Creating a participatory communication model of engagement of local communities to enhance development effectiveness in Tanzania

By Jasson Kalugendo and Paul MacLeod

'If real development is to take place, the people have to be involved.' . . . Mwalimu Julius Nyerere

Abstract

Current development communication strongly recommends an approach based on the initiatives of communities through community-based organizations. Unfortunately government policies are unaware to the research trends and government agencies tend to dictate to rural communities what projects are to be initiated and how they are carried out. This paper has analysed three case studies of projects in Tanzania started and carried out with the initiatives of the people in community organizations and shows the effectiveness of this approach. The study also shows the contribution that independent educational radio to these initiatives of the rural communities.

Key Words: development communication, Tanzania, community-based development initiatives

Introduction

In 1998 Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada defined communication for development as 'the use of communication processes, techniques and media to help people towards a full awareness of their situation and their options for change, to resolve conflicts, to work towards consensus, to help people plan actions for change and sustainable development, to help people acquire the knowledge and skills they need to improve

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their condition and that of their society, and to improve the effectiveness of institutions (Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada, 1998:63). In 2010, Wendy Quarry and Ricardo Ramirez, in their book Communication for Another Development – Listening before Talking refined that definition to explain communication for development as process utilizing media tools to give 'voice' to the 'voiceless' and to facilitate dialogue between those who are marginalized in society and those who make decisions, to engage the former and empower them to participate in planning and implementing action to improve their social, economic or cultural situations.

In this context, the essence of communication for development (C4D) is to empower citizens through a combination of ensuring they have essential information and providing them with relevant communications tools (audio, video, radio, social media, etc.) to engage fully to determine and participate fully in the implementation of the development they require, demand accountability from the those entrusted to manage the development of their community, their region and the nation and ultimately transform their lives.

When it comes to development, 'communications' is too often treated as superfluous at worst, or as an 'add-on' at best and what passes for C4D does little to engage citizens. In Tanzania, even when 'communications' is indicated in strategic plans, implementation and results usually fall short of expectations. The most common approach adopted is to treat intended beneficiaries as 'consumers' of whatever policy makers have devised for their betterment. They are identified as a 'target audience' and messages are prepared and disseminated in various ways. But while this may be effective when it comes to helping consumers choose between different brands of life's necessities, and obviously works for highly desirable products for which there is a ready market such as cellphones and soft drinks or beer, experience suggests it is largely ineffective when 'outsiders' try to 'sell' substantive change into communities with which they have not engaged and to citizens who naturally resist 'top down solutions' to problems they may not even consider to be priorities to better their lives.

The purpose of this paper is:

- to outline what experience shows is the ineffectiveness of current top-down C4D models and consider other approaches that promote learning from and engaging with the intended primary beneficiaries .
- to propose implementation of a new paradigm of that will integrate traditional analog radio technology with evolving digital technologies to promote

interaction at the community level and engagement for communities in the national dialogue.

A myth about communication for development in Tanzania

Currently some scholars and social economists in Tanzania have started questioning whether or not the capacity to implement effective development programmes is available in Tanzania. Rajani points out that despite various attempts to build citizen capacity, results have been disappointing and there has been little or no progress. 'There is no shortage of initiatives to build capacity in Tanzania; for almost 50 years government, donors and NGOs have established thousands of schemes and spent billions to enable people to know more, gain skills and perform better. But ask virtually anyone today and the lack of capacity will appear in the top set of challenges facing the country' (Rajani, 2010, p.157). The question must be asked: why, given the enormous investment over so many years, does such a large 'capacity deficit' remain? Is it because initiatives have mostly focused on building bureaucratic and technocratic capacity rather than finding ways to communicate with and unleash the capacities of those most in need – those at the lower end of the socio-economic scale who are generally marginalized in the decision-making process and for the most part live in rural areas?

Certainly the results of recent initiatives to advance towards Tanzania's development goals and reduce poverty are not encouraging.

The 2009 Poverty and Human Development Report (REPOA) confirmed that despite a growth rate in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2009 (REPOA 2009, 4), between 2007-2009 poverty remained high, with far too many living under the poverty line, especially in rural areas (REPOA, 2009, 11). This, despite the fact that the report noted improvement in the delivery of social benefits especially in the areas of education, health, sanitation and water quality as a result of NSGPR I (REPOA 2009, XXIII-XXIV). Yet another section of this report (REPOA, 2009, XXV), along with a National Bureau of Statistics Report (NBS, 2009) and a House Budget Survey (HBS, 2009) presented a mixed picture, showing that improvement in the area of service delivery is moving slowly, resulting in insufficient and poor quality service delivery to the majority of people – again, especially those living in rural areas . Furthermore a 2009 survey conducted with six local councils on the initial phase of Tanzania's National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty drew attention to the fact that participation in local planning declined slightly. These results clearly suggest that there exists a significant 'disconnect' between development and those most in need

(Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA) 2010: 102).

A Poverty Reduction Dialogue between development partners, government officials, LGAs, CSOs, academia and others held in late January 2012 to consider the past year's 'growth and poverty-reduction outcomes' (as depicted in the above reports) honed in on lack of engagement in the planning and implementation of national development goals on the part of what may be termed 'the grassroots' as one key reason for the disappointing results. This confirmed what Norman and Massoi (2010, 314) pointed out: the planning process at the grassroots level in Tanzania remains minimal and ineffective, largely as the result of implementation of a de-concentration rather than a true decentralization process; consequently real control is exercised by the central government.

This brings us back to what role effective participatory communications may play in empowering communities to engage actively in the nation's development dialogue and in playing an active role in their own development. Clearly the 'target audience oriented' top-down sales approach (figure 1) that dominates in development throughout sub-Saharan Africa and in most other regions of the developing world is ineffective.

Figure 1



Figure 1. Typical top-down communications model 'targets' audiences/receivers. Little opportunity is provided for engagement or response; 'targets' at the bottom are expected to react in ways decision-makers at the top consider necessary to implement the' development' objectives they have set.

Hoffmann et al (2009) studying the impact of 'loss of engagement' on communities' efforts to conserve their surrounding environments in Mozambique, indicated that throughout the periods of colonial, post-independence and civil war, traditional authority in Mozambique's rural areas was transformed many times over, changing in response to the larger political context in which these local institutions existed. These transformations led to conflicting power relations and a lack of clarity regarding the roles of local communities and the national government in forest management and consequently in fire management. Without a sense of responsibility, local community attitudes towards common property resources changed contributing to an increase in uncontrolled burning practices that are uncoordinated in terms of timing, location and frequency.

The pattern of Mozambique is instructive for Tanzania, where, since independence, the centralisation process has often been accompanied by the loss of power of local leaders; this has led to erosion of self-reliance on the part of communities, loss of traditional knowledge and the elimination of customary laws that enforced environmental conservation. As rural communities started to depend more and more on government, top-down communication became the rule. Increasingly development-related communications initiatives became less and less engaged with the intended beneficiaries and planning and implementation was passed to various bureaucracies. As a result, the divide between those planning and implementing development initiatives and those most in need who should be benefiting most from those initiatives has grown wider and wider.

Research by Richard Calland, Mukelani Dimba & Diana Naburi (2004, p.4) shows that in Tanzania even when government demonstrates political will with respect to the 'right to know,' implementation usually fails, often because the same old advertiser-to-consumer approach is taken to sell ideas or motivate 'end users' to adopt new practices – or to teach them or inform them of something. Reliance on this approach, which depends heavily on campaigns, lies at the core of the failures to this point.

The campaigns are too often designed with little or no direct engagement with the intended beneficiaries; as consumers their only opportunity to interact is to accept what is being delivered from the top and act upon it accordingly – i.e. as the government departments or development programmers expect. Can such top-down communications strategies truly be expected to promote and support participation in substantive dialogue or create a welcoming environment for engagement?

An analytical study to redesign a communication strategy for 'integrated fire

management' in Tanzania undertaken in the first half of 2012 confirms that to date communication strategies on fire management and on environment preservation in general have adopted traditional power-holders communication models. For the planners and decision-makers, creating awareness has meant providing what they perceive the public needs to know, rather than responding to what the public actually wants to know. Little attention has been paid to offering means and motivation to the recipients to understand or engage actively. Stakeholders directing awareness campaigns too often assume that they 'know' what is needed and what is best – despite the fact that they never truly consult with those for whom they are planning, and provide little of no opportunity for interaction. This has left little scope for substantive change to occur.

Even more problematic according to Kelsall and Mmuya (2004, p.7), is that unilateral communication and secrecy in government bureaucracies have increased the reluctance of Tanzanians to criticize openly, protest against political power, or seek information on matters that affect their daily lives. The implications of this for real development are twofold: first, the intertwining of development issues with day-to-day living has declined as communities are unaware of government plans or what responsibilities they might have to implement those plans. Second, the government receives no citizen feedback or development ideas to incorporate into the planning process to ensure that the initiatives they are launching are important – or even relevant – to those for whom they are planning.

In Tanzania the difference between the success of the development industry's strategies and implementation and that of manufacturers and service providers is striking. The latter have, by and large, enjoyed remarkable success in pushing their branding and promotions into all corners of the country as they have understood how effective communications, properly applied, can help them reach their sales objectives; thus rival companies in all sectors, understanding the value of using communications that serves their purposes, compete for market share using the full range of tools – billboards, radio, television and the newer digital media. The key, of course, is that they understand what communications strategies work for them, and only invest in approaches that bring them benefit. Carefully crafted communications campaigns serve their targeted ends. Furthermore they are flexible and ready to change strategies and campaigns quickly if they determine they are not 'working.'

But in the field of development, generally, communications initiatives have not been based on outcomes. Rather they have been hodgepodges of activities with no indicators

to measure achievement. Furthermore in recent decades, the development industry has become increasingly obsessed with pre-defining and managing 'predictable' results, outputs and outcomes. Correspondingly, space for community-based participation has been eroded and there is little, if any, real flexibility. Community engagement demands flexibility and can lead to unpredictable outcomes, especially if the priorities of communities do not match those of the elites – the policy and decision-makers who are accustomed to having their priorities met. Consequently participatory-based projects do not fit neatly into critical accountability frameworks.

Furthermore, top-to-bottom communication has widened the gap between those who have and those who have not. This is confirmed in the assessment of the National Strategy for Growth and Reduction of Poverty Initiative – NSGRP 1 (popularly known by its Kiswahili acronym, MKUKUTA 1-Mkakati wa Kupunguza Umaskini na Kukuza Uchumi Tanzania) that revealed that despite economic growth, no significant impact on poverty reduction could be measured; economic growth has not been inclusive as the poor become poorer while the rich are increasingly becoming richer.

Much of what now passes for 'Development Communication' is little more than public relations (PR) designed to promote a project. PR can be predicted and scheduled as project 'outputs' before the project hits the ground. Yet while PR may be legitimate and sometimes essential to secure and maintain support and provide justification for monies spent, it cannot be considered communications for development.

To reiterate: communication for development in Tanzania seems to be stuck in a rut. Flexibility, vision and innovation are alien concepts, and so the same failed approach is repeated time and time again, even though it produces the same disappointing results. There is little appetite for risk. The old is known – even if it doesn't 'work' at least it is considered 'safe' because it fits within the 'comfort zone' of development bureaucrats and their political masters. But in reality nobody is being challenged and little change is taking place. In this case Tanzania is not unique. What is said about C4D in Tanzania can be said about C4D worldwide. The problem rests with those designing and directing development initiatives and reflects how they regard and use communications to further their development goals, whether or not they truly match the needs and aspirations of the people for whom they are designing programmes. It is the contention of this paper that approaches to C4D in this country must radically change and that it is important to act now to begin to identify appropriate communications actions, recommend technical contributions, establish training, and suggest policy changes and appropriate measurement parameters.

Communication for 'Another Development'

In their study, Quarry and Ramírez suggest that since the top-down paradigm for communications for development is not working what is needed is what they term 'another development' – a concept that emerged through seminars of the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation in the 1970s. Their book is filled with ideas and strong opinions about and specific examples illustrating the need to rethink development entirely and to design communications paradigms that allow the people who will most benefit from that development to participate actively in planning and implementing their own development. As the authors see it, the key focus for communication that supports and promotes development must be on listening, hearing and responding appropriately to grassroots people. This parallels a definition that emerged during the 2006 World Congress on Communication for Development which posited that C4D 'is a social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. It is also about seeking change at different levels including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies, debating and learning for sustained and meaningful change (The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. 2007, pp. 209-210).'

These authors and practitioners are not alone in believing that current top-down communication for development paradigms do not serve development well. Mda (1993) argues that due to a growing failure of media to reflect rural needs and concerns in development in developing countries countries, communication for development must be revitalized. As far back as 1993 in his book When people say play people: Development communication through theater, Z. Mda wrote that 'the structures of communication need to be democratized, increasing participation, promoting equity, self-reliance and closing the gap between the people and government.

Other voices including those of African economists argue that decades of top-down development initiatives have failed to deliver transformative change for millions of marginalised poor throughout sub-Saharan Africa – especially those living in rural areas – and actually threatens fulfillment of national development goals. Of particular concern is that to date there has been very little 'buy in' to development initiatives on the part of people at the low end of the socio-economic pyramid. Dambisa Moyo for one is very critical of the donor-client relationships that have led to what she believes is a breakdown in communication between governments and those they govern. Moyo, addressing a group of Beijing-based journalists, pointed out that policy makers have stopped counting on their people for development, while for their part the people have

lost trust in their leaders. The consequence of this is that neither the governed nor the power-holders enthusiastically embrace values that recognize the need to innovate and do things differently in terms of service delivery, productivity and performance. Moyo goes even further to argue that:

'Aid has allowed governments to abdicate their responsibilities of providing public goods for their people . . . If the government does not rely on its people, then the people also do not rely on their government, and instead they rely on the international community who, for their own motivations, continues to give aid to Africa even though there has been a lack of delivery in the reduction of poverty and any amount of economic growth over the last few decades. The whole continent is hooked on a drug that is unsustainable.

Like Moyo, Rogers (1976) posits that the dominant communication top-down paradigm has led to a decline of efficacy in the use of the vital tools of communication to support development. Missing from most traditional models are the critical components of listening to, hearing and learning from the intended beneficiaries of development. That engagement is not occurring is not an indictment of the communications tools themselves; rather it demonstrates a lack of understanding of how to utilize them. What is required is a major paradigm shift in how communications resources – both technical and human – are applied to development.

Examples of bottom-up 'Listening before Talking' Communications Models

Quarry and Ramirez, find hope in another development and then go further to advance a thesis that . . . turns decades of communications advocacy on its head. Many academics and practitioners – we included – have been writing scholarly papers with pleas for more communication components to be built into development programmes. Now we have come to see it differently . . . . We realize that it is not communication that creates effective (good) development. Instead a different approach to development is the condition for good communication. (2010:22).

The key to creating the environment for effective development is to 'put…the listening function' back on centre stage. . .' (2010:20). Thus they define the essential role for communications in development.

The difference between the top-down/target directed approach shown in Figure 1 and an approach that places listening centre stage is unambiguous (Figure 2).



Figure 2

Figure 2. In this simplified 'Feedback-Response Model' –communications are initiated from below by community people TO the policy/decision-makers. These in turn feed back to or otherwise engage with the communities that in turn respond. The objective is to promote on-going dialogue on development issues of relevance and importance to initiate development activities that will benefit the communities. Various communications tools may be utilized for this process: radio, video, social media, etc. In some cases the communications process may be direct without the use of any communications tools.

Prominent among the examples Quarry and Ramirez presented was the 'back to the future' model of the seminal Fogo Process from more than 40 years ago in Newfoundland, then one of Canada's least developed regions. It was implemented by the Extension Service of Memorial University of Newfoundland under the leadership of the late Don Snowden who, together with film maker Colin Low of the National Film Board of Canada, pioneered the use of film and later video as a tool to facilitate dialogue at the community level, between peer communities and between them and policy and decision-makers. The concept became recognized world-wide. Other projects led by Snowden, noted by Quarry and Ramirez, included the Kaminuriak Caribou Herd Project in Canada's north, along with his pioneer work with the process in India as documented in the film 'Eyes See, Ears Hear', which tells the story of a small project with pedal rickshaw drivers in Haryana State in India. All of these initiatives demonstrated the potency of effectively utilizing appropriate communications tools to listen to the poor and engage them in a process of enablement that would aid them in bringing about change in their lives and communities.

