

# PARTICIPATORY DESIGN OF MESSAGES AND DISCUSSION THEMES

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### Objective

Chapter two illustrates how you design messages and discussion themes in a participatory manner.

*At the end of this chapter you will be able to:*

1. Understand the difference between messages and discussion themes;
2. Define situation Analysis Framework (SAF): Purpose and rationale;
3. Know what message appeals and message presentations are, and how to use them effectively in the design of communication materials;
4. Recognise basic media advantages and disadvantages;
5. Develop a draft treatment; and
6. Prepare a communication brief.

## 2.1 Creating Basic Messages and Discussion Themes: An Overview

Basic messages and discussion themes are the core content of what you want to say. You develop these into statements. Very often a description or a rough sketch of visuals accompanies such statements. At this stage the visuals pay very little attention to the appeals or the channels or media in which they are to be used.

Messages are information that is passed from one person or a group of people to another with the intention of producing an effect. Discussion themes are information or ideas designed specifically to focus the attention of a group on a problem and generate dialogue about possible actions to be taken. It can therefore be said that “messages” are usually concerned with information regarding a solution while “discussion themes” usually pose problems to be discussed by the people.

Generally, messages are presented in media like posters, radio/TV spots, jingles and drama. Discussion themes on the other hand get presented in picture codes, story with a gap, flipcharts, participatory theatre for development, specially designed radio/TV programmes and stories.

### Box 3

*Difference between basic messages and discussion themes.*

Message	Discussion theme
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It aims to pass on information and elicit action.</li> <li>• It is supposed to elicit a uniform meaning from the people.</li> <li>• It provides solutions or it suggests actions uses to be followed.</li> <li>• It usually includes some text.</li> <li>• It shows benefits of solutions to interaction group</li> <li>• It aims to persuade and motivate people to adept solution.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It aims to provoke discussion and dialogue.</li> <li>• It brings out different perceptions of an issue</li> <li>• It presents a problem or a situation and it questions from a facilitator to provoke discussions.</li> <li>• It is composed only by images without any words.</li> <li>• It helps interaction groups to identify needs, solutions and opportunities.</li> <li>• It aims to generate views on possible causes, solutions, consequence of posed problem.</li> </ul>

The creation of messages and discussions themes is one of the most interesting phases of the communication programme design process. In this phase, the core contents and themes identified in the previous chapter are creatively turned into appealing and thought provoking messages and discussion themes for various activities, channels and media. To obtain maximum effect, the interaction groups must participate in this highly creative process.

Be aware that the messages and themes you will be working on are derived from the field findings. It is therefore very important that every time you reach a critical point in the design process you go back to and review, even if only mentally, all relevant data such as NOPS, focal problems, causal

# chapter 2 Participatory Design of Messages and Discussion Themes

links, people's perceptions, communication objectives and the significant features of the Interaction Groups profiles. This review is needed for the design of your creative strategy or copy platform.

The worksheet below shows you the process to be followed in designing messages and discussion themes.

## Worksheet 1

*The Creative Design Process.*

Basic Messages and Discussion Themes	Specifications (Objectives of Discussion Themes and Basic Messages)	Appeals	Selection of Medium	Basic Treatment	Communication Brief, Creative Mode (including outputs)

## 2.2 Developing the Creative Strategy or Copy Platform

### 2.2.1 Specifications

The creative strategy, or copy platform, forms the basis on which messages and discussion themes are developed. **It is a written strategy statement of the most important issues to be considered in designing the messages and discussion themes.** It serves as a guide for the process of turning field findings into creative communication campaign ideas. The copy platform seeks to re-examine the questions *who, why, where, when and how* of the messages or discussion themes. At this point in the process a mix of data analysis, experience and creativity is required to design effective messages and discussion themes.

Ensure that all the relevant information discovered about the **demographics** and **psychographics** of the interaction groups and their perceptions of the problems are critically reviewed. A careful re-examination of these elements provides the information for the formulation of the necessary guide, known as **the creative strategy** or **copy platform**, upon which to develop appealing messages and discussion themes that can bring the subject alive and make the interaction group stop, look, listen and discuss.

The creative strategy or copy platform is based on the following:

#### (a) Review of the problems

- A careful review of the field findings, especially the community identified and prioritised NOPS. Are the NOPS from the community different from or similar to the original assessment of the situation by the project? What are the communication implications of the NOPS?

- A critical assessment of the focal problems identified with the community. Are they the major factors causing the main problem? Are they the only factors causing the main problem? Can they be effectively addressed by communication? What will be the more effective presentation - messages or discussion themes or a combination?

## **(b) Definition of the Priority Interaction Groups**

- Who are the most likely candidates to be addressed by the messages or discussion themes?
- Have portraits of such groups been developed to describe their cultural, social and economic characteristics?
- Why will the interaction group listen to the message or discuss the selected theme?
- What will the interaction groups find interesting and believable about the message or discussion theme?
- What are the available and preferred communication networks and information sources of the Priority Interaction Groups?
- Who are the influential sources of information and advice in the community for the Interaction Groups?
- What are the sources' spheres of influence in relation to the problems?

## **(c) Assessment of the problem-solving approach**

- Does it appear to be the most effective?
- Is it sustainable?
- Where does it come from (experts assessment or community based)?
- Does it really address the causes of the problem or just the effects?

## **(d) Assessment of the communication objectives**

- Have the objectives been formulated in such a way that they give an indication of what needs to be achieved in terms of communication for the problem to be solved?
- Are they relevant and feasible?
- Are they consistent and directly linked with the focal problems?
- Are they SMART, hence easily measurable? What are the external factors that could affect their accomplishment?

## **(e) Review of the selected communication modes and approaches**

- Are the selected modes and approaches the most appropriate for achieving the communication objectives?
- Can the approaches complement each other to effectively achieve the communication approaches?

### (f) Formulation of specifications and objectives for each message and discussion theme

- What will each of the messages or discussion themes specifically accomplish in relation to each interaction group? How best can the message or communication theme be communicated?

Earlier, we said that the difference between messages and discussion themes is that messages are supposed to stand on their own and pass on comprehensible information leading to some change (e.g. increasing awareness, promoting a practice, etc.), while discussion themes are used to create dialogue and generate new information.

When designing your strategy always consider how you intend to associate the idea you are promoting or presenting with a certain image, feeling or status. This is known as **image creation** or **positioning**. This is widely used in advertising. An example of this is when a certain drink may be associated with beautiful cars and women. This is done in an attempt to associate the drink with a luxurious life style. In the social arena you may associate use of condoms when having sex with a young man who is considerate, keeps healthy, and has a small family and thus enjoys a better life style. Image creation, or positioning, requires that you start with thinking about the characteristics of the interaction groups and appealing to their cultural and social system in order for you to effectively position whatever you are presenting or proposing.

Once you have considered matters of positioning you move on to flesh out the design of the basic messages and discussion themes on the basis of the creative strategy or copy platform prepared in the preceding unit. You revisit your PRCA and baseline findings in order to improve the effectiveness of the messages and discussion themes (in terms of symbols, colours, beliefs, wording, etc.).

### 2.2.2 Creating Basic Messages

When you want to design basic messages follow the guidelines on the next page:

- i Stress one major idea;
- ii Describe or sketch the preliminary illustrations or story lines;
- iii Write down the theme lines/statements and the key words that express the ideas or information to be conveyed by the message;
- iv Offer benefits and practical solutions that meet the needs of the interaction group;
- v Emphasise these features of the idea or innovation that satisfy interaction group's needs;
- vi Keep messages clear, simple, lean and tight. Tell the whole story and when you have finished, stop; and
- vii Ensure that the message is comprehensible.

An example of a basic message is:

***Build the new maize storage bin in your compound to protect your crop from pests.***

## 2.2.3 Creating Discussion Themes

Remember that the discussion theme poses a problem or presents a situation and uses questions from a facilitator to provoke discussions. Follow the guidelines below for the design of discussion themes:

- i Highlight one major issue;
- ii Describe or sketch the preliminary illustrations or story lines;
- iii Ensure that a problem and **not** the solution is depicted; and
- iv Ensure that the interaction group experiences the problem.

An example of a discussion theme:

***Villagers lose a lot of their maize harvests to pests.***

An example of questions normally asked by a facilitator while displaying material with a discussion theme goes like this:

- What do you see happening in this picture?
- Why is this happening?
- Does this happen in real life?
- What problem does this lead to?
- What is the root cause of the problem?
- What can be done about it?

## 2.2.4 The Process of Creative Design: Appeals

At this point of the process you are ready to add some spices to your communication recipe. Appeals define the cord you plan to touch in people's hearts or minds.

### ***What Are Appeals?***

Appeals are like bait you include in a message in order to lure the interaction through emotion or reason. Both messages and discussion themes need to target certain human wants or needs at two broad levels: emotional/social (the heart) and rational/physiological (the mind). While rational appeals are directed at the interaction group's practical, functional needs or wants related to the issues raised in the communication, emotional appeals target the group's psychological, social, or symbolic needs and wants. Physiological and social needs and wants affect to a great extent how interaction groups react to messages and discussion themes. Various appeals should be used in all messages and discussion themes. The most common appeals are listed in the table that follows:

**Table 2**

*Some of the most common Appeals.*

**The Most Common Appeals**

Rational Appeals	Emotional Appeals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cleanliness</li> <li>Dependability in quality</li> <li>Dependability in use</li> <li>Durability</li> <li>Economy in purchase</li> <li>Economy in use</li> <li>Efficiency in operational use</li> <li>Enhancement of earnings</li> <li>Opportunity for leisure time</li> <li>Protection of others</li> <li>Rest or sleep</li> <li>Safety/security</li> <li>Variety of selection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ambition</li> <li>Appetite</li> <li>Avoidance of laborious tasks</li> <li>Co-operation</li> <li>Curiosity</li> <li>Devotion to others</li> <li>Entertainment</li> <li>Fear</li> <li>Guilt</li> <li>Embarrassment</li> <li>Health</li> <li>Comfort</li> <li>Colours</li> <li>Humour</li> <li>Pleasure of recreation</li> <li>Pride of personal appearance</li> <li>Pride of possession</li> <li>Romance/love</li> <li>Security</li> <li>Sexual attraction</li> <li>Simplicity</li> <li>Social belonging/achievement</li> <li>Social approval/respect</li> <li>Sport/play/physical activity</li> <li>Style (beauty)</li> <li>Sympathy for others</li> <li>Taste</li> </ul>

## ***Selection of Message Appeals***

For messages, select appeals that attract attention and make the interaction group think that the issue in the message is important and should be attended to. To achieve this, appeals must embody the physiological and emotional benefits that groups will get from the message and what it is conveying.

## ***Selection of Appeals for Discussion Themes***

For discussion themes, select appeals that depict the emotions associated with the problem. Picture codes are especially ideal for this. Such appeals often deal with embarrassment, sadness, confusion or fear etc. In the story with a gap, it is essential to clearly depict the various feelings people in the different situations normally express. Particular attention must be given to the facial or vocal expressions of the subjects used in the materials.

## ***The Process of Creative Design: Message Presentation Formats***

The way you package and present your message is referred to as a format. Discussion themes do not have such a categorisation, as their nature is mainly to generate discussion in an open manner, without narrowing any possibility of dialogue. In this section you will be presented with the formats frequently used in the treatment of messages.

Messages are presented in various formats or combinations of formats. Depending on the specifications of the message, a relevant format could be selected from the list below. These are specifically called message presentation formats because most of them cannot be successfully applied to discussion themes.

### **1. Information**

- This message format presents straight facts without an explanation of their relevance.

### **2. Argument or reason why**

- This type of message format is structured in the form of an argument or rational discussion.
- The reasons utilised in the argument may be either facts or expected benefits to the interaction group (social standing and so forth).
- One-sided and two-sided discussion/argument. A two-sided argument works better with those who initially oppose the message.
- Direct and indirect discussion/argument. With issues that involve the audience personally an indirect/oblique approach may be better than direct salesmanship.
- Definite and open conclusion. Should the message draw an obvious conclusion or leave it to the audience to draw out their own conclusion?

### **3. Motivation**

- This type of message in this format uses a combination of emotional and rational appeals to persuade and promote action among the interaction



groups. It also tries to enhance the image of the innovation by attaching a pleasant emotional connotation to it. The message creates a mood for the innovation.

- Emotional appeals are commonly used to stimulate, love, hate, fear, anxiety, security, hope, happiness etc.
- Emotional appeals attract attention to the message, people remember.
- Negative and positive appeals. Negative appeals create a state of emotion (e.g. anxiety), which is counterbalanced with a positive reassuring outcome (a recommendation).
- Group and individual appeals. Everybody else is doing it, why don't you also do it? Use of social pressure, peer-group pressure to motivate people to jump on the bandwagon.

#### **4. Hard sell**

- Messages in this format are not supported by facts.
- The objective is to get the line across for the interaction group to remember.
- The assumption is that people will believe a statement if they hear it long enough.

#### **5. Command**

- This type of message in this format orders or reminds us to do something.
- The assumption is that the interaction group is open to suggestion.
- This type of message works best with services, ideas and products that the interaction group knows very well and thinks well of.

#### **6. Symbolic association**

- This type of message in this format associates an idea, service (innovation) with a virtue word, person, tune, or situation that has particularly pleasant connotations.
- The idea and the symbol become highly interrelated.

#### **7. Imitation**

- This message in this format presents people (role models) and situations for the interaction group to imitate.
- The assumption is that people will imitate those whom they wish to be like or whom they admire. This type of message will use famous people in testimonials.

## 8. Humour

- Messages in this format grab attention and are more enjoyable especially if the subject cannot be discussed in a straightforward way, but it must be used carefully!
- Humour is used in messages in order to reduce boredom.
- Very fragile: In messages, humour is like a gun in the hands of a child.
- You must know how to do it or it can blow up in your face!

### 2.2.5 Selecting the Leading Medium and Media Mix

The next chapter presents the most common media utilised in development and some related production aspects. By now you should have an idea of the medium, or media, you intend to use. In the next two sessions look at the characteristics, strength and weaknesses of these media. If you are still not sure which one/s to choose, ask the opinion of an expert before proceeding.

#### ***Criteria for Media Selection***

When considering which media to use in the communication strategy go back to the problem addressed and to the stated communication objective. If you want to increase people's participation on a certain activity you may want to use discussion tools as a leading medium. On the other hand, if your aim is to send a message alerting people on a straightforward topic you might decide to use radio. Before taking a decision revisit your purpose, the situational context, the medium characteristics and the Interaction Groups' profiles.

An interpersonal approach (person-to-person or group discussion) is very effective in addressing individual needs and allowing people to express their ideas directly. On the other hand interpersonal communication approaches can reach only a limited number of people and discussions can get monopolised by influential individuals or go in an undesired direction. Indigenous traditional media (folk drama, theatre, story telling, songs, dance, etc.) belong to this group of approaches and have the great advantage of giving the driving seat to the community. Production of this sort is usually cheaper and allows a certain topic to be developed within the appropriate local context. The disadvantages are that it may reach only a limited number of people and that it may not be available when needed.

Modern media (video, radio, newspapers, booklets, posters, etc.) are very effective in generating interest and providing needed information. They can be divided into visual, audio (radio, cassettes) and print media (leaflets, books, etc.). Visual media (TV, video) have several advantages, namely clarity (explanations can be assisted by images), interest and retention (what you see stays longer than what you hear or read). Audio media (radio, cassettes) are a very good supporting and motivational medium, but it is difficult to sustain interest on longer programmes. Print media can be effective either in passing short straightforward messages (posters) or for treating issues in detail (booklets, books, etc.) however, they also require that people be able to read, which is a major obstacle in many areas. All of the modern media are expensive, compared to the other types. Very often they are developed outside the cultural context of the communities they are meant to serve. Even their level of penetration is generally low, especially for television, and, partly for radio and newspapers.

The table below has been culled from an FAO publication<sup>1</sup> and it illustrates the basic pros and cons of different media.

**Table 3**

*The Various Media in Rural Development.*

<b>PROS</b>	<b>CONS</b>
<b>TELEVISION</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Prestigious.</li> <li>· Appealing.</li> <li>· Persuasive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Tends to be monopolised by powerful interests because of its prestige.</li> <li>· Not available in all rural areas.</li> <li>· Expensive production/reception.</li> <li>· Programme production for agriculture can be difficult.</li> <li>· Difficult to localise information for agriculture unless there are local TV stations, still rare in developing countries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary note:</b>  <i>Although potentially powerful, television is not easy to use for rural development in most developing countries due to its high costs involved in the production and in buying TV sets.</i></p>	
<b>VIDEO</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Highly persuasive.</li> <li>· Constantly improving technology is making it ever cheaper and more reliable.</li> <li>· Electronic image/sound recording gives immediate playback and production flexibility.</li> <li>· Allows more than one language to be recorded as commentary on single tape.</li> <li>· Can be shown in daylight using battery- powered equipment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Multiplicity of standards/formats.</li> <li>· Requires talent, skill and experience to produce good programmes for development.</li> <li>· Requires rather sophisticated repair and maintenance facilities.</li> <li>· Dependent on the use to which it is to be put, may call for quite large capital investment.</li> <li>· Colour/visual quality mediocre in some standards.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary note:</b>  <i>Video has become the media in the minds of many (see chapter 3.3). Indeed, it is highly effective but as it has been frequently used, calls for a careful strategy and skilled producers.</i></p>	
<b>SLIDE SETS/FILM STRIPS</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Slide-sets quite to easy produce.</li> <li>· Low-cost equipment for production and projection.</li> <li>· Very good colour/visual quality.</li> <li>· Filmstrips made of robust material and are small, easy to transport.</li> <li>· Excellent training medium for all subjects except those few for which showing movement is an absolute essential.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Production requires laboratory process.</li> <li>· Cannot be used in daylight without special rear-projection screen.</li> <li>· Lacks the appeal of video (which relates to TV in most minds).</li> <li>· Turning slides into film strips requires laboratory process which is not always available in developing countries.</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> *Guidelines on Communication for Rural Development. FAO, Rome, Italy.*

**Table 3 (continued)**

*The Various Media in Rural Development.*

**Summary note:**

*Slide sets/filmstrips have proved an invaluable training aid in rural and agricultural development but they are tending to lose out to video, despite the higher cost of the latter.*

**RADIO**

- Wide coverage and availability in rural areas.
- Cheap production/reception.
- Relatively simple programme production.
- Local radio stations facilitate localised information.
- Weak as a medium for training and education since it is audio only.
- Batteries for receivers are often difficult to buy or too expensive for people.

