

Donor Agencies' Application Of Communication For Development: An Evaluation Of UNICEF In Enugu State

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Abstract

Communication plays an important role in development. Development is an all-encompassing human activity with transformation of the individual and the society as the goal. For some years communication experts and scholars have been engaged in the search for the best model of communication for development (C4D), So far, two models: the modernization model and the liberation model have been adopted. However, the newthinking is that for effective development communication, the two models should be mixed by development agencies. The United Nations Children's Fund is one of the international donor agencies that operate in Enugu State. Its major focus is on child survival through advocating programmes that advance child rights and protection in society. This study evaluated UNICEF's performance in development communication in implementing its programmes in Enugu State. It found that UNICEF practices C4D using a strategy called "behaviour change communication". The writer concludes that UNICEF has shown high performance in the practice of C4D in Enugu State and recommends adoption of the behaviour change communication strategy by government agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the country.

Key Words: Child rights. Child protection. Communication. Development. Development communication

Introduction

A fundamental reality of human existence is communication. Communication is the measure of life. By speech and body movement we know that one is alive. Communication is indicated in the various languages and dialects, culturally defined gestures, signs and symbols, and technologies that serve as channels of information dissemination. Usually, these have produced communication genres, namely, intrapersonal, dyadic, group and mass communication.

Another fundamental reality of human existence is development. There is always the desire in man to improve or change existing condition. The desire is at every level -individual, group, community, national and regional.

Development has always been a collaborative process. This was true thousands of years ago and is true in modern times. Communication for development (C4D) was at first rudimentary and practised desultorily but by the 1950s it became organised and conceptualized. As former colonies in Africa, Asia and Latin America were becoming independent; it became necessary for their former colonial masters: the United Kingdom, France and others to maintain the relationship. They did this by embarking on economic aid and technical assistance to the emerging independent nations. The aim was to enable the young countries to "catch up" with the developed world, through programmes that would reduce illiteracy, poverty, poor health, poor infrastructure and other inequities. Experts and scholars in the West named the development system they introduced into the developing countries as modernization. This brought the modernization model, paradigm or theory of development.

In line with the model, Daniel Lerner, at that time, a Professor of Sociology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, United States of America (USA), issued an epic book on C4D entitled, *The Passing of the Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (1958). The book analyses the modernization model of development and holds it as best for the developing countries to adopt and prosper. It emphasizes the role of modern mass media as central in information dissemination in the modernization system.

Lerner's proposition and his emphasis on use of mass media, was criticized and is still being criticized as vertical, linear and inadequate for participatory development communication in the developing countries. The criticisms led to the emergence of the liberation paradigm, model or theory of development. The paradigm emphasizes face to face communication held to be horizontal, participatory and appropriate for indigenous communication systems.

Economic aid and technical assistance to the developing countries by their former colonial masters attracted the attention of the United Nations Organization (UNO). The UNO expresses its interest in the development of the Third World countries through the intervention projects and programmes of its various agencies: the UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP, FAO, ILO, UNAIDS, and others. The intervention projects and programmes of the developing nations include health and nutrition, basic education, water, sanitation and hygiene, gender issues, child protection, and social policy advocacy and communication. The organization runs such programmes in various states of Nigeria.

This study was necessitated by the current pointers in the press that Nigeria was lagging behind many other nations in the implementation of the millennium development goals (MDGs). There was also the recently publicized opposition to immunization of children against polio in the northern parts of the country. The study, therefore, sought answers to the following questions:

- i. What communication strategies have been adopted by the UNICEF in implementing its programmes in Enugu state?
- ii. How effective have been the communication strategies?

Conceptual Analysis

Child:

The child is a significant focus of UNICEF's intervention activities in Enugu State. In its legal dimension, a child according to Black's Law Dictionary is: "a person under the age of majority", in other words, a minor, not an adult, particularly "a person who has not reached the age of 14 years".

