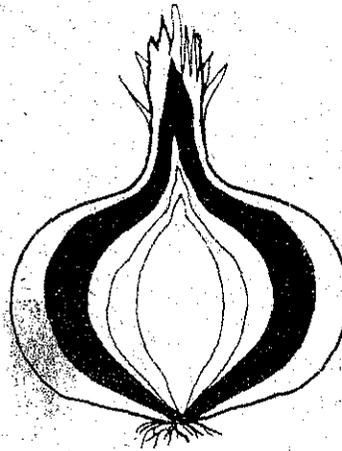
In Indian cultures, basic themes are darma (duty) and karma (fate that leads to an endless cycle of life, death and rebirth). Caste is a behavior pattern that structures Indian society, derived from these themes.

Gaining possessions is a behavior pattern in many cultures, but not an underlying theme. The theme is better expressed as materialism, which means that the value of people and programs is determined by the amount of wealth that they possess or can command. Ultimate worth is determined by wealth rather than by any spiritual or philosophical merit. In most Western societies today, the economic system promotes and depends heavily on materialistic behavior by masses of people.

Each culture has such underlying themes that shape behavior patterns. Those themes can only be deduced from observation which allows careful comparison and contrast between the various visible part(s) of the culture.

Social Authority

Authority in Culture



Every culture has authority figures who embody the basic themes of the society. Their behavior, their decisions and their leadership express the themes of the group. We usually call them "leaders", but they can more correctly be seen here as "mouth-pieces" because they express the values of the group and, in turn, maintain group values. In deciding a matter, the leaders (elders, judges, politicians) will make their decision within those values held by the society. Authority is gained primarily by those who in themselves best represent the values of that society.

In many African societies, great value is placed upon maintaining balance and good relationships within the society. Even in criminal cases, emphasis will most often be on reconciliation and restoring the balance between members of the society. In Western societies, greater emphasis is placed on punishment of the wrongdoer. These differing values greatly affect the kind of decision which will be made by authority figures.

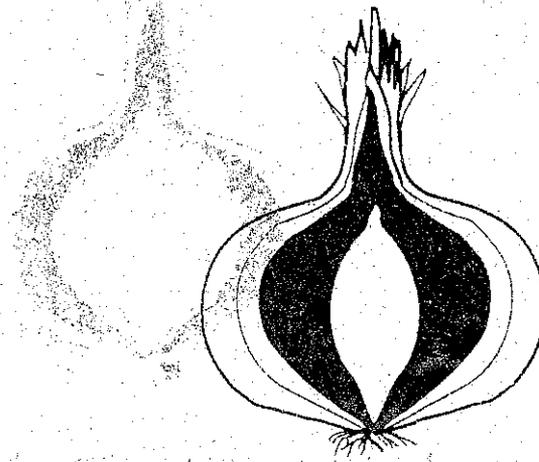
Those societies that value balance and good social relationships will give authority to individuals who have proven most effective in maintaining good relationships within the society. The social group that values wealth and material possessions will normally give its greatest positions of authority to those who have amassed the most wealth and possessions. Thus recognition of basic themes will help in identifying the real authority figures in the society. The themes point to the authority, and the authority expresses the theme - much as a chicken produces an egg, which produces a chicken, which produces an egg, and so on.

Authority is also ascribed to certain experts e.g. doctors, rainmakers, teachers, craftsman, spiritual leaders etc. They are considered leaders in their field of expertise.

Another form of authority is that of peers. We are keen to follow the example of our peers, dress like them, behave like them, and appreciate what they like etc.

The Role of Personal Experience

Experience



Personal experience normally agrees with what is found at the outer levels in our model of culture. It usually confirms both the wisdom of the authorities and the value of existing behavior patterns in a culture. It provides, for the individual and the group, a continuing reaffirmation of the culture's total life-style. This reaffirmation is subjective as well as objective, since even the interpretation of an experience is strongly influenced by the accepted behavior patterns and values of the culture. Personal experience usually reinforces the inner values of a culture, the core beliefs which orient its people toward all of life.

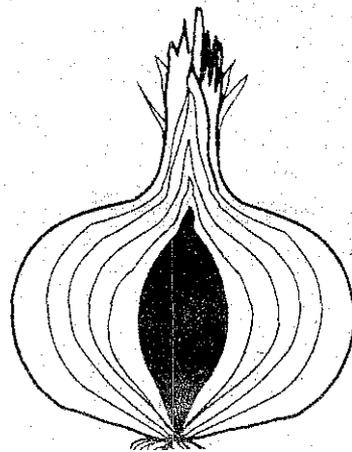
When an individual holds opinions which go against his or her culture, it is often personal experience which changes those opinions. Experience that verifies accepted behavior or authority or, especially, core beliefs is a decisive influence on our attitudes. In the example below, a Sudanese health worker held an opinion that went against local medical practise and teaching. It was only when he became personally involved that his opinion changed.

Anthony Cokipi was a nurse at Kematong dispensary in Southern Sudan. He had often heard the doctor advise diarrhoea patients to use the oral rehydration therapy, that is, to drink lots of pure water with salts dissolved in it. But, Cokipi still believed that antibiotics were better.

Then in 1980, a severe cholera epidemic struck the area where he was working. As he went from place to place treating the sick, Cokipi himself became infected and fell sick. By then there were no more antibiotics available, so he instructed his assistant to give him rehydration fluids continuously. The assistant obeyed his orders, fearing what might otherwise happen. After ten hours and plenty of the salty fluids, Cokipi was out of danger and slowly able to move about. The experience fully convinced Cokipi of the value of oral rehydration.