**Summary note:**

*Excellent support medium, good for strengthening motivation and for drawing attention to new ideas and techniques, but weak for providing detailed information and training.*

**AUDIO CASSETTES**

- Easy and cheap to produce programmes.
- Cassette players quite widely available.
- Easy to localise information.
- Good for feedback because farmers can record their questions/reactions.
- Can be used well in conjunction with rural radio.
- Audio only and so suffers some of the weakness of radio, though where possible repeated listening may help to overcome it.
- When directly used by the community audio recorders need attention and careful maintenance.

**Summary note:**

*Very good low-cost medium. Potential has not been sufficiently recognised. Especially useful in conjunction with extension and rural radio.*

**FLIP CHARTS**

- Cheap and simple to produce and use.
- Good for training and extension support.
- Not as realistic as projected aids.
- Care required to make drawings understandable to illiterates.
- Lack the attraction of audio-visual materials.
- May be thought of as "second-rate" by people with experience of electronic media.

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PROS	CONS
<b>FLIP CHARTS (continued)</b>	
<p><b>Summary note:</b>  <i>Flip charts are very useful in helping extensionist/technicians in their work with rural people. Drawings are notoriously difficult to understand for people with low visual literacy, so careful design and pre-testing needed.</i></p>	
<b>PRINTED MATERIAL</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Relatively cheap, simple and easy to produce when using basic printing formats (e.g. one colour, simple binding, etc.) and for large numbers.</li> <li>· Can be taken home, consulted and kept as permanent reminder.</li> <li>· Particularly valuable for extensionists, technicians and community leaders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Can be also expensive if a sophisticated printing is required (i.e. full colour, proper binding, layout, etc.) or if the quantities to be produced are very limited.</li> <li>· Of little use among illiterates, but bear in mind "family literacy" as opposed to literacy of individual farmers.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary:</b>  <i>Well designed, carefully written for their intended audience, printed materials can provide a vitally important and cheap source of reference for extensionists, and for literates among the rural population.</i></p>	
<b>FOLK MEDIA (Theatre, Puppetry, Storytelling, etc)</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· It requires small capital investment.</li> <li>· Does not depend on external technology, often liable to break</li> <li>· May be highly credible and folk persuasive where media has a strong tradition.</li> <li>· Can treat sensitive issues in a culturally appropriate manner.</li> <li>· Intrinsicly adapted to local cultural scene.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· Requires skilled crafting of development messages into the fabric of the folk media.</li> <li>· May lack prestige vis-à-vis more modern media in some societies down.</li> <li>· May be difficult to organise, and calls for close working relationship between development workers and folk media artists.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Summary</b>  <i>Creative use of folk media – in cultures where it is popular and well entrenched - can be a subtle and effective way of introducing development ideas and messages. Care required to ensure that the mix of entertainment and development is appropriate, so furthering the latter without damaging the former.</i></p>	

## The Process of Creative Design: The Creative Element

Creativity has always been something regarded highly in human societies. It is because of their creativity that human beings were able to survive and evolve through a hostile environment. It applies in every aspect of human life but it plays an especially important part in communication. It is the added value in the communication strategy that can really make the difference between failure and success.

## *The Concept of Creativity*

Ancient Greeks in the past associated creativity with “divine madness” and they considered it a gift of the Gods. At that time the highest form of creativity was to be found in arts such as poetry or sculpture. Creativity was therefore something added to man, a plus. Even during recent times many creative artists have been considered to be rather eccentric. The “divine madness” is accepted in them as a sign of geniality. However every human being, in different degrees, is capable of being creative. Every human being actually applies his or her creative powers in many everyday situations. How creativity can be learned or strengthened is a subject that has fascinated many thinkers. Graham Wallas, in his book, *The Art of Thought*, describes four stages of creation:

### **1. Preparation.**

In order to have creative insights, a person needs to know as much as possible about the issue of relevance. The availability of information and its assessment are important factors fuelling the creative process. People usually seem to have creative ideas only in their own field, i.e. artists in art, scientists in science, doctors in medicine, etc.

### **2. Incubation.**

It is the period of time, usually spent away from the issue or problem, needed to reflect upon the information available. It might have happened to you when thinking too much about a problem without finding a suitable solution, and then suddenly it comes to you when you are not even thinking about it.

### **3. Inspiration.**

This is the stage where you suddenly see a light flashing in your mind and you know you have found the perfect solution to your problem, or you have come up with an innovative, original idea. Whatever the case, you have been illuminated. Often this happens unexpectedly, even during your sleep. While most inventions in human history may appear to have happened “out of the blue”, they really “clicked” on the inventors’ knowledge. These happened because the inventors knew their subject area very well. Their creative ideas only came up after a deep knowledge of the subject.

### **4. Verification.**

This is the application of your idea in the real world. Sometimes great sounding ideas do not work effectively in reality. In your communication strategy pre-testing would be the equivalent of this phase.

While working on the communication strategy you will probably go through a similar process as the one described above. Be sure that you, as everybody else, have creative powers, which come from knowledge, and experience accumulated from every day of your life. Remember that when developing the communication strategy it is not enough to ensure the transmission of information, but to use your creativity. Use your creativity to get people’s attention! Once more, think about the advertising world where at times one word or an image makes a whole world come alive. Try to use similar approaches and techniques for the development world.

## The Big Idea

The big idea is a bold, creative initiative that synthesises all that is known about the interaction group, the benefits of the innovation with the group's desires, needs and wants in a fresh and involving way to bring the subject to life. The big idea requires inspiration. **To come up with the big idea, message designers rely on metaphors: the likening of one process or thing to another by speaking of it as if it were the other.** They borrow terminology commonly used by the interaction group to describe something else. For example, immunisation is likened to an umbrella that you carry with you during the rainy season because you don't know when it is going to rain. Without it the rain will drench you.

To get their creative juices flowing, message designers keep a list of messages they have seen and liked. They do so because they believe that these might stimulate new ideas, so they experiment or play around with words and they write from the heart. A good way of keeping the stream of big ideas flowing is that of always keeping a small notebook with you, writing down every significant thing you see or that comes into your mind. As seen previously, good ideas apparently come out of nowhere, and they might go as easily as they come. Noting them down as they come could therefore be a good way of increasing your creative wealth.

To recognise a good big idea ask yourself the following questions:

- Did it make me gasp when it first occurred to me?
- Do I wish I had thought about it myself (if it did not occur to you)?
- Is it going to be effective?
- Is it unique?
- Does it apply to the interaction groups?
- Does it fit the rest of the strategy to perfection? and
- Are the interaction groups going to be moved to discussion or action by the big idea?

### 2.2.6 Developing the Basic Treatment

This involves the selection of the possible wording, pictures or sounds to communicate the message or the discussion themes. The treatment must help position the idea clearly and reinforce it. For messages, especially the treatment must help ensure that they have the ability to generate the following in the interaction group: Attention, Awareness, Comprehension, Desire, Credibility/Conviction, Interest, and Action.

- **Attention:**

The purpose of any message is to get people to take some action to satisfy a need or want. But first people need to be made aware of the problem or the solution, if the problem is obvious. To create awareness, the message designer must first get the people's attention. Culture, attitudes, needs, wants, mood, beliefs, behaviour, assumptions, motivation, size, position, timing etc., can all determine what catches a person's attention.

Attention is the first objective of any message. Without gaining and sustaining attention, the message is no good. For the message to gain attention it must break through the person's *selective exposure and attention* screens. Selective exposure is the tendency for a person to expose himself or herself to only those messages that are in agreement with the

persons existing attitudes, needs or wants and to avoid those that are not. However, under some circumstances, a person can expose himself, or herself, to a message that is not in agreement with his or her attitudes, needs or wants because he or she cannot judge the content of the message before hand. In such cases, the selective attention mechanism is activated. Selective attention is the tendency for a person to pay attention to those messages or parts of a message that are in agreement with the person's strongly held attitudes, beliefs, or behaviour and to avoid those that are not. One major key to getting attention is to make the message relevant to the interaction group's culture, attitudes, needs, wants, mood, beliefs, behaviour, assumptions and motivation.

### **Attention-getting devices for print media:**

Dynamic visuals  
Unusual layout  
Vibrant colours  
Large headlines  
Provocative statements

### **Attention getting devices for electronic media:**

Special sound effects: loudness  
Music  
Animation and Movement

- **Interest**

This is the second element the message must generate in order to be effective. It carries the person who is interacting with the message from the attention stage to a more serious discussion in the body of the message. Interest is required to keep the excitement created at the attention-getting stage going on as the person gets into the more specific and detailed information in the message.

One way of achieving interest is to keep talking about the interaction groups' problems and needs, and how the action suggested in the message can answer them. Good message designers use the word YOU frequently to personalise the message. Use of a story, a dramatic situation, sound effects and catchy dialogue can help you maintain interest.

- **Credibility**

Another important factor of the process is to establish credibility for the action or information in the message. Your interaction groups are often sceptical and cynical. They want to know that the information or action suggested in the message is backed by facts: Can the action recommended produce the results claimed by the message?

To achieve credibility, you can use influential sources of information and advice identified by the community during the PRCA as spokespersons to give testimonials in your messages. Whenever such "proofs" are used, ensure that they are valid and not just manipulative. The dimensions of source credibility are:



- **Trustworthiness.** How much a particular source is trusted by the people.
- **Competence.** Is concerned with the know-how, as perceived by the interaction groups, of a person in relation to the issue of relevance.
- **Charisma.** Powerful personal qualities, that make a person admirable and respected by everybody else, thus providing instant credibility to what he/she says or does.
- **Status.** This is similar to the above, but rather than coming directly from personal qualities it is derived from the social position occupied by a person. The two - charisma and status - are often associated with one person. Sometimes you find a person with high status, but very low charisma, or a highly charismatic person yet with very low social status.

Remember that people are more prone to listen, and follow the advice, of somebody they hold in high esteem rather than some unknown person.

- **Desire**

This is the step in which the most relevant benefits or advantages of the idea in the message are made manifest. In this step you are basically encouraging the interaction group to imagine themselves enjoying the benefits of the action recommended in the message. In advertising this is the phase where “people wants” are transformed into “peoples needs”, that is, convincing people that what they desire, e.g. a new car, a computer, etc., is what they actually need.

- **Action**

The purpose here is to motivate the interaction group to do something - “Visit your nearest clinic for more information”, “Go to your extension officer for a demonstration” etc; or at least to agree with the message. The call for action may be explicit e.g., “Visit your nearest clinic for more information”, or implicit: “Feed your children and not rats.” Calls for action are normally stated in the tone of a command.

### For radio/audio messages:

Message designers first need to understand radio/audio as peculiar media. Radio, especially, provides entertainment or news, as the listeners are busy doing other things. To be heard on radio and produce any type of effect, the message on radio must be catchy, interesting and unforgettable. Radio listeners usually decide within five to eight seconds whether they want to pay attention or not. Therefore, to attract and hold listener’s attention, the message must be intrusive, but not offensive. Try to make the programme alive and interesting. Some suggestions include:

- If humour is not appropriate offer drama;
- Mention the innovation at least three times;
- Be conversational. Use easy to pronounce words and short sentences, avoid tongue twisters;
- Keep the message simple. Omit unneeded words;
- Concentrate on one selling point. Make the big idea crystal clear;
- Paint pictures with words. Use descriptive language;

- Choose familiar sound effects to help you create a visual image of your narrative;
- Stress action words rather than passive words;
- Emphasise the benefits repeatedly and with variations;
- Try to get the listener to do something (e.g. call a hot line, etc.);
- Use presentation formats that utilise folk idiom and spoken language; and
- Adapt folk medium and drama for radio/audio programmes.

## 2.2.7 The Communication Brief (including outputs)

The communication brief is a clear and written directive prepared for media producers to guide them in translating basic messages into communication materials, media and activities for use in the communication campaign. It contains all the relevant information to enable the producer come up with materials that are relevant, attractive and useful.

This communication brief includes the objectives of the campaign, message or discussion theme specifications, the intended interaction groups and their characteristics, preferred technical features such as colours or sound effects. It specifies where and when the messages will be communicated and also the context for the use of the discussion themes. Most important of all the communication brief has to specify the intended outputs. Even if some may have already been preliminarily identified at an early stage it is only now, after the messages and themes have been fully designed, the selection of the media finalised and the related treatment fully accomplished, that outputs can be accurately specified and refined.

Outputs are needed to finalise the work plan for the communication strategy. Therefore you should describe them in detail. If for instance you intend to use radio, specify if your quantitative output is a radio programme or a series of programmes, and what the objectives of this programme are. If you need to produce posters, specify how many copies you expect to produce and so on. It is important that after having gone through the creative design phase you clearly state the expected outputs necessary to address the communication strategy effectively.

## 2.3 Preliminary Monitoring of Messages and Discussion Themes' Effectiveness

Before even producing the materials the designers should share messages and discussion themes with as many people as possible in order to gauge their preliminary levels of attention, comprehension and relevance. This does not mean that the materials would not be eventually pre-tested with samples of the intended interaction groups before final production. Many elements to be considered in monitoring are discussed in the sections dealing with pre-testing of communication materials. Keep in mind that you will have to monitor technical aspects regarding the production of materials as well peoples' perceptions and effectiveness of the intended scope of the messages and discussion themes.

## chapter 2 Participatory Design of Messages and Discussion Themes

The best way to assess effectiveness is to compare it against set specifications. If a message has been designed to raise awareness on a certain issue you must measure if it does that. If it does not, you must find out why. The causes are usually stem from one, or sometimes both, of the following categories: the technical/ production area, (e.g. Is the sound quality good enough? Are the drawings technically valid and the materials used appropriate?) Or the design area (e.g. Have the materials been developed according to peoples' perceptions and background? have the proper appeals and formats been used?). Therefore whenever you produce something do not be absorbed by how good they look on sound, but how well they perform their purpose.

# COMMUNICATION MATERIALS AND MEDIA ISSUES

- 3.1 Using Radio in Communication for Development
  - 3.1.1 Nature and Purpose of Radio for Development
  - 3.1.2 Basic Radio Approaches
  - 3.1.3 Common Radio Formats
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  - 3.1.5 Basic Principles of Radio Scripting
  - 3.1.6 How to Evaluate a Radio Programme
  
- 3.2 Using Print Materials in Communication for Development
  - 3.2.1 Uses and Rationale of Print Materials
  - 3.2.2 Basic Elements of Print Materials Production
  - 3.2.3 How to Draw for Rural People
  - 3.2.4 Production Criteria in Print Materials
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  - 3.2.7 Pre-testing Print Materials: Field-Testing to Ensure Effectiveness

## Objective

This chapter provides an introduction on how to produce and use communication materials and media in development.

*At the end of this chapter you will be able to:*

1. Have a basic understanding of the various media potentials;
2. Have an understanding of the production requirements needed for the media presented;
3. Know the criteria for evaluating a successful production; and
4. Be able to go through and plan phases involved in the production of communication materials.

## 3.1 Using Radio in Communication for Development

Radio is a medium widely used in development. It can cover wide areas reaching a large number of people at a relatively low cost. In this section the term radio includes:

1. the common notion of radio broadcasting, from a central station to a certain area. In the development context it is often referred to as rural radio;
2. community radio, audio programmes produced locally or by another centre and broadcast to the whole community through loudspeakers set in the village; and
3. The use of audiocassettes, both for use in the community or for producing and recording local programs on crucial issues, both for inside and outside purposes.

### 3.1.1 Nature and Purpose of Radio for Development

As for television, radio can be a mass medium and as such has been introduced for information and persuasion purposes. For instance in 1965 the French (OCORA - Office de co-operation radiophonique - with ORTF, RFI and AUDECAM) assisted an initiative in Africa known as Missions de programmes. The scope was to train local production teams and to produce educational materials by using radio techniques already tested by advertising specialists. This was an interesting approach that has been applied in other instances. However, radio in the development world has been used in many other ways, always with the same main concern: how to assist people to take control of their lives and improve their livelihoods.

The nature of radio is such that it can be used easily, i.e., listened to, while doing other things. Even the poorest countries can afford to establish radio stations and produce radio programmes. Radio receivers are also quite cheap and can be afforded by many people. Batteries sometimes can be a problem as they might be expensive and/or difficult to find in certain areas. With the progressive introduction and improvement of the wind-up radio<sup>2</sup> technology, this problem should be greatly reduced.

The role of radio is generally defined as to inform, educate and entertain. In development, however, radio can be multi-faceted as, among other things, it can serve to pass messages, improve the capability of calling upon and organising groups and organisations, enlarge the forum for social dialogue, provide effective capacity building of the community, raise awareness and knowledge of community issues, bring the people's voice to the higher level of their political structure and mobilise the community to tackle issues of collective interest. Radio production requirements and formats can be adapted to specific use and objectives.

### 3.1.2 Basic Radio Approaches

Radio in the development context can be broadly divided into three categories, each of which requires a different approach:

- Educational Radio;
- Documentary and Cultural Radio; and
- Participatory Radio.

**Educational Radio** scope is that of providing knowledge and instructions on specific issues. It can be used for formal education, as in Nicaragua where UNESCO assisted to establish a radio network to teach mathematics to pupils in primary schools, or to provide informal instructions for practical purposes, as used in a number of countries, especially in the agricultural field. These kinds of programmes are usually written and prepared by subject specialists after having investigated and assessed the issue in question. Distance education is another area where radio has played an important role. It has provided the possibility of progressing with the studies to people in remote areas, reducing limiting factors such as the time (programmes are usually broadcast more than once, and can be recorded) and the place (you can listen to them from your house or any other place provided you have a radio instead of going to school). Radio can also be used effectively as a support medium in educational campaigns on issues of collective relevance.

**Documentary and Cultural Radio** intends to report and provide testimonials on aspects of community life. This is done to draw the attention of the community to specific issues, problems and their solutions. Journalistic investigations also fall in this approach. Journalists, social researchers and communication practitioners are the ones that usually produce this type of programme, often adopting a participant observation approach in order to document the issues accurately and objectively. These programs can be addressed to other communities having similar problems, as well as to the management of development organisations or to policy-makers.