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English defines a child as: "A young human being who is not yet an adult". It adds that a child is: "a person who is strongly influenced by the ideas and attitudes of a particular time or person"

Also, the Webster's All-in-One Dictionary & Thesaurus, states that a child is: "an unborn or recently born person" or "one that is strongly influenced by another or by a place or state of affairs."

From these definitions, two significant implications emerge:

- i. that a child is yet an unborn or recently born person.
- ii. that a child is one susceptible to environmental influences either by the state of affairs or the individual's around him.

It is no wonder; therefore, that the UNICEF closely monitors the welfare of nursing mothers and their babies as well as the pregnant ones (for the unborn). However, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as: "every human being below the age of 18 years". Nigeria has adopted this definition.

Child Rights:

The UNO's declaration on the Rights of the child was made on 20th November, 1989. It contains 54 articles. The aim of the declaration is to ensure child's rights in society and thereby its survival, development and participation.

The basic principles of Child Rights as drawn from a publication of the UNICEF's Nigeria Country Office and as adopted by the Federal Government on 21st March 1991, are as follows:

- i. Every child has the right to life and should be allowed to survive and develop,
- ii. Every child is entitled to a name, family and nationality,
- iii. Every child is free to belong to any association or assembly according to law.
- iv. Every child has the right to express opinion and freely communicate them on any issue, subject to restriction under law.
- v. Every child is entitled to protection from any act that interferes with his or her privacy, honour and reputation.
- vi. Every child is entitled to adequate rest, recreation (leisure and play) according to his or her age and culture.
- vii. Every child is entitled to receive compulsory basic education and equal opportunity for higher education depending on individual ability,
- viii. Every child is entitled to good health, protection from illness and proper medical attention for survival, personal growth and development.
- ix. Every child must be protected from indecent and inhuman treatment through sexual exploitation, drug abuse, child labour, torture, maltreatment and neglect.
- x. No child should suffer any discrimination irrespective of ethnic origin, birth, colour, sex, language, religion, political and social beliefs, status or disability.

Child Protection

As already stated in the definition of child, the child is accident prone, being susceptible to the influences of its environment. Addressing this point, the Federal Government's National Child Rights Implementation Committee observed in a preface to its book, *Child Protection in Nigeria* (undated) that:

The survival of society requires that children be protected and adequately cared for in order that they too, in turn, in adulthood will transmit the cultural heritage to their children.

The committee in 1998, commissioned a study on the "Protection and Violation of Child Rights in the Eastern Part of Nigeria", (Odigie, 1988). The study covered Calabar, Enugu, Owerri and Port Harcourt and extended to Makurdi, the capital of Benue State.

From its findings on violations of child rights, the study identified the following as instruments of child protection and survival:

- i. health education not only at the health institutions but also in schools and communities,
- ii. control of the incidence of hiring of domestic servants,
- iii. population education to ensure fewer children for couples,
- iv. intensification of the poverty alleviation programme,
- v. assurance of free and compulsory primary education, if not for all children, for the disabled specifically,
- vi. introduction of child maintenance allowance,
- vii. introduction of laws against child sexual exploitation and rape,
- viii. prohibition of persons below 18 years from participating in club activities in, or visiting, hotels, bars, beer palours except when accompanied by a parent or older sibling,
- ix. public enlightenment campaigns and advocacy to create awareness of the growing incidence of child rights violation and through this persuade the public to be concerned with child protection.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study focused on a participatory theory of development, that is, the liberation theory. The theory is not a one-man scholarly proposition. It developed in the 1970s from the world-wide criticisms of the modernization theory. However, South America is credited to be the starting point. According to Waisbord, (undated, p.19), Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educationist, mounted a sustained campaign in his writings against Western attempts to domesticate their "concepts and principles" in the area through communication activities that did not promote dialogue or encourage participation. Freire's writing sensitized many scholars in the third world and from their codified communication needs, the theory emerged.