Change in the Core

Core



We have seen that core beliefs clearly affect the three other levels of culture, but how are core beliefs affected in turn? To communicate adequately within a culture, we need to understand something about these interactions. We also need to understand the core beliefs themselves.

Core beliefs are developed from infancy, learned from parents and family members. Most of these are learned non-verbally as the baby becomes a functioning member of a particular group. Almost all of these core attitudes are learned by the time the child is seven years old. Because they are so closely intertwined with basic learning of how to survive and how to relate to other people, the core attitudes and values are deeply embedded in the person. They are almost impossible to express verbally because they are learned non-verbally, and so they are rarely changed by argument, discussion or any kind of assault. Change happens only very slowly, to be measured in generations rather than in years.

However, some changes in the core do happen when profound experiences challenge existing beliefs. These experiences must be personal but, at the same time are normally related to the experience of a group. Both the personal and the collective response are part of the first-hand experience. Afterwards, the affected person is able to say, "I know because it happened to me; I was there."

If possible, any such experience will be interpreted and reinterpreted so that it will agree with existing beliefs. But where that cannot be done, the core beliefs will be changed just enough to accommodate and explain the experience. Group influence is particularly relevant if we are to explain major changes in core beliefs.

3.4. The Communication Systems

Communications functions as one of the systems of our lives. We can sub-divide it into the signal systems, the channels and the media.

If the development worker comes from outside the local society, he or she must be part of that society in order to work effectively for change. He or she does not share the local people's background, their beliefs or their understandings. Common ground for participatory communication is lacking. To develop mutual understanding, there is no substitute for living with people and sharing their way of life. Shared personal experience gives a foundation for interpreting behaviors, recognizing patterns and deducing the core beliefs. Rich understanding will rarely be achieved in less than two or three years, and often requires a lifetime of sharing.

There are ways to speed the process, without becoming a professional anthropologist. Begin by learning the visible signals of communication. Identify where and when they are used, as well as who uses them for what purposes. A guest who learns the signals of a community can communicate in a manner similar to the members of that community. Such a person can work from a position much different from that of an outsider who simply transmits information to the people, or is shut off and separated in silence.

3.4.1. The Signal Systems

The signals used for communication in any culture can be categorized into twelve systems. The particular signals and interpretations, of course, are particular to each culture, and their great variety can overwhelm the guest observer, but learning the twelve different types of signals will help in sorting them out. Virtually all human communication occur within the following twelve systems which are:

- Verbal. The use of speech and spoken language.

- **Written.** The use of symbols to represent the spoken word, preserving it over time and extending across space.
- **Numeric.** Conveying meaning through numbers and mathematics, both as individual figures and as the mathematical system of relationships between numbers.
- **Pictorial.** Drawings, paintings, photographs and similar two dimensional representations.
- **Audio.** Individual sounds carry meaning, as does music, a formalized system of sounds.
- **Artifactual.** The objects we create around ourselves, including carvings and architecture, cars and furniture, clothing and the many miscellaneous objects of any culture.
- **Kinestics.** Body motion in all of its variety, facial expressions, motions of the hands, "body language".
- **Optical.** Light and color create mood as well as give specific information, such as traffic lights.
- **Tactile.** Touch and feel communicate a wide range of emotion †and information, from the extremes of anger and love to the sophisticated skill of reading Braille.
- **Spatial.** The space between and around people, when talking in a group, between houses in a village or the size of an office.
- **Temporal.** Clock time and the way it is used, whether precisely or casually, and the frequency with which events occur.
- **Olfactory.** Taste and smell signal specific information and convey specific moods, as food and cooking or the use of scents and perfumes.

Each culture uses these systems and the individual signals differently, yet, taken together these twelve signal systems will show how information is shared within that culture. Careful observation of these twelve systems in use will build understanding of how a society communicates.'

3.4.2. The Channels

A Communication System has its special channels. It is important to learn what these channels are, in order to utilize them, These channels consists primarily of the networks of social contacts. The men may have their own groups which meet at the village centre, or at a drinking place. The women often meet together with their neighbours, or in a working group or in a women's club. There they share information with one another. But the development agents have often been discussing with the men subjects which should have been shared with women. The results has been that the information never reached the women. It is thus important to learn to know the channels available for information in the groups of people you are working with.

The social networks are not open to outsiders who want to introduce new ideas. Groups of friends may sit together at the end of a day's work, or people who work together may talk during the day. They talk about events in the family, village news, things they have heard, and new ideas. These may be considered and even evaluated, informally of course. But this evaluation determines whether or not the idea will be remembered and possibly tried ...or forgotten.

These private discussions are a key point in the process of change. Outsiders cannot be part of them. They are for insiders only. Outside ideas will only appear in the social networks if the local community has become aware of possible change and showed interest in it.

3.4.3. The Media

By media we mean instruments or techniques which strengthen the total signal output in a communication act.

Every communication system makes use of such devices. In a traditional African society stories, dance, songs, drums and horns etc. are commonly used media for transmitting messages. Other societies have excelled in constructing very expensive and complicated media.

We sometimes classify media according to the context in which they are used or, to the size of audience they reach at one time. Thus we speak of group media mainly used in face-to-face communication, and mass-media which are used for communicating to large audiences.

Group media offer many advantages, the main one being that they stimulate interaction and that control over them remains with the users. Group media are often times more effective and usually cheaper than large complex media.

Mass media can reach a large audience, but gives few opportunities for the audience to interact with the senders or with one another. These media are therefore often used as a means of control. The aspect of who controls the media employed in the communication process, and for what purpose, will be of importance also for our present study.

3.4.4. Overcoming Barriers to Communication

Many times we try to communicate with another person but our message does not reach him/her. Why is that?

