Population Communication and Sustainable Development

An Analysis of Population Information Education (IEC) Projects in Anglophone Africa

By Isaac Obeng-Quaidoo and Waithira Gikonyo

Abstract

This paper is organized into three main sections. The first section deals with the theoretical thought and the inter-relationships between and among communication, population and development. Section two uses some basic data gathered from UNFPA Information, Education and Communication (IEC) project officers and managers to illustrate how population communication is utilized or under-utilized to aid and facilitate sustainable development. The third section provides extensive conclusion, discussion and specific recommendations for the appropriate use of population communication projects to support behavioural change and development. Throughout the paper, a participatory model of development communication as

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La Communication de la Population et le Developpement Soutenable

Une analyse des Projets de Renseignements sur l'Education de la Population (REP) en Afrique Anglophone

Par Isaac Obeng-Quaidoo et Waithira Gikonyo

Résumé

Ce chapitre est composé de trois sections majeures. La première s'occupe de l'aspect théorique du rapport très étroit entre la communication, la population et le développement. La deuxième essaye d'étudier des données de base obtenues auprès des officiers et des directeurs responsables des projets d'Informations, d'Education et de Communication de l'UNFPA. Dans cette partie de l'exposé, on essaye d'illustrer l'utilisation et la sous-utilisation de la communication de la population, dans la promotion du développement soutenable. La dernière section est consacrée à une conclusion détaillée, une discussion ainsi qu'aux sugestions spécifiques. Celles-ci sont destinées à l'illustration de l'utilisation appropriée des projets de communication de la population, pour soutenir le changement du comportement ainsi que le développement. Tout au cours de cet exposé, on adopte un modèle de communication du développement par le biais de la participation, comme approche préliminaire aux efforts de développement de la communication, dans le domaine de la population.

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Introduction

Communication, in the form of interpersonal, group, mass media, and machine-mediated exchange is often called upon to support and facilitate developments in social, cultural, economic and technical fields. Since the fields of development endeavours and approaches are numerous and varied, communication's facilitating functions also tend to be numerous, albeit quite similar generally. For instance, in the use of communication to support the "introduction" of a new drought resistance hybrid seedling or new female condom, the general approach would be informing people about the new seedling and condom and working with specific segmented communities to find out whether this new agricultural innovation or condom device is part of their long term farming or family planning needs.

Working with a segmented group in a community (through the mass media, interpersonal communication, group discussions, drama or folklore, etc) to determine their own needs for or about a particular innovation in their own context is quite different from the old diffusion innovation paradigm which perceived people as passive recipients of innovation, but did not bring much behavioural change (Rogers 1962, Servaes and Malikhao, 1994).

Population Communication and Development

Some population programmes and projects have either failed or been discontinued after the initial donors have left because implementors did not initially involve the beneficiaries; they did not listen to the community, respect their local ideas and opinions and mutual trust was not built from the start. Lack of genuine involvement of target groups lead to blurred objective setting for projects, fuzzy strategies, inconsequential project activities and lack of evaluation in impact terms.

Projects with dismal performances should not be blamed on "communication" but the project's document formulators and the implementors who manage the projects. For, the assertion

that communication can be a facilitating factor in sustainable development is no longer an assumption or a hypothesis to be tested since numerous data exist to attest to the applied use of the discipline for development. The application of development support communication (DSC) in the "Masagana 99" campaign during 1973 turned the Philippines (over a period of three years) "from a net rice importer to meet domestic requirements to becoming an exporter of its excess harvest" (Gary Coldevin and Teresa H. Stuart 1993). UNICEF's information, education, communication (IEC) intervention in its GOBI strategy (growth monitoring, oral rehydration, breastfeeding and immunization) and the WHO's EPI (expanded programme on immunization) have brought about significant reductions in levels of childhood mortality through immunization against six of the major infectious diseases prevalent in developing countries (Koenig, Fauveau, Wojtyniak 1991).

In delineating the above interventions, we are essentially dealing with activities which bring about the inter-relationship between population and socio-economic and cultural development; population information which supports mother and child health and family planning (MCH/FP); and population information, education and communication (IEC) which support population and family awareness creation, motivation, attitude and behavioural changes in society.