The Liberation Theory perceives communication not as information transfer as in the modernization theory, but as a process in which the source and the receiver assure immediate feedback to each other. According to Agunga (1997) as cited by Waisbord, (undated p. 18), the theory also perceives communication as "a process of creating and stimulating understanding as the basis for development of social relations among the people." Stimulating understanding is perceived to be a function of face to face communication through participation and dialogue. The UNO recognized this emphasis in C4D when in 1997 it defined development communication as

Communication for development stresses the need to support two-way communication system that makes for dialogue and allows communities to speak out, express their aspirations and concern and participate in the decisions that relate to their development. (UNO, Resolution 51/17 Article 6).

These definitions have implications for development. Development project or programme should have a time duration when the development agents and the expected beneficiaries should be in contact. The contact establishes participation and promotes dialogue. Dialogue is the wheel of development. The development agents and the expected beneficiaries must appreciate one another for dialogue to prosper and mutual understanding assured. People should not be forced to adopt innovation, they should be encouraged to participate and be responsible to take the decision whether to adopt or not.

Waisbord (undated) in the paper of interest which she prepared for the Rockefeller Foundation in the U.S.A., espouses sensitivity to cultural diversity in development communication. According to her, the Liberation theory of development communication:

Encourages systematic utilization of communication channels and techniques to increase people's participation in development and to inform and train rural population mainly at the grassroots.

She cites Okunna (1995:111) stressing that in the liberation theory of development communication:

Development workers should rely more on interpersonal methods of communication rather than national media and technologies and that they should act as facilitators of dialogue.

Literature Review

Development

Development is a concept that has been defined in numerous ways by social scientists. The variety of the definitions and perspectives derive from attitudinal, cultural, hierarchical, psychological, even

individualistic and ethnocentric propensities (Waisbord: undated). The first approach to explaining development as a deliberate, planned effort toward improvement and transformation started in the 1940s and got consolidated in what is known today as the modernisation theory/paradigm of development. Popularly referred to as the old paradigm, it was for many years the dominant theory/paradigm of development until the 1960s when the critics began to codify the new ideas.

The modernization theory/paradigm of development according to Kendall (2007:296) is:

A perspective that links global inequality to different trends of economic development and suggests that low-income economies can move to middle and high-income economies by achieving self-sustained economic growth.

Critics saw it as linear: top-down and paternalistic even as being the cause of under development and dependency in the new independent countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America. It was through the criticisms that an alternative paradigm/theory emerged called the liberation paradigm/theory or participatory paradigm/theory. Popularly called the new paradigm of development. One of its advocates, Luis Romiro Beltran, a South American Scholar, according to Opubor in Nwuneli (1985: 185) defines development as:

A directed and widely participatory process of deep and accelerated socio-political change geared towards producing substantial changes in the economy, the technology, the ecology and the overall culture of a country, so that the moral and material advancement of the majority of its population can be obtained within conditions of generalized equality, dignity, justice and liberty.

Development Communication

Development communication refers to the communication strategies and ideas applied in the course of planning, implementing and monitoring of development projects and offshoot of development theories and paradigms.

Development Communication Models

The criticisms against the modernization paradigm ignited the debate on the best approach to development communication. At issue was and still is the dependability or effectiveness of the mass media system as against the oral indigenous communication systems.

In his epic book on modernization, Lerner (1958) observes that the mass media are central to development in modernization or transformation of society by "spreading among a large public vivid image of its own new ways..." (p. 45). Comparing the mass media system and indigenous media systems, Lerner (P. 55) observes that:

In media systems the main flow of public information is operated by a crop of professional communicators selected according to skill criteria, whose job is to transmit mainly descriptive messages ('news') through impersonal media (print, radio, film) to relatively undifferentiated mass audience. In oral systems, public information usually emanates from sources authorized to speak by their place in the social hierarchy i.e. status

rather than skill criteria. Its contents are typically prescriptive rather than descriptive; news is less than rules which specify correct behaviour toward imminent events directly-involving the larger population such as tax collections and labour drafts.

A salient observation in Lerner's perspective of development communication in the comparative performance between modern mass media and oral/indigenous media is that communication changes from the traditional to the modern. The traditional is oral and a face to face, system and the modern is an impersonal, mediated system.