There are four main barriers to successful communication:

1. Our message does not reach the other person. The reason is either that the person is too far away or that he is deaf or blind. This barrier can be overcome by getting closer to the person, or by choosing another signal (a picture if the person is deaf). We have also the different tools or methods which can help us. Telephone is such a medium. Our signal can reach to any part of the world. Radio and Public Address systems can also help us.

2. Our message is not noticed by the other person. Perhaps, he or she is occupied with something else and does not pay attention. If we for example tell an interesting story the person may take notice of our communication. People easily pay attention when we talk about something they are in need of and consider impor-

tant.

3. Our message is not understood. The reason can be that the other person does not understand our words or other signals. Then we need to adjust our message so that the person can understand. We may also have presented our message in such a confused manner that he/she cannot see what is meant. It will be easier for him/her to understand if we present our message clearly, if we use simple words, and if we have some media such as pictures or written words to supplement our message. A very good way of helping people to understand a complicated process is to demonstrate it.

4. Our message is not remembered or retained. A good way of helping people to remember is to repeat. But repetition can be very dull, and people lose attention. If, however, the message is repeated in some other form, e.g. by a song, it is much more attractive. We can also repeat by asking questions to the listeners. written words to supplement our message. A very good way of helping people to understand a complicated process is to demonstrate it.

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3.5. The Internal/External Communication Systems

If we learn how people use different signals, when and with whom, we can begin to explore beyond these visible elements of communication. Behind these, helping to hold together a society is a unique pattern of channels and relationships which we will call the Internal Communication System (ICS).

The ICS is a society's ways of communicating. As we introduce this concept here we must stress the society's 'ownership.' Outsiders may learn to understand its ways and even be the first ones to speak of a system, but outsiders may even be able to work within the local system, but only as a guest accepting generous hospitality. In the end, the ability to use it extends only as far as the welcome of the hosts. It belongs to that community, by its very nature.

With local acceptance and with at least a partial understanding of signals and channels in a society, participatory communication is possible. Goals for change can be established together, using the special knowledge of both the guest from outside and the local people who know local needs intimately. With such participation, both parties feel a sense of personal ownership, commitment and control of the development work.

Participatory communication must use the Internal Communication System, so learning about it is very important. Communication that occurs outside that system is, by definition, exotic or foreign to the culture. It is under the control of outsiders, making genuine participatory communication impossible. That is why the first step in communicating for positive change is learning how to communicate within the system of signals and channels used by a group. Attempts to move more quickly, by-passing this learning stage, will prove to be slower in the long run and less likely to bring about change, especially change which is appropriate and helpful to the people.

We have noticed the great importance of making use, as far as possible, of the Internal Communication System (ICS) of the community which we are working with. This gives a leading role to the community, who are superior to the development worker in the use of their communication system. It also makes it more

natural for them to think in terms of using their own resources (e.g. the media) rather than external ones.

There are, however, certain contexts in which up to now an External Communication System is in use. This is primarily with government organizations.

A national government is almost always modelled upon that of the colonial Western nations. It is built on a series of hierarchic structures, very different from the mainly decentralized, semi-independent units of pre-colonial times. (I am aware of many exceptions, but compared to the situation today, the village or ethnical group was then still the main administrative unit).

Today decisions regarding the community are usually taken at a central location far from the community, by mainly members of other communities. The representatives of the authorities communicate differently, they are often difficult to understand as their signal systems, channels and media are different. Their behavior is different and so are their cultural values.

Participation is often reduced to saying 'yes' and providing some assistance in manpower and funds.

Even development workers are usually feeling the pressure to behave like government officials. They have to abide by government regulations, policies etc., and most of them are non-negotiable so there is pretty little room for accepting community suggestions.

NGO's have usually more opportunities to allow for truly community-based-development efforts, but this does not mean that they always do it.

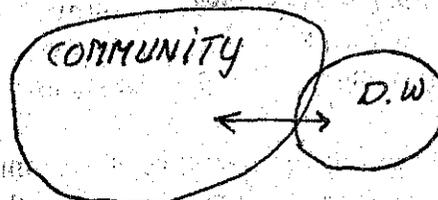
The urban communities are less homogeneous and the individuals must therefore use more of the External Communication Systems. This makes it difficult to carry out participatory development work e.g. in the so called 'slum-areas' of the cities.

A most important development activity is handled by the educational institutions. The schools are usually using a communication system external to the community. The medium of instruction may be a language other than that of the community and the topics studies of little relevance. The present crises of education in most countries of Africa, is possibly a result of this development.

3.6. Practical Example of Communication in Participatory Development

The forms of communication described above place the community in the centre and put the emphasis on the members of that community as the chief actors. In the following I will present some practical examples of how this done in the Communication for Development Project in Southern Sudan and how thereby participation increased.

1. In our presentation we have often mentioned the community and the development workers as two groups of actors in the development activities. We have stressed that there is a need for good and free Communication.



between the two. The use of the ICS can assure that and facilitates also the dominance of the community in the encounter. But how can a development worker arrange for such encounters to take place?

3.6.1. Routines and Events

In many societies there are two ways in which social life and economic production are arranged:

i) There are activities routinely carried out by an individual or a small group such as:

- drawing water
- caring for cattle
- weeding
- daily feeding etc. etc.

ii) There are also activities around special occasions such as:

- a feast
- a celebration or
- a particular task.

Each of these is seen as an event which distinguishes it from the daily routines. People also gather specifically for these activities.

If this pattern exists in a community, it can also be reflected in development work. In a routine contact there is usually:

- a small group of people participating
- stress on "business"
- people wanting to get back to their daily work.