At this point it is important to emphasize that communication tools do not bring about development; rather, used sensitively and innovatively they can help people achieve their own development objectives, first in their own communities and eventually throughout the country. As Don Snowden put it in an interview with Wendy Quarry about change that had occurred on Fogo Island in the late 1960s: 'Film did not do these things: people did them. There is little doubt, however, that film created an awareness and self-confidence that was needed for people-advocated development to occur.' (Quoted in Quarry and Ramirez (2010.30. Italics were added by the authors).

The point must also be made that no 'process' model is carved in stone. Innovation and flexibility are key ingredients to success. As case studies below demonstrate, it may be appropriate to bring people from several communities, knowledge providers, government and other stakeholders together for a 'community forum' to be broadcast. As well as radio, other media such as cell technology may be exploited; the new social media offer exciting possibilities.

Cases of Bottom-up initiatives in Tanzania – intimations of another development?

The *Hifadhi Ardhi Shinyanga* (HASHI) initiative

One Tanzanian example of a successful bottom-up development implementation is the community-based fire management project in the Miombo woodlands in Bukombe District, Shinyanga. For two decades Bukombe District in Shinyanga Region faced growing environmental degradation caused by human-made fires as a result of age-old traditional attitudes and socio-economic activities – agriculturists cleared land using slash-and burn, pastoralists set fires to initiate pasture regeneration for their cattle, and villagers relied on illegal logging and charcoal production for their livelihoods.

The *Hifadhi Ardhi Shinyanga* (HASHI) project (which means 'soil conservation' in Kiswahili) was a Government initiative under the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism to intervene in the growing environmental problem in Shinyanga. HASHI began a top-down-commercial model by providing messages through a variety of media such as video, theatre, newsletters, and community meetings to raise awareness and mobilize local people to take action; but this approach failed to impact villagers and mindsets did not change. In fact incidences of fire increased. HASHI's initial strategy was too expensive and ineffective –but more importantly it did not work; so it was decided to change the strategy.

HASHI started to utilize indigenous knowledge, known as *Sukuma Ngitili* meaning 'enclosure', to engage people actively to manage fires in a way that they had used in the past to conserve the natural resource. *Ngitili* refers to an area near a village which is closed off at the beginning of the wet season to preserve fodder, and opened during the dry season to allow cattle to graze. Villagers were encouraged to identify such enclosures and to dig strips around the area for demarcation purposes – strips which would also function as fire breaks. Through numerous community meetings, villagers were motivated and encouraged to establish environmental committees, to formulate and enforce by-laws to protect the environment and establish land ownership rights, to map and demarcate the village forests and protect them from fire. They were also encouraged to think of other means through which they could utilize the natural resources for their benefits. The new enclosures preserved not only grasses but also trees throughout the district.

The HASHI project is a fine example of how bottom-up 'listening before talking' produced noticeable and sustainable results. It was significant that agents were willing

and able to listen to villagers, identify and utilize local knowledge, understand the gaps that existed and empower villagers with new skills. Community self-organizing was strengthened and social organizational structures within the communities were-established and reinforced increasing people's confidence so that they could continually reduce their vulnerability to disaster through their own knowledge and efforts. Eventually the local community was able to own and replicate the techniques and sustain the project.

Access to Information (ATI) initiative

Between 2007 and 2010 the Prime Minister's Office-Regional Administration and Local Government (PMO-RALG) implemented the pilot ATI initiative supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Netherlands Development Organization (SNV).

The pilot was implemented according to thematic issues in four districts: Uyui (Malaria), Bunda (Maternal Health), Morogoro Rural (Education) and Bukoba Rural (Water and Sanitation).

In Uyui the activities included improving and renovating a run down and under-utilized Information Centre, data collection on the prevalence of Malaria and how Uyui residents received information on their basic rights, and conducting awareness and advocacy meetings. The team also targeted health facilities and primary schools to strengthen their potential as information sources for the communities; particular attention was paid to getting available information off office shelves and onto notice boards where they could be accessed by the whole community.

In Bunda emphasis was placed on properly collecting data and establishing and equipping information centres so that the data could be analysed and development partners such as the District Council could effectively translate the information in terms that would be understood by the Bunda community. Local Government Agencies and Civil Society Organizations were encouraged to utilize local government information systems such as 'Planrep2' and the Local Government Monitoring Database which made more available relevant data and contributed to better transparency as a result be being able to generate many different types of progress and financial reports. Other important components included the promotion of community dialogue related to maternal health through village discussions, construction of two labour wards, installation of two new water tanks and rehabilitation of dispensaries and essential equipment.

The goals of the Morogoro Rural education initiative were to promote gender equality in education, monitor funds for education development and improve communication routes to schools. Collaboration between the local community and journalists generated 'powerful articles and media discussions on the state of education. The community media acted as a medium in which citizens could voice their concerns, demand transparency and government responsiveness.' (Access to Information (ATI) – Localizing MGDs. Project report by SNV/UNDP 2011: 18). Through the project improvements to communication routes were made. Thanks to national exposure of embezzlement of funds as a result of community interaction with journalists, auditing of government funded projects was improved. As well, through successful intervention in local planning more funds for education were approved by the Morogoro District Council, and the Council now can plan more effectively as a result of having access to better data than in the past.

In Bukoba Rural District village information networks improved communication, local media helped bridge the gap between the District Council and the public yielding positive results, and Water point Mapping was established to improve specific water points in the district. Two main Information Centres were equipped and supplied with a variety of print resources (leaflets, posters, policy documents, T-shirts) to be used as learning and information dissemination devices. Concern about the 'donor dependency syndrome' led to the community seeking out information and implementing initiatives such as establishment of a Village Water Fund in one locality. At ATI meetings local residents expressed great concern that their priorities be incorporated into planning – something that seldom occurred.

Overall, the initiatives of the ATI Project were successful because they provided opportunities for local villagers to express their views, expose corruption and participate in planning and implementing development projects. By its conclusion the project was seen to have influenced the development of particular action plans in various sectors including agriculture, nutrition, health and education; young people participated actively to address social issues, and the initiative proved effective in creating an intersection between village and district levels (SNV/UNDP 2011).

Among lessons learned that are pertinent to this presentation were that 'One of the best ways to communicate messages to the community is through using the community themselves' (SNV/UNDP 2011: 19). In one community the ATI successfully kick-started community action through local theatre performances that engaged the community.

The HASHI and ATI initiatives show that there are those in the development community in Tanzania who understand the important principle of 'listening before talking' and donor partners willing to support initiatives that carry some risk but promise very positive returns for the intended beneficiaries. Both initiatives also utilized basic traditional modes of communications (face-to-face, community meetings and discussions with community leaders and opinion makers); it seems that only the Water component of the ATI Project in the Bukoba Rural District was able to take advantage of and benefit from the utilization of a broad range of communications tools – newspapers, radio (both TBC and the local radio FM station) and TV. This experience may have influenced the 'Key Messages for Policy Makers' of the final report for the ATI initiative to recommend the promotion of interactive media such as community radio and mobile phone technology (SNV/UNDP 2011:22).

'Voices from the Coast'

About the same time as the HASHI and ATI projects, but completely separate from them, Dar es Salaam's School of Journalism and Mass Communications (SJMC) produced a series of radio programmes, Voices from the Coast. As a component of a Canadian-supported fisheries project between Memorial University of Newfoundland and UDSM the name perfectly described the nature of the programme. For the first time the 'voices' of coastal people were heard discussing their aspirations, needs and ideas about their fisheries and socio-economic issues that were important to them. The programme was broadcast on SJMC's Mlimani Radio; in addition one faculty member produced several programmes that were broadcast over TBC.

An important intent for the initiative was to create field production training opportunities for SJMC students, staff and faculty. The field production also incorporated video shooting and the audio of interviews recorded on video was used for the radio programmes.

The production team began in the Kilwa region. No sooner were the first programmes aired than requests began to come into the producer from the Tanga/ Pangani region and from Zanzibar – fishermen in these areas wanted 'equal access' so their voices could also be heard on issues that concerned them. This affirmed what has been seen in other countries where people are given access to expressing themselves – they embrace the opportunity to be heard and to become part of a public dialogue about issues of common concern.

This initiative differed significantly from both the HASHI and ATI projects as there

was no fieldworker or team active in the communities to work with the people to provide continuity or focus so it was not a true 'process' exercise.

The programme only ran, on and off, for about a year, insufficient time to bring sufficient discipline to the structure of the programme or to fulfil the important feed-back loop. But useful positive lessons were learned:

- Perhaps most importantly, the level of interest and participation dispelled any concerns that people living in rural Tanzania might be timid about speaking up for broadcast on issues that affect them or that they might not be competent to engage intelligently in dialogue on development issues.
- The potential for peer-to-peer dialogue and learning and its importance was confirmed. People living in one coastal area learned that people living in other coastal areas faced many of the same challenges; by exchanging ideas and talking about solutions on-air was beneficial to all concerned.

The failure of Voices from the Coast to become a long-term resource for the country was disappointing, but from this a key lesson was learned: to sustain programming in such a context it is essential to secure full institutional buy-in to allow producers and their development partners time to generate full engagement and create the desired dialogue. The virtue of patience is too often missing in the context of development, which can thwart the maturing of positive results and cripple capacity building.

Tanzania 'ripe' for implementation of Bottom-up Communication

The experiences outlined above suggest that the time is right in Tanzania to bring together concepts and ideas and lessons learned to move forward with implementation of approaches designed to further engagement on every level of society placing radio as the core technology. The potential to utilize radio in innovative ways in this country is enormous: it is ubiquitous throughout the country, is widely affordable and most families have access to at least one radio set.

Radio entertains, informs, motivates and becomes 'a companion' and it can become an important source for community sharing and interaction. Also, as a broadcasting medium it readily lends itself to use with groups by community animators. Common programming can be shared by many at the same time over a wide geographic distribution, which enabling peers to share their knowledge views. It encourages imagination and is well suited to promote culture, share ideas, enable participation and action and help listeners to learn. It is an excellent platform for the creation of

programming to present results of research using everyday language that all can understand.

Some urge that the emphasis be placed on developing community radio stations, giving communities the capacity to put on air their own programming at their discretion and when it most suits potential listeners. While there is considerable merit to taking this approach, there are also many challenges to doing so. How many can be established? What licensing issues will there be? Can they be maintained after interest peaks and initial enthusiasm slumps? How widely can they reach and what level of outreach to officials and information providers can small community stations have?

Meanwhile there may be an alternate resource already in place: in recent years there has been a surge of independent radio stations (indies) establishing their footprints in specific areas across most of the country. By joining with partners and stakeholders across the development spectrum (for example in the fields of health, education, agriculture, fisheries, wildfire mitigation and a host of others) the indies could cultivate broad new audiences through generating strong, positive local programming that serves developmental purposes. While there are many issues to be considered around financing such initiatives, but there is reason to believe that these can be worked through without adding significantly to already-stretched development funds.

Another potential opportunity utilizing the indies could be to set up networks so that multiple indies could join in a national forum on a particular theme. This could contribute directly to a nation-wide discussion of an important development issue. The indies may also serve as a core transmission hub to foster interaction within and between local peer communities and between those communities and policy and decision-makers as well as with the knowledge holders. Figures 3a, b and c attempt to visualize a multi-level communications process utilizing radio as the primary transmitting agent.