Flowing from that observation, it is reasonable to expect that while mass media would necessarily be appreciated and be effective in an urban setting, it would not satisfy expectations in a rural setting which is the forte of the oral/indigenous media system. Critics of the modernisation model of development communication actually, therefore, have the large majority rural population in the developing world of Africa, Asia and Latin America in mind, when they point to the inadequacies of the mass media. Awa (1987), for instance, projects the significance of oral traditional/indigenous communication in Africa. Deriving from indigenous knowledge, he says that indigenous communication arouses participation and produces immediate feedback to both source and receiver in a communication exchange. Okwesa (1982), attempts to demonstrate the comparative advantage of the oral approach against mass media with an incident in the Caribbean. A radio campaign message urging women to spend more time breast-feeding their children instead of introducing them to milk so early that read: "A breast-fed baby rarely gets diarrhoea" was pronounced by the newscaster as "A breast-fed baby really gets diarrhoea (emphasis mine). That caused confusion among the target audience, most of who ran to health centres the next morning.

Development Communication Strategies

In the modernization model of development communication, the practice is to use mass media contents. This is because of the belief that mass media have the capacity for outreach, appeal and capture of mass audiences that are widely separated geographically and widely diversified psychographically. This reach is attained rapidly and simultaneously. Media-based development communication strategies include Media Advocacy and Social Mobilisation.

Since the 1980s, media advocacy and social mobilisation strategies have been popular in Nigeria. They were used effectively under the Buhari and Babangida military regimes (1983 -1993) in the "War Against Indiscipline". It involves use of the mass media to promote social policies in a way that attracts public opinion leading to social mobilisation to support a cause with government involvement. Both are directed toward behaviour change and change of policy in governance. The radio and television are very effective organs of advocacy and social mobilisation. Billboards, posters and advertisements are also commonly used.

Social Marketing

Social marketing has been very influential as a development communication strategy in all countries. It started from the nature of advertising in the USA. It was later transported to the developing countries. It is anchored on diffusion of innovation toward behaviour change for adoption. It combines advertising and marketing principles in promoting a cause or solution of a problem. According to Waisbord (undated) citing Andreasen (1994: 110), social marketing is:

Adaptation of commercial marketing techniques to programme designed to influence the voluntary behaviour of target audiences to improve their personal welfare and that of the society of which they are part.

Current, this strategy is being used in the country for the campaign for use of condom, breast feeding, immunization, family planning, child nutrition and HIV/AIDS. Although the strategy is based on modernization principles, it gives room to the face to face participatory model because its educative information materials and consumer-oriented approach create incentives that attract community dialogue and participation. But such educative materials are provided through TV and radio programmes. Print and billboard advertisements, news and features are also used frequently.

Information Education and Communication (IEC)

This strategy mainly focuses on health education aimed at child survival and preventing maternal mortality. The general public is of course, not ruled out. The assumption of the strategy is that the health condition of the individual is the result of the individual's behaviour or life style. The expectation is that changes in one's behaviour or life style will bring the desired consequences needed for a healthy population. This means, for instance that wrong behaviour of a pregnant woman or nursing mother is likely to affect both mother and child adversely. In some countries, this strategy is linked to public policy on health and environment that attract government funding. The mass media are vigorously used to provide the necessary information and education for public consumption.

The UNICEF

The United Nations International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) is an arm of the United Nations Organisation (UNO). According to a UNO's document entitled "Communication for Development: Strengthening the Effectiveness of the United Nations (2011: 39), the UNICEF is:

Mandated by the United Nations General Assembly to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potentials.

The UNICEF, therefore, supports national activities that affect child health and nutrition, hygiene (safe water and sanitation), quality basic education for children, their protection from violence, exploitation and HIV/AIDS.

UNICEF and Nigeria

The UNICEF is active in 190 countries including Nigeria. In a recent situation analysis of response to child programmes, it is pointed out in the UNO document cited above that Nigeria is not on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals despite its leadership in Africa, South of Sahara. The document states:

Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. Moreover, after India and China, it has the third highest number of poor people in the world. Over 50 percent of the population lives below the international poverty line... One in every 10 children dies before reaching the age of 5 and above 7 million do not attend school. Maternal mortality rates remain high with approximately 42,000 women dying annually due to pregnancy-related problems. In addition, more than three million people are living with HIV/AIDS, the second largest number for any country in the world.

