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# Communication for Development and Social Change

\* **FRANCOIS HEINDERYCKX**

INFORMATION DIET IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

A number of benefits of the Information Society are quite obvious and welcome. What needs to be questioned is how it is being implemented with an almost exclusive attention to equipment, hardware, computers, connections (preferably broadband), with unforgivable lack of attention for crucial issues such as social significance, required skills, usability. Public authorities unanimously wage war against the 'digital divide' and commit impressive resources with a view to 'bridge the gap', but mostly in the form of providing citizens and businesses with equipment. Public initiatives to close the digital divide often boil down to incongruous strategies which would compare to, say, trying to save starving populations by offering them fully equipped kitchens.

\* **CAROL UNDERWOOD AND BUSHRA JABRE**

ENABLING WOMEN'S AGENCY: ARAB WOMEN SPEAK OUT

The stark contrast between popular, mediated images of Arab women and the everyday experiences of Arab women prompted the development of *Arab Women Speak Out* (AWSO), a training program in the tradition of a ritual model of communication, as theorized by James Carey, which features alternative video self-portraits of ten women. In small groups throughout the Arab world, women gather to discuss their shared beliefs, interrogate the status quo, and explore the possible actions they could take to improve their circumstances in light of the profiled women's stories. Facilitators guided the participants through a series of discussions, exercises, and role plays that helped them hone their critical thinking skills and develop or strengthen practical skills for everyday life. The guiding hypothesis was that women who took part in the program would be more likely than would non-participants to express high levels of self-efficacy, to recount active participation in decision-making, and to report high levels of agency. The 2001 survey, which comprised 255 participants and 116 non-participants, found the odds of starting a new business venture were 2.5 times greater for participants than for non-participants, while the odds of taking an active part in community meetings were 2.3 times greater for participants than for non-participants holding background characteristics constant.

**\* STEFAN MERTENS**

**MASS MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF FOOTBALL AND SOCIAL CHANGE: AN EMPIRICAL CASE STUDY IN FLANDERS**

In this article the results of an empirical research project on mass media representations in the Flanders are presented, and the key question is whether these representations contribute towards changing the hierarchy between autochthons and immigrants or whether they help to maintain social inequalities. Using discourse-analytic and reception-analytic research findings, it is argued that there is an egalitarian symbolic logic that can be discovered in the representation of soccer. Respect for the national colours and the national anthems is considered important, and everyone is considered free to choose his own national identity. In case-studies using more concrete images of immigrants and racism in the representation of soccer, it becomes however clear that this abstract egalitarian logic is not strong enough to provoke social change in vested hierarchies between insiders and outsiders. This persistence of hierarchical images is shown in case-studies on Italian and Turkish female soccer fans and on an antiracism commercial. Furthermore it is shown that Italian immigrants, as part of a first immigration wave in Flanders, are stereotyped using positive stereotypes, whereas an attempt to positively portray Turkish immigrants, as part of a second immigration wave, did not succeed, and thereby the hierarchy between these two immigration waves, that was already identified in earlier research, is confirmed in this study.

**\* NABIN ARYAL**

**HIV/AIDS IN NEPAL: THE ROLE OF RADIO AND TELEVISION IN RAISING THE AWARENESS OF AIDS AMONG MARRIED WOMEN**

Utilising the Between Census Household Information for Monitoring and Evaluation System (BCHIMES) data obtained from the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) of Nepal, the article analyses the factors of media, -- radio and television --, and literacy in the awareness of AIDS among the currently married women of Nepal. The results from the logistic regression models suggest that exposure to media, such as radio and television seemed to increase the odds of gaining awareness of AIDS. The women who were exposed to radio and television seem to be significantly more aware of AIDS than those without exposure to such media. Another important factor behind the awareness of AIDS was found to be literacy. Compared to illiterate women, literate women of Nepal were much more likely to be aware of AIDS

**\* NUZHAT SHAHZADI AND NEILL MCKEE**

**UNICEF'S MEENA COMMUNICATION INITIATIVE TAKES ON NEW CHALLENGES: PSYCHOSOCIAL CARE IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE TSUNAMI**

UNICEF's *Meena* Communication Initiative (MCI) for the rights of the South Asian girl was launched in 1991 and continues to this day, taking on new and different challenges. The stories of the MCI are developed through extensive research and revolve around the adventures of *Meena*, a nine year old South Asian girl, and members of her family and village community. An independent evaluation in 2004 consisting of both primary and secondary quantitative and qualitative research, determined that the MCI had been to a large extent successful due to the great appeal and attractiveness of the communication materials and their ability to communicate to South Asian audiences children's rights, particularly girls' rights, to health, education, freedom from exploitation and abuse, and in so doing, to create awareness, promote

acquisition of psychosocial life skills and practical survival skills. A recent episode, *Life Has Changed*, is used as an example. It was designed to assist children affected by a disaster or tragedy, such as an earth-quake, tsunami or tidal wave, to build resilience and help them participate actively in their own recovery. The authors describe the factors that have made *Meena* successful, enduring, and adaptable to different social and development issues. The article analyses some successes and failures and draws some conclusions on the principles and lessons learned in developing and implementing a communication initiative that can be adapted to different issues across a whole region and the cost effectiveness of such endeavors.

**\* MATT JACKSON**

REGULATION THE INTERNET

A review of Ang, Peng Hwa. *Ordering Chaos: Regulating the Internet*. Thompson Publications. 2005. 216 pp.