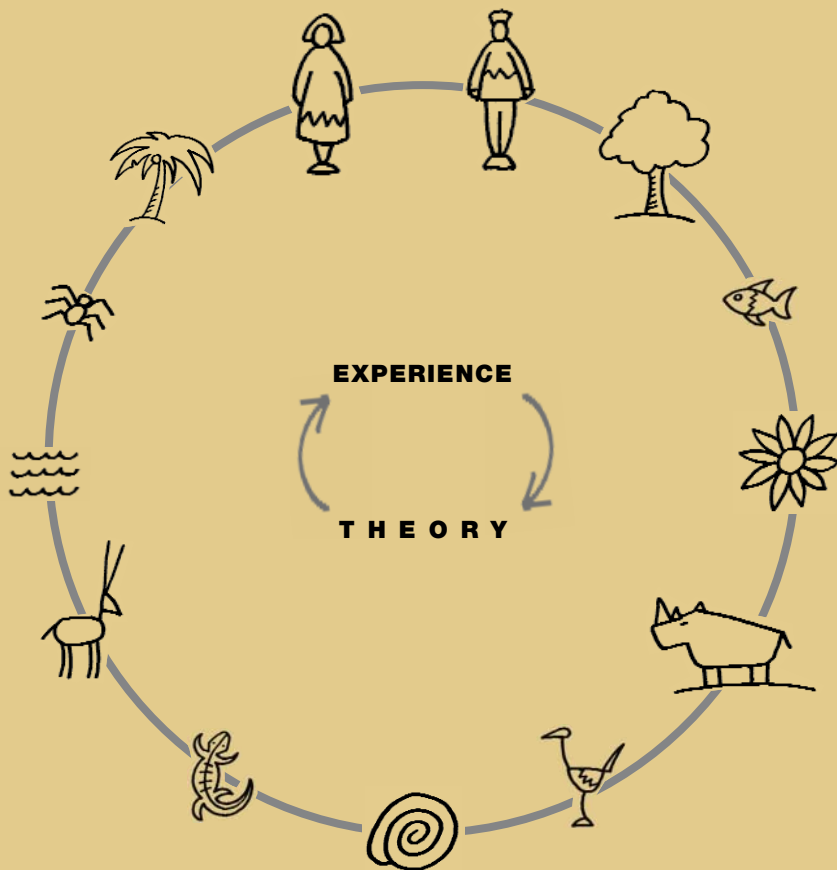
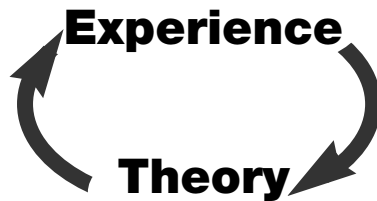


# Communication<sup>and</sup> Natural Resource Management



# **Communication and Natural Resource Management**



Prepared by The Communication Initiative in collaboration with the  
Communication for Development Group

Extension, Education and Communication Service  
Research, Extension and Training Division  
Sustainable Development Department

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# Foreword

When FAO raised the idea of preparing a resource book in collaboration with The Communication Initiative for people involved in **communication and natural resource management**, it was clear that finding an approach that reflected the diversity of thought, practice and local context would be a challenge. We hope that this document meets that challenge by presenting experiences across cultural and theoretical perspectives in such a way as to enable the reader to reflect on some of the shared principles and lessons learned in this field.

For many years, under the definition of Communication for Development, FAO has emphasized the critical role that participatory communication plays in involving communities in rural development. Such a commitment to genuine participation requires openness to the different ways of understanding and resolving problems that emerge from the cultural, economic and agroecological realities of the communities involved. During the past three decades the **Communication for Development Group** in the Sustainable Department of FAO has integrated in several field projects the use of different communication approaches and media, and more recently new information and communication technologies (ICTs), for community based rural development. These experiences have shown that participatory communication processes can transform the ability of rural stakeholders to fully manage local natural resources and to enable community control over their environment.

**The Communication Initiative** has worked to increase the profile of communication as a central element of successful development practise and to enable communication practitioners to use peer review and real time information exchange to improve their work. Through its 'location' as a crossroads for a range of information about, evaluations on, and reviews of, communication projects, The Communication Initiative has facilitated discussions across theoretical approaches, gathered information on grass-roots initiatives from varied cultural and geographic settings and brought together practitioners from very different backgrounds.

The two groups share an understanding of the centrality of communication for rural development and social change, and a commitment to enhance rural people's capacities in managing communication processes. FAO is interested in exploring this in the realm of natural resource management and rural development in order to strengthen the work of communication practitioners. The Communication Initiative looks for ways


to profile and share the varied communication approaches and methods being used successfully in the field. Both institutions want to facilitate a process of mutual learning among different stakeholders interested in sharing experiences about communication for natural resource management.

The result of this effort is a unique and not easily categorized resource book – **Communication and Natural Resource Management: experience/theory**. It is not a work of theory and yet examines theoretical perspectives. It is not an account of best practises and yet provides examples of interesting and useful initiatives. It is not a training manual and yet presents exercises and learning objectives. It looks at how experience is, and can be guided by theory and how theory can be derived from understanding experience. It challenges us to reflect on our own and others' work by treating theoretical approaches as interchangeable tools within a variety of different communication and natural resource management initiatives. It encourages the readers to learn from each other.

We hope you enjoy reading this book and find it a useful tool when thinking about communication for natural resource management and rural development from perspectives that shed new light on old problems.



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The writing and preparation of this book has been a collaborative effort from the beginning. There are many people who helped us by allowing us to use their experiences in the field, there are others who helped point us towards essential reading and documentation, still others read portions of the document for us and offered advice and useful criticism. We thank all of you for helping make this a better book than it would have been without you while exonerating all of you from any role in its failings.

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# Introduction

## USING THIS BOOK

This book has been written as a tool for people involved or interested in communication and natural resource management who seek a better understanding of how different theories and strategic change principles relate to actual practise. It is not, however, a book of theory nor is it an argument for one approach over another. Instead, it relates a variety of theories and change principles in simplified, almost schematic form, to a series of real initiatives in the field through interactive «experiences».

It asks that the reader become a participant in a process that requires reading and analysing each initiative using different theoretical lenses. Each «experience» is organised around a theme, a learning objective, a description of an actual natural resource management and communication initiative, and one or two theoretical lenses through which to analyse the initiative. As you work through each «experience», you will be asked questions about the theory and change principles and how they relate to the initiative. The idea is not to «discover» the right approach but rather to create an interactive space that enables you to reflect on what might work in your own context and also on how different contexts may require different approaches, principles and theoretical frameworks.

The reader will find no examples of «best practice» in this book nor will you find step-by-step examples of how to «do» natural resource management communication. While there are clearly examples of good practise and well planned initiatives in this and other places<sup>1</sup> this is a book about exploring the practical relation between theory and practise and about being open to different perspectives and approaches. Its format is designed for you to interact with directly. Spaces are there for you to write in, make margin notes on, and highlight elements that are relevant to you. It is also designed to be easy to photocopy so you can make multiple copies for yourself or others. We encourage you to use it in workshops as well as a tool for individual reflection. We hope you enjoy it and find it useful.

## A WORLD OF FINITE RESOURCES

Between 1970 and 1999 the natural wealth of the earth's forests, freshwater ecosystems, oceans and coasts declined by 33 percent.<sup>2</sup> Today, 58 percent of the world's coral reefs

and 34 percent of all fish species are at risk.<sup>3</sup> Within the next 25 years 48 countries accounting for 35 percent of the world's projected population will face water shortages.<sup>4</sup> Over the next 50 years the world's population is estimated to grow by 50 percent to 9.3 billion. Virtually all of this growth will be in today's developing countries. The 49 poorest countries will see their populations grow from 668 million to 1.86 billion people.<sup>5</sup>

This grim statistical list could go on and on. The world has not managed its natural resources well and the problem will almost certainly get worse before it gets better. Furthermore, though the poorest and most marginalised have the smallest «footprints» when it comes to using the world's resources, they are also those who are and will be effected first and worst. Therefore, while long term solutions to the world's major environmental and food security problems depend significantly on action from the wealthy and most industrialised countries (those with the largest «footprints»), day to day survival for the poor and marginalised will depend increasingly on the careful local management of natural resources in a context of increasing scarcity and demand. Add to this the impact of AIDS which has already killed an estimated 7 million agricultural workers and is predicted to kill another 16 million by 2020<sup>6</sup> and it is clear that the coming years will present unprecedented challenges especially for the rural poor.

So, as journeys to find firewood get longer, maintaining the fertility of the soil gets harder, catches of fish get smaller, and the hands to do the work get fewer, the need to effectively manage natural resources has never been greater. Similarly, improving communication as a tool to facilitate the better management of limited resources has never been more critical. But, finding ways to sustainably and equitably steward and share these resources will require dialogue and compromise at global, national and local levels. Future benefits need to be weighed against immediate costs, and short-term interests against long term sustainability.

This exploration of experiences, theories and methods, will provide opportunities to reflect on the critical role that communication for development can play in supporting essential processes of dialogue. We hope that it offers some insight into how best to support the many actions that people are already taking, as they confront the challenges facing us all in a world of finite natural resources.

## **CRITICAL PERSPECTIVES**

Let us begin by drawing out some key themes through the voices of a Zimbabwean war veteran, development worker and poet, and some leading thinkers in the areas of

Natural Resource Management (NRM) and communication for social change. In *Dusk of Dawn*, a book of prose and poetry, Freedom Nyambaya writes:

**A Career for Life**

*I am a retired soldier  
not a retired revolutionary  
I still walk around armed  
with tools and ideas of how to grow more maize  
There are still those of us  
who consciously organise and create  
Africa's man-made problems and make  
our suffering a career for interested scholars<sup>7</sup>*

From Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend, M. Taghi Farvar, Jean Claude Nguinguiri and Vincent Awa Ndongang, in the *Co-management of Natural Resources: Organizing, Negotiating and Learning-by-Doing*:

«In the past, many traditional societies formed relatively closed systems in which natural resources were managed through complex interplays of reciprocities and solidarities. Communal property was generally widespread, and constituted a crucial element in the cohesion and sustainability of traditional resource management systems. Local knowledge and skills, built through extended historical experience, were another cornerstone. Most importantly, local communities tended to create *themselves* around a body of natural resources that they could manage together....

The historical emergence of colonial powers and nation states, and their violent assumption of authority over most common lands and natural resources led to the demise of traditional resource management systems virtually everywhere. The monetisation of economic exchange weakened local systems of reciprocity and solidarity, as did the incorporation of local economies into increasingly global systems of reference. In addition, the rise in power of modern, expert-based, «scientific» practices induced severe losses in local knowledge and skills. This generalised breakdown of local NRM systems finally resulted in the disempowerment and «deresponsibilisation» of local communities...<sup>8</sup>

And again from Freedom Nyamubaya:

**Shanty town beauty**

*She stood at the door step*

*must have been five years or less  
the begging eyes gazed from left to right  
The kwashiokored tummy bulged out  
of the torn dress  
with marks that looked like the map of Africa  
I realised it was not tattoo  
but an accumulation of dust  
run over by sweat  
Pretty more than famous Cleopatra  
everything equal  
the girl would pass for Miss Africa  
just another woman nature produced  
but forgot to breast-feed<sup>9</sup>*

These two voices, while coming from radically different backgrounds, present us with quite similar perspectives on the disempowerment of local communities, the importance of who «owns» development processes, and a sense of the mistrust and obstacles to communication that have been created by colonialism, modernisation and globalisation.

Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend *et al.* tell us of a series of external impositions on local communities through colonial or state rule, the discounting of local knowledge in favour of «scientific» knowledge, and in some cases the stripping away of local control in a process they call «deresponsibilisation». These forms of disempowerment stripped many local communities of the capacity and even the right to manage the resources that had previously been the foundation of their existence and identity.

At the same time, and not surprisingly, these disempowering processes have generated mistrust and resistance. Freedom's revolutionary commitment to the development of tools and ideas to «grow more maize» and refusal to be objectified by scholars or images of hunger and poverty, speaks to community frustration and anger, but more importantly, to community strength and determination to reclaim what has been taken away.

What they both say is that managing natural resources in the difficult times ahead will require a clear recognition of the mistakes and abuses of the past. The «local» has to have an influential, indeed powerful, seat at the NRM table, and previous patterns of exclusion should be seen as having often been disastrous, both for local communities and for the world as a whole.

## **CHANGING APPROACHES TO NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

Responses to the realities reflected above are not new to NRM or community-based development. There have been significant changes to the methods and theoretical underpinnings of all kinds of community development over the past 30 or so years. Much of this change is the result of reflection on experience, coupled with, and sometimes forced by, the insistence of local voices like Freedom's, to be heard and reckoned with.

During the 1970s, practitioners working with rural communities began to be disillusioned with the lack of progress, the failure of many development activities, and all too often, worsening conditions for the poor. It can be assumed that the communities themselves were even more disillusioned though their voices were seldom heard. Early work on NRM focussed on the lack of local knowledge and the need to improve this through education, training and outside expert advice. Local practices were surveyed to identify what had to change, but not surveyed for the local wealth of experience and knowledge.

To the extent that this amounted to a communication method, it was one in which local people were questioned to discover gaps in their knowledge that could be filled by expert outsiders. Knowledge was usually seen as technical, value neutral, and transferable across cultures and continents. If not quite a one-size-fits-all approach, it was based more on a belief in the universal application of methods defined by agricultural science than «less rigorous» approaches that emphasised the centrality of social and cultural practise.

As it became clear that this approach was not delivering the progressive improvements it promised, two key problems were identified. The first was lack of local support for many of the activities and projects designed by outsiders – Freedom's «interested scholars» or the «modern experts» of Borrini-Feyerabend et al. The second was failure due to poor understanding by outsiders of local social and environmental conditions, made worse by not acknowledging the value of local experience.

Identifying these problems led to new approaches to communicating with rural people that sought a better understanding of their local situation, and involved them in identifying the issues that affected them most directly. This led to the adoption of techniques such as «Rapid Rural Appraisal» (RRA), which enabled development workers and other outside «experts» to gather simple data quickly on issues iden-

tified at the local level. It also allowed some participation of semi-literate and illiterate people.

While this was an improvement over the complex and specialised information gathering of the past, it was still based on outsiders obtaining information, which was then taken away for analysis and use in the preparation of development interventions. Local opinions and ideas were gathered more effectively, but control and ownership remained outside of the communities being «developed».

Nevertheless, techniques like RRA opened the door to involving communities further – not just in data collection, but also in data analysis, problem identification and prioritisation, and eventually (though still not often enough) participation in defining, implementing and evaluating development interventions.

This more inclusive approach became popularly known as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA). The key insight of PRA was that both local communities and outside «experts» had information and knowledge to share. It was assumed that outsiders knew relatively little about local conditions, practices and resources, while community members often lacked technical knowledge that would help them adapt to changing social, political and natural environments. The important change was the identification of a two-way approach to communication that respected the experience and knowledge of both «inside» and «outside» participants, and gave the community a voice in setting development priorities.

PRA helped move the community back towards the centre of the development process and sought to better understand and overcome the difficult and often contradictory positions in which communities find themselves when facing issues of sustainable resource use. But, as important as this process of enabling communities to take ownership of their own development was and is, it does not fully respond to the interdependent context in which all development processes must work.

Consider the issues faced by communities in the relatively remote San Juan River Bi-National Basin in Central America (see Experience # 6). These communities are in Costa Rica and Nicaragua. The basin itself forms a natural ecological and social unit, and there are many cultural links between its inhabitants on both sides of the border. The area is also open to a variety of business activities, and depends on, or is affected significantly by, decisions and policies made in the relatively distant capitals of the two countries.

No matter how participatory an approach may be within a local community, there are many other factors that can impact the local management of resources. If business

regulations are lacking, then unscrupulous and unsustainable practices that generate little local benefit and much long-term damage can – and in the case of the San Juan Basin did – occur. If governments make policies that do not take local needs and concerns into account – or do not make policies at all – then local involvement and commitment to the management of resources will be weaker or impossible.

The proper management of an area like the San Juan Basin requires the coordinated participation of at least two national governments, local government, business and local communities. To do this requires more than a commitment to participation at the community level through processes like PRA; it requires meaningful participation at multiple levels and across divides of geography, culture, education levels, income and often fundamental interests.

For participatory approaches to succeed in this wider context of interdependent influences another facet is required - a way to bring the necessary groups into conversation with each other, and to enable the poorest and most marginalised to have a powerful/influential voice. In other words, a communication strategy that goes beyond the relationship between «outside» development experts and «inside» community members.

Communication strategies that go beyond the local community retain the insights provided by approaches like PRA, but insist that equal importance be given to communication strategies dealing with the external contexts in which communities must function. This has been recognised in approaches like Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal<sup>10</sup> and Co-management<sup>11</sup>.

The Namibia experience with Community Based Natural Resource Management (see Experience 1) provides a good example of the importance of this kind of expanded communication strategy. Here processes of «internal» communication work together with parallel but linked processes of «outside» communication to build participation and trust between different communities, levels of government and policy makers.

Internally, Namibian communities had to find ways to separate and manage cattle and wildlife, to stop poaching (a major economic activity of many of their own members), to establish new forums for local and regional decision-making, and to learn skills and adopt practices to manage resources in new ways. But for these to be successful, different communities had to share access to resources, traditional leaders had to make co-ordinated decisions and share power, government planners had to listen to rural



communities, and national leaders had to incorporate local ideas and priorities into national policies.

This situation is not unique. In fact it can be argued that most development activities require changes at the individual and local level as well as between communities, policy makers and private interests. Such changes require communication strategies that look «in» and «out» at the same time, and that may involve quite different approaches in different spheres. Unfortunately, while the situation is not unique, it is still rare to find development initiatives that incorporate such communication strategies.

## **COMMUNICATION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL CHANGE**

This recognition that «the local» is embedded in complex relationships with other actors and forces, has led to a related set of discussions on the role of communication in the context of globalisation and new technologies. The Rockefeller Foundation has initiated one of the more interesting of these discussions by involving people and organisations from around the world, in an exploration of how to increase the impact of communication as a tool in development processes given «globalisation» and new communication technologies.<sup>12</sup>

The discussion began from the premise that:

«...developments – in communications technologies, in political and media systems, and in emerging development problems – suggest a greatly enhanced, radically different role for communication in development programming.»<sup>13</sup>

Three broad traditional roles were identified as having formed the core elements of communication programming in development thinking and practise:

The first was to, «inform and persuade people to adopt... behaviours and practices... beneficial to them.»<sup>14</sup> There are many familiar examples of this in HIV/AIDS, immunisation, health and sanitation, reforestation, family planning, and soil and pest management, to name a few.

The second was to «enhance the image and profile of organisations involved in development.»<sup>15</sup> This has been an important aspect of generating legitimacy for – mostly northern – organisations and raising funds.

The third was to «enable community consultation over specific initiatives.»<sup>16</sup> This can be compared to Participatory Rural Appraisal discussed above, where the focus is more on community participation and involvement in a particular intervention, than the surrounding context of influencing issues and actors.

Each of the three traditional areas is important but not sufficient to respond to the changing technological, political and economic context in which development occurs. In order to be able to make change effectively «inside» a community, the surrounding environment must also change, or at least be recognised and influenced.

This need to understand the surrounding context applies to communication theory and method as much as it applies to the communities and people that communication initiatives seek to reach. In other words, communication thinking must also reflect on itself and the environment it works in, and change its own behaviours and practices accordingly. Within the discussion, some key contextual changes have been identified which are significant enough to require reflection on communication theory and method. These are the liberalisation and deregulation of the media, the emergence of new technologies, and a new global and political environment.

## **Media Liberalisation**

Media liberalisation has broken the hold of many government-run and dominated information services, which have been the source of information for much of the world's population. The general trend since the end of the Cold War has been for governments to relax controls and enact freedom of speech laws.

The impetus has come from a variety of sources, both within countries and internationally, through political pressure from citizens groups and international donors, and economic pressure, as new trade regimes demand the opening up of national media to competition.

These trends present a double-edged sword. On the one hand, countries which had heavily censored and controlled media, have seen the emergence of often vibrant and populist newspaper, radio and television outlets, while old government-controlled institutions have faded due to falling audiences and funding.

On the other hand, the door has been opened to unregulated media that can further disempower the marginalised. Government self-congratulation and disinformation has often been replaced with a diet of Western pop music, and irrelevant or inaccurate news.

This trend has created a new communication environment in which single media outlets have been replaced with many, in highly-fragmented markets with multiple audiences. Getting the message out now requires paying attention to more outlets and audience segments, and the additional problem of encouraging the new media to play a role in development processes.

We can see some of this in the GreenCOM experience in El Salvador (see Experience # 8), where training reporters to better understand environmental issues, was considered central to building greater awareness and commitment to environmental sustainability. It is also reflected in the Kenyan Pastoralist experience (see Experience # 2), where reporters were sensitised to the culture and lives of pastoralists, and encouraged to write stories about them, to help build understanding for their issues, and reduce their marginalisation within Kenyan society.

## **New Technologies**

The revolution in information and communication technologies is profound. The Internet, e-mail, mobile phones, satellite and wireless, have all opened up communications in ways not thought possible even a few years ago. Countries with collapsing telecommunications infrastructures can utilise cell phones, microwave and satellite technologies, to upgrade and more affordably replace old systems, and provide phone and Internet service to isolated rural areas.

These systems are helping to connect previously isolated people to information and other communities. The Kothmale project in Sri Lanka (see Experience # 5), demonstrates how community radio can be linked to the Internet, to provide access to information on health and agriculture. Other initiatives in Kothmale show how connections are being made with surrounding villages and ethnic groups, creating the potential for greater understanding and dialogue between people isolated by terrain and culture.

However, as the FAO has pointed out, «a combination of inadequate national communications policies; insufficient infrastructure, connectivity access and high costs; a scarcity of skilled ICT labour; and a lack of local content creation and applications (language and software) hinder ICT appropriation by poor nations and by poor regions within nations and especially by isolated rural communities»<sup>17</sup>.

This «digital divide» could grow and serve to further widen the gap between rich and poor, the connected and the marginalised. Furthermore, increasing access to new technologies is only part of a response to ICT marginalisation. As Alfonso Gumucio

Dagron reminds us, «when we talk about technology we are only referring to instruments, not to social, economic or cultural development. A knife is just a knife; it can be used to hurt someone or to carve a beautiful wood sculpture. Content and utilisation is what makes the difference.»<sup>18</sup>

There is great potential in many of the new technologies, but like media deregulation, they are not in themselves good. The Internet for example, makes both amazing and terrible things possible. Its very openness means that it is used for both our brightest and darkest dreams. It can be a place for tackling discrimination and injustice head on, and it can be a place for the worst kinds of racism and exploitation. It is also an instrument that is denied to many because of income, gender, education, language and geographic barriers. Consider this set of UNDP statistics from 1999:

- The typical Internet user worldwide is male, under 35 years old, with a university education and high income, urban based and English speaking.
- A computer costs the average Bangladeshi more than eight years' income, compared with one month's wage for the average American.
- English is used in almost 80 percent of websites. Yet fewer than one in ten people worldwide speak the language.»<sup>19</sup>

Others feel much more positive about the impact of the Internet and information communication technologies (ICTs). For example, John Lawrence points out how:

«...in 1995, the Social Summit and the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women both engaged local communities in dialogue on crucial policy issues for the first time via Internet (See Gurstein M. Community Informatics. Idea Publishing, Hershey Pennsylvania 2000). The wealth of documentation on ICTs in the service of social development and anti-poverty strategies following the Social Summit demonstrates serious, local commitment by communities throughout the world. An important index of the empowering potential of the Internet is the degree of resistance encountered in autocratic societies. Also we should note the extraordinary contribution of the Internet to reversing the «diaspora» effect in remoter, poorer or troubled regions (e.g. the 3 Pomegranate Network in Armenia <http://www.3noor.org/nnplaunch.html> ).<sup>20</sup>

A recent study by the FAO's Communication for Development Group on local appropriation of ICT's found that:

On the one hand:

- there are a limited number of community driven ICT initiatives,

- there is scarce visibility and coverage of grassroots driven ICT projects,
- most of the documentation on community ICT projects is relatively new because the projects are new and few evaluations have been undertaken,
- the emphasis of ICT projects is more often on providing access to information than on finding innovative ways to apply ICT's to specific local needs,
- and the priorities of many ICT projects are influenced more by interests of external organisations than local community based organisations.

While on the other hand ICT's can:

- offer opportunities for two-way and horizontal communication,
- support bottom-up articulation of development needs,
- support, create and strengthen interactive and collaborative networks,
- support policy and advocacy,
- help build consensus,
- and enhance partnership with the media.<sup>21</sup>

Whether sceptical or optimistic about the potential of these new technologies to spark serious social change that benefits the poor and empowers the marginalised, there is recognition that they can offer cheaper and more accessible communications, and provide increased opportunities for horizontal (as opposed to hierarchical) forms of dialogue and information sharing.

It is still too early to pass judgement on the potential of these technologies, but if the central questions about «content» and «utilisation» are to be confronted, who better to do so than those concerned with communication for social change?

## **Politics and Economy**

The final set of trends identified through the Rockefeller discussion, concern changes to the political and economic environment. One aspect of this has been the end of the Cold War, and with it the emergence of more open political systems. Even states that retain one-party systems or function as monarchies or theocracies are more open to political debate and to greater freedom of expression.

This has been reinforced by the emergence of a global economy in which, «for the first time in human history the entire planet is capitalist, since even the few remaining command economies are surviving or developing through their linkages to global, capitalist markets.»<sup>22</sup> This enclosure of the world within a single economic system is requiring all governments to make adjustments, and one aspect of this process is to make information more available. The global marketplace has helped create some of the

impetus for government to deregulate media and relax freedom of speech laws. This has been reinforced by the Internet, which has proven very difficult for even the most authoritarian governments to regulate.<sup>23</sup>

However, the globalisation of the capitalist system has also led to an increasing concentration of ownership in the communication field. For example, AOL/Time Warner controls 32 percent of the US Internet service provider market<sup>24</sup>. This concentration of ownership is compounded by the convergence of media and telecommunication industries in which a few very large multinational companies now control both transmission systems and the programmes they carry. There are clear trends towards concentration and centralisation on the one hand, and fragmentation, coupled with the potential for networked or horizontal communication on the other. While it is not clear how these seemingly contradictory tendencies will work themselves out, they require that anyone involved in communication watch them closely as they are about who controls the flow of world information.

## **INSIGHTS AND DIRECTION**

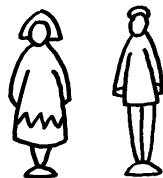
Discussions and debates about what these changes to the communication environment mean range around a few key insights. For our purposes – examining what experience and theory have to show us about the use of communication in natural resource management (NRM) – the most telling points are:

1. There is a complex history of unequal power relationships and economic marginalisation in which community level development processes are embedded and from which lessons can be drawn and better approaches to communication built.
2. Preferred methods and approaches to communication in NRM, have moved from «expert» outside advice provided for «recipient» communities, to the sharing of knowledge in a process of mutual exchange, where the community determines its own development priorities.
3. Local communities do not exist in isolation from wider contexts of social, political, economic and environmental forces, and these need to be taken into account.
4. Most NRM initiatives require communication strategies for both internal and external processes.
5. New communication technologies have increased the possibilities for marginalised communities to access information, and to have their voices heard from local to global levels.

6. The obstacles to this access remain and should not be underestimated, as they are caused by language, gender, poverty, geography, discrimination, and a variety of other forms of marginalisation and disempowerment.
7. There are many experiments in the use of communication and NRM, but these are as recent as the new technology or method employed, and can only show us partial glimpses of what is possible and what is sustainable.
8. For every positive indication of how ICTs may create opportunities for those involved in communication for social development, there are negative aspects that must be kept in mind such as the digital divide, the concentration of ownership over the means of communication, and who controls the content and utilisation of communication tools and approaches.

In spite of these potential pitfalls, many people, communities and organisations around the world, have begun to experiment with a variety of approaches to communication and NRM that make use of inclusive methods and technologies (some new and some traditional).

It is easy to feel we are at a point where there are more questions than answers, and more uncertainty than clear direction. However, there are opportunities and possibilities being created by people wherever they are engaged and lessons being learned in the process of engagement. If the paths we should follow are not clearly marked the general direction has been mapped and to paraphrase the words of Spanish poet Antonio Machado «Traveller! there are no paths, paths are made by walking» (Cantares XXIX). We hope that you will find the following «experiences» useful as tools to explore other contexts and theoretical perspectives while gaining insight into your own communication practise.



# Experience 1 **Community Based Natural Resource Management – Namibia**

## **CBNRM IN NAMIBIA**



**Theme:** Principles and Action

**Learning Objective:** To improve participants' understanding of the relationship between differing communication principles for effective change, and the planning and organisation of their actions.



There are a number of very different principles on which to plan and organise a communication activity related to NRM. Two different approaches follow the outline of this experience in Namibia.

We suggest that you start by reading the Namibia experience. As you do, think about the change principles that are central to it. We then outline two change approaches and ask you to reflect, in relation to both the Namibia example and your own activities.

### **Project**

Community Based Natural Resource Management in Namibia (CBNRM) is less a project or programme, and more a process involving different actors and approaches over time. It has focused on providing communal area residents with incentives to use their resources sustainably, combining reform of policy and legislation, with implementation at the community level.

### **Context**

Namibia is the most arid African country south of the Sahara, with limited and unpredictable rainfall, leading to regular drought and marginal agricultural yield. 66 percent of its population of approximately 1.8 million live in rural areas, and are directly dependent on harvesting natural resources. Per capita GDP is about \$4 600, but income is highly skewed between rich and poor, with the richest ten percent receiving 65 percent of total income.



Apartheid policies during South African colonial rule meant that at independence in 1990, 40.8 percent of the land had been allocated to black homelands supporting a population of 1.2 million, while 43 percent (including all the most productive land) had been allocated to white commercial farmers. Fourteen percent was allocated to conservation, and a small portion was unallocated.

Wildlife and forestry resources have been subject to strict state controls. In the past, local residents had little legal access to these resources. In spite of the controls, wildlife numbers fell significantly. In many communal areas, forests are being cleared for shifting cultivation, firewood and building materials. The state has been unable to regulate either wildlife or forest resources, due to distances and limited government capacity.

Traditional mechanisms for land and resource allocation began to break down during colonial and apartheid times. Since independence, government policy has continued to erode the status and power of traditional leadership. This has led to situations of «open access» on much of Namibia's communal land. Residents have been unable to prevent others from settling and using resources, even when such use is detrimental locally. People have tended to use what they can before someone else does.

Government and communities have recognised these problems for some time, and considerable energy has gone into developing CBNRM. Experiments began as early as the 1970s on commercial farms, expanded to communal lands in the late 1980s, and accelerated in the post-independence atmosphere of open policy reform.

### **Issues/Problems**

1. Poverty in rural communal areas.
2. Significant reduction of wildlife populations in communal areas, due to poaching and drought.
3. Significant loss of forested areas.
4. Limited rural economic opportunities.
5. Small, widely separated communities with poor communication and little cooperation.
6. Lack of state resources to patrol and monitor large inhospitable tracts of land.

### **Level**

This project operates simultaneously at different levels and in mutually-reinforcing ways. Projects at the community level act as pilots to test community identification of issues and appropriate responses. Local experience is integrated into policy and legislation development.

In terms of communication needs, this means that several different approaches have been adopted, and a number of technologies introduced to make it happen. In rural areas, satellite radios have been put in place to enable communication between distant communities and game guards who monitor and track wildlife.

Many facilitated meetings have been required to work out differences and agree to institutional frameworks. Sustainable resource management training has been conducted for game guards and community members. Meetings have been co-ordinated between communities and private tour and resort companies to build trust and negotiate deals. At the government level, research has been planned and carried out.

Sensitisation has occurred regarding the importance of community participation in the research and problem definition phase. Government has been encouraged to incorporate lessons from pilot projects and community experience, into the policy development process. This in turn, has been fed back to communities for comment and understanding.

## **Process/Method**

Chronologically, the process after independence went as follows:

1. 1990-92: the process began with socio-ecological surveys carried out by NGOs with local experience to determine the key issues and problems from the perspective of effected communities.
2. This led to the development of several pilot community-based conservation projects, which were supported by foreign conservation NGOs.
3. This experience helped the government and Namibian NGOs to realise that policy and legislation would have to change to allow success. Throughout, the pilot projects led the process of policy development.
4. 1992: A new draft policy was prepared giving rights over tourism and fire control to communities that formed conservancies.
5. 1993: The United States Agency for International Development (US AID) became involved through the Living in a Finite Environment (LIFE) Programme. This enabled a national approach involving a partnership between national and local government, NGOs and local communities.
6. 1995-96: Cabinet approved a new policy for conservancies and enabling legislation was passed.
7. 1997: The first communal area conservancy was legally recognised.
8. 1998: Three more conservancies were recognised, and the President officially launched the Namibian Communal Area Conservancy Programme.

9. 1999: Four more conservancies were approved in principle, and the LIFE programme was extended for another five years.
10. By February 2001, fourteen communal area conservancies had been registered and 40 were in the process of being formed.

Key aspects of the method were:

1. Building on lessons from earlier examples in Namibia.  
In the 1970s, commercial farmers were given the right to control and profit from wildlife on their farms, which led to the development of a multimillion dollar hunting and photo safari tourist industry.  
In the 1980s, the Namibian NGO, Integrated Rural Development and Nature Conservation (IRDNC) had already begun working in communal areas on NRM with a focus on community empowerment.
2. Looking outside of Namibia for both negative and positive examples.  
Particular emphasis was given to Zimbabwe's Campfire experience, which pointed to the importance of communities benefiting directly from wildlife conservation income rather than having the income go to government and then come back through community programmes.
3. Learning from advances in theory and practice regarding community property management through appropriate institutions that incorporated:
  - A defined membership.
  - A set of agreed operating and resource use rules.
  - The ability to monitor and enforce the rules.
  - Legitimacy from the community of resource users and the state.
4. Developing a two-way communication process between local communities, government officials and NGO's that enabled joint identification and understanding of problems and the joint development of solutions.