Participatory Communication

The participatory communication approach/model of development is in tune with the current thinking in IEC where audiences are no longer perceived as amorphous, and ready to be injected with any kind of messages. Rather, they should be segmented, their opinions sought, planned with and allowed to be participants in all facets of a project if the audiences are going to be useful beneficiaries. The participatory model stresses certain basic points (Servaes and Malikhao, 1994:18).

1. The participatory model views ordinary people as the key agents of change, and for this reason it focuses on their aspirations and strengths. Local cultures are respected. Development is intended to liberate people and, in so doing, enable them to meet their basic needs.

2. The participatory model entails lifting up the spirits of a local community to take pride in its own culture, intellect and environment. Participatory development also aims to educate and stimulate people to be active in self and communal improvements, while maintaining a balanced ecology [for future generations]. Due to their local concentration, participatory programmes are, in fact, not easily implemented, nor are they highly predictable nor readily controlled.

3. In essence, participatory development involves the strengthening of democratic processes and institutions at the community level and the redistribution of power. For these reasons, it often threatens those whose position and/or very existence depends upon control over others. Reactions to such threats are sometimes overt, but most often are manifested as less visible, yet steady and continuous resistance to change in the status quo.

Four main kinds of participation have been identified (Uphoff, 1989). These are:

1. Participation in *decision-making* where individuals or communities take part in identifying problems, formulating alternatives and planning activities.
2. Participation in *implementation*, where individuals or groups partake in carrying out activities, for example, volunteering as Community Based Distributors (CBD) of contraceptives, etc, or managing and operating programmes with assistance from project officers and experts.
3. Participation in *benefits;* individually or as groups from their previous activities, they enjoy what thy have brought about

in the community.

4. Participation in *evaluation;* finding out the effects or the impact of their ongoing activities and also at the end of their own activities.

Many project implementors do not consider these four interactive processes on their projects since project beneficiaries do not assume central role in their projects. Sometimes the lack of centrality of beneficiaries in partaking in all aspect of projects emanates as a result of foggy long and short term objectives, inappropriate strategies, utopian and universal workplans, and especially, lack of audience analysis and segmentation of beneficiaries.

Section A: Inter-Relationships Between Population and Sustainable Development

The fact that population and development variables are highly inter-related is no longer in question. " Such inter-relationships derive from the fact that the focus of development is on people, that development is by people and for people, and that demographic factors are both determinants and consequences of development" (Morah, 1990). For instance, demographic measures such as infant and child mortality rates, crude death rates, life expectancy, total fertility rate, etc., are treated as integral components of the indicators of development. Specifically, however, we perceive *economic and social development* as "a process of achieving sustainable increases in health, education, material consumption, and environmental protection--in short, improving standards of living over the long term" (The World Bank, 1994). The World Bank document also explains that development depends also on good governance, appropriate infrastructure and institutions, and better-trained people.

Since we have outlined the inter-relationships between population and development and situated communication as performing a facilitating function to enable these two variables to operate, it is necessary to emphasize the sustainability of the whole interactive process.

Sustainable development "is typically taken to mean that the well-being of the current generation should not be advanced at the expense of future generations. Within a generation, sustainability also implies particular concern for the most disadvantaged in society" (Tutu, 1994). The author follows Barbier *et al's* argument that the economic interpretation of sustainability should follow the following sequence:

(a) In order to ensure that future generations are not disad vantaged by the present generation, actual compensation to future generations by the present generation is required;
(b) The form which this compensation must take is through transfer of capital assets; and
c) This capital compensation requires that no less than the current capital stock in terms of its value, be passed on to future generations (Maler, 1989; Warford and Pearce, 1980 as cited by K. Tutu, 1994).

The capital compensation consists of all man-made capital assets as well as environmental assets such as soil, minerals, biomass, etc. If a resource is going to be depleted, then the profits should be re-invested in other forms of capital (machinery, roads, research, development of democratic institutions and new hybrid seedlings, etc) so as to compensate for the decline in natural resources and safeguard future generations. If this is not done, then the particular development is not sustainable.