The document further revealed that although there are several channels of participatory communication to promote child care in the country's rural communities, these are not easily supported by community structures and the leadership. It traced the problem to low knowledge levels in the communities, addiction to traditional customs and parental limitations for child care.

UNICEF in Enugu State

UNICEF's role in Enugu State as an international donor agency is focused on six areas, namely, basic education, children and HIV/AIDS, child protection, health and nutrition, social policy advocacy and communication as well as hygiene (safe water and sanitation)

The organisation is listed by the Enugu State Economic Planning Commission as a donor agency to the State. The organisation works closely with several State government's ministries and departments, namely, State Economic Planning Commission, Ministry of Information, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Women Affairs and Enugu State Broadcasting Corporation. At the rural level, local governments' Public Health Communicators and Community Mobilisation Officers are officially connected with UNICEF's activities in the state.

UNICEF also operates in seven communities of the state. These are Mpu, Neke, Ogurugu, Okpanku, Ukpata, Umualor, and Umuegwu. A "catalyst", that is, any breakout which presents a need, may direct the UNICEF to any other affected community.

Methodology

According to Wimmer and Dominick (2000:369) programme evaluation concerns examining the planning, implementation and impact of the programme. It involves investigating the extent of the programme, costs and benefits; outreach and effectiveness in achieving the goals. This study evaluated the application of development communication by UNICEF in the planning and implementation of its programmes in Enugu State and the impact. The study relied on critical documentary analysis and interviews. The researcher interviewed UNICEF and Enugu State Government's agents concerned with UNICEF's programmes in the state. Interviews were also held with local governments' officials involved in UNICEF's activities, some community members: male and female, and a female lawyer. Part of the interviews was in the form of consultation. This involved relevant senior officials in UNICEF, State Economic Planning Commission, Ministry of Information and Ministry of Health, who not only explained issues but also supplied literature. Interviews focused on child rights, government policy on child protection and survival, and UNICEF's programmes in that sector, as well as its communication strategies. At the community level, the interviews included finding out the participatory tendencies of community members and the impact of UNICEF's programmes on them. The interviews took place in Enugu, Udi, and Okpanku. For some interviews, stimulus materials such as specific government pronouncements and newspaper publications were used.

Findings

UNICEF's strategies in development communication in Enugu State include sensitisation, community dialogue, collective action, entertainment, education such as drama, song and dance, and the town crier. They solidify the strategies to what they call behaviour change communication (BCC). Through the strategies the agency helps the communities to identify and tackle child health problems more easily; strengthen self determination and participation in development activities within the community. They monitor community and religious leaders to facilitate discussions on key issues and promote agreed action to resolve the issues of need for change.

A case of interest is immunisation. Child immunisation caused consternation and doubt in parts of the north of the country. Political and religious leaders queried the intentions of immunisation and campaigned against immunisation until powerful emirs intervened. The UNICEF in Enugu State, using its cooperating government ministries and departments as well as their local government partners approached community leaders, especially the traditional rulers, chairmen of town unions, chairmen of women

associations and religious leaders, and discussed sensitisation of the people on immunisation. The leaders were used as primary audience groups. They were sensitised to be used to sensitise their people. They were trained to undertake household visits, to hold dialogue sessions with their community members (secondary audience groups) on immunisation. The visits were planned to be repeated every quarter, and at a convenient time hold a general assembly to share experience.

At the sensitisation sessions of the primary audience, not less than 30 members were invited and attended the meetings from the respective communities. They represented the aggregate of community basic social institutions and social organisations. The sensitisation sessions took place at late evenings and lasted nearly a week except Sundays. Government officials at state and local government levels who were UNICEF programme officers acted as mobilisers and facilitators. They invited the media for coverage. Where the media did not respond, the state and local government information officers wrote stories of the event and distributed to the media.

In programme planning, any of the government staff concerned with the UNICEF could prepare proposals that are submitted to UNICEF. They are invited by the UNICEF for appraisal of their proposals which are approved as submitted or with amendments informed by cost-benefit ratio. The procedure is meticulous and efficient. The UNICEF itself has a team of Communication Officers, the head of which was an academic, a former head of Department of Mass Communication in one of the nation's universities.

Before embarking on a programme, however, the UNICEF first develops an action plan, the result of field research. The research is based on the principles of what they call "ACADA." ACADA is an acronym for assessment, communication analysis, design and action. Assessment involves assessing the situation as is in the location of interest to determine the community needs for action. The available communication media are identified and examined to determine service possibilities. The types of messages to be used are determined as would attract "ownership" that is, a feeling of belongingness that would encourage participation. The final act is determination of a series of activities for disseminating the messages.

The planning and implementation of their programmes, visibly, immunization, have been effective, with commendable impact in the state. Powerful traditional rulers and local government chairmen have participated in the agency's sensitisation programmes. Some powerful community members resident in the cities returned to their communities to "claim ownership"; that is, demonstrate belongingness. Some of the community sensitisation events received media coverage in the print and the broadcast media, mostly the broadcast media.

Discussion

The foregoing establishes the fact that development communication strategies should be aimed at behaviour change and social transformation in a way that affects governance through proactive political decisions. Several empirical studies have revealed that these cannot be achieved solely through the mass media. We should recognise the importance of the modern media in information dissemination but at the same time, we should be conscious of the power of social networking in diffusion of innovation through interpersonal relations.

This is apparently why Nwuneli (1985:207-208) recommends the transfer of the human touch to the radio so that in promoting development, radio could use "commissioned songs" plays and discussion groups. These, he thinks, could be replicated by the television but the feasibility is restrained by lack or limitation of infrastructure. He warns that, in the Nigerian situation: "Not until we sell our social development programme to the people the way we sell beer and soap through the media can we be sure of any meaningful success for our labour."

In advocacy and social mobilisation, where seminars, workshops, club and associational meetings are held to attract media coverage, Anibueze (2008:198) points out the obvious limitations of the media as follows:

There are obvious limitations to the performance of mass media. Mass media do not originate advocacy and social mobilisation activities, they provide support communication. This means they are not part of events planners. Mass media, therefore, operate without knowing the target behaviours expected by the planners and the planners cannot control the editorial content and output of the media during a campaign.

He, therefore, suggests that in advocacy and social mobilisation through the mass media, development agencies should hold "immersion programmes" for journalists where they would be properly briefed and acquainted with the procedures and expectations of the concerned agency. Such trained journalists should be co-opted to the agencies' activities for effective public information delivery. In that situation, the development agency expects that the media organisation of the co-opted journalist(s) would demonstrate a sense of belonging. UNICEF Enugu applies the model.

It is in the direction of integration or convergence that UNO introduced four key strategies, namely behaviour change communication, communication for social change, communication for advocacy and strengthening an enabling media communication environment. In its paper, "Communication for Development: Strengthening the United Nations" (2011), the organisation defined behaviour change communication as an "interactive process for developing messages and approaches using a mix of communication channels in order to encourage and sustain positive and appropriate behaviour."

Conclusions and Recommendations

The UNICEF in Enugu State practises communication in development. In its application of communication in development, it has achieved convergence of the two models of development communication, the modernisation model and the liberation model. This is what Figueroa et al (2002) call integrated approach to communication for social change. They describe it as "a process by which leaders guide community members through dialogue and collective action in order to resolve mutual problems for themselves." The target result is behaviour change. This is in agreement with the Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) approach of the UNICEF in Enugu State. The UNICEF in Enugu State has, therefore, shown high performance in the use of participatory communication as a donor agency. Problems that delayed achievement or caused ineffective results arose from poor community structures, poor leadership and addiction to tradition. The behaviour change communication strategy should be adopted by governments' agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the country as an effective strategy for communication in development.

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