## **Key Players**

1. Community leaders and resource users.
2. Local government workers and extension officers.
3. NGOs/Funders – IRDNC/US AID, World Wide Fund for Nature, the European Union.
4. Private sector tour and lodge operators.
5. Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism.
6. Namibian Cabinet and President.

## **Results and Reflections**

There are now fourteen legally gazetted conservancies and at least 40 other communities in the process of forming conservancies. This indicates that there is communal support and that the pilot project experiences are widely known in the country.

While conservancies are just beginning to operate, and only a few contracts have been signed with commercial hunting and photo safari operators, there are a number of positive and successful examples.

For instance, a conservancy in the Kunene Region Conservancy has an agreement that has seen an upmarket tourist lodge built on its land. The Conservancy is involved in overall policy making for the lodge, local people receive preferential hiring, and the lodge provides training to ensure that local employees are also in management positions. Other benefits have come from hunting licenses, wages to community game guards, and the ability to hunt surplus game.

A profit-sharing arrangement has resulted in contributions to the community development fund of US\$ 40 000 and in direct wages of US\$ 69 000 between 1996 and 1998. The direct wage numbers are quite substantial considering the low population and even lower incomes in these areas, where a few hundred dollars per year can make a significant difference to a family.

Non-financial benefits have included the empowerment and skills that come from the conservancy development process. These are very important in a context where apartheid has left many rural communities disempowered and dependent. Some of the non-financial benefits include:

1. Adaptable institutions.
2. Defined and committed community membership.
3. Accountable leaders and participatory processes for making decisions and sharing information.
4. Cohesive social units with a common purpose.
5. New skills in resource and business management.
6. Mechanisms for managing natural resources.
7. Experience and growing confidence in negotiating with outsiders.
8. Recognition from neighbours and outside authorities.
9. Pride and sense of control.

Such building blocks may become tools for further social organisation around a range of other resource management issues such as forests, farmland, water and harvestable wild products.

The process is still relatively new. There are high participation costs for communities in terms of time spent in meetings, conflicts emerging as land and resource sharing issues are discussed, frustrations waiting for government policy and legislation changes, and new community issues arising from decision making about what to do with community income. However, the growing numbers of communities involved mean that many perceive the benefits to outweigh the costs. During 2001 conservancies in different regions in Namibia began to form regional associations in order to provide greater communication and cooperation between individual conservancies sharing similar interests and problems. These associations provide a platform for the conservancies to engage in advocacy at various levels, particularly with regard to lobbying government for increased rights and recognition as full partners in natural resource management. This is an important step as it means the communities will have their own voice independent of the NGOs that have been supporting them, and will start to form a significant political constituency.

## **COMMUNICATION AND CHANGE**

Here are two contrasting views on how and why change takes place.

1. **Paulo Freire**<sup>25</sup> viewed change as coming from a process where dialogue led to social commitment, and the constant dialectic between action and reflection. In other words:
  - a) Dialogue: Lots of communication, discussion and debate, particularly amongst those people most affected and engaged.
  - b) Social Commitment: People, individually and through organisations and groups in which they are involved, commit themselves to change, and/or take advantage of the opportunities they see for improving their livelihoods.
  - c) Action/Reflection: People take action and then review those actions to see what happened. In the light of that assessment, they plan and undertake new actions leading to further reflection on what happened and a continuing cycle of action and reflection.

2. **Johns Hopkins University Center for Communication Programs**<sup>26</sup> developed the following model for change:

**Knowledge**

Information, examples, data, etc.

**Approval**

From those around you, of the importance of the issues you wish to address, and the importance of addressing them effectively.

**Intention**

To make it happen, genuinely desiring that the change will take place.

**Practice**

An action has to be undertaken.

**Advocacy**

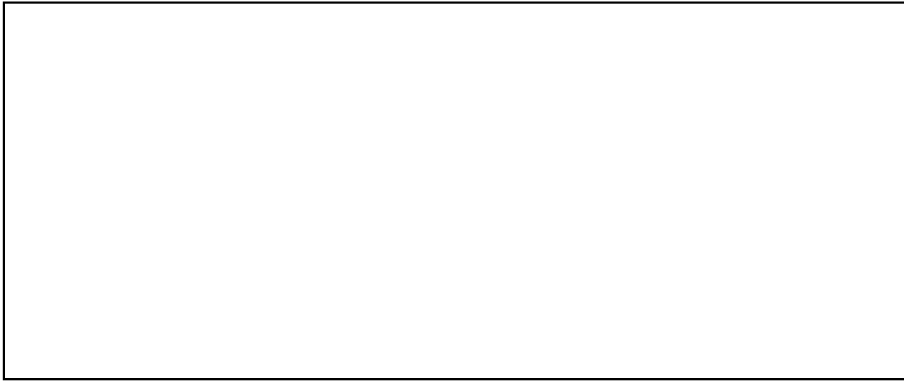
Try to convince others about the desirability of their making the same choices and taking the same actions.

**Your Analysis of Natural Resource Management in Namibia**

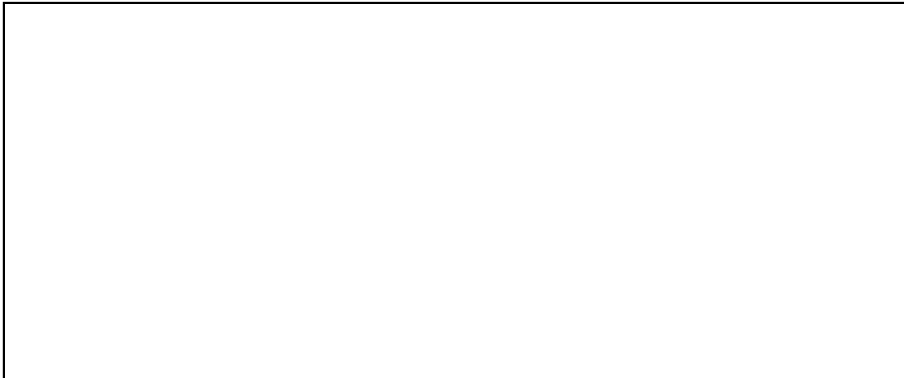
We suggest you refer to the Namibia experience above as you do this exercise. As you review it, make notes in the boxes below to detail elements of the change strategy pursued in Namibia, which are consistent with one of the principles for effective and sustainable change outlined by either Freire or Johns Hopkins University CCP.

Change principle	Elements of the Namibia NRM story that reflect this change principle.
<i>Dialogue</i>	
<i>Social Commitment</i>	
<i>Action/Reflection</i>	
<i>Knowledge</i>	
<i>Approval</i>	
<i>Intention</i>	
<i>Practice</i>	
<i>Advocacy</i>	

**What conclusions do you draw about the main change and communication strategies that underpinned this NRM initiative in Namibia?**



**What implications are there for your NRM strategies?**



**Considering the Theme and Learning Objectives for this experience please list one or more lessons you think are important for your own work. Please list these on the chart in «Drawing Your Own Conclusions» p89.**

### **Supporting Document**

Brian T. B. Jones, «Community Management of Natural Resources in Namibia», *Scandinavian Seminar College's Africa Project* SSC Africa Project, paper no. 03 1999  
– (View abstract at: <http://www.cdr.dk/sscafrica/brudoc3.htm>)



## Experience 2 **Pastoralist Communication – Kenya**

### **PANOS PASTORALIST COMMUNICATION PROJECT**



**Theme:** Voices and Action

**Learning Objective:** To advance participants' understanding of effective communication strategies, where substantive action is sourced in the voice and perspective of the people most affected.



Information follows on the Pastoralist Communication Programme in East Africa.

One component of this description is the Process/Method adopted. After reading through the chapter, we encourage you to make some notes concerning the boxed questions in the Process/Method section. These boxes reflect on the change strategies and theories that are at the heart of this programme.

#### **Project**

The Panos supported Pastoralist Communications Programme aims to strengthen the capacity of pastoralists to share information, debate development issues, and articulate their concerns and solutions, both among themselves and outwards to local authorities, the wider national community and policy makers. The programme combines the production of policy briefing papers, support for mass media journalists to learn and write about pastoralist issues and lives, and community radio operated by pastoralist groups.

#### **Context**

Seventy percent of Kenya's land is arid or semi-arid and not suitable for agriculture. The 20 percent of the population (about five million people) who live on it are mostly pastoralists, and they produce a large part of the country's meat supply. Like pastoralists everywhere, they are suffering from a variety of problems including: impoverishment and reduced capacity to survive natural disasters such as drought and flood; severe competition for access to grazing land and water, often from new agricultural

developments; displacement and alienation from land, more or less legal; low educational attainment; social problems such as drugs, especially among those who are settled in urban areas; frequent violent conflict (cattle rustling, shootings, rape) between different pastoralist groups, exacerbated by the ready availability of small arms; and very poor access to human and animal health services.

The community radio element of this project has focused so far on the Borana, one of six or seven different pastoralist peoples living in various parts of north and northeast Kenya. Many Borana, and most of those directly involved in this programme, are settled or semi-settled in urban areas, between four-hours and two-days drive from Nairobi.

### **Issues/problems**

1. Pastoralists are marginalised in national politics and development planning.
2. Their livelihoods are increasingly under threat and poverty is increasing.
3. Communication among themselves and between them and national authorities is difficult, due to their mobility and remoteness, and the poorly-developed infrastructure in their areas.
4. It is hard for them to assert their interests in the development debate, and ensure that modernisation trends benefit, rather than further marginalise them.

### **Level**

The programme operates at three levels: national policymakers (government and NGO), general public attitudes and opinions, and most importantly, pastoralist communities.

### **Process/method**

1. **Policy level:** working with local pastoralist NGO and media partners, the project produces Policy Briefing papers, carefully targeted at relevant decision makers, and outlining policy changes that are achievable and realistic.

For example, a paper titled, «The Desertification Convention, pastoralists and its implementation in Kenya», says that the degradation of Kenya's arid lands is often due to pastoralists maintaining too many livestock. They do this because of poverty and their very poor access to markets, which depresses livestock prices. The paper, aimed at Members of Parliament, calls for a national commitment to revive the infrastructure – abattoirs, roads, veterinary and certification services – so that pastoralists can better supply meat to domestic and export markets, reducing their need to maintain very large herds.

«... opinion leader theory (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955)...says that there are two steps in information flow: from the media to opinion leaders, and from leaders to the masses. Media audiences rely on the opinions of members of their social networks rather solely or mainly on the mass media.»<sup>27</sup>

**Does the Pastoralist initiative conform to these principles?**

- 2. General public level:** mass media journalists are supported to produce regular media features on pastoralism, in consultation with pastoralist NGOs and Community Based Organisations (CBOs), in order to address the general public's hostility towards pastoralists. The features raise awareness of pastoralist life and issues, and present pastoralists in a positive light, as people who are addressing problems and dealing with change. They are generally based on direct visits to pastoralist communities, and include many different pastoralist voices – women and men, old and young, leaders, ordinary people, etc.

«...Communication means a process of creating and stimulating understanding as the basis for development rather than information transmission (Agunga 1997). Communication is the articulation of social relations among people. People should not be forced to adopt new practices no matter how beneficial they seem in the eyes of agencies and governments. Instead, people needed to be encouraged to participate rather than adopt new practices based on information.»<sup>28</sup>

Does the approach to working with the Pastoralist communities, as outlined in this description,

**a) Create and stimulate understanding as the basis for development? Why?**

or

**b) Focus on information transmission? Why?**

- 3. Community level:** Six Borana community groups (three women's groups, three youth groups), in different parts of the country, are making their own radio programs, which are broadcast on the Borana language service of the national broadcaster. After a five-day training workshop, the groups choose their own topics, conduct interviews with officials and leaders, and record music and dramas, using basic cassette recorders. Their tapes are sent to Nairobi for minimal editing, and broadcast.

The aim is to produce programmes on social and development topics that are of more interest to Borana listeners than the regular state-produced material, airing the communities' own voices, ideas and debates. The programs hope to stimulate more debate and action within the Borana community, and to strengthen their confidence to dialogue with officials, politicians and development agents.

«Participation does not always entail cooperation nor consensus. It can often mean conflict and usually poses a threat to existent structures...Rigid and general strategies for participation are neither possible nor desirable.»<sup>29</sup>

**Do you agree or disagree?**

In the case of the Pastoralist programme, reviewing the whole of this document (including the following sections), **do you think that the participatory elements sought consensus or conflict?**

**What is the approach within your initiatives?**

## **Key players**

- a. **Policy level:** pastoralist representatives and advocates, national policy makers. (Members of Parliament, etc.)
- b. **General public level:** pastoralist organisations and individuals who provide stories and information to journalists; journalists who have developed understanding, knowledge and interest in pastoralist issues; people who are willing to travel to remote areas to gather material for stories; editors who publish the features because they appreciate their quality of research, on-the-ground knowledge and human interest.
- c. **Community level:** the trained members of the community groups who are making radio programmes, and a few local leaders and mobilisers who are involved with, or supportive of the community groups.

## Results and reflection

1. **Policy level:** No briefing has yet been completed. The process of thinking through the policy-change targets, and how best to communicate with them, has been valuable. This process needs to be documented and disseminated among relevant advocacy groups.
2. **General public level:** Print media features have been produced monthly for over three years. Nearly every one has been published in at least one of the four main daily papers (three in English, one in Swahili). They are varied and of good quality, and editors like them.

The impact has so far only been assessed informally, through talking to the authors of the features themselves. The journalists are known and respected by concerned officials and NGOs, and state that: urban newspaper readers are struck by and interested in the features, which describe issues outside their experience; pastoralist communities appreciate the way their concerns have been reported, at least occasionally; some pastoralist CBOs have acquired the habit of contacting a sympathetic journalist with other stories – for instance, returning a girl to school when her parents have withdrawn her for early marriage; officials sometimes react to exposure of inadequacies – for instance, the national veterinary service sent an official to investigate allegations of improper sale of veterinary medicines, which should have been provided for free. In another case, the national museum sent out officials to study a weed that was newly invading pasture lands, following an article which pointed out that they were taking no action to control this threat.

3. **Community radio programmes:** The three women's groups have been very enthusiastic, producing tapes regularly for over a year. The youth groups have found it more difficult to organise themselves for the work involved. All the groups were pre-existing, and two of them are music and drama groups.

Topics covered so far include land rights and access, livestock health and marketing, education particularly of girls, AIDS, girls' rights and early marriage, and conflict. Topics selected by the six groups to cover in the next phase are conflict, AIDS and the environment.

In this next phase, the groups will receive some training from a conflict resolution specialist, so that they can produce a series of more focussed and effective programmes on conflict prevention, based on better analysis of the causes of conflicts, and more refined thinking about effective conflict-prevention strategies.

The programme is likely to move towards more coordinated planning by the six groups about topics and messages, to avoid repetition, and to develop further depth of analysis. As with conflict prevention, training might be offered on other topics, if the groups wish it, to strengthen their access to information, and skills in developing messages.

Data on impact has come mainly from the groups themselves, during a mid-project review workshop. They say they are proud to be educating their communities, and they are willing to overcome considerable difficulties to do so (e.g. husbands who object to their wives moving around among the community interviewing strangers.)

Some anecdotes show that impact on audiences is starting to emerge. For instance: «One of the radio programmes on HIV-AIDS made a local leader in Kula-Mawe, a location in Isiolo, declare his HIV status in a public baraza. When the chief was later asked why he took that bold step, he said the HIV-AIDS pandemic is no longer a secret, but an issue of national concern. He said he had listened keenly to a program on the radio on the issue, and said even the rural populace needs to be warned. He said the first step is to accept one's status, and stop the disease from spreading further by educating the community.» (Spontaneous testimony given by a trainee researcher during the training workshop for the audience survey).

Another indicator of success is that a major NGO working with pastoralists all over Kenya, is planning to adopt the methodology as part of its national work on AIDS and conflict.

An audience survey was carried out in March, 2001, to assess the size of listenership among the Borana. Three hundred questionnaires were conducted with a random sample in three separate Borana areas. An initial look at the results suggests a very large proportion have listened to the programs. The biggest constraint seems to be the very poor state of the national broadcaster's transmission facilities, which are badly in need of renovation.

This project is far from being self-sustaining. The six groups involved at present need support from a full-time coordinator, with some additional outside inputs for radio-skills training. There is also technical editing/broadcasting input from Kenya Broadcasting Corporation. (Borana Service)

Outside input on the topics the groups choose to cover might also be desirable – the groups' capacity to access information themselves is limited, as many of them

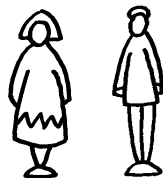
are illiterate, few have a high level of education, and they are fairly remote from sources of information.