If we take Ghana as an example of the sustainability issues we have discussed above, we see that there has been fair increases in the production and export of resources like timber, cocoa and gold due to the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). However, first, we observe that most of these commodities are exported without any processing,thus giving less employment to Ghanaians. Second, the "relative low earnings we are achieving compared to past years show that we are not taking care of the future generation as we did many years ago" (Tutu, 1994). Tutu concludes that "....Ghana is not over-exploiting its resources in a sustainable way. Part of the increased resources

is done at the expense of the environment while both current and future generations are not getting the investment which could compensate for the depletion and mismanagement of the natural resources."

A follow-up argument to the above theoretical arguments, is that when population project implementors are not aware of the linkages between and among communication, population and sustainable development, then IEC support for development becomes haphazard, unfocused and eventually leads to project failure.

Section B: Micro-level Data and Sustainable Development

The first section has examined the inter-relationships between communication and sustainable development at a macro-level. This section looks at micro-level data and issues related to the implementation of population IEC projects and programmes in Anglophone Africa and examines their inter-face with sustainable development.

The Data:

To this end, a short questionnaire was administered to participants attending a population IEC course mounted by the UNFPA regional training programme in Nairobi. The instrument consisted of questions related to project document formulation, audience research, materials development and dissemination and project evaluation. A few questions dealt with respondents perceptions of the sustainability of their projects and their understanding of various development concepts.

The respondents consisted of 12 women and 17 men from sixteen countries of Anglophone Africa. The respondents were made up of programme managers, directors and project personnel in on-going IEC projects. In terms of educational background, nine respondents had a masters degree, eleven had a first degree and the rest had diplomas in various social science fields.

The data collected represent over 29 population IEC projects in the Anglophone Africa region which are slightly less than ten percent of the IEC projects under implementation in the region. Therefore, while the number may appear small, it is fairly representative of the projects in the field.

Framework for the Analysis

While these data were collected from individuals, the unit of analysis is the project. One major problem in analysing project level data is the development of a framework that will allow for sufficient comparison without losing information. For the purpose of this paper, the Development Support Communication Process Model developed by Coldevin (1987) has been adopted. The model has been tested and found valuable in the formulation of development communication projects and programmes (Coldevin 1990, Coldevin and Stuart 1993). The model has eleven steps. The first three steps, named "front end analysis," consist of needs assessments, development of project objectives and situation analysis. The three steps under this process are where the project idea originates. This involves an analysis of the community needs and the prioritization of needs as well as identification of how the problem can be addressed. The remaining eight steps, which they call support communication process, are the major focus for this paper. These are: target audience analysis, setting DSC objectives, message design and channel strategy, production of materials including pre-testing, monitoring and impact evaluation. These steps relate to the core IEC process. (See Appendix 1.)

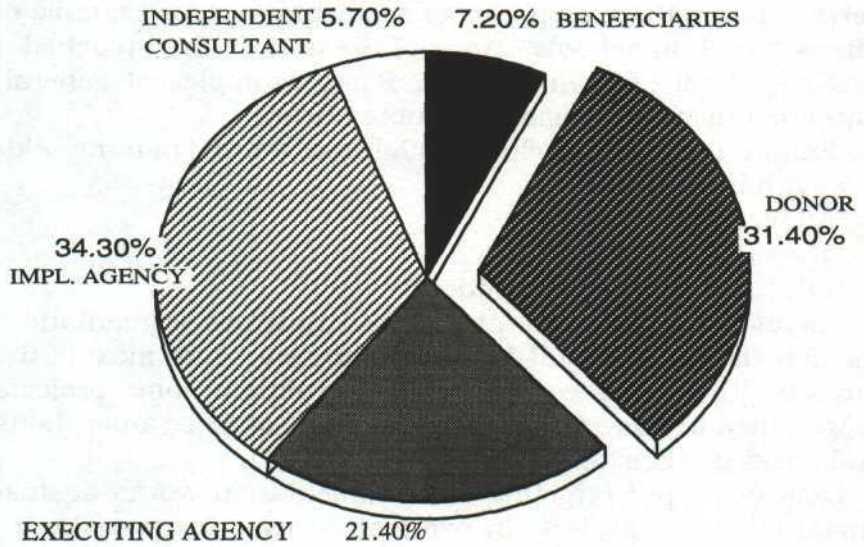
Data Analysis

Most projects come about via a project document which is subsequently used as a blueprint in the implementation. The respondents were asked who were involved in the drafting of their project documents.

