

Communication for Development and Social Change

*** JAN SERVAES**

CONFUSION ABOUT MDGs AND PARTICIPATORY DIFFUSION

In essence, development is about the development of people and the transformation of society. Unfortunately, it is argued, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) primarily look at development as an ‘engineering problem’ to be solved from a top-down perspective. While references to ‘top-down’ approaches have fallen out of grace in the discourse of the highly political development aid community, many statements and reports are now advocating ‘bottom-up’ approaches with references to ‘participation’, ‘empowerment’ and providing ‘a voice for the voiceless’. Hardly anybody seems to be concerned about the implicit contradictions these forms of ‘hybridity’ pose at both theoretical and applied levels.

Major aspects of many projects and programmes currently being promoted and implemented are, it is argued, nothing but ‘public relations or corporate communication’ wrapped in participatory diffusion rhetoric

*** AYO AYODELE**

LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATIVE INCOMPETENCIES IN DYSFUNCTIONAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

This article argues that human development is inextricably linked with competence in both language and communicative behaviour. Efforts geared towards building the individual capacity for effective participation in the life of the community must begin with language (seen as discourse rather than just a tool of communication) development and acquisition. The best starting point in this regard will be the first language or mother tongue.

*** JUDE WILLIAM R. GENILO**

COLLECTIVELY DEFINING AGRICULTURAL INNOVATIONS: A PHILIPPINE RICE FARMING VILLAGE IN DIALOGUE

After several decades of development communication work in Philippine agriculture, practitioners continue to mull over the proper approach to technology transfer. They observe crop yields in farms substantially lower than those in research stations. They don't know why farmers adopt/reject particular technologies. "What is the right approach?" is repeatedly raised.

This article investigates how rice farmers in a Philippine village utilize communication to engage in dialogue, *i.e.*, exchange, negotiate and form meanings on farming (including innovations). In doing so, it examines collective definitions on farming, mechanisms for and participants in the dialogue, communication elements/messages, and farming knowledge/practices. Based on findings, the article calls on those engaged in technology transfer to: view communication also as meaning negotiation, rethink how (not assume that) information becomes knowledge, recognize local knowledge (not accept unquestioningly scientific knowledge), manage local communication resources (not introduce modern channels), and contextualize audiences within their communities (not as isolated individuals).

*** ZALA VOLCIC**

"THEY ARE ALL ANTI-WAR PROFITEERS!" CONTESTING CIVIL SOCIETY LANDSCAPES IN SERBIA

This article explores the relationship between the civil society, nation, narratives, and belonging in Serbia through an analysis of narratives of a set of roughly 45 interviews with young Serbian intellectuals aged 23-35. I propose here that in order to understand the civil society discourse in Serbia, we should understand how elite perceptions of civil society are formed, contested, and negotiated.

I first provide the historical and theoretical background for understanding the idea of civil society. Further, I ground my debate on the particular uses of the notion of civil society in contemporary Serbia – as seen and articulated by the young Serbian intellectuals. I explore the range of meanings associated with civil society and further, discursive strategies and ideas of my informants while they invoke the notion of civil society within their discourse.

*** GEORGIOS TERZIS AND BERT SMEETS**

E-PEACE: *ONLINE PEACE ACTIVISM AND THE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT OF ETHNOPOLITICAL CONFLICTS*

The net offers opportunities for conflict management and opens up possibilities that transcend previous traditional media boundaries. The internet allows peace activists to offer a *multitude of alternative information sources* to their 'constituency' and *reform the flow of communication distribution from top down to bottom up* with the participation of the 'dissident' voices. The internet with its convenience, anonymity, speed, inexpensiveness and capability for convergence of different media forms also multiplies considerably the ability of peace activists to *keep open the communication*

channels between conflicting parties and reduce the isolation of moderates in countries where expression of peace-oriented opinions is not particularly welcomed. Additionally, the importance of the net on the intermedia agenda setting should not be underestimated, not only because traditional offline media follow closely their online peers but because the Internet as a significant organisational tool, for both online and offline actions, allows peace activists to set sometimes the media and even the political and public agendas.

*** TOKUNBO OJO**

INTERNATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Book review of Bella Mody (Ed.), *International and Development Communication: A 21st Century Perspective*. London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2003.