**Considering the Theme and Learning Objectives for this experience please list one or more lessons you think are important for your own work. Please list these on the chart in «Drawing Your Own Conclusions» p89.**

### **Supporting Documents**

Silvio Waisbord *Family Tree of Theories, Methodologies and Strategies in Development Communication: Convergences and Differences*. Prepared for the Rockefeller Foundation 2001. Available on The Communication Initiative website at <http://www.comminit.com/stsilviocomm/sld-2881.html>

Kitty Warnock. Note for *The Communication Initiative*. Panos, London May 15<sup>th</sup> 2001.





## Experience 3

# Indigenous Forest Management – Cambodia

## **CBNRM AMONGST INDIGENOUS PEOPLE IN RATANAKI PROVINCE**



**Theme:** Issue Analysis for Action

**Learning Objective:** To expand participants' skills at analyzing the issues to be addressed by the communication initiative.



Please review the experience below. Then attempt to re-describe and debate this experience according to the analytical process described in the «problem tree» approach within Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal.<sup>30</sup> You will find this process at the end of the experience.

### **Project**

This project supports indigenous people living in the highland jungles of Cambodia's Ratanakiri Province, to control and sustainably earn a livelihood from the forests they have traditionally inhabited.

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) initiated the project in 1996. In 1997, the Centre combined forces with the Cambodia Area Rehabilitation and Regeneration Project (CARERE), a rural development project funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

### **Context**

Long after the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime in 1979, rebels lurked in the jungles of Ratanakiri, a province in northeast Cambodia. Outsiders stayed away from the forest, which meant that the forest remained intact. However in the early 1990s, the situation changed. The rebels gradually gave up their arms – and the logging trucks started to arrive.

They came by the hundreds, rumbling up and down the country's main highway – a narrow red dirt road – taking loads of lumber across the border to Viet Nam. Settlers from other parts of Cambodia also poured into Ratanakiri, and investors bought up huge tracts of land to grow cash crops. Jungle gave way to plantations and fields, and forest resources began to disappear.

This has created serious problems – particularly for indigenous people, who rely on the forest for their livelihood. Although most of Cambodia's population is Khmer, in Ratanakiri province almost three-quarters of the population belongs to an ethnic minority. The province's six ethnic minorities are collectively known as Highlanders. In the traditionally hierarchical society of Cambodia, these people had never spoken up for their rights – until they became involved in a CBNRM project.

Many Highlanders rely exclusively on the forest to survive. As Seu Chelone, a woman who lives in Som Thom Commune explains: «We need firewood, vegetables, fruit, mushrooms, bamboo shoots, and we can have these things from the forest. We see the forest as our market.»

## **Issues/Problems**

1. After years of relative isolation due to the area's occupation by Khmer Rouge rebels, the area has opened up, bringing logging and cash cropping, and with them the loss of jungle and forest resources.
2. The local ethnic minorities or «Highlanders» make up the majority of the province's population, but are traditionally discriminated against in Cambodian society.
3. Many of these people depend on the forest and jungle for their livelihoods, but these livelihoods are now at risk as forest companies and settlers move into the area to take trees and clear land for cash crops.

## **Level**

Cambodian researchers work with community members, whom they train to map local resources and document local knowledge. The communities have used the knowledge and training to lobby provincial and national governments about land use permits, and laws protecting indigenous people's right to possess and use public land and support their traditional livelihood practices.

## **Process/Method**

In the project, Highlanders from three communes (Som Thom, Yeak Lom and Ochum) began working with Cambodian researchers to map forest resources, and document

indigenous knowledge of the forest. A core team of community members received technical training in mapping skills, and participatory action research techniques. This team then trained villagers, showing them how to record observations and collect data in the field. Villagers created land use maps, sketching boundaries and documenting land uses. Their findings were verified by the research team, which used global positioning systems (GPS) to double-check that privately owned land had not been inadvertently included.

## **Results and Reflections**

«We wondered if they went and cut the forest just anywhere,» says Nehm Sovanna, the national team leader for the Ratanakiri project. «But we found there is a very clear mechanism for using their natural resources and protecting them. They have specific areas for swidden agriculture where they rotate crops. In swidden agriculture, you cut the forest, you burn it, you cultivate it, and then you move and let the forest grow back for ten to 20 years. There is also the wildlife forest, watershed forest and spirit [or sacred] forest.»

Highlanders protect the tall trees of the spirit forests: to cut them is to invite disaster. According to traditional beliefs, «If you cut down a tree from the spirit forest, something bad will happen,» explains a villager. «For example, maybe a tiger might eat you.»

When researchers examined one of the spirit forests, they realised this area would not regenerate if it were cut. The soil was not fertile enough and the area was too exposed to wind and rain. «We found out that, yes, it is right: you really cannot cut the spirit forest,» says Mr. Sovanna.

This finding bolstered the Highlanders' confidence in their traditional mechanisms for managing forest resources, which had broken down as loggers, investors and settlers moved to Ratanakiri. Tempted by offers of cash, some Highlanders were leading loggers to the best trees or selling their land – their only resource – to speculators. In addition, outsiders started farming land the Highlanders had left fallow.

To help gain recognition for traditional management systems, part of the project focused on documenting boundaries of traditional resource areas. Villagers also agreed on rules and regulations for community forest management. They set fines for anyone in the village who cuts trees – or helps others to do so. Researchers and villagers also began investigating ways to increase agricultural production.

In 1996 however, the cash-strapped Government of Cambodia had granted a palm oil company a concession of 20 000 hectares – right in the middle of the Highlanders'

land. Local people were not consulted. By 1998, over the objections of the community, intensive logging was taking place in the commune – and the spirit forests were not to be spared.

John Ashish, a local researcher with the project, describes a confrontation between a villager and a logger: «One villager had chosen a tree from the forest and marked it to claim it. He was going to use this tree to build his house. When the loggers came in, he stood by his tree and tried to stop them from cutting it. He said, «This is my tree. I marked it to build my house.» The logger replied: «We don't want to hear from you. You are nothing.» The tree was cut down.»

Yet the villagers were mobilised by the project – and they had research results to make their case. They had also established a relationship with the provincial government, because the project was implemented in close cooperation with the Department of the Environment.

At a provincial workshop in 1999, villagers explained their land use map and illustrated how they depended on the forest. Governor Kham Kheun was impressed: «The government does not have a clear land use plan. In Ratanakiri, we can see that the villagers have made the kind of plan we need, based on a classification of the types of soil in the forest.»

«We want to help the community protect its natural resources,» he added. Governor Kheun, who grew up in Ratanakiri, went to bat for the Highlanders with the national government. In July 2000, the palm oil concession was drastically reduced – to 5 000 hectares. At the same time, the Governor also endorsed Som Thom community forestry, effectively signing the forest to the community for management.

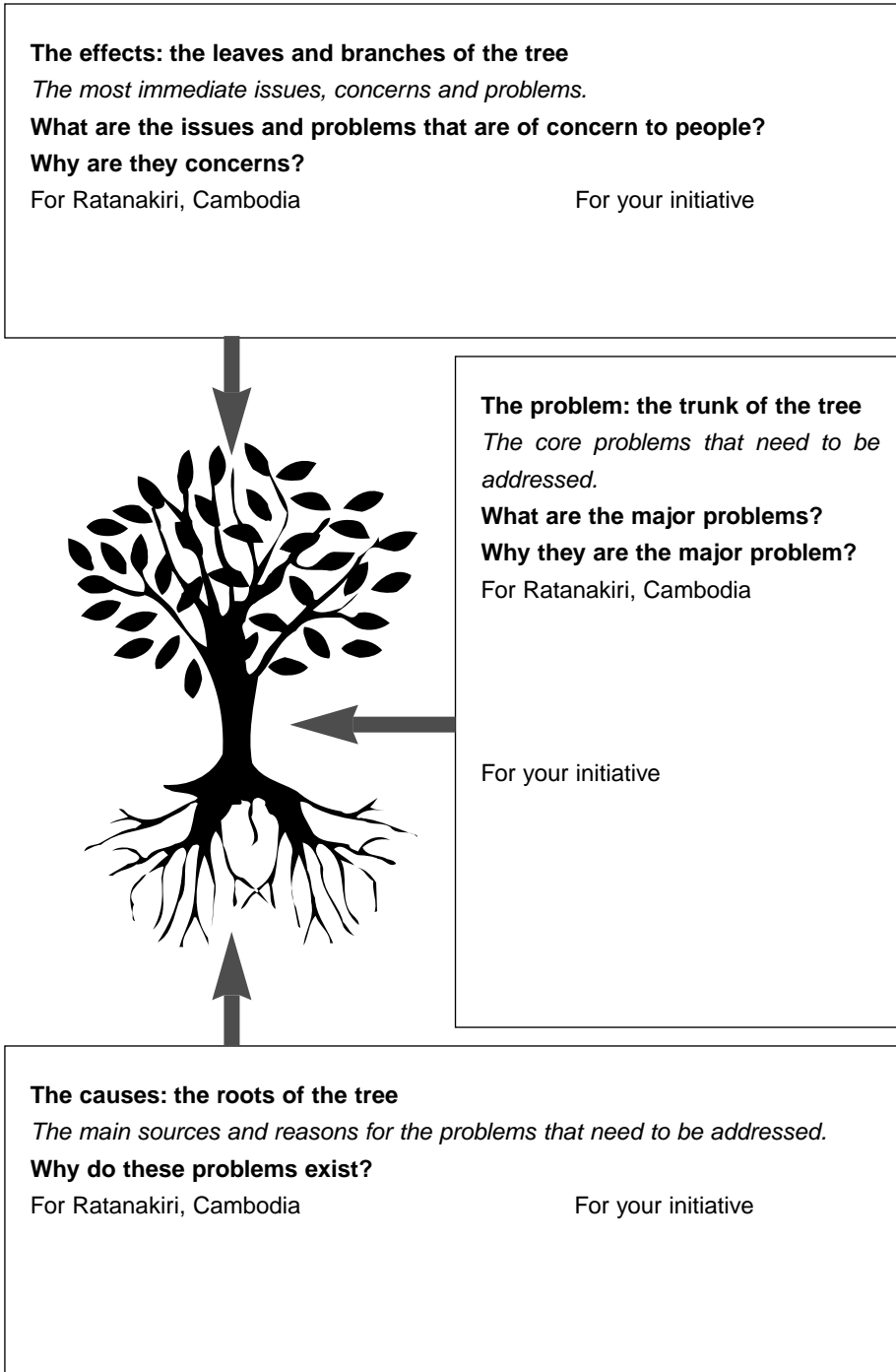
The provincial government now sees the CBNRM project as a model and wants to extend it into other areas. The Department of the Environment has already received several requests from other communities to participate. Moreover, because of the project, both OXFAM and the UNDP hired lawyers who worked with the project participants to help draft a new land law that reflects issues affecting Highlanders, such as indigenous people's communal rights. A Cambodian helped to lobby the case for Highlanders at a ministerial level, and with other non-governmental and international organisations. The bill was adopted by the Council of Ministers, and is now before the National Assembly. If it is approved, indigenous communities will have the legal right to possess and use public land to support their traditional livelihood practices.

«Villagers are changing their way of thinking,» says Sal Yutch, a village development chief. «We can see that the only way to safeguard our resources is to work together as a community.»

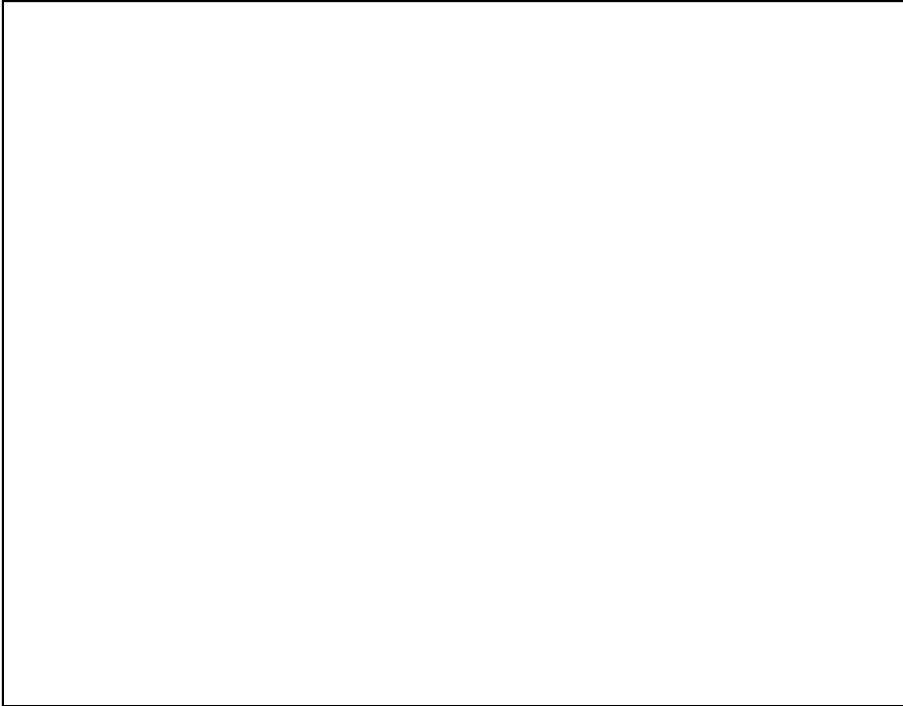
On the following page you will find a «problem tree» exercise. Please follow these steps while answering the questions in the exercise:

1. Choose a project example that you know well and that has some of the same elements as the initiative in this experience.
2. Now starting at the top of the tree work your way through the questions to the roots.
3. While you are doing this consider that the top of the tree represents immediate but sometimes symptomatic issues, the trunk gets to core problems that are often within the grasp of the local community to respond to, the roots get at fundamental and often important social, cultural or economic questions – these are often only partially in the control of any community to respond to – e.g. gender relations, world trade regimes, environmental degradation.

## THE PROBLEM TREE



**Is it ok to have an initiative that does not tackle the problems at all these levels?**



**Considering the Theme and Learning Objectives for this experience please list one or more lessons you think are important for your own work. Please list these on the chart in «Drawing Your Own Conclusions» p89.**

### **Supporting Documents/Contacts**

Lisa Waldick. Staking a Claim in Cambodia's Highlands. *Reports: Science from the developing world*. International Development Research Centre March 30 2001. [http://www.idrc.ca/reports/read\\_article\\_english.cfm?article\\_num=910](http://www.idrc.ca/reports/read_article_english.cfm?article_num=910)

Claire Thompson, Research Officer, CBNRM program initiative, International Development Research Centre (IDRC); PO Box 8500, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. [cthompson@idrc.ca](mailto:cthompson@idrc.ca) 613 236 6163 ext 2069

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Experience 4  
**Recovering from Conflict  
- Viet Nam**

**IMPROVING NRM IN THE HONG HA COMMUNE**



**Theme:** Contextual Analysis for Action

**Learning Objective:** To improve participants' skills at analyzing the contexts for change.



Please review this experience in Viet Nam with a colleague or friend.

Before reading the project description, we encourage you to focus on the contexts for change highlighted below in the boxes on the left-hand side. In the boxes on the right-hand side, write three or four questions you would ask, if you were to review a communication and change initiative from the perspective in the left-hand box. Then, as a pair, work through the Hong Na commune example asking your questions at appropriate times.

<b>Social Features</b>	<b>Your Questions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interpersonal relationships.</li><li>• Behavioural expectations in terms of gender, age, class, social position.</li><li>• Expectations regarding who has access to knowledge and information.</li></ul>	



### **Cultural Features**

The behaviours and attitudes considered acceptable in given contexts.

### **Your Questions**

### **Ethical and Spiritual Features**

The influence of significant moral and spiritual belief systems which form the basis of personal and shared values.

### **Your Questions**

**Legal Features**

Laws determining what people can and cannot do, and activities to encourage observance of those laws.

**Your Questions**

**Political Features**

Systems of governance in which change will have to take place. For example, in structure, political commitment, reliability, transparency, or capacity.

**Your Questions**

Resource Features	Your Questions
<p>What is required to make things happen - covers human, financial and material resources, community knowledge and skills, and items for exchange.</p>	

## Project

This project works to reduce hunger and poverty in the Hong Ha Commune, by identifying ways to respond to the deforestation caused by defoliants and bombs during the Viet Nam War. The deforestation has led to devastating floods and the replacement of native vegetation by invasive grass species.

To address these problems, researchers at the Hue University of Agriculture and Forestry, are using participatory research methods to help local residents identify priorities, and develop innovative responses to their needs. Launched in 1998, with support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the project team has also received technical support from the International Center for International Agriculture (CIAT), and the University of British Columbia.

## Context

Located on a branch of the former Ho Chi Minh Trail, a military-supply route used in the 1960s and 1970s by the North Vietnamese Army, the Hong Ha Commune - encompassing five villages - is the poorest of 21 communes in the Aluoi District of central Viet Nam. More than 45 percent of local households lack enough income to stave off hunger all year round.