It is notable from the pie chart that project beneficiaries were

involved in only 7.2 percent of the cases in the formulation of the project document. This clearly shows that while in theory the concept of participatory development has been endorsed, it is not happening in practice. The IEC projects remain by and large donor driven with the initiation of projects solely lying in the hands of the donor, executing and implementing agencies.

Project Initiation



Project Beneficiaries

A major premise in this paper is that communication intervention will seldom be effective if directed to a mass audience. There is a wealth of research data that suggest that interventions are most effective when designed for carefully selected segments of the population (Grunig 1989). In this case, we asked the respondents to identify the beneficiaries of their projects.

One way to analyze target audience segmentation is to look at the steps in the refinement of target audiences. For this purpose, a scale ranging from 0 (no segmentation) to 4 (well defined segment) was created and the stated project beneficiaries were graded accordingly. The accompanying bar chart

presents the findings.

One quarter (25 percent) of the project dealt with general unrefined mass type audience, for example "citizens of country 'x' generally and the rural communities in general." Another relatively large number (42 percent) dealt with a one-step refined mass audience, for example "men and women of reproductive age." Only four projects had a two step level of segmentation, for example "women in the reproductive age." Another 25 percent had a three-step level of segmentation. An example of this is "youth in schools." None of the projects had reached a four-step level of segmentation. Some examples of general, unrefined mass audiences are quoted below:

"Family members, including children, youth, parents, elderly, handicapped"

"All workers"

"The sick persons"

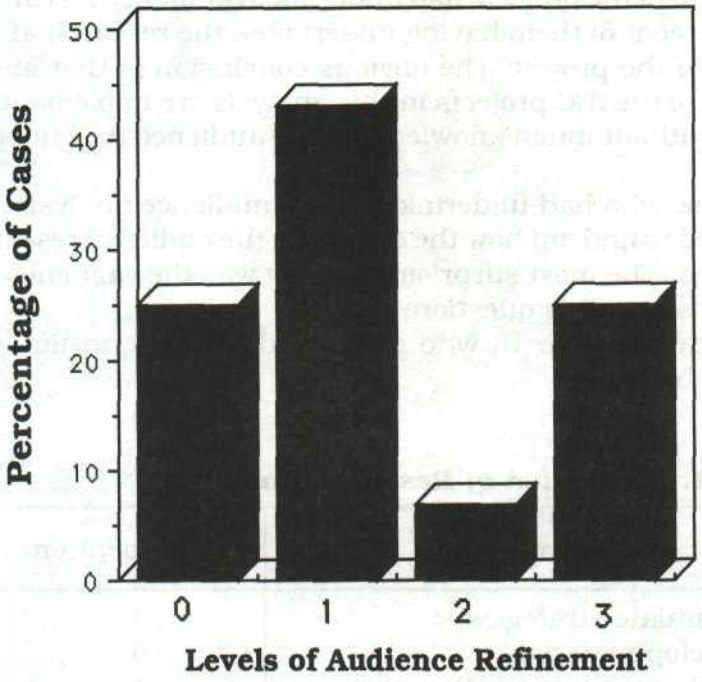
"Adults in rural communities"

Therefore, despite some attempts in audience segmentation, the beneficiaries remained large and unrefined for most of the projects. To further complicate the situation, some projects represented in this analysis had a multiple of these amorphous audiences as their target.

Lack of proper targeting and segmentation works against sustainability of projects in two major ways. For one, the involvement of beneficiaries in project implementation becomes an elusive ideal and one that is not likely to be pursued. Secondly, while there are fewer research costs if an intervention is directed at a mass, the overall project costs become much greater. It is also the case, if we consider the personnel size within these projects, that the target audience is beyond the absorptive capacity of the projects, to implement any activities in any meaningful and effective way.

Sustainable development emphasizes the recognition and incorporation of the less disadvantaged in the society. The term "disadvantaged" is normally understood in material and economic terms. However, from an IEC perspective, there are segments in the society which are disadvantaged in terms of

Levels of Audience Refinement by %



information and education and whose needs ought to be addressed. Among these are youth and men. In analyzing the data, we looked at the extent to which these groups are considered as beneficiaries.

In the projects under analysis, only *one* project had men as a *discrete* target audience. The youth represent only 30 percent of the beneficiaries mentioned. None of the projects had youth as a discrete target audience but rather the youth tended to be subsumed as "part beneficiaries" out of a whole array of target groups.

Audience Analysis

Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not audience research has been undertaken in their projects and whether the research was undertaken at the inception of the projects. Only

34.5 percent of the projects had undertaken audience research,, with 31 percent of them having undertaken the research at the inception of the project. The obvious conclusion is that about two thirds of the IEC projects in this analysis are implementing activities without much knowledge of the audience they hope to reach.

For those who had undertaken some audience analysis, we also wanted to find out how the data from the audience research was utilized. The most surprising finding was the vagueness of the responses to this question.

The data from the 13 who responded to this question are presented below:

Table 1. Utilization of Research Data

Use of Research Data	No. of mentions
To formulate strategies	3
To develop materials	5
To implement intervention programs	4
Audience segmentation	1
	13

Some respondents attempted to qualify their answers and notable among them were:

"Results do not seem to have been fedback into the project."

"The data was found to be too academic, and we tried to do our own interviews to bridge the gap."

While the above statements appear to be isolated, these are common phenomena in population IEC projects. Worthy of note is the limited use of research data. There are some major omissions in data use, for example, in monitoring evaluation and as feedback for modifying project strategies and activities. Considering the cost of research, the cost-effectiveness of poorly utilized research data is in question.

Materials Development

The respondents were asked whether their projects had developed IEC materials and whether these materials were pretested. In both instances they were asked whether the beneficiaries were involved.

Sixty nine percent of the projects under analysis had developed some IEC materials and 75 percent said the materials had been pre-tested.

On the involvement of beneficiaries, only 40 percent of the projects had involved the project beneficiaries in the development of the materials. Of those who pre-tested the materials, 15 percent did not involve the beneficiaries in the process.

What the data are unable to clearly reveal is the nature of the involvement. Not that the question was not asked, but the nature of the responses defy any logical analysis. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this:

"There has been a gap in this area"

" FGD/Seminars/Workshops "

"There is a committee called Interministerial Technical Committee which discusses these issues"

"The materials were developed with some community opinion leaders" (Youth Project)

"The women were told that the Ministry is planning to develop

IEC materials"

It appears reasonable to conclude that there has been no meaningful involvement of the beneficiaries in the process of message and materials development.

Dissemination Strategies

The respondents were asked to rank (with 1 being the most common) the media commonly used by their projects in disseminating information/messages. The table below presents the results:

Table 2: Rank Order of Communication Channel Use

Communication Channels	Rank			
	1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Radio	12	5	2	-
TV/Film	4	9	2	4
Print	4	7	10	5
Interpersonal	6	1	3	2
Drama/Folk media	-	1	1	1
Audio cassettes	-	-	1	-
Workshops	-	-	-	1
No response	3	6	10	16
	29	29	29	29

The results show a clear preference for mass media channels of communication. This faith and reliance upon mass media and the non-use of interpersonal channels might explain why in many countries there are high levels of awareness and low levels of practice of fertility management. It has been demonstrated that the mass media (as they are currently utilized) are effective in awareness creation while interpersonal and group media are more effective in changing behaviour. Notable and unused are the traditional communication channels. In trying to match the identified beneficiaries (unsegmented as they are) one has to wonder about the extent to which the selected media can be effective in reaching them.

In using mass media, the opportunities are limited, for the mass media are commonly urban based and spread while populations remain mostly dispersed and rural. It is also the case that the mass media are less "participatory friendly" in terms of desirable beneficiary involvement in both message development and dissemination.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The respondents were asked a series of questions related to the

evaluation and assessment of their projects. These included project objectives, existence of a benchmark study and the inclusion of an impact assessment as a project activity.

While the more logical point to start the analysis would be with project objectives, we leave that to the end as there is more to say which brings the point we are trying to make clearer and more emphatic.

Over half (59%) of the projects under analysis claim to possess a monitoring system mainly in the form of periodic progress reports and mid-term reviews. However, only one project reported to have a formative evaluation system in place. Some 15 percent of the respondents said they did not know whether their projects have a monitoring and evaluation system.

Only 24 percent of the projects had undertaken a benchmark study. The timing of these so called "bench-mark" surveys are interesting. Only 4 projects (13 percent) undertook the study prior to the implementation. The others were undertaken at dubious times along the implementation phase:

"Mid-term"

"End of First Phase/Pilot Phase"

"Evaluation stage of the 2nd phase of project expansion"

The absurdity of the situation is that 38 percent of these projects have, as part of their projects' activities, an impact assessment exercise. How that can be accomplished in the absence of a bench-mark study is anybody's guess.

However, the paradox is incomplete without a review of project objectives as stated by the respondents. In analysing the project objectives, the "SMART Criteria" were used. (SMART is an acronym for *specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-bound)* The main emphasis in the analysis was the specificity and measurability of the objectives.

None of the projects under analysis had a specific and measurable objective. In fact, none of the projects had a population IEC objective, that is, an objective related to a specific population variable. In short, given all the best intentions, the projects cannot be evaluated in impact terms. A few examples to illus-

trate the point:

"To provide information, education and counselling on adolescent reproductive health"

"To reduce the incidence of STD/AIDS among rural households"

"To motivate men towards accepting FP concepts"

"To bridge the gap between awareness and use"

"To create and sustain aggressive enlightenment for the rural communities on Pop/Family Life issues"

"To increase the welfare of rural populations"

Notable among the findings about "objectives" are:

(a) The misplaced emphasis in terms of expected change. Over 50 percent of these "objectives" were to create awareness. It is clear from KAP studies that most countries in Anglophone Africa have awareness levels of 60 percent and over while few have attained a practice level of 20 percent. It would therefore appear reasonable that IEC activities should be geared towards motivating beneficiaries to practise rather than mere continued awareness creation.

(b) The discrepancy in relationship between stated "objectives" and project beneficiaries. In over 75 percent of the cases, the project "objectives" were not related to the project beneficiaries. For example, a project with youth as beneficiaries might have a project objective - "to train 300 community educators."

c) The inadequate framing of objectives, for example:

"to improve the KAP of farm household in Population and FLE"

"to reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy and sexual activity among youth 12-19 years"

(d) The substitution of activities for objectives, for example:

"to organize workshops"

"to train staff in IEC/service delivery."

Perceptions of Sustainability of Projects

The respondents were asked whether they thought their projects would be sustainable in the absence of donor funds.

A majority (87 percent) said their projects could not continue without donor funds. Only *two* projects were perceived as sustainable. This is an expected finding given that most of the projects are both donor-driven and do not involve the beneficiaries in crucial matters in the formulation and implementation.

Concept Cognition

(i) Participation

The respondents were further asked what they understood by the term "participation." Most of respondents understood the concept of "participation" as *involvement of* project beneficiaries" (73 percent).

A few did not appear to have any rudimentary idea about participation. One said, "personally and physically engaged in any activity undertaken" while others defined it in more limited terms, "all project staff should have the participation in developing a project." Given that many of them relate the term to the involvement of the beneficiaries, then the question is why is this not happening in the projects as shown by the data.

(ii) Sustainable Development

The respondents were asked to explain what they understand by the term "sustainable development." The responses were as varied as the number of respondents.

Thirty eight percent of the respondents related the concept to the sustainability of a project/programme. The following quotation captures this meaning: "It means that with the departure of the donor, the programme can be maintained by local people."