They may not have much time and may want to know how long a program will last. By contrast, an event-oriented contact usually involves:

- many people participating
- lots of fellowship
- people putting aside their ordinary work
- people expecting to spend time at the event

We found that it was possible for development activities to be worked into these patterns of community life and into the local communication system, ICS.

Village Workshops

Some occasions for event-oriented contacts already existed in the communities where we worked, for example, village meetings, traditional feast days, funerals, birth celebrations and weddings. All can be occasions for giving attention to community needs. However, when attention needed to be focused on a problem and its solutions, we and our hosts developed a special type of gathering. The mutual contact and learning become the event. We called this a village workshop.

A village workshop is a meeting with representative of a community. It lasts one to two days, depending on how much time is needed for the subject and how much time the participants have available. It is held in order to enable development workers and a community to come together and study:

- community needs
- possible ways to meet those needs
- what actions can be taken
- presenting needs and solutions to the community

A workshop requires preparation on two levels as well as follow-up. First we met with the village leaders to get their advice and approval. We found out what community need was most important to them, who should participate, where and when the workshop should be held, and how to arrange food for the people.

Next, the content of the workshop was prepared and more detailed arrangements were made. Then the workshop was led and, afterward, the follow-up activities were done.

Step One: Planning the Workshop

The call for a planning meeting may come from local people or an appropriate outsider. There may be a problem which is troubling the community or a special need that has arisen. Those who meet must try to select a topic, arrange for selection of participants, and decide on the time and place for the workshop.

In Sudan, a primary health care unit wanted to carry out immunization of children. This had been difficult to accomplish in the past, so a nurse in the area was asked to go to a certain village and discuss the matter with the village elders. The community health worker was also present. The elders listened and agreed that the great number of children who died every year was a big problem, but they were not so sure that immunization was any good. However, they agreed that they should study the matter. The nurse proposed a workshop and everyone was in favor of this.

The elders selected fifteen "important" people to participate. They were people who "could understand such matters". A date was set. It was to last one day, and would be held under the big trees where the elders usually met. Someone offered a goat for food and the nurse promised to bring some flour. The planning meeting ended, and the nurse returned to his unit and reported to his supervisor.

Step Two: Preparation of the Workshop

Those who are to be involved in the workshop must make the necessary preparations. The community may take responsibility for local arrangements. Development workers will probably be responsible for presenting the topic and opening the discussion. They may also need to prepare a session on making media materials.

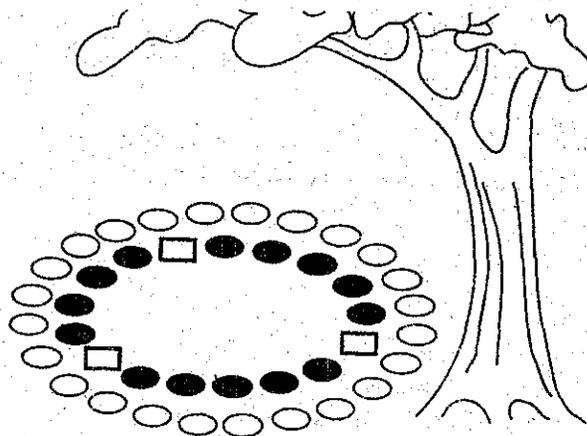
Before the workshop was held, the community health worker contacted the elders to ask them how the selection was proceeding. He also discussed who should take care of preparing the food, bringing water and other practical arrangements. The supervisor and the nurse planned what to present to the villagers. They prepared a flip-chart and some handbills on immunization. They also brought the flour and tea they had promised.

Step Three: The Workshop

It is advisable that any village presentations be carried out by the participants of the workshop. Their involvement, creativity, and way of saying things are usually what make such presentations a success. It is also important to make the presentation at a traditionally proper place. This is where the ICS comes into

operation. Also, allow some time for the villagers to discuss the topic after the presentation.

Early on the appointed day, the nurse, his supervisor, and a medical assistant went to the village. They met first with the community health worker who took them to the village leaders where they spent some time on greetings and small talk. Word was then sent to the selected participants that they should meet "under the tree". Some chairs were brought along in addition to the logs already there. People began assembling and after about one hour most of the participants had arrived. A number of others also came to see what was going on.



The seating arrangements were:

- village participants
- health staff
- other villagers

Then the workshop began. There were six parts to the day.

1. Opening. The workshop opened with prayer by the catechist of the village. The medical assistant officially greeted the participants and a village teacher said a word of welcome.

2. Introductions. The community health worker introduced all the participants, by name and title, activities and interests of the person. One was a farmer and a good hunter, another was a housewife and a traditional birth attendant etc.

3. Presentation of situation, problem and solutions. The medical assistant began to talk with the participants about the general conditions in the village. Referring to the discussions in the preparatory meeting with the elders, he proceeded to the question of the health of the children. The participants, especially the women, named various diseases which children suffered from. A traditional healer corrected anyone who in her opinion was not quite correct. The traditional ways of treating the diseases were also listed and evaluated.

The medical assistant then brought up the idea of presenting the diseases, using a flip-chart to explain about immunization. A discussion followed in which opinions regarding immunization were expressed. Questions were entertained and suggestions made. Eventually, a decision was made to recommend and promote immunization for the village. A possible date and place for the immunization was discussed and agreed upon.

4. Group media preparation. Everyone saw the necessity of spreading this information throughout the neighbouring villages. The participants decided to divide themselves into three groups: one to present the information with the help of a flipchart, another to use a pictorial handbill and a third to compose a song.

The first two groups began the presentation work by agreeing on the story to go with the flip-chart and handbills. They then had each participant practise the use of the media as well as the story.

- The singing group incorporated a few on-lookers whom they recognized as good singers. They began by choosing a melody, and then compose words to go with the tune.

In the end, most of the workshop day was spent repeating and improving on the presentations.

5. Village presentation. It was noticed that many villagers had come out to the "elders' gathering place", so the workshop participants agreed to make a presentation there. The new songs (in the end, the group had made up two) were sung several times and people joined in. The flip-chart story was presented by a participant, a song was sung and a discussion held. The hand bills were not presented there, but several participants got copies of the handbills in order to be able to present the story in their own compounds.

6. Closing. The workshop was given a traditional closing in which a prayer was offered for the protection of the village against the diseases of children and a blessing was pronounced upon the vaccines and the participants. Special thanks were expressed to the person who had donated the goat for the meal and blessings pronounced upon him.

Step Four: Workshop Follow-up

What action can the participants and their village neighbors undertake, based on the progress made at the workshop?

The people who participated in the workshop should decide on some concrete follow-up. Arranging more village presentations may be necessary and helpful after the workshop. In the case above, that is how the workshop's solution for a village problem was shared with the whole village.

Hopefully, any further meetings and any follow-up work will be as participatory as the workshop. Local responsibility, ideas and support must be valued just as highly as they were during the workshop process. Perhaps a test period or an investigation will be necessary and there may be a wait for the results.

In our example, three weeks later an immunization team visited the village and carried out a vaccination campaign. The turn-out in the village was high.

In the end, the people and their development partners must decide and follow-up together, whether for a one-time immunization campaign, a medium-term building program.

3.6.2. How to Develop a Message

Development workers are often eager to find some kind of media which they can use to present their development messages. But the first and most important step should be to prepare an appropriate message. The choice of media is secondary.

Since the message comes first, the first thing you need to ask yourself is: What do I want to say? Unless you make that clear to yourself, you will not be able to make it clear to others.

Perhaps you only want to make a first contact. But even then you have something to say: "I want to know you; do you want to know me?" Or perhaps you want to introduce something, for example, a new variety of maize. Then you have another kind of message to develop, and you are taking part in the larger process of change. You have a message about better agriculture and it may seem like a good 'solution' to a local problem, but it will only be that if it successfully meets the community's needs and requirements. Mutual understanding, built on clear messages back and forth, will be a vital part of the process of change.

Whatever your purpose, study the topic. Even the simple message above, "I want to get to know you" is no simple matter. You need to think it through and learn about the community before you profess your interest in them. With a topic like the new variety of maize, you may have to visit an agronomist and discuss similar crops which the people already grow. List the information from the agronomist, for example:

- maturation time
- drought resistance
- yield
- pest resistance
- taste
- storage
- special treatment of this variety

Then find out what beliefs people hold about the topic? In the case of a new variety of maize, collect as much information as possible about the people's general opinion of maize.

- What qualities are they looking for?
- What taste do they prefer?
- Do any of their beliefs run counter to your plans for this new variety?

Now you may be ready to formulate your message. If you have understood the people, the message you create will be their messages, as well as yours. Take the information you collected on your topic, both from the experts and from the people. Set it down in an interesting and orderly fashion. A worthwhile message begins to emerge. For example:

- people's opinions about what is 'good' maize
- problems with their present variety of maize
- advantages of the new variety
- disadvantages of the new variety
- how to grow the new variety
- where seeds can be bought

3.6.3. Selecting Media

In presenting a message, media are helpers. There are many types of media, and in this section we will look at various types and how they can be helpful in both carrying and strengthening a message. We will also see that some media are familiar to almost everyone in the world, while others are still new or being introduced.

There are communicative elements that help a medium to carry a message. Each element helps in its own way and may work better with some media than with others. An understanding of communicative elements will influence both our selection and our use of a particular medium. Here are four of the main elements,

how they can help, and some of the media which can make use of them.

- 1. Narrative element. Narratives, or stories, are a good way to interest people in a topic and raise issues that people might otherwise reject. Media that are particularly good for telling a story include speaking, drama and audio-cassettes.
- 2. Visual element. Pictures and graphics interest people and can help them to better understanding what is being presented. By seeing the topic, people learn faster. Some of the media which offer this visual element are flip-charts, posters, newspapers, slides and video-cassettes.
- 3. Teaching element. Sometimes we must use media that can help us give a lot of information, as in teaching. All media carry information, but some carry a lot of information more easily than others. Demonstrations textbooks and teaching cassettes are good information carriers.
- 4. Retentive element. Finally, there are media which help people to remember messages and which act as a reminder in the future. Media which do this have a strong retentive element. Included are songs (which you learn and may sing later) and handbills (which you may take home with you).

In fact, some media are able to fulfill several of these purposes at the same time. They may combine different communicative elements. A good book, for example, may communicate by:

- telling a story (narrative element)
- carrying helpful pictures (visual element)
- conveying much information (teaching element)
- being available for reference in the future (retentive element)

When the strengths of different media are combined, people may understand a message better than when just one medium is used. This is the multi-media approach to presentation of messages.

However, more is not necessarily better. It is usually not wise to spend much time and resources on getting many media; it may well be better to select only a few media, say two or three, and learn how to produce and use them well. You may, for instance, use a combination of drama, flip-charts and song. Drama would then provide the story dimension; flip-charts the visual dimension, and perhaps the main information, or teaching. Songs would help the audience to remember the message.

Traditional versus modern media

There is also another factor in choosing media. Unless the messenger remembers which media are familiar to the people, they may not retain the messages. Whether a medium is familiar or not affects media choice and use.

Every culture has traditional media - the media which it has known and used for a long time. These include dance, songs, story telling, drama and demonstrations. These media require very little equipment or materials and are basically free of most. They can be very effective.