The Hong Ha Commune is at the source of the Bo River, which supplies the agricultural plain of Thua Thien Province. During the war, the region was a frequent target of chemical defoliants and bombs, which destroyed much of its natural forest cover. Today, the native vegetation has been replaced by invasive imperata grasses, which are difficult to remove but must be cleared for agriculture or agroforestry. Moreover, the deforestation has led to devastating floods, both in the Aluoi District and in downstream areas.

The project evolved out of an earlier initiative conducted from 1994 to 1997, in the Xuan Loc Commune of Viet Nam's Hue Province. In this work, the research team helped local farmers improve their land management practices. The project introduced ecologically-sustainable agricultural techniques and higher-yielding crops, including new varieties of rice, cassava, mung bean, black bean and groundnuts. Some of the most useful techniques from this initiative have since been applied to the Hong Ha Commune project.

Traditionally, Hong Ha residents have depended primarily on slash-and-burn, otherwise known as swidden agriculture, for their livelihood. Other food sources have included hunting, animal husbandry and the gathering of forest products.

According to Le Van An, the project leader and Deputy Head of the Department of Science and International Relations at Hue University, the main goals are to gradually replace swidden agriculture with a home garden economy, limit forest destruction, diversify crop production and increase household income.

### **Issues/Problems**

1. Effects of war-time use of chemical defoliants and bombs have left the area deforested and susceptible to invader species and flood.
2. This has made agriculture and agroforestry much more difficult.
3. More than 45 percent of local households lack enough income to stave off hunger all year round.

### **Level**

University and technical expert researchers work closely with participating local households chosen through a survey, and a representative of each of the communes' villages and ethnic groups.

### **Process/Method**

As a first step, the research team conducted surveys to assess the state of water, soil, agriculture, forestry, livestock and human resources in the region. The results

showed that local residents face numerous obstacles ranging from a lack of capital for investing in agricultural production to inaccessible markets. These factors make it hard for farmers to sell their produce at decent prices. They are also hampered by: a limited number of crop-growing options, low-yield rice strains, inefficient pig rearing, low female participation rates in decision making, limited education, rapid population growth, decreasing natural resources, severe flooding, and unstable water resources.

Based on this survey, 17 households were initially selected for participation in the project. They included families from both the commune's five villages and its five ethnic groups. During planning meetings involving the research team and participating farmers, the partners agreed to conduct joint farmer-scientist trials to develop higher-yielding crops, and a strain of crossbred pigs that are better suited to the local environment. They also decided to introduce a greater variety of high-quality agricultural products for both field agriculture and home gardens.

## **Results and Reflections**

While generally successful, the trials have not been problem-free. A flood damaged the trial crops and fish ponds. «Now the crops are harvested earlier before the rainy season, and are grown higher up in the mountain,» says Le Van Hua, the commune's Chairman.

As part of its efforts, the university has held training courses to help participants improve their pig raising, rice management and cassava growing skills. These lessons have been disseminated further through farmer-to-farmer visits, which are considered very useful by local villagers.

Meanwhile, some residents have shared their experiences in gardening, livestock raising and fish ponds, and have started to experiment with new crops such as pineapples, black peppers and bamboo. As a result, the number of participating households is now more than 200.

Community members are increasing their food self-sufficiency and making better use of their land. «Before there was always a lack of food, now there's enough,» notes Quynh Dien, a male farmer who participated in the trials.

«We now have high-yield rice, cassava, fish, pigs and a better standard of living,» adds Mrs. Quynh Vuong. «I received a loan from the project. I bought fertilizer, pesticides and fingerlings. I've repaid the loan and used the profit to buy food, and send my children to school.»

«Every household wants to take part [in the training sessions]. When there is a training session with one family, many more come to learn,» says Nguyen Hoai Nam, the commune's Communist Party leader. «Now we know how and when to use fertilizer. We know how to use pig sties, instead of letting pigs roam in the forest.»

Among its goals, the project has strived to involve local women in agricultural production. For example, the local women's union has hosted workshops on farming methods. «Before, women were shy and didn't speak in meetings. We didn't know much about livestock and rice production. Now we speak what we think and share our experiences,» says Quynh Vuong.

According to Le Van An, the farmers have played a key and enthusiastic role in the project's successes, by sharing their agricultural knowledge with the scientific team, and by participating in project planning, implementation and management - a major departure from previous government programs.

For example, local villagers participated in planning sessions concerning the construction of an irrigation system and a kindergarten. In the process, their own confidence and belief in their abilities has increased. «Farmers feel those activities belong to them, not just the researchers (and government officials), and are very excited,» he says. Meanwhile, «the project has strengthened the research capacity of university staff. We have much to learn from the participatory approach.»

One problem that still needs to be addressed concerns property rights - local residents lack full authority to manage the commune's natural resources. «We have organized meetings and invited people from provincial and district offices to discuss this. The way ahead is to develop a bottom up approach,» argues Van An.

«We would like to spread our success story to other villages in the mountains,» he concludes.

**As a pair, work through the Hong Na commune example asking your questions at appropriate times.**

**Considering the Theme and Learning Objectives for this experience please list one or more lessons you think are important for your own work. Please list these on the chart in «Drawing Your Own Conclusions» p89.**

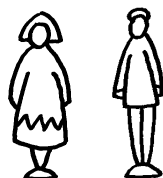
### **Supporting Documents/Contacts**

Miriam Martinez & Nick Wilson. «Improving NRM in Viet Nam's Hong Ha Commune»  
*Reports: Science from the developing world.* International Development Research  
Centre February 2001.

[http://www.idrc.ca/reports/read\\_article\\_english.cfm?article\\_num=870](http://www.idrc.ca/reports/read_article_english.cfm?article_num=870)

Claire Thompson, Research Officer, CBNRM Program Initiative, International  
Development Research Centre (IDRC); PO Box 8500, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada.  
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## Experience 5 **Internet Radio – Sri Lanka**

### **KOTHMALE INTERNET COMMUNITY RADIO WWW.KOTHMALE.NET**



**Theme:** Culture and Action

**Learning Objective:** To expand participants' awareness of the relationship between culture, context and strategy, in developing effective communication initiatives.



Different cultures can have very different approaches to communication for change. Before reviewing the Kothmale initiative outlined below, please consider the following insights into the Aristotelian and Buddhist approaches to change. These two approaches<sup>31</sup> have significant and differing implications for communication strategies.

#### **Aristotelian Model**

1. Emphasis on communicator.
2. Influencing is a central concept.
3. There is a focus on control.
4. The emphasis is on outward processes from the communicator to the world or audience.
5. The relationship between the communicator and the receiver of information is assymetrical – the communicator controls the message.
6. Stresses intellect and rational action.

#### **Buddhist Model**

1. Emphasis on receiver.
2. Understanding is a central concept.
3. There is a focus on choice.
4. The emphasis is on both outward and inward processes – the message and how the receiver perceives and interprets the message.
5. The relationship between the communication and the receiver of information is symetrical – the receivers' understanding of the communication is as important as the original message.
6. Stress empathy and understanding



The text below describing the Kothmale Internet Community Radio Project [www.kothmale.net/](http://www.kothmale.net/) is flanked by two columns that are labelled Buddhist and Aristotelian. We suggest that as you read this text, when you come across elements of the strategy that match an aspect of either of these approaches, that you tick next to the appropriate section. You might also want to add a brief explanation for your tick. An example is provided. Following this will be a short series of questions asking you to reflect on your own principles for effective communications and those embedded in the Kothmale experience.

Aristotelian Communication Principles	Project Description	Buddhist Communication Principles
	<p><b>Project</b>            The Kothmale Community Radio Internet Project (KCRIP) builds on the success of the Kothmale community radio station and programming. The Internet project focuses on assessing the potential benefits of new communication technologies to remote areas. UNESCO is implementing it in collaboration with the Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and the Media, the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation, the Sri Lanka Telecommunication Regulatory Commission, and the University of Colombo.</p>	

Aristotelian Communication Principles	Project Description	Buddhist Communication Principles
<p><b>Example:</b> The station was set up to give people information, so the emphasis was on an asymmetrical relation between communicator and receiver.</p>	<p><b>Context:</b> The Kothmale Community Radio station is located at the top of a mountain in the central region of Sri Lanka, in an area that is mostly rural with small farms, rice paddies and tea plantations scattered between dense forest and small villages. It began broadcasting in February 1989. At the time, the Mahaweli Authority (a governmental development body operating in the central region), had relocated more than 2,900 families for Sri Lankas' second-largest damming project. Many people in the region lost their crops and farming land. <b>The Mahaweli Authority set up the station with the objective of giving information to people who had been relocated.</b> The station was also used to provide information about self-employment and health.</p> <p>By February 1991, the station aired only three days per week, with three hours of transmission each day. In 1999, the station moved to its current larger location in Mawathura, and broadcasts extended to eight hours per day. The morning broadcast was commercialised, so the station would collect approximately 75 percent of its operational costs from the commercial revenue. Financial management remained with the Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation.</p> <p>In 1998, UNESCO supported a new component, KCRIP, to provide Internet access to remote and rural regions of Sri Lanka using computers and a regional radio broadcast.</p>	

Aristotelian Communication Principles	Project Description	Buddhist Communication Principles
	<p><b>Issues/Problems:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Much of Asia's poverty is concentrated in rural areas with limited access to information. Improved access to information is seen as an important tool that can enable communities to improve and diversify their rural livelihoods and manage their resources better.</li> <li>2. Kothmale is quite isolated and depends on radio.</li> <li>3. The community members involved felt that access to information from around the world would be of benefit, but that this could only be accomplished if there was an intermediary between the local people and the information available on the Web, such as trained local people at the radio station.</li> <li>4. Youth in the villages lacked access to computers and technologies that they believed they needed to participate in a world dominated by new communications technologies.</li> </ol>	
	<p><b>Level:</b></p> <p>This project is focused at the community level of Kothmale and the 25 km radius of its broadcast range. However, it works in partnership with the University of Colombo and the Sri Lanka Ministry of Posts, Telecommunications and the Media. It is seen as a pilot project that may be reproduced in other communities.</p>	

Aristotelian Communication Principles	Project Description	Buddhist Communication Principles
	<p><b>Process/Method:</b> There are three basic features in this project which combine new information technologies with conventional radio.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A radio programme allows people to «Radio Browse» the Internet, with the information gathered interpreted in the local languages. Here, a daily two-hour radio programme has community broadcasters interpreting information from select Internet sites. The listeners direct queries to the radio station to find specific information from the Internet. The advantage is that the radio provides the requested information in the local languages, making Internet information accessible to those who do not understand English.</li> <li>2. A mini Internet Service Provider (ISP) offers free local Internet access through the community radio. Besides an Internet Café at the station, there are two free Internet access points at Gampola and Nawalapitiya community libraries. This has been very useful for the community, as ISPs are usually located in capital cities, and rural users have had to pay long-distance telephone charges to access the Internet. This provides cheaper local telephone access plus use at community libraries is free. These library access points are also used as direct links to the radio station, to produce and air live programmes.</li> </ol>	

Aristotelian Communication Principles	Project Description	Buddhist Communication Principles
	<p>3. A community database is being developed as requested information is gathered and stored. The community radio is also developing its own computer database, deriving information requested by community members from the Internet. Much of the information on this Web site is available in the local languages, and is an attempt to solve the problem of non-availability of Internet information suitable to local rural needs. A collection of CD-ROMs will also be made available for community use. The project allows for direct Internet access, mostly used by young people, and indirect access, where listeners of the FM Radio are able to write in questions or provide topics for the radio station to broadcast. Trained volunteers research and gather information from the Internet and CD-ROMs, and translate it into Sinhala and Tamil. All but three of the weekly broadcasts are in the Sinhala language, since the area has an ethnic breakdown of around 70 percent Sinhala. There are also large Tamil and Muslim communities. In January 1999, the station began including weekly Tamil broadcasts. The questions are responded to through various radio programs including: one on human rights, a women's programme, a children's programme, one on health, and international news. Gradually all the data will be available for other community radio stations and citizens via the Web site. Furthermore, the station will broadcast online so other community radio stations throughout Sri Lanka can utilise it.</p>	

Aristotelian Communication Principles	Project Description	Buddhist Communication Principles
	<p>A Friday evening program is particularly popular. A local lawyer hosts it and volunteers help with the research during the week. His topics have included international cultural belief systems and practices, world leaders and social movements, law and change, and scientific masters throughout history.</p> <p>The staff and volunteers frequently visit the communities to do field recordings and live broadcasts. This direct communication is important, as many people are geographically remote. The station is able to bridge the communication gap by interacting with the community through live and recorded broadcasts. Music is a very important aspect of Sri Lanka culture and each day traditional songs are aired. Buddhist prayer is also broadcast every evening and on full moon Poya days.</p> <p>Letters to the station average 50 per day (more on weekends). These letters include poetry, drama, history, songs and local event information. Members of the Kothmale FM listeners club deliver daily news summaries.</p>	

Aristotelian Communication Principles	Project Description	Buddhist Communication Principles
	<p><b>Key Players:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local community members and volunteers at the radio station.</li> <li>2. Local libraries.</li> <li>3. Local Government and NGO workers.</li> <li>4. National Government Ministries.</li> </ol> <p><b>Results and Reflections</b></p> <p>Students of the access centres are designing their own Web sites, using the Internet for research and school projects, and obtaining information on educational grants and institutions.</p> <p>Other members of the community have been able to directly access information regarding health, human rights, agriculture and other issues affecting their daily lives. Some examples are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One man was extremely upset when his son was diagnosed with Hirschsprung disease. He was able to get information and advice from experts in other countries.</li> <li>• A local school teacher was able to interact with teachers around the world about short wave radio teaching, and apply this knowledge to a very remote school.</li> <li>• A local farmer, who hoped to expand his market by raising geese, was delighted with the housing diagrams and feeding information he was able to gather from the Internet.</li> </ul>	

Aristotelian Communication Principles	Project Description	Buddhist Communication Principles
	<p>The radio programme has also supported blood donation campaigns, an exhibition on self-employment, an information campaign to prevent a cow disease epidemic, a fundraiser for local hospitals, and a library book donation drive.</p> <p>Providing information on human rights has been an important area of focus that has been made easier with convenient access to the Internet. Two local students, Madhushini Nilmabandara and Nilma Samrakool, do a weekly program on human rights. The University of Colombo's Human Rights Centre funds their program: «People were not aware of their human rights. So we give them information... how to take action to protect it. Now we have set up human rights clubs in schools and do programs with them (on radio).» The students come to the station to produce programs. They perform dramas about children's and women's rights, and discuss issues related to war in Sri Lanka.</p>	



Aristotelian Communication Principles	Project Description	Buddhist Communication Principles
	<p><b>Problems</b></p> <p>The initial Kothmale radio project seems to be the one still addressing the problems of the rural population. The Internet component is mainly benefiting those that own a telephone line and can call in, or those that speak English and can browse the Web by themselves.</p> <p>The domination of the Web by the English language is a barrier to access, but the help of bilingual speakers from the community has assisted programme producers. Doctors, lawyers and teachers get involved in the program; they extract information from the Internet and interpret it for the listeners.</p>	

For your culture, please list the five principles for effective communication that would be the equivalents of those described for Aristotelian and Buddhist cultures. Even if you consider yourself part of the Aristotelian or Buddhist traditions, it might be helpful to undertake this exercise. Perhaps you will reach different conclusions.


Aristotelian Model	Your Cultural Context	Buddhist Model
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emphasis on communicator.</li> <li>2. Influencing is a central concept.</li> <li>3. There is a focus on control.</li> <li>4. The emphasis is on outward processes from the communicator to the world or audience.</li> <li>5. The relationship between the communicator and the receiver of information is asymmetrical – the communicator controls the message.</li> <li>6. Stresses intellect and rational action.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.</li> <li>2.</li> <li>3.</li> <li>4.</li> <li>5.</li> <li>6.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Emphasis on receiver.</li> <li>2. Understanding is a central concept.</li> <li>3. There is a focus on choice.</li> <li>4. The emphasis is on both outward and inward processes – the message and how the receiver perceives and interprets the message.</li> <li>5. The relationship between the communication and the receiver of information is symmetrical – the receivers' understanding of the communication is as important as the original message.</li> <li>6. Stress empathy and understanding</li> </ol>

**What conclusions do you draw about the principles that underpin the Kothmale communication strategy?**

**Do you agree or disagree that these were the best principles on which to base that work? Why?**



**What conclusions do you draw for your own work?**



**Considering the Theme and Learning Objectives for this experience please list one or more lessons you think are important for your own work. Please list these on the chart in «Drawing Your Own Conclusions» p89.**

### **Supporting Documents**

*Kothmale Community Radio Sri Lanka.* UNESCO.

[http://www.unesco.org/webworld/com\\_media/society\\_com\\_media.html#3](http://www.unesco.org/webworld/com_media/society_com_media.html#3) .

The Kothmale Web site: <http://www.kothmale.net/> .

Alfonso Gumucio Dagron, *Making Waves: Stories of Participatory Communication for Social Change*, The Rockefeller Foundation 2001. pp.127-132.