Twenty seven percent of the respondents related the concept to the "here-and-now" situation as illustrated by this quotation: "Development based on utilization of available resources that continues to grow to certain levels and be maintained."

Only one respondent defined the concept as is generally accepted: "Development that ensures that its resources are

continually replenished and replaces and regenerates what it has expended. Development that balances consumption and growth."

The rest of the respondents did not appear to understand the concept as indicated by the following two responses: "Progress without failure," "Process which does not stop at a point, but continuing for the improvement of the beneficiaries."

It is encouraging to note that most of the project implementors have an understanding of the concepts of participation and sustainability. The question then becomes, why are the projects designed without consideration of sustainability and implemented without reference to the beneficiaries?

Section C: Discussion and Conclusion

As the saying goes, if one goes out looking for problems, one rarely gets disappointed. However, this paper is based on a premise of lesson learning and the following discussion, although not entirely new, is one that needs a revisit. It is quite clear from this paper that there are problems at the macro and micro level in the implementation of sustainable development.

At the macro-level there is a need to better understand the relationship between population, economic planning and the role communication needs to play. This paper recommends frequent and on-going dialogue between government, the media and the people, to ensure that present and future generations are taken care of. Recognition that sustainable development is not attainable without the participation of all is an important first step. A second step is the understanding that there are limitations to the problems that are solvable by communication, but that structural modifications can go a long way in further enhancing the role of communication in sustainable development.

At the micro-level, all is not well with the formulation and implementation of population IEC programmes and projects as the data so clearly indicate. For too long now, there has been a glaring gap between what is known in theory and what is

practised, what is known to work and what is done. The data presented in this paper imply negligible involvement of beneficiaries of population IEC projects despite the demonstrated evidence that such involvement is indispensable if any meaningful impact is to be achieved and sustained. Looking at the data, the model that has been consistently applied to population IEC programming in the region is a "top-down", "we/they" model.

This paper recommends the application of the four main kinds of participation as outlined earlier, that is, in decision-making, implementation, benefits and evaluation. This requires a major shift in processes involved in project formulation, implementation and evaluation. While participatory approaches have been endorsed by donor agencies and governments for almost two decades, the will has not been forthcoming and the way is still illusive in any demonstrable and practical form.

The failure of IEC projects is normally attributed to the project implementors, and particularly their lack of knowledge and skills. This paper argues that the project staff are only part of the "problem" and indeed all the actors (with an exception of the beneficiaries) have a share in the blame. What is also strange is that the project implementors have little responsibility in taking decisions on project strategies and activities yet they carry the blame for failure. Emphasis should not be placed on apportioning blame but instead on looking closely at the whole process of project formulation and implementation with a view to providing a remedy.

Participatory approaches call for "a learning process approach" to project formulation in which tentative plans are made and reviewed and feasibility studies and arrangements revised in light of situational experience, based on the assumption that neither ends nor means can be fully known in advance. This process implies team work among the donors, implementors and beneficiaries, as they are all stake-holders in the process. One major advantage of this approach is that it creates difficulties for any attempt to ignore the beneficiaries. In addition, it provides information on what works and just as impor-

tant, why. This is one aspect of population IEC programming where little data exists.

The common practice in project document formulation does not allow the participation of the beneficiaries. All too often, any understanding of the audience, in the form of audience analysis, is provided for as part of project implementation rather than as a pre-project activity that would lead to viable strategies and activities with the beneficiaries themselves. To further compound the problem, project documents are perceived as blueprints (cannot be easily modified) by the donors and the implementors. It is therefore not surprising that data from audience analysis is often not utilized and are seen to be of limited value.

An example from one participant to the training programme is worth noting and well illustrates this difficulty. In this case, the project document called for audience analysis at the initial stage of the project ,but the document contained pre-conceived strategies and activities with their corresponding budget. The audience analysis data indicated the need for different strategies, activities and, accordingly, a change in budget. The project was put on "hold" for some time awaiting the usual mid-term review.

While initial audience research is now commonplace as a means of concretizing or changing the many possibilities outlined in a project document, allowance for the input of the data into the implementation of the project is often not made and lessons learned are often lost.

In addition, audience research is static, in that when it is undertaken, it is done once. Most projects do not have formative research as a continuous learning activity. It is not unusual to find project strategies that are based on stale data. The irony of the situation is that it is the people who are in the business of facilitating change who fail to acknowledge that circumstances do indeed change.

This paper recommends the need for a long pre-project phase in which audience analysis can be undertaken and activities piloted. It also recommends project documents that are flexible,

with a stepwise development of activities in a progressive manner, and which would allow input of lessons learned. This would further require continuous assessments of all activities undertaken, and a recognition that strategies and activities adopted by a project document are but a few possibilities among a myriad of other (and changing) possibilities in problem solution. The approach would also require the empowerment of project implementors to modify project strategies and activities.

The assumption here is that the project personnel possesses the necessary knowledge and skills to do so. While much needs to be done in training of project staff, there now exists in some countries and projects a core of trained people who can immediately be so empowered. The trained staff need an encouraging and nurturing environment in which to put their knowledge and skills into practice.

There are some implications for training, both at institutions of higher learning or as an in-service activity. Much of the communication training at African universities tends to be academic and theoretical. There are no real attempts to train in day-to-day application of theories into practice, as is required to effectively implement an IEC programme or project. There is need, therefore, to orient the curriculum so as to produce graduates who not only know, but can also do. Conversely, IEC project personnel need to know the theories so that they understand what should be done and how it should be done. Such an approach in capacity building for IEC operations would be a beginning in the courtship between theory and practice.

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Appendix

Adapted from Coldevin, Gary and Stuart H. Teresa (1993)

Development Support Communication Process Model

1. *Needs Assessment:* Establish major need-based technologies for potential transfer through a variety of methods beginning with rapid rural appraisal and proceeding toparticipatory community problem identification through Key Informant Panels and elaboration of "Problem Trees," Consultation with field specialists and analysis of reports.

2. *Development/Project Objectives:* Select key development or project to be addressed and prioritize technologies for transfer; Determine if communication support is needed; Analyse whether gap between existing and desired situation is resource-based (supplies and materials), or communication based (information, motivation, training) or both.

3. *Situation Analysis:* Assessing existing communication resources available, media access and preferred channels of target groups; Determine if technology transfer inputs are readily accessible.

4. *Target Audience Analysis:* Refer to existing documentation and secondary data; Conduct KAP (Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices) survey and assess current level of income derived from technology(ies) to be transferred; Focus group interviews may also be useful for providing qualitative data.

5. *Setting DSC Objectives:* Select only tasks that are amenable to solution through communication. Specify objectives in terms of type of change expected from target audience(s), under what conditions the activities will take place, and what criteria will be used to measure success.

6. *Message Design & Channel Strategy:* Break down content into modules or units to address gaps identified in baseline survey; Develop message design approaches and delivery mix in terms of lead and support channels (multi-media materials and interpersonal communication; individual, group or mass audi ence - or all three).

7. *Preparation & Pre-Testing of Prototype materials:* Pre-test portions of materials under development with samples of target audience(s) for attention getting power, comprehensibility, credibility and persuasiveness; Revise materials where warranted and re-test.

8. *Final Production of Multi-Media Materials:* Produce materials targeted to seasonal variation in farmer's needs; Ensure that channel strategy is systematically orchestrated to promote repetition of key messages.

9. *Delivery & Monitoring:* Check for delivery system constraints such as viewing and listening conditions, and dependability of equipment used; Monitor how well content of materials is received and where practical, "mid-course" changes might be made to improve the system. Check appropriateness of channels selected and whether they are mutually reinforcing; Monitor feedback systems between target audience(s), field agents, and media producers.

10. *Summative or Impact Evaluation:* Measure impact of DSC strategy through KAP summative evaluation procedures as well as increased productivity and incomes; Use results as eedforward for future production decisions and channel strategies.

11. *Review & Replanning:* Plan for continuity, adjustment, and adaptation to changing audiences, project needs and opportunities.