Introduced media are media which have been brought in to a community relatively recently, during the lives of the people living today. These can be called modern media, in contrast to traditional media.

Some introduced media are capable of reaching a large number of people at one time. These include radio, television, newspapers and films, and are called mass media. The messages they deliver are produced by a few people at a center, where the large majority of people have no input or control. The costs involved in using these media are usually very high. Let us look at one of them more closely.

In many developing countries, radio is the most important of the mass media. It is very effective in bringing information to a wide area. For example, national governments may promote unity through radio programs which enable various ethnic groups to know and identify, with each other. Of course, there is also the danger that radio is used only for what the government wants to say.

Radio has other strengths and weaknesses: it may be heard by many people at once, and the cost per listener can be quite low. But how much benefit does it bring? To make radio an effective communication tool for development, radio producers must be able to hear from, and respond to, their audiences. This is true whether the producers are governments, churches or development agencies. How can the audience be heard? How can the audience, the "receivers", also become "senders"? Here are four ways:

- The radio producers travel to meet the listeners, stay with them, and listen to them.
- Audience participation is a priority. Programming encourages this with interviews, recordings of local events, listeners' choice segments, radio letter boxes, telephone call-in programs.
- Portable studio facilities are used regularly.
- Listeners' forums are arranged, so that people can meet and discuss topics they have heard about on radio.

Simple print media include pamphlets, booklets and one page handouts. These are also mass media. They are especially good for following-up messages and contacts made through other media. Literature should be used carefully, since people who have not learned to read might feel excluded from on-going development efforts.

Group Media

Group media are another class of media. They are primarily used with small-group audiences.

Either traditional or introduced media can be used in small group setting, but the term means that the media is adapted and intended for that setting. Dramas, flip-charts and panel discussions are typically used as group media. A locally-produced video cassette may be used as a group medium. One could even use a television program that is broadcast via satellite, though this would be rather more difficult.

Group media can often be produced locally and at low cost. The local people should be involved in production or take some responsibility for it. Easy access for the audience and low costs help to explain what is meant by the term "group media".

The Best Media

Which media are best for your situation? In order to choose the best media for your work, we suggest that you ask yourself these five questions:

1. What kind of media do my messages need?

Look at your message and decide which element is required. If you want to teach a song to people who

cannot read, a written text or pictures (visual elements) would not be helpful. Practising the song a number of times or listening to it on a cassette (retentive elements) would be a better choice of media.

Your message may be more complex, for example, explaining the duties of a member in a cooperative society. You may find that you need to convey much information and that you need a visual element to explain it, plus something to help people remember. Then it may be best to select a combination of media which will provide more communicative elements.

2. Do the media permit popular participation?

Some information, like government proclamations, originates at a central place. Media such as radio or newspapers are well suited for this type of message, because it is carried from one place to many places, whether or not people take in the information.

But since our aim in development communications is to have a high degree of popular participation, we usually cannot produce messages centrally. We must communicate locally, with programs used and controlled by the people.

Traditional media are all well suited for participation, as are some introduced media, such as flip-charts, puppets, games, posters, cassette programs and rural news letters.

3. What are the local resources?

Some of the introduced media require electrical power, which is rarely available in rural Africa. Even in many African cities, electricity may be erratic. Thus, battery-operated equipment may be the only choice. But in some areas even batteries are difficult to obtain. You may have to select other media which do not use electric power, or limit your use of them to times and places that electricity is available.

Availability of other resources should be assessed in the same way.

4. Can the media programs be produced locally?

There are many advantages to locally-produced programs:

- The medium can be adapted to the message.
- End product is in the local language.
- Program is more likely to be understandable.
- Programs offer people the chance to recognize themselves and their own situation, and to make personal applications more easily.
- People have control over the contents of the media programs.

5. How much money, maintenance and technology are involved?

Many introduced or modern media are expensive. They may also need maintenance, technical expertise and supplies.

Before selecting any such media, it is wise to learn what is required and what are the costs.

3.6.4. Combining Message and Media

To combine the message and the media, it may be necessary to separate the message into different parts for a good presentation. What are these different parts of the message? They will vary, of course, depending on what we have decided to say.

Here is one example. First, there might be a story which relates a central issue of the message. Next, we might want to give an illustration of the message. Then in order to show clearly what is most important, we might prepare a brief lesson on the essential information. Finally, we would probably have a summary that will help people remember the main points.

Earlier we mentioned several things to consider in choosing media, such as their different strengths. Now is the time to remember these strengths and to work the right ones into the presentation. Also, remember which media are available in your area and suitable to a particular message.

Media Practise

Since the media programs have been produced, they may seem ready to use. But practice is advisable first. Its purpose is for all participants to learn how to use the media properly and effectively.

There are usually several things to learn. For example, someone who presents a cassette program must know:

- how to operate the cassette player, load the cassette, start the motor, adjust the volume
- how to arrange the setting and where to place the machine so people can hear well
- how to use the program so as to encourage participants to take an active part in discussion and decision making.

The same applies to all media, both introduced and traditional. We are not only speaking about the operating skills required with modern equipment. The social arrangements which go with traditional media may actually require more training, if these media are to be used well in development communications. All media should be practiced with help from experienced users.

Field Testing, Evaluation and Presentation

Before a media program receives final approval, it must be field tested. Field testing means that the program is presented to a group as much like the final audience as possible.

If a program is intended for a rural population, this test presentation ought to take place in a village. The test group's reaction to the program is then evaluated. In some cases, this will mean that different parts of the program, for example, the pictures, must be checked separately for understanding.

The field testing and evaluation is intended to show whether or not:

1. The message reached the target group via the media program.

2. The target group paid attention to the program.
3. The target group participated during the program.
4. The target group understood the message.
5. The target group remembered the message.