**Participatory Radio** implies the use of radio for the people and by the people. Even if in the previous two instances some degree of people's involvement is required, it is only with this kind of radio, also sometimes known as community radio, that full participation is experienced. The issues to be discussed and presented in the programme are decided by the community with the assistance of a radio producer. Zimbabwe, since 1988, has witnessed a unique media project that emphasises the two-way communication potential of radio as opposed to its traditional mass medium approach of addressing passive listeners. The Federation of Africa Media Women - Zimbabwe Chapter, conceived the Radio Listening Clubs (RLC) Experience. The project aims at providing the rural population of Zimbabwe access to radio and cross sharing of views and ideas on varied issues. People in the community have the opportunity to set the agenda and contribute to the programme expressing their needs, concerns and priority interests. With the RLC the flow of information can be either horizontal, from a community to other communities, or bottom up, from the community to policy and decision-makers. This project operates by providing a voice to the community. A co-ordinator services the RLC regularly. RCLs are formed entirely by members of the community, and the co-ordinator assists in the recording of the intended issues (even though very often the recordings are done in the absence of the co-ordinator). Having collected the recorded cassettes, the co-ordinator seeks feedback from the relevant authorities or organisations and records the responses. Next, the co-ordinator links the original community recording with the feedback provided by the person responsible and puts the programme on air. In this way the information is shared not only in the community that produced the initial recording, but with other communities as well. Members of the RLC agree that listening to radio programmes on their personal receivers is not as effective as listening to the same programme on their RLC receiver. This is so because after listening to the programme on their RLC receiver they discuss and share their ideas. An evaluation of this project, carried out in 1993, reported that:

<sup>2</sup> *This is a radio that does not require any battery and is charged manually. This kind of radio was first introduced in Africa in 1996, the technology still needs to be improved as for every time the radio is charged manually it provides only a maximum of thirty minutes of play.*

- The RLC project has provided an alternative and more efficient vehicle for direct two-way communication between the communities and the mainstream resource providers;
- The project has provided an effective mechanism for the RLCs and their communities to access resources necessary for solving their most pressing issues and concerns; and
- RLCs have provided a network for the effective exchange of information, expertise and resources among their members and their communities in general.

Participatory radio's purpose is that of providing an open forum where people can express their views, opinions, and concerns and in doing so providing the opportunities to improve their livelihoods. It also tries to change the common flow of information, traditionally top down, into a bottom up or horizontal flow of information that brings "communication" to its original meaning of sharing and exchanging ideas, opinions, solutions from different perspectives.

Each of the above mentioned approaches could adopt a different radio format. The following are the most common and frequently used formats.

### 3.1.3 Common Radio Formats

- **Lecture or Straight Talk.** This is used for presentation of something or passing on knowledge on certain issues. It should be used only for a short time (max. 15 minutes), as it can be quite boring and flat.
- **Interviews/Discussions.** This is different from the previous one. This format requires more than a single person and opinion to be aired. It can be an interview with a member of the community as well as the recording of a group discussion about an issue of concern. The fact that it involves more than one person already makes it more interesting to follow. As seen previously, this approach can be used to generate a two-way flow of information as in participatory radio.
- **Drama.** This can be the simple translation of existing drama into a radio format or the more creative dramatisation of issues identified by the community. Drama can generate a high degree of interest and keep the attention of the listeners alive for a long time.
- **Music.** This format is particularly effective in communities with a tradition of popular music, dancing and singing. The themes of songs are usually used to raise certain issues or promote certain practices.
- **Jingles/Slogans.** These are usually part of a bigger programme. However, they can be used as an approach in itself. Learn from advertisement where sometimes a simple slogan or a jingle is flashed at you just to remind you of a certain product. The same can be done in the development context.
- **Feature.** It is a programme on a specific topic. It can use a straight talk or a mix of talking and music. It is, however, focussed on a single issue.
- **Magazine.** This is a radio format usually containing a number of issues or mini-programs within its time. It can be shaped as a news report or it can have a number of different elements, such as interviews, music and straight talk. Its aim is to inform the listeners on a number of different issues.
- **Info-tainment.** This format is a combination of information and entertainment. It can be a dramatisation of an event or a radio soap opera treating priority issues. In the 1950s in

Great Britain, there was a successful drama series aimed at providing education through entertainment. It was entitled “The Archers - an everyday story of country folks”. This program was thought and set out to include material of an informational and educational nature while providing an entertaining story that the audience could identify with. Its success was due to a careful mix of elements that combined cognitive theories and the creative factors successfully used in radio fiction. Each character in the series reflected a portrait of a specific group of people identified as the learning target. Negative characters (e.g. irritant, arrogant, etc.) were usually associated with attitudes and practices that were intended to be abolished while positive characters (e.g. friendly, dynamic, successful) were associated with messages and behaviour that the producers wanted to promote. The main reason for the programme’s success probably was due to the fact that the educational and informational content of the series was entertaining, (even including a comic element). There is no rule saying that information must always be treated in a serious, and often boring, way. Radio can also be used creatively for development purposes.

### 3.1.4 Basic Elements of Radio Production

In the previous section you have seen the different types of formats that can be used when you want to present an issue of concern. Now, let us turn to factors that should be considered if you want to present the issues effectively. These can be divided into three categories: technical, content and presenters.

**Technical factors** are:

- **Sound quality.** Is the audio recording clear? Are music levels balanced? Etc.;
- **Special sound effects.** You might need the sound of rain, or wind, etc. as they relate to the issue of the programme’s focus; and
- **Accents.** You make sure that certain passages are emphasised, (usually by a higher level of volume).

**Content and its organisation includes a number of factors such as:**

- **Opening and closing.** The way you introduce a programme is very important, as it will provide the basis upon which a listener may decide to go on listening or not. Similarly the end of the programme is supposed to provide a punch line that will make the listeners reflect upon or remember the main message or issue;
- **Slogans-themes-logos.** Radio programmes can include certain slogans or recurrent themes as a distinctive mark, as people are likely to associate the slogans with the programme. Similarly these may also be used to promote and reinforce a certain idea/message. You can see this done very effectively in the advertising world. If you are not sure about it, just turn on your radio or your television!
- **Jingles.** These are similar to the ones above, only that they are usually musical slogans that can be easily sung by everybody. Jingles serve to identify a certain programme, message, product to promote and reinforce a certain idea or message;
- **Humour.** According to the format you have selected humour can play an important part. But you should not abuse it, as humour in certain instances may be offensive to people and counterproductive to the objectives of the programme;



- **Simplicity of presentation.** This is especially true in the development context. Avoid jargon and complicated treatment of concepts and messages. Always keep in mind the KISS formula - **K**eeP **I**t **S**imple and **S**traight forward;
- **Accuracy.** Make sure that the content you are presenting is accurate, and simple to understand. Once broadcast, any inadequacy may have a negative impact on many aspects of the programme;
- **Repetitions and summaries.** It is usually a good practice to repeat more than once the crucial points your programme wants to get across. Try to repeat the same points without duplicating them. That is, treat the point in different ways so that the listeners are exposed to the message more than once but in different ways. At the end of the programme you might also want to summarise the main point/s. Remember to do it in a concise and effective way;
- **Pacing.** This has to do with the speed of the radio production's presentation and the way you order and balance the different parts or segments. A well-paced programme should be neither too fast nor too slow and have all the different segments ordered in a logical and balanced way. Pausing is also part of pacing, as pauses are an important factor and can be accomplished either through music, jingles, slogans or even silence; and
- **Interactive capability.** Programmes using a participatory approach must provide an interactive capability, as seen for instance in the case of the Radio Listening Clubs in Zimbabwe. Phoning, where it exists, can be another way of providing interactivity to a radio programme. This means that you must take into account this factor not only when discussing and presenting the issue but also where there is the possibility for immediate feedback.

**Presenters and their style of delivery** can be another crucial element determining the success of a programme. Factors associated with presentation include:

- **Clarity of speech.** Do not assume every person, just because he or she knows how to talk, can be equally good as a radio presenter. A presenter needs to articulate his talk well and in an understandable way. He/she also needs to follow, or guide, the pace of the programme, using his/her voice to emphasise crucial points;
- **Source credibility.** If the presenter of the programme has a high credibility rate among listeners, this will certainly help the message to be accepted more easily. Consideration should also be given to the presenter's background (do the listeners consider him/her an insider or an outsider by). Gender is another factor to consider (for instance a woman is more likely to give higher credibility to another woman talking about breast-feeding practices than to a man); and
- **Role models.** Closely related to the above point is the question of role models. If your presenter is somebody people would want to be associated with, or a popular figure that is highly respected, the message in the radio programme will be regarded highly. Again to see how popular people can effectively give prestige and credibility to a product, look at the way the advertisement world uses sports champions as testimonials which associate them to products that often do not have anything to do with their field of expertise.

### 3.1.5 Basic Principles of Radio Scripting

Finally, another significant element of radio production that should be noted is scripting. When you are ready to work on the radio script before anything else, define the subject, the purpose, the primary audience and the intended duration. Then go through the material you have researched and recorded in the field. Ideally in a good number of cases this process should be done in the community, with the community.

Here are some tips when you engage in, or supervise the writing, of a radio script:

- **Write for the ear, not for reading.** Spoken language and written language can differ greatly and this needs to be borne in mind all the time. Each word on the script should therefore sound right not necessarily read right. Avoid the use of big and complicated words, too many adjectives, and any word that may be unfamiliar to your audience;
- **Use imagery.** While trying to keep your language simple and straight forward, try also to be creative and allow your audience to visualise what you are talking about;
- **Use relevant facts.** Facts, especially if listeners can relate to them, help in drawing attention to the message. Facts can be the familiar, something the listeners have experienced directly, or memorable, or something extraordinary or known to everybody;
- **Speak your word as you write them.** As mentioned earlier on, you are writing for the ear. It is good practice therefore to speak the words as you are writing them on paper. The suggestion here is “Think it, Say it, Write it!”
- **Get straight to the point.** Do not cram information and when needed do not be afraid to repeat the information using different ways. Most likely the audience will listen to the programme only once, therefore you need to make sure that they will get the main point/s; and
- **Be informal.** It usually helps to keep the programme, person to person, talking to him/her as you would talk in a normal conversation. Say it the way people say it!

### 3.1.6 How to Evaluate a Radio Programme

By now you have seen some of the basic characteristics associated with a good radio programme. On page 63 you will find a prototype Pre-test Checklist Sheet for the audio production that should give you an idea of what to look for when producing a radio programme. Criteria upon which a good programme is evaluated are: the relevance and the accuracy of the content; the interest it generates; the way information or points are treated and transmitted to the listeners, the technical quality and, most of all, how it has achieved the intended objectives. Evaluation, based on these criteria, should be done systematically. It must begin with the script, since it affects a number of factors such as the content accuracy and relevance, pace and message treatment. Once the script has been written it should be read aloud and timed.

Whenever possible you should pre-test the programme to make sure it is accurate and easy to understand. The questions below are intended to provide you with a guide for revising and pre-testing a script.

- Is the main point/message coming out loud and clear from the programme?
- Have I done justice to the issue?

- Is the information accurate?
- Have I a strong introduction and a strong ending?
- Have I chosen the right words and the right language (for the ear)?
- Could I have used fewer words and say it more effectively?
- Is it easy to follow?
- Is it interesting to follow throughout the entire programme?
- Does it have a good pace?
- What response do I expect?
- Do the listeners get what I intended to?
- What response do I expect? and,
- Did I use effective slogans/jingles?

*(See model of a Pre-test Checklist on the opposite page)*

### PRETEST CHECKLIST SHEET FOR AUDIO PRODUCTIONS

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Objectives: \_\_\_\_\_

Audience: \_\_\_\_\_

Producer: \_\_\_\_\_ Subject Specialist: \_\_\_\_\_

Length of time: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Format: \_\_\_\_\_ Radio Broadcast \_\_\_\_\_

Audio Cassettes: \_\_\_\_\_

Items to be	Very low	Good	Medium	Very	Low	evaluated	good
Introduction .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Closing .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Accuracy .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Comprehensibility ..	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Sound quality .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Special effects .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Music .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Jingles/slogans .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Interest .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
Length .....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		

### OPEN QUESTIONS

1. What do you think was the main message/issue presented in the program?
  
2. What do you think are the weak points of this programme?
  
3. What do you think are the strong points of this programme?
  
4. Suggestions to improve the programme?

Reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Sample Tested: \_\_\_\_\_

## 3.2 Using Print Materials in Communication for Development

Print materials, having text, or visuals or a combination of the two, are widely used in development to make communication effective. Print materials assist facilitators in interpersonal communication during training sessions or demonstrations. Sometimes they can be used as reference materials. Overhead transparencies, posters, and other visual aids can be used to illustrate points during learning. Handouts that are used by trainees themselves to remember important points are normally illustrated – it should be noted that words are images too. Print materials are also produced to provide a set of instruction on how to do something, including how to use communication materials. Print visual materials are particularly effective for generating discussions, as are flipcharts and picture codes. Posters are used extensively where one wants to draw the attention of people to specific issues.

### 3.2.1 Uses and Rationale of Print Materials

Words and images constitute the two basic elements of the print medium. Words are particularly critical where you want to provide accurate understanding of concepts, instructions and procedures. However, they can also be tedious and difficult to understand at times. In many instances they are practically useless, as the majority of people in the developing world are illiterate. Images, on the other hand, have an easier and more direct appeal, as pictures almost naturally attract the attention of the human eye. To understand a picture (provided it is compatible with the cultural environment) you do not need to have done any particular study.

The rationale for using print materials should be seen within the larger context of the situation in the area of interest. Print materials can be relatively cheap when you want a simple product. For example, when you use cheap materials or use of two colours only. They can be quite expensive if you want a sophisticated product (e.g. high material quality, full colour, etc.). Deciding when to use what and at which level, depends on a number of factors such as the characteristics of the interaction group/s (especially their literacy level), their number, their distribution (to produce 20 booklets for the 20 teachers of a district has a lower per/head cost than producing a radio programme. If, however, you had to reach 200 teachers in the province, radio might be cheaper. Your budget and objectives determine what you are going to do in the final analysis.

Materials using text are very useful when you want to inform people about events as well as provide them with technical knowledge on specific issues. Print visual materials are on the other hand, particularly effective when used to stimulate discussion (an image appeals to everybody and its meaning can be interpreted by anybody in a variety of ways) or to draw attention to a specific subject, either by appealing to their curiosity, desires or fears. In this handbook print materials are divided into four groups namely; text, visual materials, combined print materials and visual discussion tools. The latter is widely used in a number of communication strategic approaches because it encourages peoples' participation through dialogue, (see box 4).

- **Text:** Any material based exclusively or mainly on words. It includes books, leaflets, brochures, guides, etc.
- **Visual Materials:** These are drawings, pictures or photographs carrying a message or drawing the attention on one issue without the use of words. They include posters, stickers, murals, etc.

- **Combined Print Materials:** These are materials, which combine the visual element with text. Some posters fall in this group as well as a number of brochures and guides illustrating or explaining a set of instructions.
- **Visual Discussion Tools.** Usually referred to as discussion tools. As the term implies these are visual materials aimed at generating discussions rather than passing a message. They can be standing alone as a single drawing (picture codes) or they can present a full story (flipcharts) addressing a specific issue.

### Box 4

*Types of Discussion Tools.*

#### **CLOTH FLIPCHARTS: stimulating discussion in rural areas**

*Flipcharts are one of the best interpersonal communication tools for creating dialogue and rapport between field staff and rural communities. They are effective in remote areas with groups large and small, and also work well in schools, clinics, and markets and staff meetings.*

#### **Benefits of flipcharts**

- The large pictures attract attention stimulating interactive discussion.
- Illiterate people clearly see important ideas for discussion.
- Discussions are relevant because the pictures show local people and their situations, etc.
- Both problems and solutions are seen.
- Problems can be further discussed, probed and sometimes even solved.
- Peoples values of a particular subject can be raised because positive benefits are seen.
- Technical details can be examined.
- Technical information is consistent.
- The presenter can easily check to see whether or not the interaction group has understood each point.
- Feedback is immediate as questions can be raised and answered on the spot.
- A whole story (or series of linked events) can be seen picture by picture in one short session.
- The story can be adapted to examine local situations to create consensus for action.
- Pictures of the problems stimulate a search for solutions.

## **Box 4 (continued)**

### *Types of Discussion Tools.*

- Field staff and rural people gain confidence to exchange ideas.
- Interaction between field-staff and the beneficiaries is immediate and guaranteed.

### ***On the practical side, clothe flipcharts...***

- Keep information in the correct step-by step sequence, to aid the presenter;
- Allow the presenter to select certain pictures to reinforce a point of view;
- Are durable for field conditions and resistant to tearing, heat, dust and rain;
- Are washable for use over many years;
- Are portable, lightweight and do not break down easily;
- Unlike projectors, they do not need a darkened room or electricity;
- Can be printed in sufficient quantities so that all field staff and key people in the community may have copies to use;
- Are made locally, and relatively cheaply, without foreign exchange.

## **FLIPCHARTS USER'S GUIDE: enhancing practical communication skills**

For field staff, teachers and other community mobilisers, a guide booklet tells how to turn a simple flipchart into a dynamic discussion tool. It interprets the meaning of the pictures, explains the story line possibilities and suggests interpersonal communication techniques.

### **The guide describes how to:**

- plan and conduct productive meetings with rural people;
- set up the meeting place;
- tell the flipchart stories, stressing important information;
- adapt the flipchart messages to local needs;
- ask leading questions;
- encourage the interaction group to join in with questions, answers and points of view;
- identify problems or obstacles;
- steer the discussions toward positive decisions;
- assist rural communities to make practical plans that will support development objectives.

**On the practical side,** the booklet is printed in sufficient quantity so that field staff and others can use it as a general communication guide.

### **PICTURE CODES: stimulating discussion**

Picture codes are drawings, used in a similar manner as for flipcharts. They differ from flipcharts in that they do not portray a series of events but rather a single act and that they are usually on paper. Quite often on one side of the picture code there is the drawing and on the other side there are the suggested questions to go with it. Benefits and uses of picture codes are the same as those for flipcharts.

### **POSTERS AND LEAFLETS: promoting ideas and action**

Very often these utilise or adapt the flipchart images. Posters raise awareness and the value of the important “new ideas” discussed in the flipcharts.

Leaflets provide reminders about the “ideas” and key technical points raised in the flipcharts.

#### **With posters and leaflets:**

- the project is more visible, dynamic and important;
- mass awareness of the “new idea” is achieved;
- vital technical information is widely distributed in a consistent form;
- various communities are informed through use of local language versions; and
- field staff has attractive and colourful gifts to give to influential individuals and offices.

On the practical side, posters and leaflets are printed in large quantities and in local language versions without much additional expense.

**ADULT LITERACY AND SCHOOL BOOKLETS:** These are often used for teaching farmers and their families

These booklets, that usually include a number of drawings and pictures, are an excellent way to encourage interaction groups, field staff and students to learn more about the intended issue. Booklets are usually in high demand among literacy programmes and individuals that do not have enough reading materials. For many individuals these serve as a starting point or reference for discussion. They can also be reused many times.

#### **Adult literacy and school booklets:**

- remind people of the story discussed in the flipchart;
- provide opportunities for discussing and studying vital technical information;
- help people to learn the requirements of the project and how individuals may participate in it;
- are accessible to various communities because they use local languages; and
- provide an opportunity to the project to give something to key individuals and groups, schools, etc.



Large quantities of adult literacy and school booklets are usually distributed to rural communities in target areas where an extra effort to inform people and to ensure their participation is needed. In such circumstances local language versions should be made available for each relevant community.

## 3.2.2 Basic Elements of Print Materials Production

Printed materials include mass media such as newspapers, posters, pamphlets, banners, stickers, billboards, booklets, etc. and group media such as flipcharts, picture codes. The former usually intend to pass on information or messages to people while the latter enhances face-to-face discussion thus facilitating the investigation of critical issues and the exchange of knowledge. As for other media, when considering aspects related to the production process, you should assess the situation to be addressed by the communication strategy. There are a few elements you should be aware of when preparing for the production of print materials.

- **Culture** - printed materials have of necessity to be culturally relevant and appropriate. From culture to culture images or metaphors that might be visually represented could mean different things, which are acceptable or not acceptable. The PRCA is important in unveiling aspects of the culture that are considered taboo or not for public consumption. Similarly, you should look at the literacy level of the interaction group critically when considering the written word. There is some literacy requirement for the visual component. People need to relate to images in order to appreciate them fully and understand the message. This is made possible if images are culturally sensitive and appropriate.
- **Educational Level** - illustrated print materials can also have text. As mentioned above before the use of text, it is important to know whether the interaction group for which the materials are meant, are literate.
- **Content** - the content, that is what is presented by the print materials, should always be relevant and appropriate to the context. Subject matter, age, gender, and preferences for colour, appeals, and perceptions of the community determine the context, closely related to the cultural element. If you deal with visual materials you are strongly advised, wherever possible, to work with an artist from the community. This will ensure the appropriateness of the materials, encourage the community to bring out the materials associated with the topic and assist actively in the production process.
- **Language** - communication becomes a two-way understanding if the spoken and written language and that of visualisation, is spoken and fully understood by the interaction group. Language is the first window to a people's culture. Unless one prints materials using the people's language, it might not be possible to access the people's culture.
- **Application/Technical Use** - materials for discussion, education, information or training should be pertinent to the application, or technical use for which they are meant. Indigenous technical knowledge regarding the matter should also have been known from the participatory research.

While this handbook has referred to both written and print material its major focus is specifically visual materials as they are the ones mostly used in the communication approaches adopted in the development world. Remember that in many cases high illiteracy levels are a formidable barrier to understanding written printed aids.

### 3.2.3 How to Draw for Rural People

As mentioned above, because of their level of formal education, relative isolation from the media and other printed matter, rural people may have limited skills to interpret drawings. Just like reading a book, comprehending a drawing is an acquired skill, called “visual literacy”. To help such viewers, make illustrations that can be understood easily, possibly without any written or verbal explanation. The followings are some tips that can assist you when drawing for rural people:

- Make drawings simple and bold, and put the main topic at the centre as large as possible;
- Show only one topic (or idea) at a time;
- Take out unnecessary details, which do not have a purpose, as they distract people and make the main subject to become lost;
- Since perspective may confuse viewers, avoid drawing objects that are small in the background;
- Draw everything in the picture in scale to each other;
- Show whole objects, even if there are several. Put the objects in the foreground;
- Avoid overlapping or cutting off parts of objects;
- Show “detail enlargement” of a part only after the whole object is seen;
- Avoid symbols that are generally abstract;
- Help people identify with the pictures, make the characters, clothes, buildings, animals, crops, tools, and environment as similar as possible to the interaction groups;
- Use colours realistically;
- In a picture sequence present a new picture for each new action, thought or theme. This is called step-by-step sequence;
- Keep the figures and environment in the story consistent (characters, gender, age, clothing, hairstyle, animals, crops, buildings, seasons, colours, etc.).
- Use appropriate clothing for the person’s social status, age, gender and activities; and
- Use the right facial and body gestures for each situation in the story.

To create effective visual materials that will meet your objectives, it is necessary to identify the various themes and ways of telling the story, as people from the community would describe it. These will be transformed into ideas, which will provide the basis for pictures and text. To be effective, ideas must be clarified. Incomplete and vague ideas will waste the time and effort of artists, writers, technicians and even the intended interaction group. Use the storyboard technique to put all ideas in a sound written and visual form.

What is a storyboard? It is a way of assisting you to organise the various aspects involved in the production of visual print materials. It allows you to match images with the text or questions accompanying them. A storyboard is made this way:

- Small rough sketches of the proposed pictures, on one side of the paper;
- Simple text explaining the graphic details of each picture, on the other side of the paper, next to the related sketches; and
- Text that narrates the main story, in outline form, but includes key questions for the interaction group.

The storyboard is the key creative planning tool. It enables easy alteration, which ensures that ideas are clear and the story sequence and technical information are complete. At this stage all concerned with the communication effort can review and suggest improvements.

The guidelines presented here are mainly intended for flipcharts although they also apply to other materials. Remember to sketch the entire group of flipcharts, posters, leaflets and booklets, before drawing full sized versions. This shows planners that all main themes are covered. In summary you should observe the following:

- **Visualise for the interaction group.** Imagine each picture revealing the story in a step-by-step sequence so that the interaction group has no doubt about what is happening.
- **Sequence.** Good sequence is achieved when the interaction group is comfortable looking at the next picture, and not disoriented, asking, "What happened?"
- **One picture for one thought.** Assign a new picture to show each new action, thought or technical theme. If a message has multiple topics, split it up into separate pictures.
- **Number of pictures.** Plan a minimum of three pictures and maximum of eight pictures per story.
- **"Write pictures" or "draw sentences".** Let the subject be revealed in pictures, one after another. The pictures should be self-explanatory. Draw as you are narrating a story, keeping in mind topical questions to help the interaction group explore the content of the pictures more deeply.
- **Keep it brief.** Avoid writing long technical descriptions in the narrative (the pictures should be self-explanatory). The style should be conversational to stimulate discussion. Avoid a lecture.
- **Make it worthwhile.** Let the interaction group know from the very first picture that it is worthwhile to see more. This is accomplished by showing people like themselves involved in the story, familiar scenes of employment or leisure, or relevant concerns and interests.

For the end of the story prepare questions that help the interaction group to discuss and to give their views on what happened and what could be done. Often individual pictures are viewed again for this discussion.

Finally if you are producing posters or booklets pay attention to the suggestions below:

- For posters make the pictures bold, attention-grabbing and self-explanatory with equally simple and large headlines. The illustrations may be adapted from the flipcharts; and
- For booklets the narrative should be written simply to be read aloud easily, not like a technical document. The illustrations may be adapted from the flipcharts.

### 3.2.4 Production Criteria in Print Materials

The design and production process must be participatory. This means that at every stage of the design process the interaction group has to be involved in terms of ideas and, if there is a local artist, in terms of drawing the illustrations. By so doing, the community perception of visual literacy is demystified. The community is empowered by virtue of being engaged from the brainstorming, to the creation of learning, discussion materials.

- During the participatory research, video footage, photographs and samples of songs, colours and so on are collected. This collection is important in the material production process particularly when using a graphic artist not familiar with the area. Aspects of culture need to be incorporated in visual materials to be relevant to the interaction group. **A picture of Sudanese adult nomads wearing traditional robes was shown to Zimbabwean farmers and the Zimbabwean farmers interpreted the illustration as that of children looking after cattle.** Findings of the participatory research will also assist you in choosing the appropriate media.
- Remember that the idea of print materials is to enhance communication in a face-to-face dialogue. It is not only the comprehension of the visual materials that is important but also the acceptability. Whereas one community in a sanitation campaign can accept an illustration of some one in the bush answering the call of nature using the cat method, another community might be offended by that illustration. Cultural sensitivity is a cardinal rule in producing visual materials. The communication team and graphic artist must be good observers of non-verbal cues and listeners of the interaction group's concerns in order to achieve this.
- Establish whether the purpose of the visual materials, with regards to the communication approach, is problem solving, to educate, to dialogue, or to train. A particular approach will have an impact on the type of illustration one is using. For example, an illustration informing a community about mixed cropping is different from an illustration that is intended to create dialogue on problems encountered in mixed cropping. Discussion tools will naturally always seek to promote face-to-face discussion.
- As you will see later pre-testing is a fundamental part of the production process. It serves to ensure that the community sees what you think you are drawing. Sometimes you can have a very talented graphic artist but with no experience of the rural world. Pre-testing ensures that such an artist moves closer to the rural setting and thus avoids creating material that is meaningless or misleading to the interaction group. Drawings should be seen as evaluated by the eyes of the people they are intended for not from those of technical panel on drawings. Remember that reality is what peoples' eyes perceive regardless of how well or how accurately the artist has drawn something.
- Communities appreciate artistically profound illustrations – profound in the sense of appealing. Banal, dull, unimaginative illustrations are likely to alienate the communities' interest in learning. There are different appeals that can be used in illustrating materials. As discussed in chapter two these appeals can also be adapted for radio, theatre, video, television and other media.

### 3.2.5 The Printing Production Process

The communication strategy describes the content and direction messages and discussion themes should take. Therefore when describing the production process you should start from the research. Also remember that before authorising mass production of the materials it is always advisable to have a prototype produced. You can follow these basic steps in the production of print materials (a similar process applicable to media production in general is presented in the last section of this chapter):

## **Step 1: Research**

Identify objectives, messages/exchange themes by consulting field staff and interaction groups. Take photographs to help the illustrator.

## **Step 2: Storyboard and writing/drawing**

With interaction groups, use participatory approaches to sketch individual images, and draft accompanying texts. Check materials with technical specialists. Produce illustrations, lettering and complete texts.

## **Step 3: Field-testing and approval**

Show materials to assess effectiveness with the interaction groups, field staff and technical specialists. After field-testing, improve message content, illustrations and text. Obtain final approval.

## **Step 4: Preparing to print**

Obtain competitive quotations, choose a printer, and produce final illustrations, typeset text and paste-up camera-ready artwork for printing. Wherever possible produce a prototype first.

## **Step 5: Budgeting and printing**

Deliver camera-ready artwork to printer. Confirm final budget. Approve first printed samples prior to authorising full printing job. The next section deals with budgeting aspects in detail.

## **Step 6 Training and distribution**

Train field staff to use materials at communication training workshop - do not distribute materials to field staff unless they have been trained to use them. Detail the distribution plan with field staff co-ordinators to coincide with communication activities.

### **3.2.6 Budgeting for the Production of Print Materials**

Budgeting for discussion materials that usually are based on visual aids may present some differences from the one involved in print materials using text. The process however is similar, and in this section we look at the former. The budget for producing print materials, and in particular, discussion tools, can be a major cost of the communication activities. It is important to be able to make an accurate estimate by being familiar with all factors involving costs. These include:

- cost of work by production team;
- pilot-testing (transport, accommodation, allowances, etc.);
- modification related work;
- printing;
- training field staff to use the materials; and
- distribution and use.

When you start planning the production of print materials you should make sure to have all the necessary expertise on board. The Production team usually consists of a team leader, a scriptwriter, an illustrator (from the project area), technical adviser or subject specialist (from the project). The activities this team will be involved in may include:

- Planning production steps and budget;
- Establishing printing specifications and costs;
- Writing the texts for all materials;
- Collecting visual reference: taking and collecting photographs;
- Drawing all illustrations;
- Visualising and presenting storyboards for appraisal;
- Pilot-testing draft illustrations, text and themes of prototype materials;
- Modifying prototype materials after pilot-testing and seeking final approval;
- Preparing camera-ready artwork (including text type-setting) for printing;
- Liasing with selected printers and quality control of their work;
- Drawing guidelines for training field staff to use printed materials; and
- Developing the printed material distribution plan;

Once the process has reached the stage of production, you should define the specifications needed to accomplish this task. To determine costs printers must know specifications, which include:

- printing process - silk-screen or offset litho;
- page size and number of pages;
- quality of paper or cloth;
- cover material;
- type of binding (finishing);
- number of colours for printing;
- state of the camera ready artwork (drawings & text);
- quantities;
- delivery time; and
- finalise specifications after field-testing.

### **Determine Quantities By:**

- distribution points;
- number of users;
- number of language versions; and
- minimum quantities for cost-effective printing

Finally you have to determine the quantity considering the following factors:

- **Distribution points.** Determine all likely users from field staff to key people in local communities and distribution points using a Distribution Quantity Worksheet (a list specifying places and quantities). For particularly important areas, a more intensive distribution and use of materials might be needed.
- **Number of users.** You need to know how many people are going to use the materials in order to estimate cost and inputs needed.
- **Number of language versions.** If applicable, plan to print important materials in local language versions. The printer, at little additional cost per copy, can produce different language versions of the same poster, leaflet, etc., if sufficient copies are printed.
- **Minimum quantity for cost-effective printing.** Take into account minimum printing quantities. Bear in mind that the major costs of printing are in the preparation stages of the first batch. Additional copies are relatively inexpensive.

The following tables provide an example of various budget lines to consider in the production process, categorised by communication activities, personnel, type of materials for printing, training and distribution.

**Table 4**

<i>Production Team Activities.</i>	
<b>1.1 Personnel</b>	<b>Estimated cost</b>
1.1.1 Team leader	
1.1.2 Illustrator	
1.1.3 Project technical specialist	
1.1.4 Secretarial service	
<b>1.2 Preparation</b>	
1.2.1 Research field trip	
1.2.2 Per diems	
1.2.3 Fuel for field trip	
1.2.4 Fuel for town	
1.2.5 Art and photographic materials	
1.2.6 Office, artist studio, telephone	
1.2.7 Pilot-testing field trips	
1.2.8 Per diems	
1.2.9 Fuel	
<b>Estimated subtotal</b>	

**Table 5**

<i>Printing.</i>		
<b>2.1 Printing</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Estimated cost</b>
2.1.1 Flipcharts		
2.1.2 Flipchart users guide		
2.1.3 Picture codes		
2.1.4 Posters		
2.1.5 Leaflets		
2.1.6 Literacy booklets		
<b>Estimated subtotal</b>		

**Table 6**

<i>Training and Distribution.</i>		
<b>3.1 Training and Distribution</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Estimated cost</b>
3.1.1 Training the trainers workshop		
3.1.2 Local-level training of field staff		
3.1.3 Distribution, transport to local areas		
3.1.4 Usage - activities		
<b>Estimated subtotal</b>		
<b>TOTAL (table 1, 2 and 3)</b>		

### 3.2.7 Pre-Testing Print Materials: Field-testing to Ensure Effectiveness.

The process of pre-testing is similar for all materials. In this section, however, our focus is on discussion tools. People interpret drawings and the message behind them on the basis of what they already know and what they believe in. Their “Visual Perception” is particular to their culture, education and extent of exposure to media. It is therefore essential to test all draft media materials with the intended interaction group and users before you print, or distribute and even use them.

#### Testing will save money, time and effort

Field testing, or pre-testing, puts the production team in direct contact with the people that are important, i.e., the project beneficiaries. During and after field-testing the team can modify the materials to ensure effectiveness.

#### The viewers

Rural people often see illustrations in ways that are very different from people who live in towns. They may even interpret a drawing to mean the exact opposite of what you intended it to mean. With the illustrator, show the pictures to the intended interaction group and ask what they see. If they see something different from what you intend, ask their advice on how to make the picture better if it is to reflect what you intend it to do. The illustrator should re-sketch the subject on the spot and try it again. In just a short time you will have pictures that rural people understand and enjoy. These new sketches can be finalised back at headquarters. But if there is any doubt about



rural people's comprehension of these final materials (in terms of concepts, colours, rearrangement, etc.) the materials should be field-tested again before printing. Remember you are also testing for the acceptability of the idea and not just for the comprehension of the individual pictures.

## **Test the materials, not the people**

When field-testing materials, remember that the materials are being tested, not the people who are asked to comment and make suggestions. There are no "right" or "wrong" comments. A farmer is not "wrong" if he or she identifies a drawing of a cow as a dog! The drawing is "wrong". The illustrator needs to redraw it to fit the farmer's image of a cow. Do not be embarrassed if the drafts of media materials "do" poorly. The challenge is to adapt these materials in order to communicate effectively with rural people.

The kind of questions that field-testing will answer with the interaction group are:

- Do they like the materials, are they attractive, do they hold their attention and do they stimulate discussion?
- Do they get the message (or concepts) right away, or are they confused by the way things are portrayed, or by unnecessary details?
- Can they link the step-by-step sequence of pictures into a story over a time scale, or do they interpret each picture separately?
- Is the content of the story correct?
- Do they focus just on details, or parts of the picture, rather than the whole picture?
- Do they see the relevance of the situation portrayed, to their own lives and needs?
- Do they agree with the local details such as clothes, buildings, animals, crops, tools, and environment?
- Are they used to abstraction of ideas, or do they mostly think in concrete terms?
- Do they understand perspective to show things far and near?
- Can they see overlapped objects as separate items?
- Can they determine the relative size of objects in the picture? (Scale)
- Can they interpret close-up enlargements?
- Are they concerned about cut-off's, e.g. torso section of the body without the legs?
- Do they recognise facial expressions and body postures with specific emotions?
- Do they see the implied activities and movement and are they correct?
- Does any part of a picture embarrass them?
- Do they attach any significance to the different colours? and
- Are the stories too long or too short?

### **With whom and how many people should you pre-test with?**

To get a balanced view with the intended interaction group, show the drawings to different individuals across the social scale age and gender. Keep testing until you find a trend that gives you an idea of what the problems are. **Consistent answers from 20 to 30 people are enough to indicate if the materials work or require changes.**

### **Test for the meaning of the text**

Get people to read aloud any text that is intended for them, for example slogans on a series of posters. If they cannot read, read it to them. Do they understand the meaning of the slogan? Can they suggest a slogan to convey the meaning better?

### **Some classic questions of field-testing both pictures and text narration**

Ask open questions to prompt and encourage discussion. Let the interaction group explain details and, if applicable, encourage them to give testimonies of their experience on the subject seen. Indicate first the entire picture and then further prompt by pointing to the details.

- “What do you see here?” (Indicate first the entire picture and then the details.)
- “What is happening?”
- “What is the picture about?”
- “How does this picture relate to the previous picture?”
- “What is each person in the picture doing, and what are they thinking about?”
- “Why are they doing that?”
- “How do the people look?” and the crops, animals, buildings, etc.
- “Who is this person and how is he/she feeling?”
- “What do you feel about this?”
- “Which is close and far away?”
- “What is the message of this story?”
- “Does it happen here?”
- “What should be done?”
- “What do you think should happen next”?
- “Is there anything you like about this picture?”
- “Is there any thing you don’t like about this picture, is anything embarrassing?”
- “Is the picture interesting? If so why and if not, why not?”
- “How would you change this picture to make it clearer?”
- “How would you change these drawings to show the message better?”
- “Read the text aloud (or read it to them if they cannot) and tell me what you just read?”

- “Does the text go with the picture?” and
- “Are there words you would change? To what?”

Naturally, if the whole production process has taken place in the community, with local artists, the effectiveness of pre-testing is greatly diminished as people’s perceptions and suggestions will already have been already reflected in the materials.

## 3.3 Using Video in Communication for Development

Video has often been regarded as a powerful medium that is adaptable and effective in all situations. Unfortunately this is not the case. Video is the use of semi-professional or professional videotaping for specific purposes made for narrow audiences, with specific characteristics and interests. It can be produced and shown either in a raw form or in an edited fashion (meaning working on the video material that has been shot, cut it and put it together into an effective format). Sometimes video programmes can also be used and broadcast on television, but even if video is such a powerful media this does not mean that it should be used in every occasion. You should keep in mind that video production could be a complex and expensive task. The main danger with video is that it can often be regarded as the most important aspect of a communication strategy, running into the danger highlighted by Mc Luhan, when he stated that the medium is the message. Viewers, especially in rural areas, can become very excited with video, but will they be equally excited and alert to the content video is supposed to communicate?

### 3.3.1 Purpose and Rationale for Using Video

Video is a medium that could be used for a number of purposes. The most common use is the one-way mass communication function, where the message, or a series of messages are passed on to a passive audience, consisting of viewers who cannot provide any direct feedback to what has been produced. Video, however, could also be used in a more participatory and interpersonal manner, as it has been extensively done by FAO in a number of countries in Latin America<sup>3</sup> and by other organisations in different parts of the world (India is another country where participatory video has been used successfully). People in the community can use video to document and reflect upon issues and activities of collective interest. It can also be used to generate discussion on critical issues.

When considering using video you should ask yourself the advantages of this choice. The rationale for using video can be its persuasive strength or maybe the fact that it will stimulate and motivate farmers to express their viewpoint in a community experiencing a low profile on a certain activity. The point is that once you are familiar with the strengths and weaknesses of video you should consider them in deciding why it would be better to use video in your communication strategy. There are many media that can be used in a communication programme. Each of them may be the most appropriate according to the situation and the needs of the community.

Before using video you should however closely consider the costs and implications associated with this choice. Bear in mind that video has a language in itself and before thinking how to go about it, you should try to understand the level of visual literacy of the community. By visual literacy it is meant the people’s understanding of the technology and of symbols and images, which may be

part of the video. You should therefore avoid using video just for the sake of it, as it frequently happens. Video should be used carefully and only after having decided the benefits expected and the full implications of using it.

### 3.3.2 Main Uses of Video

Video in development can be used effectively for various purposes namely:

- documentation;
- monitoring;
- encouraging participation;
- generating discussion; and
- facilitating the learning process.

Documentation usually implies a series of tasks that can be accomplished effectively only by somebody with a good deal of experience in video. Documenting a process or an activity requires accurate planning before the shooting, in order to highlight effectively the intended content/message. This means that before going into the field to document a project and community activities you need to sit down and prepare a basic plan for your video shooting. You have also to make sure that the video planning is compatible and feasible with the project work plan and the community's daily activities. Once you have done your video planning you must inform all stakeholders about it. When the actual shooting of the video begins, the person operating the video equipment needs to be familiar with a number of technical issues e.g., how to frame a shot properly, lighting requirements, proper audio recording, etc. This ensures the quality of the final product, which usually needs to be of high standard in order for the result to impress project management, policy makers, international donors, governmental institutions, etc. Finally, after the shooting in the field, the material should be edited into an attractive and interesting format. The production of this kind of video can be very expensive. You therefore need to identify funds before beginning the production process.

On the other hand, video can be used in a less demanding, but equally constructive way, by shifting the production process from the experts to the community. The purpose of video here is not to impress somebody but rather to encourage people's participation, and to generate discussion on crucial issues or facilitate the learning process (concerning new skills or required knowledge). In Latin America FAO<sup>3</sup> has introduced an innovative methodology known as Audio-visual Pedagogy that is based on the principle that the best form of learning is that achieved by doing. Relevant problems are assessed in the field jointly by the extensionists and the farmers. Out of this interaction a pedagogical package, which contains learning issues decided jointly by the extensionist with the farmers, is developed with video at its centre. Problems are discussed and addressed with the support of video. The old model sender-medium-receiver has been changed into interlocutor-medium-interlocutor, (very similar to the model used by the Southern African Development Community- Centre of Communication for Development - SADC-CCD). Video is then planned,

<sup>3</sup> The Regional FAO Project GCP/RLA/114/IITA, based in Santiago, Chile, has been at the forefront of an innovative approach, known as Audio-visual Pedagogy. It entails the use of video with and by rural communities to encourage and support their active participation in the decision making process.

produced and played back by the community for the community. When used in this interactive and participatory fashion, video can be a very valuable asset both for the community and for any development project or programme.

There are other instances where video can be used in a participatory way. When discussing an issue for instance the debate can be recorded and then shown to other people (with or without editing). Very often that is enough to stir a lively discussion and raise people's awareness on what is being discussed. Video can act as a filter to express people's opinions, thus making them more impersonal and less sensitive to personal criticism. On the other hand some people may feel shy or too intimidated to talk in front of a video camera. Such is the power of video that it can also be effectively used to revert the traditional mass media top down approach into a bottom up one, as in the case of one Masai community in the Ngorongoro conservation area. The men of the community expressed candidly in a video, their concern about the management plan as proposed by external experts. They openly said that they were wondering why they needed these experts to come and tell them how to conserve their natural resources when these very experts were coming from countries where most wildlife and vegetation was already destroyed. Statements such as these were recorded on video and started being shown in different circles. As a result, the approval of the intended management plan was postponed (even when there was extensive pressure to make it go ahead). Video can therefore be effectively used for advocacy in order to allow the community's voice to be heard. As seen in the example just given above, video has a very powerful effect that can be easily and rapidly multiplied by showing it to a number of people or organisations. In such an instance video does not need to have extensive preparations or post-production activities. The poor technical conditions in which the message is presented can actually reinforce the immediacy and the impact of what has been said.

Finally video can also be used effectively for monitoring and evaluation. This aspect could either be done by the community or by video experts. The preparations for this should be however done in a participatory manner. Indicators and checkpoints to be monitored and videotaped should be decided jointly with the community. Usually if properly done this material can be used to produce a video on the whole process, thus documenting, informing and even promoting the projects' achievements.

Video is a flexible enough instrument to be used for a number of purposes as long as you are clear in your mind what it is for. The biggest, and most common, mistake you can make is that of video taping everything just because you have available the necessary equipment. In this case you are very likely to end up with a mountain of videotapes of very little value. To avoid this, you should plan in advance what you intend to record. You may not need a full treatment of the video you intend to produce, but at least, you should have some guidelines to direct your video recording.

Since video production can be a very expensive enterprise, before engaging in it, you should carry out a cost-benefit analysis answering questions such as: is video the most appropriate medium to achieve the objectives? Is it cost effective? Do most people have access to view the video? Etc. One case where it is often advisable to use video is in television campaigns where there is a strong element of persuasion to be dealt with. Due to its persuasive power, its high appeal and high credibility it usually enjoys, video is a very effective medium for drawing people's attention to crucial issues. However, there is still the problem of how many people are actually able to watch the video, either through videocassette recorders, mobile units or television. How many people have access to television in rural areas? If you plan a mass campaign and you intend to use video,

or television, you should first investigate the penetration levels, i.e. establish how many people have access to video or television. As a final recommendation, keep in mind the purpose of video you intend to produce, the people you intend to produce it with. When in doubt, ask for advice from experts.

### 3.3.3 Strengths and Limitations of Video

While video can be a very appealing medium with many strengths it also has a few limitations and constraints. Among the major advantages of using video is the high interest it generates and the fact that electronic images can be played back and forth and be discussed immediately (if the necessary equipment is provided). Among the most frequently quoted disadvantages are; the relatively high costs and the technical know-how required to properly operate, maintain the equipment and produce good quality products.

The main advantages of using video are:

- It is a prestigious and persuasive medium. The simple fact of using it often is sufficient to draw people's attention;
- It can be highly persuasive, as it usually enjoys high credibility;
- It is a very effective mass medium and as such, it can reach a great number of people at the same time;
- It can be of immediate use. Pictures and sounds are recorded simultaneously and can be played back on the spot if a monitor or a VCR is available;
- Once the equipment is purchased and well maintained it has minimal running costs;
- It can provide immediate feedback and arguments for educational or raising awareness discussions;
- When post-production is required, video allows a very effective content manipulation to reinforce the intended message or theme and make it more appealing;
- Modern video technology has made the operation of video technology a simple task, within everyone's reach; and
- It is an effective medium for documenting and monitoring community activities. It can also be used effectively in presentation of the community viewpoints to policy makers and decision makers.

On the other hand video has the following disadvantages.

- It has high initial expenses.
- Video equipment is quite delicate, must be stored in an appropriate place and handled with care. It usually requires proper maintenance in order to function properly over a period of time.
- As powerful as it is as a medium, it can also be rather self-absorbing, diverting people's attention from the intended content on to the video itself.

- When used at community level, it tends to be monopolised by powerful interests because of its prestige.
- Loses its mass media connotations in rural areas where TV penetration is low and quite often even when electricity may be lacking.
- When used for informational purposes, it requires complex preparation in terms of content (what should be presented) and format (how it should be presented and shot). Hence it also requires specific know-how seldom available in rural communities.
- When used for informational purposes video can be a very expensive instrument, since on top of the time and costs required for the preparations, you need time and costs for post-production activities.

## 3.4 Using Popular Theatre in Communication for Development

Theatre for Development is used as one way of helping the masses in the developing world to come to terms with their environment and the onus of improving their lot culturally, educationally, politically, economically and socially. It can be used to pass and reinforce certain messages or to uncover and investigate issues.

Various terms are used for Theatre for Development, for example: popular theatre, propaganda theatre, case drama, development theatre or, sometimes, political theatre. Each of these terms indicates to some extent what Theatre for Development is about, but not fully. In this section you will be introduced to the way theatre can be used effectively as a communication technique and medium.

### 3.4.1 Background and Rationale

Politics and intellectual nationalism today are responsible for the view that performing arts have always been fulfilling a utilitarian role in the community and that encouraging this serves to forestall a people's heritage. Some politicians claim that<sup>4</sup>:

There are many reasons why our forefathers chose to use songs, dance, drums and masks to educate their young, to comment on the socio-political conditions in their societies and to preserve their historical legends. One of the reasons is that our forefathers realised that one of the most effective methods of education is through audio-visual aids of what was familiar. In other words our forefathers subscribed to the modern education axiom that if he sees and hears he remembers. They also realised that by presenting ideas through a variety of media such as songs, dance, mime, poetic recitals, ordinary narrative and masquerades one is able to capture the imagination of the people. It was the function of our traditional theatre, not merely to entertain, but also to instruct.

In this vein, theatre for development has been encouraged as a positive effort building on a people's cultural heritage, using traditional channels and knowledge. Theatre has always been used to exchange or advance knowledge, views and information among peoples of the world from time immemorial. This kind of theatre has existed within festivals or ceremonies of one kind or another.



To see the knowledge, views or information invested in this theatre, one has to understand the occasion when it takes place, the manner in which it is done and, the words and language that form its stories. Current use of theatre in development activities stems from recognition of this fact. However, there are practitioners, with more radical views, who believe that the entertainment function of theatre is a deliberate and convenient move to suppress the potential of theatre as a tool for raising the consciousness of the people.

The sudden resurgence of theatre for development in the third world today, highlights the potential of this medium for being a democratic medium, in which the people, i.e., the audience, can play an active part in the making of the content and issues presented. In this way they can relate directly to those issues and fully enjoy the integration of popular and traditional elements with the creative component of theatre. Theatre can assist in the search for ways of supplementing the mass media, which have been shown to be incapable of effecting change on their own without some intermediary process especially in rural areas. This view is partly supported by some people who state that popular theatre is being encouraged as a tool for adult education. This is due to deficiencies in the existing educational institutions and communication media that stem from elitism of colonial education and its irrelevance to the goals of national development to non-formal education. They also share one philosophical basis in their discussion of this education. And this is a philosophy deriving from the ideas of Paulo Freire and others who put at the centre of their work participatory research, conscientisation and development. These people are adult educators and their ideas have given rise to the participatory methodology "Training for Transformation".

One of the burning issues in theatre for development is the role and importance of the artistry. One school of thought believes that whatever the theatre producers do with their people should be well done, polished and professional. Other practitioners tend to de-emphasise this aspect. The message is all they really care about. This position seems to be more prevalent in most developing countries now. The artist is encouraged to identify with the masses. The artist's work must be committed to the needs of his society. Aesthetics are not of primary importance to the people. Survival is the thing. Whether it is political or physical, it is survival and artists must commit themselves to that end. This is an urgent matter too. In other words, artists must also understand that their art should be an 'instant' package in an 'easy to carry' wrapper.

The result of these two parallel demands on the artist have also given rise to 'Theatre for Development' or as some say 'popular theatre'. This is a theatre that combines use of the theatre as a medium for propagating ideas and entertainment. Theatre for development is also being used as a way of exploring problems, views on them and solutions amongst the people. In this regard it is used as precursor to community mobilisation campaigns.

### 3.4.2 The Nature of Theatre for Development

In almost all cases where this theatre is in existence, it is led by a team of experts who work with various types of extension workers or 'village level workers', assisting them 'to get their health, nutrition, and agricultural messages across to rural villages using entertainment and fun'. We might add to this list, adult literacy campaigns too. Throughout the developing world, we find projects of one type or another engaged in Theatre for Development.

<sup>4</sup> Mudenda, Hon. E.H.K. Speech at the Official Opening of the Theatre for Development Workshop held at Chalimbana In-Service Training Institute on 19 August 1979 (in *Theatre for Development* by Chifunyise, Kerr and Dall, published by I.T.I., 1978).



Areas that come under this theatre vary from straight drama to songs that are employed in any way as media for communicating ideas related to rural development. The Government of Sierra Leone/Care project called LEARN used 'dramatisations, music, visual aids to bring new information and ideas to villagers to help them keep healthy and improve their agricultural practices'. Travelling Theatre of Zambia and the Extension Services Department in Malawi include puppetry and dance in their work. So, broadly speaking, Theatre for Development involves a wide range of resources. Let us isolate a few elements of this theatre in order to illustrate how it is created.

- **Songs**

Usually these are campaign songs composed and sung by teams of extension workers either alone or together with the people amongst whom they work. In some cases the songs are recorded on tapes and distributed all over the country for playing through the radio or portable tape recorders during working sessions. Where the latter is the case the help of properly trained musicians is sought. This is the case in Sierra Leone's project LEARN whose theme was sang by Big Fayia and the Military Jazz Band.

The songs are sung in vernacular languages and usually their tunes are well known adaptations of popular music styles. The guiding principles in composing such songs are:

- (a) simple catchy tune,
- (b) simple words and lots of repetition,
- (c) clear message.

- **Dance**

Dances employed in this theatre are those that already possess within themselves abundant mimetic potential, for what actually takes place here is what should properly be termed dance-drama. An example of such dances is Malipenga or Mganda or Beni found in United Republic of Tanzania, Malawi and Zambia. Although it is danced to the accompaniment of songs, the dominant part of the music comes from drums, whistles and gourds that are specially designed to play like some form of trumpet. To the beat of such instruments, dancers mime several scenes in which they depict whatever message they choose to show. In theatre for development these messages fall within the total intentions of the project.

- **Puppetry**

This usually forms part of mobile information campaigns. In Malawi the Ministry of Agriculture has used this most extensively. The Extension Services section, now called the Agricultural Communication Branch, that serves not just Agriculture, but Forestry and Game sections of the Ministry prepares and performs puppet shows up and down the country. The idea in such campaigns usually is to teach farmers and villagers in general, modern methods of Agriculture as well as forest and game conservation.

In spite of its popularity amongst practitioners puppetry is losing its grip on its adult audiences. It is found to be too childish in some cases, whereas in some places it is found to be culturally **not admissible**.

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<sup>5</sup> Project LEARN (1982). *Instructor's Guide*. Government of Sierra Leone, Care Publications.

The puppet show takes on a simple story line that the audience is supposed to follow without problems. Usually it builds on stock characters that can easily be identified. Most campaigns using puppetry employ popular recorded music to go with the show. Very often the show is interspersed with such music and commentary other than the puppets' own dialogue.

The problems these shows try to tackle are usually a common phenomenon amongst the audience, so that no questions about the clarity of the message arise. The setting too, is always a direct take-off of everyday life. The drama in these is almost always sustained by quarrels between characters that stand for opposing points of view in the story. The stories are mostly built around imagery from local folklore sources.

- **Drama**

This is the most extensively used of the art forms of the lot considered under Theatre for Development. The work in drama varies from plays performed for villagers by outside groups to plays created and performed by the villagers themselves. As the Sierra Leone experience shows<sup>5</sup>:

“These dramas feature the adventure of a typical village farm family. In each story a situation is presented that a Villager might encounter. Some of the dramas show ways that the problem might be solved, while others are left unresolved to encourage the listeners or audience to work out their own solutions. Each drama is in the vernacular languages of the people in which the project is presently being implemented.”

This work was presented as radio drama as well as stage presentations. The aspect of how ‘the problem presented might be solved’ in work, like that of Botswana’s Laedza Batanani Popular Theatre, sometimes becomes the kingpin of all work in Theatre for Development. This is particularly so where it is felt by the organisers that there is low community participation and indifference to government development efforts in the area. In such a situation, rather than solve problems, the drama is supposed to be thought provoking.

All this work is improvised. Teams of extension workers and sometimes, students collect problems prevalent in particular areas of campaigns. Using these themes they develop improvised dramas that are rehearsed very briefly and quickly before presentation. This technique has its own flaw, especially where aesthetics are concerned. There is not enough time and thought given to the format of the presentation and styles of acting. The idea in most projects is to minimise the theatrical attention to the aesthetics as much as possible in favour of the substance of the representation, so that everybody attending the project can participate without feeling intimidated or inferior to another person. To attend to such issues would run contrary to the aims of some of this theatre’s proponents which are, ‘to increase participation of community members in development projects by involving them in the planning and running of the theatre.

Ngugi wa Thiong’o’s work, which seems to be the only type, in this theatre, to care about proper theatrics, started from a script written by one author who presented it to the masses to re-write and direct *en masse*. Talking about how *I will marry when I want* a product of his work in Kenya, he says he was commissioned by the Adult Literacy organisers to script a play as a supplement to the straight teaching going on at the centre. What they had in mind was a script for ‘modern’ theatre but in the vernacular. Artistic intentions were to be primary. When he presented the script to the centre and was made to produce it, the students (adult literacy classes) at the centre were more than willing to participate. Rehearsals were open to the whole group of students there –

even if they were not participating in the play. Directing was helped by a good deal of comments from the entire public watching the rehearsals. A direct result of this was that several criticisms and alterations were made to the script. This was in terms of language as well as plot and theme. What ultimately came out was the people's own play.

### 3.4.3 The Process of Theatre for Development

Theatre can be divided in two basic categories according to the way it is used: Theatre-in-Development and Theatre-for-Development. The former is made up of three types:

- a) scripted plays written by some specialists, containing information on a particular subject as understood by the writer and performed by a group of actors in the conventional theatre format;
- b) unscripted plays co-created by a director and a group of actors, on a pre-selected topic and presented formally as conventional theatre; and
- c) scripted plays on a chosen topic but later transformed by the actors before villagers and involving them in the refinement of the final play. This kind of theatre requires its audience to come to a special venue selected by the theatre group. It allows for very limited participation of the audience in the creation of the play and its performance.

Theatre-for-Development on the other hand could be said to be of two types:

- a) that which is created out of researching in the community but performed by the outside artists; and
- b) that which is investigated and created with the community and performed jointly by the artists and members of the community. In both cases the presentations take place in the community itself, and the venue does not necessarily need to have special requirements.

Very often this theatre is a composite of music, drama, dance, masquerade and puppetry found within the community. It can be used both to investigate and probe specific issues as well as to stimulate discussion on issues of interest to the community, thus it can also be used to identify and discuss problem-solving approaches.

Even though the process of Theatre for Development varies according to its purpose the following stages can be adopted in most cases: research, reporting back, creating the story, sketching the story, rehearsing the play, performing the play and after performance.

#### **(a) Research**

The process of Theatre for Development starts with research. This is 'informal' research in that it is not set up. The research involves living in and with the community in order to know and learn about the 'life' of the people there in. This involves participating in their happiness, sorrows, celebrations as well as their work. In this way one is able to drink in the socio-economic and cultural aspects of the community. Although this research is informed, some PRCA tools could be used to sharpen pictures of the community.

Material and information learnt or gathered during such research provides:

- (a) Fodder for the play that will be created;
- (b) The way the play will be performed;
- (c) The venue which the community actually would choose for performance; and
- (d) Issues that the community feels most strongly about.

When a 'theatre' team goes into a community, it should become a part of that community. That is why it is important to dress appropriately i.e., in a manner that is in line with the communities. The team must ensure that they are not over-dressed or outrageous in their appearance. It is also advisable to work in pairs when going around the village rather than in one large group. In this way the community members being observed and studied do not become overwhelmed.

### **(b) Reporting Back**

After living in and sharing life with the community the team must come back together to report on what they have learnt of the community. Such reports highlight, issues closest to the hearts of members of the community; cultural life of the community; stories of happenings/events and anecdotes or jokes common in the community. Information gathered should include the community's perception of whatever is the subject of concern. Such material provides good stuff for dramatisation.

### **(c) Creating the story**

Material gathered during research should give a 'clear' picture of what the position of the 'issue' of concern is like in the village. It should include stories of individuals, families or sections of the community showing concrete testimonies of how they relate to the issues. Instead of, for instance, saying the people of such and such village do not build latrines although they are aware of it, you should actually have a real person who has not had a latrine and who has had concrete reasons for not having one. This takes you beyond awareness to actual experience of not having a latrine and its consequences.

From such personal testimonies or experiences and individuals, characters for the story and the story itself may be drawn and developed. Instead of speaking in 'general terms and about issues', an individual or specific people are made to live and demonstrate the experience of living with the issues being looked at.

The story so created is fiction. But it is built on actual lived experiences, that the community for whom (later with whom) the drama is being developed will recognise and sometimes even identify with it, depending on how well the dramatisation is done.

### **(d) Sketching the play**

Having created a story from findings gathered in the field, the next step is sketching the play. The goal here is not to create a play script, but an outline of the play scene by scene. A scene being stages in the story just created. If we can compare the story to a journey between District A and District B, there are points that must be gone through to make up this journey. From District A, we might have to stop over at A1, to fill up petrol in the car we are travelling in.

While at A1, the driver might have quarrelled with the petrol attendant. We then moved to point A2 where we stopped again. This time to buy drinks and visit the toilet. The next story may be our destination B. Here we find nobody waiting for us and so we decide to return.

(Journey = A > A1 > A2 > B)

Using this journey as an example of the whole story, we can say that points (A) (A1) (A2) and B could be our scenes. In 'building' the sketch we shall select deliberately events that happened at these points and leave out those that happened on the bus in between them. Sketching the play is very similar to this process. We deliberately select or create points that highlight important aspects of the issue the story is meant to tell.

## **(e) Rehearsing (developing) the play**

Using actual stories of happenings gathered during the research, characters could be identified and re-lived before everybody in the team. Here the whole team agrees on whether those 'acting' out these happenings as put together into scenes of the sketch are being truthful. They can also select those individuals who seem best suited for what scenes. This is preparation of the play that is referred to as the rehearsal. The process of rehearsal uses other material gathered during the research. These are the songs, dances or rituals that people do in the village. During the research the team will have observed how people relate to each other, how they walk or talk. From such observations, individuals selected to play particular roles might build their characters.

The idea here is that when the people of the village come to see the play, they should recognise themselves (as a village) in the play. Rehearsals therefore aim at achieving this, quite apart from dramatising and developing the story created earlier on.

## **(f) Performing the Play**

Once the play has been rehearsed and the team is satisfied that it is ready for presentation, they must choose a venue that is accessible to the people in the village. The period of research should reveal which places are used for public celebration in the village. The period should also reveal which time of the day is the best for holding the performance.

Efforts to involve the village community in presenting or even participating in dances from the village should be made. The idea here is to make it as much of the people's own occasion as possible than that of the team.

During the performance, the acting should deliberately offer opportunities for the audience to answer questions or even comment on what is happening in the play. These comments can be repeated and passed on to other members of the audience around issues being depicted in the play. The actors should always take the story back from this dialogue and move it towards the end.

## **(g) After the performance**

The team should get back together to go through experiences of the performance, to examine their own performance and the comments that the people were making as the play was unfolding.

This discussion should reveal material for further action either theatrically or on issues under discussion.

Sometimes the people want further discussion on issues in the play, such an opportunity should be provided to them. There might also be need for follow-up action. This has to be taken care of, and whenever possible fulfilled, by the subject specialist/extensionist.

### 3.5 Communication and Creativity: Combining Contents, Media Characteristics and Treatment

So far, up to this point you have been exposed to the process of message design, you have seen how a number of media can be used in communication for development you have been exposed to production issues regarding the production of communication materials. The challenge that remains at this point is how to combine all the elements in the most effective way in order to achieve the communication objectives. Each theme, message or issue you intend to present or discuss should be treated according to the medium you are going to use, taking into account people's reality. Advertisers are fully aware that an advertisement working well in a country may not be effective in another. Similarly a certain slogan on video, accompanied by certain images, will not be equally effective on radio.

By now you have seen how frequent "stop-review-and-go" steps compose the design process. The process actually does not usually go in such a linear, clear-cut sequential form, as presented in this Handbook. As a matter of fact, many of the steps presented here happen in a simultaneous way, or in a different order. The reason for putting them in a neat sequence is purely instructional. This has been purely to assist you to comprehend the process in all its phases. Once you are familiar with it you will find it easy to deal with all the communication elements that you can rearrange according to the situation facing you. When doing the final draft of your treatment (which will then be refined and produced by the specialist selected) review all the significant elements in your communication strategy, such as priority NOPS, Interaction Groups profiles, communication objectives, approaches, message and discussion themes, media selected, appeals, formats, etc. You must review all data in your hands and, by adding the creative element; you transform it into something brilliant and appealing to the interaction groups. Remember that creativity is something innate to human beings; you should therefore be ready to also pick it up from the community. Sometimes it is just enough to listen to them. You might be surprised by the simple but ingenious thinking of many rural people, who have survived for centuries in places where most people will not be able to survive for a few days.

### 3.6 Field Staff Training on How to Effectively Use Communication Materials

Some of the communication materials developed cannot be simply distributed as they are produced. In a number of cases you need to make arrangements to illustrate how they should be used effectively. This is particularly true for the production of discussion tools. Remember that the main purpose of discussion tools is to make meetings more lively and informative, where viewpoints can be shared with confidence, increasing mutual understanding. Using discussion tools effectively can be difficult for field workers such as extensionists who have been trained for years, to pass

knowledge to farmers. Such workers' understanding of participation is confined to asking questions to clarify an issue. It is difficult for people like these (after years of talking down at farmers) to suddenly start to listen to them. This is why training of the field staff on how to use tools to generate and stimulate discussion is crucial. Field staff who make skilful use of a flipchart, for example, will encourage the interaction group to do most of the talking and guide them to clarify their needs and reach decisions about how they can reach their identified objectives in the project. This can be the first step of full involvement in the project activities.

## 3.6.1 How to Use Discussion Tools: Tips for Trainers

The following simple basic points are intended as a guide to stimulate productive group discussions with rural people, that is, on how to use discussion tools effectively:

- **Read the stories** in the flipchart users guide to yourself and study all the pictures ahead of time, so that you do not have to read the stories in front of the interaction group; memorise the stories and classic questions picture by picture.
- **Adapt and relate the message** to the local interaction group by changing the names of the people and places to suit the areas you move in. Add other details about the characters' backgrounds to make them more personal. (Involve the interaction group; ask them to give local names to the characters and places.) Plan your work, make notes, find ways (ask leading questions. "Does this happen here?") to link the stories to local examples based on the pictures.
- **Have the interaction group sit near you** and make sure that they are comfortable; this can take place in any location as long as they are free from distractions. Make sure it is a suitable time and place for the particular groups and only spend 30 to 60 minutes showing and discussing the pictures at any one time.
- **Make sure that everyone can see** the pictures. A Flipchart could be hung from a tree, fence or house.
- **Help the interaction group "see"** the message/concepts in the pictures by always pointing out the critical details of the subject. Let the interaction group explain details and give their experience on the subject seen.
- **Do not lecture**, use the pictures to prompt and encourage discussions and most important, get people to think, find and understand the solutions for themselves.
- **Ask questions** that let the interaction group explain and give their experience on the subject. Get the interaction group to talk about the pictures by asking them what they see in the picture. Do not let the more outspoken dominate the discussion, instead seek out opinions from all sectors of the group across age, gender and status.
- **Use the language that is simple** and most understood by your interaction group avoiding difficult words. Remember some of the interaction group may be illiterate which is one reason why you are using pictures.
- **Listen and observe** the interaction group's reactions and comments. Ask them for possible solutions and think of the consequences of each one of them.
- **Let the interaction group argue and give answers** but do not lose control in the direction



of the discussion.

- **Be sensitive to feelings** and reactions of your interaction group, be supportive and polite when talking.
- **Remember** that discussion tools are for: storytelling; asking questions; getting others to ask questions and sharing information.
- **Make notes** on people's reactions and comments soon after the discussion. List the common questions asked on each picture and concept with your own comments.

When you use the discussion tools to ask questions, remember to adapt your approach according to the situation. Sometimes you need to make questions as open and unbiased as possible, thus avoiding leading people to give you the answer you want. In other instances you might need to ask leading questions to steer the discussion in the intended direction. The kind of questions asked and the way they are asked are instrumental to achieving the intended results. Remember, guide the discussion on the relevant topic, its causes and solutions. Common questions to ask the interaction group should be along these lines:

- What do you see happening in the picture?
- Why is it happening?
- Does this happen in real life?
- What problem does this lead to?
- What are the root causes of the problem? and
- What can be done about it?

Asking questions serves to identify any gaps of understanding between field staff and project recipients. Explore how communication activities can bridge those gaps. Show field staff how to use the discussion tools to stimulate productive group discussions with rural people. Skilful use of a flipchart, for example, will encourage the interaction group to do most of the talking and reach decisions gradually about how they can reach their objectives in the project. To accomplish this, the flipchart user should ask questions that encourage the interaction group to describe what they see and, say what they think.

Make logistical plans for the field co-ordinators to gather their field staff for similar training workshops. Each individual field staff should be supplied with the Flipcharts User's Guide booklet. This is meant to train them in communication techniques and on how to use the materials. Identify a materials distribution work plan to reach local people and places that should receive the materials (administrative centres, clinics, markets, schools, etc.). Make a plan for visiting all rural communities. Try to use existing regular meetings with rural communities to hold discussions, such as standard field visits to plan work with communities, meetings of farmers' associations, market days, health programs and distribution of goods and services. In many cases a new circuit of meetings may be required to reach everyone. Try, as much as possible, to go around and supervise the way discussion tools are being used, especially in the initial period.



## 3.7 Summary of the Basic Steps in the Production Process

The following steps provide you with a guide that allows you to use an organised and systematic approach to development of communication materials

### 1. Research

Make sure the objectives of the materials to be produced are relevant and valid to the community and that they are consistent with the identified communication objectives. Collect visual reference materials from books and journals and take photographs during your field visits.

### 2. Developing the content

According to the media you plan to use, you should think of how you want to achieve intended objectives. For example, if dealing with a flipchart, you should think of which pictures should go in and following what sequence. If a booklet is needed, you must think of the instructions that are to be given and in which style. With radio, you need to decide the format of the programme and then develop the treatment. If you decide to use theatre you will need to decide what kind of theatre and write the treatment. If you use video you might need a storyboard (where the text is coupled with the images going with it). Wherever possible, carry out the activities involved here with a specialist of the medium you are planning to use.

### 3. Preparing a production plan

Based on the information and decision taken so far, make a plan for the materials needed to be produced and when. Prepare an estimated budget for field visits, costs of specialists (i.e. graphic artist, radio producer, etc.).

### 4. Producing the Prototype

Develop the first draft or the prototype of what you intend to produce. Even if this is done on a low cost basis try to be as accurate as possible so that the pre-testing provides you with useful insights.

### 5. Field Testing (or Pre-testing)

Ideally the previous steps should be done in the community and with the community. Unfortunately the reality of the development world seldom allows it. Therefore, you need to field test, or pre-test, all of your materials with the community before going into mass production. No matter what medium you are using, you should always pre-test your communication materials to make sure that the community sees what you are seeing in that particular production (whether it is a drawing, or a leaflet, or a radio or a video programme). Involving the specialists in the field visits is a good way of making your pre-testing more effective and minimising the amount of changes and corrections needed. For instance, if you plan to produce a series of posters or flipcharts illustrating a problem experienced by the community, it would be helpful to bring the graphic artist in some of your field visits. In this

way not only does he/she have a precise idea of the physical detail needed for his/her drawings (e.g. facial traits, kind of houses, etc.), but he/she also gets a flavour of the social and cultural environment of the people related to the communication activities being developed.

### **6. Budgeting**

Once you have carried out the pre-testing and made the modifications, you should review the costs involved and finalise your budget accordingly. The more complete and detailed the set of instructions and materials you deliver to the specialists (e.g. a refined storyboard for a video production, camera-ready artwork for printing, etc.) the less is going to be the cost you will have to bear.

### **7. Mass production**

At this point you can start the production of all the materials. One tip, valid especially in the case of printing though is: try to always get samples of materials prior to authorising the full job, even when the budget and all the specifications have been discussed and approved before hand.

### **8. Training and Distribution**

In some instances you need to train field staff on the purpose and use of the communication materials being produced. Next you have to plan their distribution. If they are posters for instance, you should also advise on best options for placing them (e.g. hospitals, schools, etc.). Distribution is not always given due attention, but it is a very important aspect of materials development that should be done properly in order to complete the production cycle.

## MANAGING THE PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMUNICATION PROGRAMME

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### Objective

This chapter provides you with the tools for organising all your work into an effective and manageable plan of action. It also indicates how to monitor the whole process and evaluate the final results. Finally, the chapter also gives some tips on how to report and present the communication planning and activities.

*At the end of this chapter you will be able to:*

1. Draw a consistent and feasible work plan;
2. Monitor the communication process; and
3. Conduct the quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the communication component.

## 4.1 Using SAF to Organise your Data into an Effective Work Plan

All the elements needed to draw an effective communication work plan are now in your possession. The only thing you need to do is to put them together in a logical and consistent way. The Situation Analysis Framework (SAF) can help you in this task. In order to make your tasks simple this section has been divided into four units meant to take you gradually, through in the design of the overall work plan.

### 4.1.1 Linking Objectives and Outputs

At this stage you will have already defined all the elements needed to draw up the communication strategy. All you have to do is to put them together and make sure that the way they are linked is consistent with the overall process. We shall use the example of a Nutrition Project to make the process easier to see and understand. The priority focal problem identified in this project is **poor feeding practises in children under five years of age**.

The related communication objective to be concentrated upon in the development of the communication strategy is **raising awareness on proper feeding practises for children under 5 to at least 80% of all the women between the age of 16 and 40 in a particular district**.

The next question you should ask yourself is “how can I best achieve this objective?” A solution is not always easy to find right away. Sometimes you might be considering possible solutions for quite sometime as you go through the various steps of the strategy design, before you decide which one would be best. For our example here, this has been decided. On a hypothetical basis, the decision is that the best way to achieve the communication objectives is by accomplishing certain tasks. These are defined as outputs and are formulated in a measurable, tangible way. In SAF these are known as quantitative outputs, and in this case they are:

- 1. Two meetings per village:** Organise at least two meetings in each village of the district to be attended by all the women (men are to be welcomed too). The purpose of these meetings is to draw the attention of the women to the danger of malnutrition. Discussion should also be concerned with how to recognise the early symptoms of malnutrition and what to do to improve the situation.
- 2. Two hundred posters:** Produce 200 posters with a strong visual emotional appeal (e.g. a hungry malnourished baby crying) meant to draw the attention of the women to the problem of malnutrition. These posters will be posted in public places throughout the villages of the district. Some will be placed in schools and clinics in order to stimulate discussion through teachers or nurses.

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- 3. Ten flipcharts:** Design and produce 10 flipcharts to be used by the health worker as discussion tools in meetings with the women. Their purpose is to stimulate discussion around critical issues concerned with malnutrition in children and the importance of adopting proper feeding practices.
- 4. One training workshop.** The workshop is meant for the health workers. They will be trained on the importance of using an open, participatory approach with the women and on the importance of having the right attitude. More specifically the health workers will be trained on how to use the flipcharts in stimulating discussion and dialogue among all parties.

The next question you might ask yourself is “if I accomplish all of the quantitative outputs will I be sure to achieve the objective?” The answer should be yes, but at the moment, it is no, since it is not only what you do but how well you do it that is important to achieve the objective. For instance, you can successfully complete the training workshop attended by all participants expected, but you could still not achieve your purpose. The participants may not have acquired the necessary skills, or even attitude, to use the discussion tools effectively. In many instances this separation between what has to be done and how well it is done is absent, and the two concepts are considered both under outputs. However in this handbook, for instructional purposes and for the sake of clarity, outputs have been divided into two elements: quantitative and qualitative outputs. These will make it easier for you to first consider tangible and measurable outputs, and then, focus on the expected results of those outputs, which are often ways of measuring the effectiveness of your outputs. In the Nutrition Project example given here, the qualitative outputs are:

1. The **amount of women participating** in the two meetings (was there a significant number of women?) and their **degree of involvement** (did most women participate in the discussion?);
2. The appropriate **placing of posters** in selected locations (do most women of the village get exposed to them?) and the **message passed by the posters is it easily understood and does it truly reflect the intended purpose** (do women see the point of the poster?);
3. The **flipcharts have been produced in an effective manner** (are the drawings reflecting what they are supposed to and are they stimulating discussion about the issue? Are the panels of a proper size?); and
4. The **training workshop has successfully managed to achieve its instructional objectives** (have participants comprehended the required attitude? Did they learn the new skills?).

In organising the work plan at this early stage you must make sure that the outputs selected can have a direct beneficial effect on the objective. Reviewing every step of your communication strategy that led you to select those outputs can do this. Remember that outputs must be tangible and measurable products. We recommend that you split these outputs into two groups, i.e., qualitative and quantitative ones. The latter group, which is very similar to a unit of measurement, has been added for instructional purposes. It will assist you in refining the quantitative outputs properly while at the same time help you to focus on monitoring and evaluation of the process.

## 4.1.2 Organising Activities and Responsibilities

When organising activities like in the case of flip charts, you must first consider the various steps involved in the production of the flipcharts, namely:

1. Developing the story (and storyboard);
2. Designing the preliminary drawings;
3. Pre-testing the drawings;
4. Produce the flipcharts; and
5. Training of the field workers on how to use the flipcharts.

For each activity, you must consider what you want to achieve, thus verifying the consistency of the linkage between the activity and the outputs, and what is involved. You should consider the human and material resource needed, the location, the kind of work required and the amount of time estimated to be spent for each activity. Together with your team you must decide who is going to be responsible for each activity. The responsible person does not necessarily have to carry out the activities. Rather he/she is supposed to supervise, co-ordinate and monitor the activities making sure they are performed satisfactorily.

## 4.1.3 Accounting for Inputs and Estimated Budget

When making preparations for carrying out the plan of action you should consider all the requirements needed to accomplish the specific activities, both in terms of human resources and materials. These requirements are defined as inputs. It is your task to list and account for all needed inputs. Correct estimation of inputs is very important for production of quality work and for drawing an accurate budget, which is supposed to be approved by management of the project. Very often, getting a budget approved is not so easy, but getting a revision of a budget (due to miscalculations or to factors that cannot be accounted for) is even harder. It is therefore necessary to spend a good amount of time going through all the needed inputs for each single activity. In the same way you must be precise in estimating the cost of each input. Estimates for budgeting can be done following several approaches. You can either make an estimate for each expense or put expenses under certain groups or categories such as transportation costs, production costs, stationery for training, fees for consultants, etc.

## 4.1.4 Organising all Elements into a Consistent Work Plan

By now you should have all the elements needed for putting your work plan together. The only element you need to add once you have put all the pieces together is time. You have to provide a feasible timeframe taking into account the time needed to accomplish a particular task, availability of the specialists involved, project's deadlines and, last but not least, the community schedule of activities in the field. Worksheet 2 given on the next page illustrates how your work plan could look like following the SAF format. This should be considered as a guide to provide you with all the elements needed for producing a final work plan in whatever format.

Worksheet 2 summarises the sequence and the steps needed to synthesise all the factors constituting the work plan. Before filling the boxes of the worksheet you should have gone through every step putting them in writing in a narrative form. Start showing why and how you have defined the SMART Communication Objectives (i.e. which focal problems?). Explain the communication mode

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design you have selected (i.e. Interaction Groups, Communication Approaches, Design Specifications, Media and Activities) and the expected outputs. Detail each activity, specifying the needed inputs, in terms of human resources, materials and funding. Reach a decision about who is supervising what and finally decide the time frame within which the work plan will operate in order to fulfil its purpose. Once this process has been carefully reviewed and agreed upon, you can go to the schematic format of worksheet 2 (page 108), which is summarising all of the above.

## Worksheet 2

*SAF in the Organisation of the Work Plan.*

SMART Communication Objectives	Quantitative Outputs (derived from Communication Strategy)	Qualitative Outputs	Activities	Inputs with est. costing	Responsibility	Timing
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Putting together all the elements of the work plan also gives you an opportunity to review the whole communication strategy. For each element you are filling in, revise the validity of its existence, the soundness of its purpose and its feasibility. Also revise linkages between each element and the previous one and the next one. Remember that each element of SAF has a causal linkage with the others. Also remember that even if in the work plan outputs come immediately after objectives, they actually are indirectly derived from the objectives (since they were defined through the communication strategy), as solutions to the focal problems. Once all the elements have been accounted for, you are ready to start the implementation phase. Having defined and organised all the elements this far it should be easy for you to manage the whole process. Nevertheless, you still have to monitor each step closely.

## 4.2 Monitoring the Communication Process

Monitoring is the process of establishing checkpoints to make sure that you are on the right track. This means that you must establish a system for recording, on a regular basis, useful information for keeping track of the activities and progress being made towards the set objectives. Whenever something is going wrong, monitoring should provide basis for taking the best course of action to correct the situation. Monitoring is complementary to the organisation of the work plan since it is supposed to identify indicators for measuring the success of the activities and determining the checkpoints to assess the project progress.

## 4.2.1 Purpose and Rationale of Monitoring

The main purpose of monitoring is that of checking and verifying that the planned activities are progressing in a satisfactory way. Monitoring is supposed to provide the necessary instruments for checking the process while it progresses, rather than wait until the evaluation of the final result. An effective monitoring system allows you to have the situation always under control and to take corrective action as soon as it is needed thus optimising time and resources.

What should you monitor? Monitoring should begin as soon as the project is being originated and it should occur in all the phases of the communication process. During the research phase monitoring ensures that the identified community NOPS will be analysed and prioritised appropriately. During the planning phase monitoring provides indicators to closely check the feasibility and the way the project is supposed to progress. During the implementation phase monitoring measures the effectiveness and the relevance of the activities being carried out. It is important that the indicators for monitoring the process be established and agreed upon with the community. This ensures the participatory nature of the programme and avoids differences and misunderstandings in the expected outputs.

The following steps should assist you in planning and conducting the monitoring of the project activities:

- Establish the purpose of monitoring;
- Establish what will be monitored;
- Establish how it will be monitored (indicators);
- Establish when the monitoring will occur (checkpoints); and
- Establish who will be responsible for the monitoring.

## 4.2.2 Indicators and Levels of Measurement

How does monitoring occur? First and foremost you need to identify indicators that will serve as checkpoints throughout the whole process. As usual indicators can be easily defined for activities resulting in physical outputs, but they are not so easy to define when dealing with other aspects not physically quantifiable. If in the work plan one of the outputs is to conduct a series of training workshops for at least, 80% of the farmers in the district an indicator is going to be the percentage of people trained. By getting statistical data on the farmers' population and counting the number of participants attending your workshops, you can easily monitor if you are achieving the intended result.

Things are not so easy if you include another aspect dealing with the expected output of the training, such as that of ensuring that all participants get the necessary skills to implement new farming techniques. It is not easy to establish indicators in such circumstances since indicators should somehow measure the level of competence in the new skill acquired by the participants during the workshop.

Similarly monitoring, or evaluating something like the degree of participation in the decision-making process is very difficult? Which indicators can provide an accurate representation of the degree of people's participation in a campaign aimed at reducing the incidence of malaria through



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meetings and public discussions? Head counting at weekly meetings can be one way, but a very limited one as it does not truly reflect people's level of participation, but rather their presence.

A more appropriate way could be to measure how many people attending the meetings are changing their attitudes, and taking actions to prevent malaria. Establishing indicators often requires identifying criteria for measuring the progress and direction the communication programme is moving to. This is obtained by operationalising the relevant terms or concepts.

Operationalisation is the concrete and specific definition of something in terms that can be measured. It refers to the specifications of the steps (procedures, or operations) needed to identify and measure a certain variable. For instance delinquency can be operationalised as committing an act that violates the criminal law. Cultural differences play a critical part in this aspect. The operationalisation of the term family in most western countries, where the father, the mother and maybe one or two children, compose a typical family is likely to be different from, say, that of most African societies where the extended family, includes father, mother, children, grandfather, grandmother and often uncles and aunts.

When you operationalise a term you are basically answering three questions: what are you going to observe, how are you going to do it, what interpretations are you going to give to what has been observed, or measured. When you put these three questions together, you have your operational definition.

To make sure this concept is clear let's operationalise together the term "economic growth" following the suggestions above.

- Answering the first question you could state that you would observe the amount of trade in the community, or the profits from agricultural products.
- The second question may lead you to state that you will observe and record the money transactions taking place in the community, both with inside and with outside sources.
- Thirdly, you can state that your observations will be interpreted according to a certain level of increase in the financial transactions. Therefore you can operationalise the term economic growth, as a significant increase of the average income of the community.

The example above is hypothetical but it should help you to see that by operationalising a term you are actually defining it as it is and as it can be observed, hence measured. Once this has been achieved you need to identify the indicators. An indicator can be defined as a unit of measurement that provides the needed frame of reference to judge and assess a given situation. In the previous example an indicator could be the financial transactions actually taking place in the community in a certain period of time. A good indicator should have the following characteristics:

- Be specific: in terms of magnitude and time. It should also specifically refer to a single concept or activity rather than to a number of them;
- Be factual: each indicator should reflect the fact rather than the impression or the interpretation;
- Be directly measurable: indicators should have a direct causal link with what they are supposed to measure. Be sure to eliminate all possible interference from external factors; and
- Be based on verifiable data: indicators should be accounted for based on already available data or on data that can be collected easily by the project. For instance there is no use in setting indicators for which you cannot identify appropriate sources of verification.

Monitoring the planning phase requires indicators for checking the timing of the activities and for verifying the consistency of the actions planned and the logical linkage to each other. Indicators should be identified and defined at the beginning of the communication process, as soon as possible, in order to establish an effective monitoring system. It would be difficult and impractical to monitor every single step of the process. You are thus advised to identify relevant checkpoints that should be assessed to provide the needed monitoring feedback. If everything appears to be going as planned then you can proceed. If not, you should consider the best course of action to correct the situation.

From what has been discussed above you can see that there are two types of measurement: the quantitative and the qualitative. The former is concerned with monitoring the visible, tangible outcome while the latter is concerned with the quality of that outcome. These two types can be used to monitor each phase of the process, namely the research, the communication planning and design, the materials development and the implementation of the activities. At the end of the process the same two types of measurement must be applied to measure the impact of the communication.

### 4.2.3 Means of Verification

Since every indicator needs to be easily measured you have to think of how it can be done. Means of verification have the purpose of ensuring that you can measure objectively the checkpoints you have established, either in the planning or implementation phase. Your task here is that of determining which are the sources from which you can obtain information regarding the set indicators. If you cannot find reliable means of verification you should reconsider your indicators. For instance if you want to monitor the effectiveness of a vaccination campaign and your indicator is the number of people being vaccinated, your means of verification can include clinic reports and statistics from the mobile teams of the Ministry of Health.

In the case of a campaign to increase awareness on AIDS, choosing correct indicators may be more tricky than the vaccination case above, since if you define an indicator as the number of people aware of AIDS you will have firstly to operationalise the term "AIDS awareness" and secondly, you will need to know who was not aware of AIDS before the campaign.

Establishing means of verification involves defining how you intend to measure your indicators. While going through this phase you should ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the information needed to verify the indicators available from existing sources?;
- If yes, is the information reliable and up-to-date?;
- If not, can the needed information be collected in a justifiable way (costs/benefits)?; and
- Is measurement of indicators going to be clearly verifiable and consistent with its purpose?

These questions will help you to define the means of verification necessary to efficiently, and effectively, monitor the whole programming process.

### 4.2.4 External Factors

External factors are situations or conditions largely, or completely, outside the project's control that could however negatively affect the final result of the project activities. Do you think it is possible

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for a project that has been properly designed and accurately implemented to fail completely? Yes, it is. How? By a concurrence of factors outside the project's control. One of the most classic examples is that of a project training a number of people on certain technical skills and once they have been successfully trained most of them resign from the project and accept better paid jobs in the private sector. Another example could be that of a community-based project growing a variety of crops for income generating purposes. Everything seems to go smoothly until a major unexpected flood occurs causing the destruction of all the crops.

External factors could also be formulated in terms of assumptions (necessary conditions or situations needed for the project to succeed) or risks. Assessing possible risks in the beginning of the process helps to minimise those risks or at least to be ready to consider and take into account possible countermeasures should negative external factors occur. A clear definition of external factors is also useful to the management of the project since it helps to clarify the area and limits of responsibility of the project. External factors should be identified and analysed during the assessment and planning phase. If they are very likely to occur, the project should then be redesigned in order to take them into account. For instance, you would not plan to build a hospital in a frequently flooded area. In summary, external factors are very important since they assist management in understanding the boundaries and limits within which the project operates and also because they allow you to prepare a contingency plan should they occur.

### 4.2.5 Monitoring Crucial Steps of the Process

So far we have been talking about the purpose of monitoring and the procedures required to establish an effective monitoring system. The Worksheet below is a useful tool that can assist you in this task.

#### **Worksheet 3**

*Communication Strategy: Monitoring the Work Plan.*

Topics/Results to be measured	Indicators	Means of Verification (for each indicator)	External Factors
Quantitative Outputs Qualitative Outputs Relevant Activities Relevant Inputs			

When you develop your work plan make sure you have a complete list of expected outputs, activities and inputs (the Objectives will be assessed in the Evaluation Phase). The worksheet on this previous page, assisted by the list presented at the end of section 4.2.1 (**Purpose and Rationale of Monitoring**) will assist you in compiling a detailed checklist. For each single output of your communication strategy you need indicators to enable you to measure and monitor both the quantitative and qualitative component. You do not need to monitor every activity and every input included in your work plan closely.

However, it does help to monitor some of the most crucial activities as they progress (for instance a training workshop) or some of the inputs (like the timely delivery of needed materials). In some cases, when dealing with the development of communication materials, you need to monitor a number of issues related to the outputs. For instance, if you are developing a series of posters you need to monitor and measure a number of issues such as:

- the validity of the message the poster is conveying (is the message accurately reflecting the topic it is supposed to address?);
- the comprehension level (is the message easily understood by the community?);
- the attention level (does the poster draw the necessary attention to the passer by?); and
- physical exposure (is the location and number of posters sufficient to have the message seen by a significant number of people in the community?).

All of the above aspects are part of designing an effective monitoring system, whose main function is to make sure you are on the right track. Remember that involving the community in identifying and defining specific checkpoints in the planning phase will make sure you are considering relevant issues and it will assist you throughout all the subsequent steps of this crucial task.

## 4.3 Summative Evaluation

At the end of the planning and implementation process of each project, it is necessary to evaluate the overall impact of the intervention in order to assess the degree of success or failure. The final, or summative, evaluation has this scope i.e., ability to measure the level of intended change brought about as a result of the project activities.

### 4.3.1 Rationale and Purpose of Evaluation

Once all the activities of the communication programme have been implemented there is the need to see what have been their practical effect in the field. What change was brought about by the communication strategy being implemented? The aim of the final evaluation is to measure the impact caused by the project intervention in relation to the set objectives. This is different from monitoring as an evaluation is conducted mainly for purposes of measuring the final results of the entire process, rather than the progress of the project. A project that does not evaluate, properly, the results of its activities cannot be of any use for eventual duplication of experiences met. Evaluation is not only useful to assess how well the strategy worked but also for assessing how it has benefited the community. It is only a valuable instrument for assessing the effectiveness of the strategy implemented if it can be eventually improved, adapted and utilised in other projects and programmes.

In this handbook the summative evaluation has been divided into two types just like it was done for monitoring: quantitative and qualitative. The former is concerned with objective, verifiable measurement related to the project objectives. The latter, instead, measures the degree of success of the project activities as perceived by the community. The two should ideally coincide, but this is not always the case. In case of sharp differences between the two different evaluations you might consider investigating why this should happen. If the quantitative evaluation, in the form of a baseline study, shows that the project successfully reached its objectives while the participatory

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assessment indicates that people do not perceive any benefit from the project, you need to look into the matter. There could be a number of reasons for the disparity, e.g., the objectives of the project were not the right ones for the expected solutions, or the perceptions of the problems between insiders and outsiders were radically different. Whatever the reason, the final evaluation is supposed to give you a comprehensive and consistent picture of the results of the project intervention.

### 4.3.2 Quantitative Evaluation: the Baseline Study

Change cannot be measured in absolute terms, this is to say that, if you want to measure accurately the impact of your project, you need to measure the situation before and after your intervention. If you want to know how far you have walked over a distance, you need to know where you started. The difference between the point of arrival and the starting point will give you the distance you have covered. Similarly, in your communication programme you need to measure first the level of awareness or knowledge before implementing the strategy. After having implemented the activities of your communication strategy you will measure again the level of awareness or knowledge. The difference between the two levels will give you a clear indication of the degree of change brought about by the communication activities (assuming there are no significant external factors).

By now it should be clear that in order to assess the degree of change brought about by the communication intervention, you need to have a starting point against which to measure any eventual change. The baseline survey mentioned at the beginning fulfils this function. As the word baseline suggests, it provides objectively verifiable data necessary to show the quantitative dimension of the problem to be addressed, thus providing the needed term of reference. Traditionally baseline surveys are conducted before any other activity of the programme has started in order not to bias the results.

In the Action Program, however, the baseline survey takes place after the PRCA. This innovation has been adopted because very often the area measured by the baseline in the former situation is always different from the priority areas identified with the community. A baseline survey carried out before a PRCA would for instance, try to measure the AKAP on building VIP latrines when in actual fact the real problem was that people did not see the need to have VIP latrines. In such a case the baseline should really be measuring factors affecting the AKAP concerning health and hygiene. The baseline would be more useful after the PRCA, even if it is at the risk of having some data contamination. In this way the baseline is more likely to measure exactly the priority areas of specific relevance. Furthermore it can also be used to validate and confirm the PRCA findings, besides quantifying them.

In chapter 5 of the PRCA handbook, there is a guide on how to design a baseline survey. At this point of the strategy you should remember that you have to evaluate the impact of the project activities through a post-implementation baseline survey compatible with the baseline carried out during the field research. Even if the baseline is only part of the overall summative evaluation (Participatory Impact Assessment is the other major component) it is a very important part, since project management, donors and international organisations are usually very sensitive to accountable, sound figures. The baseline survey should provide scientific, tangible and verifiable hard evidence showing that the communication intervention has brought some significant improvement.

### 4.3.3 Qualitative Evaluation: the Participatory Impact Assessment

Quantitative evaluation may be objective and scientific but in some cases it may overlook the most important issue in development: the human factor. The degree of satisfaction of the community should be equally important as the rate of adoption of a certain innovation, even if it is not so easy to assess. Participatory Impact Assessment - PIA - is supposed to measure the perceptions of the results of the communication intervention and the degree of satisfaction of the community. PIA, unlike the baseline survey, is not concerned with measuring objective scientific results, but the impact of the project as perceived by the community. Ideally the two should be consistent with each other.

The impact assessment is carried out through a series of participatory techniques and tools similar to those used in the PRCA. In evaluating the project impact you have to make sure that the community identifies in advance the indicators for the problems that are to be addressed (usually originating from the problem tree) jointly with the project staff. In this way you are sure that the objectives are appropriate and relevant for insiders and outsiders, i.e., the community and the project staff. Using participatory techniques and tools, your team and the community, have to go through the following steps:

- Agree on the purpose of the evaluation;
- Establish what will be evaluated (e.g. project objectives, people's satisfaction, etc.);
- Establish how it will be evaluated;
- Establish by whom it will be evaluated (evaluation team);
- Establish when it will be evaluated; and
- Make final comments and recommendations.

Based on the above questions, you could also make a plan to make sure that the evaluation activities are carried out properly. The purpose of PIA is to make sure that the evaluation is not a theoretical exercise for a few experts but a comprehensive measurement that includes the community's perceptions and concerns. Once the "what are you going to evaluate" has been defined you and the other members of the evaluation team need to decide how. Go to the PRCA toolbox in the PRCA Handbook, and use the most appropriate techniques and tools designed to involve people in the whole process (from choosing appropriate indicators to assessing the final result).

### 4.3.4 Finalising the Overall Evaluation of the Project's Impact

Once the quantitative and qualitative evaluations have been carried out, the results should be combined to form a comprehensive study, assessing the results and the change brought about by the communication intervention. The major point you should keep in mind, when you present the results of the evaluation, is to show what has been the direct benefit/improvement that has been caused by communication. If you write a specific report on the evaluation of the communication component (or even of the project) you could follow a number of formats. The one usually used in the Action Programme is divided into six major areas as outlined below:

- Brief background of the project, specifying the objectives;
- Preview of the results achieved by the project (or by the communication intervention);

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- Evaluation Methodology (which methods have been used);
- Description of Evaluation Activities;
- Findings of the Evaluation; and
- Comments and Future Recommendations.

Needless to say, you can adopt whatever format you feel confident with when presenting the findings of the evaluation. The important thing to remember is that you must always consider whom your audience is. When you present findings consider the most important points you are to put across. Here again SAF as given below, can assist you in organising your findings.

### Worksheet 4

*SAF in the Evaluation of Communication Impact.*

Topics/Results to be Measured	Indicators	Means of Verification (for each indicator)	External Factors
Quantitative Evaluation (of the Impact in relation to the Objectives) Participatory Evaluation (of the Impact in relation to the Objectives) <b>Relevant Inputs</b>			

The project and the communication objectives are not the only elements that can be evaluated. You might also be interested in evaluating a specific technology, social processes or the level of participation enjoyed by the project, even if these may not be directly considered in your objectives. You should therefore also be aware that the evaluation, even if it is done at the end of the whole process, is not necessarily the very last activity of the project. Based on its findings and recommendations, the project could be extended in order to take corrective measures to further improve the final outcome. Further corrections, modifications or adaptations suggested in the evaluation could be considered in order to improve the effectiveness of the strategy implemented when, and if, a similar project is to be replicated in other circumstances.

## 4.4 Final Considerations

At this point most of the job appears to have been done. What remains, is to assemble the various stages of the strategy and verify them in a systematic way. In this chapter you will discuss how to prepare and present a feasible and manageable work plan. Remember that it is not enough to make a good work plan. You have to convince management, and all other interested parties, that your proposal is appropriate, cost-effective and most of all that it is needed to solve a major problem.



## 4.4.1 Organisation and Management of the Entire Planning and Implementation Process

You are now at the end of the process of communication strategy design that originated from your work in the field. All you have to do now is to assemble all the pieces, double-check each one of them and verify the way they are linked to one another. To assist you in checking the whole process follow and revise the points outlined below:

- **SMART Communication Objectives.** After having stated the objectives revise the quantitative and qualitative indicators, means of verification and external factors;
- **Quantitative Outputs.** Make a complete list of outputs and revise the indicators, means of verification and external factors for each of them;
- **Qualitative Outputs.** Make a complete list of outputs, usually in relation to the quantitative outputs, and revise indicators, means of verifications and external factors;
- **Activities.** Try to be as precise as possible, listing each activity, the person responsible and the time frame; and
- **Inputs.** For each activity specify the human and material resources needed. Provide a clear estimate of the funds needed to carry out the activities.

If you have revised these elements you are in a comfortable position to organise and supervise the whole process. However you should remember that, as in all human activities, in all communication strategies, the human factor plays a predominant role. This means that creativity, as well as unexpected variations should be borne in mind. Your planning and supervision should therefore be flexible enough to allow changes as you proceed towards the accomplishment of the objectives. This is especially true as you are adopting a participatory communication strategy design people will be assessing, taking decisions, carrying out activities with you. More people might mean more ideas and often more time spent to reach a consensus on the best course of action. This is part of the approach. Remember that you are not there to tell people what they are supposed to do, but to find out with them what should be done and why. Communication can then go to the next step and facilitate the achievement of the set objectives.

Managing and supervising the communication component requires close following up of all activities that should be checked according to the set indicators and the provided timeframe. You should also have room for some flexibility. If you have already accounted accurately for external factors it is going to be easier to draw contingency plans as the need arises. The more careful and comprehensive your work plan is the easier and more effective it is going to be to supervise and manage the activities planned and to accomplish the set objectives.

## 4.4.2 How to Report and Present the Communication Proposal

When you write your report about the proposed communication strategy, and its rationale, you must make sure to include all relevant factors, while avoiding being too long or spending too much effort in explaining details of each step you went through. There are many ways to write and present a report. Each of them could be equally effective. You should choose a format you feel most comfortable with. Always keep in mind the person it is intended for. The following is a suggestion of what to include in your written report:



## chapter 4 Managing the Planning and Implementation of the Communication Programme

- **Executive summary.** It is always advisable to start with a short summary, not more than a page long, of what is your proposal all about. This allows even the busiest person to have an idea about your proposal and hopefully to become interested in it. The executive summary should emphasise what is your proposal about and why is its relevance. Often people writing on a well known issue forget that other people may not know it that well and may fail to see the relevance of the issue in question. Therefore do not assume that what you are doing is important, prove it! Make sure your audience can see what the problem is and why it is important to address it. If your executive summary conveys these two issues effectively you made a big step forward in getting your audience attention.
- **Contents and acknowledgements.** Include a table of contents to illustrate all the topics treated in your report. You should also acknowledge the contribution of everybody.
- **Background Information.** At this point include a short project presentation, illustrating the geographical, cultural, social and economic background of the concerned area. Also state the project objectives, problems, structure and main activities.
- **Presentation of the main problems and rationale of the proposal.** Present the problems you are addressing with your proposal. Explain why they are major ones and what is the rationale for addressing them; stating why do you think it is important to deal with them. Illustrate why you think communication can effectively assist in solving the problems or improve the situation.
- **Presentation of the research findings.** Show how the point above has been derived from the field research. Illustrate your original research proposal, the methodology used (PRCA tools and baseline), the findings and the difference between project and community perceptions.
- **Description of the communication strategy.** Synthesise the major steps you went through in order to illustrate your strategy. Remember that most of all, you have to convince the readers that your communication strategy is: needed, relevant, consistent and effective.
- **Description of the outputs.** Specify which outputs are expected as a result of the strategy design. Illustrate the use and purpose of communication materials to be produced.
- **Present the work plan.** This is the culmination of all the work you have done so far. The project management will judge the soundness of your proposal by the consistency, relevance and feasibility of the work plan. Based on this they will also decide if it should be endorsed and if adequate funding should be authorised.
- Make final comments and recommendations.

When you present your strategy do NOT spend too much time on details and background information, however interesting and relevant they might seem to you. If somebody wants to know more, they can read the report or ask you a question at the end of the presentation. Focus on the issues and problems in question, on the findings of your work and on proposed solutions. Remember that if you want to convince the management, or other agencies, to fund your project you need to convince them of two things above everything else. Firstly that the problem presented is a serious one (presenters tend to assume that it is already a known fact, when often it is not) and secondly that your strategy will effectively assist to eliminate or reduce the problem.

Many presentations fail to achieve the intended results just because the presenter tries to include everything in its presentation. Remember that when you prepare for the presentation you should have in mind your listeners, among them focus your attention on the decision-makers, and concentrate on the more important issue only. Also try to use visual aids to make your presentation more lively and interesting. There are many ways you can organise the presentation to the management. Whatever format you choose to use, remember to be straight forward and up to the point and most of all be logical and show all causal links. That is, first illustrate the problem, supporting yourself by data, then illustrate how it can be addressed and why. If you perform effectively these three steps you are almost there. Do not worry if in your presentation you leave out most of the work you have carried out and methodology you have used so far, you can always present these during follow up questions. The objective of your presentation should be twofold. Firstly to convince your audience that the problem you are addressing is a major one (which needs to be solved before all others) and secondly that the strategy you are proposing will eliminate or greatly reduce the problem. In the following page you will find a list of dos and don'ts about the presentation. So please pay attention to them.

**Table 6**

*The Dos and Don'ts about Preparing a Presentation.*

Do not start your presentation with general statements or background information.	Start your presentation with a strong statement, illustrating the crucial issue and refer to it throughout the presentation.
Do not make a long elaborate presentation. People have a limited attention time span and tend to lose concentration fast.	Try to keep your presentation short (less than 30 minutes) and up to the point. Eventually bring out more information during the follow up questions
Do not get up and start to read your paper in a monotonous way	Diversify the tone of your presentation, emphasise important points, use visual aids and keep eye contact with the audience
Do not get worried about including everything you have in your presentation	Stick to the most important points, which stem from your field findings
Do not end your presentation in a rushed way	Reinforce the main point in your conclusion, if possible with a dramatisation or a provocative statement
Do not make your presentation as if you were the audience	Shape your presentation having in mind the portrait of the audience i.e. what do they know, what do they need to know, what is their background, etc.

## ANNEXES

This document has been developed in order to facilitate the monitoring, and the needed backstopping, of all the projects enrolled in the Action Programme-AP. The tables on pages 107 and 108 reflect the various phases of the communication process.

### MEMORANDUM ON AP BACKSTOPPING

The following points should be clear to everybody in order to understand and use in a consistent way the monitoring table:

- On top of each checklist the name of the project, the AP round, the names of the Centre training/technical and field co-ordination focal points should be entered. In addition, all the consultants involved in the backstopping should enter their names or initials in the box related to that specific phase.
- The five different tables tend to reflect the crucial steps in which the assistance of SADC-CCD is usually required. The shaded boxes reflect the critical steps in which direct backstopping by SADC/FAO experts usually occur (even though backstopping in the field can change to respond to specific situations). The first table reflects activities done during the AP workshop, the other tables reflect activities implemented as a result of the work done during the workshop.
- The column **CHECKPOINTS** specifies all the crucial points necessary to keep track of a project progress and need for backstopping. It is an internal monitoring system meant to assist getting a fast and clear picture of the situation of each project in the AP.

- The column **IN-PROGRESS ACTIVITIES - INITIATED** should be entered when we receive some confirmation that the activities have been initiated.
- The column **IN-PROGRESS ACTIVITIES - FOLLOW UP** serves the purpose to check that the activities initiated, that may require a long period of time, are making some progress. In many cases there may not be the need to enter this column at all.
- The column **COMPLETED** is meant to provide confirmation that a specific activity has been complemented and the communication programme is now entering the next step.
- The column **DOCUMENTED** is to inform if the activities has been documented and in what way. If a written report has been done the initials WR could be entered, for photographic material enter PHM, for any video documentation enter AVD or in case of a combination of the above formats just enter the relevant initials.

*Note that each step of the process includes monitoring.*

## **MONITORING CHECKLIST FOR AP ROUND No.**

PROJECT: \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTRY: \_\_\_\_\_

TRAINING Focal Point: \_\_\_\_\_ COORDINATION Focal Point: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**I) ACTION WORKSHOP**

CHECKPOINTS	IN-PROGRESS ACTIVITIES		COMPLETED	DOCUM.ED
	INITIATED	FOLLOW UP		
1. Enrolment				
2. Course Participation				
3. PRCA Field Implementation				
4. PRCA Analysis				
5. Pre-Baseline Design				
6. Pre-Baseline Administration				
7. Pre-Baseline Analysis				
8. Communication Strategy				
9. Draft Workplan				

**II) MANAGEMENT ENDORSEMENT**

10. Presentation to Management				
11. Budget Endorsement				
12. Finalisation of Workplan				

**III) MATERIALS REFINEMENT AND PRODUCTION**

13. Message Design Finalisation				
14. Pre-testing of Materials				
15. Review and Evaluation of Materials				
16. Mass Production				

**SUGGESTED MID-TERM ASSESSMENT (when needed)**

## IV) FIELD IMPLEMENTATION

CHECKPOINTS	IN-PROGRESS ACTIVITIES		COMPLETED	DOCUM.ED
	INITIATED	FOLLOW UP		
17. Training of Field Staff				
18. Implementation of Communication Activities				

## V) EVALUATION

19. Post-baseline Design				
20. Post-baseline Administration				
21. Post-baseline Analysis				
22. Final Evaluation (quantitative and qualitative)				

**COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS:** \_\_\_\_\_

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This Handbook on Participatory Communication Strategy Design (PCSD) has been prepared as a training and field guide for designing, implementing and managing communication for development strategies for field projects. The PCSD methodology is used to build on the results of the Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA). It outlines ways of involving people in the decision-making processes for effective communication planning and action.

The handbook focuses on the process of planning a communication strategy design in a participatory manner. It clearly explains the principles and processes of communication planning, message development, multimedia material production and the implementation of communication activities in the field. Although it does not dwell on the technical aspects of production, the handbook specifies the requirements for effective use of communication approaches, techniques, media, materials and methods among rural communities. It presents a step-by-step approach to strategy design. In this way the reader will be able to plan, implement, supervise and monitor the whole process.

PCSD has been prepared primarily as training and reference material to be used during workshops for communication skills development, as well as a guide for participatory communication strategy design in the field. For those who have not been trained in PCSD, it is advisable to attend a training workshop in which the principles and procedures of the activity can be learned and practised before application at the community level.

The communication strategy design process described in the handbook has been tested in training workshops. It has also been applied with success to various development projects dealing with agriculture, health, education, income generation, gender, water and sanitation, animal husbandry and poverty alleviation.

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