In this example the process begins at the community level with a field worker or a team (herein designated the Community Engagement Team or CET). Their essential role is to serve as a community animator or catalyst to engage with community people (at every level, not just community leaders) and encourage them to articulate their views on issues of concern and what is needed to help improve their lives, address problems, provide essential services, foster economic and social development. In some cases field workers may introduce specific issues – such as wildfire mitigation, agricultural support, fisheries sustainability, education, and health and social services – and ask community members to consider these and comment or contribute ideas.

Figure 3a

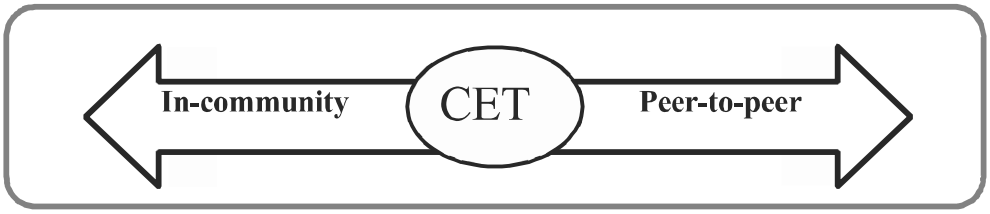


Figure 3a. It starts in and with the community. In an issue-focused initiative (e.g. the 'Moto Jamii' programme) the CET invites community participation around what priorities citizens may wish to address, with the commitment that these will be broadcast by participating indie radio stations or otherwise made available so that government and other stakeholders and specialists and other content providers can l hear their views and be invited to respond in substantive

Figure 3b

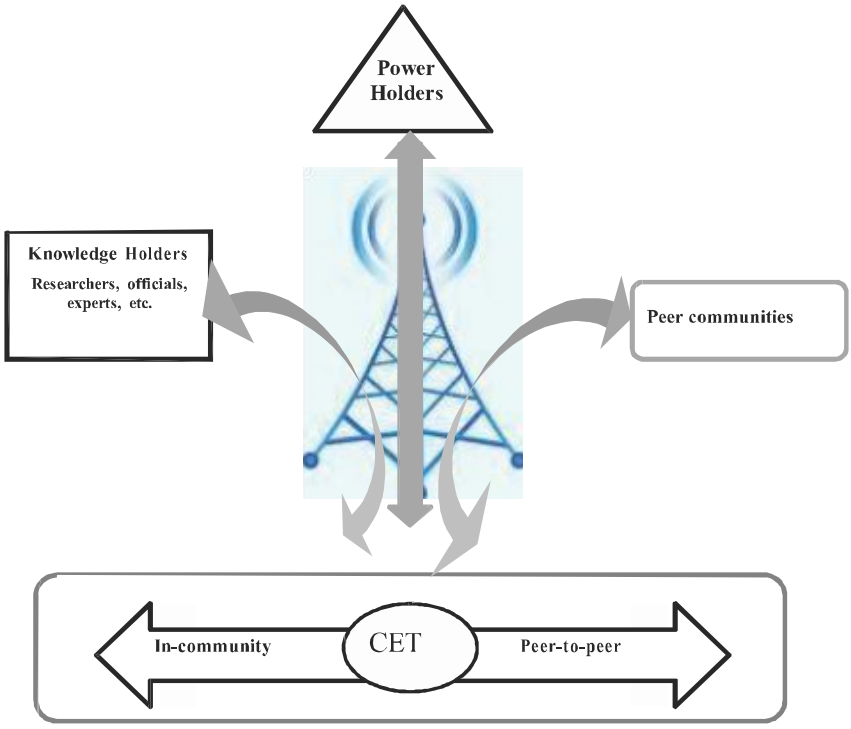


Figure 3b.'Voices' are heard. As community members are interviewed they have the right to request changes, additions or complete deletion of what they have said before it is broadcast. This period

of recording interviews and discussing the issues with community members encourages them to think more deeply about issues that concern them and helps build consensus. With permissions in hand, the radio producer (member of the CET) begins to edit programmes and they are broadcast (at times identified by community people as accessible for them). Often this is the first time people have heard their voices – or even voices of their peers – talking about issues of vital importance to their own development – perhaps challenging what government is doing, asking questions that may require input from specialists or experts. The strength of radio is its outreach into all villages within the radio of the station signal – this means that messages and observations from one village may be shared with other peer communities as well as with policy and decision-makers. This is a starting point for dialogue to develop.