Field testing will usually reveal weaknesses in the program, but since these have been discovered before the final presentation, changes can still be made. We can improve what we have chosen to say and how we have chosen to say it. This means going back to "message development" and "media selection", if necessary. We may also have to spend more time practicing.

As always in the process of good communication, changes are discussed with participants and then implemented with them as well.

3.6.5. Production and Use of Certain Media

Drama

Drama focuses the interest of the participants on a specific topic and is a medium with its own entertainment value.

In production workshops, a specific group may be given responsibility for preparing an appropriate drama. As background, they would normally need message content which had been developed earlier in the workshop.

The group begins by discussing a possible plot or story. It helps if they have a meeting place where they can act out their ideas. As soon as some characters have been named, members of the group are selected to fill the roles. As they try out their parts, the story evolves into a drama. After each run-through, some changes are made and the drama is repeated and evaluated. Substantial changes to the story may be made.

The drama group continues to develop its program and repeats it several times during the workshop and perhaps later in other kinds of meetings. It is then ready to be performed before a small group as a field test.

Finally, it is ready to present to a local village or other community. During the performance, the public may be asked to participate, if they wish, and then invited to take part in a discussion afterwards.

Here are some guidelines for using drama in this way.

- A drama, like a good story, must be both entertainment and interesting. It should make people laugh, cry, or do both.
- It should not attempt to teach many things but rather one main thing.
- A drama can raise sensitive issues for example, traditional taboos or discrimination, even issues that you cannot normally mention.

- A drama should be short; ten to fifteen minutes is a reasonable length of time.
- A drama should be performed in an open place where everyone can watch. An ideal spot is in the middle of an area where people can sit down. Let people come near you. If they feel like participating in the drama or commenting about it, they should be allowed to do so.
- When a drama group is organized, it is important that it has a dynamic leader. Try to identify such persons.

Songs

Songs are one of the most important media for many people. Songs and singing are part of everyday life, part of work and part of special occasions like feasts. In tribal communities, songs may serve both to narrate the history of the group and to laud or ridicule its members. Songs express and help form attitudes, maintaining the norms of the society.

As with story telling, each ethnic group has its own peculiarities, so it is important to study the songs of the group you are working with. Since a song is an expression of a particular culture, it is difficult to create successful songs with groups composed of people from different cultural backgrounds.

In most cases, development-related songs are produced at workshops. The words of these songs should be short and easy to remember, so that they only tell the most important part of a particular development message. This way, a song will more readily help people to retain and recall that message.

When a group is preparing a song, one or more of its members may be capable of leading the singing. If not, the group may want to bring in someone who is considered to be a good singer. In either case, the group begins by talking about the message and about a melody that could be used. An existing melody may work, it may be altered to fit the song they make up, or they may compose a new one.

One person takes the lead in testing some words with the melody. When that person gets stuck, another takes over and the creation of a song is underway. Each time a line is completed, the song is repeated from the beginning. By the time the song is complete, all participants will have learned it. It is practiced a few more times and is then ready to be field tested.

When songs are presented it is common for the audience to immediately try and join in. Also, since songs often go with dancing, the group and its audience may actually dance as well as sing.

Songs do not always have to be produced by a group. They can also be created by a singer from the community, and then taught to others. This is also a good exercise in communication, since the learning of a song makes for good participation if the song is good. The best songs have a text that is easy to learn.

A women's group held a workshop on nutrition for children. Some of the participants were to prepare a song and decided to make up a lullaby. Here is a translation:

Baby, my baby, what do you want?
Banana, or guava, or avocado you want?
They are good for you...

Or meat, or groundnuts, or fish, or eggs?
They are good for you.

Baby, my baby, I know you are sick.
You want me to take you to the clinic?
It is good for you...
But I cannot take you,
Your father has no money left.

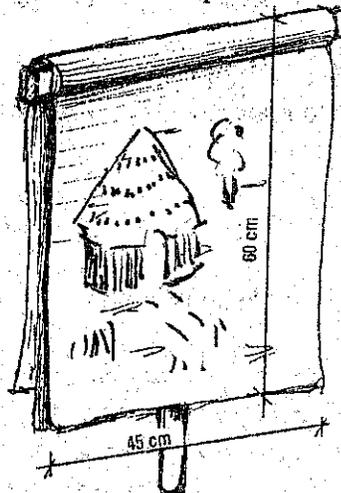
Demonstrations

A demonstration program can also be developed during a workshop. Participants first study technical questions, for example, how to prepare a water filter. They note which ideas need to be stressed. Then, the main parts of the demonstration lesson are drafted, the necessary materials and tools gathered (locally available, if possible), and a full demonstration lesson is practiced by all participants. The lesson is criticized and improved before it is actually used. Here are some helpful guidelines for working with this medium:

- Check before the lesson that you have all the material and tools you need.
- Place yourself near the people, so that they can see what you are demonstrating.
- While you are doing the demonstration, keep talking and explaining what you are doing.
- Watch to see if people understand, and be prepared to stop and explain further as needed. After field testing, the demonstration will be taken out to the people in a village. During the demonstration, the people are invited to participate in the action and to ask question and discuss.

Flipcharts

It is often helpful to use a series of pictures. There are many ways to do this, but we found the flipchart to be the most durable and handy for field use. Here is the kind of flipchart we used:



This flipchart can be rolled up and carried easily. It can also be packed for transport. A stick can always be found to hold the flipchart, or in case of strong wind, it can be held against the body.