## Experience 6

# Regional Networking – Costa Rica and Nicaragua

## THE CENTRAL AMERICAN COMMUNICATION INITIATIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ICCADES) – COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS IN THE SAN JUAN RIVER BI-NATIONAL BASIN.



**Theme:** Behavioural or Social Action

**Learning Objective:** To develop participants' ability to understand the relation between individual behaviour change and structural/social obstacles or supports to that change.



Before reading the ICCADES experience, please review the information in the following two boxes. Each highlights an approach to communication and change. After reviewing them, note in the blank box your intuitive feel for which of these two explanations is correct, and any elaboration or change you would make to that theory. Then review the ICCADES experience, noting as you go through the communication and change principles, the theory on which it is based. There are small boxes at regular intervals through the text to prompt you.

### Theory of Reasoned Action

«...there is one primary determinant of behaviour, namely the person's intention to perform it. This intention is itself viewed as a function of two determinants:

- a. the person's attitude toward performing the behaviour (based on his/her beliefs about the consequences [and benefits] of performing the behaviour...); and
- b. the person's perception of the social (or normative) pressure exerted upon him or her to perform the behaviour.»<sup>32</sup>

### **Theory of Community-Level Structural Models**

«Environmental forces beyond the control of the individual constrain or help the knowledge-behaviour link: (for example)

- Presence or absence of legal restrictions
- Wage scales - which define what proportion of people will have the resources for making behaviour changes such as improved nutrition, travel to health clinics for immunization, or keeping children in school.
- Access – for example to services such as health clinics, schools, and affordable transportation.

Each of these would make it either harder or easier for an individual who learned about a practice to realise it.»<sup>33</sup>

### **Your Preference? Why?**

### **Project**

ICCADES is a Central American effort to facilitate at the local level participatory communication towards sustainable development. It synthesizes several communication experiences and innovations in Central America. It functions as a regional network bringing together individuals, communication centres and media organisations from the whole region of Central America, to unite their efforts, and exchange information on the role of communication for local development.

ICCADES has been supporting the creation of an alternative development model for the San Juan River Basin between Costa Rica and Nicaragua by helping local communities to design and implement their own strategies for the sustainable development of the basin. Funding for this support has come primarily from the FAO's Forests, Trees and People Programme in Central America, and the Agriculture Frontier Programme of the European Union.

We will use the context provided by the San Juan River Basin experience to shed light on the larger ICCADES project.

## **Context**

The San Juan River Basin serves as a natural border between Costa Rica and Nicaragua. It is an ecological and social unit with its own cultural identity resulting from strong links among the inhabitants. Despite its natural potential, the area is economically undeveloped. It is far from administrative centres, politically isolated, and exploited by private business interests. It is recognized as an area of natural beauty to be conserved for its bio-diversity, but local communities have not felt in control over its development.

The situation is characterized by social and economic marginalisation that has led to very weak communication links between the communities and government institutions. The only time the area makes the news is when there is a natural catastrophe or violent crime. This has strengthened the «outside» perspective that local people are objects to be pitied and helped, or controlled. The area's potential its rich social dynamics have become invisible to decision makers in the cities.

Yet the basin is of obvious regional importance to both countries, and over the years different development projects have been attempted. In the 1980s, the Integrated System of Protected Areas for Peace (SI-A-PAZ) was established to work with local communities to protect the area's natural resources. Local proposals however, met with indifference from both national governments. The result was an expansion of unsustainable activity by private investors, who established citrus plantations, logging and strip mining, creating considerable environmental degradation, with few benefits flowing to local residents.

Responding to this failure, local producers, NGOs and government, decided to come together to create a strong local initiative to save SI-A-PAZ. Processes on both sides of the border have produced converging proposals for a sustainable development model.

In Nicaragua, the Consejo para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Río San Juan (CODECO) is coordinating the effort. In Costa Rica, it is the Plataforma Campesina para el Desarrollo de la Zona Norte.

In 1998, ICCADES began supporting this process of dynamic communication between local communities, government and similar initiatives in Central America. The goal was to further the discussions and set the stage for the development and implementation of local plans for sustainable development of the basin.

### **Issues/Problems**

1. The area is important as a border, a river basin, and for its wealth of natural resources.
2. It forms a natural ecological zone and its inhabitants share a cultural identity.
3. It is isolated, underdeveloped and overexploited, which has led to economic, political and social marginalisation of local communities.
4. National government indifference, coupled with a lack of confidence in the local communities' ability to implement sustainable development plans, has furthered the marginalisation.
5. Unregulated private investment has created high levels of environmental destruction and little local benefit.
6. Attempts to create sustainable development initiatives have been made without success since the 1980s, but the experience has more recently led to the emergence of promising local proposals.

**Considering the 2 theoretical approaches to communication and change what do you think are the key obstacles to change in this initiative and which theory would you find most appropriate?**

## **Level**

ICCADES works with local communities, organisations and government, along with national and regional bodies. It works with individuals, communication centres, and media organisations from the entire Central American region. In the San Juan River Basin, it works with local communities, government and media (mostly radio); cross-border organisations; and national groups and government.

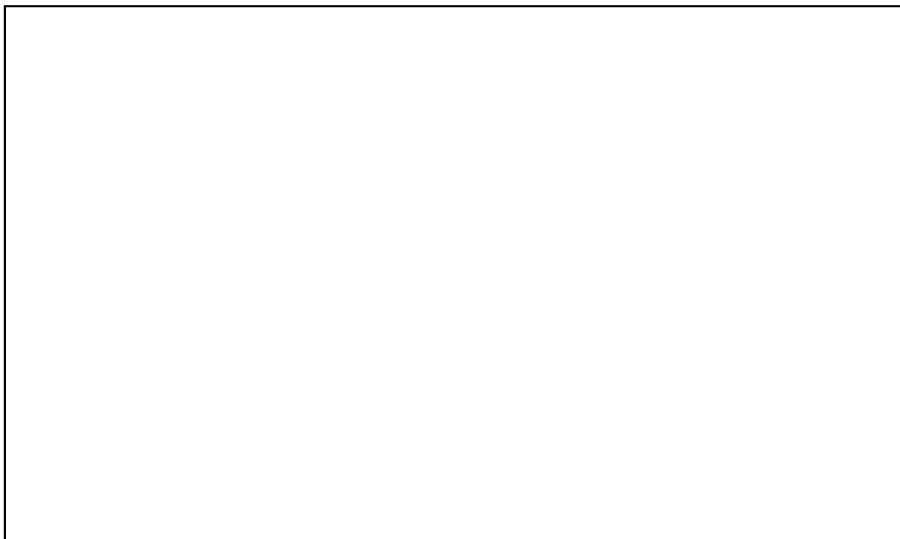
## **Process/Method**

At the local level, communities and organisations are brought together in dialogue, using locally-trained facilitators and radio stations.

At a bi-national level, communication activities spread information about local initiatives «upwards and outwards» to influence political, legal and technical decision making processes. They also work to raise awareness in both countries, about the need for legislation that supports the sustainable management of natural resources, and local economic development.

At a regional (Central American) level, ICCADES supports improved exchange of community experiences through peasant gatherings, systematisation of activities, and the evaluation of communication processes and their political, legal and technical effects.

**Is the change process in this initiative oriented around individual behaviour change or social/structural change or both? What elements of the initiative lead you to this conclusion?**





ICCADES objectives are:

1. To encourage communication processes among organisations at local, regional and national levels, so they contribute effectively to decision making in the region.
2. To make visible the dynamics and proposals of local efforts for sustainable development, giving priority to shared experiences and processes.
3. To strengthen the communication capacities of ICCADES' partners.
4. To help organisations build a common agenda for local sustainable development within Central America.

To achieve these objectives, ICCADES works with partners to:

1. Highlight the need for collaboration among communication organisations.
2. Integrate local residents into sustainable development communication processes.
3. Promote information services and technology.
4. Coordinate the exchange of experiences, and provide assistance for participatory communication.
5. Systematize and publish the results of successful local experiences, so these can be shared and known.
6. Monitor and evaluate the results and impact of communication activities in the communities.

The principles and values guiding the collaborative work of ICCADES' partners include commitments to:

1. Balance people's needs with long-term sustainable natural resource use.
2. Strengthen people's participation in local sustainable development.
3. Support local decision-making processes guided by residents' own cultural values, and respectful contributions from foreign agents.
4. Respond to the needs and interests of local organisations through participatory communication, and active participation in all initiatives.
5. Be confident and share what we are and what we have, with all our limitations and potentials.
6. Share information and working spaces.
7. Strengthen local partners' work, by basing all activities on agreements among the partners of each country.
8. Recognize the residents as the main leaders who remain prominent actors in the training, production and systematisation of all our activities.

## **Key Players**

1. Community leaders.
2. Local facilitators trained by the project.
3. Local environmental NGOs and producer, peasant and community organisations from both countries.
4. Local radio stations.
5. National legislative leaders and institutions.
6. Regional groupings of peasants, communication centres and media organisations.

## **Results and Reflections**

### **At the level of the San Juan River Basin**

The ICCADES strategy in the river basin is to work with communication activities, guided by goals that have been established by local people. The belief is that such strategies make local development needs clear while providing mechanisms to verify the work according to agreed goals.

In this way, local communication strategies can evolve, and become tools that help consolidate community interests, and identify related issues that require attention. Such local communication strategies form the roots, from which can grow regional processes of participatory communication for sustainable development. They provide a basis for «convergence and wide coverage - like a strong trunk that supports the branches of a great tree».

One of the main lessons drawn from the experience of ICCADES in the Rio San Juan area, is that radio stations have a tendency to focus on technical aspects of radio communication, and lose focus on the social importance of their work. It is therefore important to work simultaneously on strategies for local development and communication, so as to keep radio organisations in phase with local community organisations.

Based on this lesson, ICCADES is initiating a training programme in communication and rural development for local facilitators. This will be implemented by one of its members, the Centro de Comunicación Voces Nuestras, based in Costa Rica. These facilitators will help to implement the communities' strategies. Improving the capacities, both technical and social, of the nine local radio stations of the river basin, will complement this approach.

### **At the level of the Central American Region**

ICCADES' strength is derived from the association of various communication and other Central American organisations. The main challenge will be to consolidate, and

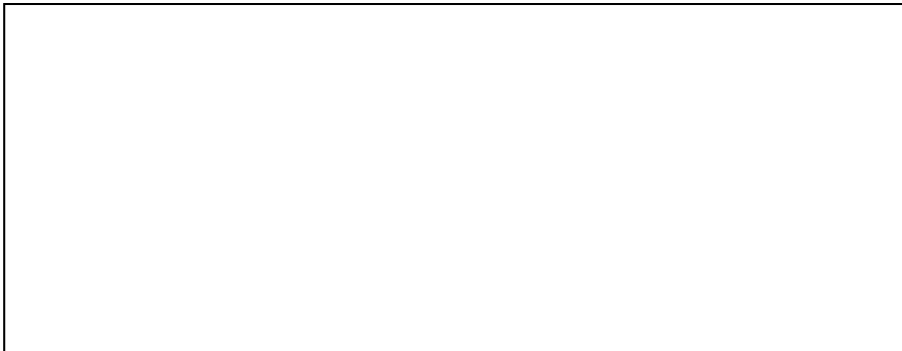
continue to coordinate the work of these organisations at a regional level. At national levels, the challenge will be to continue to promote associative and collaborative processes, such as partnerships and strategic alliances between various communication organisations, and actors involved in local development, such as community-based organisations.

Examples of how ICCADES plans to meet these challenges are:

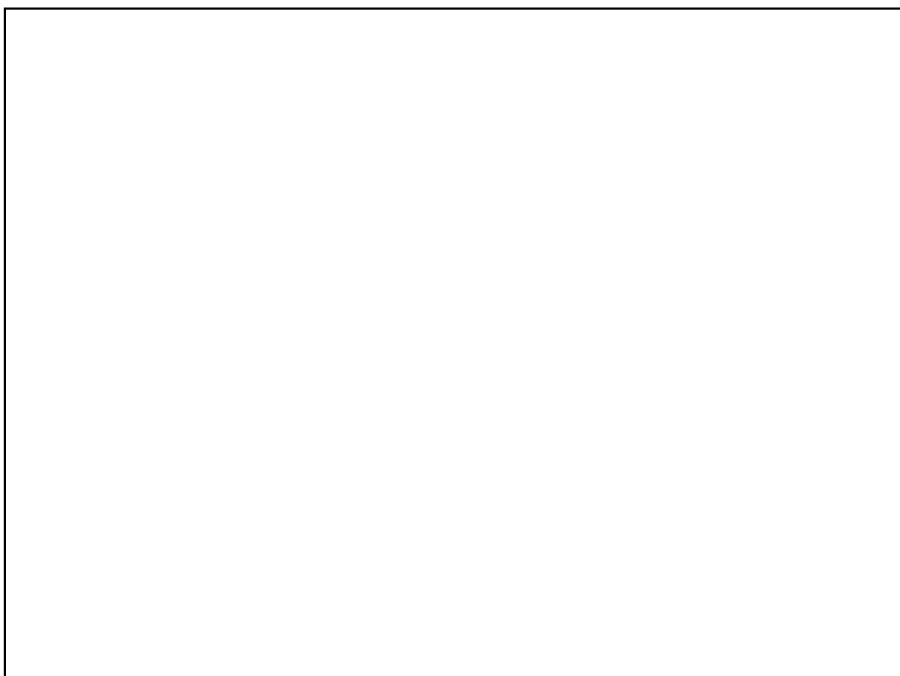
1. In collaboration with La Universidad de las regiones Autonomas del Caribe (URACAN), training and capacity building in communication strategies, to assist the local development of radio stations, and Afro-Caribbean communities on the Atlantic coast of Nicaragua.
2. A Central American regional training programme in communication, for local development of local facilitators. Voces Nuestras, the communication centre that will implement this programme, is expected to train facilitators in each country of the region.
3. Investigating the possibility of building upon and developing at the regional level, the concept of radio novels as a pedagogical tool.
4. Replicating, through radio stations across Central America, a competition to promote innovative local sustainable development initiatives. This was started several years ago by the Nicaraguan radio programme, La Hora de la Naturaleza.

ICCADES recognizes it is a relatively recent initiative, and will look to learn from similar experiences around the world. It welcomes discussion and opportunities to share ideas and experiences with others.

**Considering the ICCADES initiative, what assumptions does it make about how social change occurs and what are the main elements of the initiative that support this change?**



**In what ways is the initiative similar or different from the Theory of Reasoned Action and the Theory of Community-Level Structural Models?**



**Considering the Theme and Learning Objectives for this experience please list one or more lessons you think are important for your own work. Please list these on the chart in «Drawing Your Own Conclusions» p89.**

### **Supporting Documents and Contacts**

Luz Marina Rizo, Juan Carlos Cruz, & Lyes Ferroukhi. "Communication for Sustainable Local Development in Central America: An Experience of Working with the Communities' Perspective in the San Juan River Binational Basin". *Forests, Trees and People Newsletter No. 40/41*.

<http://www-trees.slu.se/news/40/40lyes.pdf>

Luz Marina Rizo is an environmental journalist from Nicaragua. On two occasions she has received the National Prize of Environmental Journalism. She currently acts as the ICCADES' facilitator in her country.

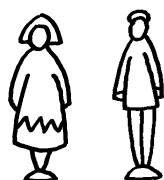
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## Experience 7 **Creating Local Organic Markets – Turkey**

### **BUGDAY<sup>34</sup>: BUILDING MARKETS FOR ORGANIC PRODUCE**



**Theme:** Education or Dialogue for Action

**Learning Objective:** To improve participant's ability to understand key differences between approaches emphasising education or dialogue and the programmatic implications of those emphases.



The role and importance of information and education for change is often debated and discussed. Do change strategies based on «educating» people produce long-lasting results, or is a process of debate, dialogue and action by those most affected, more effective?

As you review this initiative, we encourage you to think of alternative strategies that could have been pursued. If you were responsible for the strategy of Bugday, what would you have done – what actions would you take? At the end of this experience, we ask you to assess your ideas against the course taken by Bugday.

#### **Project**

This project supports the development of a national organic food industry. Through education, and cost-effective ways to stimulate local production and consumption of organically grown and processed foods, it seeks to develop an industry to improve the livelihoods of farmers and the health of consumers.

#### **Context**

Over the past 50 years, traditional agricultural practices in Turkey have given way to conventional monoculture using pesticides and synthetic chemicals that many feel have led to increasing environmental and human health problems.

While traditional agriculture used organic methods, the idea of organic certification is very new in Turkey. It began in 1995, with a few organic dried fruit projects controlled and traded by several European companies. These initial projects grew quickly in step with growing markets in Europe and provided benefits for foreign producers, traders and consumers. The increased number of organic producers also had a positive impact on the environment where organic farming took place.

However, there was virtually no internal Turkish market for organic produce until 1997 at which time it accounted for less than one percent of agricultural products consumed. For advocates of organic production, this meant that local people were denied access to foods that would improve both environmental conditions and health.