Figure 3c

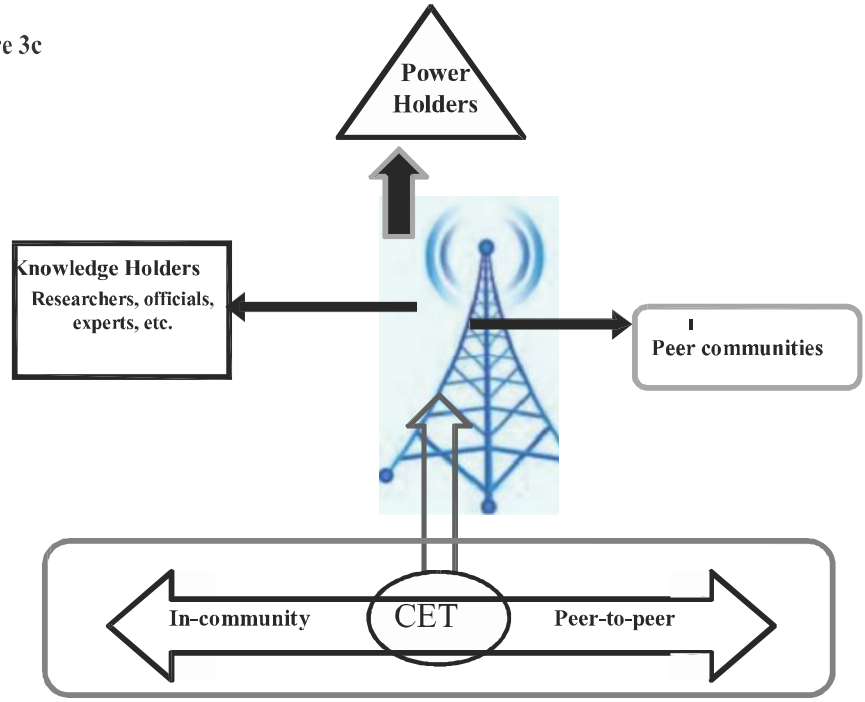


Figure 3c.Feedback and dialogue fosters understanding and can lead to real change. As the process continues the CET and partner indie stations reach out and create opportunities for power holders, knowledge holders and peers in other communities to feed back reactions and responses to the 'voices' they have heard. This provides content and substance for continued on-going discussions within the community and between the community and those being reached through the programming. This in turn can contribute to substantive change, propelled by listening, hearing and responding.

In 'process' work it must be recognized that communications is the means, not the end. Only by empowering community people will development be effective and sustainable. Therefore media people working in this field, often accustomed to turning their personal vision into programmes, must accept that it is the development 'process' rather than any radio, video or TV 'product' that must be the priority. Some working in this field have described their role as being the 'pen' for the community. It is also important that they involve the other field workers in all decision-making that can impact the community work.

The critical role played by dedicated community workers in launching and carrying through a 'process' of this type was noted by Don Snowden based on his experience in the evolution of The Fogo Process. Effective community workers can come from a wide range of disciplines, agencies, institutions and departments, and may have varying degrees of education and training. Key qualities are that they empathize with the people with whom they are working and have a strong belief in both the 'process' and its objectives of empowering people to do for themselves; they must also be innovative, patient and bold when dealing with community leaders.

Any process-based project must begin with identification and training of those who will be working in the field. Ideally much of the training will take place in situ following short but intensive training in the principles and best practices. The initial thrust of work in communities will be to build trust with the community residents as a fieldworker of CET begins to identify key people in the village and starts to interview villagers. Techniques will be employed to foster dialogue within the community to bring focus to issues; different starting points may be identified depending on local situations – one approach that has often proven useful is to begin with elders discussing past practices. From such a base interviews will ramp up to more challenging examination of how things have changed and what participants see as possible ways to begin to introduce change. As the process continues it will be important to engage youth and others who may seem detached from any development vision – and it may be here that the use of social media will become significant.

Mda (1993) posits that 'Marotholi Traveling Theatre' based in Lesotho become a communication tool for development for that village because it increasingly involved village people in production, integrated indigenous knowledge, and used resources and systems at hand to enhance two-way communication and explore cultural forms of expression to enable people to realize their development. In the same way the approach of the CETs (including radio production) must be non-intrusive. The approach to

content-collection – both aural (e.g. interviews, meetings, songs, children playing games, etc.) and visual (e.g. using cell phone cameras) must be dedicated to helping the villagers identify themselves with the programme. Further, CETs will find ways to create opportunities for 'play back sessions' to engage community members and enable them to hear what is being said, perhaps through setting up listening/discussion sessions – particularly as the first programmes go to air. They may also explore ways to share audio or even video recorded on cellphones with other people to expand ideas and opinion in open forum – first in their own communities and then through their broader networks, including through the radio programming component.

As the Feedback-Response Model in Figure 3c attempts to illustrate, effective communication for development not only means creating demand by empowering local communities but also requires that policy makers and other elected leaders agree to respond to questions and concerns raised at the community level and provide more information and explain or modify their ideas, policies and practices. Thus, importantly, the process can play an important role in enhancing the democratic process, increasing clarity and improving governance.

At appropriate points in the evolution of the dialogue, community radio forums may be set up and broadcast. While physically situated in one community, through such forums it will be possible to include the voices of peer communities in the region together with input from policy makers and external specialists. The purpose of a forum will be to expand discussion and stimulate debate and positive actions to address the issues.

In addition, radio producers may prepare special themed programmes on related development issues which may be shared across regions – creating the opportunity to build a national dialogue around issues related to development. Hearing themselves present their viewpoints on the air will build self-confidence amongst villagers. Peers in other communities, hearing viewpoints similar to their own given on-air respect will be encouraged to re-consider their own attitudes towards social problems and begin to craft solutions. Radio, well produced and highly focused, can play a vital role in stimulating thought, discussion and positive response throughout a region and the country.

Of the media tools available in Tanzania radio with its broad outreach could be utilized much more effectively than has been the case to date, especially when supplemented by new digital technologies (cell phone, podcasts, other social media) and, where possible, regional and national TV.

Some may be understandably apprehensive over what role social media can and should play in development seeing the turmoil attributed to the new technologies related to uprisings and social unrest not only in Arab countries but around the world. But as analysis undertaken by Thioune (2003) of case studies conducted in communities in rural and suburban areas of Kenya, Senegal, South Africa, and Uganda confirms, Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) have unprecedented opportunities for community development in the Sub-Saharan Africa. The most significant impacts observed in these studies were changes in behaviors, relations, activities, or intervention strategies of community population. Thus ICTs in those communities were crucially important for sustainable development in terms raising participation in decision process with the information on how to increase income, access improved health and education as well as better use and more equitable sharing of resources.