To produce your flipcharts, here are some practical guide lines:

- When you have decided what you want to illustrate on the flipchart, you begin to sketch the drawings.
- Try to limit the number of pictures. Five to seven is about all you will need. One picture can be used to show several different points of the message.
- Fill out the image a little, then color it in, so that the pictures can be used temporarily in a field test.
- Test the flipchart by asking individuals to explain what they see in the pictures.
- Aspects which are unclear to people will need to be drawn again, until they become clear to any likely audience.
- Use the flipchart while telling the story.
- Evaluate how well the story and pictures work. Material may be revised and re-drawn.
- Finally, when revisions are finished, the material can be reproduced for others to use. To draw flipchart pictures an artist must take special care.
- Use large subjects, excluding most of the background details. Such pictures are the easiest to understand.
- Let the pictures show some kind of action. Action pictures are usually easier to interpret than pictures of inanimate objects.
- Make sure that the items in the pictures, for example, clothes, ornaments, or tools conform to local customs and usage. Some groups are very concerned that tribal objects are pictured correctly.

Audio cassettes

The audio cassette is very useful in participatory communication. The technology involved in reproducing and using cassettes is more complicated and costly than that of handbills, but is still quite feasible in many communities and situations.

- Programs can be produced locally.
- Participants do not need to be literate.
- Cassette players are so simple to operate that almost anyone can learn how to do it.
- Even single copies can be produced at a reasonable cost.
- Programs can be readily produced in different vernacular languages (in contrast with, for example, books which usually cannot be produced economically in an edition of less than 1,000).

To make cassette programs for development work, one can use material recorded in studios or in the field. There are many types of studio material, depending on what is available to a community or agency. Field material is mainly of two types:

- a. Interviews conducted with local people and specialists on topics such as health and agriculture.
- b. Programs produced during workshops, both with staff and with villagers.

The production of cassette programs follows the same basic process that we have described for other media. After the message has been developed, a group (usually with a media "producer" from a development project as facilitator and technician) drafts a possible program on the basis of the agreed upon message. Then they carry out interviews or create dialogues and short talks to use a material for programs. Songs, dramas and stories are also recorded. These may be part of village feasts, rituals religious services, and other public meetings of interest.

Video

While video in the affluent societies has become an 'individual' medium, in Africa it is becoming a group medium. People who have no chance at all to buy a TV, let alone a video, can sometimes have a chance of attending a video show in the small video - cinemas that are becoming increasingly popular. The entrance fee is usually very low (in Kenya about US\$ 0.10). The owners are often short of films and happy to include a development film in their programme. As the public usually belong to the same community there is a good chance that the development message will be discussed, perhaps even acted on.

4. The role of communication in increasing the efficiency, cost effectiveness and, continuity of development activities.

When we discuss the function of communication in relation to efficiency and effectiveness we are primarily dealing with a participatory versus a non-participatory approach. One of the objections to participatory development is that it is less efficient. The argument is therefore that talking takes time, and when a development worker knows what is technically right he can simply give orders and the task will be accomplished without delay.

This argument is still being used, but has, as far as my experience goes, only proved right in emergency situations which call for very swift action of very short duration. However in most development situations there is a tendency that swift action often drags on. UN intervention in Somalia is a good example in case. Today many are asking why UN didn't put more efforts into cooperation with the communities.

The short duration of a development intervention has often tempted development projects and workers to do the things themselves instead of involving the communities. Governments have often followed the same pattern, perhaps not due to time restraints but more due to inability of allowing the communities to be responsible for the development work.

Another factor to reckon with is the duration of the effect of the intervention. Usually the cost benefits are calculated only in relation to time of intervention, while the long term benefits e.g. in terms of people trained often are not taken into consideration.

Norwegian Church Aid ran a large scale Integrated Rural Development Programme in Southern Sudan. One of the main forms of intervention was building of feeder roads. Large scale mechanical means were used and the road project was considered very efficient. Another section of the project dealt with public health. It concentrated on a very participatory form of health education and training.

At the outbreak of hostilities (in that area 1985) most of the facilities and equipment was destroyed and roads quickly deteriorated. But even a few years later, it was possible to find many of the village health workers active in treating the sick and advising people on health matters.

This was an extreme case, but it demonstrates the fallacy of looking on efficiency in a short term perspective only.

I would like to present another example of how the use of a participation communication approach can be efficient, cost effective and sustainable.

An integrated rural development project in Kasese Uganda, is now in its sixth year. The project included many different activities, health, water, co-operatives, soil conservation, agriculture etc. The owner of the

project and the donor organization had agreed to follow a participatory model where the community had a strong influence on the project. At an evaluation during the third year of the project, it was found that the communities had somehow pushed the project leadership to expand the health activities. The communities had raised extra funds to increase the size of the health facilities, and the staff. They had also got in touch with the authorities in order to find ways of getting government assistance with staff. On the request of the people the integrated project had made a transfer of resources from the co-operative programme to that of health. Another 3 years have passed and my latest information is that the health activities now will be able to rely on local resources, i.e. community with some government assistance.

The community was allowed to direct the programme in a direction they thought was most beneficial to them, and in the long run it proved to be the most effective and sustainable.

As to the cost of communication itself it is primarily related to the training and equipping of people. The so called folk media cost very little and so do the non-electronic mass media. But there is a need of continuous training and upgrading. Communication is not something that everyone knows from birth, it is something that needs resources of training and of some equipment.

A short-term development intervention which seeks close participation with a community or members of a community may well prove less efficient and more costly than one which does not look for participation. However, a development effort which looks beyond a brief project period and which seeks participation in order to empower individuals and community to run their own affairs has definitely a much better chance to succeed in achieving efficiency, cost effectiveness and sustainability. A successful participation and sharing of knowledge, skills, material resources etc. can only occur if communication between the participants functions well.

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