Bugday – an organisation that operates a centre for ecological living – recognized that the growth of organic farming for foreign markets created an opportunity to introduce organic products to Turkey. But this could not happen if organic agriculture was seen only as a business opportunity, and not also as an opportunity to improve the quality of life for Turkish consumers.

To realize both opportunities, Bugday felt consumers would have to be educated about the value of organic foods, and cost-effective ways to stimulate increased local production and consumption would have to be found.

### **Issues/Problems**

1. Traditional organic agriculture had been almost entirely supplanted by conventional monoculture production.
2. Organic produce represented less than one percent of all produce consumed in Turkey.
3. Conventional agricultural practices were creating health and environment problems to producers and consumers.
4. Foreign markets and companies were developing local organic production, but this was not consumed locally.
5. The idea of organic certification and the value of organic foods was not widely known or understood in Turkey.

### **Level**

Bugday works primarily with consumers and producers, providing information on the value of organic foods to health and the environment, and the importance of rural life and tradition. It works largely through education to producers, consumers, traders and processors.

**Can you think of alternative actions Bugday could take to achieve the same objectives?**

**From what you understand of Bugday's approach do you think it is primarily focussed on education or dialogue? Why?**

**Process/Method**

Bugday began to promote certified organic products at their centre for ecological living. Before certification was widespread, they sold non-certified traditional village products that had been produced organically. To introduce the concept of certification, they started by selling local organic products processed by export companies. Initially, because of the lack of awareness of the benefits of eating organic produce, there was not enough local support for a Turkey-based processing and packaging operation.

To build local support Bugday organized public meetings, panels at conferences, gatherings of consumers and farmers, and published articles in the national press, promoting what had already become a growing organic movement. They also began to publish their own bi-monthly magazine to provide information on healthier and more environmentally-sustainable products, and also to promote the cultural values of organic agriculture. The magazine now has a readership of over 6 000 people in Turkey and parts of Western Europe.



To practically test the growth and strength of the Turkish market, Bugday also set up stores. The first were supported by an environmental NGO, but these quickly gave way to small private businesses. The overall approach was a combination of education and marketing, combining sound business and farming principles, with the promotion of positive cultural, environmental and health values.

**Would Bugday's process of building local support look different if it had chosen a different change strategy? If so, how?**



## **Results and Reflections**

Bugday started with few staff and resources, but has grown quickly. Once they felt the market was ready, they opened a store in Istanbul. In 1999, they opened four new stores in different parts of Turkey. By 2000, Bugday was in contact with dozens of people wanting to open their own stores around the country.

In early 2000, three export companies began to package and sell nearly 70 different organic products within Turkey. This has led investors to explore the development of a local organic production and processing industry.

Bugday has become a reference point for organic production in Turkey, and offers advice and consulting on a volunteer basis to new entrepreneurs in the organics business. It supports an emerging environmental movement that synthesizes environmental sustainability with business opportunities, through a network of professionals, volunteers and supporters within and outside the country.

By mid-2000, there were over 50 sales points for organic agriculture, and every month three or four new stores were being launched. Catering companies have started to seek the advice of Bugday on organic ingredients, and organic dishes are appearing at festivals, meetings and restaurants. Farmers use Bugday for new ideas, resulting in the regular appearance of new products in the Turkish market.

Developing a market for organic produce requires more than farmers cultivating the supply. The organics industry requires a strong consumer base. Since there is often a premium for organic produce, educating consumers about its benefits is essential. In Turkey, Bugday has used organic agriculture as a facet of a larger strategy to re-value rural life, and the traditions and crafts that make Turkey unique.

By demonstrating the viability of a strong, locally-supported market for organically grown and processed foods, Bugday has shown that environmental sustainability can also sustain people's health and livelihoods. This has paved the way in Turkey for a deeper look at issues like fair trade and socially-responsible business. With farmers, producers and consumers onboard, Bugday has the support to introduce further environmental innovations in Turkey.

**Re-read the last paragraph**

Bugday has been successful in achieving many of its objectives. Please analyse the approach taken so far, Bugday's plans to «take a deeper look at issues like fair trade and socially responsible business», and its ongoing objective of supporting traditional rural culture.

**Do you think it should maintain its present strategy or adopt a different one? Why, and if you think the strategy should change, what changes would you suggest?**

**Considering the Theme and Learning Objectives for this experience please list one or more lessons you think are important for your own work. Please list these on the chart in «Drawing Your Own Conclusions» p89.**

### **Supporting Documents/Contacts**

Ashoka (February 2001). *The Turning Tide: The People, Principles, and Strategies Creating Ecological Balance. Environmental Innovations Workshop and Conference.*  
[http://www.ashoka.org/global/ei\\_book.cfm](http://www.ashoka.org/global/ei_book.cfm) .

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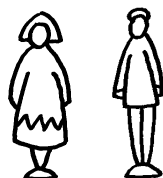
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## Experience 8

# Environmental Education and Communication Project: El Salvador, The Gambia, and Jordan

## GREENCOM: THE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND COMMUNICATION PROJECT OF USAID



**Theme:** Innovation and Action

**Learning Objective:** To heighten participants' critical skills at matching the requirements for action with the context for that action.



Innovation is an essential component of any communication and change process. In reviewing the GreenCOM experience below, we encourage you to reflect on the issue of innovation in relation to NRM.

Following the description of this experience there is an introduction to two approaches to sustainable change related to culture and innovation. Reflect on them in relation to the GreenCOM experience and your own work.

### **Project**

US AID launched GreenCOM in 1993, to work in tandem with other projects across sectors and regions, to achieve a range of strategic environmental and education objectives. Its mission is to change human practises to better the environment through the use of strategic communication and education.

Its goals are to:

- Go beyond «raising awareness» to help individuals and groups acquire knowledge and skills to change behaviours around specific environmental issues;
- Lay a broad foundation for critical problem solving and long-range resource planning through environmental education;
- Promote more rapid, targeted behaviour change through communication and social marketing;

- Work toward long-term sustainability through the integration of education and communication capacities within local institutions;
- Address the specific roles that men and women play in natural resource management.

GreenCOM seeks to empower people and communities to protect and conserve their environment by:

- Developing practises and sharing research strategies, methods and tools;
- Strengthening partnerships among stakeholders;
- Building networks of environmental education and communication practitioners, and stimulating environmentally positive practises.

GreenCOM has worked on over 30 projects, in 28 countries over the past 8 years, with a wide range of partners in an effort to create synergies between the activities of US AID Missions and the projects they support. The aim is to develop projects that are responsive to the needs of each partner and that use education, communication, and behaviour science tools to promote improved environmental practises. GreenCOM provides an on-line resource centre of environmental education materials, an internal portal allowing workgroups to communicate, a journal for practitioners and a series of publications on how to implement effective strategic communication initiatives.

## **Context**

US AID had been involved in environmental education and communication (EE&C) projects in many places. GreenCOM was established to create synergy between and among these development activities and to bring together multiple tools, methods and strategies developed across US AID missions and projects, and from a variety of partners and experts.

GreenCOM has sought to play a multifaceted role for US AID EE&C programmes by:

1. Providing direct EE&C support to field operations.
2. Carrying out field-driven applied and practical research.
3. Sharing state of the art methodologies and materials with people around the world through a resource centre, website, newsletter, as well as publications and occasional symposia.

## **Issues/Problems**

1. US AID felt a need to coordinate and build synergy between its EE&C projects.
2. In many countries environmental issues were becoming worse and local capacity had to be strengthened significantly.

3. Changing behaviour to impact positively on environmental issues involves more than the provision of information. Behaviour change involves a complex combination of strategies and methods.
4. EE&C projects drew on several disciplines and techniques that could be brought together to increase the success of future projects.

## **Level**

This is a global project working through the US AID structure of Missions, projects and country partnerships. It works at national levels with governments, and at regional or local levels with partner NGOs. It also works directly with projects at all levels, providing support, design, monitoring, and evaluation.

## **Process/Method**

The fundamental question informing GreenCOM in any EE&C project has been why do people who take positive environmental actions often have no better understanding than those who do not? What causes people to act?

GreenCOM starts from the perspective that knowledge and attitudes regarding the environment are not the critical areas of focus for EE&C. The determining factor is behaviour. While shifts in knowledge and attitudes support behaviour change, GreenCOM believes there is no cause and effect relation between them.

The programme pulls together the following processes, objectives and principles of social marketing, environmental and education communication, and public participation:

1. **Social Marketing** using a five-step process:
  - *Assessment*: Why do people behave the way they do?
  - *Design and Plan*: Compare the assessment to the project goals, and design a message.
  - *Pre-test and Revise*: Campaign items are pre-tested and then revised.
  - *Implementation*: The messages are delivered through the channels selected.
  - *Monitor and Evaluate*: Behaviour is monitored and evaluated, and this is fed back into the campaign.
  
2. **Environmental Communication**, which draws on social marketing theories, using this four-step process:
  - *Goal*: Start by determining what behaviours the project will change.
  - *Audience*: Determine what groups' behaviour is to be changed.
  - *Medium*: Determine the «media diet» of the target audience.

- *Message*: Decide on and prepare the message.

**3. Environmental Education** which focuses on critical skills rather than behaviour change – how to think, not what to think. Using five objectives:

- *Awareness*: Learning about the environment and becoming sensitive to the issues.
- *Knowledge*: Experience the environment and its problems.
- *Attitude*: Instil values of concern for the environment.
- *Skills*: Develop skills to identify and solve environmental problems.
- *Participation*: Encourage active involvement in solving problems.

**4. Public Participation** requires stakeholders to participate in research, development of messages, programme design, decision-making and implementation. The need for public participation is a basic tenet of GreenCOM's strategies and is seen as important because:

- The complexity and specificity of environmental issues means that outside experts are unlikely to have answers that are relevant to local contexts.
- Processes of increasing democratisation around the world have led to growing community wariness of solutions developed without strong and ongoing community participation in the design of their own communication strategies and messages.
- Enabling such community participation not only improves project impact and credibility but develops community skills and capacities to do similar work in the future.

GreenCOM approaches to public participation seek to go beyond project design to involve stakeholders in collecting formative research, decision making and project implementation. The incorporation of increasingly participatory approaches has also led to the use of new communication tools such as community resource centres, radio, and websites.

### **Key Players**

1. GreenCOM staff.
2. US AID Missions and NGO partners.
3. Local NGOs and communities participating in projects.

### **Results and Reflections**

Three experiences from GreenCOM:

1. **El Salvador.** This rebuilding project began in 1994 after the war had left the country's physical and natural environment badly degraded. The country had

no environmental education in schools, no environmental information on the media, no government agency charged with environmental concerns, and a rapidly growing population. GreenCOM was brought in to promote a five-year campaign to increase environmental awareness and management throughout the country.

By the end of the five years El Salvador had:

- A national environmental education strategy.
- Environmental education as a major theme of K-12 schooling.
- Established environmental education at the university level.
- An active environmental press.

The development of the national environmental education strategy was the first step, and it focused on three areas:

- Formal education through the school and university system.
- Informal education working with literacy and adult education projects, park interpreters, museum exhibits and community organisations.
- Informal education through the mass media.

GreenCOM worked with the government, to make the environment one of eight central themes for education; to prepare environmental education materials for teaching throughout standard subjects like science and math; and to train teachers.

In the universities, training was provided to professors, courses were «greened» where the instructors expressed interest, and a mandatory course was instituted on national environmental problems.

Informal education was supported by establishing environmental education units; training legislators, decision-makers and technicians on the issues, and how to design, execute and evaluate environmental projects; and establishing interpretative trails and information centres at parks.

Key staff from environmental NGOs were trained in participatory techniques, design and evaluation of environmental programmes and education materials, and monitoring and evaluation.

Informal education was also promoted through sensitisation meetings with media owners and managers, training and support to reporters, and rewards offered to journalists for the best environmental reporting.



2. **The Gambia:** This project began in 1995 and operated over a short time frame with limited resources. Run by the National Environmental Agency, this was an awards programme offered to the best environmental projects in eight categories including business, schools and voluntary organisations. Over 200 individuals and groups entered and many more were exposed through media coverage, community meetings and awards ceremonies. The programme was well advertised and reached out to all parts of the country. Specific groups were identified for special appeals, such as farmers, community leaders, school administrators and teachers.

Each component from sensitisation to awards ceremonies, was used for education and awareness raising. Evaluation criteria were carefully decided and used. Results have included new programmes and an infrastructure for decentralized environmental management.

3. **Jordan:** This project began in 1994 with a Jordanian NGO, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN). Jordan has extreme water shortage problems and growing dependency on other countries that control upstream river flows. The project focused on developing curriculum to improve water conservation, at which Jordanians are already quite good. With a 92 percent loss of rainfall to evaporation, hydropower in Israel and Syria reducing river flow, high population growth, modernisation increasing demands, and rationing a way of life, Jordan is looking for changes in individual behaviour to conserve every drop. This was done by:

- *Research* to understand the population's perceptions of water scarcity.
- Designing and targeting *curriculum* to the knowledge gaps identified above.
- Taking *gender* into account, and using different approaches for girls and boys.
- Ensuring the *participation* of Jordanian educators.

The research resulted in a better understanding of Jordanian perceptions of water problems, from a historical and gender perspective. The identification of knowledge gaps indicated that the best intervention would be a water-conservation curriculum for the RSCN's network of secondary-school environmental youth clubs. The curriculum consisted of five units:

- The water cycle in nature, and water sources in Jordan.
- Reduction of household water use.
- Ground and surface water.
- Ground and surface water pollution.
- Home gardens and irrigation.

The curriculum was developed in an interactive process with Jordanian teachers from a variety of teaching specialities. Content was based on information from interviews with teachers, students and administrators, and existing curricula from other parts of the world. The curriculum was tested against control groups and showed good results amongst the environmental groups, and also the families of these students. Ninety percent of teachers who used the curriculum materials said they would use them again.

## **Communication and change**

Here are two theoretical statements expressing different underlying principles on culture and innovation. Each has implications for how change is effectively initiated:

### **Everett Rogers<sup>35</sup>**

Rogers elaborated the «Diffusion of Innovation» Theory in the 1960s. This theory has been one of the most influential models for development communication. Rogers argued that innovations diffuse over time according to individuals' stages. ...Rogers posited five stages through which an individual passes in the adoption of innovations: **awareness, knowledge and interest, decision, trial, and adoption/rejection**. According to Rogers, development communications entailed a «process by which an idea is transferred from a source to a receiver with the intent to change his behaviour. Usually the source wants to alter the receiver's knowledge of some idea, create or change his attitude toward the idea, or persuade him to adopt the idea as part of his regular behaviour.» Populations were divided in different groups according to their propensity to incorporate innovations and timing in actually adopting them. Rogers proposed that early adopters act as models to emulate and generate a climate of acceptance and an appetite for change, and those who are slow to adopt are laggards. This latter category was assumed to describe the vast majority of the population in the Third World.

Later in his career Rogers recognized that his early views had individualistic and psychological biases. It was necessary to be sensitive to the specific sociocultural environment in which «communication» took place... The stages model remained but the top-down perspective according to which innovations diffuse from above needed modification. Communication was no longer focused on persuasion (transmission of information between individuals and groups), but was understood as a «process by which participants create and share information with one another in order to reach a mutual understanding».

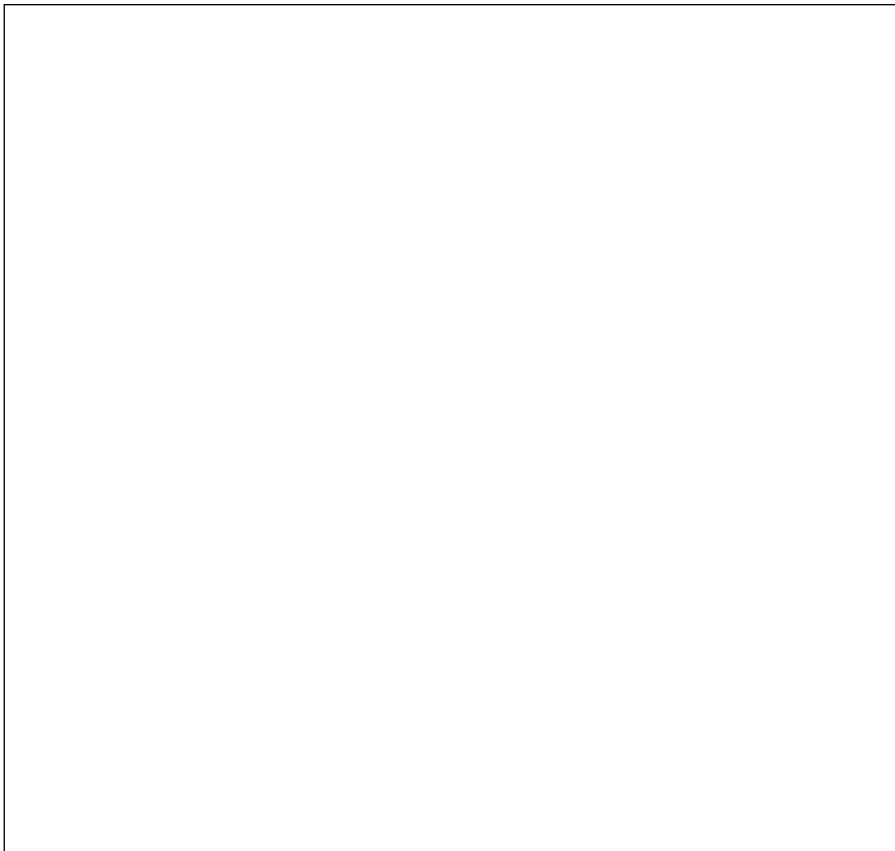
### **Martin-Barbero<sup>36</sup>**

«In the redefinition of culture, the clue lies in the understanding of the communicative nature of culture, understanding culture as a process that is productive of meaning, not

just as a «circulator» of information. Thus, the receiver is not just a decoder to whom the TV broadcaster transmits a «message» but also a «producer». « [1993]

The emphasis here is on culture – more specifically the ways in which people define their own culture. Culture is dynamic – it continues to be redefined as people «produce new meanings». People are the producers of change, not receivers and communicators of messages. By implication, people in their social settings drive the change process.

**What do you think are the main differences between these two perspectives about how to effectively initiate change?**



### **Your analysis of GreenCOM**

We encourage you to review the GreenCOM project and list elements that you think reflect Rogers' 5 steps.

Awareness	Knowledge and interest	Decision	Trial	Adoption/ Rejection

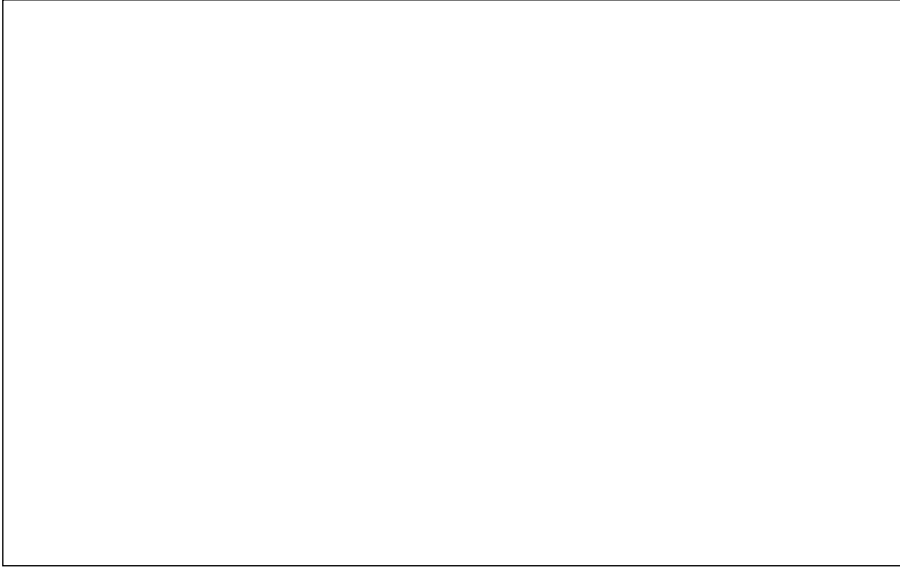
**Do the elements you have identified above reflect the views of Rogers' later work? If so how? if not why?**

**Now consider the statement by Martin-Barbero and identify 2 or 3 areas where you think the GreenCOM project emphasizes the importance of culture and locally driven and controlled communication and change processes.**

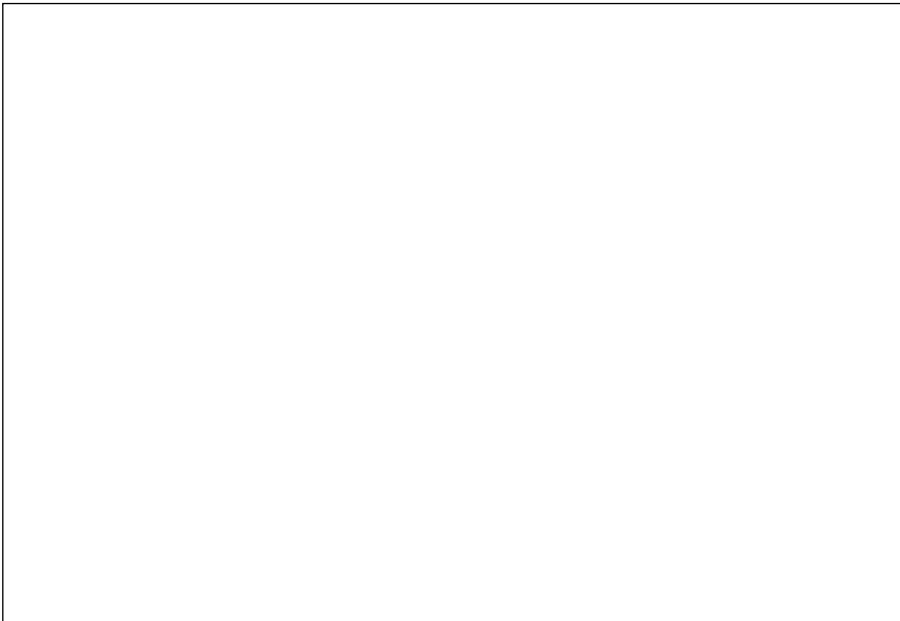
- 1.
  
- 2.
  
- 3.

**Do you think Rogers Diffusion of Innovation Theory and Martin-Barbero's understanding of culture as a producer of meaning are compatible? Give reasons for your answer.**

**Which of the two approaches provides the better framework for enabling innovation and matching requirements for action with the context for that action? Why?**



**What conclusions do you draw about the mission, goals and methods that underpin GreenCOM's strategy?**



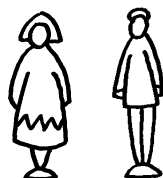
**Considering the Theme and Learning Objectives for this experience please list one or more lessons you think are important for your own work. Please list these on the chart in «Drawing Your Own Conclusions» p89.**

### **Supporting Documents**

Academy for Educational Development (2000). *Environmental Education and Communication for a Sustainable World: Handbook for International Practitioners*. Washington. Available at <http://www.greencom.org/greencom/books.asp>

«Living with the Rubbish Queen - Telenovelas, Culture and Modernity in Brazil» by Thomas Tufte. Published by University of Luton Press - 2001 p 16.

Silvio Waisbord *Family Tree of Theories, Methodologies and Strategies in Development Communication: Convergences and Differences*. Prepared for the Rockefeller Foundation 2001. Available on The Communication Initiative website at <http://www.comminit.com/stsilviocomm/sld-2881.html>



# Drawing Your Own Conclusions



**Theme:** Planning for Action

**Learning Objective:** To prioritise the lessons of the previous 8 experiences and reflect on how they will impact your future communication for development and NRM work.



Below is a chart on which you can write the key lessons or important points you were asked to note down at the end of each experience.

## **Experience 1**

### **Community Based Natural Resource Management – Namibia**

**Theme:** Principles and Action

**Learning Objective:** To improve participants' understanding of the relationship between differing communication principles for effective change, and the planning and organisation of their actions.

**My key lessons:**

1.

2.

3.



### **Experience 2**

#### **Pastoralist Communication – Kenya**

**Theme:** Voices and Action

**Learning Objective:** To advance participants' understanding of effective communication strategies, where substantive action is sourced in the voice and perspective of the people most affected.

**My key lessons:**

1.

2.

3.

### **Experience 3**

#### **Indigenous Forest Management – Cambodia**

**Theme:** Issue Analysis for Action

**Learning Objective:** To expand participants' skills at analyzing the issues to be addressed by the communication initiative.

**My key lessons:**

1.

2.

3.

#### **Experience 4**

##### **Recovering from Conflict – Viet Nam**

**Theme:** Contextual Analysis for Action

**Learning Objective:** To improve participants' skills at analyzing the contexts for change.

##### **My key lessons:**

1.

2.

3.

#### **Experience 5**

##### **Internet Radio - Sri Lanka**

**Theme:** Culture and Action

**Learning Objective:** To expand participants' awareness of the relationship between culture, context and strategy, in developing effective communication initiatives.

##### **My key lessons:**

1.

2.

3.

### **Experience 6**

#### **Regional Networking – Costa Rica and Nicaragua**

**Theme:** Behavioural or Social Action

**Learning Objective:** To develop participants' ability to understand the relation between individual behaviour change and structural/social obstacles or supports to that change.

**My key lessons:**

1.

2.

3.

### **Experience 7**

#### **Creating Local Organic Markets – Turkey**

**Theme:** Education or Dialogue for Action

**Learning Objective:** To improve participant's ability to understand key differences between approaches emphasising education or dialogue and the programmatic implications of those emphases.

**My key lessons:**

1.

2.

3.

**Experience 8**

**Environmental Education and Communication Project: El Salvador, The Gambia, and Jordan**

**Theme:** Innovation and Action

**Learning Objective:** To heighten participants' critical skills at matching the requirements for action with the context for that action.

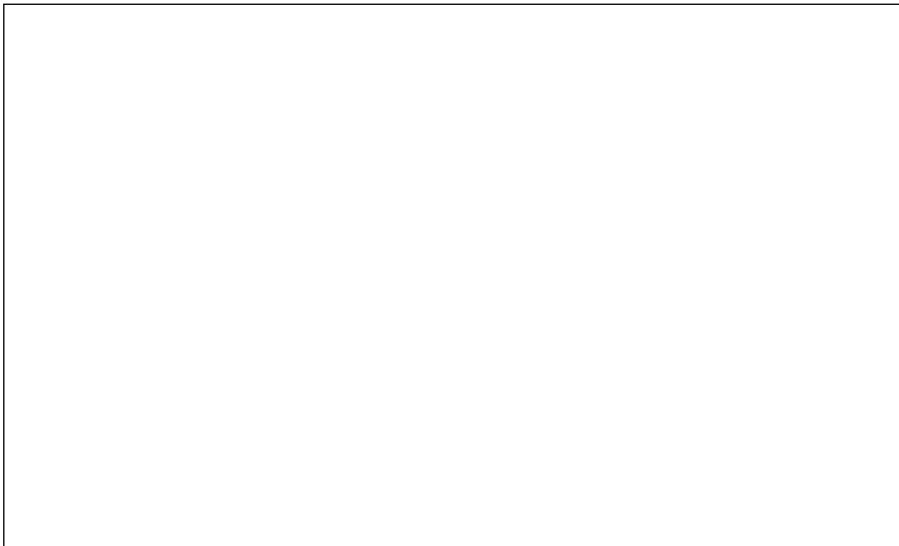
**My key lessons:**

1.

2.

3.

Consider the list you've made above and ask yourself whether these lessons will cause you to change the way you approach your work in the future. If the answer is yes make a few notes below about how your work will change.



Now consider the list again in terms of what you think are the most important lessons to keep in mind in your future work. List them below in order of priority:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
etc

# NOTES

- 1 See for example, Alfonso Gumucio Dagron, *Making Waves: Stories of Participatory Communication for Social Change* (The Rockefeller Foundation) 2001. Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend, M. Taghi Farvar, Jean Claude Nguingui, Vincent Awa Ndangang, *Co-management of Natural Resources: Organizing, Negotiating and Learning-by-Doing*. (Heidelberg, Germany) 2001. Chike Anyaegbunam, Paolo Mefalopulos, Titus Moetsabi, *Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal: Starting with the people* (Harare) 1998. A concise article on this was prepared for SD Dimensions by Phillippe Van der Stichele which can be viewed at: <http://www.fao.org/sd/cddirect/cdan0015.htm>  
Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend, Dianne Buchan ed., *Beyond Fences: Seeking Social Sustainability in Conservation* Vol 1 and 2 (IUCN, Gland Switzerland and Cambridge UK) 1997. Thomas Barton, Grazia Borrini-Feyerabend, Alex de Sherbinin, Patricio Warren, *Our People, Our Resources* (IUCN Gland Switzerland) 1997.
- 2 Claude Martin, «How Big is Your Footprint?» *World Wildlife Fund Global Network Newsroom*, October 2000  
[http://www.panda.org/news\\_facts/newsroom/news.cfm?uNewsId=2154&uLangId=1](http://www.panda.org/news_facts/newsroom/news.cfm?uNewsId=2154&uLangId=1)
- 3 «Trends Point to Gains in Human Development, While Many Negative Human Impacts on Vital Ecosystems are Increasing», *Sustainable Development Information Service Global Trends*, World Resource Institute 2000  
<http://www.wri.org/wri/trends/index.html>
- 4 «Solutions for a Water Short World», *Population Reports: Volume XXVI*, Number 1 The Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, September 1998
- 5 «Footprints and Milestones: Population and Environmental Change,» *UNFPA State of World Population 2001*  
<http://www.unfpa.org/swp/2001/presskit/english/summaryen.htm>
- 6 «FAO Fact Sheet: AIDS A Threat to Rural Africa»  
<http://www.fao.org/Focus/E/aids/aids6-e.htm>

- 7 Freedom Nyamubaya, «A Career for Life,» *Dusk of Dawn*. College Press Publishers, Zimbabwe 1995. p. 29.
- 8 Borrini-Feyerabend *op. cit.* pp. 1,2.
- 9 Freedom Nyamubaya, «*Shanty town beauty,*» *op. cit.* p. 34.
- 10 Anyaegbunam *op. cit.* See also Brenda Dervin and Robert Huesca, «Reaching for the communicating in participatory communication: A meta-theoretical analysis» *The Journal of International Communication* 4:2 December 1997. and Gary Coldevin, «Participatory communication and adult learning for rural development» *SD Dimensions* November 2001  
[http://www.fao.org/sd/2001/kn1104\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/2001/kn1104_en.htm)
- 11 Borrini-Feyerabend 2001 *op. cit.*
- 12 Denise Gray-Felder & James Dean, *Communication For Social Change: A Position Paper and Conference Report*. (New York.: The Rockefeller Foundation, 1999) and Silvio Waisbord *Family Tree of Theories, Methodologies and Strategies in Development Communication: Convergences and Differences*. Prepared for the Rockefeller Foundation 2001. Available on The Communication Initiative website at <http://www.comminit.com/stsilviocomm/sld-2881.html>
- 13 Denise Gray-Felder & James Dean *op. cit.* p. 11.
- 14 *ibid.*
- 15 *ibid.*
- 16 *ibid.* p. 12.
- 17 Sabine Isabel Michiels & L. Van Crowder, «Discovering the «Magic Box»: Local appropriation of information and communication technologies (ICTs).» *SD Dimensions* (FAO Communication for Development Group June 2001). P. 4.  
[http://www.fao.org/sd/2001/kn0602a\\_en.htm](http://www.fao.org/sd/2001/kn0602a_en.htm)
- 18 See the *Making Waves Chat Forum*  
<http://www.comminit.com/majordomo/makingwaves/msg00032.html> on The Communication Initiative <http://www.comminit.com/>.

- 19 *Base Line* <http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-22.html> on The Communication Initiative <http://www.comminit.com>
- 20 *Making Waves Chat Forum op. cit.*  
<http://www.comminit.com/majordomo/makingwaves/msg00035.html>
- 21 Sabine Isabel Michiels & L. Van Crowder, *op. cit.*
- 22 Denise Gray-Felder & James Dean *op. cit.* quotation from Manuel Castells, p. 24.
- 23 *Communication News* <http://www.comminit.com/TempoArchives/sld-1690.html> and <http://www.comminit.com/TempoArchives/sld-1420.html/>
- 24 *Base Line Archives* <http://www.comminit.com/BaseLineArchives/sld-2246.html>
- 25 Thomas Tufte. *Living with the Rubbish Queen – Telenovelas, Culture and Modernity in Brazil*, University of Luton Press - 2001 p. 11
- 26 Phyllis Tilson Piotrow, D. Lawrence Kincaid, Jose G. Il Rimon, & Ward Rinehart, *Health Communication - Lessons from Family Planning and Reproductive Health*, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, Center for Communication Programs 1997 p. 23.
- 27 Silvio Waisbord, *op. cit.*
- 28 *ibid.*
- 29 *ibid.*
- 30 Anyaegbunam, Mefalopulos, & Moetsabi. *Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal – Starting with the People*. SADC Center of Communication for Development and FAO Regional Project.
- 31 A Buddhist Approach to Development. *Communications Systems for Planning Change*. Pp. 48 and 49.
- 32 M. Fishbein Summarising Fishbein & Ajzen (1975), Ajzen & Fishbein (1980), Fishbein, Middlestadt & Hitchcock (1991) in *Developing Effective Behavior Change Interventions*. University Of Illinois. p. 4.



**33** Robert Hornick. Alternative Models of Behavior Change. *Working Paper 131*.  
Annenburg School for Communication 1990 p. 3 and 4.

**34** Bugday means «wheat» in Turkish.

**35** Silvio Waisbord, *op. cit.*

**36** Thomas Tufte *op cit.* p. 16 for excerpt only see:  
<http://www.comminit.com/ctheories/sld-3151.html>