New technologies bring new dimensions. In the case of The Fogo Process, film was quickly supplanted by video; now it is proposed that radio be a primary tool for work in Tanzania as outlined above. The rapid expansion of cell phone technology and the accompanying development of social media open exciting opportunities for practical in situ research: 1) into whether or not they can play audio-visual roles similar to video for in-community work (for example supplemented with increasingly small projection systems); and 2) how effectively ever-changing technologies can be utilized to expand issue-focused dialogue amongst peer communities, within regions and ultimately nation-wide.

Experience in the above selected cases has demonstrated that implementation of a development process that effectively utilizes communications tools to give 'voice' to community people, promote participation and facilitate dialogue between traditionally marginalized groups and those in positions of power who develop policies and make decisions can be a catalyst for positive change by contributing to:

- consensus-building both within communities and within regions;
- a growth of self-awareness and self-confidence;
- emergence of broader leadership within communities;
- peer learning both from within the community and between communities;
- higher acceptance of new 'outside' ideas– not imposed but negotiated;
- deeper knowledge of 'real' community issues by policy/decision makers;
- better (more effective and appropriate) policy-making;
- higher level of respect for constituencies on the part of government;

- greater stakeholder understanding and engagement – both up and down;
- strengthened capacity, especially when process leads to more responsive interventions and seek more information to meet real needs;
- broader participation in the democratic process as people learn that their input does count and can make a difference;
- more research opportunities as communities become 'more cooperative' recognizing that there is value in new knowledge that can benefit them;
- better governance as those who may have operated 'under the radar' see the higher level of citizen participation.

New paradigms for communications for development must be tested if the objective is to engage citizens at all levels in national development dialogue and bring about change that truly benefits not just those at the top but, most importantly, those at the bottom of the socio-economic pyramid. The most effective way to achieve this is to implement bottom-up, 'listening before talking' communications models that will engage community-level people fully and on equal footing and to foster meaningful dialogue amongst experts, community leaders, and local authorities and policy-makers to identify the country's needs and develop long-term capacities to achieve and maintain the intended results. Only through full 'ownership' will those who have live in marginal circumstances 'buy into' development processes that they see are contributing to a better life for them and their children. Is it not logical therefore that those concerned about development should embrace whatever methodologies can utilize communications tools most effectively to reach this goal?

Notes

1. Dr. Jasson Kalugendo lectures Communication Corporate, research methods and design, development ethics at School of Journalism and Mass of Communication, University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. He is a specialist with international and local experience in communication strategy, communication for development, and capacity development and other analytical related works. He holds a Ph.D degree focusing on social capital and MA and BA degrees in communication (public relations, journalism, and social communication).
2. Paul G. MacLeod (B.A., M.A.) has been a practitioner of communications for development for over 30 years, beginning with his involvement in Fogo Process work at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Canada and extending to training and production work in communications components of development projects in

Asia, South America, the Canadian north and in Africa, including in Tanzania. His most recent projects have included workshops in Afghanistan and training in Kenya.

3. This fire communication strategy is one of the strategic plans of the National Forest Monitoring and Assessment (NAFORMA) project – a collaboration between the Governments of the Republic of Tanzania and Finland and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. The purpose of the Integrated Fire Management Project is to establish a prudent and sustainable system of fire management for natural resources and to help mitigate climate change through participatory communication.
4. Read the full story at http://africanboots.com/2010/11/economist-dambisa-moyo-aid-fuels-disfunction-in-africa/.
5. The Fogo Process is a communications process utilizing appropriate media tools to foster participatory community development. The Fogo Process evolved through a series of events and interventions that took place on Fogo Island (an island off the northeast coast of Newfoundland, Canada) beginning in 1967 as collaboration between the Extension Department of Memorial University of Newfoundland (led by its Director, the late Donald Snowden) and the National Film Board of Canada (particularly producer/director Colin Low). Two years earlier Snowden upon reading the Economic Council of Canada's 'Report on Poverty in Canada' was distressed by the report's perspective on poverty through the lens of urban values. About the same time Low came to Newfoundland in search of appropriate sites for a film depicting rural poverty. Snowden was determined to show that 'poverty' meant not just economic deprivation but extended to cover isolation, the inability to access information and communication media and the lack of organization and opportunity to participate meaningfully in social and economic development. Snowden and Low identified Fogo Island as the most suitable location to film in order to present an overview of the issues facing rural Newfoundland. As they and their colleagues worked through what was originally seen as a traditional documentary film, their work evolved into the seminal communications process that became known worldwide as The Fogo Process. The Fogo Process de-emphasizes the 'product' – i.e. the programmes in whatever format – focusing on how they can be utilized to engage village people, facilitate their 'voices' being heard and empower them to participate actively in their own development planning and implementation. (For more details on The Fogo Process read: Tony Williamson, 'The

Fogo Process: development support communications in Canada and the developing world.' In AMIC-NCDC-BHU Seminar on Media and the Environment: Varanasi, Feb 26-March, 1989. Singapore: Asian Mass Communication Research and Information Centre, 1989.)

6. The story was adopted from: http://ag.arizona.edu/oals/ALN/aln55/nssoko.html and modified by the authors.
7. The PMO-RALG project provided an entry point to attempt to improve collaboration between Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and Civil Societies Organizations (CSOs) in disseminating information to the public.
8. In the context of the radio-based projects under consideration in Tanzania, staff for CETs may be drawn from Civil Society organizations as well as radio production staff and may also include village leaders as well as local government authorities. It will be important that leadership ensure that all team members share a common vision as building consensus within the communities will be an important part of their work. It will also be important to try to identify innovators with capacity to explore the potential of incorporating social media tools into the process.

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