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Communication for Development and Social Change

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AFRICA IN 2015: INTERROGATING BARBIE DEMOCRACY, SEEKING
ALTERNATIVES

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CONFRONTING THE MISSIONARY POSITION. THE MISSION OF
DEVELOPMENT/ THE POSITION OF WOMEN

In this analysis, I focus on how the development project, particularly through bilateral aid, has engaged concerns with women, gender, and feminism. First, I address the notion of a central “mission” in development work, toward improving women's conditions and recognizing gender and feminist concerns. In the next section, I consider the “position” of women as a consequence of this process, in passive roles, valued in terms of their reproduction, sexuality, and victimization. Finally, I consider options, based in feminist critiques, toward confronting the missionary position of development programs targeting women.

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BROADENING THE SCOPE OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION
CAMPAIGNS: ADVOCATING FOR ADVOCACY

This article argues that the advocacy campaign as a development communication strategy has great potential in addressing institutional and structural obstacles to development initiatives, obstacles that have their roots in unequal power relationship in a community. If understood broadly, advocacy campaigns are applicable beyond engaging the news media to push for policy change, as is the case with the so-called liberal advocacy campaigns. In the developing world, many NGOs have embraced advocacy as the path to more effective and strategic social change, incurring serious challenges on the authenticity of their advocacy claims. This article prioritizes its analytical and critical dynamism on this pursuit of the authentic voice of the grassroots, and proposes some well-developed participatory campaign tools that might bring about truly participatory and empowering advocacy campaigns in the future. It argues that theories and practices of advocacy have to adapt to the specific power structure with which development communication practitioners find themselves confronting. This article has some considerable limitations. It mainly explores on the theoretical level the possibilities and problems of using advocacy in development initiatives in Southern countries. The article itself advocates for serious

scholarly consideration on advocacy campaigns in the discipline of communication. Therefore, its targets are more institutional and structural, rather than tangible or case-specific; its discourse conceptual, rather than empirical.

*** SILVIO WAISBORD**

MISSED OPPORTUNITIES: COMMUNICATION IN THE POLIO ERADICATION INITIATIVE

Although the original goal of eradicating polio by 2000 has been reset, the polio eradication initiative (PEI) has made significant progress to achieve its goal of stopping virus transmission at the global level by 2005. Communication programs have made important contributions to polio eradication. This article reviews the historical experience of communication programs in support of the PEI, summarizes evidence-based studies about their impact, and explores the links between communication and disease control programs. The analysis is based on review of documents and materials, fieldwork in Angola, Bangladesh and Nigeria, and almost 100 interviews with medical and communication staff who have worked in the PEI. The findings suggest that the PEI partners only belatedly recognized the relevance of communication programs after the PEI confronted a number of problems, mainly resistance and negative rumors about polio vaccine in many countries (such as India, Pakistan, and Nigeria). The PEI has been largely dominated by a purely medicalized, systems-based approach that sidestepped important social issues such as service demand, risk perception, trust networks, and local participation. These issues need to be seriously considered in order to achieve not only health goals but also sustainable development. Likewise, the experience of the PEI suggests that a shift from an informational to a sociological approach to communication is necessary to capture how populations communicate about diseases and health issues. Reducing health communication to the transmission of information, as PEI campaigns have regularly done, is fraught with problems. Such approach is unable to capture the richness and complexity of ways in which populations communicate and make decisions about health and disease.

The PEI offers important lessons for other global health programs: communication as well as other social aspects need to be addressed early in the design of the intervention, and social and cultural expectations related to vaccination and other health issues need to be identified and properly integrated. Instead of relegating communication and social issues to a secondary role and only considering them as “obstacles” to be overcome, international health programs need to be informed by a careful consideration of how populations experience health early in the process.

*** LINJE MANYOZO**

LOCAL RURAL RADIO AS A DEVELOPMENT RADIO: AN EXEMPLAR OF DZIMWE COMMUNITY RADIO IN MALAWI

The article examines the nature of stakeholders’ participation in conceptualizing and implementing a village-based rural radio for development purposes. It explores the development leading to the establishment of the station and how the politics of participation resulted in tense conflicts over the radio’s ownership between an implementing body and a community-based committee. Whilst investigating the

development broadcasting praxes the staffers are employing with regards to empowering and mobilizing communities towards poverty reduction initiatives, the article argues that inadequate community participation at the planning stage will result in uncertainties over project sustainability after implementation. The article does this through a careful case study of Malawi's local rural radio, Dzimwe Community Radio, which was established in 1998 in Monkey Bay area of Mangochi District.

*** T.J. GRANT**

INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY