

Yearbook 2012/2013

SPEAKING UP AND TALKING BACK?



**Media, Empowerment
and Civic Engagement
among East and
Southern African Youth**

Editors:
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Norbert Wildermuth
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**The International Clearinghouse on
Children, Youth and Media**

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**THE CLEARINGHOUSE
IS LOCATED AT NORDICOM**

Nordicom is an organ of co-operation between the Nordic countries – Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The overriding goal and purpose is to make the media and communication efforts undertaken in the Nordic countries known, both throughout and far beyond our part of the world.

Nordicom uses a variety of channels – newsletters, journals, books, databases – to reach researchers, students, decisionmakers, media practitioners, journalists, teachers and interested members of the general public.

Nordicom works to establish and strengthen links between the Nordic research community and colleagues in all parts of the world, both by means of unilateral flows and by linking individual researchers, research groups and institutions.

Nordicom also documents media trends in the Nordic countries. The joint Nordic information addresses users in Europe and further afield. The production of comparative media statistics forms the core of this service.

Nordicom is funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media

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In 1997, the Nordic Information Centre for Media and Communication Research (Nordicom), University of Gothenburg, Sweden, began establishment of the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media. The overall point of departure for the Clearinghouse's efforts with respect to children, youth and media is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The aim of the Clearinghouse is to increase awareness and knowledge about children, youth and media, thereby providing a basis for relevant policy-making, contributing to a constructive public debate, and enhancing children's and young people's media literacy and media competence. Moreover, it is hoped that the Clearinghouse's work will stimulate further research on children, youth and media.

The International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media informs various groups of users – researchers, policy-makers, media professionals, voluntary organisations, teachers, students and interested individuals – about

- research on children, young people and media, with special attention to media violence,
- research and practices regarding media education and children's/young people's participation in the media, and
- measures, activities and research concerning children's and young people's media environment.

Fundamental to the work of the Clearinghouse is the creation of a global *network*. The Clearinghouse publishes a *yearbook* and a *newsletter*. Several *bibliographies* and a worldwide *register of organisations* concerned with children and media have been compiled. This and other information is available on the Clearinghouse's *web site*:

www.nordicom.gu.se/clearinghouse

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Thomas Tufte, Norbert Wildermuth, Anne Sofie Hansen-Skovmoes
and Winnie Mitullah

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Foreword

Speaking Up and Talking Back? Media, Empowerment and Civic Engagement among East and Southern African Youth is the title of the 2012/2013 Yearbook from the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media at Nordicom, University of Gothenburg.

Access to information and knowledge as well as the ability to share information empowers people, regardless of who and where they are. Information can mobilize and increase transparency and accountability, and is a stimulus to participation, active citizenship, lifelong learning and social change. This makes information crucial to ensuring a democratic society. Freedom of expression and freedom of information are essential to the realization of other freedoms set forth in international human rights instruments.

The media are among the most powerful social forces of our time, and whether we are talking about the political, economic or cultural sphere, we cannot avoid taking the media into account. Media, not least the Internet, represent social and cultural resources that can empower people, in both their personal development and their development as members of society. An important prerequisite for the empowerment of citizens is a concerted effort to improve media and information literacy. Such skills strengthen citizens' critical faculties and ability to communicate, both of which enable them to use media and communication as tools and as a way to articulate processes of development and social change. In short, media and information literacy empower people to influence and improve their lives – while promoting a well-oriented, democratic and sustainable society. But, we often tend to forget how crucially important such skills are for both democracy and development.

Time and again young people have manifested an ability to use media, to produce content, to understand and interact with a variety of Internet platforms like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and myriad blogs, as well as traditional media formats – not least radio – and technologies in many different contexts. Their

competence can make a crucial contribution to the effort to find fruitful paths forward, towards a more democratic and equitable society.

In recent years the International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media has especially focused on empowerment through media literacy, freedom of expression and information, good governance, intercultural dialogues and the demands that the digital media landscape poses. No less than the future of democracy is at stake.

Against this background, it is of particular importance to publish this fourteenth yearbook from the Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, entitled *Speaking Up and Talking Back? Media, Empowerment and Civic Engagement among East and Southern African Youth*. The publication is part of the research project 'People Speaking Back – Media, Empowerment and Democracy in East Africa' (2009-2013) funded by Danish International Development Agency / DANIDA.

The fundamental question posed in the book is whether and how citizens of Africa engage with media and communication technologies and platforms in their pursuit to be included in the change processes of their societies. The authors seek "to identify and discuss certain key arguments about democracy and its processes, their relationship to media and to ICTs, and how these issues have been examined and debated in relation to the global project of democratization in sub-Saharan Africa. It further examines what constitutes democratic engagement generally, and in relation to media, including ICTs."

I am deeply indebted to the editors of the book, Thomas Tufte, Norbert Wildermuth, Anne Sofie Hansen-Skovmoes and Winnie Mitullah, and all the contributors, who have made this Yearbook possible; a Yearbook which I hope will be of value all around the world and stimulate new research as well as cooperation both within countries and across national borders.

Göteborg in January 2013

Ulla Carlsson

Nordicom and

International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media

University of Gothenburg

PART 1

Introduction and Conceptual Framing

African Youth, Media and Civic Engagement

Thomas Tufte & Norbert Wildermuth

Speaking Up and Talking Back? Media, Empowerment and Civic Engagement among East and Southern African Youth. This is the title we have given to the book. The fundamental aim is to question if and how citizens in Africa engage with media and communication technologies and platforms in their pursuit to be included in the change processes of their societies. The theme echoes some of the claims made by disenchanted and frustrated youth and other citizens in the streets of the North African cities of Tunis and Cairo in 2012. Severe critiques were articulated against the governance structures of their countries; mass social mobilisations were seen, governments fell, and in the aftermath, the slow process of deep change continued, now with one tyrant less, but still with huge challenges in the social and economic development of these countries.

Youth in particular engaged massively, visibly, loudly and dramatically around claims to be involved and included in their countries' development process. Our book taps into the less visible and dramatic, but nevertheless highly dynamic and influential process of media development and enlargement of youth-driven, deliberative spaces which sub-Saharan Africa seems currently to experience.

Democratic governance

Fragility and underdevelopment in Africa has partly been attributed to dysfunctional political institutions and the resultant authoritarianism, which have hindered the successful pursuit of any development strategy regardless of the ideological orientation (Van de Walle 2001). This has seen the endorsement of democratic governance as an essential condition for sustainable development on the continent (Hope 2002). The argument is that democratic governance can trigger a progressing cycle of development because political freedom empowers

people to press for policies that expand social and economic opportunities, and open debates that help communities to identify and shape their priorities. It is an argument which has encouraged demands for the enhanced democratization of, and institutionalization of democracy in African countries.

In the context of a respective call, this book seeks to identify and discuss certain key arguments about democracy and its processes, their relationship to media and to ICTs, and how these issues have been examined and debated in relation to the global project of democratisation in sub-Saharan Africa. It further examines what constitutes democratic engagement generally, and in relation to media, including ICTs.

Access to information and to the space of debate is necessary for civic engagement to take place, and is almost always associated with media, which are assigned this responsibility in most societies. Cowling and Hamilton (2010) point out that whether an actual public sphere exists or not, “the operations of modern democracies assume the existence of a viable public sphere.” And what Habermas describes as the components of the public sphere directs us to the importance of the dynamics of debate and discussion, the importance of equal access to the debate, and the historical connection of access to media and other channels for communication to deliberation.

Media development

It is argued that the people in democracies cannot exercise their rights without access to information, which enables them to make informed decisions as voting citizens. An independent media sector is considered crucial to provide quality and accurate information. Such normative approaches to the media also see them as being extremely significant to public deliberation on issues of social importance (see Wright Mills 2004; Habermas 1989; Fraser 1992; McQuail 1994).

Understanding the media as accountable to the public and as holding the elites and the state accountable, is a normative, liberal interpretation of the (mass) media as “watchdog of society” that not always reflects realities on the ground. Community media, particularly radio, have been endorsed as an alternative to both market-driven and state-controlled media, enabling a broadened section of the population to gain access to a mediated communicative space where they can engage in debate and deliberation. While these and other citizen-led, often youth-led, mediated publics are laying the groundwork for community empowerment, advocacy and activism, it is understood that the dissemination of information, on its own, is not sufficient to alter the marginalized position of excluded communities. Moreover, civil society-led spaces of communicative exchange and deliberation, such as community and citizen journalist media, do face a range of constraining factors in meeting the needs of their designated communities of participants-cum-recipients.

While acknowledging the differences in practical experiences of the media in many developing countries, there is evidence that “old” media do play a constructive role in helping advance democracy and demand accountability from (a receptive) government. This is seen particularly in the field of health communication. Especially the 25+ years of fighting against HIV/AIDS in Africa has been an experience with civil society driven media platforms which very much has been linked to youth as target groups. Our book taps into this experience in part three. ‘Old’ media like film, and a variety of forms of interpersonal communication are likewise dealt with in our section four on ‘culture and social change’.

However, despite highlighting and focusing in on specific media in some of the chapters, it is the co-evolution of media which characterizes the African societies, and the uses and appropriations amongst youth in society that is particularly noteworthy. The role of new and old media differs depending on the political system in which they operate, and they require different kinds of support systems and channels (and perhaps audiences) in order to play a Fourth Estate role in holding governments accountable and in articulating social change processes in Africa (Sida 2009: 24). It is our hope that our book sheds light on some of these processes and the particular role of youth in them.

Media, empowerment and democracy

Our book grows out of the Danida-funded research project ‘People Speaking Back? Media, Empowerment and Democracy in East Africa (www.mediae.ruc.dk). The project (MEDIEA 2009-2013), covering Kenya and Tanzania, was launched at a seminar in December 2009 in Tanzania with the aim to explore how civil society driven media platforms and communicative empowerment initiatives provide – or not – opportunities for young marginalized citizens, young girls in particular, to engage in public debate. The MEDIEA project’s six Nordic and African researchers, its international advisory board, and many local African partners from civil society, media and academia participated in the launch seminar. It was combined with an online communication for development seminar in the context of Malmö University’s MA in ComDev. This whole mobilization around the questions of mediated civic engagement in processes of development contributed to a series of both Nordic and African masters students pursuing thesis work in this field. Now, a few years down the line, the book brings together 21 researchers from Northern Europe and East- and Southern Africa contributing to reflections about media, empowerment and civic engagement amongst African youth in processes of social change and democratic transition. The book contains a good blend of junior and senior researchers coming together and reporting on their empirical work, including five of the MEDIEA project researchers and a member of the advisory board.

Rethinking communication for development

The book falls in 4 parts. The first section seeks to provide an overall conceptual framing to the topics dealt with. The book is embedded in the academic discipline as well as in the practice of communication for development and social change. This is a field which is in a process of fundamentally being rethought in the context of globalization and mediatization, network society, digital media developments, and challenged especially by the processes of development that seem to exclude and marginalize huge segments of citizens, not least the youth. In this context, Thomas Tufte analyses the resurgence in practices of bottom-up communication for social change. He assesses how the plethora of agency in which voice, citizenship and collective action influences and informs the thinking and practice of institutionalized communication for development and social change. What are the underlying conceptual differences in the notions of action, participation and social change which inform the new generation of social movements, on one side, and the established field of communication for social change, on the other?

Linje Manyozo then provides an introduction to, and very critical assessment of the phases that have characterized the theory and practice of communication for development on the African continent. Manyozo distinguishes between the phases of orientalism, when missionaries and colonial authorities studied and co-opted educational indigenous practices and traditions; *extension* and *liberation*, just after independence, when broadcasters and universities were being used to take development messages to the people; and 'NGO-ification' (Manyozo, 2012), during which major scholarship is being generated by development organizations. These phases are not mutually exclusive.

ICT, empowerment and policies: The case of Kenya

Part two focuses explicitly on Kenya, where the situation has been particularly noteworthy in terms of political instability, youth vulnerability and ICT creativity. Hilker and Fraser (2009) advance the argument that large cohorts of unemployed and under-employed youth who lack political participation combined with urban crowding may become aggrieved, increasing their likelihood of engaging in violence. The Kenyan post-election violence was a dramatic warning of such scenarios.

In digging into this complex situation, Norbert Wildermuth opens the section by exploring the constraints and opportunities for processes of e-citizenship, e-democracy and digital empowerment to unfold, be it for the unemployed youth, but also for the Kenyan citizen in general. He draws on a rich body of civil society based experiences spanning from community-based digital inclusion initiatives to online tools/processes for civil auditing and social accountability. These analyses are interestingly complemented by Winnie Mitullah's analysis

on the policy and institutional context of ICT and citizen participation. Mitullah argues that the prevailing policies, regulations, societal values and norms in Kenya either facilitate or slow the realization of participatory governance using ICT. The chapter uses an institutional perspective and draws on theories around ICT for development to analyse how ICT policies and regulations affect processes of especially women's empowerment and participation in development.

In the following chapter, Wanjiru Mbure focuses explicitly on online youth engagement. She explores how digital media platforms in the form of youth group websites and online social groups advance or constrain opportunities for youth participation in the political process. Mbure further examines some of the theoretical paradigms that exist to explain political participation by youth in the digital era. Karen Luise Kisakeni Sørensen and Viktorija Petuchaite also look at how new digital media can be used to overcome a digital divide beyond the provision of access and how civil society finds ways to adapt these technologies to their context to achieve empowerment. The authors investigate these through the case of Ushahidi, a crowdsourced, open source, online platform, which was developed and first used during the Kenyan post-election crisis of 2007/2008, but has found numerous employments around the world ever since.

Grace Githaiga presents results from her ongoing PhD project in the Nairobi slum of Mathare. Importantly, she asks how young Kenyan women, and in particular those living in informal settlements are making use of ICTs and whether ICTs are shaping their communication strategies and practices either as groups or individuals. Her chapter assesses literature reviewed on how young women use ICTs, and whether or how these are shaping communication between them.

Health, communication and social change

The five chapters in part three all tap into the rich African experience with health communication targeting African youth. Within the widespread demand for more effective communication in the fight against HIV/AIDS, many conflicting paradigms have emerged over the last three decades. Eliza Govender explores four of the most conflicting paradigms, which include; the debate regarding the shift of mass media interventions to more participatory HIV communication; the question of whether HIV should be addressed from a focus on individual behaviour change or social change communication; from a faith based approach or a secular approach; and finally from a social science or a biomedical perspective for HIV prevention. Govender argues that these paradigms all need to be reviewed from a cultural studies perspective.

Drawing on an HIV/Aids prevention project in the town of Mbarara in central Uganda that involved local youth as peer educators, Mille Schütten and Line Friberg Nielsen explore the use of peer education as a potentially participatory method for turning a target group into active participants in their own change process. Schütten and Friberg Nielsen argue that participation in itself does not

create change. Rather, the potential for change depends on how participation is understood and applied, and on how participants, both implementers of a change process *and* members of the target group, communicate, engage and relate.

In the following chapter, Abraham Mulwo and Keyan Tomaselli examine South African university students' interpretations of the notions of 'abstinence' and 'be faithful'. Their study is based on a reception study conducted to explore students' responses to ABC and VCT campaigns at three universities in the KwaZulu-Natal province. Using reception theories and hermeneutics, Mulwo and Tomaselli examine the structures and processes through which university students make sense of campaign messages and the impact of these campaigns on students' sexual practices. Empirical evidence from the study suggests that the nature of cognitive influence and social action that behaviour change communication messages generate amongst the audience-publics, ultimately depends on how the meanings interpreted from the messages articulate with the situated discourses that led to the formation of those meanings.

From South Africa we move to Tanzania in the next chapter, where Datus Rweyemamu engages in a study of Tanzanian civil society organisations and their efforts to empower youth sexually. Rweyemamu presents the diverse strategies used by CSO in their work to enable youth to modify their risky sexual behaviours, make informed decisions, communicate their sexual concerns to their partners and adults, and engage in dialogue about sexual norms and ideas. Using the three dimensions of adolescent sexual empowerment set out in Spencer et al. (2008), this chapter examines the empowerment strategies used by CSOs in Tanzania to demonstrate that adolescent sexual empowerment is a process and a matter of degree which no single CSO can claim the sole capacity to achieve.

Finally, the last chapter in this part, written by Cecilia Strand, discusses a study of local Ugandan human rights defenders' attempts to influence local print media coverage of the Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Bill of October 2009. This bill caused an international outcry and sparked intense debate in both Ugandan and international media. Several Ugandan human rights organizations mobilized to raise awareness on the proposed Bill's potential negative impact on human rights and health rights in particular regardless of sexual orientation. Based on the findings of the mentioned study this chapter presents four recommendations aiming at maximizing the effects of future human rights advocacy on sexual minority health rights in Uganda.

Culture and social change

In the fourth and final section of the book, we focus our attention on the cultural dimension of development, exploring youth lives vis-à-vis the use of culture clubs to reconcile citizens, culture sensitive approaches to solving crime, the role of community radios in promoting youth cultures and empowering youth, and finally also looking into how film can articulate social change. The common

denominator here is the emphasis on cultural practices and how they, as communication practices, often end up as bridge-builders, building trust in hostile environment, social tissue in conflict-ridden societies or some form of participation and civic engagement. All 5 cases deal with youth.

The first case study is from Burundi, where Nikita Junagade explores the peace-building efforts of an NGO, ADRA. After generations of hostility, years of internal warfare, loss of homes, livelihoods and family members, how can those people most disrupted by the conflict rebuild their fragmented society? Nikita Junagade describes how clubs open channels of communication in a community governed by suspicion and she further uncover how they enable a process of empowerment and re-codification of identities, altering how members see themselves and how they perceive others. Through concepts from communication for social change, conflict transformation, and narrative theory, Junagade draws from the Burundian experience to lay out a theoretical framework for communication for reconciliation.

Ricky Braskov takes as his point of departure that Nairobi has been suffering from high levels of crime and violence for many years. His case study looks consequently into crime prevention and the role of communication in it, namely into the Safer Nairobi and into the establishment of youth self-help groups focused on developing livelihoods for unemployed youths. Based on his fieldwork conducted in Kibera, Braskov presents findings and recommendations on how future partnerships between Nairobi City Council and the Kibera youth self-help groups could contribute to more sustainable crime prevention interventions in Nairobi.

Jessica Gustafsson also conducts a case study from Kenya. It remains focused on community media in the slums of Nairobi. Based on her recent PhD study, Gustafsson explores three community radio stations that have begun broadcasting in 2006. Based on interviews and participant observations with youth working at these community radio stations, and their listeners, Gustafsson discusses: the benefits and drawbacks of working for the community radio stations; whether the young audience feels that the stations serve their needs; and if the focus on youth prevents the stations from properly catering for the needs of the entire community.

Line Røijen and Anne Sofie Hansen-Skovmoes explore the role of film in Zanzibar. The article is divided into two parts; the first part presents a strategic and methodological approach to the use of art and cultural events in developmental strategies and work. The second part of the article is more praxis-oriented based on a case study of Zanzibar International Film Festival. In the study the use of film and film festivals as a method to generate processes of social change for the youth in Zanzibar is examined, and whether the film festival succeeds to do this is discussed. In the final chapter, Rosalind Yarde explores the core concepts of voice, empowerment and social change in relation to young people in Tanzania. Yarde's explores how these core concepts might be promoted using a participatory media and communication framework. It is based on research carried out with former street children in Northern Tanzania who were being cared for by an organization called Mkombozi. The main objective of the chapter is to assess

whether giving a voice to these young people helps strengthen Mkombozi's youth empowerment and community engagement agenda and thereby help bring sustainable change to the communities in which it works.

Roskilde in January 2013

Thomas Tufte & Norbert Wildermuth

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Towards a Renaissance in Communication for Social Change

Redefining the Discipline and Practice in the Post 'Arab Spring' Era¹

Thomas Tufte

Abstract

Worldwide, we have experienced a resurgence in practices of bottom-up communication for social change, a plethora of agency in which voice, citizenship and collective action have centre stage as core values, principles and practices. This resurgence sparks a series of questions; How are these new calls for social change and their principles and communicative practices influencing and informing the thinking and practice of institutionalized communication for development and social change? And what are the underlying conceptual differences in the notions of action, participation and social change which inform the new generation of social movements, on one side, and the established field of communication for social change, on the other? These are the questions that drive this chapter.

Keywords: social movements, communication for development, communication for social change, agency, new digital media, social media, 'Arab Spring'

Introduction

When teaching communication for social change, I often start courses and lectures by outlining the contradiction in terms inherent in the concept of 'Communication for Social Change'. It assumes that by communicating in particular ways the group or organization behind the communication intervention can orchestrate a particular change process, be it changes in behaviour, social or even political change. However, if we look back into history, we are more often proved wrong in this assumption. Major changes in the development of society have historically been bottom-up processes, growing from groups of people that have mobilized, organized and advocated their cases – communicating their causes and achieving their rights.

The women's movement in the late 19th century and early 20th century is one obvious example. The civil rights movement in the United States in the 1950s and 1960s is another. Many of the social movements fighting the Latin American military dictatorships in the 1970s and especially the 1980s are other examples. These movements were successful at claiming a voice and a space for their protagonists and successful at articulating civic and collective action – and they have ultimately been successful at enhancing citizens' claims for a role in the development of their society.

Today we seem to be witnessing similar bottom-up processes in the form of the social movements emerging across the globe – the Arab Spring, the Occupy Movement, the Autonomous Movement, wider civil society's use of Ushahidi, the Indignados. These are names and slogans given to processes of social mobilization and collective action that have at least one common denominator: the call for a more inclusive development process in which the unemployed, the youth, women, the poor, the marginalized, or simply the citizen on a low income demand to be heard.

The new digital media is playing a central role in these contemporary social movements, circulating information, opening spaces for social critiques and facilitating new forms of social mobilization. In this respect, 2011 was a seminal year, which gave rise to many social movements of continuing importance.

While the crucial role of the media and communication in processes of social change has become ever more evident, this growing recognition is ironically not primarily connected to the field of communication for development and social change – neither as it has come to be institutionalized as a communication practice in large development agencies nor as it is taught in academia. Most development agencies are focused on developing vertical spaces for participation, in which target audiences, through strategic communicative interventions, are 'invited' to participate, gain knowledge, deliberate, debate and change behaviour. However, these communication for social change practices have little or nothing in common with the new generation of social movements.

The differences between an institutionalized communication for development (ComDev) practice and the ways social movements mobilize and communicate for social justice and social change are in part explained by their different approaches to participation. The development agencies largely understand participation as social processes closely tied to programme and project cycles and the underlying logics that inform their organizational inertia (Tufte and Mefalopulos 2009). Citizen-led participatory processes such as those seen during the many social mobilizations in 2011 are a difficult match with the logics of most development organizations.

While very much engaged in participation and citizen-driven processes, the development organizations seem hardly able to connect with what is happening in the horizontal spaces of deliberation created by contemporary social movements. Substantial social mobilizations occurring outside formal institutional and political arenas are generating previously unseen processes of deliberation, social and political critique, collective action and social change. However, they

are doing this without clear organizational structures, no fixed membership, no explicit communication strategy on paper and, in many ways, as a movement 'in flux' that is difficult to clearly identify, monitor and evaluate. Many contemporary social movements are a fit with the 'segmented, polycentric, integrated networks' (SPIN)-type groups (Gerlach and Hines 1968), which Gerlach and Hines defined in 1968 and which Lance Bennett has reflected on more recently:

Unlike armies, most global activist networks do not display a hierarchical command organization. And unlike mobs, they have considerably more refined communication and deliberative capacities. Perhaps the best account of the type of movement organization that enables vast networks to pursue diverse social justice goals on a global level is the SPIN model proposed by Gerlach and Hines (1968), and updated by Gerlach (2001). (Bennett 2003)

The dominant discourses used within communication for development and social change today have primarily grown out of organizations that produce institutionalized communication in the form of 'campaigns' and similar invited communicative practices. In contrast to these spaces of communicative practice, the social movements use media and communication technologies as a practice embedded in the spaces they create outside of formal systems of governance and social organization – spaces they claim, demand and occupy. It is this intriguing gap between invited system-driven spaces for communication and participation and the bottom-up, informal and non-institutionalized spaces which ought to provoke the 'establishment' organizations engaged in communication for development and social change.

This gap has always been there, as is demonstrated most expressively in the communication for social change practices coming out of the Latin American social movements of the past five decades (Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte 2006). It is, however, being rearticulated today, in the many social movements that swept across the globe in 2011 from the tent camps in Israel to angry students in Chile, from Malawians frustrated by the political impasse to the marginalized British youth who took to the streets.

Worldwide, we have experienced a resurgence in practices of bottom-up communication for social change, a plethora of agency in which voice, citizenship and collective action have centre stage as core values, principles and practices. It is this resurgence which sparks a series of questions:

- How are these new calls for social change and their principles and communicative practices influencing and informing the thinking and practice of institutionalized communication for development and social change?
- What are the underlying conceptual differences in the notions of action, participation and social change which inform the new generation of social movements, on one side, and the established field of communication for social change, on the other?

These are the questions that drive this chapter.

Given the thought-provoking gap outlined above, I argue below that communication for development and social change, both as a scholarly field and a communicative practice, is at a fundamental crossroads. In the light of new digital media developments and increased citizen engagement through these media, ComDev as a discipline and practice is being fundamentally challenged. Second, I reflect on and explore how the network society and media developments are creating new dynamics between citizens and decision makers. I argue that the recent developments are stirring up our thinking in a highly productive manner, as a 'wake-up call' forcing us to critically re-examine current schools of thought and produce new insights regarding how we conceptualize and use media and communication to articulate behavioural change, social justice and political transformation.

I conduct a brief review of current schools of thought, analysing three recent typologies of ComDev thinking and practice. The first is Linje Manyozo's outline of six schools of thought within communication for development. Manyozo's typology places theories, people and communicative practices in a geographical and institutional matrix (Manyozo 2004, 2006). The second typology is my own generational organization of the field, outlining three generations of communication for development and placing them in a heuristic matrix structured along 10 conceptual characteristics (Tufte 2004). Finally, I review Rafael Obregon and Mario Mosquera's convergence model, which identifies a range of characteristics in the field, placing them in a continuum and arguing that there is no single approach but only flexibility and convergence between all the options on this continuum (Obregon and Mosquera 2005). All three typologies predate the latest winds of social mobilization and technological developments.

The concluding section of the chapter reflects on how the new social movements and new digital media developments are combining to reopen the field of ComDev to the virtues and potential of bottom-up processes of change, articulating a renaissance in our discipline and field of practice, helping us to regenerate core values and principles and formulate new heuristic, conceptual and analytical frameworks with which to understand the current and future role of citizens and their claims for participation in more inclusive development processes.

Communication for development at a crossroad

My initial claim is that communication for development and social change, as both a scientific discipline and a communicative practice, is at a crossroads. Four major issues speak to this:

a) The emergence of a new generation of social movements as key players in development processes is challenging power structures in society. Although they have some similar traits to the identity-based *post-material* social movements that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s (Ingelhardt 1977; Tourraine 1981; Melucci 1985), known as the 'new social movements', the current wave of social

movements seem also to articulate highly material demands for jobs, income, housing, food and education – social and economic rights issues familiar from the social movements of the industrial era. In the context of the current global wave of social movements, Thompson and Tapscott remind us to be cautious about our understanding of social movements as being too caught up in Western paradigms (2010: 2-4).

b) The development and proliferation of mobile telephony and the Internet contribute to the articulation of new social and political dynamics: new relations are emerging between decision makers and citizens, between media and activists, and between offline and online spaces of deliberation (Lievrouw 2011; Sáez 2011; Thomas 2012). However, the new media developments are also resulting in private media companies emerging as strong drivers of change, promoting and reinforcing a market-driven economy and process of development;

c) Civil society has undergone a massive transformation in the past 15-20 years, locally, nationally and transnationally (Albrow et al. 2008; Gaventa and Tandon 2010). Non-governmental organizations in particular have conquered a central role in development processes as key agents of advocacy and change. This is leading to new power relations in governance processes;

d) Finally, the changing political economy of the development industry and the underlying change in concepts of development are increasingly relativizing and making more complex what is meant by development. The Western discourse on development is losing its global dominance. A fundamental questioning of the Western models of development that have dominated development discourses in the post-Second World War era has led to the post-development discourses which are emerging in global scholarship as a range of new paradigms of development. The new paradigms range from China's technocratic growth model, centred around their own national economic growth mixed with Confucianism, to Latin American claims of a sustainable development process informed by notions of 'buen vivir' (Silva 2011), which resonate with some dimensions of the Bhutanese Gross National Happiness index that is receiving growing international attention (Ura and Galay 2004).

All four dimensions – a new generation of social movements, the proliferation of new digital media, the growth and expansion of civil society and a strengthening of post-development discourses – are defining new contexts, stakeholders and dynamics within which we have to redefine the discipline and practice of communication for development and social change.

Social movements and social media

In the aftermath of the turbulent year of 2011, a whole sub-discipline in media and communication studies is gaining ground, analysing and theorizing about social movements, insurgent politics and new forms of deliberation and communication. Predating this new trend, John Downing spent years pulling together a massive compilation of social movement media (Downing 2010) that illustrates the breadth of both historical and contemporary experience of social movements using the media and communication in pursuance of their agendas. It clearly

illustrates that the use of the media by social movements is nothing new – it has just become more visible and widespread with the advent of the ‘Arab Spring’ and associated movements. It is, however, fair to say that the dynamic relations emerging between uses of social media and social mobilization are only briefly touched on in Downing’s encyclopedia. Although many of the examples assembled predate the era of social media activism, they are illustrative of the multiple forms of communication used in social movements.

In his book ‘Communication Power’ (2009), Manuel Castells reinforces the potential for ‘mass self-communication’ which social media open up the possibility of:

[I]n a world marked by the rise of mass self-communication, social movements and insurgent politics have a chance to enter the public space from multiple sources. By using both horizontal communication networks and mainstream media to convey their images and messages, they increase their chances of enacting social and political change – even if they start from a subordinate position in institutional power, financial resources, or symbolic legitimacy (Castells 2009: 302).

Castells shows the strategic role new social media have played in articulating social and political change. However, he does not go so far as to link communication theory with social movement theory.

A useful attempt to build this theoretical bridge is found in the work of Anastasia Kavada (Kavada 2011). In bringing together social movement theory, political communication and organizational communication Kavada develops a conceptual framework and a typology with which to understand and argue the centrality of media and communication in social movements. Her typology outlines four flows of digital communication: from ‘membership negotiation’ to ‘organizational self-structuring’ and ‘activity coordination’ to ‘institutional positioning’. Kavada’s conceptual framework is a promising outline of how we can bring analysis of media and communication practices close to social movement theory.

Media and citizenship

As we all know, the relation between the production of media content, technology and audiences has undergone a significant transformation in recent years. Fundamentally, what is happening is that the development of new digital media – especially mobile telephones and the Internet – have altered the relationship between sender and receiver in communication processes. This is a fundamental change in the logic and practice of communication that is forcing us to rethink how we both conceptualize and practice communication for development.

On the one hand, concepts such as ‘prosumer’, ‘produser’ and similar notions indicate the breakdown of traditional dichotomies in the classical line and logic of linear models of communication. A consumer is also a producer and, more generically, a user of the media can also produce media content themselves. Audiences become receivers, and receivers audiences.

On the other hand, such concepts as public connection, public sphere engagement, citizen journalism, participatory journalism, citizen media and civic engagement are all part of the growing international research interest in the active involvement of citizens with the media, communication and social change. These new concepts all speak to a research field on the move.

The academic perception of the new digital media's role in development and social change processes is usually seen as either revolutionizing our organization of time, space and social relations, or just 'business as usual', that is, as an extension of the 'old' media and its role in society. My approach to new digital media is to stress both these traits. Many cases demonstrate that the Internet and mobile telephony offer an extension of established media and communication practices while also providing new social dynamics that are challenging the established social order.

This 'co-evolution' of new and old media opens up for some still unknown and yet to be explored social uses of media. Some of these uses are, I argue, a manifestation of citizenship in everyday life. This argument is based on a notion of citizenship in which social practice is grounded in everyday experiences and where enhancing citizenship is about more than the right to vote. It is about ordinary people being 'the claimants of development' rather than just being the beneficiaries (Gaventa 2005: xii).

Citizenship is not just a set of rights and responsibilities 'bestowed by the state', but a multidimensional social practice that speaks to the identities and actions of people themselves. Citizens are not only audiences or receivers of communication-based strategies for change. They are equally as much to be seen as participants in or activists for change.

Civic action is thus the active manifestation of citizens as claimants of development, a process in which identity and action come together in deliberate communicative action for social change. Becoming media producers, citizen journalists and bloggers, and taking on similar participatory roles in a mediated development process are part and parcel of this process.

Voice, space and the challenge of a neoliberal development paradigm

I claim above that we, as ComDev scholars, stand at a crossroads in our understanding of how to conceptualize and practice communication for development. Two points should be made. The first is that new digital media developments do indeed offer us a new communication model which is not linear, one-way or top-down. It is dynamic, interactive and multidirectional, and it opens up multiple forms of citizen engagement. However, the other point to be made is that we must be cautious about overestimating the role of social media in articulating the political changes we have seen happening in, for example, Tunisia and Egypt. Enthusiastic uses of the media are at most, I would claim, chipping away the top of an iceberg full of unemployment, dissatisfaction, frustration, poverty and subdued human rights. People's discontent with not being included in the development processes of their own countries – these are not new sentiments

– are now being articulated on a massive scale and reaching mainstream public spheres, in addition to sparking many change processes.

Fundamental to these discussions is a renewed claim for voice. After historical exclusions of citizens' voices in so many development processes worldwide, these unfair development processes are now being challenged, and 2011 marks an epochal shift in this regard. This ties in well with the critique by the British scholar Nick Couldry of the neoliberal development processes that characterize our times (Couldry 2010).

Couldry formulates a fundamental critique of the neoliberal development paradigm which has influenced the large development organizations across the globe. His main criticism is that our ways of thinking development have historically not been very inclusive. There have not been proper ways and means to secure citizens a solid voice in the processes of development. He concludes his book by outlining the challenges of a post-neoliberal politics, and some of the important new resources such a politics can draw on. He speaks of the 'new technologies of voice' (Couldry 2010: 139), outlining five new possibilities which media and technology are enabling. These are:

First, that *the new technologies are allowing voice in public for a vastly increased range of people*. This is already apparent, although issues of lack of access, resources and competencies still produce significant digital divides.

Second, *a greatly increased mutual awareness of these new voices has emerged*. We can circulate more stories, quicker and to more and more peers. In other words, the imagined communities Benedict Anderson spoke about in the era of the mass media a few decades ago (Anderson 1983) have materialized as real-time networked communities for a growing proportion of the world population.

Third, we are seeing *new scales of organization thanks to the Internet*. Events during the Arab Spring are case in point. Many demonstrations are being organized through web-based communications. This ties in well with Kavada's emphasis on 'organizational self-structuring' (Kavada, 2011).

Fourth, *our understanding of the spaces that are needed for political organization has now changed*. As the US political scientist Lance Bennett has argued, the dynamic network becomes the unit of analysis in which all other levels – organizational, individual and political – can be analysed more coherently. Once again, however, this is the case in some societies but not in others.

Finally, and very importantly, all the above-mentioned changes are generating the potential for *new forms of listening*. This resonates with Wendy Quarry and Ricardo Ramirez' call for stronger attention to 'listening before telling' in ComDev practice (Quarry and Ramirez 2010). Governments are now no longer able to say that they cannot hear the voices of the people as new relations are possible between citizens and politicians.

Although cautious about how to assess these opportunities, Couldry's outline provides interesting analytical pathways for the ComDev scholar to analyse and for the ComDev practitioner to strategize around. While the massive social uprisings of 2011 used new digital media in their articulation of strong voices against

the socially and politically excluding forces of current development processes, Couldry's outline of the 'technologies of voice' constitutes a resource for moving beyond the neoliberal development paradigm.

Drivers of change

Within the recent history of development we have seen a rapid and significant global development of civil society. There has been an enormous growth in the number of organizations, and this has changed relations between citizens and decision makers. Some scholars even speak of the *NGO-ification* of development (see the chapter by Manyozo in this volume).

In the midst of this development of civil society, civil society-driven media platforms are growing and inviting citizens to engage and participate. These platforms typically use the mass media – the printed media and community media platforms – but they are also rapidly opening up to the new opportunities for citizen-driven media production, in both news and other forms of content production. Kavada deals in more detail with Internet-based media platforms (Kavada, forthcoming).

One example of a civil society-driven media platform is Femina HIP, the largest of its kind in East Africa, with eight different media outlets in Tanzania, including the two of the largest print magazines in the country, a successful television talk show and a radio drama. Femina HIP is an NGO with aspirations to create a social movement for youth across the country in order to engage in Tanzania's development process (Tufté 2011).

An innovative example of using social media platforms for mobilization, documentation and deliberation is Ushahidi in Kenya, crowd-mapping software that is increasingly being used to engage citizens with a variety of development challenges. As a web- and mobile phone-based platform it aggregates and channels the concerns and observations of citizens, serving a number of Kenyan NGOs as a useful media platform for advocacy and accountability purposes. As an integrated platform built on an independent, open source framework, it was picked up and used in a variety of other contexts from the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in Haiti in 2010 to activists' struggles for human rights in Syria in 2012.

The common denominator is that these civil society-driven media platforms invite citizens to engage with particular social, human rights or political problems – detecting violations and abuse and reporting them, and voicing both individual and community concerns in the process. In other words, they allow for processes of what Kavada calls 'activity coordination' when analysing social movements and their use of media and communication (Kavada 2011).

It is fair to say that the boundaries between social movements and civil society organizations are sometimes difficult to draw. The above two examples from East Africa illustrate this point. Ushahidi is a crowd-mapping tool developed by

an NGO and used increasingly by activists both in Kenya and abroad, while Femina HIP's successful proliferation of their many media outlets illustrates that NGO's aspirations to connect with its potential constituency and articulate a social movement among Tanzania's youth.

Among the key questions that are emerging are: How, and to what extent, are these emerging media platforms altering relations between decision makers and citizens? Are they leading to new spaces for deliberation and public debate, and to new spaces for critique and civic action? Are they invited spaces or claimed spaces? And what difference would this make? These new dynamics need to be much better understood.

In addition to civil society drivers of change, it is important to remember that other stakeholders are also emerging. The new telecommunications companies are significant drivers of change in Latin America and Africa, but also globally. Their ability to provide networks and telephones to a vast population seems to be altering everyday life in fundamental ways. It lies beyond the scope of this chapter to explore this development, but the fact that mobile telephony and increasingly the Internet are becoming accessible and being used intensively identifies the need for new media and communication research as well as broader social science research that explores how the intensified use of social media in everyday life relates to social change processes.

Redefining the discipline and practice in the post-arab spring era

This chapter has focused on some of the developments that have led me to call for a fundamental review of ComDev thinking and practice. They centre around two key issues:

- First, the fact that massive social mobilizations contesting political dictatorships, financial crises and mass unemployment have produced a wake-up call around the social and broader societal costs that many decades of autocratic leadership and neoliberal development thinking have produced.
- Second, the new global wave of activism outside of formal institutions and organizations and linked to new digital media developments have brought powerful dynamics into the equation of relations between citizens, the state, government, the media and the private sector;

In the midst of this call for a review of ComDev, an important question emerges: What exactly in the field of ComDev thinking and practice needs reviewing? I return here to the recurrent discussions on the definition of the ComDev field. I perceive three common denominators for ComDev as we have commonly known it: a normative framing of development committed to questions of social justice, equity and human rights; an institutionalized practice of communication; and, consequently, the use of strategic forms of communication.

We can then ask: Where do the recent social uprisings and the communicative lessons learned from them leave the ComDev field? Has the high social cost of neoliberal development, the re-emergence of non-formal activism outside of institutions and the multidirectional, open-ended use of communication through the new digital media made ComDev as we know it obsolete? Have we reached the passing of a field of theorizing and practice in communication for social change, which has been overrun by communication for social change in real-time, non-formal, activist-oriented settings? Probably not: we will continue to see the institutionalized practice of health communication, knowledge-sharing systems in the rural sector, environmental education campaigns, peace communication and community communication, to mention just some of the core areas of ComDev practice.

In his 2006 book, *Global Movements: Action and Culture*, Kevin McDonald distinguishes between two complementary paradigms when conceptualizing social movements. I would argue that his is a distinction we can use to differentiate the two key lines of ComDev practice that I outline in this chapter: the more established ComDev practice known from governments, United Nations agencies and large NGOs, on one side, contrasted with the new generation of social movements that have become visible since the 'Arab Spring' and the associated social mobilizations in 2011. McDonald distinguishes between *the institutional paradigm* and *the identity paradigm* of communicative action. The first understands 'action as strategy and maximizing opportunity' (McDonald 2006: 214) with a focus on strategy, rationality, calculation, and opportunity (ibid.: 215). The second is about articulating experiences of 'something greater', or the deindividualization of action (Marshall 2002), and thus the formation of the unstructured collective, the 'communitas' (McDonald 2006: 216).

It is my argument in this chapter that in the light of the 2011 uprisings across the globe, we as researchers of ComDev need to revisit our notions of development, and our perceptions and uses of media and communication, and reconsider the possibilities and limitations of strategizing our way to social change. McDonald's identity paradigm offers an alternative which is very much in line with the thematic focuses of the social movements that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, but the question remains how to conceive of the forms of participation and civic action that we see occurring today, and whether and how they fit into the dichotomy outlined above. McDonald argues in his book for a third paradigm, one which moves beyond seeing action as representation, and beyond action understood in intentional terms (McDonald 2006: 214). Based on a series of case studies of current or recent social movements, McDonald concludes his book by underlining the importance of 'embodiment as practice', where embodied experience is a 'mode of presence and engagement' which goes beyond a claim for representation. This, I believe, could be a useful starting point for an analysis of ComDev and its possibilities as a field of action in the post-Arab Spring era.

Conducting such a full analysis lies far beyond the scope of this chapter, but in preparing for this emerging ComDev agenda, I focus on revisiting some of the recent systematic framings of the field.

Typologizing communication for development and social change

In a 2004 outline of the field of ComDev, the Malawian media and communication scholar, Linje Manyozo, suggested bringing together the many stakeholders involved around the three nodes of geographical setting, institution and ideology. He outlined six schools of thought: the Latin America School; the Bretton Woods School; the Los Baños School; the African School; the Indian School; the Post-Freire School; and Participatory Development Communication (Manyozo 2004 and 2006). Although somewhat confusing in his mixing of mentions of individual scholars, media, strategies, geographies and institutions, the outline communicates the key point that communication for development and social change is a broad field, with institutions, scholars and communication experience spread all over the globe and a breadth of theories. Ironically enough, however, there is no mention of the Arab world, from where some of the most prominent recent communication for social change processes have emerged.

About the same time as Manyozo's typology appeared, two other models were published, my own 'Three Generations of ComDev' and 'The Convergence Model in ComDev' developed by the Colombian scholars Rafael Obregon and Mario Mosquera. My own model, first published in the Nordic Yearbook on Youth, Media and Communication in 2004 (Tufte 2004) and later reprinted in Hemer and Tufte (2005), was concerned about identifying the key conceptual characteristics underlying different forms of entertainment-education known in institutionalized communication practices, and demonstrating that other approaches existed beyond those practices embedded in the dominant diffusion-oriented communication paradigm.

My work with entertainment-education was a pretext for exploring ComDev in general, and I have since reiterated the point that the three generations exist not only within entertainment-education, but also in communication for development more broadly. In outlining the three generations in ComDev thinking and ComDev practice, I have sought inspiration from the 'classical' dichotomy which many ComDev typologies have revolved around – that of diffusion approaches versus participatory approaches. Everett Rogers and Paulo Freire have in that sense come to stand as the core thinkers and representatives for each of their communication for development paradigms. Nancy Morris has delivered a useful elaboration of this in her analysis of health communication practice (Morris 2005).

My Three-generation Model, presented below as Figure 1, serves as a heuristic framework with which to analyse communication for development practice. I argue that there are three overall conceptual approaches represented in the three generations. The first is that of diffusion of innovations, focused on dissemination of information and tied closely to behaviour change communication. The second is a life skills approach to communication, promoting the development of core life skills or competencies based primarily on educational communication. The third is that of communication for social change, which emerges from Freire's liberating pedagogy and the principles of dialogic communication. It is the nature of the development problem to which they seek to respond that defines the core difference between the generations. It is also important to note that the

heuristic framework offers ten core concepts to consider in the analysis of the individual ComDev experience and for assessing whether it relates mostly to a first, second or third generation approach.

Figure 1. Three generations of communication for development

Communication for Development	1st Generation	2nd Generation	3rd Generation
Definition of Problem	Lack of information	Lack of information and skills	Structural inequality Power relations Social conflict
Notion of culture	Culture as obstacle	Culture as ally	Culture as 'way of life'
Notion of catalyst	External change agent	External catalyst in partnership with community	Internal community member
Notion of education	Banking pedagogy Persuasion	Life skills Didactics	Liberating pedagogy
Notion of audience	Segments Target groups Passive	Participants Target groups Active	Citizens Active
What is communicated?	Messages	Messages and situations	Social issues and Problems
Notion of change	Individual behaviour Social norms	Individual behaviour Social norms Structural conditions	Individual behaviour Social norms Power relations Structural conditions
Expected Outcome	Change of norms and individual behaviour Numerical results	Change of norms and individual behaviour Public and private debate	Articulation of political and social processes Structural change Collective action
Duration of activity	Short term	Short and mid term	Mid- and long term

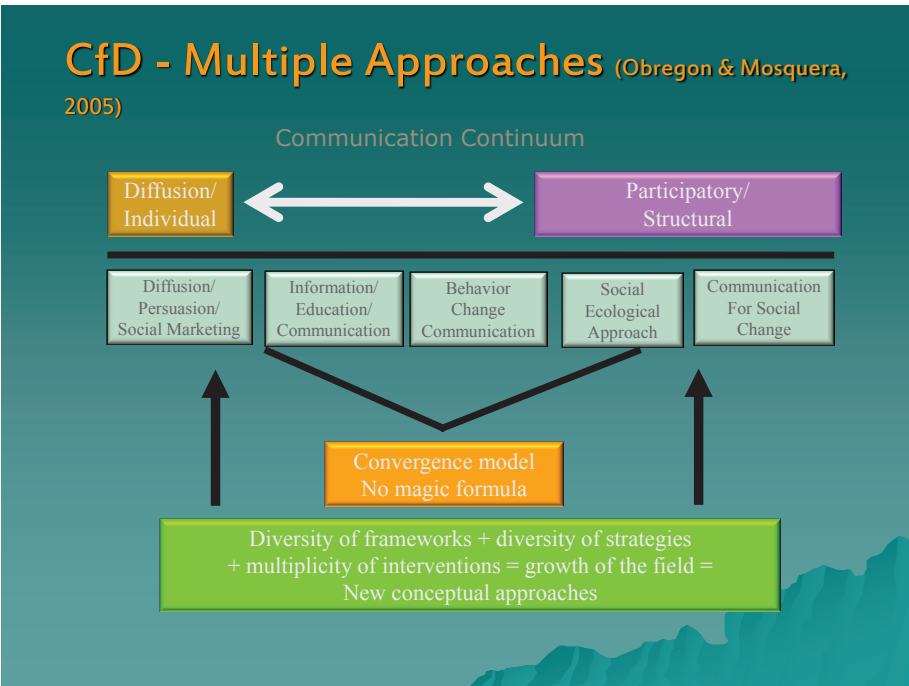
Source: Tufte (2004)

The 'Convergence Model', which appeared in the form of a heuristic framework in 2005 (Obregon and Mosquera 2005), offers another take on ComDev. Emerging out of an in-depth analysis of communication approaches within health communication, it has since been developed into a more clear-cut typology of interventions (see Figure 2). This typology distinguishes between diffusion/persuasion/social marketing; information, education and communication (IEC) approaches; behaviour change communication; the social ecological model; and communication for social change. Obregon and Mosquera make the point that most communication for development practice draws on a mix of these typologies. It speaks to the pragmatism of the field, is less ideological and theory driven than is argued by Manyozo, and more dynamic than my model implies.

When examining the three typologies of ComDev outlined in this section, a few common traits emerge. First, they all emerge from the *institutionalized* practice of communication, tied up with the logic of thinking of an organiza-

tion or a system in which broader and deeper questions of development and social change often are left aside. Second, they all tend to contain an implicit imperative of predefined goals. This resonates with the age old discussion within communication for development: To what degree are the NGOs, governments or United Nations agencies that ‘do’ ComDev willing to surrender their agendas and reformulate the direction of their campaigns, their message, the participants, their duration, and so on? How do they relate to the principles of the ‘identity paradigm’ driving the new social movements of the past three or four decades? And how much, if at all, do they contemplate the form of action McDonald’s calls for when he argues for the ‘embodiment of practice’ as a form of ‘action to understand’, and one which brings us beyond ‘just’ considering action to be about representation (McDonald 2006: 214-215).

Figure 2. The ‘Convergence Model’ in ComDev



Source: Obregon and Mosquera (2005)

It lies within the logic of this analysis that typologies are generalizations of practice which cannot capture the depth and breadth of actual practice. Having said that, contrasting the new generation of social movements and their social and communicative dynamics with the established practices of communication for development as represented above is a thought-provoking exercise from which

a series of features emerge for ComDev scholars and practitioners to consider. These are outlined below.

Towards a renaissance in communication for social change

I write above about the thought-provoking gap between invited, system-driven spaces for communication and participation and the bottom-up, informal and non-institutionalized spaces. I analysed some of the practices of communication for social change emerging especially out of the latest generation of social movements and materializing in their activist-driven claims for influence, visibility, participation and inclusion in society. From there I moved on to a brief presentation and analysis of some recent typologies and conceptualizations of the ComDev field – conceived and practiced as a system-driven communicative practice.

Now, I wish to outline some of the key challenges I see for the reformulation of communication for development and social change at this moment in history, following the ‘revolutionary year’ of 2011. The above analysis has helped me identify five constitutive features which I believe will challenge the field of communication for development and social change in the future.

First, *the concept of development* will – once again – require profound debate. At a time when the Western economic growth model is in a state of fundamental crisis, and when alternatives have been emerging and discussed for decades, how do communication for development scholars and practitioners position themselves? From Fanon’s post-colonial thoughts and Escobar’s post-development discourse, onwards to the Buddhism-inspired Gross National Happiness index currently being operationalized in Bhutan, how do scholars and practitioners in the ComDev field relate to these and other takes on development and social change, be they ecological, human rights-based or something else? A clear and explicit normative stance is fundamental to guiding the interpretation of the problems we, the citizens, mobilize, strategize and advocate for, be it from inside or outside systems and organizations.

Second, the new social movements have re-emphasized the need to recognize *power struggles as a core context* in which we communicate for development and social change. *Governance is part and parcel of this debate*, as governance is about having the power to administer the resources of a society. Participatory governance is about citizens having a role to play in these processes beyond the mere election of politicians at election time.

Empowerment has become a rather neutralized concept in recent years, but the fact that some people have power and administer resources is a key premise to consider. Stronger attention to the power struggles and the dynamics and practices of governance can help guide communication for development and social change. The concept of ‘*cyberculture*’ can help us further theorize the field. Cyberculture should not be conceptualized as it was within Internet studies in the 1990s. Cyberculture, as Jorge Gonzalez conceptualizes it, is about

ordinary people's cultures of governance, cyber meaning 'to govern' in Greek (Gonzalez 2009).

Third, recent media developments have led to *a proliferation of new spaces of deliberation, participation and agency*. Public debate has long been recognized as a founding pillar of democratic development, but the participants in and spaces for debate are changing. Couldry's emphasis on the technologies of voice in a post-neoliberal politics is a condition to factor into communication for development and social change. Multiple public spheres are generating many different voices.

Fourth, as the network society evolves, and social media become integrated into the social practices of everyday life in more and more places on the globe, we see an increased dissolution between previously separate forms of communication, with interpersonal communication on one side and mass communication on the other.

Central to this process, we see *polyphony emerging as a communicative condition of our times*. In music, polyphony is a texture consisting of two or more independent melodic voices. With networked social relations and practices of communication, many today communicate with many in a mix of online and offline practices. The most significant feature seems to be the network character of social relations and forms of communication, allowing a multiplicity of voices to speak together. This is setting new standards and producing new logics of communication.

We have for a long time been witnessing a transition from the dominance of monologic media formats working with one-way communication to dialogic media formats working with two-way communication. Increasingly, we are now moving to polyphonic media formats working with networked communication occurring between many stakeholders at the same time. This is becoming a key premise for any communication in our time. It is loosely connected with the notion of an emerging polymedia communicative environment, as developed by Mirca Madianou and Daniel Miller in their in-depth ethnographic study of family communication in migrant families (Madianou and Miller 2012).

Finally, influencing power structures, having a voice or gaining a say in processes of social and political change *are a growing articulation of tactics by citizens*, citizens who are becoming claimants of development, mobilizing in social movements and, in this context, articulating tactics to engage in development and social change. According to Michel de Certeau (1984), tactics are the efforts made by ordinary people to create spaces for themselves, whereby they can overcome the strategies or the power structures to which they are subjected. The response to this from ordinary citizens is to seek to develop citizen tactics – ways and means of carving out their own use and meaning in everyday life. In contrast to the traditional journalistic perspective, the agency lies not with the media house or the journalist but with the ordinary citizen.

By considering citizen tactics within the communicative dynamics of the network society, institutions – be they NGOs, states, governments or private companies – can develop a sensitivity to the citizen, listening and holding con-

versations with them in order to understand them better. Without losing sight of the political economy side of things, institutions in society might well see the centre of agency and social transformation develop in the hands of citizens. This may well be the most profound challenge for the field of communication for development and social change in the future.

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Notes

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Communication for Development in Sub-Saharan Africa

From Orientalism to *NGOification*

Linje Manyozo

Abstract

The chapter provides a critical appraisal of the trends and phases that have characterised the growth of the theory and practice of communication for development on the African continent. The key argument is that communication for development has evolved with contradictions. Whereas its origins can be loosely traced to genuine bottom up efforts by indigenous Africans to educate themselves, the coming in of western development organizations have provided the funding and sustainability to design and implement such comdev interventions. The cosequence however is that such funding has come with its own ideological influence, espically in the way dominant syntax conceptualise the field, from the perspective of western donor and development agencies. The overall objective of this chapter therefore is to rescue the field from this dominant syntax, by critically exploring the key approaches that characterise the field today.

Keywords: communication, development, orientalism, colonialism, Africa, NGOs

Introduction

This chapter introduces and interrogates the phases that have characterized the theory and practice of communication for development on the African continent. Kerr (1995) discusses three phases in the development of African popular theatre: pre-colonial theatre, colonial theatre and post-independence theatre. Loosely building on Kerr's categorizations, this paper introduces and describes three phases in the development of communication for development in Africa. The phases are: *orientalism*, when missionaries and colonial authorities studied and co-opted educational indigenous practices and traditions; *extension* and *liberation*, just after independence, when broadcasters and universities were being used to take development messages to the people; and 'NGOification'

(Manyozo 2012), during which major scholarship is being generated by development organizations. These phases are not mutually exclusive. They have dissolved into each other and, to an extent, the most recent phase continues to display attributes of the first two.

This chapter highlights two problems facing the study of development communication. First, examples of critical research on African development communication are few and far between, despite the many descriptive studies that explore case study interventions (Okigbo and Eribo 2004). This is the result partly of the failure of universities and colleges to find a compromise or an equilibrium between development communication located within media and communication departments, on the one hand, and development communication offered in agriculture and development departments, on the other (Manyozo 2007; Quebral 2011). Second, the chapter argues that, as a consequence of the failure to carve out a theoretical niche for development communication in the African university, there is a lack of agreement over what the field is about, and increasingly confusing concepts are continually thrown around to explain the same practices (Manyozo 2007, 2012). A key characteristic of development communication training is participatory action research, which allows collaborative learning and reflexive experience, in which development stakeholders generate knowledge and best practices together (Kamlongera 2005; Quebral 1988; Servaes 2008). This component continues to be absent from development communication programmes and courses, and students graduate without having mastered the skills to live and engage with development stakeholders (Gumucio and Rodriguez 2006).

Communication for development

In theory and in practice, the term communication for development is used interchangeably with concepts such as development communication, communication for social change, communication for empowerment or communication for development and social change. The concept was first defined by Nora Quebral (1975, 1988, 2011) as the 'art and science of human communication' that is applied in development initiatives that aim to achieve a rapid transformation of societies. As applied in practice, the concept revolves around the planned use of the media and communications to bring the public and the community into development decision-making processes and structures (Figueroa et al. 2005; Gumucio and Rodriguez 2006; Okigbo and Eribo 2004).

This chapter is a celebration of the contribution of the African continent to global discourses on communication for development. Manyozo (2006, 2012, 2011) has attempted to trace the historical development of the field in six schools of thought: Bretton Woods, Latin American, Indian, African, the *Los Banos* School and the post-Freire School. This discussion examines the African School, itself rooted in orality, performance, rural radio and indigenous knowledge communications. The discussion contends that understanding development communica-

tion in Africa requires a rethink of the continent's approach in the three distinct phases outlined in the introduction above.

1. The phase of orientalism: from the fifteenth century to the 1960s

The phase of orientalism emerges and ends with the period of colonization, that is, from the time the first traders, missionaries and settlers arrived on the continent until the 1960s, when most countries achieved political independence. This period was marked by Vasco Da Gama's 1497 voyage of discovery through Africa on his way to India, Jan Van Riebeeck's discovery of South Africa in 1642, Napoleon's 1798 conquest of Egypt, the 1888 partition of Africa in Berlin and the independence struggles of the 1950s and 1960s. The theory and practices of development communication did not exist as we understand them today during this period, but it is highly likely that the orientalist literature on and about Africa contributed to many of the communication interventions by colonial governments and institutions in relation to public health, education and agriculture.

For Edward Said (2003), orientalism is an organized science, a kind of corporate institution that generates 'common sense' representations of people, places and ideas. Said gives a concrete historical exposition of orientalism as being built around a repertoire of images about the global South that homogenizes the experiences of the orient the world over. The ad hominem is that the orient is backward, highly traditional and does not change (Said 2003). The centrality of the discourse on orientalism in development communication is examined in detail by Kamlongera (1988), Mda (1993) and Kerr (1995), who provide historical accounts of the role of the early missionaries who came to work on the African continent, and wrote about a continent that comprised 'races of barbarians and cannibals' (Moffatt, 1842: 16). As if to confirm Said's thesis, writing about different ethnic groups in Southern Africa, the missionary Robert Moffat (1842: 16) observed: 'all these possess nearly the same physical characteristics, the same manners and customs'. The consequence was that such scholarship contributed to what Said (2003) describes as a 'double act of subjugation', in that it encouraged the colonization of other places and people on humanitarian grounds while, at the same time, such colonization tended to inform the condescending knowledge about the 'ideal' other. Said's orientalism therefore can be understood as a discursive form of colonialization that presents itself as objective knowledge about others, in this case the African continent.

Such orientalist literature and the resultant interventions continue to represent the subaltern as unable to speak and act, and therefore requiring exterior interventions to save them (Spivak 1988). Spivak (1988) argues that oftentimes colonial institutions have not understood the content, symbolism and politics of subaltern speech. There were two aspects to the colonial and orientalist perspectives on indigenous communications. The first was the systematic attempt to manipulate oral traditions and performances to 'civilize the native' (Kamlongera 2005), which for Kerr (1995:19) constitutes 'colonialism's assault on indigenous performing arts'. The second concerned the importation of European performance

and communications into Africa and the corollary manipulation of indigenous communications to support settler colonization and capitalism (Kamlongera 2005; Kerr 1995). Although church services and schools were employed to educate the heathen and pagan Africans (Kamlongera 1988; Kerr 1995; Mda 1993; Moffat, 1842), educational strategies were not based on the notion of liberation or conscientization. Missionary education employed pedagogical strategies of repetition and memorization, and, as is demonstrated by Moffat (1842), also involved uncritical imitation.

2. The phase of extensionism and liberation (the 1960s to the 1990s)

This stage spans the period when most sub-Saharan African countries gained their independence but then most of them became one-party states or dictatorships – until the 1990s, soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall, when most then became multiparty democracies. Independence as a coherent political and economic programme was poorly planned, since colonial administrators were forced to hand over power against their will, and the newly independent states inherited weak socio-economic infrastructures. At the same time, these new states urgently needed to scale-up and roll-out social and development services. In the areas of health and agriculture, there was a need to communicate with rural and regional communities – and it was here that radio and popular arts played a huge role in animating the conversations between communities and service providers. Three hypotheses drive the extensionist approach to development communication: (a) development information provided in people's indigenous language is more effective at helping people adopt best practices in health, agriculture and other development sectors; (2) there is a direct relationship between the accurate and effective delivery of development information, and socio-economic change in communities and societies; and (3) there is 'information poverty' among rural and regional communities

Each of these hypotheses contributed to the formation of the linear theoretical and methodological trajectory of development communication experiments. The first hypothesis acknowledges that colonial approaches to communication disregarded the indigenous languages and contexts in which these communications were situated. Manyozo (2011, 2012) observes that in countries such as Ghana, colonial broadcasting services aired crucial development information in European languages. The newly independent broadcasters immediately introduced rural departments and indigenous language programmes. The demand for indigenous language content resulted in the establishment of sister stations to public broadcasters, but the lack of sustainable funding meant that instead of creating programmes *with* communities, broadcasters ended up producing studio programmes that offered advice *to* communities. The challenge for these early broadcasters and for modern-day broadcasters was and remains the conundrum of linguistic diversity.

The second hypothesis, which still holds sway in dominant development communication thinking today, holds that specific communication interventions are

responsible for specific social and economic changes. This assumption emerged from two sources: (a) the educational broadcasting and entertainment-education paradigms of Latin America; and (b) social psychology-informed health and population communications in the United States. It is believed that strategically planned communication can induce change and development. The educational broadcasting and entertainment-education approaches can be specifically traced to Miguel Sabido, his subsequent partnership with Everett Rogers and of course the scaling up of the methodology by many public broadcasters in the global South (Singhal and Rogers 1999). US-originated health and population communications emerged in and became consolidated by organizations such as the Centres for Disease Control, the John Hopkins University Centre for Communication Programmes, Family Health International, USAID, Population Services International (PSI), and others. In both these communications interventions, projects are planned as experimental designs. For example, in the radio forum experiments in sub-Saharan Africa dating from the 1960s, the interventions were designed as laboratory experiments and tended to compare the differences in knowledge gain, message recall and technology adoption between groups with organized listening clubs (led by facilitators) and groups without clubs (Manyozo 2011, 2012). Entertainment-education, and population and health communications continue to be designed along the same lines today, a good example being the UK-based Development Media International's assumption that 'the mass media saves lives' (Manyozo 2012).

This third hypothesis raises the contention that 'information poverty' has more to do with the absence of mass media and is not necessarily linked to social and economic poverty. In response to this hypothesis, development communication projects on the continent focused on establishing rural media such as local and regional radio stations and newspapers. In Ghana, for example, there were attempts after independence to establish rural indigenous language newspapers (Abbey-Mensah 2001; Ansu-Kyeremeh 1994; Obeng-Quaidoo 1988). State broadcasters also attempted to introduce sister rural and regional broadcasters that would provide indigenous language broadcasting to diverse ethnic groups (Fardon and Furniss 2000). There was a realization that centralized media and communications run the risk of marginalizing ethnic diversity. In the post-independence period, the use of radio and other media alongside community-based social mobilization provided development stakeholders with avenues to speak to the people.

In practice, two kinds of development communication evolved during this period. The first, was linear extensionist development communication, which aimed to offer public service information to mass audiences. There was a recognition on the part of the new governments that existing institutions for communication and learning were incapable of addressing national development goals (Kamlongera 2005; Kerr 2001; Kidd 1982). This form of development communication was largely informed by Western theories of mass communication, rural sociology, agriculture extension and health communication. The second was a more radical form of development communication, which emanated, on the one

hand, from a realization of the inadequacy of the extensionist approaches and, on the other, from the post-colonialist and negritude thinking emerging from universities (Fanon 1963; Mbembe 2001) and from liberation theories (Freire 1996).

In addition to being rooted in Western social science theory, the extensionist approach to development communication was also informed by the orientalist literature and discourse that had accumulated during settler colonization. In this orientalist discourse, the ideal other remained socially and epistemologically static, frozen in time, long after Western religion and beliefs had been accepted. It remained the responsibility of the extensionist subject matter specialist to prepare a package of development information that would psychologically redeem the subaltern from themselves and their backward traditional practices (Lerner 1958). This could only be achieved through the provision of relevant information. The real poverty afflicting the traditional communities was not material poverty, but poverty of information. The mass media was thus seen as a facility for eradicating this poverty.

Another important aspect of this extensionist approach to development communication is the fact that the content was and is manufactured by funders and communications experts who are not necessarily familiar with local contexts and socio-economic conditions. Of course, there are attempts to challenge these linear discourses and practices of development communication. For example, Tufte (2005) describes what he calls third generation entertainment-education, in which participatory approaches are employed to allow audiences to generate content with experts. Development through radio (DTR) platforms allow radio listening clubs to share power with broadcasters in developing, recording and producing development radio content (Abbey-Mensah 2001; Ansu-Kyeremeh 1994, 2005; Manyozo 2012). Similarly, Kamlongera (1988, 2005), Kerr (2001), Kidd (1982), Manyozo (2002) and Mda (1993) describe the theatre for development process, in which theatre troupes come into the community, conduct baseline research and informal surveys and use this information to develop educational content, through sketches and drama, to enlighten local people on development challenges. These modes of communication at the grassroots level enable research on and analysis of local development problems, and help to create critical awareness and potential for action to resolve problems. It should be emphasized that these alternative pathways to undertaking development communication may indeed capture subaltern voices and aspirations. Nonetheless, the political economy of such interventions, characterised by donor funding and control, continues to promote dominant theoretical trajectories and to follow the same dominant methodology.

A second development communication approach to evolve out of, and exist simultaneously with, the extensionist approach is the radical and post-colonial communication that can be traced to the work of, among others, Ngugi wa Thiong'o (1986). This approach emerged from the African university and is rooted in popular arts and theatre, when communications started to be used to conscientize Africans on the failure of the post-independence state to meet the aspirations of its people. Ngugi's approach to theatre for development is more

liberatory and Freirean in that it is rooted in post-colonialist critiques of post-independence African governments that have failed to develop their own people and countries. Frantz Fanon (1963) uses the notion of 'horizontal violence', while Achille Mbembe (2001) uses the concept of *commandement* to describe a widespread phenomenon in African politics by which African leaders mimic colonial forms of power as they oppress their own people much more brutally than most colonial administrations ever did. Ngugi's political and post-colonial theatre aims to articulate subaltern dissatisfaction with existing political institutions. Manyozo (2002) observes that Ngugi (1986) conceptualizes theatre for development as theatre created by and for the people in their own language that develops their critical outlook. Ngugi's definition reflects Augusto Boal's (1993) concept of community theatre, the 'poetics of the oppressed', which allows for the creation of a three-form theatre: theatre as a weapon, theatre as a discourse and theatre as a post-colonial public sphere (Manyozo 2002). As a discourse, a weapon and a forum, community theatre provides an egalitarian opportunity for indigenous peoples to critically analyse community and national issues, linking effects to causes, thereby attaining Boal's (1993) 'mental liberation', known as conscientization in the Freirean (1996) praxis.

3. The phase of 'NGOification' (post-1990)

The 'NGOification' phase has seen increased involvement by NGOs in funding and determining the theory and practice of development communication (Manyozo 2012; Servaes 2008). Emerging soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the subsequent introduction of multiparty politics in Africa, the 'NGOification' phase is not stand-alone, in that it continues to exhibit elements of the orientalist, extensionist and radical perspectives on development communication. An important aspect of this phase is its emphasis on participatory development, unlike the other two phases which were and continue to be heavily influenced by modernization approaches to development – perhaps with the exception of the liberation aspect of the extensionist phase which was partly influenced by liberation politics, post-colonial thinking and the dependency school of development thinking of scholars such as Adebayo Adedeji (1991) and Walter Rodney (1972).

A landmark in the 1990s democratization process in sub-Saharan Africa was the *African Charter for Popular Participation in Development and Transformation*, which was adopted by representatives of governments, civil society institutions and grassroots organizations (United Nations 1990). At the time, the neoliberal concept of popular democracy was being articulated and promoted by Western institutions and governments, emphasizing the democratization of development, and political democratization became an important aid and debt conditionality.

Five key factors gave theoretical and methodological shape to the field of development communication at this time: (a) a pronounced emphasis on governance on the development communication agenda; (b) the return to indigenous knowledge as key to understanding development; (c) a re-emphasis on cost-

benefit approaches in development communication research; (d) the emergence of post-colonial critiques of development communication (IPDC, n.d); and (e) the establishment of university training in the field.

An emphasis on governance issues

In the mid-1970s, UNESCO commissioned a study of communication problems in the world, culminating in the MacBride Report (UNESCO 1980). This study led to a renewed emphasis on the question of democratizing the media – not just the way the media produce content and allow people to contribute to the development process, but also the behaviour of the media (UNESCO 1980). In the 1980s, as a result of the MacBride Report, the International Programme for the Development of Communications (IPDC) was established and located within UNESCO to coordinate the development of the media sector, especially in the newly democratized states.

Unfortunately for Africa, media sector development has been implemented within the framework of neoliberal political theory, in which most projects attempt to reproduce exogenous media systems and institutions unproblematically without considering the theories of nation state formation on the continent. It has often been assumed, in largely Western-centric media development research, that a free media that is independent of the state can strengthen good governance and democracy. This limited understanding of the peculiar nature of the complex processes that contributed to the formation of the nation state in Africa has opened up debates on whether such approaches could actually exacerbate political conflicts and tensions (Allen and Stremlau 2005). A second problematic feature of media sector development on the continent concerns the democratization of the media. Media development projects on the continent have often uncritically focused on establishing new and more media institutions (Allen and Stremlau 2005; UNESCO 1980). What is often forgotten is the need to transform the behaviour of media institutions in order to make them more accountable and more democratic. It is for this reason that Western-funded media development projects that seek to promote good governance tend to footnote the development of state departments of information, which are still crucial in developing and implementing media and communications policy in post-independence Africa. There is a need therefore to deconstruct the dominant, Western-centric approach to media development that uncritically celebrates the role of civil society in the development of democratic and independent media. By de-emphasizing the transformation of government departments of information, media development organizations have contributed to the failure of media transformation in multi-party sub-Saharan Africa. Instead, is the Chinese government that has brought a totally different perspective on media development, by focusing on building the capacity of state media systems (Gagliardone, Repnikova and Stremlau 2011).

A return to indigenous knowledge systems

In the 1980s, international institutions, especially the World Bank and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, began to carry out research into indigenous knowledge systems to establish how they could be harnessed to inform and consolidate development initiatives. The multiplicity paradigm of development was beginning to emphasize local voices and the importance of local context in development policy thinking (Servaes 2008). Indigenous knowledge refers to the ways of living, thinking and perceiving practiced by indigenous people, a term which, in classical anthropology and development, implied highly traditional, rural, uncivilized and underdeveloped societies and communities (Finnegan 1970; Warren 1991; Wilson 1987). Indigenous knowledge is sometimes known as traditional or local knowledge, citizen science or primitive epistemology (Sillitoe 2002; Wilson 1987). For Warren (1991), indigenous knowledge, unlike scientific knowledge, is locally produced, 'unique to a given culture', passed down the generations and constitutes an important building block in community decision-making. Similarly, Pottier (2003: 4) describes local knowledge as 'people's understanding of the social universe and also their rights'. Indigenous knowledge has generally been conceptualized as the way of knowing that a social group generates and accumulates over generations of living in an environment, allowing them to explain essential and existential phenomena.

The study of indigenous knowledge communication systems (IKCS) emerged from the increasing interest in indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is created, modified, used and shared across the generations through a series of overt and covert communicative practices and performances. Mundy and Compton (1999) and Wang (1982) define such communication systems as the organically developed 'elaborate ways' through which society transmits technical and non-technical information among its members to inform, educate and entertain them. Also known as indigenous communication systems, traditional systems of oral communication, indigenous media, oral literature, or oral media, IKCS have in-built media systems that are rooted in orality, memory and narrative, such as folk media, village meetings, griot performances, poetry and storytelling, open market places, proverbs or drumbeating (Adjaye 2008; Finnegan 1970; Ugboajah 1985; Wilson 1987). These communication systems often perform social functions within an indigenous knowledge system, mostly related to the calendar of human life, from birth to death and back to birth (Kamlongera et al. 1992). As a consequence, most governments and development organizations have used these to build their social mobilization campaigns and activities (Kamlongera 1988, 2005). It should be pointed out however that such social functions can in some cases be highly oppressive to subalterns within a social formation.

Cost-benefit approaches to impact evaluations

The most visible feature of development communication on the African continent is arguably entertainment-education. Entertainment-education is associated with experiments in Peru and Mexico in the 1970s and, of course, health and popu-

lation communication research in the United States (Singhal and Rogers 1999). What is ignored by most Western development communication scholars is that long before the advent of Latin American educational and development communication experiments, indigenous knowledge communications was already performing a similar function on the African continent (Ansu-Kyeremeh 1994, 2005; Kamlongera 2005; Kerr 1995; Okigbo and Eribo 2004; Wilson 1987). What African communication scholars have failed to do, however, is develop theoretical frameworks on behaviour change that can explain how effective these indigenous entertainment-education approaches have been at promoting social change. Nonetheless, there are some wonderful initiatives by scholars (Adjaye 2008; Finnegan 1970; Ansu-Kyeremeh 1994, 2005) who have attempted to develop indigenous knowledge communications theory.

In most entertainment-education approaches, the emphasis is placed on proving that a specific communication intervention can contribute to a change in behaviour in the target audience. For example, a London-based research organization, Development Media International (DMI), builds on scientifically designed experiments in West Africa to demonstrate that health improvements can be achieved by mass media campaigns. This approach is not new. It is a replication of 1960s and 1970s efforts by the then newly independent African nations, which established farm and rural radio listening clubs to promote social development. In Ghana, Nigeria, Benin and Malawi, radio clubs were designed to augment radio-based distance learning on agriculture – largely to compensate for inadequate and weak agriculture extension services (Abbey-Mensah 2001; Manyozo 2012 2011). Radio clubs were also introduced to increase popular participation in community health development, local elections and basic education. Perhaps drawing on lessons from similar Western-funded projects that had been implemented in Latin America, South East Asia (especially the Philippines) and India, the African experiments with radio forums were designed in a similar way to DMI's behaviour change intervention methodology. More recently, entertainment-education experiments in Tanzania, Kenya and South Africa, among others, have tended to be designed with North American behaviour change theory in mind.

Thus, when it comes to evaluation, multivariate-regression analyses and other 'scientific' methodologies are preferred in order to demonstrate that specific development communication interventions have increased knowledge gain and facilitated the adoption of better practices on specific sectoral development issues. Alongside this emphasis on quantitative evaluations, a group of Northern European community media institutions and scholars is attempting to empirically test the importance of qualitative and participatory evaluations, as in the case of the East African Community Media Project, in which participatory evaluations are being built on local narratives of how local people experience change and development as a result of contact with community radio (SIDA and Jallof 2007).

Post-colonial critiques of development communication

Development communication in Africa and beyond faces mounting criticisms that are located within post-colonial thinking (Okigbo and Eribo 2004). There

are two dimensions to these post-colonial conversations. First, is the suggestion that Western approaches to and models of development communication are incompatible with organic and indigenous communications. These exogenous models are considered 'outlandish, dangerous' and incompatible with Africa's socio-economic systems due to a Western misunderstanding of indigenous knowledge communication systems (Ansu-Kyeremeh 1994, 2005). It has become imperative for Africa to develop 'its own communication systems'. Much of this concern could be a reaction to suspicions of cultural imperialism, that is, the ideological perspective that Western and global information infrastructures dominate the African communication agenda (Ansu-Kyeremeh 1994, 2005; UNESCO 1980). Perhaps as a challenge to cultural imperialism, endogenous regional media institutions and processes have been put in place. Examples include the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA), national media councils and the 1991 Windhoek Declaration on Press Freedom.

The second aspect of the criticism is related to the challenge of linking information and communications technology (ICT) to genuine change on the ground. The business models of ICT for development initiatives seem to be all about the financial rewards for the service provider, because of the expensive tariffs they charge. The essentialized category of the rural poor (as in essentialism) have been able to access information and communication services, but the ownership of the ICT industries is still controlled by regional and national corporations. Social enterprises have not experimented with collective models of ownership of telecommunications companies. Nonetheless, a strategically essentialized category of subjects in Western development literature are spoken for and spoken about as having benefitted from e-governance, e-commerce or e-development initiatives.

Another important aspect of the ICT for development debate is the question of sustainability, especially financial sustainability. Projects are introduced and, within a few years, they end up as what Eric Dudley (1993) describes as an 'abandoned house'. A meta-criticism is how development communication is thought about in universities and international development organizations. There is an absence of political economy perspectives, in the process of which there would be an ideological emphasis on the importance of the local ownership and control of ICT for development projects. The best strategy would be to introduce such projects based on business surveys and models developed organically, to ensure that the projects, once set up, benefit local populations financially. It is well established that development communication initiatives that offer people economic incentives eventually enjoy greater levels of social and institutional support from local communities (Manyozo et al. 2011).

The establishment of university training

One major development that has taken place during the 'NGOification' phase is the emergence of universities as training and degree providers in development communication. Since the 1980s, most of these departments have had huge

experience of designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating development communication projects alongside government departments or NGOs. The advent of multiparty democracies resulted in legislation that enabled the proliferation of the NGO industry – the rapid growth of which can be explained by poverty and the failure of the African state to provide basic social services. As a result of this expansion of the NGO industry, there has been a need for new communicators, with skills in living and engaging with people in order to work alongside stakeholders to promote social change and development. While the NGOs initially provided short-term workshop training, the skills obtained in these scenarios lacked any critical exploration of theory and methodology.

Since the 1990s, however, the demand for specialist development communicators has been obvious. Universities have had to respond to this demand, starting by offering development communication aspects within media/communication studies and in agriculture extension programmes (Manyozo 2007).

Conclusions

The emergence of the development communication agenda on the African continent has been affected by various ideological, intellectual and methodological movements. The above discussion examines the development of theory and practice in the field from the orientalist approaches, which approached African communications from anthropological perspectives, through the extensionist phases, which emphasized agriculture and development journalism and to some extent participatory action research, leading to the ‘NGOification’ phase, in which the political economy of development communication largely rests with international and local donor institutions. The orientalism phase was marked by the development of ‘objective’ scholarship on and about Africa, which led to direct colonial rule and eventually sustained the idea of colonization as a humanitarian force.

The closure of Burkina Faso’s CIERRO in 2006 and the Harare-based SADC Centre of Communication for Development in 2008 robbed the continent of its centres of excellence, in which the scholarship, training and policy debates of the field were undergoing robust and rigorous interrogation through the theory-based and method-driven testing of development communication. Even though these institutions obtained much of their funding from the West, their leadership, agenda-setting and, in a way, control seemed African. Nonetheless, when the funding taps were turned off, these important institutions could not sustain themselves financially.

In all three phases of the development of African development communication, political economy has favoured exogenous approaches that have unfortunately downgraded the importance of local resources, knowledge and realities. It is also recognized that while it is imperative to evaluate the impact of development communication, cost-benefit evaluations assume that communication variables can

cause social change without other social variables. It is therefore important that Mansell's (1982) critique of continued superficial revisionism in the theory and practice of development communication receives serious consideration. Unless the African School of development communication breaks free from a political economy that provides ownership and control of development communication to external and exogenous institutions, it is highly likely that superficial revisionism will become a feature of these exogenous interventions.

The current phase of 'NGOification' challenges African policymakers, development experts and institutions to think of more radical ways of conceptualizing development communication from below. Journalism and communication programmes require a reorientation of their offer, to provide the intellectual space for the capacity building of development communication experts who appreciate the importance of organic models and processes. Africa needs a centre of excellence in communication for development that can pioneer and test theories, strategies and practices in the field (SADC-CCD 2006). Such a centre, operating along the lines of the US-based Communication for Social Change Consortium, would work alongside universities and colleges offering various aspects of the field, and rethinking the theories and methodologies in development communication. To achieve more organic and independent models of development communication, the region must begin to reorient itself towards social business models that allow communities to generate funding and invest their profits back into initiatives. For too long, development communication has been thought of as philanthropy. To achieve the above, scholarship must draft in political economy perspectives, thereby allowing a careful consideration of debates on ownership and control.

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Note

- 1 There is an increasingly common ownership pattern for ICT kiosks in Africa, in which local business people provide various services to a specific catchment area. In a study of ICT and community radio in Uganda, Mozambique and Mali (Manyozo et al. 2011), it was observed that, even in rural areas, multimedia centres and Internet kiosks were repairing broken mobile phones and allowing people to charge their mobile phones, copy music and videos, send and receive faxes, type letters and resumes, and send and receive emails. In this model however, it is telecommunications customers establishing businesses that provide the services to a wider customer base. The proposal being advanced in this chapter concerns the establishment of telecommunications service provider social enterprises (i.e., a cellphone provider company owned by a social enterprise or a cooperative).

PART 2

ICT, Empowerment and Policies

Information and Communication Technology-facilitated E-citizenship, E-democracy and Digital Empowerment in Kenya

The Opportunities and Constraints of Community-based Initiatives

Norbert Wildermuth

Abstract

Contemporarily, Kenya, and in specific Nairobi, is the site of an innovative environment for the co-operation between social change agents and IT experts around issues of e-citizenship, e-democracy and digital empowerment. The chapter outlines the specific social, economic and political conditions and incentives that have encouraged the emergence of a pioneering civil-society led ICT-for-social-change environment with increasing transnational links and recognition. In the second, empirically oriented part, clusters of respective ICT facilitated initiatives are distinguished, followed by a specific focus on a few community-based initiatives that seek to bring online media and computer literacy to the slums of Nairobi. The limitations of this “conventional” approach are pointed out and compared, in conclusion, with reference to a promising cluster of civil auditing and social accountability initiatives that build on the Ushahidi platform and other crowdsourced online mapping tools and social change processes.

Keywords: e-citizenship, e-democracy, digital empowerment, good governance, civil auditing, ICT4D

Introduction

In recent years, Nairobi has developed into the leading regional hub for the design and development of innovative Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for East and Central Africa. Global ICT companies have shown an increasing interest in setting up a base in Kenya in order to tap into the country's growing mobile applications industry. The only one of Nokia's 13 global research centres located on African soil is in Nairobi. In August 2012, the US computer services company, IBM, in cooperation with the Kenyan government, opened a Nairobi-based IBM Research Lab, the first of its kind on the African continent.

In addition to these investment decisions made by some of the leading players in the global ICT industry, domestic and foreign venture capital has facilitated a boom in Kenyan ICT start-ups and subsidiaries. Last but not least, multilateral and unilateral donor agencies have jumped on the bandwagon. To give one high-profile example, in June 2011 the World Bank opened a regional mobile applications laboratory in Nairobi as part of its global EUR 13 million programme to stimulate innovation and competitiveness among small and medium-sized enterprises working in ICT in developing countries. At the time, Kenya's World Bank Country Director, Johannes Zutt, told journalists:

This lab will enable dynamic developers from the East Africa region to exploit existing opportunities in the growing mobile applications market. ... Over the past ten years the ICT sector has contributed one per cent to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth annually. Since for every two people in the world using mobile money transfer, one is a Kenyan, the country should use this advantage to develop other applications¹.

While a full analysis of the causes and dynamics of this promising surge in Kenya's ICT capacity is beyond the scope and objectives of this chapter, a number of factors are highlighted below. These could offer possible explanations and should be taken into consideration in future, more systematic and grounded attempts to determine the structural conditions for the present state and future prosperity of the Kenyan ICT industry. This chapter also examines the extent to which Nairobi's booming ICT scene has facilitated non-profit oriented efforts and initiatives to diffuse the benefits of this digital proliferation among the bulk of the Kenyan population. In other words, I ask questions below about the digital inclusion and empowerment of Kenyans as a whole, and about the potential for ICT to further the communications strategies of social change agents and civil society organizations (CSOs) in Kenya. The latter are grouped for analytical purposes into eight distinct clusters of civil society-, donor- and private enterprise-initiated projects on ICT-for-social-change.

Based on empirical research carried out in Nairobi between September 2009 and August 2012, as part of the Danida-funded research project "People Speaking Back? Media, Empowerment and Democracy in East Africa (MEDIEA)", this attempt to identify and to map the Nairobi ICT-for-social-change scene involved the identification of some of the major players in the field of digital inclusion, e-participation and e-democracy; and an outline of their activities at the community, regional and national Kenyan levels, including the transnational links and networked relations that these CSOs maintain. I present below the findings of a number of cases studies on the ICT-facilitated communication for social change activities of these non-profit, civic and developmental organizations, compiled during four months of field research carried out in the course of six visits to Kenya. The aim is to highlight the most significant challenges that Kenyan CBOs face in their attempts to digitally involve and empower their designated target group of beneficiaries. Finally, I question some of the underlying conceptual understanding of digital inclusion and empowerment that informs the design and

implementation of ICT-facilitated strategies for participatory communication,² as proposed and practiced by the CBOs studied.³

Preconditions for e-citizenship, e-democracy and digital empowerment in Kenya

This section outlines the role of e-readiness in relation to the research objectives outlined above, and the central questions regarding e-democracy initiatives in Kenya. When assessing a country's ICT-development, the term e-readiness is commonly used to signify the ability of governments, civil authorities and public services to use ICT to facilitate their strategic objectives and obligations at the local and national levels.⁴ Apart from its polity, a country's e-readiness and digital inclusion in the global knowledge society are as much determined in the private sector of the economy as in the public sphere. (The public sphere comprises, among other organizational actors, the media, political parties and CSOs.) Last but not least, e-readiness resides at the individual level, encompassing the population as a whole. Thus, the polity, the private economy and the CSOs that address, serve and interact with individuals, either as citizens or customers, must take their target group's level of digital inclusion into consideration when assessing the potential of ICT-facilitated forms of service provision and communication.

In consequence, a country's e-readiness is not only decided by the proliferation of ICT and its skilled acquisition in some of the above-mentioned organizational spheres, that is, in polity, in the private economy or in the public sphere. To give a concrete example, ambitious efforts at e-governance have commonly been shown to be futile and beyond the capacity of the state, unless accompanied by the advance of market-driven online services and infrastructure, enabling public employees and citizens to access, make use of and participate in corresponding ICT-facilitated processes of state-led communication and cooperation. Similarly, attempts to centrally plan and carry out a country's digital revolution based on massive non-commercial and donor-driven budget allocations alone, typically realized in the shape of the telecenter/community information centre-cum-computer-skills-and-literacy approach, have seldom produced the anticipated scale of citizens' digital inclusion.⁵ Attempts to bring the benefits of ICT to the majority of the population in the societies of the Global South have produced encouraging results in a limited number of pilot and showcase projects.⁶ To digitally include the bottom of the population pyramid, however, has all too often proved to be a task that is too demanding and too formidable for non-market initiatives alone, even when outsourced to national or global ICT training and education enterprises with several decades of experience.⁷

Nor does a more narrow focus on access and ICT proficiency in the polity, from top to bottom, covering the whole spectrum from ministers and parliamentarians to local and junior administrators, in relation to the demands of e-government and e-governance, seem adequate as a national e-readiness strategy. Reaching and motivating the large body of small farmers and agricultural workers, for

example, to participate in ICT-facilitated processes of governance and social service provision, and/or the national digital knowledge economy in general, has proved to be more or less impossible, unless need- or user-driven. Sophisticated private-public partnerships in e-governance and the training of public employees as IT-savvy communicators can contribute to the e-readiness of a country, but only if it is part of a successful interplay between all organizational spheres and thus complementary to the educational and user-driven digital inclusion of broad segments of society.

Arguably, the conditions for a productive interplay between ICT-techie and social change agents in Kenya have benefitted from the country's currently booming ICT industry. Nairobi, in particular, has blossomed as an African hub for the design and development of mobile phone- and web-based applications for social change. One important trend that has contributed to the emergence of a nurturing techno-activist environment is the emergence of a dominant regional, dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem in Nairobi. The result less of the acceleration in foreign direct investment in Africa's natural resources seen in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa, Nairobi's increasing regional and international economic strength is based on the human capital and know-how found among its three million plus inhabitants. In recent years, East Africa's economic power centre has seen some remarkable growth in the service sector, which now contributes 62 per cent of Kenya's GDP. This remarkable development has been largely triggered by a rapid expansion in the telecommunications and financial sectors, accompanied by a policy environment that is conducive to deregulation and massive levels of private investment.⁸

Kenya's legacy as an important British colony and as one of the main African beneficiaries of Western development aid since the country's independence in December 1963 goes some way to explain the existence of a small but well-educated, anglophone cohort of Kenyan academics and professionals in the capital. The multicultural composition of Kenya's major urban centres, with considerable communities of Western, Indian, Arab, Somali and other African origin, testifies to Kenya's global links. The South Asian community, despite the fact that it constitutes less than one per cent Kenya's population, plays a key role in Nairobi's booming ICT industry, based both on their high level of (often international) education and their close personal and professional relations with South Asian run or owned ICT companies and professionals. The Kenyan South Asian community thus plays a key role in connecting Nairobi with the globalized nexus of the North American, British and Indian IT industry.

No less important is the explosive growth in mobile phone use and mobile Internet in Kenya.⁹ This penetration epitomizes the dynamic interplay between entrepreneurial infrastructure development, user-oriented service provision and consumer-funded financial sustainability that enables the individualized, market-driven appropriation of ICT across wide segments of the population. Accentuated by the success of M-Pesa, the world's first and most successful mobile banking system,¹⁰ Kenya has been the location for a bottom-up digital inclusion and empowerment process of a scale and kind that is radically different from the

top-down, planned strategic interventions spelled out in the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) approach to the democratic provision of digital opportunities.¹¹

Developed in response to the communication needs of ordinary Kenyan's, and the perceived benefits of mobile phone use, the deep penetration and rapid proliferation of mobile phones in Kenya reflects a generally emerging trend in the Global South. Neither social-change oriented and based on the normative ideals of democratization and participatory citizenship, nor planned and evolved on the basis of a top-down needs assessment, this mobile revolution has far-reaching consequences for the prospects for e-democracy and digital empowerment initiatives. Not surprisingly, CSOs and (INGOs active in the field of e-citizenship, digital empowerment, ICT-facilitated transparency and social accountability are increasingly seeking to incorporate text messaging and smart phone enabled access to the Internet¹² into their communication strategies and their designs for hybrid mobile/Internet platforms for citizen engagement.

Creating hybrid interactive platforms is fast proving to be one of the more successful ways of simultaneously reaching both young, tech-savvy and older, more traditional audiences, creating vibrant cross-media platforms for debate. Hybrid media platforms combine capabilities such as short-message service (SMS) texting, for conducting live polls and soliciting comments, with traditional mass media such as radio and television. Individually acquired and appropriated ICT can therefore provide spaces for publication and debate in contexts where access to independent media and freedom of expression are limited (Warah 2004).

In sum, Kenya's mobile phone boom has significantly altered the preconditions and opportunities for e-democracy initiatives in the country. The communications-related inclusion of wide segments of Kenya's population is no longer as dependent on massive state- and donor-funded resource allocations, with the objective of providing online connectivity and digital skills, as it was just a few years ago. As I argue below, acknowledging these changed dynamics in mediated public opinion and deliberation raises crucial questions about the obsolete and outdated nature of nationwide programmes such as Kenya's ambitious Pasha (Digital Village) project.¹³

However, the market-driven proliferation of ICT in Kenya, facilitated by a national policy of telecommunications deregulation, the availability of national and international venture capital, and business-oriented economic agendas, comes with its own problems. It is a continual challenge to ensure that ICT benefits the majority of the population. Currently, many Kenyans cannot afford to take advantage of digital online media. Although mobile phone use has become widespread, privately owned personal computers and broadband subscriptions are only within reach of a small number of, mainly urban, households. As a consequence, there is a continuing role for digital inclusion efforts initiated by state development assistance. The use of ICT to enlarge the democratic space in Kenya (and other countries in sub-Saharan Africa) will not succeed without interventions by donors and the state. According to a recent Kenya-based study on the uses of ICT for governance:

The citizen sector is weak. The entrepreneurial sector is in a start-up phase, with software developers racing to be 'first to-launch' in the most profitable business niches. In the area of social media, these apps include music downloads, news aggregation, and dating/social meet-ups. Governance and citizen advocacy are not viewed as profit centres (Siceloff and Jensen: 25).

This brings us to the final important dimension of e-readiness: the role of national ICT policies. The potential of state- and donor-driven e-democracy, e-citizenship and digital empowerment initiatives will partly be determined by Kenya's ICT policy frameworks and regulatory measures.

In contrast to the majority of countries in sub-Saharan Africa, Kenya has undergone a second wave of regulatory reform in recent years, which has unleashed growth and investment in the ICT sector. In essence, consecutive Kenyan governments seem to have found the right mix of policy, economic and technical ingredients and the entrepreneurs committed to sustaining growth in ICT.¹⁴

According to Alice Munyua,¹⁵ formerly on the board of directors of the Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK) and convenor of the Kenya ICT Action Network (KICTANET), an interdependent multi-stakeholder network working with government on ICT policy formulation, the respective policy reforms in the Kenyan telecommunications sector have increased the availability, accessibility and affordability of ICT. The government's favourable policy framework aims to drive citizen adoption of its Vision 2030 priorities,¹⁶ through ICT policies and initiatives mapped out in its National ICT Master Plan, 2017.¹⁷ Kenya's ICT policy framework therefore continues to be a decisive factor in the vibrant and innovative cooperation between ICT-techies and social change agents.¹⁸

Kenya's socio-political context

Support for democracy and for the promotion of human rights is key to the prevailing notion of development. By the same token, compliance with human rights presupposes a democratic society. Kenya's shift from a one-party to a multiparty system in the late 1990s brought questions of democratization and good governance to the forefront of public attention, both nationally and internationally.¹⁹ Although its institutional structures are inspired by the British colonial legacy and Kenya's declared adherence to the global, post-Cold War discourse on just and democratic governance, the post-Kenya African National Union (KANU) governments in power during the presidency of Mwai Kibaki have been criticized for their reluctance to abolish some of the undemocratic structures and policies that survived the incomplete democratic transition.²⁰

While a number of the factors that define and shape the democratic culture in Kenya, including access to civil and political rights and other human rights more broadly (such as access to information and freedom of expression), appear increasingly entrenched, indicators measuring just and democratic governance paint a less flattering picture. According to the World Bank's Governance Indica-

tors, Kenya is perceived to be performing relatively well on regulatory quality (42.1%) and voice and accountability (34.4%), but extremely poorly on political stability (16%), the rule of law (15.9%) and control of corruption (15.2%).²¹ Thus, serious concerns remain in the areas of corruption, judicial subservience to the executive, increasing crime due to the proliferation of small arms and violation of fair trial rights, including extrajudicial killings.

No less importantly, Kenyan society has made only limited strides towards bridging the gender inequality gap, due in large part to the prevailing political system and cultural norms and attitudes that condone gender violence. Improving Kenyan women's profiles in all sectors, and reducing gender disparities to enhance women's capacities and their access to opportunities, has been on the political agenda for a number of years but is far from being sufficiently realized in practice.

Last but not least, according to Freedom House's 2008 report on the status of Kenya's civil and political rights, the country's political rating declined due to significant irregularities in the December 2007 presidential election. An immediate precursor to the post-election violence that left more than 2000 Kenyans dead and almost one million internally displaced, the conflict's deeper reasons are linked to Kenya's pervasive tribalism, poverty, inequality and political elitism.

Kenyan voters overwhelming supported the republic's new constitution in a national referendum in late 2010, providing an unmistakable political mandate for the stipulation and implementation of far-reaching democratic reforms. Nonetheless, Kenyan society seems in many ways still far from adequately equipped for any critical engagement in civil society or for public efforts to deliberate with government on issues of national importance. In order to advance democratic practice by the Kenyan government, the institutions for promoting democracy – including the national parliament and local government bodies – need to be strengthened and restructured in line with the ongoing process of devolution. Improving Kenya's state-led e-government and e-governance capabilities is part of the donor-supported democracy and governance efforts, as are the citizen-led initiatives that are the focus of this chapter.

The continuing need for democratic reforms and advances in good governance in Kenya accentuate the important role that civil society must play in this transitional process. Civil society has to be empowered so that Kenya's media and CSOs, which are rather pluralistic and independent by African standards, can demand greater transparency in governance structures and hold the government and its executive institutions accountable to their respective mandates. However, as Siceloff and Jensen, among others, have pointed out, both sectors face a profound capacity gap:

The information capabilities of South-based NGOs mostly still reside in the 'old' information architecture, relying on the collection of anecdotal stories by field representatives, which are then collated into periodic reports. It is true that there is a South community with experience in large-scale data collection and aggregation – the software entrepreneurs. But these 'techies' overwhelmingly lack community roots, and have little experience of working with drivers of

change. The media ecosystem is weak, with little investigative reporting and, frequently, a reluctance to challenge the powerful and the wealthy (Siceloff & Jensen 2012: 18).

This observation raises crucial questions about the strength and entrenchment of civil society in general in Kenya. It is therefore necessary to assess the democracy enhancing and citizen engaging/empowering capacities of Kenyan CSOs, before it is possible to determine their strategic capacity to appropriate ICT on a sufficient scale, in order to facilitate democracy support and related social change as well as citizen engagement initiatives.

The feeble role of kenyan civil society organizations

Advancing democracy through ICT and e-citizenship in Kenya is unfolding in a context that is fraught with contradictions. Although Kenyan civil society has grown substantially in size and influence in recent decades, there is still insufficient consultation by government when formulating national policies (Mulama 2008). NGOs and CBOs are, for example, generally still expected to be at the service of the government and not to question its priorities, strategies and implementation successes or failures, or its polity. Social movement organizations, activists and advocacy groups are less directly co-opted, but often face financial and human resource constraints. Although civil society structures are now diverse and relatively well organized, Kenyan civil society continues to face considerable challenges. Organized and sustained citizen engagement, especially with regard to rather abstract issues of national significance, such as democratization and good governance, seems only able to attract the participation of a small section of primarily urban, well-educated Kenyans, unless it is linked and of immediate benefit to the existential circumstances of daily life faced by the majority of individuals.²² CBOs working in the field of basic service provision are with few exceptions insufficiently networked to build non-partisan advocacy coalitions on a national scale (Siceloff & Jensen 2012).

In sum, this might partly explain why there have been no signs yet of the formation of a strong, people-driven protest movement demanding Kenya's democratization, along the lines of the "Arab Spring", and no mass-based challenge to the legitimacy of the ruling political elites. Another often cited reason for the absence of an "African Spring" is the fragmentation of political mobilization along ethnic or tribal lines in most of the sub-Saharan African nation states.

Nonetheless, Kenya's civil society sector seems to have benefitted indirectly from a number of advantageous circumstances, such as: (a) the high level of bilateral and multilateral donor funding; (b) the availability of venture capital through public-private partnerships; (c) the prevalence of international NGOs and multilateral development agencies (UNDP, UN Habitat, etc.) in Nairobi, the preferred location for their East African regional operations; (d) the high level of international political and donor attention on Kenya due to its geostrategic significance; and (e) the current international focus on sub-Saharan Africa, in general, which is critically perceived as the 'lost continent'.

CSOs engaged in the field of democratization and good governance have received considerable international attention, to the extent that their work is seen as promising to address Kenya's continued social disparities, human rights situation, political fragmentation and violent confrontations along ethnic lines.

The constraints and enabling factors outlined above have facilitated the emergence of a considerable number of e-democracy, e-citizenship and digital empowerment initiatives in Kenya since the mid-2000s, but civil society as a whole is still in a nascent state, and it remains Nairobi- and elite-centric.

Promoting democratic conditions through ICT: Generic considerations

Based on the above delineation of Kenya's continued democratic deficits and the feebleness of its civil society, development assistance funds and pro-governance efforts have been assigned strategic importance in mainstreaming ICT in development cooperation and supporting citizen-led approaches to advancing democracy and good governance (Siceloff & Jensen 2012: 25).

Digital empowerment is a third way in which ICT is used to advance democratic processes: the use of ICT to create new and improved opportunities for horizontal communication and networking between individuals, civil society and other groups (Mäkinen 2006). Broadly speaking, it is about the creation of improved conditions for influencing opinion, independent of and beyond the control of the nation state, and beyond the influence of the mainstream media channels.

ICT-facilitated forms of citizen-led, participatory communication are thus particularly relevant in contexts where access to independent media and freedom of expression are limited. The political uses of networked online media may still be less significant than their roles in serving citizens in non-political arenas, but they represent strategic opportunities for engagement and deliberation by citizens and thus for democratic engagement to take place.²³

Mapping Kenya's digital empowerment scene

In the course of my empirical fieldwork, I identified eight distinct clusters of ICT-facilitated communication for social change initiatives. Each is distinct in terms of its organizational structure, digital inclusion objectives, scale of operation and e-readiness/ICT capacity:

1. Digital empowerment and e-citizenship initiatives operating at the community-based level;
2. Digital empowerment initiatives operating at vocational training centres;
3. National level activist/advocacy groups exploring the added value of ICTs for social change;
4. (I)NGOs exploring the added value of ICTs for social change;

5. Kenyan online activists/advocacy media (tweets and the blogosphere);
6. Media development initiatives;
7. State-driven digital inclusion and empowerment initiatives by Kenya, the African Union and the international community;
8. Corporate entities participating in public-private partnerships for digital inclusion.

14 initiatives and spaces of online deliberation, grouped in clusters one to five, were studied systematically, using a variety of triangulated qualitative methods. The remaining projects and spaces for online deliberation were approached in a less comprehensive methodological fashion, based on a number of open-ended qualitative interviews, 'textual' analyses of online content/design and critical study of written sources of project documentation, which provided a 'snapshot' of their present state.

In sum, this ambitious research project has enabled me to explore how the contextual conditions outlined above for the realization of digital inclusion and empowerment initiatives in Kenya present specific opportunities and constraints that go across all or several clusters, as well as those that are specific to the activities of a particular group. The vast amount of data produced, and of analytical interpretations, makes a comprehensive presentation and discussion beyond the scope and reach of a chapter of this length. An inevitably eclectic exemplification and generic discussion of my qualitative observations on the advances and challenges shared by the actors or organizations in the first, community-based, cluster will have to suffice. This is followed by an attempt to draw some conclusions that seem relevant across the entire field of digital empowerment, e-democracy and e-citizenship initiatives in Kenya.

Community-based initiatives: lessons learned

The digital empowerment and e-citizenship initiatives operating at the community-based level studied range in size from micro CBOs, such as Kamukunji Human Right Defenders (KHRD), Kimathi Information Centre (KIC) and Kibera News Network (KNN), to medium-sized Kenyan NGOs with a strong community orientation, such as Slums Information Development and Resource Centres (SIDAREC), Kibera Community Development Agenda (KCODA) and Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA).

All the organizations have their local focus of engagement close to some of the major slum areas of Nairobi, that is, Kibera, Pumwani, Mathare and Embakasi. They also emphasize youth and young women as their primary target groups. Importantly, none of these organizations has an exclusive focus on digital inclusion or e-citizenship. On the contrary, all but KIC are engaged in participatory activities to empower the specific sections of the community they have interacted with for many years prior to their recent efforts to explore how ICT-facilitated information and training might be integrated into their existing outreach activities. SIDAREC and KCODA in particular have managed to capitalize on their

reputation as well entrenched CBOs with a track record in community media and effective citizen engagement.

SIDAREC is best known for its 99.9 Ghetto FM radio station,²⁴ and KCODA is known as the publisher of the community magazine, *The Kibera Journal* (Perkins 2010: 11).²⁵ The daily operations of both community media outlets are predominantly based on the voluntary work of young community members, who are motivated by the opportunity to acquire media production skills as well as idealistic motives to serve their community. They provide SIDAREC and KCODA with a strong 'identity' as CBOs. In terms of branding and fundraising, directed at state and donor assistance, this participatory approach is a strong selling point. KCODA, and even more so SIDAREC, have built themselves a reputation as organizations with the credentials of a CBO and the professional capacity of a well-organized and well-managed Kenyan NGO.

In 2009 SIDAREC secured sizable donor funding for the establishment of a community communication and information centre, which was inaugurated in late 2011. Its location in Embakasi means that SIDAREC has expanded its areas of operation to include three slum areas in Nairobi.²⁶ The so-called Mukuru Kwa Njenga Centre is accommodated in a newly built structure, designed by the winner of an international architectural competition, located in a walled compound of generous size, with playgrounds and a garage for SIDAREC's mobile library bus. Conceptually, the community communication and information centre (CCIC) was envisaged as a Technology and Media Lab to 'study and document the participatory design, implementation and operation of a community-based information centre that seeks to engage local youth in creative media production and expressive advocacy'.²⁷ As part of SIDAREC's Community Media and ICT Initiative this objective aims to ensure: 'easier access to vital local national and international information that is valuable to poor communities, thus bridging the knowledge divide and enabling the poor to understand and participate in national and global human development issues'.²⁸ It locates itself within the digital empowerment discourse, a vision that is endorsed explicitly by Lucy Mathai, the acting director of SIDAREC.²⁹

The initiative is in its early phases and it is too soon to evaluate it. Twelve PCs had been installed and the centre's broadband connection established just a few days before my visit in February 2012, and the plans for the use of the telecentre and technology and media lab were still very vague, basically reproducing SIDAREC's existing computer skills and literacy approach. No explicit consideration seemed to have been given to the strategies of mobilization and civic engagement that had had been postulated but insufficiently conceptualized in terms of the collective empowerment of local youth from the Embakasi community. Instead, it was simply anticipated that the CCIC would attract its target audience over time by providing free access to the Internet, and thereby to accomplish the formation of a core group of 'activist youth' with an interest in civic engagement, community education, empowerment and advocacy.

Picture 1. SIDAREC's newly inaugurated Mukuru Kwa Njenga Centre in Nairobi, Embakasi



Picture 2. Computer literacy course at Mukuru Kwa Njenga Centre



Picture 3. The centre's new media lab



Picture 4. Lucy Mathai in front of SIDAREC's mobile library bus



A preliminary assessment of SIDAREC's ICT for social change highlights critical shortcomings with regard to the conceptualization of the outreach and community mobilization strategies, which are supposed to make it the centre of a truly participatory, bottom-up process of digital empowerment and e-citizenship. Specifically, questions of community 'ownership' and needs assessment were not sufficiently addressed at the CCIC planning and physical construction phases, but instead postponed to be dealt with later, that is, after the CCIC's inauguration. The initiative risks not to live up to its democratic pledges and ambitions or its social change objectives.

KCODA also decided to set up a Digital Village Centre (DVC), after obtaining training support from the government through the Ministry of Information and Communication ICT Board in January 2009. The DVC was made possible by the donation of 15 used desktop PCs and Internet hosting. The DVC was still not fully operational in February 2012, although a major challenge, the achievement of a stable Internet connection, had finally been overcome. Located in the KCODA premises in Kibera, the signal strength available for wireless reception proved too weak to enable operations before the erection of an antenna several metres high. As KIC, a small-scale community telecentre in Kimathi, a lower middle class area adjacent to the Pumwani/Majengo slum, learned the hard way in 2009 and 2010, Internet landline connections are a haphazard alternative in Nairobi's poorer residential areas. Copper cables are often stolen for their scrap value. KIC was without Internet access for several months, and also entangled in financial disputes with their Internet service provider.

Daily power cuts are another obstacle for Kenyan CCICs and telecentres, which can seldom afford the expense of buying and running a generator of their own. The sad reality for the respective centres is therefore a limited and unpredictable period of useable computer hardware, and slow or deficient Internet connections aggravated by the often poor technical specification of the software and level of maintenance of the equipment.

More serious than the temporary delay in the KCODA DVC's inauguration is the impression that the KCODA leadership has only hazy ideas about how to integrate the centre into their existing range of community outreach activities. A number of PCs were diverted to be used by KCODA staff in their daily work, and the understanding of the range of possible uses of ICT in furthering citizenship, democracy and good governance seem surprisingly limited.³⁰

KCODA's general declared objectives include, among others, to: (a) advocate good governance for a sustainable impact on poverty; (b) provide a platform for other civil society organizations working in urban informal settlements to network and promote development; and (c) encourage a citizenry that can make informed decisions and claim their rights.

All three objectives highlight the potential of ICT-facilitated communication strategies. However, the exclusive uses of the DVC considered so far are as CBO-run cyber cafe and basic computer skills training centre. According to KCODA's leadership, the cyber cafe, with public access for a limited number of hours daily, is envisaged as an income-generating activity intended to make the

DVC financially sustainable. However, Kibera already has a considerable number of commercial cyber cafes, some of which are located in close proximity to KCODA and doubtless equipped with better, and better maintained, hardware. It is therefore questionable whether the DVC will become competitive on the basis of slightly lower rates alone.

As for using the DVC as a computer training centre, the immediate ambition seems to be to digitally include Kibera youth who have no affordable opportunities to acquire computer and online skills. Unfortunately, this aspiration is rather techno-centric in its understanding of the mechanisms of social and digital exclusion that it seeks to overcome. Without a systematic integration of the intended courses with the position of strength in community outreach that KCODA has developed in recent years, for example, in the field of constitutional education and rights-based approaches to social accountability, the DVC runs a serious risk of ending up as a failed social inclusion and digital empowerment initiative. In consequence, the DVC might be kept alive most of all for the sake of KCODA's attempt to position itself as a community media organization, with a broader scope than the *Kibera Journal* alone.

Picture 5. KCODA premises in Kibera



Picture 6. Jessica Gustafsson (UoS), Ben Leed (MS Kenya) and Julius Ayoma (KCODA)



Picture 7. KHDR's container office



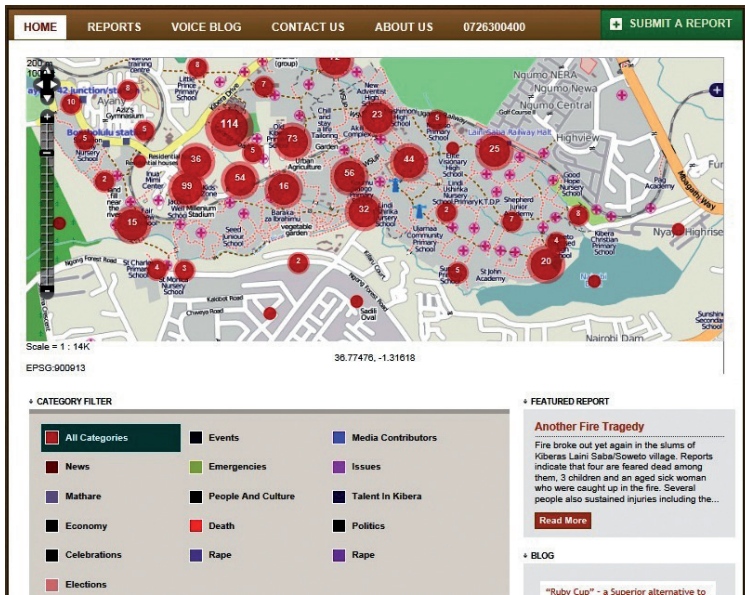
KCODA's declared future ambition is to host Kenya's first online community television station. Thus far, the Kenyan Communications Commission (KCC) has rejected the idea and not granted KCODA the required licence. The DVC is arguably an important infrastructural resource that gives KCODA a competitive advantage compared to other Kibera-based CBOs, which also intend to approach the Kenyan government for a community television licence.³¹

The youth-driven Kibera News Network (KNN) is arguably even more important for KCODA's positioning as a community television station. Or rather, that part of KNN that remains with KCODA after the group split into two camps in the summer of 2011. Initiated in March 2010 by the Open Street Map/MapKibera members Erika Hagen and Mikel Maron, KNN began as a group of 15–20 youth volunteers. The initial video production course, hosted at the premises of KCODA, taught participants how to shoot video footage on issues of relevance to the community using low-tech Flip cameras. The resulting news footage was edited and the completed news items were uploaded on a separate YouTube platform³² in the nearby Nairobi iHub, digital innovation centre.

The KNN community journalism project was a significant attempt to give a voice to Kibera youth (Perkins 2010). The initial enthusiasm of the participants was supported by KCODA, which provided the group with a space for editing, meetings and much more. There was also some editorial interaction between *The Kibera Journal* and KNN (Perkins 2010: 21). However, KNN's flat organizational structure, although idealistic in its egalitarian approach, created its own dynamic of struggles for power and control. Participants also struggled with the limitations of the simple technology, and with the fact that they missed out at various times on opportunities to make a living, due to the time-consuming nature of the work. KCODA and MapKibera, on the other hand, are well aware of the emblematic and concrete value that KNN gives their organizations.

MapKibera is an Ushahidi platform-based, open source, open data software online mapping project that seeks to encourage and aggregate the crowd-sourced inputs provided by Kibera's citizens and development organizations, including locally active CBOs and NGOs. *The Kibera Journal*, Pamoja FM and KNN are among the networked community media organizations that contribute additional content to the donor-funded platform (Perkins 2010: 25).³³ KNN provides much needed citizen journalism content to supplement the limited amount of input received by e-mail and text message. The community news items produced by KNN are linked to the MapKibera platform, which combines database and mapping functionalities (see figure 8). KNN content is the most visible articulation of the 'voices' of Kibera citizens and, although primarily journalistic in its approach and characterized by a lack of professionalization, it is the closest MapKibera comes to qualifying as a digital empowerment initiative with a focus on community involvement and deliberation (Perkins 2010: 24)

Picture 8. MapKibera screenshot



KNN's value in the context of KCODA's future plans has been highlighted above. In the summer of 2011, competition with Map Kibera over the organizational 'ownership' of KNN culminated in the video group seeking formal association with a registered NGO, to increase its chances of external funding. As both KCODA and MapKibera consider KNN to be a crucial asset to their credibility as CSOs with strong and participatory community links, no compromise could be achieved. This resulted in KNN splitting into two competing factions, each of which has placed its future hopes in the hands of a registered CSO.³⁴

Neither faction seems so far to have addressed the foremost limitation of their online citizen journalism and engagement ambitions – the challenge of reaching out effectively to the approximately 150,000 inhabitants of Kibera. This has resulted in less than 100 views per news item, on average, complemented by sporadic public screenings. More substantial funding, secured as part of a comprehensive KCODA or MapKibera community outreach application, had not been forthcoming in August 2012, raising questions about the future sustainability of KNN and KNTV.

Kibera is not a homogenous and united community, and it was the setting for some of the worst incidents of post-election violence in Nairobi in early 2008. Given KNN's and KNTV's so far limited mandate as widely recognized and legitimate voices of the community as a whole, a very real possibility exists that both initiatives will end up as pawns in the notorious tribal and party political factionalism that has characterized Kibera as a place riven with violent conflict and as a highly disputed constituency.³⁵

Concluding and comparative perspective

As this and many other chapters in this volume underline, Kenya has become a popular location for the design and implementation of mediated spaces for civic engagement and of participatory communication initiatives for social change. These new civil society-led spaces for public debate, advocacy, social accountability, transparency and deliberation have without doubt contributed to the ongoing democratic transition in Kenya since the end of the Moi era of authoritarian presidential rule and one-party politics in 1992. While the dominant, privately owned and state-controlled mass media organizations have undergone a continuing professionalization and seem to have made some progress in the direction of fulfilling their normative role as the Fourth Estate in the Kenyan republic's democratic system (Jarso 2010; Mäkinen and Wangu Kuira 2008; Maina 2006),³⁶ the continuing need for non-commercial and non-state-controlled spaces of mediated information and public debate has been highlighted convincingly (Muindi 2011; Siceloff & Jensen 2012; Sida 2009).

Community radio and other forms of citizen journalism play a central role in these spaces, due to their overwhelming reach and cost-free access (Maina 2006; Mbeke and Mshindi 2008). The accelerating proliferation and individual appropriation of ICT across broad sections of Kenyan society give rise to new communication strategies for developing and using digitally networked media spaces for awareness-raising, deliberation, advocacy and mobilization to create fairer and more democratic governance structures. A nascent online activist blogosphere with transnational links is one example of this dedicated, but in its impact still rather limited and Nairobi-centric, attempt to advance Kenya's democratic transition in the sense of Fuchs' concept of the "self-managed and self-organized participatory information society" (Fuchs 2008).³⁷ The national and international CSOs and NGOs that are exploring the added value of ICT applied in their strategic communication efforts to promote democracy, good governance and social change are another cluster of examples.

In addition to the highly 'visible' civil society-led uses of online activism and social movement communication, a new generation of social accountability practices has been developed in Kenya that, through the creation of a solid evidence base, seeks to facilitate direct forms of citizen interaction with public service providers and their government counterparts. Kenya's National Taxpayers' Association (NTA) is one of the most promising and experienced civil society organizations currently exploring this approach. NTA does this, in particular, by drafting and disseminating so-called Citizen Report Cards, which provide information in a clear and well-structured way on the quality of services in the 15 major districts and the overall management of all 12 constituency-based devolved funds.³⁸ ICT plays an increasing role in this rights-centred approach to social (citizen-to-government) accountability and transparency mechanisms. In regard to data collection, data aggregation and public distribution of the resulting reports, the NTA is currently exploring the challenges and advantages of going digital and operating online. Also two "call centres" have been set up, one in Western Provinces, the other in Mombasa, to collect citizens' complaints about

public services and their duty bearers and to take them up with state authorities, if necessarily anonymous, cases of corruption being the most common issue. This data collection process may feed into an online anti-corruption mapping tool like the existing crowdsourced Hatari platform.

The NTA's creation of a solid evidence base enables collective citizen interaction with public sector service providers and their governmental counterparts. In the emerging area of evidence-based advocacy and citizen-led social auditing mechanisms, one of the most immediate benefits is scale:

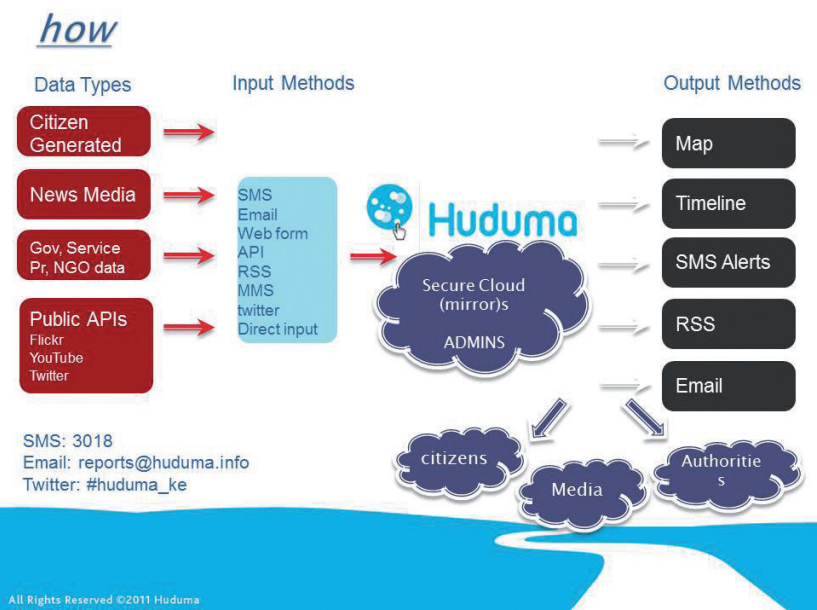
Moving from individualized, anecdotal protest to advocacy based on thousands of citizen inputs gets the attention of government at higher levels. It becomes a media story. It tells citizens that the problem they encounter locally is reflected elsewhere in the country (Siceloff and Jensen 2012: 14).

Thus far, Kenya has witnessed only a few comparable initiatives to empower citizens on a national scale, all of which are at an early phase with regard to the incorporation of ICT into the organizations' respective outreach and mobilization strategies. What makes them promising is the fact that they appear designed to overcome the most obvious shortcomings of the community-based initiatives on digital empowerment and e-citizenship presented above, such as organizations' limited capacity to engage with and mobilize local communities around needs-oriented issues.

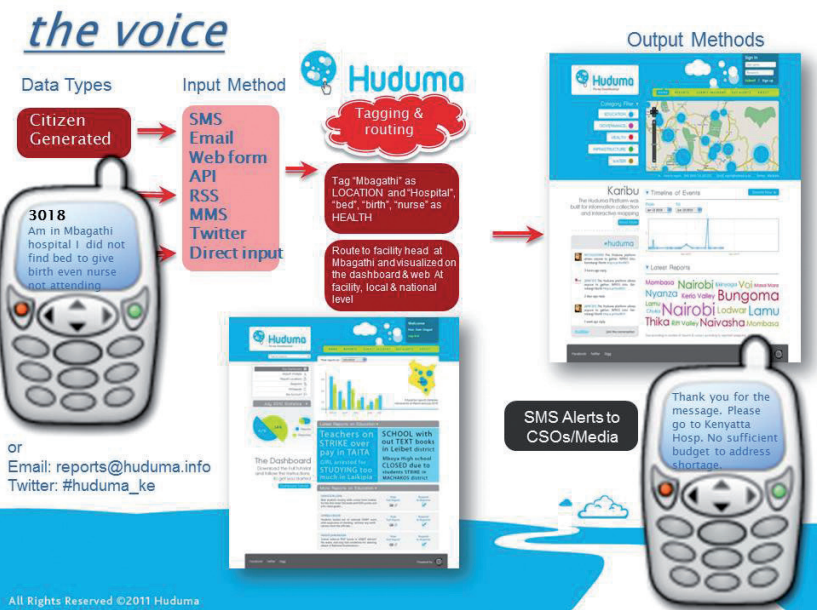
The Social Development Network (SODNET) is another Nairobi-based NGO with strengthening citizens' and civil society's capacities in the strategic use of ICT among its key objectives. SODNET's Infonet Programme has designed and implemented several online platforms for social auditing and citizen engagement, including a budget tracking tool. Huduma, which is Swahili for service, is SODNET's most recent citizens' initiative, conceptualized as a strategy and a technology tool to give voice to citizens' concerns, displeasure and complaints direct to authorities and service providers. Huduma is powered by the Ushahidi platform and is in essence a crowd-sourced, citizen-based data collection, monitoring and social auditing tool (see Figures 9 and 10).

Still in a very early phase of development, the initiative is currently facing a challenge to find a partner organization that can roll out Huduma on the ground, through a network of community-based civic groups that are able to cover Kenya on a national scale. The NTA has built its own countrywide network of voluntary groups over the years and therefore has a track record of effective citizen engagement and evidence-based accountability work before it made the move into the realm of e-citizenship and ICT-facilitated social accountability. The NTA and SODNET therefore embody divergent organizational and programme trajectories. However, together they represent a digital approach to supporting citizen empowerment, and just and democratic governance that promises to make use of Kenya's conducive (e-readiness) environment and civic pressure to give the population a 'voice' that matters, by including those individuals who are usually excluded by society's political, administrative and economic elites, from being heard in the mediated public space.

Picture 9. Huduma’s crowdsourcing and aggregation process



Picture 10. Huduma’s multi-channel, hybrid platform model



Their approach is therefore conceptually more suitable and has a greater impact than the telecenter/community information centre-cum-computer-skills-and-literacy approach that has been adapted by national CBOs/NGOs and funded by an international donor community on the basis of a limited conceptual understanding of the challenges posed and opportunities provided by digital empowerment, e-citizenship and e-democracy in the context of Kenyan society. Lacking clearly defined ideas regarding the potential uses of ICT in digital empowerment the case-studied CBOs subscribe to the “conventional” digital inclusion approach and seek to adhere to the community information centre model in their declared ambition to bring ICT to the communities that they work with.

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Notes

- 1 "World Bank launch Nairobi mobile technology lab" (<http://mobilemoneyafrica.com/world-bank-launch-nairobi-mobile-technology-lab/18-06-2011>).
- 2 'From a political perspective, empowerment can be defined as: The equitable representation of a group in decision-making structures, both formal and informal, and the inclusion of the group's voice in decisions affecting the group and the larger society. But a rights-based approach uses the term "empowerment" more broadly, to mean full cultural, social and political inclusion in a society' (cf. Sicheloff & Jensen 2012: 11).
- 3 I would like to express my gratitude to all the Kenyan and international CSOs that I have worked with in the course of my research project, which have provided me with valuable insights into and understanding of their work, and arranged access for me to the communities in which they work.
- 4 For a comprehensive presentation of the concept of e-readiness and its evaluation see the website www.bridges.org, a non-corporate organization with numerous programme activities in East and Southern Africa. See also Ismael Peña-López' e-readiness bibliography (http://ictlogy.net/bibliography/reports/types_categories.php?idcat=21), the Centre for International Development at Harvard University, Information Technology Group's e-publication "Readiness for the Networked World: A Guide for Developing Countries" (<http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/readinessguide/guide.pdf>) and Dada (2006).
- 5 See Wildermuth (2010a; 2010b; 2009). See also Granqvist (2005) for his critique of a large scale community information centre initiative in Latin America and the Caribbean.
- 6 See Howard's 2008 study on two telecentres in Tanzania, on behalf of Association for Progressive Communications. For another thorough study of respective experiences in SA and Uganda see the thorough study of Parkinson (2005).
- 7 For a case study of three large-scale digital inclusion projects see Shirin Madona et al. (2009).
- 8 The privatization of state corporations such as the now defunct Kenya Post and Telecommunications Company, for example, resulted in East Africa's most profitable company, Safaricom.
- 9 Internet users nearly doubled in 2011 as data download prices fell, and Kenya had 17.38 million Internet users and 28 million mobile subscribers by the end of 2011, according to the Communications Commission of Kenya. Total available bandwidth in the country was recorded at about 5 million megabytes per second, a 25-fold increase on 2010, and mobile data subscriptions account for 98 per cent of all Internet subscriptions. The number of mobile subscribers grew to 28 million with Safaricom holding a majority 19 million subscribers (see <http://softkenya.com/cck-report-kenya-has-17-38-million-internet-users-and-28-million-mobile-subscribers/>).
- 10 Developed between the Kenyan network operator Safaricom and the pan-African mobile telecommunications company, Vodafone, and launched in 2007, by December 2011 M-Pesa had 17 million subscribers in Kenya alone and is now available in a number of African countries.
- 11 In particular the WSIS Tunis Commitment (2005) has not "translated into concrete actions on the ground" (Sicheloff and Jensen 2012: 21).

- 12 The simplest Internet-enabled mobile phones on the Kenyan market are now available for less than USD 100. Internet access through prepaid mobile telephone services covers more than 90 per cent of the population, via a multi service provider and an almost countrywide mobile transmitter network. In most cases, it is even cheaper than a landline-based Internet connection.
- 13 Pasha is being carried out by the Kenya ICT board and is a private-public partnership programme under the Kenya Transparency Communication Infrastructure Project (KTICIP). See <http://www.pasha.co.ke>
- 14 For a comprehensive overview of the Kenyan Ministry of Information's initial efforts to encourage the entrepreneurial ICT sector see the ministry's 2006 National Information & Communications Technology (ICT) Policy (http://www.ist-africa.org/home/files/Kenya_ICTPolicy_2006.pdf).
- 15 Personal interview, 17 May 2012.
- 16 Vision 2030 is Kenya's development programme covering the period 2008 to 2030.
- 17 As of 1 November 2012, under public revision (see <http://www.scribd.com/doc/110892993/Kenya-ICT-Masterplan-2012-2017-For-Review>).
- 18 See also Winnie Mitullah's contribution to this book.
- 19 Governance, in this context, includes transparency and accountability in government, citizen voice and civic engagement in decision-making, and support for the rights of all citizens.
- 20 Kenya gained its political independence from British colonial rule in 1963 and until the late 1990s was in effect a one-party state ruled by the Kenya African National Union (KANU), led first by Jomo Kenyatta and then by Daniel Arap Moi. Kenya adopted a multiparty political system in the late 1990s and KANU's rule came to an end with the first multiparty election in 2002.
- 21 Transparency International's latest Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) places Kenya 147th out of 180 countries. Of the 50 African countries for which it collected data in 2008, Kenya is rated the 15th most corrupt. Large scale and petty corruption have become endemic, and contribute to Kenya's poor development record. A number of major corruption scandals have been reported and debated extensively in the local and international media and since the late 1980s (cf. Sida 2009: 43).
- 22 Progress in the democratization process as well as institutionalization of democracy in Kenya has, however, witnessed a striking distinction between the urban and rural areas. Whereas the urban sector has remained steadfast in agitating for increased political reforms, the rural sector has surprisingly remained aloof from contestations for democracy (Wanyama, 2003). It is widely acknowledged that, on the one hand, the composition of individual activists and civil society organizations that played a pivotal role in pushing the state to initiate the democratization process in the country was almost exclusively urban-based and, on the other hand, there was virtually no evidence of rural unrest in support of political change during the initial and subsequent protests in the early 1990s (Bratton and Van de Walle, 1997: 102). Similarly, the debate and push for constitutional reforms in Kenya were led by the urban-based citizens and civil society organizations, with the rural sector once again remaining in tow, if not silent.
- 23 Four key transactions for active democracy have been identified in the literature: (1) information access/provision (enabling entry into the political space within which citizens contribute to political debate and the decision-making process); (2) citizens' active engagement with the political process; (3) deliberation (in which citizens actively discuss issues and form opinions); and (4) impact on public policy.
- 24 Ghetto FM is one of three, non-profit community radio stations in Nairobi that share the same frequency. This is possible without signal interference due to their limited geographic reach (low-power transmission) and the distance between the areas Ghetto FM (Pumwani), Pamoja FM (Kibera) and Koch FM (Korogocho) target. Ghetto FM has daily transmissions.
- 25 Launched in May 2007, *The Kibera Journal* is on average published on a quarterly base.
- 26 The third site for outreach activities is Kibera, where SIDAREC is engaged in a Comic Relief initiative.
- 27 Cited from the SIDAREC concept note "Long term study of the implementation of SIDAREC's Technology and Media Lab".
- 28 Ibid.

- 29 During several personal conversations with the author between November 2009 and February 2012.
- 30 I base this, admittedly subjective, assessment largely on a number of interviews conducted with Julius Ayoma, the founder/CEO of KCODA, between November 2009 and February 2012.
- 31 Like, for example, Pamoja FM, the Kibera community radio station that has been on air since 2007.
- 32 See <http://www.youtube.com/user/KiberaNewsNetwork>
- 33 Among MapKibera's international sponsors are UNICEF, HIVOS, Plan and Jump Start International.
- 34 The KCODA faction now goes by the name of Kibera News TV (KNTV) and has migrated to the Veengle online platform (<http://www.veengle.com/s/Kibera%20News%20Tv.html>).
- 35 Together with the highly affluent suburbs of Karen and Langata, Kibera is part of the Langata electoral constituency represented by Raila Odinga, Kenya's acting prime minister and ODM presidential candidate.
- 36 See also the BBC's Kenya Media profile (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-13681344>).
- 37 [kiwanja.org](http://www.kiwanja.org), Kuweni Serious, Mzalendo, Ushahidi and tHinker's rOom are good examples.
- 38 See <http://www.nta.or.ke/about-nta>

Institutional Context of ICT and Women's Participation in Kenya

Winnie V. Mitullah

Abstract

Information and communications technology (ICT), and citizen participation are both important for development and social change. ICT is found in almost every area of government and of private sector organizations. This chapter argues that the prevailing policies, regulations, societal values and norms either facilitate or slow the realization of participatory governance using ICT. The chapter uses an institutional perspective and the theory of ICT for development (ICT4D) to analyse how ICT policies and regulations affect participation, in particular women's participation and empowerment. The chapter notes the importance of a contextual understanding of the embedded relationship between communication and participatory democracy, and the new interactive digital media's contribution to citizen development. The chapter provides background on the collaborative research project on Media, Empowerment Democracy in East Africa (MEDIEA¹). It is informed by secondary sources and key informant interviews with policymakers, practitioners and scholars.

Keywords: new media, ICT, women, participation and institutions

Introduction

Information and communications technology (ICT) and citizen participation have become common elements in development discourse. The importance of ICT as a mediating communication technology has been highlighted by several studies (Harvey 2010; Heeks 2009). Heeks (2009) notes that the economic, social and political life of the 21st century will be increasingly digital, while Harvey (2010) observes that 'ICT platforms are enabling groups once understood simply as end-users or consumers of information to also become active participants and producers, assuming multiple roles as they view, respond to, amend and share content within and between different communities of interest or practice (Harvey 2010: 2).

Most ICT for development (ICT4D) research focuses on various development sectors, including health, water, education, micro and small enterprises, and financial management in the public and the private sectors. Citizen participation is a pillar of development, especially in the context of the decentralization policies being implemented across Africa, and is a major motivation behind the research focused on Media, Empowerment and Democracy in East Africa (MEDIEA), which investigates how citizens, in particular the youth and women, use the media to engage in participatory democratic life.

Poor citizen engagement with the governance of public affairs (UNDP 2003) has its roots in the autocratic nature of the governments in most African states before the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) and the related and ongoing reforms under the rubric of New Public Management (NPM) (Kaboolian 1998). These reforms have triggered new methods of governance, such as ICT-based participatory forms and the development of strategic plans that provide blueprints for the governance of various sectors – including local development (Mitullah 2010).²

SAPs and the NPM are products of the neoliberal policies steered by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. Ordinarily, these policies are top down approaches to development. However, embedded in the reforms are incentives for governments to embrace participatory approaches to development by involving stakeholders when developing strategic plans and making relevant decisions, albeit with the support and influence of external agencies. Participation using ICT as a mediating technology occurs within this framework, hence the importance of initiatives on e-participation and e-collaboration, digital inclusion and digital empowerment.

Effective citizen engagement in public affairs remains a major challenge in many African countries, in particular with regard to the collaborative and deliberative engagement of poor communities struggling to sustain their livelihoods. The MEDIEA research project focuses on the role of the media and communications in facilitating citizens' understanding and engagement in democratic life, and seeks to unravel some of the ICT-related issues that either facilitate or hamper citizen engagement in governance. In particular, the research aims to explore the role of civil society driven media and communication technologies, and the media and communication platforms that are driven by civil society to enhance participatory governance processes in East Africa, in particular in Kenya and Tanzania.

Part of the research in Kenya seeks to unravel the policy and institutional contexts of ICT that inform citizen participation, in particular the participation of women. ICT both benefits and sets up barriers to women's participation. The benefits include empowerment, increased self-esteem, reduced isolation, access to markets and health information, while the barriers are related to location, infrastructure and connectivity, time and money, the lack of relevant content, low levels of education and literacy, and social norms and perceptions (Terry and Gomez 2010). There are also formal and informal societal values and norms, such as policies and regulations, that either facilitate or prevent the realization of

participatory governance, including women's participation. This chapter examines the policy and regulatory context within which participation and development occurs in Kenya, and how women use new ICT as a mediating technology in this context.

The chapter presents the theory of ICT4D and its contribution to communication for development and social change, the historical background to media development in Kenya and the institutional framework of ICT, focusing on ICT policies, regulation, and the related strategic plans and their effect on governance and citizen participation. The chapter uses the literature to assess how women use ICT for development and social change, noting the gaps in knowledge in the area of ICT as a mediating technology for women. It is informed by secondary sources and key informant interviews drawn mainly from policymakers, practitioners and scholars.

ICT4D and social development

ICT is part of the electronic media, which has the potential to open up and alter the power equation between powerful transnational media corporations and their powerless audiences (Rodriguez 2001). It enables individuals to create representations of their life worlds based on their views and relative self-understanding by expressing their own identities and engaging beyond their environment without any mediation. This has the potential to open up and expand the space for engagement. However, scholars such as Nyamjoh (1996) argue that new communication technologies should be treated as problematic since they are designed, built and installed with the primary objective of maintaining the economic, political and cultural privileges and advantages of the advantaged society. While this may be true, the benefits of ICT are thought to outweigh the negative effects (Kauffman & Kamar 2005).

ICT has enabled individuals who in the past have only been audiences for and consumers of information to become information producers and distributors, albeit in some cases hampered by the digital divide. Rodriguez (2001) argues that the alternative media has become an option for counter balancing the unequal distribution of communications resources that arises from the activities of the big media corporations. Although she did not have ICT in media in mind, she observed that women accustomed to having men 'guide them', and considering this natural, had to reframe their whole outlook and gender relations – reformulating their entire world view.

The power of ICT is seen in the alternative media, which is a social, political and cultural phenomenon sweeping the globe – creating a new information and communication order. Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte (2006) note that these communication experiences embrace different labels, including popular, horizontal, dialogical, participatory and endogenous. They offer space for expression, empower collective voices and promote the right to communicate and conquer communication space. Before the dawn of ICT and the alternative media, citizens had no alternative but to rely on what was communicated by the big media enti-

ties. The situation was worse in Africa because of the tight control of the media by autocratic regimes that pursued restrictive media policies.

Mobile telephony in particular has recorded tremendous growth in Africa. In Kenya, 71 per cent of the population had mobile phone at home in 2009, and by September 2011 this figure had increased to over 90 per cent (Government of Kenya 2011). The major forms of ICT are radio, fixed line and mobile telephones, and Internet-based communications. However, this chapter is interested in new ICT, that is, online and mediated forms of media and telecommunications. The chapter embraces Amartya Sen's capability approach to ICT4D, which shifts the focus of the ICT4D discourse from technology-oriented developments to questioning the real impact of ICT on people's well-being and life opportunities. This approach views ICT as a means rather than an end, and moves away from studying the use of ICT to investigate the extent to which and in what dimensions ICT change peoples lives in terms of their available options to pursue a life they consider valuable (Amartya Sen 1999).

The field of ICT4D has attracted a lot of interest, and there has been a shift away from describing the global spread of ICT to studying the effect ICT has on enabling the poor to improve their livelihoods (McNamara 2000). Although Sen's capability approach is still relatively new to ICT4D researchers, various scholars across disciplines have applied it. Research in Kenya on the 'development outcomes of the new technologies' in terms of the 'quality of life of low income households in Nairobi' concluded that 'new technologies, particularly the mobile phone, contribute to social capital by providing a means for people to become active citizens by engaging in small acts of social responsibility and interpersonal concern' (Nyambura 2011: 196). A study on digital villages in Kenya observes that there is a gap in how ICT services take the needs of women into account in resource poor environments (Terry and Gomez, 2010).

Theories of social change define social change as a transformation in the organization of society and of institutions, and in the distribution of power. Communication for Social Change (CFSC), which is becoming increasingly popular, especially as a tool for analysing how young people engage with the media, has been used to understand participatory community dynamics. In most cases the theory has been applied to those who have never thought about communication as a tool they can control to improve their lives (Figueroa et al. 2002). CFSC is defined as 'a process of public and private dialogue through which people define who they are, what they want, and how they can get it' (Gray-Felder and Deane 1999). Emphasis on CFSC outcomes should go beyond individual behaviour to include social norms, policies, culture and the supporting environment. Its central tenets are dialogue and debate, the public and private processes through which people use communication techniques to determine their own fates and plans of action in order to improve their own circumstances (Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte, 2006).

Most theories of communication have only a marginal focus on the nature of participation and the ability of an ordinary person to influence media content, leading to change. This is the gap which the theory of communication for development (C4D) and social change through ICT attempt to fill by looking

at the entire fabric of society, including social, cultural, economic and political change. Thus, the use of the theory of C4D, and its related strand CFSC, is broad and all-encompassing.

In the context of understanding women's participation, it is necessary to introduce the concept of agency. Agency can be individual or collective, denoting the ability to choose between different courses of action, to learn from previous experience and to effect change (Cohen 1987). C4D and CFSC using ICT are assumed to be key pillars in building and enhancing women's agency in development. Contemporary debates on deepening democracy assume that individuals are equally able to form associations and engage in political life irrespective of the differences in power between social groups (Cornwall and Coelho 2007: 11). However, it should be noted that opening up spaces, including through the use of ICT, sets a political process in motion that has the potential to empower and to improve the levels of participation by marginalized groups such as women in the planning and governance of resources.

Kathryn et al. (1999) notes that agency manifests itself in various forms of self-determination and self-direction, which make women agents of change. Agency emerges from group-based oppression, although some types of agency that emerge through collective action as well as individual self-reflection are obscured by liberal theories. These types of agency are directed to cultural and political as well as individual targets. Amartya Sen emphasizes the importance of women's agency to social change, pointing out that when the role of women in development is limited it has negative effects on society. He argues that instead of concentrating on women's status or well-being, or their lack of either or both, there should be greater focus on women's active agency to achieve change (Sen 2000), something which ICT can facilitate by providing mediation platforms.

Patricia Stamp observes that concepts of individual and rational choice, which are applicable in Western democracies, are problematic for achieving an understanding of women's agency in a country like Kenya. Women relate more to groups and a sense of privacy and individualism are absent, although this does not indicate a lack of self-esteem or awareness of one's capacity (Stamp 2004). Stamp notes that women in Kenya contribute autonomously and authoritatively to the collective good. She disagrees with the disempowering attributes often attributed to women's groups in Kenya and argues that women's agency resides in their communal endeavours, which are constantly reinvented in the context of political and social change. Stamp maintains that women's collective actions and self-representations must be seen as more than pragmatic responses to exploitation and the challenges of change. Instead, these should be viewed as a powerful and political agency woven into the very fabric of the colonial and neocolonial state (Stamp 2004: 78). The use of ICT has the potential to expand the communal endeavours that women engage in beyond their local environment into regional and global spaces.

Media development in Kenya

The history of ICT in Kenya is linked to the history of the media there, which dates back to 1902 when Kenya's first newspaper, *The Standard* was founded by Jeevanjee. This was followed in 1928 by the establishment of Kenya's oldest broadcasting station, the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC), which was later nationalized and renamed the Voice of Kenya in 1964 (Ochilo 1993). The early beginnings of the mainstream media were exclusive and largely as a communication instrument for the colonial governors—serving only white settlers and Asians and with only a limited reach.

The first radio for indigenous communities went on-air at the beginning of the Second World War. The channel aimed to rally local communities to support the war, since many of their number had been recruited to fight alongside the British. As the independence struggle intensified during the 1950s, radio programmes were strictly controlled and censored. Propaganda against the nationalist movement, the MAU MAU,³ was relayed to the citizens, followed by the detention of key leaders, but this did not slow the progress of the movement or dialogue among the nationalists.

As Kenya moved towards independence during the 1950s, the African elite mainly used newsletters, which did not communicate with the general public but only with the particular groups engaged in the liberation struggle (Ochilo 1993). In this way they were no different to the exclusive colonial media channels. When Kenya achieved independence in 1963, most of the indigenous media, contrary to expectation, disappeared from the scene—quashing the voices of ordinary people. In 1968, the government enacted the Official Secrets Act to address a series of leaks that had made the government vulnerable to political pressure.

While the disappearance of the indigenous media at independence can be attributed to their focus and mandates, which were based on the freedom struggle for liberation, the fact that many of the post-independence leaders became serious repressors of the media was a major disappointment to Kenyans. Repression of the media, which Kenya lived with until the 1990s, had three phases, restrictive, enabling and proactive.

The restrictive phase, 1966-1991

The autocratic restrictive period began with the colonial governors and continued under the post-independence governments until December 1991, when Section 2A of Kenya's Constitution was repealed reverting Kenya to a multiparty state. The repressive and autocratic regimes of Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel arap Moi had used Section 2A to change the post-independence Constitution to make Kenya a one-party state. The 1991 change was influenced by international pressure, including from the international media which continued to report on the abuses of the autocratic governments in Kenya. Unfortunately, during this period there was no alternative media to bring out local voices, and whatever was reported by the monopoly media organizations became established knowledge and informed responses.

Before the change to a multi party state, dissent was criminalized and there was an open clampdown on the media. Kenya experienced harassment of the media, a number of publications were banned and journalists were thrown into police cells or into detention for either sharing their opinions or being seen as anti-government. Independent and critical publications such as *Beyond Magazine* (1988), *The Financial Review* (1989) and *Nairobi Law Monthly* were banned in 1988, 1989 and 1990, respectively (KHRC 1997). This purge also affected the international media. Publishing news by foreign wire services was forbidden and, in 1988, a British journalist was deported after reporting on the controversial queue-voting, which Kenya used during the 1988 national and local government elections.

The autocratic era reflected the deep-rooted prevailing political divide between left and right. Kenya leaned towards the West, but in respect of the media pursued autocratic policies similar to those of the Soviet Union. Wanyande observes that the new state realized the power of the media but, in contrast to the colonial period, the media during this period was seen as an unnecessary evil that needed close supervision (Makali 2004). The autocratic government also had supporters in the media, and some media channels produced content that was acceptable to the government in order to both keep afloat and gain access to the perks that went with such collaboration. The media owners belonged to an elite group working closely with the state elites to protect their economic and political interests.

The enabling phase, 1992-2002

The repeal of Section 2A of the Constitution in 1991 was a major turning point for the media in Kenya. It ushered in the enabling phase and amore participatory and citizen-sensitive strand within communication for development began to inform media policy in the country. This partially opened up the media without changing the relevant laws and regulations. The government continued to interfere with operations of the media. The changes were part of a general democratic trend in Africa during the 1990s. In the media field, it was symbolized by the Windhoek Declaration of 1991, which underlined the significance of freedom of expression and the need for a multiplicity of media scapes in Africa (Kivikuru 2005).

In spite of the commitments in the Windhoek Declaration, attempts to change the media laws and regulations in Kenya were halfhearted, demonstrated by the establishment of two Task Forces on Press Laws in 1993. The Task Forces failed to deliver an acceptable Media bill. The recommendations of the Task Forces were rejected by the media fraternity, noting that the draft bills generated were 'in bad taste', draconian, failed to protect journalists, publishers and broadcasters and gave the government unfair representation on the proposed regulatory body (Kenya Union of Journalists, 1998).

Prior to the 1997 National elections, the Kenya Inter Party Parliamentary Group (IPPG) recommended the repeal of various sections of the Constitution,

changing the legal situation in the country. These provisions were viewed as hindering freedom of expression and the right to free assembly, and criminalizing the free flow of published information in Kenya (Rutten et al. 2001). This resulted in the establishment of another Task Force led by the Kenya Union of Journalists, which prepared the media bill of 1998. The bill recommended the establishment of an Independent Mass Media Commission, the Media Council of Kenya, and the repeal of section 79 of the Constitution. The bill called for the replacement of this section with a new provision that would guarantee the freedom of the media, protection for journalists, publishers and broadcasters, and the right to access to information (Draft Bill 1998). The bill was passed by parliament, becoming the Kenya Communications Act of 1998.

Although the Kenya African National Union (KANU), which had ruled under Kenyatta, took power in the 1997 elections, the reforms continued. The repeals were followed by a review of the Kenya Post and Telecommunications Act, which restructured the service by splitting it into three agencies: the Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK); Telkom Kenya Limited and Postal Corporation of Kenya. As the reforms continued, the government's approach became less restrictive and a number of radio and television stations were licensed even before the relevant laws were ratified. In addition, community radios were established – embodying a two-way process entailing the exchange of views from various sources. This enabled communities to participate as planners, producers and performers. As is noted by Opuku Mensah and Bonin (1998), the media began to move away from mass communication where messages flow from the capital city to the periphery without adequate feedback from the community. Community radio became a means of expression for communities as opposed to expression to the communities.

The proactive phase, 2003-2012

Armed with new laws, civil society and its development partners became the watchdogs of the old regime, which was not used to freedom of expression in the media. This was enhanced by the coming to power of a new regime at the end of 2002. The National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) was composed of reformists from civil society who had been agitating for democracy, and for freedom of the press and of expression, since the repeal of Section 2A of the Constitution. The government focused not on restricting the media but on engaging stakeholders and attracting investment in the communications sector. The goals of the new regime were outlined in an Economic Recovery Strategy for Wealth and Employment Creation 2003-2007 (Government of Kenya 2003).

The reforms and the strategy consciously integrated programmes informed by development communication for social change, which the country is still struggling to fully implement. The reforms resulted in the publication of an ICT policy in May 2006 (Government of Kenya 2006). The policy sets an overall goal of e-government to make the government more results-oriented, efficient and citizen-centred. This e-government strategy aims to redefine the relationship

between the government and its citizens, empowering citizens through increased and better access to government services (Mitullah and Waema 2011). The policy calls for the participation of women in ICT policy formulation and implementation at all levels to ensure that ICT policy meets the needs of women. Consequently, the communication for development and social change framework is used in many community programmes, including those directed at women and the youth.

The opening up of the media and communication space is reflected in the diversity of Kenya's media, which include television, radio and print as well as thriving new media such as the Internet and mobile telephones. These media can be classified as privately owned; the state broadcaster; private sector local language radio stations, which broadcast in local dialects; community radio, owned and controlled by local groups living in specific communities; independent religious stations; the alternative press; international media; and new media. They provide a variety of information, catering for the educational, religious, advertising and entertainment needs of various segments of the audience. Of particular interest to this study are community media, which include stations such as KOCH FM, SIDAREC and Ghetto FM, and the local dialect media stations, which cover most ethnic groups.

The Internet has exchange information using mobile phones, totally changing how people relate and do business in most countries, which had been providing very poor landline telephone services, gradually became irrelevant. Vandalized telephone booths in most of the urban areas of Kenya and abandoned landlines in many living rooms are the relics of the state corporation's past dominance and inefficiency.

NGOs have been in the frontline promoting and applying communication for development and social change. They have embedded communication for social change in to their development programmes, especially in the areas of community participation, health, the environment and humanitarian relief. A number of programmes are being implemented although many, in particular those which are ICT-based, still pursue one-way communication systems that deliver health information to communities. This is complimented by the indigenous forms of communication with which NGOs and their agents engage communities in various aspects of their programmes.

The proactive period has taken a number of positive steps towards expanding the space for expression using various communication channels and media. There are many media outlets, including vernacular radio stations. These stations not only broadcast but also engage citizens through social media, including talk-shows, to debate topical issues and hold policy debates. The opening up of the media is intended to translate into an effective participatory engagement of citizens which will result in a multifaceted, enabling development environment that, includes social, cultural, economic and political development.

The institutional framework of communication

The policies, regulations, values and norms embedded in various organizations are important institutions that are context-specific and inform the activities of society.⁴ There is no global definition of institutions and many scholars have redefined and discussed various dimensions following the lines of Selznick (1948), the originator of the concept. This chapter uses the definition in Scott (1995), which defines institutions as social structures composed of cultural-cognitive, normative and regulative elements, including policies.

Policies and regulations

Policies provide guiding principles on which regulatory frameworks and the related sector work plans are based. Institutions as values and norms are the operating formal and informal rules that inform citizens' participation and interaction in development activities. Most African states have been engaged in reviewing policies and reforming the regulatory framework in order to provide an enabling environment for economic growth. The communication sector, in particular ICT which is seen as a pillar for development, has been a major target of this process.

The Kenyan government's ICT policy highlights the need to make the government more result oriented, efficient and citizen-centred. It sets a number of benchmarks for the communication sector, including redefining the relationship between government and citizens with the objective of empowering citizens through increased and better access to government services (Mitullah and Waema 2011). It also recognizes that communication is relevant to development and seeks to: (a) facilitate sustained economic growth and poverty reduction; (b) promote social justice and equity; (c) mainstream gender in national development; (d) empower the youth and disadvantaged groups; (e) stimulate investment and innovation in ICT; and (f) achieve universal access (Government of Kenya, 2006). The ICT policy and related global Internet dynamics have opened up communication in Kenya.

The 2006 ICT policy is based on four guiding principles: infrastructure development, human resource development, stakeholder participation and an appropriate policy and regulatory framework. The policy was translated into the Kenya Communications Amendment Act of 2009, from which several regulations have been developed including the Kenya Communications (Broadcasting) Regulations of 2009.

The Broadcasting regulations aim to create an environment that enables broadcasting services to be provided in the public interest and to contribute equitably to the socio-economic and cultural development of Kenya. From the regulations, the CCK has developed a code of practice to enhance and facilitate business relations with stakeholders in the market place, and for the deployment of a communications infrastructure. The code aims to create a framework to guide the roll-out of network infrastructure in a manner that addresses commercial, environmental and consumer concerns for the benefit of all.

The communication reforms have also established a Universal Fund administered by the CCK. The fund aims to support widespread access to ICT services. So far, the projects created through this fund include school-based ICT centres, community ICT access points and ICT for people with disabilities, the digitization of the secondary school curriculum, the computerization of health centres, and research and development. The school-based partnership programme began in 2007 and has 16 school-based ICT centres, two in each of the eight provinces. The centres aim to build ICT capacity and skills and are expected to serve both the schools and the community. Each of the schools is supplied with a server, four computers and a printer, as well as the cost of servicing and maintenance for one year and a free Internet connection for one year.

The Community ICT Access Programme addresses issues of access, equity and quality, relevance and efficiency, although sustainability remains a major challenge. The pilot programme is run in partnership and has been adopted for rural and high cost areas to reduce the cost of individual ownership of equipment and servicing. It has supported four telecentres in four districts, providing a server, two computers, printer and connectivity. The ICT for people with disabilities programme has provided school-based ICT in eight secondary schools for people with disabilities. A web portal has been provided in each of the schools to provide people with disabilities with Internet access and to conduct an awareness campaign.

The digitization of the secondary school curriculum has concentrated on the Kenya Institute of Education. A Certificate of Secondary Education Curriculum for Form 1 was piloted in 16 schools at a cost of Ksh. 16 million for software and capacity building. The computerization of health centres has been limited to Nairobi, where logistics management of antiretroviral drugs has been piloted in partnership with other agencies (<http://www.cck.go.ke>). Each of these interventions is at a different stage of implementation. Each will require monitoring to assess whether it is enhancing communication and expression for development and social change in its respective community.

Women's participation and empowerment through ICT

The context of media development and the status of the ICT provided present a platform for examining women's participation and empowerment through ICT. The Kenyan government's national policies and regulations acknowledge the important role that women play in development, their marginalization and the need to facilitate their engagement using all mechanisms, including ICT for participatory development. This section provides an overview of the situation of women in preparation for a planned study that will focus on how women use ICT to mediate spaces for development within local authorities.

Policies and regulations inform citizens' level of engagement, assuming that all citizens are equal. Research has shown that all citizens are not equal, however, and a number of works have highlighted the issue of marginalized groups, leading to the development of the gender-related development index (HDI) and

the Gender Empowerment Measure (UNDP 2001). Kenya is among the countries with low levels of human development and high levels of gender inequality, with gender inequality index of 0.738 (UNDP 2010).

There has been a lot of focus on women and youth in policies related to communication, such as how they access information, the content of information accessed and how they use information for their daily livelihoods. Women have limited access to information technology, largely due a range of socio-economic, political and cultural barriers including low levels of skills, income and access to education (Huyer and Hafkin 2007; Chabossou et al, 2009).

Scholars such as Gurmarthy (2006) argue that the use of ICT does not necessarily result in more equitable gender relations, while Desai (2002) argues that the importance of ICT lies in the degree to which it allows women to challenge, either implicitly or explicitly, existing hierarchies, social norms and boundaries.

Reflection on gender and ICT lead to conflicting evaluations. One reason for this might be the generic use of the term ICT to include everything from computers used in cybercafés to privately owned mobile phones and Internet-enabled social accountability and transparency platforms, to name just a few. By contrast, the potential practical uses of ICT very much depend on the concrete design and appropriation of specific technologies. Buskens and Webb (2009) observe that ICT policies are being implemented without clear knowledge of the ways in which gender inequality and ICT are affecting each other, and there is a need to be aware of the gender dimension in ICT development at an early stage.

Kenya has ICT policy guidelines that are responsive to women (Government of Kenya 2011). They notes that the government will initiate special programmes to address the gender digital divide and increase computer literacy among women, achieve gender equity in the distribution of ICT resources, empower women to effectively participate, support women in rural areas to access the Internet and allow telecommuting for professional women (Government of Kenya 2011). So far, the government's ICT4D policies have prioritized the development of digital villages, which are expected to bridge the digital divide and also to benefit women and girls. However, an evaluation of some of the villages indicates that although the centres have the potential to serve the population in less accessible areas, they are largely used by men, the majority of whom are comparatively well-off members of their respective communities (Hallberg et al. 2011). This implied marginalization of women in the use of digital villages and other ICT has been previously noted in policy (Government of Kenya 2007).

Although the ICT policy framework is in place, women are yet to fully benefit from such technology. The remaining part of this section highlights how women engage in development, assesses whether women engage in development individually or collectively, and whether they use modern technology for expression and to engage with the various development agencies, including the state. The majority of women belong to civil society organizations whose mandates are broad. In addition to associational groups, micro finance institutions that provide business loans have become major institutions of engagement for women. Most

of these institutions use civil society organizations as a conduit for reaching their clients, including women who they access largely through women's groups.

While it is known that women use ICT to receive information from various civil society programmes, there is little evidence that women use ICT to express opinions [or for dialogue with civil society organizations and government authorities with which they work. To some extent, the ICT4D approach is largely skewed towards the programme developers, crowding out the local voices and views of women. A number of authors have emphasized the importance of understanding the collective agency of women (Kathryn et al., 1999; Sen 2000; Kabeer 2003; Agarwal et al. 2005). Sen defines agency as the 'ability to achieve one's goals and interests in coherence with personal values', while Kabeer (2003) notes that agency encompasses observable action in the exercise of choice within decision making, protest, bargaining and negotiation, as well as the motivation and purpose that individuals bring to their actions, which is ability to act on individual choices. Agarwal et al. (2005) maintain that to consider people as agents they must be heard, participate in public life and be involved in collective decisions. In relation to empowerment, agency is attributed to the ability to exercise choice, with the potential to provoke social change and an increased likelihood of challenging power relations.

The agency perspective raises a major question related to how collectives give women voice, and link and relate with other levels of development, including the state. Stamp provides examples of elite women who have made a difference in influencing major policies, such as the late Nobel Prize , Wangare Mathai, and the late Wamboi Otieno. The latter had a protracted court case with the clan of her husband over where her husband should be buried, but eventually lost the case. These examples do not assist in answering the question, since the cases quoted used neither new ICT nor the collective approach emphasized by the agency perspective. They used formal lobbying, advocacy and legal methods, which gave them access to sources of power and the ability to be heard at the highest levels of governance.

Another study of the role of women's organizations in civil society in Kenya (Broumers and Pala 2004) noted that it is not the women's organizations but the NGOs that work with them that are at the forefront. These NGOs support women in organization building and strengthening citizenship, and improve the level of democratic participation and of social and political responsibility. The study revealed that women are stronger on the social than the political side of citizen building, and are also poor networking and lobbying. ICT has the potential to overcome these challenges by offering flexibility in time and space and reducing social isolation (UNDP 2005).

In recent years a number of specialist government agencies and civil society organizations have been established to support women's advancement, gender mainstreaming and empowerment. In the area of communication, organisations organizations such as Development through Media (DTM) have been running national and local programmes through radio and television in support of women. After the post-election violence of in Kenya in 2007, a number of civil society

organizations used the media to call for peace, and good relations across parties and ethnic groups. Concerned Citizens for Peace worked with the printed, electronic and new media using blogs and text messages to ensure that women's voices were heard in relationship building, hearings and reconciliation forums. However, it is not clear how well the voices and views of women were represented in these arenas. It is important to question whether such approaches enhanced and continue to enhance women's capacity to directly engage in dialogue on development issues relevant to sustainable livelihoods. Amartya Sen's capability approach provides a good framework for such a study and will be used to examine how women in the Mathare low income settlement in Nairobi use new ICT to engage with service providers and improve their livelihoods.

Concluding remarks

This chapter demonstrates the importance of understanding country context, including the embedded values, norms, policies and regulations that inform the participation of citizens. Democracy and effective participation cannot thrive in a restricted, autocratic and repressive environment that does not allow freedom of expression and communication. The different phases of media development discussed above have transformed the media from closed one-way communication to two-way interactive communication using new ICT. How active women are in engaging with the two-way interactive media through new ICT, however, is an area, which requires further research.

Kenya has policies on ICT, but studies have focused more on the use of the new ICT as an end and not a means. It is the study of the new ICT that can assess whether new ICT is improving the livelihoods of women in Kenya or not. Although women are extremely active in domestic roles and associated tasks, vertical communication and expression are not taking place effectively. Women remain on the margins, and delinked from sources of power and access to resources in spite of the many programmes aimed at addressing the development challenges that face them. This reduces their potential to influence activities relevant to development and social change. The question that remains of interest to scholars and which requires further research is whether new ICT, in particular mobile telephony and access to the Internet, has potential to break down the barriers and expand women's opportunities to engage in the private and public spaces development.

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Notes

- 1 Website: <http://mediae.ruc.dk>
- 2 Strategic plans are the product of the 1990s new public management reforms, which moved away from broad national and district development plans to ministerial and sectoral strategic plans. All public organizations are expected to have these plans, as well as focused action plans with clear and measurable results. The plans identify key issues, strategies to address these key issues, and key performance measures and targets.
- 3 A Kiswahili phrase, Mzungu Aende Uingereza Mafrica Apata Uhuru (the white man should go back to Europe and let Africans free).
- 4 Institutions are humanly devised constraints on human interaction (North, 1993). Some constraints are formal, in that there are written rules, while others are informal norms or codes of conduct. They can be social, political or economic.

Social Media and Digital Democracy

An Exploration of Online Forums for Civic Engagement and the Involvement of Kenyan Youth in Participatory Development

Wanjiru Mbure

Abstract

This chapter explores how digital media platforms in the form of youth group websites and online social groups advance or constrain opportunities for youth participation in the political process. Previous work has suggested that digitally networked platforms have fostered greater involvement by youth in political and social issues. Furthermore, that ICTs encourage individuals to express their opinions and interests, and foster dialogue and collaboration (Shirazi, Ngwenyama and Morawczynski, 2010). In the Kenyan context, such collaboration can manifest itself in dialogue between individuals belonging to opposing parties or coalitions. The availability of ICT and its use by citizens in political participation can be seen as both individual and cultural (Balkin, 2004). ICT may allow citizens to actively determine their culture, and to participate in the creation of individual and collective meaning within a community.

As Chaffe and Metzger (2001) point out, motives for the use of the mass media are developed by users through their identification with various messages and personalities in the media. With new media, user motivation is developed through self-actualization, as users are able to network and sustain relationships with individuals with whom they share interests (see also Bimber, 2003; Chadwick, 2007). However, the question of youth engagement with new media is rather complex. The extent to which youth utilize new and social media platforms for political reasons needs further empirical investigation. The section below examines some of the theoretical paradigms that exist to explain political participation by youth in the digital era against a survey of Kenyan youth's political presence on social media sites and the Internet in general.

Keywords: social media, digital democracy, youth, civic engagement, participatory development, Kenya

Introduction: Theoretical paradigms on political participation by youth in the digital era

Bennett (2008) identifies two opposing perspectives on the new media and the political involvement of youth: the engaged youth paradigm and the disengaged youth paradigm (Bennett 2008). The engaged youth paradigm focuses on youth involvement in online spaces, choosing to see youth as empowered individuals who utilize their creative freedom to participate politically online. This paradigm, according to Bennett, may de-emphasize the declining involvement of youth in so-called traditional routes to political involvement such as voting (Bennett 2008). The disengaged youth paradigm, on the other hand, while acknowledging innovative forms of youth civic engagement online, primarily focuses on what it terms 'the generational decline' of youth involvement in more conventional methods of civic engagement (Bennett 2008: 3). Although these two paradigms direct our attention to different aspects of youth engagement, taken together, they can enhance our understanding of how new media platforms contribute to youth political engagement or disengagement. Other scholars have a more sceptical outlook. For example, Garrett and Jensen (2011) observe that the availability of political information online has not encouraged increased citizen participation in policymaking.

Information technologies enable citizens to participate in the democratic process by facilitating digital engagement or e-democracy (Morrisett 2003; Norris 2001). For those with easy and affordable access to it, the Internet has expanded the platform for communication, allowing individuals to participate in and determine public opinion by circumventing traditional mass media sources such as newspapers and television (Balkin 2004). The availability of information technologies may increase the likelihood that individuals will seek out opportunities for civic engagement. For example, citizens with access to ICT, such as those in urban areas like Nairobi, are more likely to participate in politics (Weare 2002). Such proximity, however, may be exclusionary in that it creates a barrier to individuals without access becoming part of the political culture. Other than proximity, cost and language barriers may also collude to further marginalize certain individuals in the online political sphere.

These challenges certainly exist in the Kenyan context, where only an estimated 3.2 percent of the population has regular access to the Internet (Mäkinen and Kuira 2008). Even allowing for mobile phone penetration, proximity to urban areas offers an advantage to the few. For example, in a case study of M-Pesa, a popular mobile banking application, Jack and Suri (2010) note that individuals in urban areas are more likely to take advantage of the technology than those in rural areas. A particularly relevant challenge in this exploratory analysis is control. Kenya's online presence, it has been noted, is strongly influenced by Kenyan citizens living overseas (Mäkinen and Kuira 2008).

In the light of such challenges, the textual analytic approach of this chapter is useful for providing an understanding of the occurrence of online participation and the form of symbolic expression used by Kenyan youth on Facebook.

However, this approach is not without limitations. First, textual analysis demands the selection of a few texts as opposed to a large number as would be the case with social science approaches that aim to establish patterns (Carley 1993).

The selection of the groups analysed in the current study was based on the number of members of each group. After an initial survey of Kenyan youth political groups on Facebook, a benchmark of groups with more than 10,000 members was used to select the Madaraka Party (61,707 members), the Kenya Young Voters Alliance (23,319 members) and Kenyans For Change (12,218 members). Groups supporting a particular candidate were excluded from the sample in order to focus on groups initiated and sustained by youth initiatives.

The focus on how youth use social media to become a part of the political landscape in Kenya makes the political participation of young people of special interest to this chapter. This is explored primarily through the lens of the social networking site Facebook. Kenya is a former-British colony with a population of 40 million people. The country was often cited as an exemplar of political stability in the East African region, particularly in comparison to its less stable neighbours: Uganda, South Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia. Kenya's other neighbour is Tanzania. Kenya enjoyed this relatively positive reputation until December 2007, when, following a disputed presidential election, post-election violence erupted that resulted in the loss of 1,500 lives. Calm was restored in late February 2008 following a power-sharing deal between the incumbent president, Mwai Kibaki, and Raila Odinga, who continued in the role of prime minister. Kenya's youth (those aged 15 to 24) comprise around 20 percent of the population (nearly 8 million people), according to the most recent census data (2009).

Online social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook were pivotal media partners in the 2008 US presidential election (Digital Natives 2008). For example, President Obama's campaign maintained a heavy presence on Facebook and used YouTube to engage young voters in the campaign by asking them to post questions in the form of videos. If newspaper reports are anything to go by, the 2012 Kenya presidential election is poised to be highly contentious and an opportune moment to evaluate the impact of the role of digital participation by youth. The violent events following the 2007 election saw an increase in digital participation by Kenyan youth – especially on the social networking site Facebook. Several groups with banners such as 'Peace in Kenya' and 'Revolution in Kenyan Politics 2012' sprung up during or shortly after the post-election violence. In the period since the election, several key events – including the appointment of a bloated cabinet and tax laws allowing members of parliament not to pay income tax – have increased attention and participation by Kenyans on Facebook. At least 20 groups support the taxation of parliamentarians' incomes and a revolution in Kenyan politics. These groups emerged in response to significant political moments, such as negotiations on the new constitution or the International Criminal Court's (ICC) case against politicians suspected of involvement in the post-election violence. The latter issue, for example, boasts more than 20 groups on Facebook. Furthermore, Kenyan youth now have their eyes on 2012, demanding that youth take their place in history and get rid of the

'old whigs' who have long dominated the Kenyan political landscape. In Kenya, youth are often represented by younger politicians. For example, politicians such as William Ruto, Eugene Wamalwa, Peter Kenneth, Raphael Tuju, Michael 'sonko' Mbuvi and Uhuru Kenyatta have publicly claimed to represent Kenya's youth. These politicians may not fit into the youth age bracket but, politically speaking, could be seen as newcomers and 'young blood'.

There is evidence that youth on a global scale are seizing new digital tools to participate more fully in democracy and development. Much of the research on online civic involvement by youth is situated in Western contexts. Little is known, especially in less developed contexts such as Kenya, about how youth are participating politically through new and social media. The aim of this chapter is to explore how youth in Kenya are using Facebook to participate in the political culture of Kenya. Textual analysis is used to explore youth voices by focusing on detailed readings of the wall posts, group descriptions and comments on items posted on the group wall. Another existing gap in current research is the issues on the minds of youth. Previous paradigmatic approaches such as those identified by Bennett (2008) appear to focus on the bigger question of whether digital tools hinder or foster civic engagement. While this is an important question, an understanding of the issues that youth are most interested in is equally relevant. An exploration of the myriad ways in which Kenyan youth are engaging with new media and social networking is a first step to fully understanding the role of youth in the political landscape, and in Kenyan society as a whole.

The sections below provide an in-depth analysis of the major collective players on Facebook: the Madaraka Party of Kenya, the Kenya Young Voters Alliance and Kenyans For Change, in order to reveal the type of discourse that is occurring online and the functions that such organizations have in advancing youth participation in politics. The discussion includes a history of the organizations, the issues discussed, and the functions they serve for their members.

The Madaraka Party of Kenya

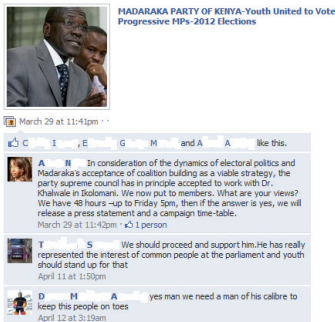
The Madaraka Party of Kenya was formed in June 2005 by members of the student body at the University of Nairobi (Madaraka 2011). According to Madaraka's Facebook page, the party has over 60,700 members. The motto of the party is 'Youth United to Vote Progressive MPs 2012 Elections' (Madaraka 2011). The party describes itself as the 'most consistent voice of the struggling youth of Kenya' (ibid.). The page chronicles the achievements of the party, including the government's allocation of a KES 2 billion youth fund, and organizing a boycott of the 2007 elections (ibid.). The party's mission is to deliver to the Kenyan electorate the 'most progressive, well-informed, committed and people-focused candidates' in the 2012 parliamentary elections (ibid.). The party relies extensively on Facebook to maintain its membership and update its members. The Facebook page offers links on membership, the official website (<http://madaraka-kenya.com>),

information on events such as national conferences, and documents such as the party's draft constitution. A thematic analysis of posts on Madaraka's Facebook wall reveals that the page functions a forum for a variety of party-related issues, youth interests and third-party agendas. These themes are discussed below.

Party-related issues

Madaraka's Facebook wall features various party-related posts, such as endorsements for candidates and updates on party developments. For instance, the wall was used to communicate Dr Bonny Khalwale's request for endorsement for the Ikolomani parliamentary seat. After seeking members' views, the party endorsed his candidacy and set out a campaign plan for the May 2011 by-election (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Madaraka Party Khalwale endorsement



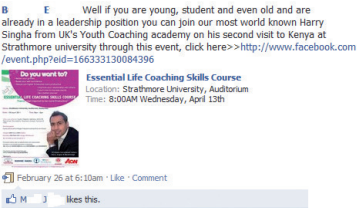
In addition to the endorsement of specific candidates, the Madaraka Party page is used by the party to relay important party updates, such as the December 2010 decision to sue the Registrar of Political Parties for rejecting its application for re-registration. Madaraka Party news on the Facebook page is cross-referenced on the party's website.

Youth interests

In addition to functioning as a platform for party news, Madaraka Party members use the Facebook page to relay important issues pertaining to youth. Specifically, the page features training opportunities for youth, and comments on issues such as unemployment, and job and investment opportunities. The site has featured links to events abroad and in Kenya, such as a training event at Strathmore University, and links to self-improvement websites focusing on youth leadership development (see Figure 2). Furthermore, members post YouTube videos

of exemplary youth leaders, Kenyan music videos and political developments covered by the Kenyan media. The page also features links to the websites and Facebook pages of 2012 parliamentary candidates. These are posted by members but not directly endorsed by the Madaraka Party.

Figure 2. Madaraka Party youth leadership event



In addition, members post links to civic engagement opportunities, encouraging members to visit websites such as <http://www.electionskenya.info/ek/> which offers visitors an opportunity review candidates and to cast a vote in an electronic poll. Members also post links to petitions, groups advocating a position on pertinent political decisions, or events in Kenya. For example, one member posted a link to a Facebook group formed to voice opposition to Kenya's bid to pull out of the ICC (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Madaraka Party ICC link



Finally, youth often post comments related to current events in Kenya's political landscape. Links to Kenyan newspaper articles abound as do comments on recent developments, such as rising food and fuel prices, judicial appointments, and the government's failed shuttle diplomacy attempts. It appears that members of Madaraka are well-informed about current political events and use the forum to voice their opinions. A comparison of posts with political developments covered

by the mainstream press finds many similarities between the two. The site is not afraid to expose members of parliament when they fail to deliver as promised. One member posts about his member of parliament:

I am absolutely ashamed of my Member of Parliament, who has squandered the CDF (County Development Fund) money without blinking. He recently bought a Chopper, and the common men and women from his area 6 have died from hunger (Omondi Anyanga, Nyatike Constituency).

This strategy is successful in that it publicizes youth discontent with parliamentarians, although it is hard to say whether such public declarations influence the work of those implicated. The Madaraka Facebook page offers youth a chance to speak out against the perceived failures of politicians in power. The extent to which such voices reach their intended targets is beyond the scope of this analysis, but it is important to recognize that youth take the opportunity to voice their frustrations without restraint or fear.

Third-party messages

Anxieties about the hijacking of online platforms for commercial interests reverberate across the Madaraka Party's Facebook forum. Alongside party news and youth events, the Facebook page is used to relay information from third-party interests such as business promotions and advertisements. Most of these are directed at Kenyan youth in the diaspora (e.g., Babawatoto and Kiosk), but there are also services found in Kenya such as computer repairs and sales, and vacation rentals in tourist spots such as Mombasa.

In sum, the Madaraka Party, with its 60,000 plus membership, has a strong presence on Facebook and uses the online social media platform not only to advance its mission, but also to offer youth an opportunity to engage in the political process by sharing their views on politicians seeking youth support. Furthermore, the page functions as a site for the exchange of ideas, events and opportunities that foster youth leadership and development through jobs, training, and investment opportunities. However, the platform is not free from stakeholders interested in tapping into the youth market either within Kenya or among the diaspora.

Kenya young voters alliance

According to its Facebook page, the Kenya Young Voters Alliance has a membership of over 10,000 and comprises individuals and groups devoted to 'ensuring that Kenya as a country manages to achieve set developmental goals to meet both international and national set targets' (Kenya Young Voters Alliance, 2011). The idea for the group came out of a series of meetings by student leaders at the University of Nairobi, concerned with the political direction of Kenya fol-

lowing the 2002 presidential elections which saw the end of Daniel arap Moi's 24-year rule (ibid.). In particular, the Student Organization of Nairobi University (SONU) was concerned about allegations of corruption levied against the new government of the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) (ibid.). SONU's involvement with the party is not evident from its Facebook page, but it is apparent that the group has a large public university student following, given that its 2009 conference was held at Kenya Polytechnic. The group claims to be the forerunner in organizing young voters during the 2007 campaign and the 2010 referendum. The main purpose of the organization is to 'mobilize young people to participate in democracy and development of Kenya' (ibid.). The group also intends to engage in voter education and mobilization in readiness for the 2012 elections. Among its listed achievements, the group has created national networks for youth who align with the organization's vision, set up an office in Nairobi, mobilized voters and established an online presence through Facebook and the blog <http://kenyayoungvotersalliance.blogspot.com>.

The Facebook page also outlines the group's to-do list: (a) set up and publicize a website; (b) organize youth development programmes for young 2012 election hopefuls; and (c) identify sustainable funding. The Kenya Young Voters Alliance lags behind other groups with a heavy social media imprint on Facebook in terms of establishing a strong online presence, particularly as it lacks an official website. However, the group blog appears to be consistently active with at least one blog posting per month. Furthermore, the blog offers links to other Kenyan political blogs, and this may be indicative of an attempt to live up to its commitment to embrace diversity in terms of both ethnic groups and ideas.

The Kenya Young Voters Alliance page plays a very similar role to that of the Madaraka Party, as a platform for publicizing party events and youth opportunities, and as a forum for youth to express their reactions to political events in Kenya. It is also prone to third-party commercial interests peddling services and products for consumption by Kenyan youth. However, its use of Facebook offers some unique contributions to our understanding of digital civic engagement. In particular, members appear to exhibit a more reflexive approach to their use of Facebook. The page also serves as a platform for politicians who want to commend or involve youth in their election campaigns. Finally, the Kenya Young Voters Alliance uses the page strategically to source youth opinion on topical and political issues in Kenya. A detailed discussion of these unique contributions is provided below.

Self-reflexive participation

Compared to other political groups on Facebook, the Kenya Young Voters Alliance members appear to exhibit a more reflexive approach in their use of Facebook. Members posting on the page acknowledge that the idea of a Facebook page is pivotal in the quest for youth inclusion in politics. For instance, one member notes that the high presence of 'youthful voters' online who play 'serious Internet politics' has changed the political fortunes of the old in Bungoma County.

The member points out that the Bungoma County Group on Facebook has a membership of 1,750 members, and urges those interested in Bungoma politics to join. However, this acknowledgement of the potential of a youth presence in online political forums exists alongside scepticism that youth participation online translates into genuine civic engagement at the grassroots level. For instance, one member (see Figure 4) points out that “ubaya wa vijana ni kupiga tu domo” (the problem is that they are all talk) and they fail to live up to the hype when the true test of the election comes around (Madaraka 2011). The member further points out that ‘rotten leaders’ still rule even though youth are the largest voter group in Kenya.

Figure 4. Kenya young voters alliance: ‘member a’



Similar sentiments are echoed by another member (see Figure 5), J.O.O, who asks: ‘Youth of Kenya....What about our future? 2012 and beyond? Will we be hecklers and not implementers?’ (ibid.).

Figure 5. Kenya young voters alliance: ‘member b’



These self-reflexive comments by members on Facebook suggest that youth are conscious of the shortcomings of their online participation and see their attempts to bring attention to them as an important aspect of digital political participation. Furthermore, the comments following such self-reflexive comments suggest that there are mixed hopes regarding the extent to which the strong membership numbers (over 10,000) will translate into a high voter turnout.

Politician intrusion

In addition to self-reflexive participation, the page also features posts from Kenyan politicians and aspiring candidates who want to commend or involve

youth in their election campaigns. An example of this is seen in the comments on the page by parliamentary hopeful, Lindy Wafula, following the Makadara by-election in 2010 (see Figure 6). The comments are followed by a condemnation of the post and the characterization of Wafula as a ‘joy writer’ who should take the forum more seriously in future.

Figure 6. Kenya young voters alliance: Lindy Wafula



Although Wafula does not offer a rebuttal, the exchange highlights an important characteristic of digital participation: a presumed youth ownership of digital platforms. The fact that Lindy Wafula is rebuked suggests that the Kenya Young Voters Alliance online forum is not to be abused or taken advantage of and its ‘rightful owners’, that is, the youth, have a right to expose individuals perceived as participating for self-seeking motives.

Feedback forum

Finally, the Kenya Young Voters Alliance uses the page strategically to source youth opinion on topical and political issues in Kenya. Its Facebook posts are often geared to elicit feedback from readers on political events, such as the ICC trials, and human interest stories in Kenya. In addition to posts structured as questions, the page also features opinion polls designed around current events in Kenya. Figure 7, for example, solicits members’ opinions on Dr Willy Mutunga’s appointment as Kenya’s Chief Justice.

Figure 7. Kenya young voters alliance: Mutunga poll



The Kenya Young Voters Alliance uses its Facebook page to maximize applications to deliberately seek out the voice of youth on issues relevant to political developments in Kenya.

Kenyans for change

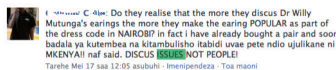
In addition to the groups that focus on a specific agenda or political development, one group encompasses a range of issues and claims to harness the youth movement for transformative political ends. Kenyans for Change (K4C) is a major player in terms of not only its membership, but also its regional presence across Kenya and in global chapters such as Australia, and Dallas and California in the United States.

K4C is an organization with a heavy presence on the online Kenyan political landscape. The organization has over 12,000 members on its Facebook page and also maintains a website, <http://kenyansforchange.com>. The group's Facebook page functions in many ways similarly to those of the Madaraka Party and the Kenya Young Voters Alliance, featuring a range of resources for youth, such as job opportunities, and providing a feedback forum on current political issues. A detailed description of two additional functions illustrated by K4C are discussed below.

Topical protests

Like other pages featuring Kenyan youth and young voters, the K4C website features protest posts intended to admonish retrogressive statements and actions by Kenyan politicians. Among these are numerous anti-corruption posts – directed either at politicians at large or to specific political figures. Posts on the group's wall are also directed at specific politicians who defend corruption. In one instance, a member posts a comment directed to Kenyan politicians who appear to be angered by US ambassador Michael Ranneberger's rebuke of corruption. Other topical protests include on the appointment of judicial officials by President Kibaki, the decision by 35 Kenyan parliamentarians to 'escort' the Ocampo 6 suspects to the Hague, the lack of voting mechanisms for the diaspora, and the unwarranted focus on the nominee for Chief Justice, Dr Mutunga, to which a member retorts: 'Discuss issues not people!' (see Figure 8).

Figure 8. Kenyans for change: Mutunga protest



Polls

Like the other group pages discussed in this chapter, the K4C page also engages youth by offering opinion polls. This is done to not only to elicit youth commentary on topical issues but also to direct the members' to possible scenarios that may face youth in their everyday life in Kenya. For example, one member

asks: “Is Kenya ready for nuclear power?” (Kenyans for Change 2011). Another presents a hypothetical scenario in which he/she encounters a corrupt traffic officer. In both instances, members respond by offering detailed feedback on the issue at hand, sometimes even informing readers of their rights in the given hypothetical scenario.

Intertextuality

A unique aspect of the K4C page is the extent to which it offers an intertextual platform for other media. More specifically, the page featured the most references to political events on television and radio, or in film and music videos. This may be a reflection of the multimedia exposure of K4C’s members – or an indicator of its transnational membership which has greater access to media products on Kenyan issues. The media organizations featured received comments from members both in Kenya and abroad. For instance, reference to *Citizen TV* is made by a member who enjoyed the station’s coverage of a demonstration by K4C members outside the headquarters of the United Nations in New York. The site also featured references to the performance of politicians on Kenyan television, as well as other media outlets such as East Africa Radio USA. One member comments on a live television event offering an opportunity for real time discussion of political coverage in other media similar to that offered by Twitter. Members also posted links to newspaper articles on politics, links to pro-social music videos (such as Kenya we Pray) and clips of short films, such as *Kuveni Serious* and *Tomorrow Will Come*.

Political allegiances

Although the K4C Facebook page does not advocate a specific political party or leader, the page features posts by members who advocate for specific political leaders, most notably Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga. Such support was provided in the form of links to Facebook groups or brief posts summarizing each politician’s credentials and their superiority as a 2012 presidential hopeful.

Diaspora events

The K4C page is also very active in posts related to events relevant to Kenyans in the diaspora. Such posts included: the time and venue of Kenyan film screenings, such as the Kibera-based Hot Sun Films feature debut *Togetherness Supreme*; opportunities to meet Kenyan politicians touring the United States; and details of demonstrations and protests, such as the K4C-organized UN protest against Kenya’s position on delaying ICC proceedings against the Ocampo Six. Resources on the page also included links to voter mapping and registration, and an opportunity for a conference call with presidential hopeful Martha Karua.

Other youth organizations

There are also smaller organizations with similar goals. One such is the Kenyan Youth Quest for a Young Leader in 2012. The group draws its inspiration from Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign: "Kenyans out there...as hungry for a new way of doing things as the American people showed on November 4th" (Kenyan Quest 2011). The group's profile picture is a juxtaposition of President Obama, in a symbolic 'guiding light' gesture, with Kenya's politicians (see Figure 9).

Figure 9. Kenya youth quest for young leader in 2012: profile picture



The group's Facebook wall and discussion board features items on the 2012 US presidential campaign and Barack Obama's official re-election site. They also feature members' views on current issues in Kenya as well as evaluations of the type of leadership and governance implemented by the 'wazees' or old political whigs in Kenya. At 260, the group's membership is significantly lower than similar groups, and its wall and discussion page lacks the consistent level of participation observed in the organizations discussed above.

Facebook also hosts several groups encouraging youth to support specific political leaders in the 2012 campaign. These include: William Samoei Ruto for President (4,464 members), Martha Karua for President 2012 (6,121 members), Youth for Uhuru Kenyatta (126 likes), Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta (One Million Strong for Uhuru 2012) (this page has over 12000 likes but the group does not specifically target youth), Kenya Youth Support Raila 4 President 2012 – We Reject Tribalism (47 members) Youth For Raila 2012 (1,654 members) and Kenya Youth Quest for Youth Leader 2012 (296 members). An analysis of these sites suggests that the groups offer opportunities for individuals who already believe in a given candidate, since there is little variety in terms of opinion. Members use the platform to share news of their candidate of choice.

Conclusions

This chapter explores the major players in Kenyan youth's political presence on social media sites and the Internet in general. This preliminary survey suggests that Kenyan youth are using the Internet to organize and invite individuals to

protest against what they consider to be a political culture that exists largely without their input. Questions about the extent to which these attempts are successful on the ground is beyond the scope of this study, but are an opportunity for future research.

The social groups also serve a pro-social function by relaying investment and job opportunities to youth. This exploration of Kenyan youth political groups online suggests a complex relationship in the interaction between traditional media outlets and social media. Social media offer many opportunities for civic engagement among youth. For example, social media such as Facebook have been shown to spark curiosity among youth in the United States, who in turn research more information on candidates they first discovered on Facebook (Parmelee and Perkins 2011). However, the ways in which social media transform political participation are as varied as there are political contexts for youth around the world. This is primarily due to the personalized and truncated manner in which information moves from one person to another on sites such as Facebook. Research on intergenerational influences on voting shows that individuals who receive information from their friends or family about a certain candidate, or who observe that a friend or family member has joined a group in support of a specific candidate, are more inclined to find out more about that political candidate than if they receive the same information from a stranger or a political advertisement (Parmelee and Perkins 2011). Obama's 2008 campaign demonstrated that this process is true in the US context.

The presence of links to articles from Kenyan daily newspapers such as the *Daily Nation* or the *East African Standard*, or television clips from *Citizen TV* or the *Kenya Television Network* (KTN), suggests a varied diet of media sources of political information for Kenyan youth. This sampling of media sources may enable individuals to shape public opinion as they debate, challenge and add to the information gathered from traditional sources. Furthermore, this relationship is an excellent opportunity for traditional media sources to engage with youth voices. This may be done by directing youth who are watching live broadcasts, such as interviews with presidential candidates, to go on Facebook, where they can comment or ask questions. Such a partnership already exists between several radio stations (Easy FM, Capital FM and Classic FM), which have Facebook pages and often encourage listeners to post questions and comments. The presence of the mainstream media on social media sites such as Facebook suggests that the traditional media do not disappear in an age of increased media resources online. They co-exist alongside individuals' Facebook posts, tweets and blog entries. The question remains: Will these individual sources of political information and participation lead to a redistribution of political power and participation?

This exploration of online political participation by Kenyan youth suggests that a significant number of young voters have access to the Internet and are consistently engaged in the political process through the various groups introduced above. Access to ICT such as the Internet and to social organizing through sites like Facebook has been shown to increase the likelihood of participation in the political process (Weare 2002). Kenyan youth, particularly those in urban areas

or those in the diaspora, have the advantage of easy access. It is beyond the scope of this project to determine the extent to which access translates into an increased likelihood of participation for the tens of thousands of Kenyan youth participating in political groups on Facebook.

According to Sammy Situma, K4C's Media and Communications Officer, social media are a key tool in informing and engaging with youth on target areas such as corruption, impunity and bad governance (Situma 2011). The groups discussed above appear to have brought these issues to the forefront, as they appear frequently in their various wall posts.

The opportunities presented by the Internet are not without their challenges. One of the greatest is establishing a grassroots organization to complement the online presence, particularly in rural areas (Situma 2011). However, this survey suggests that social media have triggered political curiosity and continue to engage youth in political events in Kenya. The presence of Kenyan youth in Kenya's online political culture is vibrant and stakeholders can harness this involvement by ensuring that online participation results in civic education and engagement on the ground. Furthermore, stakeholders can use this online presence to educate youth on their rights, and encourage the more active individuals (e.g., in urban areas) to connect with other marginalized youth. A major constraint on the online presence is the absence of a coherent infrastructure to unite Kenya's youth voices on Facebook. Efforts to educate or to mobilize collective action might be particularly challenging because of the number of groups that identify with Kenyan youth, some of which have only a few hundred members. In such a situation, resorting to the groups with the highest number of members, such as the Madaraka Party, would essentially marginalize the less popular groups. Another challenge is that the infrastructure that allows for such groups as Facebook to exist is constantly evolving and may not be able to continue to support groups in their current form.

Despite these challenges, it is hoped that the vibrant voices of Kenyan youth online will continue as the 2012 presidential election draws nearer; and that participation online will be equalled or even surpassed by their presence in the voting queues at the polling stations.

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Prospects for Civil Society Empowerment Through the Use of the New Media

Karen Kisakeni Sørensen & Viktorija Petuchaite

Abstract

Access to information and communications technology (ICT), or the new media, has become a necessary condition for effective participation in the modern information society. In the development field, the bulk of actors – multilateral, bilateral and international organizations – focus mainly on providing access to the new media in order to close the gap between those with access to technologies and those without, often referred to as the digital divide. Access to the new media is believed to enhance civil society participation, and thus lead to civil society empowerment. However, various actors have pointed out that a focus on providing access neglects the social, political and cultural relations, which shape that access and the use of the new media. We therefore believe it necessary to look at how the use of the new media can lead to empowerment, and how civil society finds ways to adapt these technologies to its context in order to achieve empowerment. This chapter investigate these questions using a case study carried out in Kenya in 2010.

Keywords: digital empowerment, digital divide, civil society empowerment, new media, Ushahidi, Kenya

Introduction: The Kenyan case study

The post-election crisis and uses of alternative sources of information

Mwai Kibaki was declared president by the Election Commission of Kenya on 30 December 2007, shortly after a general election which, according to both national and international observers, was considered flawed and possibly rigged (Abdi and Deane 2008: 2; Goldstein and Rotich 2008: 3; *Boston Globe* 2008; ABC News 2008). Prior to the Commission's announcement, candidates of both the

opposing presidential parties – Raila Odinga of the Orange Democratic Movement and Mwai Kibaki of the Party of National Union – claimed victory in the polls (Goldstein and Rotich 2008: 4; Mäkinen and Kuira 2008: 328). This sparked the post-election crisis. The crisis, which officially ended on 28 February 2008 when the opposing parties signed a power-sharing agreement, left more than 1000 people dead and an estimated 500 000¹ displaced from their homes (Abdi and Deane 2008: 2; Mäkinen and Kuira 2008: 328; Reuters 2008).

On 30 December 2007, the Kenyan government issued a ban on all live broadcasting, which was not officially lifted until 4 February 2008 (Reporters Without Borders 2008: 3). It claimed that it was acting ‘in the interest of public safety and tranquillity’ (Mäkinen and Kuira 2008: 328), but its action was met with disapproval from international organizations, several Western embassies and the chiefs of Kenyan media organizations (Reporters Without Borders 2008: 4).

Given the ban and the partial compliance with it by the mainstream media, albeit with notable exceptions among the vernacular radio stations,² Kenyans turned to other means of receiving and relaying information (Mäkinen and Kuira 2008: 329; Njogu 2010: 191). Mobiles phones and online media, such as blogs, wikis,³ Facebook, YouTube and international media homepages, were used by people to communicate, share information and, in some cases, to promote peace and raise funds – or, in others, to spread rumours and messages filled with ethnic hatred (Mäkinen and Kuira 2008: 329; Njogu 2010: 191). It was the longing for existence of one source that could gather information on incidents that happened across the country that gave rise to the Internet platform *Ushabidi*

The *Ushabidi* platform

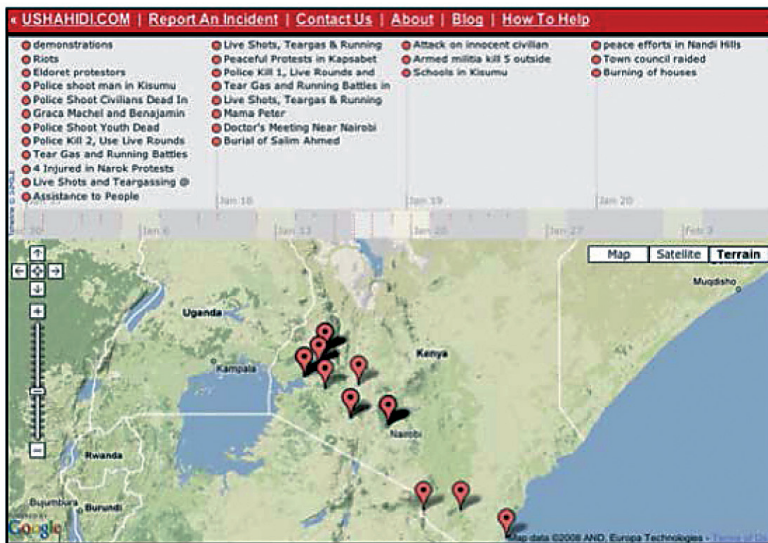
Ushabidi (which means ‘testimony’ in Kiswahili) is a website that was developed by members of the Kenyan diaspora and Kenyans living in the country during the post-election crisis of 2007-2008. The website was initially developed to map the violence taking place in Kenya at the time, but has since been further developed into a multi-purpose tool.⁴

Speaking about the creation of *Ushabidi*, its co-founder, Erik Hersman (2010), explained: ‘there was not a single one of us who had any humanitarian experience; most of us were self-employed, running our own businesses or consulting; the only common denominators that we shared was our love of our home, Kenya, and the ability to blog’. Because *Ushabidi* was built during the post-election crisis and during the ban, the initial idea was not to develop the platform into a comprehensive or accurate tool that could replace or live up to the standards of mainstream media or humanitarian organizations. Instead, the idea was to develop a tool that would gather and spread information (Okolloh 2009: 65). The main objective of the founders was to create a single, central platform that, through crowd-sourcing,⁵ could gather information about what was happening on the ground in Kenya, which would form a record that could be used in later reconciliation processes.

During the crisis, information was abundant but not published by the traditional media, and the atrocities were thus not publicly documented. The basic intention of the platform was to enable the sharing of information online, in a media environment that was filled with rumours, lies and uncertainty (Okolloh 2009: 65).

As access to the Internet for most Kenyans in Kenya was impossible,⁶ the *Ushahidi* platform allowed anyone with a simple mobile phone to send a text message (SMS)⁷ to a dedicated number to report incidents of violence or human rights abuses, and to report incidents directly online (Coyle and Meier 2009: 23). All reports would appear on a timeline and a map on the website, as is shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. Screenshot of the initial *Ushahidi* mapping website



The website quickly became interactive with over 250 users. The most challenging part of the *Ushahidi* platform was the issue of verification and validation of the incoming reports (ibid.). All reports had to be checked manually. Where possible, the *Ushahidi* team telephoned or emailed those reporting to verify data. When reports were sent in anonymously, the team attempted to counter-check them with other sources (Okolloh 2009: 66)⁸.

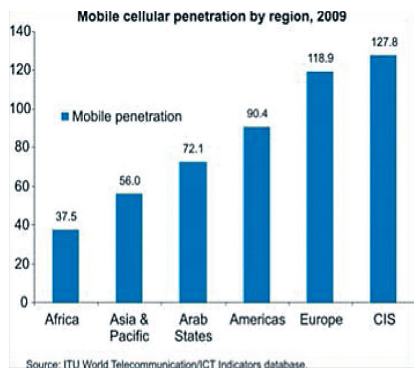
As the *Ushahidi* platform was the first of its kind, created by Kenyans for Kenyans, the case study raises a number of questions. In order to dig deeper and to understand the potential for digital empowerment through an Internet platform such as *Ushahidi*, the following section examines opposing opinions expressed by 'optimists' and 'sceptics' in the debate. The optimists believe in the

empowering effects of the use of new technologies, leading to digital empowerment, whereas the sceptics believe that access to new technologies creates and reinforces a divide between countries and within nations – the so-called digital divide.

The digital divide: a complex phenomenon

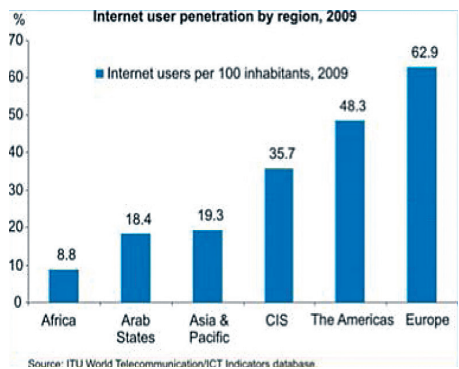
In its simplest form, the divide between those who have access and can use the new (online) media to achieve societal development and those who have not and cannot is called the digital divide (Norris 2001; Fuchs and Horak 2008; Mäkinen 2006; van Dijk and Hacker 2003). Most of Africa (see Figures 2 and 3 below) seems to be at the top of the list of the regions left out of the information society, and it is here that the digital divide seemingly becomes a pressing problem (Mercer 2004; Fuchs and Horak 2008; Castells 1999).

Figure 2. Mobile phone penetration



by region, ITU 2009

Figure 3. Internet penetration



by region, ITU 2009

However, according to Maarit Mäkinen (2006), conceptualizing the digital divide by measuring it quantitatively is too simplistic and represents one-way, mechanistic thinking that ignores the multifaceted reasons for the digitally marginalized or digitally excluded (Mäkinen 2006: 383). Many, including the authors of this study, would agree with her that the digital divide is a complex phenomenon, especially among the different communities within a single nation (Norris 2001; van Dijk and Hacker 2003). Nonetheless, the figures cannot be ignored – there are obvious differences between Africa and the other continents of the world. Some researchers have added other factors, such as the aspects of democratic and social inequality presented by Pippa Norris (2001), which affect the use of and access to information and communication technologies (Mäkinen 2006: 383).

Although both Norris (2001) and Mäkinen (2006) only examine the impact of the Internet, this study finds it relevant to also look into access to and the use of mobile phones (both simple and smart phones) as they were widely available at the time of the post-election violence.

The social divide

According to Norris, the social divide refers to a gap between the information-rich and the information-poor in every nation (Norris 2001: 4). Norris explains that the social divide in Internet access is a result of deeper socio-economic stratification within countries, in which demographics and resources such as income, education and occupation play a role, that influences the distribution of household appliances and access to other forms of information and communications technology (ibid.: 92).

In the case of Kenya, it is evident that divides exist between urban and rural areas in terms of the access to and use of new technologies. In 2008, Internet penetration was 7.9 percent⁹ and 80 percent of all users were living in Nairobi (CCK 2009: 20, 53). We can assume that only a small part of the remaining 20 percent were living in rural areas, not least because of infrastructural constraints. Mobile telephony, however, is available more widely across Kenya and its penetration was much higher – at 42.06 percent in 2008 (ITU 2008). The reasons for this difference are that the costs are much lower than those related to the Internet, as is the level of skill required to use it; and, more importantly, the infrastructure for mobile telephony is cheaper and more available (Nyabuga and Mudhai 2009: 46). In addition, sharing mobile phones is quite common due to the expense and existing communal practices (Mäkinen 2007: 7). This indicates an even higher level of penetration and use than the above figure suggests.

Despite the increasing levels of penetration and access to new technologies, especially the mobile phone, the social divide in Internet access continues to exist in Kenya. This suggests that those without the access may become the digitally excluded, and thus the information-poor.

The democratic divide

The democratic divide refers to the concern that there is a gap between those who do and those who do not use digital resources to engage, mobilize and participate in public life or, in other words, use such resources for civic engagement (Norris 2001: 4). Optimists believe that the Internet provides alternative channels for civic engagement, such as political chat rooms and electronic voting systems, among others, all of which could revive the level of mass participation in public affairs, or political mobilization, by reducing barriers to civic engagement (ibid.: 13). On the other hand, pessimists claim that the Internet only unleashes new inequalities of power and wealth, creating divisions between the information-rich and the information-poor, and making the gap between activists and non-activists even wider (ibid.).

It is important to note that civic engagement through online activities depends not only on infrastructure, physical access, personal resources and motivation, but also on the presence online of social movements, political parties, the news media, civil society organizations, and the like (Norris 2001: 235-240). In Kenya, the lack of infrastructure and high costs mean the online presence of the above-mentioned institutions, movements and organizations is limited, which further restricts the achievement of political mobilization through online activities. However, assuming that some of the 8.8 percent of the African population (see Figure 2) use the Internet for civic engagement, is it fair to assume that the rest of the population is democratically marginalized just because they, according to the statistics, have no access to the technology with which to participate or get mobilized? Mäkinen (2004, 2006) claims that this is not the case and we tend to agree with her. According to Mäkinen: 'An included person [...] feels like a full member of the community [...] and he/she has the competence to influence with or without using the new technology' (Mäkinen 2006: 383). On the other hand, 'an excluded person does not have these possibilities', nor does he/she possess the competences (*ibid.*). In addition, those who are not able to improve their well-being with technology do not belong to the group of digitally excluded as technology would not alter their life (*ibid.*). Thus, there must be great numbers of those who are socially included in ways other than directly by the use of new media, and those who use new media purely for entertainment, who feel like full members of society without having to use new media for civic engagement. What is it that the new technologies provide people with? And what does it mean to be digitally empowered?

Digital empowerment as enablement

Digital empowerment should be understood as a process by which people gain better communication, cooperation and networking opportunities and improve their competence to act as active participants in the information society. Thus, a digitally empowered person is one who feels that she/he has gained control of their life by using the information received and the skills gained through the new media.

Digital empowerment should be understood as an enabling process, which, in Mäkinen's (2006) sense of the term, occurs in stages. It requires prerequisites that lead to improvements in skills and knowledge, which then have consequences that empower people (Mäkinen 2006: 391).

The basic prerequisites are: awareness, motivation, technical access and competence (*ibid.*). Awareness refers to knowledge of the potential opportunities that the use of new media might bring about (*ibid.*). If people are not aware of the options available to them or do not understand how they can use them, they do not see the reasons for applying the technology. Motivation is another prerequisite and, together with awareness, it is a critical psychological variable for all types of empowerment process (*ibid.*). The lack of either or both of the

two factors could explain what Norris (2001) refers to as the democratic divide. She differentiates between those who use the new media to become civically engaged because they might be aware of the potential gains and/or they are motivated, and those who do not use the media because they are unaware and/or demotivated. Technical access is the most obvious prerequisite, referring to both the hardware and the software that are needed to access the Internet (*ibid.*). Last but not least, competence refers to the skills and abilities that are necessary in order to use the Internet, and the digital literacy that is necessary to understand the messages (*ibid.*). If all the prerequisites are there, the empowerment process leads to a number of improvements: (a) becoming connected to social networks; (b) gaining new technical competences; (c) becoming information producers (and receivers) by sharing information with others; and (d) learning new ways to act by using new media (Mäkinen 2006: 391).

The new media: enhancing individual autonomy and online/offline collaboration

The concept of individual autonomy and peer-production is another way of describing the effects that the new media have on society and its actors (Benkler 2006). Adding to the works of Mäkinen (2004, 2006), Benkler explains that new technologies provide individuals with new opportunities to express themselves and to act and challenge the traditional mass media (Benkler 2006: 9). Individual autonomy is enhanced as individuals become the producers of information, gaining the individual freedom to produce new knowledge without mediators, which moderates the power of traditional media (*ibid.*).

In Mäkinen's theory (2004, 2006), individuals are enabled to use alternative communication platforms not only to be informed, but also to cooperate, which allows them to widen their social networks. Benkler (2006) uses the concept of peer-production, which he describes as a production system based on individual action, in which individuals, who are usually strangers or only loosely affiliated, look for peers who are willing to work together to make a wish into a reality online (*ibid.*: 137).

Mark Granovetter's theory of the strength of weak ties is also relevant to such collaborations and networking (Granovetter 1973). It focuses on how loose affiliations, the weak ties, influence the diffusion of information and resources beyond those accessible to an individual's social circles. Granovetter distinguishes between strong ties, which are characterized by kin and close friendship relations, and weak ties, such as acquaintances (Granovetter 1973: 1361). The weak ties are important bridges between different groups of people and are therefore essential links for receiving new information. Looking at the new media through this lens, and using Benkler's theory (Benkler's 2006), online networks are networks of weak ties that can be valuable for the individual participants, as these individuals might acquire information that would not have been available

without such networks. This allows them to become part of online communities as a result of common interests, which in some cases leads to peer-production of information and knowledge and, in turn, digital empowerment, in Mäkinen's sense of the concept (Mäkinen 2004, 2006).

Taking all of the above into consideration, when looking into the potential for empowerment through the new media in Kenya, it is important to look at not only how online networks, which are usually based on weak ties, affect the individual taking part in those networks, but also how they may affect that individual's strong ties. It is necessary to look into the information flow and exchange between both weak ties and strong ties.

Being cautious about the empowering effects of the new media

Benkler (2006) focuses mainly on the empowering effects of the new media, but he urges caution about focusing too much on the possible empowering effects that the use of such new media might bring about. Benkler (2006) stresses that in order to fully understand these effects, they must be compared to the effects of the use of the traditional media – or what he refers to as the commercial mass media (Benkler 2006: 10). This is because the new media have not pushed out the traditional media, as was assumed when the new media emerged in the 1990s. Instead, both coexist and complement each other (Benkler 2006; Jenkins 2008). This is evident in Kenya, not least due to the limited access to the new media. The most common source of information, in Kenya as well as the rest of Africa, remains the radio, due to its affordability and accessibility among low income and infrastructure-poor regions, as well as the low level of technical capacity required to operate it (Mäkinen 2007: 5).

Benkler also emphasizes that use of new media tools, in particular the Internet, does not necessarily lead to the emergence of certain social structures (Benkler 2006: 17). Rather '[...] technology sets parameters of individual and social action [...]', which will make certain relationships, organizations, institutions and actions easier to practice or engage in, and others harder, depending on the challenges of the environment, either natural or human (Benkler 2006: 17). This means that technology allows certain actions, but its use and adaptation depend on the particular society, and the environment into which it is introduced. In the case of Kenya, as is illustrated above, existing socio-economic inequalities and infrastructural difficulties affect the use of and access to the new media. However, *Usabidi* is a good example of how new technology is adapted to the context, which leads back to the case study illustrating the possibilities for digital empowerment in Kenya.

Ushahidi: satisfying diverse needs

Our research shows that individuals and non-profit organizations used the *Ushahidi* platform for different purposes. All the interviewees¹⁰ believed that new media tools such as *Ushahidi* can be powerful, as in their case it provides an uncensored medium for self-expression,¹¹ enhancing what Benkler (2006) called individual autonomy. Everyone who has access to either the Internet or a mobile phone can send in a report of an incident that they have either witnessed or heard about from others. In this way, *Ushahidi* gives the power to produce information to ordinary individuals who are not trained media reporters.

In addition to being a tool for self-expression that enhances individual autonomy, *Ushahidi* can be perceived as a tool of empowerment because the interviewees' use of the platform has made it possible to see them as digitally included. The platform enables them to act on informed choices based on the information available, to assist family and friends and, for those who want to assist humanitarian efforts, to get involved. It also enables both local and national non-profit organizations to assist people in need and to share information online.

The online networks assisted the founders of *Ushahidi* to co-produce and spread the word about the platform, using blogs and online forums, among other things, to spread information about the new tool. They also helped those working with local communities to get more financial support, especially by connecting the Kenyan diaspora with Kenyans living in the country, allowing them to become part of the information society.

What drove online communities to come together using the *Ushahidi* platform? Benkler (2006) would suggest that it was common interest – a realization that there were few outlets available for citizens to voice their opinions and a lack of information about what was happening around the country, especially in case of the diaspora who, according to Erik Hersman (2010): '[...] had the time and they care[d] the most as the people in Kenya [were] too busy being in it to really be actively involved a lot of times'. This illustrates that having an online network is vital. Information about *Ushahidi* spread fast across the online communities and became known to 200 000 people in two days (Hersman 2010). This proves how strong weak ties can be, as illustrated by Granovetter (1973). The question arises: what about those who did not have access to *Ushahidi* online? Were they excluded from digital empowerment during the crisis?

Reaching a wider audience through a convergence of media and word-of mouth

As is mentioned above, once the platform became SMS-compatible, this allowed those without online access to send reports and thus become part of the information society.¹² The mobile phone became one of the most valuable tools to have during the crisis.

As Eric Hersman (2010) has pointed out: '[in a crisis situation] [...] normal culture does not disappear, it's there and it's being used [...]'. This is especially important as some of our interviewees had told us that they spread the information from the *Ushabidi* to their strong ties, to use the conceptualization by Granovetter (1973), such as family and friends, using the new media and word-of-mouth – allowing those who were digitally excluded to be included, albeit indirectly. Some told us that they posted the information that they received from others on the platform, while those working in humanitarian assistance would update people in distress with information available from *Ushabidi* allowing them to make informed decisions about, for instance, where and when assistance would be provided to them. In a sense, these people acted as intermediaries who were able to include those who would usually be considered digitally excluded. This means that when it comes to the information flow, it is not only (online) weak ties that are important in an information society, but also the strong ties, because those who are online and who have access to the new media spread information to those they care about using offline means.

Another way those without access to *Ushabidi* received information was the through convergence of media, in Henry Jenkins' (2008) sense of the term. For instance, Joshua Goldstein and Juliana Rotich reported that some of the radio broadcasters were reading the most influential blogs on air, which in a way extended the penetration of the Internet from 5 percent to 95 percent (Goldstein and Rotich 2008: 8; Okolloh 2009: 66). This fact was confirmed by some of our interviewees. The convergence of the media not only delivered information to radio listeners, who might then have been able to make informed choices, it also digitally included those who did not have access to the new media in the information society by proxy.

The above illustrates that the digital divide is not clear-cut and that Kenyans who would normally be considered marginalized and excluded from the (online) networked society were able to be included. As is noted above, the new media are not accessible to all, but SMS compatibility, the convergence of media and the use of word-of-mouth to spread information from *Ushabidi* enabled the inclusion of people previously considered digitally excluded.

Having explained how individuals became part of the digitally included by proxy, we now show how non-profit organizations used *Ushabidi* during the crisis. This is important: first, because civil society is considered to be the key to empowering disadvantaged groups and communities through new media (Mercer 2004: 50); and, second, because a platform such as *Ushabidi* needs a critical mass to be successful. However, good intentions and innovative ideas often clash with the reality of the context in which they are to be realized.

Ushahidi and civil society organizations

Among the non-profit organizations making use of *Ushabidi* during the crisis was *Peace Caravan*.¹³ The organization tried to intervene in the crisis by organizing

peace talks and passing on information. Peace Caravan would receive information about planned attacks or unrest from their established network, either from physical meetings or mobile phone contact, and would then pass this information on to the authorities in the area and/or to the intended victims.

Peace Caravan used *Ushabidi* for two reasons. First, it could maintain the anonymity of its sources, which was vital to its work; and, second, it could notify other peace promoting organizations of the work being done at various locations in Kenya. In this way, the workers at Peace Caravan became the mediators of information. According to accounts by our interviewee from Peace Caravan, facilitators who had more resources shared information online that would otherwise have stayed offline. A question therefore arises: what influence does this communication taking place through a mesh of mobile phones, the Internet and physical meetings have on civil society empowerment?

By combining various media, Peace Caravan created new opportunities for offline action by offline groups. If analysed through the theoretical framework of Norris (2001), the Peace Caravan facilitated a process within which the social and democratic divide narrowed. They facilitated a flow of information that otherwise would have been unavailable, and with that information they succeeded in mobilizing and engaging partners to take offline action in the field of peace work – as well as providing potentially valuable early warning information or critical information for immediate action. In the theoretical framework of Granovetter (1973), the use of *Ushabidi* by Peace Caravan reinforces the strength of weak ties theory, as efforts drawing on weak ties led to valuable information sharing amongst people without any strong relations between them, illustrating that weak ties, just as strong ties, can be important bridges, which convey new information and in this case, can even lead to social mobility.

However, during the empirical investigation it became apparent that there was some disappointment at the lack of interest by the non-profit organizations in adopting *Ushabidi* during the post-election crisis: '[...] one of the more disappointing sides of *Ushabidi* was how the NGO community did not respond favourably in this time of crisis' (Hersman 2010). Our interviewees suggested various reasons for this, which are discussed below.

Online ideals, offline realities

Ushabidi came about very fast as a response to the crisis. As a result, no strategic communication plan that was developed beforehand by the *Ushabidi* ad-hoc team. Thus, a combination of the lack of a strategy, a lack of familiarity with and insight into the objectives of the platform, and a lack of resources among the Kenyan non-profit organizations affected the adoption of *Ushabidi* by NGOs.

According to the interview with the founders of *Ushabidi*, the organizations were not sure what they could use the platform for and what they could get out of it. It also seems that the non-profit organizations were confused about the role of the *Ushabidi* team and its promoters. *Ushabidi* was a platform to be

deployed by non-profit organizations – it was not the intention that the *Ushabidi* team should be the principal deployment body of the platform. The idea was that civil society should embrace it and give it a ‘life of its own’. In addition, the new platform had to make its way through an environment permeated by mistrust, rumours and violence, which made it even more difficult to persuade organizations to embrace and trust the new platform, which had been created by a group of unknown individuals – even though the platform guaranteed anonymity and a secure database.

The lack of trust was highlighted by Peacenet Kenya in our interview. It developed its own SMS-based reporting system, using its own offline network of member organizations and its own appointed and trained peace monitors from across Kenya. Peacenet was concerned about the credibility and validity of the information, which they believed was lacking on the *Ushabidi* platform. This reveals the fundamental difference between two distinct types of peace work: *Ushabidi*, based (and dependent) on an idealistic, loosely affiliated group of people with diffuse end-goals; and Peacenet, focused on concrete objectives and end-goals designed in a formal results-oriented organization.

The lack of resources, in terms of skills and hardware, and, to some extent, organizations’ respective relations with the new media in general also presented challenges for many Kenyan non-profit organizations in using the platform. Some interviewees spoke of mental or psychological barriers that had to be dealt with before the new media could become fully integrated into Kenyan civil society. From this perspective, according to the theoretical framework of Norris (2001), a democratic divide is still pervasive as many Kenyan organizations (and Kenyans in general) do not consider it to be possible for them to engage, mobilize or participate in public affairs through the use of online media. This, in turn, provides evidence for the reinforcement theory (Norris 2001), as many non-profit organizations did not ‘jump on the bandwagon’ just because the new (online) media was available. Instead, it seemed to appeal to those already confident with the Internet and other new media.

Last but not least, our study revealed that the issue of funding what they called the ‘NGO industry’ also played a role, through non-profit organizations withholding information from each another as a way of gaining a competitive advantage over their competitors for funding from donors. Claire Mercer (2004) supports this explanation, arguing that it is naive to think that technological advances would encourage non-profit organizations to share information. They are heavily dependent on donor funding, and thus all the knowledge, experience and information they accumulate over time becomes a commodity that attracts the donors, and which they are not willing to share (Mercer 2004: 61). This shows that the prospects for having organizations share information unconditionally for the common good face serious constraints. It also seems to be destructive for initiatives such as the humanitarian work of *Ushabidi*.

Conclusion

This chapter describes how individuals and organizations used *Ushabidi* not only to help themselves but also to assist others, either through their weak or strong ties; and the reasons for the limited use of the platform by non-profit organizations. It is possible to use the case study to draw some conclusions about the questions posed in the introduction: How can the use of the new media lead to empowerment? Can civil society find ways to adapt these technologies to their context in order to achieve empowerment?

In order to assess the possible empowering effects of new media tools, such as *Ushabidi*, it is necessary to evaluate them against the traditional media and the space they provide for civic engagement. It became apparent that during the crisis a great part of the traditional media failed to fulfil their roles, either by complying with the ban issued by the government on all live broadcasts or by reporting along ethnic divides. To a certain extent, they also failed to live up to their role by providing biased information and failing to incorporate investigative journalistic practices into their reports.

The *Ushabidi* platform was developed in this environment. For the interviewees who used *Ushabidi*, the platform was empowering because: (a) it developed into a medium that provided information which enabled them to act based on informed choices; (b) it allowed them to become information producers; and (c) it enabled them to connect through online networks making use of their weak ties, making it easier to become civically engaged both online and offline.

The SMS application on the *Ushabidi* platform allowed more people to have access to the digital sphere and thus to become digitally included. Were those who had access to neither a mobile phone nor the Internet digitally excluded? Our study illustrates that communication went through other channels. For instance, the majority of the interviewees distributed information received online to their strong ties – family and friends – offline, using word-of-mouth in addition to mobile phones. The information transmitted through the convergence of media also potentially reached many more people, due to the high level of penetration of radio in Kenya. Last but not least, information travelled through non-profit organizations that had access to the Internet and were able to transmit information to the people affected, as exemplified by the activities of Peace Caravan. In addition, the organizations were able to report the stories of those affected to the *Ushabidi* platform, creating awareness of places that were in need of help which allowed other organizations to know where to provide assistance. Hence, the role played by these intermediaries, both individuals and organizations, empowered those without direct access to the *Ushabidi* platform. Consequently, they could indirectly be perceived as digitally included.

Keeping the above in mind, the prospects for civil society empowerment through the use of new media in Kenya will depend on the ability of future governments to recognize that mere access to the new media is insufficient, and the ability of the development community to take account of the local context. Both must look beyond the normative level and instead recognize and understand the cultural and socio-economic realities of Kenyan civil society. Thus, they must

be aware of the fallacious notion that the new media has more empowering qualities than other modes of communication. In Kenya, like most of Africa, the new media and the traditional media coexist and are mutually dependent. It is important to appreciate these complexities in order to fully comprehend the prospects for digital empowerment.

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Notes

- 1 The number of people displaced as a result of the crisis is unknown and estimates range from 150 000 to 600 000 (Abdi and Deane 2008: 2)
- 2 Commercial and profit-making radio stations in local languages.
- 3 Online, collaborative work spaces that allow users to add, remove, edit and change content. They also allow links between any number of pages. It is a very efficient if mass, collaborative authorship of a book or a paper is needed. The term 'wiki' can also refer to the collaborative software itself (wiki engine) that facilitates the operation of such a website, for instance, Wikipedia (Ashley, Kenton and Milligan 2009: 124).
- 4 Beyond Kenya, *Ushabidi* has been used for various purposes around the world since its launch in 2008, everything from mapping medicine stock outages in Malawi, Uganda and Zambia, to mapping blizzards in Washington, DC, aiding crisis communication in Haiti and, most recently, mapping incidents of violence in Egypt during the 2011 Arab Spring. This illustrates that *Ushabidi* has great potential to be used as a tool for civil society to raise awareness, gather and disseminate information in times of crisis, and hold authorities accountable.
- 5 'Simply defined, crowdsourcing represents the act of a company or institution taking a function once performed by employees and outsourcing it to an undefined (and generally large) network of people in the form of an open call. This can take the form of peer-production (when the job is performed collaboratively), but is also often undertaken by sole individuals' (Howe 2006).
- 6 In 2008 the level of Internet penetration in Kenya was just 7.9% (CCK 2009: 20, 53).
- 7 Mobile phone penetration in Kenya in 2008 was 42.06% (ITU 2008).
- 8 Unverified reports were published on the website with a note that the data were unconfirmed. Such reports were then counter-checked by other citizens, who would confirm or disprove the information (Okolloh 2009: 67). Furthermore, all the reports sent to *Ushabidi* were closely

- checked before they were published in order to avoid the risk of the platform being used for propaganda or to spread ethnically biased messages (ibid.).
- 9 It should be noted that Internet penetration in Africa as a whole, including Kenya, is difficult to measure due to the collective use of the Internet in cyber cafes, telecentres and public places that offer Internet services, and also due to the introduction of a cellular broadband by the Internet provider, Safaricom, that allows Internet sharing (Nyabuga and Mudhai 2009: 45).
 - 10 All our interviewees are based in or around Nairobi. The data therefore have an urban bias. However, during the post-election crisis, most were visiting family in the rural areas. We conducted 10 semi-structured interviews, of which one was a group interview. Three of the interviewees were women, and 10 were men, all aged between 20 and 40. It is important to note that all of the interviewees in our study seemed to belong to the information-rich. Nor could they be labelled as socially or democratically excluded, as they had the resources and access to the new (online) media, and they already actively engaged in civil society. Interviewees included *Usbabidi* founders, human rights activists, media researchers, Peacenet Kenya (a network of Kenyan NGOs) and 'ordinary Kenyans' who used *Usbabidi* during the crisis.
 - 11 Whether it can be called uncensored is open to question, as there were several administrators on the *Usbabidi* platform who attempt to verify the information they receive by trying to cross-reference it with information available on other Internet platforms, websites and blogs as well as the traditional media.
 - 12 Texting or SMS was the most widely used application in Kenya during the crisis (and still is today). It is also the most widely used new media application in the rest of Africa.
 - 13 Peace Caravan is a Kenyan civil society organization that was very active during the post-election crisis. It attempted to intervene in the crisis through peace talks in remote areas as well as the outskirts of Nairobi. The Peace Caravan has an extensive network all round Kenya and received information on planned attacks and the escalating conflict.

Young Women and ICT

A Need to Devise New Strategies

Grace Githaiga

Abstract

Global communications have changed dramatically, as a result of the increased use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). The emergence of ICTs has been compared to the industrial revolution in its scope and significance. It has contributed to economic growth and globalization and has brought social, cultural and political opportunities to many people. However, it is not clear how young women, in particular those living in informal settlements are making use of ICTs and whether ICTs are shaping their communication strategies and practices either as groups or individuals. This chapter assesses literature reviewed on how young women use information and communications technology (ICTs), and whether or how ICT are shaping communication between them.

Keywords: ICT, young women, empowerment, Kenya

Introduction

This chapter assesses how young women use information and communications technology (ICT), and whether or how ICT is shaping communication between them. It aims to determine the uptake of ICT among young women in empirical terms, and to contribute to a better understanding of the potential for ICT use by young women in informal settlements¹ - using the Mathare Pioneer Group as a case study. The reason for this focus is that young women remain unacknowledged and unsupported in terms of their participation in and contributions to ICT.

ICT encompasses the technology used to handle both information and telecommunications – the integration of all forms of information including symbols, data, voices, and live and recorded images. This has been made possible by the convergence of previously separate industries – the media, telecommunications and computing – on a single platform provided by the Internet. Ngege (2003)

defines ICT as technologies that enable the handling of information and facilitate different forms of communication between human actors, human beings and electronic systems. Overall, ICT is grouped together under two categories: 'the traditional' and 'the new'. Traditional ICT are non-electronic media such as print and analogue technologies, including books and newspapers, radio, television, fixed-line telephones and facsimile machines. These technologies were gradually ingrained in the daily lives of people and communities. New ICT consists of computers (in all their manifestations) and the data processing applications accessible through their use: email, the Internet, word-processing, mobile phones, wireless technologies and other data processing applications (Gurumurthy 2004: 6).

Young adults see new technologies as a means to gain advantage in education and employment, and in the political realm. Young people have an affinity with Internet technologies and are more likely than older citizens to use mobile phones and web-based platforms for research, to access political information and for empowerment strategies (Stephen 2004). The power of the Internet environment lies in its ability to gather collective information capital that everyone can use without reducing anyone's access to it (Wildermuth 2010: 12).

It remains unclear, however, how young women, in particular those living in informal settlements, are making use of ICT and whether ICT is shaping their communication strategies and practices as groups or individuals. There is hardly any disaggregated data on how young women in Kenya, in particular young women in informal settlements, are making use of ICT. This is in spite of much speculation about the Internet's potential to facilitate the engagement of youth in critical issues affecting society.

The Mathare Pioneer Youth Group is based in the urban informal settlement of Mathare, Nairobi. The name Pioneer was inspired by the fact the group was 'breaking new ground'. The group houses school-age children and youths who have been orphaned by HIV/Aids and related diseases. Pioneer is a network of 13 working groups within the wider Mathare area, comprised of about 200 households of orphaned and vulnerable children and youths. In 2008, the youth members of Pioneer started using modern technology, such as email and short message service (SMS) text messages for mobilization of their activities. Having realized the usefulness of ICT as a strong lobbying and advocacy tool, the group trained 'trainers of trainers' on blogging. This approach seeks to empower marginalized children and youth to self-advocate on the issues affecting their lives and to lobby for full recognition and participation in finding solutions and ways to address their needs.

It is within this background that the study, *Owning the information highway: the uptake of ICTs by young women in informal settlements*, was conceived. The study is ongoing and therefore the evidence is still inconclusive. The focus on the Mathare Pioneer Youth Group aims to draw out wider lessons for young women in other informal settlements in Kenya.

Going beyond access

It has been argued that women are the keepers, transmitters and recreators of popular cultural traditions (Riano 1994: 93). With this in mind, Africa's women's rights organizations have lost no time in grasping the challenge and potential afforded by ICT. 'Both the emergence of new networks and the uptake of ICTs by existing organizations have not only been extremely rapid, they have also been characterized by a level of improvisation that demonstrates the remarkably creative organizational and strategic capacity of feminism in Africa'.² Women and women's organizations are becoming more aware of the importance of ICT to empowering women, although a lot of effort remains at the professional level. For example, the African Gender Institute, African Development and Communication (FEMNET) and ABANTU for Development (a non-governmental organization that aims to help increase women's participation in decision-making and policy influencing) all make use of ICT. This has been stimulated by a recognition of the costs of digital exclusion, and by ongoing experimentation that seeks to make maximum use of the Internet and ICT to develop a vibrant feminist intellectual and activist community in spite of the digital divide – and, in fact, to overcome it (*ibid.*).³

The Association for Progressive Communications – Africa-Women (APC-AAW) points out that this uptake has been heavily informed by African women's interests in overcoming the disparities and marginalization emanating from unequal access to information and knowledge. The capacity building of such ICT networks and groups has worked to empower women's groups, advocacy, and documentation and research centers, creating new levels and senses of community and collaboration. Norbert Wildermuth (Wildermuth 2010: 29) suggests that more self-expressive, politicized and counter-hegemonic creative media engagements, which give a voice to specific youth groups within the community only seem to 'evolve if a collective of young people working with communication in all its mediated forms is formed, encouraged and supported consistently over a considerable period of time'. Empowerment is therefore based on four requirements: awareness, motivation, technical access and competence. Jung et al. (2001) suggests that engagement with ICT is less concerned about issues of access and ownership and more about how people develop relationships with ICT, and how they are capable of making use of the social resources that make access usable.

However, in all such initiatives, the focus has generally been on professional women, and mostly those attached to professional organizations. There is hardly any evidence of how ordinary women, in particular those in Africa's informal settlements, are using contemporary technologies creatively for community collaboration and to overcome disparities or marginalization.

According to Schilderman and Ruskulis (2006), the poor women in informal settlements are often more disadvantaged than the men in terms of not only access to information, but also representation and participation in decision-making, income generation opportunities and human rights. Many of them appear marginalized, or even hidden, from ongoing events in their communities because

of a lack of skills, literacy, status, mobility and self-confidence. The fact that women are seldom involved in decision-making or policy formulation processes has impeded their socio-economic development and has led to most key issues affecting them remaining untouched. These authors nevertheless point out that women are conscious of the fact that the acquisition of knowledge constitutes the first step towards the process of change, be it social, economic, cultural or political. Good information flow is thus an integral part of social and economic development, even though much of the information disseminated through the new ICT is in a written format and often in English or another European language – a fact that can be seen as further marginalizing women and in particular those in informal settlements.

The digital divide

Dighe and Reddi (2006: 3) point out that a common assumption with regard to ICT presupposes that the presence of technology automatically translates into increased efficiency that will result in benefits for communities. This assumption has seen governments concentrate on building infrastructure without addressing women's equality needs. The authors call for an ICT strategy that integrates women's equality needs. They refer to the Women's Forum at the *Global Knowledge II Conference*, which took place in 2000 in Kuala Lumpur, and argue that the digital divide is not just a polarization of the information rich and information poor, but also a divide between men and women – a situation that has not changed. Furthermore, these authors argue that the beneficiaries tend to be young, urban, English-speaking, male Internet users, and that the majority of women live in rural areas where connectivity is rare or almost non-existent. They suggest that in addressing the problem of the digital divide: 'proactive efforts would have to be made to provide information literacy to women'. Information literacy here is defined as 'the ability to access, know where to find, evaluate and use information from a variety of sources'. Therefore, they point out that the digital divide needs to go beyond Internet access to address the divide in the opportunities to develop and use such skills. This would include addressing ICT access, and knowledge and its use.

Van Dijk and Hacker (2003) list four principle impediments to genuine Internet access at the individual level:

- a) Material access, where there is lack of computers and network connections;
- b) Mental access, where there is lack of elementary digital experience caused by a lack of interest, computer anxiety and the unattractiveness of new technology;
- c) Skills access, characterized by a lack of digital skills caused by insufficient user-friendliness and inadequate education or social support; and

d) Usage access, which is a lack of significant usage opportunities.

Stamp (1989) delineated ten issues in the relationship between gender and technology in Africa. Three of these issues are especially relevant today to gender and ICT:

- Governments and development agencies treat technologies as neutral, value-free tools and assume that the adoption of these technologies will naturally lead to development;
- Governments and development agencies tend to ignore women's relationship to technology; and
- Women have unequal access to development resources, of which information has come to be regarded as a primary one, equivalent to land and capital.

When examining the social relations of technology, Gurumurthy (2004: 4) appears to confirm the above. She links women's exclusion from technology to the gender division of labour, and the historical and cultural view of technology as masculine. She sees technology as reflecting male power as well as capitalist domination. This means that technology is not necessarily 'neutral'.

A report, *Women and Mobile: a Global Opportunity*, by the Global System for Mobile communications Association (GSMA) and the Cherie Blair Foundation (2010) points out that women with the lowest incomes are typically some of the last to benefit from technological advances. This holds true for mobile phones too. Mobile phone ownership in low and middle income countries has skyrocketed in recent years, but a woman is still 21 percent less likely to own a mobile phone than a man. This figure increases to 23 percent if she lives in Africa, 24 percent if she lives in the Middle East and 37 percent if she lives in South Asia. Closing this gender gap would bring the benefits of mobile phones to an additional 300 million women.

The report suggests that mobile phone ownership provides distinct benefits to women, including improved access to educational, health, business and employment opportunities. Women surveyed across low and middle income countries on three continents believe that a mobile phone helps them lead a more secure, connected and productive life.

Both society and industry could benefit from equalizing male and female rates of mobile phone ownership, given the important role women and mobile phones play in socio-economic development. In Kenya, for example, mobile phones constitute the only feasible telecommunications option (Orbicom 2007: 19).

Banda (2010: 16) argues that disaggregating Internet usage across gender, class, race and other variables leads to the conclusion that the Internet is still largely an elitist medium in Africa. By contrast, Macueve et al. (2009: 27) feel that, to a certain extent, mobile phones are helping poor women to increase their incomes, for example, by providing cost-effective communication that facilitates their trading and allows women to establish small businesses. However, they suggest that rural women cannot appropriate computer-related ICT

and therefore be empowered unless much more attention is given to making computer-related technologies and tools more useful for them (Macueve et al. 2009: 29). In addition to issues related to its usability and mobility, they identify as a weakness of this technology that rural women are presented with limited content about issues related to their survival. They suggest that if these factors were corrected, women might more easily use computer-related ICT within their constraints on time, money and skill acquisition. Macueve et al. conclude that if something responds to the actual needs of a group of people, it will be appropriated by them (Ibid 2009: 30). Thus, if ICT were to provide a real solution to rural women's immediate problems, they would appropriate it and make use of it to strengthen their ability to resolve problems, make decisions and choices, and take the desired actions. Munyua (1998) proposes that because information is power and women constitute more than half Africa's population, it is essential for ICT to free up women's productive potential by taking specific steps to give them access to information and enable them to seize, organize and exchange information for their own ends.

Muller (2009: 34) argues that it is unlikely that women will make gains in ICT in sub-Saharan Africa, in particular where female headed households constitute over half of households¹ as men move to urban areas in search of jobs. 'This gendered division of labour means that a woman's domestic responsibilities... make it difficult for them to simply "pick up and leave" for urban areas. This urban bias means that more men than women are likely to be exposed to ICTs'. Furthermore, Muller points out that men have more purchasing power to buy or access the ICT they wish to use. Women are likely to use their income on household needs. This view is supported by Kazanka (2009: 44), who argues that ICT is rapidly becoming a signifier of the gender gap between men and women, with women having restricted access to ICT resources and opportunities.

Buskens and Webb (2009: 208) conclude that access to ICT by women must be understood in the context of their gender positions and identities, and how they interact with their political-economic situations. Women's struggles to overcome the limitations of their positions and identities through the use of ICT must be understood in this context. Furthermore, they argue that for there to be sustainable change and 'real empowerment', women need to be the agents of their own empowerment processes.

Young women and ICT initiatives

According to the UN Habitat 2008 *State of the World's Cities* report,⁴ young people aged 15 to 24 make up 18 per cent of the world's population. The report states that Africa has the highest proportion of young people. In most African countries, including Kenya, Tanzania, Zimbabwe and Zambia, children and young people aged 25 years or below constitute around 70 per cent of the population. The report also reveals that in countries in East and Southern Africa, more than 40 per cent of young women are not in paid work and have had no formal education.

The report notes that young women in informal settlements often miss out on opportunities for paid employment because they have had children at an earlier age, compared to their counterparts in planned settlements. They also take on more domestic responsibilities than men, which limits their ability to participate more fully in employment and training.

According to Kenya's National Youth Policy,⁵ youth have remained on the periphery of the country's affairs. The policy's goal is to promote participation in democratic processes as well as in community and civic affairs. It recognizes youth as a key resource for the benefit of the country, attempts to address issues affecting young people to enable them to reach their maximum potential and provides a framework for all stakeholders to contribute to youth development. Key principles of the National Youth Policy include equity and accessibility, gender inclusiveness, good governance and mainstreaming youth issues. Among the responsibilities listed for various stakeholders are that the private sector should play a role in the provision of information and the transfer of technology and skills. Youth and the media is a priority strategy area, and female youth a priority target group.

Schilderman and Ruskulis (2006) suggest that good information flow is an integral part of social and economic development. Poor urban women are by far the most disadvantaged in terms of the benefits attributed to accessing sources of information. They are also the most adversely affected by poverty, in particular those in informal settlements. Schilderman and Ruskulis give an example of how women belonging to two community groups, in Mathare and Redeemed Village, Nairobi, participated in 2001 in the 'telling our stories' project, learning scriptwriting and video production skills in order to communicate their living conditions and livelihood issues. The project was implemented between September 2000 and May 2001, and looked at how ICT could be used effectively by poor, marginalized women to strengthen their largely oral skills to communicate their need for improved livelihoods. Many of the women had either limited or no literacy and did not speak English. Video was therefore chosen as a new ICT medium that could be made more accessible to the women's groups, as literacy is not a primary requirement for making videos. In addition, as the medium is largely visual, and it is the images that leave an impression on the viewer, the commentary can be added in the language of the intended audience. The video produced by these two groups was entirely participatory and they had complete control over the scenes they wanted to show and how they wanted to sequence and present them.

Mathare and Redeemed Village are two of the numerous informal settlements in Nairobi. The Redeemed Village group was a well-established group of mature women, mostly in their 60s, that already had a permanent meeting place. The women were mostly single grandmothers, often responsible for bringing up orphaned grandchildren. They were involved in a range of self-help, welfare and mutual support activities among the members. The women had known each other for a long time and engaged in daily savings schemes and therefore had developed a lot of trust in each other.

The membership of the Mathare group was mostly young women aged between 20 and 35, better educated than the other group but generally unemployed. They had only been established for a relatively short time and group cohesion was less evident than with the Redeemed Village group. The members' support to each other was predominantly geared towards finding work, and it was this group that identified the potential for using video making skills for income generation. These women's groups, largely informally organized, undertook neighbourhood improvement activities and waste management, and functioned as self-help and action groups. However, the impact of the women's actions was constrained by their lack of status in their own communities, their remoteness from decision-making processes, their limited contacts outside their own group and inadequate access to information. Even though there has been talk of the importance of ICT to people's lives, the women's groups in the informal settlements in Nairobi had gained little from the development of new ICT.

Schilderman and Ruskulis (2006) state that the outcomes on capacity building for both the women's groups through their participatory video experience were seen as positive. Furthermore, the profile and status of the two women's groups and of individual women within these groups increased: 'People in the two settlements noticed the women video makers and were impressed generally by what they were doing'. The women would hold discussions about the production of the video they were producing, and this helped them to improve their level of articulation of needs. Some lessons were learned: the video production process helped them to understand the power of dialogue and information; and they came to appreciate reliable information and to recognize their right to this, and also to recognize the destructive power of misinformation. The women also gained confidence in their own abilities and were satisfied with what they had done. What is not clear, however, is what the two groups are doing currently or whether they continued to produce videos, that is, the sustainability of the projects.

Another example of a women's ICT initiative is the Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET), which is a non-governmental organization that brings together several women's organizations in Uganda to develop the use of ICT tools to resolve women's issues. WOUGNET uses the Internet to facilitate communication within communities, and to share best practices, appropriate technologies, ideas and the problems of other groups working on similar concerns. WOUGNET emphasizes the Internet as a tool in the harking notion of the social shaping of technology. It also uses other platforms for debates, information exchange and dissemination, including radio, video, television and the print media (Banda 2010: 47). Furthermore, WOUGNET has been involved in a citizen journalism project, involving blogging and information sharing by rural women in Uganda. WOUGNET has leveraged the benefits of mobile phones to allow women to share their opinions and contribute to debates on various topics.

The *Africa Development Bank Issue Paper on Youth and Economic Development* (ADB 2006) reports that young people have demonstrated an aptitude for developing, adopting and disseminating ICT, and that their leadership role in this

sphere is evident throughout both the industrialized and the developing world. It is common practice for adults to learn ICT skills from the youth. ICT can be harnessed both as a tool to promote youth in the ICT sector and to foster broader youth leadership (ADB 2006: 11). Furthermore, the issue paper points out that because its impact is cross-cutting, ICT can contribute to youth participation in a wide range of economic, social and political activities. The paper suggests that equipping youth with ICT skills can have a catalytic effect on innovation and entrepreneurship, contributing to economic development. This can be interpreted to mean that ICT can help bring about positive change, which may result in increased levels of innovation and entrepreneurship. The paper adds that ICT such entrepreneurship is evident on the streets of all African cities in vending kiosks, where young people provide such services as mobile phone cells, the sale of recharge cards and repairs. The proliferation of Internet cafes across the continent has also been a source of employment opportunities for youth.

The issue paper (ADB 2006: 12) discusses Mobile for Good (M4G) in Kenya as an example of how African youth employ ICT to develop social enterprises. M4G is a social franchise project designed to use mobile technology to improve the lives of, predominantly young, people in Kenya. It aims to send essential health, employment and community content via SMS text messages on mobile phones in order 'to inform and empower disadvantaged individuals'. The pilot project, which started in Kibera, an informal settlement, in September 2003, has evolved into a sustainable Kenyan-owned and managed venture. The services that have been developed include: Kazi 560, a job information service for the casual job sector; health tips, which provide daily tips to subscribers about breast cancer, HIV/Aids and diabetes; and a community news service, which provides free, locally sourced news to those living in informal settlements in Kenya via SMS texts.

It is reported that the community news service reaches over 5000 people in Kibera.⁶ The information is collected by a group of 11 youth mobilizers who all live in the community. All the information is designed to promote economic and social development in the communities and to provide a means of accessing information.

From the initiatives above, it can be deduced that ICT projects can be used to increase understanding, for wider information sharing and for networking, entrepreneurship, and so on. Furthermore, the harnessing of ICT by young people can result in innovation.

Gaps in the literature

The impact of ICT can seen in the way in which it enhances our abilities to play active roles in society, or being without ICT constitutes a barrier to that end (Haddon 2000: 389). In this scenario, a person feels like a full member of a community or society, and has the competence to influence both either with or without technology.

Sane (2009: 107) points out that some analysts attribute excessive power to transform society to ICT, while others have declared that ICT does not have the power to change society but simply contributes to a general and widespread movement that is subject to worldwide economic and cultural exchanges. Vatikiosis seems to agree with those who believe that ICT has transformed society. He posits (2004: 8) that new communications technology has fostered new spaces for access and participation, and has created public spaces as arenas for free engagement by citizens in deliberation and public debate. In spite of all the energy being put into establishing connectivity and promoting ICT in Africa, however, in reality there remains much to be done to sensitize and train women, provide hardware and develop appropriate content.

What is clear from the available literature is that participation by women in Africa using ICT will depend critically on where the technologies are located, and that the most efficient and beneficial use of ICT is closely connected to the kind of information produced and distributed, that is, information that directly supports women's activities and responsibilities. There is a need to disaggregate the data on beneficiaries.

ICT can help individuals and groups gain information on how to improve certain aspects of their lives. However, that information should satisfy a number of criteria. It must be relevant to the needs of the users, comprehensible and easily available. This may appear self-evident, but in fact these criteria probably pose the most important obstacles to the wider adoption of ICT in Africa. People should have appropriate, adaptable and widely available ICT at their disposal, in particular women should have access to ICT related to women's information needs.

The two women's community groups in Mathare and Redeemed Village are a good example of how women can use ICT for their own information needs. However, this was a donor-funded project and therefore its sustainability is not assured. There is no literature available to show whether the women have continued the project.

It is important to note that the nature and direction of the development of the information society lacks a basis in the realities of women, especially those who are poor, who do not hold positions of power and are discriminated against due to the mere fact of their being women (Buskens and Webb 2009: 4). The limited documentation of gender issues in relation to the impact of ICT makes it impossible to make the case to policymakers for the inclusion of gender issues in ICT policies, plans and strategies.

Emerging lessons

The information revolution has been touted as a phenomenon that affects everybody and changes people's ways of interaction. The reality is, however, that these changes have bypassed the majority of human kind and in particular the

billions of poor people for whom computers and the Internet are out of reach (Wildermuth 2010: 1). Furthermore, while ICT can be used to enhance people's lives and contribute to their well-being, the effective use of time, economic development, and so on, it can also exacerbate gendered life situations and relationships, and could play a reactionary role (Buskens and Webb 2009: 4).

As is noted above, it is clear from the available literature that access for women in Africa will depend critically on where the technologies are located, while the most efficient and beneficial use of ICT is closely connected to the kind of information produced and distributed, that is, information that directly supports women's activities and responsibilities.

Chadwick (2006: 51) points out that there is lack of studies that explore how social differences in skills shape what young people are able to do when they are online. Despite all the energy being put into establishing connectivity and promoting ICT in Africa, in reality much remains to be done to sensitize and train women, provide hardware and develop appropriate content.

Buskens and Webb (2009) are of the opinion that women in Africa are undeniably participating in the ICT revolution, and they are doing so in many and varied ways. Furthermore, the prospects for the role of ICT in development and women's empowerment seem promising. However, the authors point out that women's stories of their experiences and use of these tools are not being heard; for example, whether their lives are changing for the better because of these new technologies and, if so, in what ways they are changing. Are there areas in which women could and should participate in this ICT revolution but are not because they are women? How can women's perspectives, insights and realities in relation to the use and potential of ICT be integrated into the ICT policies that are currently being developed and implemented across the continent? It is important, therefore, that the task for new information technologies is not only to allow women to gain information, but also to disseminate the information they already possess and generate.

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Notes

- 1 OECD defines Informal settlements as areas where groups of housing units have been constructed on land that the occupants have no legal claim to, or occupy illegally, or unplanned settlements and areas where housing is not in compliance with current planning and building regulations (unauthorized housing). <http://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=1351>
- 2 www.feministafrica.org/index.php/editorial-3 (accessed 22 April 2010).
- 3 See note 1.
- 4 <http://www.unhabitat.org/pmss/listItemDetails.aspx?publicationID=2562> (accessed 9 April 2010).
- 5 <http://www.kimathiinformationcentre.com> (accessed 14 March 2010).
- 6 www.uk.oneworld.net/section/mobile (accessed 30 November 2011).

PART 3

Health and Social Change

Conflicting Paradigms

Challenges to HIV and AIDS Communication, a South African Perspective¹

Eliza Govender²

Abstract

HIV and AIDS has asserted itself as a *global* epidemic, placing an increased demand on strategic HIV and AIDS communication approaches, which encourage prevention, treatment, care and support for those infected and affected by the pandemic. This widespread demand for more effective communication has also highlighted the many conflicting paradigms, which have emerged over the last three decades in addressing HIV and AIDS prevention. Four of the most conflicting paradigms include the debate regarding the shift of mass media interventions to more participatory HIV communication; the question of whether HIV should be addressed from a focus on individual behaviour change or social change communication; from a faith based approach or a secular approach; and finally from a social science or a biomedical perspective for HIV prevention. These debates pose detrimental challenges to the success of HIV and AIDS communication initiatives. Orthodox communication science will review these debates towards setting linear, process-orientated models and frameworks towards addressing the concerns in HIV and AIDS communication and prevention strategies. However, these conflicting paradigms need to be reviewed from a cultural studies perspective which recognises the importance of the self and other, creates a space for a researcher to identify his/her position/solutions in relation to the beneficiaries, allows for interpretation and discussions about how people make sense/meaning of their lived experiences/contexts, and places importance on how people receive, perceive and respond to the various discourses surrounding HIV and AIDS.

Keywords: HIV/AIDS, challenges, communication initiatives, South Africa, conflicting paradigms

Introduction

While HIV and AIDS has asserted itself as a *global* epidemic, Sub-Saharan Africa has struggled the most with the virus, with 1.9 million people becoming newly-infected in 2008 alone, bringing the total of HIV sufferers in the area to an estimated 22.4 million (UNAIDS 2009). South Africa has been especially hard-hit and is home to the largest number of people infected with the virus (UNAIDS 2008; Abdool Karim et.al 2005). This has placed an increased demand on strategic HIV and AIDS communication approaches, which encourage prevention, treatment, care and support for those infected and affected by the pandemic. This widespread demand for more effective communication has also highlighted the many conflicting paradigms, which have emerged over the last three decades in addressing HIV and AIDS prevention³. These conflicting paradigms will be discussed in this chapter with the assumption that addressing some of these debates will start a new dialogue on how to adapt communication strategies to an ever-changing pandemic.

In this chapter, I categorise these challenges to HIV and AIDS communication into four major conflicting paradigms. Rossiter (1977) defines a paradigm as: 'a world view about *how theoretical work* should be done in a particular subject area.' A paradigm, according to Thomas Kuhn (1970), goes through a revolutionary process when numerous anomalous research findings result in the emergence of a new paradigm, which later shows its limitations and the cycle starts again. In addition he suggests that breakdown in intellectual systems arise when old methods cannot solve new problems, which cause a change or revision of theory, which he refers to as a paradigm shift (Hairston 1982).

Hence this chapter is written from the perspective that models and theories will sometimes inform how communication specialists should take a functional, linear or progressive orthodox communication science approach but communication strategies need to give way to interpretation, reception and how context defines HIV and AIDS communication. Therefore this chapter is written from a cultural and media studies framework, which understands the importance of the researcher/communication planner's perspective in relation to the beneficiary/target audiences' social, cultural and psychological position when researching and designing effective HIV and AIDS communication strategies.

Based on the numerous HIV and AIDS communication strategies developed over the years, I argue that there are four easily identifiable conflicting paradigms in HIV and AIDS communication which include the shift of mass media interventions to more participatory HIV communication; the question of whether HIV should be addressed from a focus on individual behaviour change or social change communication; from a faith based approach or a secular approach; and finally from a social science or a biomedical perspective for HIV prevention.

From behaviour change to social change communication

Two dominant schools of thought, behaviour change communication (BCC) and social change communication (SCC), were evident in the way communication strategies were designed in South Africa. BCC was the initial strategic response to promote positive health outcomes, based on proven theories and models of behaviour change, which emerged from psycho-socio and cognitive theories in psychology and was premised on the understanding that people who are given knowledge, will change their attitudes and positively adapt their behavioural practices. It employs a systematic process beginning with formative research and behaviour analysis, followed by communication planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation⁴. Some of the initial communication strategies in South Africa followed this linear, progressive and logical flow models to encourage sexual behaviour change for HIV prevention.

Some of the classical models used for BCC to address individual behaviour included the Health Belief model developed in the early 1950s by Godfrey Hochbaum, based on the premise that one's personal thoughts and feelings control one's actions. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) developed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1980) identified the critical factor to perform a desired behaviour is the intent which reflects the level of commitment that an individual has to undertake a particular behaviour. The stage of change theory recognises behaviour change as a process and suggests that interventions need to be offered at different stages to enact positive behaviour change (McKee et al. 2008). Airhihenbuwa et al (2000: 5) argue that the flaws in the application of commonly used "classical" models in health communication are a result of contextual differences in locations where these models are applied. They propose that HIV and AIDS communication strategies should be flexible enough for application in different regional and cultural contexts (Kunda & Tomaselli 2009). Addressing HIV and AIDS communication from a cultural studies perspective allows for an understanding of how people make sense of their experiences and promotes a communication process which is self-reflective from the researcher and the subjects' perspectives.

Given the limitations of BCC programmes, there was a paradigm shift towards a social change communication approach, arguing that communication responses to HIV and AIDS must take into account the context in which the pandemic is embedded (Cardey 2006). Similarly, Kunda and Tomaselli reiterate that 'effective health communication interventions depend on understanding the knowledge, attitudes and practices of people from given cultural vistas' (2009: 96). They highlight a case in South Africa, where leading a modern urban lifestyle driven by materialism and promiscuity is associated with the HIV virus. Rural communities see HIV as an urban disease, and associate the urban symbols of a "BMW Z3" sports car and the risqué pop music channel "Channel O" with promiscuity and HIV. The concept of social change is important because, while many health promotion programmes assume that behaviour, alone, needs to be changed, in reality, such change is unlikely to be sustainable without incurring some level of social change (UNAIDS 1999: 23; Kalichman and Hospers 1997). Therefore early HIV and AIDS initiatives failed in the African context as they were created

for a Western context, where individualism instead of community orientation was favoured (Airhihenbuwa and Obregon 2006; Rawjee 2002).

Social change communication (SCC) is bound to emerge as the 'panacea' for HIV and AIDS (Chandwani and Gopal 2010) which sees communities as agents of their own change. It emphasises community empowerment which creates an environment of change that is process oriented, that provides a voice for communities and opportunities for dialogue, and which recognizes that individual behaviour change is dependent on social change which is a long term process (Deane 2002: 1). SCC is an integrated approach that encapsulates media, interpersonal communication and advocacy. It shifts from the didactic approach of HIV communication to a more inclusive, participatory approach. One of the prominent participatory and empowerment models developed in the late 1990s was the Communication for Social Change approach/paradigm (CFSC), later known as communication for participatory development (CFPD). CFPD supports processes of community-based decision-making and collective action to make communities more effective and empowered (Gumucio-Dagron and Tufte 2006; Kincaid and Figueroa 2009). However, before participatory models such as CFPD emerged, the development communication field was dominated by mass media approaches, which will be discussed in the next section.

Mass media versus participatory approaches

The early 1960s associated development with 'modernising the traditional' and the transfer of Western ideas and technological advancements to Third World countries (Waisbord 2001; Melkote 2003). This on-going transferal of Western ideas later manifested through modernising the communication channels and responses to health issues such as HIV and AIDS. This discarded the complexities of the pandemic in Third World countries, neglecting the challenges of reaching people in communities and some of the real social and cultural contexts, which influence how HIV prevention is addressed. In the context of HIV and AIDS, individuals were perceived to be in a position to make rational decisions, where communicating safe sexual choices would transform the individual into a modern citizen, aiding the process of communicating HIV prevention. The mass media was perceived to be instrumental in achieving this goal, aimed at individual change in attitudes and behaviour (Servaes 2008: 2; Coulson 2002). An example of a mass media HIV campaign is the loveLife billboard campaign in South Africa, launched in 1999 with the aim of using "youth-focused television and radio programming, magazines and billboards to promote sexual responsibility" (loveLife 2011). However, loveLife was widely regarded as failing to curb HIV and AIDS as it uses branding as an instrument to change behaviour without taking into account significant variances in culture, religion and socio-economic contexts (Jordaan 2006: 111). The branding strategy employed by loveLife proved ineffective as '[...] the representation of the loveLife lifestyle brand has given rise to a brand identity that positions adolescent sexuality as something that is cool and that everyone is engaged in' (Delate 2007: 4).

Image 1. Foreplay billboard⁵**Image 2.** The future poster⁶

As illustrated by loveLife, one of the main criticisms is that the top-down flow of communication lacks an in-depth knowledge of the true challenges facing the people in developing countries (Rogers 1969; Melkote 1991; Servaes 1999) and therefore requires a shift in its focus to local dialogue and participatory communication (Lie 2008: 281). Participatory Communication, commonly associated with the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire, was soon employed as a means of engaging HIV positive people in collective dialogue and to implement initiatives which were empowering and participatory (Freire 1983). For example, Grassroot Soccer (GRS) operating in South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe draws on the popularity of soccer to assist young people in learning about HIV and AIDS in a participatory manner (Grassroot Soccer 2010). Open discussions on HIV and AIDS are encouraged between the young participants and the soccer coaches to 'empower youth through a style of education that fosters self-efficacy and critical and independent thought' (Colucci 2010: 91). The success of GRS is credited to the use of local context, where soccer is one of the most popular sports and pastimes in Africa. It is clear, therefore, that HIV and AIDS messages that are created by 'experts' and then transmitted to the audience in a one-way manner are doomed to fail.

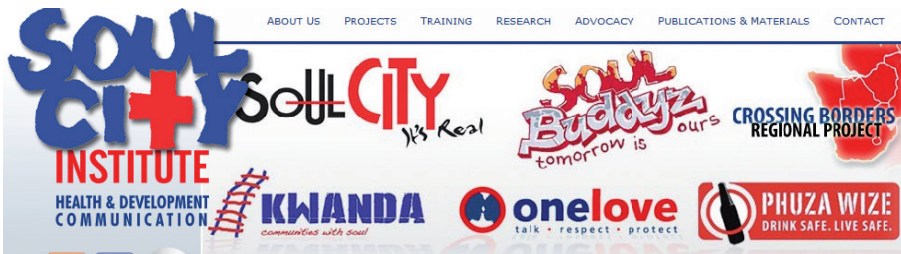
A flagship South African example, of an empowering HIV programme is the Soul City entertainment education initiative, which consists of a long-running

television series and subsidiary support programmes (Soul City 2009). Soul City's work with South Africa's Domestic Violence Act illustrates the importance of partnerships, including direct lobbying of government, community mobilization and media advocacy, which all contributed to bringing the Act to a speedy reality (UNAIDS 2007:14). While the field of development communication tends to be dichotomized along the lines of top-down mass media approaches and participatory communication, these do not necessarily exist on opposite ends of a spectrum (Morris 2005). Soul City has been one of the pioneers in creating a synergy between the mass media and more participatory grassroots approaches (Tufté 2001). For example, the television series has proven to be a conversation stimulant, encouraging families and peer groups to engage in dialogue regarding issues depicted on the series (Gumucio-Dagron 2001).

Image 3. Soul City TV Series⁷



Image 4. Soul City Multimedia Campaign⁸



One of the factors contributing to Soul City's success was its use of partnerships. Caroline Halmshaw and Kate Hawkins (2004) argue that it is imperative that local community organisations are engaged as partners since their involvement plays a major role in ensuring that local context is considered when addressing HIV and AIDS. While donors are responsible for providing the important funds, and government often plays a central role in disbursing these funds, it is the local NGOs and civil society at large that directly use these funds to address

health issues. Central to the success of effective HIV and AIDS communication interventions now lie in the sincerity and collaboration of partners. One of the stakeholders that are often included in HIV/AIDS partnerships are faith-based organisations. The approach of these organisations is now explored in comparison to more secular approaches.

Faith versus secular approaches

For many years, international development has largely been dominated by 'secular,' also known as 'public,' agents of development, keeping faith related matters strictly in the so-called 'private' domains (UNFPA: 2009). However in the last decade, synergies between 'private' and 'public' interventions for HIV prevention have been increasingly advocated. A secular approach to HIV prevention, which was extensively used since the first case of AIDS in the early 1980's, tries to offer young people the widest range of choices for safe sexual practices. Religion can also play an influential role in HIV prevention in Africa, since over 80% of the people conform to some religious belief (Velayati et al 2007: 491). While there is a strong presence of religion on the continent, Faith-based Organizations (FBOs) have been relatively less involved in HIV prevention in the early 1980s but their involvement in a few countries appears to have had significant impact in reducing transmission rates (Green 2004: 5). Professor Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala, an anthropologist at the University of Natal, says when compared to other African countries that have taken a more proactive approach, South Africa has been slow to catch on with faith-based groups⁹. Dr Kevin De Cock, Director of the World Health Organisations (WHO's) Department of HIV/AIDS says 'Faith-based organizations are a vital part of civil society, since they provide a substantial portion of care in developing countries, often reaching vulnerable populations living under adverse conditions, FBOs must be recognized as essential contributors towards universal access efforts.¹⁰ South Africa needs to draw on the synergies between the 'public' and 'private' approaches towards addressing the soaring HIV transmission rates.'

Bradley (2009) suggests that a FBO has faith embedded into the organizational structures to produce a diversity of approaches for igniting positive change. In this light 'faith acts as a platform for close partnerships at the community level' and may also assist to identify and understand how development happens (ibid:103). However, while religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam play a pivotal role in society, they tend to take a stance of 'conservative innovation' where their roles as gatekeepers of morality and religion take pre-eminence over the changing behavioural patterns of the communities (2005: 484).

A report compiled for 21 different studies done on abstinence-based education programs found that in 16 of the 21 reports there were significant positive results in delaying early sexual activity (Kim and Rector 2008). Messages of abstinence were more successful for some faiths than others and strategies may be more or less appropriate for different faiths, depending on the ability of that faith to

make the members commit to change in behaviour and support for the activity in the community (Dawad 2005). While communication strategies are now incorporating more holistic approaches to HIV and AIDS communication, not all FBO interventions are successful. The Bearman and Brückner study in 2001 found that people who pledged virginity for religious reasons deferred age of first intercourse only an average of 18 months in comparison to non-pledgers. While FBOs have a significant role to play, empirical data demonstrates that abstinence programmes may not be working.

One of the possible reasons why abstinence programmes are failing is because they tend to adopt a very didactic approach to HIV prevention. Programmes facilitated by the US government under the Bush administration also worked with an 'abstinence, be faithful' framework and often criticized for their conservative religious approach to HIV prevention, which advocates 'abstinence-only education'. Since 1982, more than US\$1 billion have been spent on federally sponsored abstinence-only-until-marriage (AOUM) programmes and still no significant decrease in HIV and AIDS transmission can be reported (McClelland & Fine 2008). Some studies found evident attitudinal shifts suggesting that AOUM programmes were 'effective' in reducing or delaying sexual initiation (Borawski et al 2005; Doniger et al 2001; Mann et al 2000). However McClelland and Fine advocate that this 'symbolic change' (attitudinal) is misinterpreted by policy makers as if it were instrumental (Behavioural) change (2008: 71).

The McClelland and Fine (2008) study found that when evaluations are overly embedded, they tend to (a) be dominated by political ideologies, (b) limit the potential for disagreement, (c) omit crucial information, and (d) reinforce existing policies and practices rather than critically investigating new ones (2008: 70-71). While the religious values embedded in how organisations select and develop their programmes can contribute to the success or failure of campaigns, donor and stakeholder agency also have a central role to play. Dutta (2006) examines the very top-down approach in which interventions are developed where the location of agency lies predominantly with the donors, who impose their Western values and ideologies instead of providing a space for the beneficiaries of the project. Dutta poses the need to promote the beneficiaries' voices where alternate definitions of their problems are identified through a process of dialogue. This process of dialogue is valued by the social sciences, which play an important role in HIV prevention. However, the following section will discuss how social science approaches are increasingly being ignored in comparison to biomedical solutions to HIV.

Social science versus biomedical approaches to HIV and AIDS

The last decade has seen a significant focus on the relevance of biomedical solutions to HIV prevention, which in turn has undermined the importance of social science interventions and the role of communication in general. The

biomedical approaches addressed HIV and AIDS exclusively from a medical perspective, not fully recognising the support human and cultural interests can play in addressing AIDS. They further focus on the individual as the locus of a disease, and by default, of the intervention (Singhal and Rogers 2003: 208). The international AIDS conferences in the late 1990s saw an increased focus on the need for treatment and more biomedical interventions, with the 1996 Vancouver conference focused on the triple cocktail drug¹¹ and the 2000 AIDS Conference in Durban focused on providing anti-retroviral drugs to HIV positive citizens (Singhal and Rogers 2003: 389). However, most countries were still slow and sceptical to pursue medical interventions despite the extensive treatment mobilization through international conferences and campaigns.

Many conflicting discourses emerged during the time of the AZT (azidothymidine) roll out. The roll out of AZT in South Africa, in particular, was more problematic during the time of President Mbeki's governance where he argued that HIV does not lead to AIDS. Encapsulated within the fight for treatment, was the need to address AIDS denialism from the office of Mbeki, vegetable cures from the Health Minister, Manto Shabalala-Tsimang and misinformation from deputy president Jacob Zuma (now President) about taking a shower to be cleansed of AIDS. As a result, the communication efforts to address HIV prevention were more than a fight against AIDS, "but a battle against bigotry, fear, denial and ignorance" (Singhal and Rogers 2003: 388).

The opinions of Sawers and Stillwaggon (2010), two United States economists, reveal that HIV and AIDS is still largely a biomedical problem. Sawers and Stillwaggon argue that concurrency is not, as most believe, a major factor contributing to the HIV epidemic in Africa. They suggest that similar levels of sexual concurrency exist in Western countries and therefore argue that the deep effects of HIV in Africa are related to

[...] blood exposures, such as unsterilized syringes, other invasive medical and dental procedures, circumcision [either in a medical setting or elsewhere], treatment by informal injectionists, tattooing, sharing of hairdressing equipment, therapeutic bloodletting and so on. Many forms of blood exposure are far more efficient at transmitting HIV than most heterosexual behaviours' (Sawers and Stillwaggon 2010: 18).

As a result, they believe that 'until now, the obsession over sexual behaviour [...] has blocked efforts to understand the HIV epidemics in sub-Saharan Africa and to devise effective prevention programmes.' (ibid. 2010: 19). Their argument is strongly premised on medical factors which cause exposure to the virus and in my opinion, associates the underdeveloped nature of many African countries with an inability to offer proper medical facilities and care. Sawers and Stillwaggon's argument therefore trivialises sexual behaviour as a contributing factor to the vast spread of HIV in Africa, and emphasizes a biomedical perspective without recognizing the complexities of culture and context.

So how does one reach the larger population that is a highly sexually active group of people, and those who do not adhere to safer sexual practices? Com-

munication and social science interventions are the only source of this information. The social science initiatives support the biomedical paradigm and vice versa. Furthermore, Singhal and Rogers (2003) reiterate that AIDS has no medical cure, and should a vaccine be developed in the next decade, it will only lower the viral load count and not combat AIDS, therefore the epidemic needs to be approached as more than just a medical problem.

Funders are geared towards attaining measurable objectives and funding outcomes. The biomedical focus is often adopted because it favours number counting, where HIV prevention or assistance from donor aid is measurable. International funders, for example, are able to count the number of people who have been tested for HIV, or who have been put on treatment. Social science initiatives, on the other hand, that aim to educate people or change their attitudes, are much more difficult to measure or to numerically evaluate. Since biomedical initiatives are easier to measure they also often gain more exposure and publicity. For example, one of the prominent biomedical prevention measures has been microbicides that have been used in a vaginal gel that prevents the sexual transmission of HIV by either killing the virus or blocking its entry into target cells. The Centre For The AIDS Programme of Research in South Africa CAPRISA 004 trial provided the first evidence that the antiretroviral vaginal gel called Tenofovir can prevent HIV infection in women (Abdool Karim and Baxter 2010). According to Salim Abdool Karim, one of the leading co-researchers on the project, 'We showed a 39% lower incidence of HIV in the tenofovir group' (cited in Brett 2010). The CAPRISA 004 trial was conducted with 889 women from rural and urban areas in South Africa, and proved for the first time that a microbicidal vaginal gel could help prevent HIV (Abdool Karim and Baxter 2010).

Tenofovir vaginal gel is intended as a secondary barrier of protection and not the primary preventive measure. While a 39% success rate is a breakthrough, this biomedical intervention cannot be used as a primary preventive instead more focus needs to be placed on the behavioural and social preventive measures which place abstinence, delayed sexual debut, commitment to one partner and condom usage as key primary preventive approaches, beyond the simple solution of applying a gel solution to a complex problem. These negotiations and dialogue can only be facilitated within a context of relevance, where there is a distinct understanding that HIV and AIDS is a social condition first, before a medical problem.

Similarly, male circumcision has gained tremendous exposure as another HIV preventive mechanism (Quest 2010) with the removal of the foreskin reducing the contraction of the virus by up to 60% according to trials conducted in South Africa in 2002, 2003 and 2005 (Addanki et al 2008). While this biomedical approach can be accredited for its 60% success rate in reducing the risk of HIV transmission, male circumcision as a primary preventive measure cannot work alone. In a study by Lagarde et al (2003), 9% of circumcised and 7% of uncircumcised men in the study reported that they believed circumcised men do not need to wear condoms and suggested that circumcised men can safely have sex with many women. The lack of correct information in this case nullifies

any medical preventive measure without the support of effective communication and education strategies. Medical and social interventions therefore need to work together rather than in opposition. According to Lundstrom, 'the biomedical model and the social humanistic perspective are complementary approaches' in health care and interventions, where the biomedical role is crucial in specific disease identification and the social humanistic perspective on the ability to act (Lundstrom 2008: 395).

Biomedical measures for HIV prevention provide the foundation from which to administer ideal preventative strategies, while social sciences ensure that on-going research is produced which reflects the real life experiences of people exposed to HIV transmission, thus plotting the field for biomedical initiatives. Social scientists unravel the economic, cultural and social conditions, which make accessibility, adherence and consistency with biomedical interventions a challenge or a success. HIV and AIDS needs to be seen as a 'Bio-Psycho-Social problem' and needs to be understood at all three levels: 'biomedical, psychological and social' (Campbell and Williams 1999: 1632).

Conflicting paradigms – the need for context

Orthodox communication science will review the above debates through linear, process-orientated models and frameworks towards addressing the concerns in HIV and AIDS communication and prevention strategies. However, these conflicting paradigms need to be reviewed from a cultural studies perspective which recognises the importance of the self and other, creates a space for a researcher to identify his/her position and solutions in relation to the beneficiaries, allows for interpretation and discussions about how people make sense/meaning of their lived experiences/contexts, and places importance on how people receive, perceive and respond to the various discourses surrounding HIV and AIDS.

The purpose of exploring these debates is not to create rigid categories, but instead to bring to the forefront some of the discourses emerging in HIV and AIDS communication. The various discourses surrounding HIV and AIDS communication suggests that each organisation needs to introduce context specific communication programmes for HIV prevention which reflects the common challenges and lived experiences in a particular community. UNAIDS (1999) makes a plea for a new context-based direction for communication and proposes five domains of contexts which include government policy, socioeconomic status, culture, gender relations and spirituality. The case of South Africa demonstrates the need to recognise the importance of context specific approaches for HIV prevention strategies. Amidst many conceptual factors, which influence the silencing of the African voice, the context of programme and message design needs to be renegotiated.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the main debates or key paradigms that have emerged in the field of HIV and AIDS communication. One of the main debates regarding the use of mass media versus participatory HIV communication highlights that while the mass media approach tends to favour the use of top-down communication, participatory approaches, on the other hand, recognise the importance of directly involving people in the communication process, so that their backgrounds and contexts can be considered. Similarly, social change communication suggests that the social environment and specific context also need to be considered when designing HIV and AIDS messages, while behaviour change communication assumed that people would change their individual behaviours if they were provided with adequate information. The importance of context also appears in the faith versus secular debate. Using a religious or faith-based approach can be effective, especially in Africa where religion plays an influential role in society. However, as is clear from the failure of many abstinence-only programmes, a faith-based approach can also prove to be highly ineffective if it does not consider the beneficiaries' social contexts. The question of whether to address the HIV and AIDS pandemic from a biomedical or a social science perspective also suggests the importance of context. Although it is vital that biomedical solutions are continually researched, these solutions can never succeed without support from the social sciences. The biomedical approach addresses HIV and AIDS from a uniform medical perspective, thus social science approaches are needed to ensure that people's specific situations and backgrounds are taken into consideration because HIV and AIDS will never just be a medical problem – it will always be affected by larger socio-cultural issues. In essence, Tomaselli (2011) argues that scientific methods vary across paradigmatic constituencies. The biomedical paradigm offers technical solutions such as male circumcision, antiretroviral treatment and condom use which can all be counted and measured, but these figures carry no significance in social contexts where the real question is what are people doing with these interventions? (Ibid: 2). Whereas these four conflicting paradigms have highlighted the importance of context, and the need for adaptability in HIV and AIDS communication, of crucial importance for the next decade of communication, is the need to recognise and apply the importance of interpretation and how people make sense and give meaning to this ever changing pandemic.

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Notes

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- 2 Disclaimer: The opinions expressed herein are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development.
- 3 Treatment and care and support are not explored in this chapter
- 4 http://www.globalhealthcommunication.org/strategies/behavior_change_communication
- 5 <http://www.lovelife.org.za/what/posters/future%201.jpg>
- 6 <http://www.lovelife.org.za/what/posters/foreplay%201.jpg>
- 7 <http://www.soulcity.org.za/>
- 8 <http://www.soulcity.org.za/>
- 9 <http://www.health-e.org.za/news/article.php?uid=20030503>
- 10 <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/notes/2007/np05/en/index.html> accessed on 10 July 2009
- 11 "The triple-cocktail treatment for HIV involves taking three different drugs to combat the infection. These medications are two nucleoside analog drugs, such as AZT and 3TC, and a protease inhibitor, such as Crixivan. The drugs drastically reduce the concentration of virus in the bloodstream to undetectable levels by affecting enzymes in the virus itself." Accessed on 9 March 2011 from http://people.brandeis.edu/~ssis/sti/triple_cocktail_treatment.html

Involving Youth in Peer Education

Message Deliverers or Agents of Change?

Line Friberg Nielsen & Mille Schütten

Abstract

Many of today's development projects that address social and behavioural barriers to development use *participation* as a 'change strategy'. But what do we mean by participation, and is participation all that it takes to create change?

Peer education is a popular choice of method for turning a target group into active participants in their own change process. This chapter, however, argues that participation in itself does not create change. Rather, the potential for change depends on how participation is understood and applied, and on how participants, both implementers of a change process *and* members of the target group, communicate, engage and relate. The chapter is based on research conducted in 2003, as part of a master's degree thesis in Communication Studies at Roskilde University. The unit of analysis is an HIV/Aids prevention project in the town of Mbarara in central Uganda that involved local youth as peer educators. At the time, the project was in its initial phase of implementation. The case is used to illustrate the barriers to *horizontal dialogue* between implementers and involved members of a target group, as well as ways to overcome such barriers. The definition of horizontal dialogue applied is developed using mainly the writings of Paulo Freire and Jürgen Habermas.

Keywords: youth, peer education, dialogue, participation, Uganda, Jürgen Habermas, Paulo Freire

Participation in a paradigmatic context

Peer education has long been one of the most used strategies for addressing the HIV/Aids pandemic in developing countries. It is used especially to reach young people with risky sexual behaviours, through their peers. Peer education is widely regarded as a cost-effective programme strategy, in that it typically relies on volunteers, and because the active involvement of members of a particular

group provides unique and effective access to that group (Turner and Shepherd 1999: 235-247).

However, it is increasingly argued that if the aim is to change behaviour and practices, the nature of the participants' participation, their degree of empowerment and the extent of their ownership of the process are what will determine whether sustainable change happens (Sen and Batliwala 2000: 19; Wallerstein 1993: 219; Communication for Social Change Consortium 2004).

The variety of approaches to participation broadly reflect two different orientations in what is commonly known as development communication: the modernization paradigm and the critical paradigm (Servaes 1989: 2). In the critical paradigm, *participation* by the target group is a goal in itself, and the objective is their empowerment and ownership, empowerment being the process by which people gain greater control over the circumstances of their lives (Sen and Batliwala 2000: 19; Wallerstein 1993: 219). In a development project context, members of a target group are involved through active participation, treated as an equal partner in the definition of problems and solutions in the planning phase, and have decision-making powers in the implementation process. The objective of participation in the critical paradigm is change at the social and systemic levels, through the collective action of local participants (Rifkin 2000: 29; Yoon 2000: 4).

In the modernization paradigm, and in the context of a development project, *participation* is considered a project approach. It is regarded as the means to achieve the objective of the project, for example, to gain insight into the problems and ideas of the target group, in order to develop an effective project strategy (Huesca 1994: 11; Rifkin and Pridmore 2001: 11). In the modernization paradigm, empowerment is defined as an *individual* experience of increased psychological self-confidence (Boyce 2001; Iversen et al. 2002; Laverack and Wallerstein 2001).

The critical paradigm sees individual behaviour as the result of complex societal situations, social issues and socio-economic factors, and less as a result of a lack of knowledge. Social change implies change at the systemic levels: local, regional, institutional and political. In the context of communication approaches to HIV/Aids prevention, the critical paradigm advocates long-term interventions, with a view to changing deep-rooted causes of particular behavioural patterns (Waisbord 2000: 11; Figueroa et al. 2002: 3). Conversely, the modernization paradigm represents the behavioural – or persuasive – communication approach (Figueroa et al. 2002: 3), often referred to as Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) (UNFPA et al. 2001). The modernization paradigm largely subscribes to an understanding of behavioural patterns as something that can be changed through increased awareness of risk factors, and through the transfer of information.

While the presentation of a simplistic paradigmatic dichotomy facilitates an understanding of the two different ends of a spectrum, programmes and projects do not necessarily position themselves clearly in terms of their perception and application of participatory methods. So what does the participation of young volunteers in a peer education project actually look like? What difference does it make how participation is understood and applied by project designers and project managers?

In 2003, we went to the small town of Mbarara in Uganda to explore the application of participation in an HIV/Aids prevention project involving youth as peer educators. The project was run by the Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU) in partnership with the Danish Family Planning Association (DFPA).

Being young in an African transit town

The town of Mbarara is four hours north of Kampala and eight hours from the border with Rwanda in the south. Mbarara is situated on the highway between the east coast of Africa and Central and Southern Africa, and traders and truckers pass through the town every day at all hours. It is a transit town, with an unsettled atmosphere. Many youth migrate to the town from small villages on the outskirts of Mbarara, looking for work. The youths in Mbarara are poor and have limited access to education. Formal sector employment is scarce, leaving the vast majority of the youth with no source of income. Unable to pursue independent and sustainable livelihoods, they remain dependent on their families, becoming 'dependent children', despite the fact that most are in their late teens or early twenties. Many of them are drawn on to the streets, where they engage in various menial activities. The lucky among the young girls wait tables at bars or work as hairdressers, and the young men work as motorcycle chauffeurs, barbers, shoe shiners or street vendors of various low value items. Their involvement in these types of 'transient' trades gives the youths a low status in society: as one young girl from Mbarara put it, they are perceived as if 'they were nothing'. It is in this idle environment that the youths enter adolescence, develop their personalities and have their first sexual experiences.

There is very limited access to pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease (STD) prevention in Mbarara. Teenage pregnancies, unsafe abortions and STD infections, including HIV/Aids, are common. This situation is only exacerbated by the traders and truck drivers who pass through the town, presenting opportunities to generate a little income through transactional sex. Both boys and girls engage in this hidden economy, and those who are not participating themselves are faced with and affected by the sexual practices that the situation encourages: ill-informed, driven by opportunism and high risk (DFPA 2004a: 8; RHU and DFPA, undated: 1).

Felicity¹, a young girl we interviewed in Mbarara, was the oldest of her siblings and had been fortunate enough to attend school for a couple of years beyond the basic primary education level. While the national level of poverty in Uganda has fallen in recent years, the situation in 2003 was such that a family in Uganda could not afford to give more than one or two of their children an education. However, an education would not take an average young person in Mbarara much further than a local job, the salary from which would go to support the financing of younger relatives' food and education. It was virtually impossible for a young person in Mbarara to find a way out of dependency on financial support from a family, or of the obligation to hand over any money earned to

the family economy. Felicity's situation was a reflection of these conditions. She wanted to go back to school, but without money to pay for it she worked as a hairdresser instead. Her job meant that she would spend most of her time in the city centre, away from her family, and close to other income-generating activities such as transactional sex with the men who passed through town. She was surrounded by young people in the same situation, and as much as they all provided a support network for each other, they were also showing each other alternative ways to get by. We met Felicity at the youth centre in Mbarara – the physical location of the peer education project that we were studying. The youth centre was also the meeting place for the peer educators in the Mbarara HIV/Aids prevention project, as well as other young people from the area. Felicity was one of the many vulnerable young people in Mbarara the HIV/Aids prevention peer education project was targeting.

The case study: HIV/Aids prevention through peer education

The objective of the HIV/Aids project was to reduce the prevalence and incidence of HIV/Aids among youths aged 10 to 24 in Mbarara, within a timeframe of 2003 to 2008. More specifically, the project aimed to increase the number of youths practicing in safe sex and using Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services.² The project was implemented from a youth centre that also housed a clinic for voluntary counselling and testing for STDs, including HIV/Aids. It had rooms for various youth activities and offices for project staff. Project officers were recruited to implement the activities, monitor progress and achieve the planned outcomes.

At the core of the project approach was peer education as a vehicle for behaviour change, and Felicity was one of the many young volunteer peer educators. About 30 peer educators were identified and trained in adolescent SRH, especially how to prevent HIV/Aids, and how to pass on information to peers.

The peer educators were all transient traders who had completed at least a primary school education. Their voluntary participation meant that they were not paid for the work that they were doing as part of the project. However, they were provided with a small allowance to cover transport costs and food for when they went to educate their peers, sometimes in remote areas, and for participating in meetings at the youth centre.

The units of analysis

Based on our wish to explore the application of 'participation' in the project, we focused on what we determined to be the two key *units of analysis* (Yin 2003: 23): (a) the project design, as explained in the project documents as well as interviews with the project manager from the DFPA; and (b) the participation

of the peer educators in the project on the ground, as seen in the dialogical encounters between project staff and peer educators.

For the analysis of the dialogical encounters between project staff and peer educators, we deconstructed the concept of *dialogue* using mainly the writings of Paulo Freire and Jürgen Habermas. In short, the deconstruction provided us with a conceptual framework consisting of three key operational parameters for what defines dialogue: (a) relationship; (b) interaction; and (c) the outcome of the relationship and the interaction. We return to this below.

Inspired by the *bricolage* approach to qualitative enquiry (Kincheloe 2001: 681), which recognizes the complexity of the research act and the limitations of using a single method of exploring social objects, we employed multiple methods for our analysis: document analysis, interviews and observations. We triangulated our data, with the aim of strengthening the validity of the research (Denzin 1989: 234-247).

Project design: Reflections of paradigms

Our review of the initial proposal documents for project funding revealed a mix of more or less explicit references to both paradigms. The modernization paradigm was reflected in three key features of the project design.

First, in the project proposal document, HIV/Aids is presented primarily as the result of a lack of knowledge of ways to prevent it, and the solution is the transfer and distribution of knowledge to individuals. There are explicit references to behaviour change communication (BCC), which, as explained, represents the modernisation paradigm (Project Proposal 2004: 2). Second, the main *strategy* to prevent HIV/Aids among the target group is peer education, based on the rationale that messages are best adopted when passed on from and to members of the same social and age group.

Third, although the project documents mention participation, it is sporadic and mainly in relation to setting up the project rather than the implementation process. Peer education is also mostly referenced as a means to achieve its results: '...the active involvement of young people in information work through the use of peer educators' (DFPA 2004a: 20); and 'youth participation is crucial to the success of the project' (RHU 2004: 4) – the latter stated in the context of the monthly peer educator meetings and the establishment of a Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) as events in which project management and peer educators can discuss progress and the actions to be taken. There are no goals or indicators related to participation.

The project documents also had references to the critical paradigm. First, according to the project proposal (the application for funding), as well as the inception reports made by an external consultant, local youths took part in several planning workshops, just as they participated in the baseline survey. The project design was therefore informed by the local youths' articulation of their situation and their vulnerability to HIV/Aids. However, the documents suggest that the youths were not asked about how they perceived the reasons for their vulnerability or the solutions to their problems.

Second, the project design included structured events for dialogue between project staff and the peer educators: the YAC meetings and the monthly peer educators' meetings. The objective of the YAC was to: 'influence and increase youth involvement in the information and communication activities and propose plans to increase youth involvement in the youth centre and the project' (DFPA 2004a: 17, 15), as well as to supply 'inputs and ideas for various project activities, especially at the youth centre' (DFPA 2004b: 13). The peer educators' meetings are described as the venue for discussing progress and planning for the following month (DFPA 2004a: 32). These meetings should be organized in a 'participatory' way, based on training the Mbarara staff in participatory methods, or 'participatory monitoring and evaluation' (DFPA 2004a: 20, 28). The material from this training describes participatory monitoring and evaluation as a learning process involving action and reflection processes (DFPA and RHU 2005), concepts that carry strong references to the critical paradigm.

A project design that references both paradigms raises questions about the implementation of the project on the ground and the nature of the peer educators' participation. We set out to explore the barriers to and enabling factors for equal dialogue between peer educators and project implementers, while recognizing that an equal dialogue per se was not explicitly planned for by the organizations behind the project.

Deconstructing and defining dialogue

Returning briefly to our deconstruction of dialogue, we gathered multiple theoretical perspectives on the concept, from contributors such as Paolo Freire, Jürgen Habermas, Orlando Fals-Borda, Luis Ramiro Beltran and Diaz-Bordenave. Freire and Habermas became the two key contributors to our deconstruction, and we focus on them in this chapter.

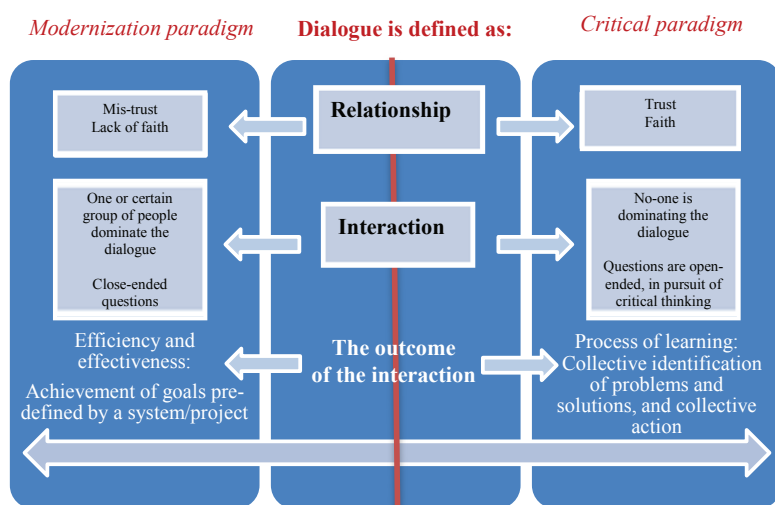
Paulo Freire introduced the concept of *horizontal* dialogue. In the early 1960s, Freire began to articulate education as a tool for liberation from the oppression of the elite. Instead of teachers placing ready-made information in the minds of the students, Freire argued that teachers and students should pursue new knowledge collectively through a horizontal dialogue (Huesca 1994: 6).

Both Paulo Freire and Jürgen Habermas operate with dichotomies: Habermas with a 'system-world' versus 'life-world' view; and Freire with a more personalized dichotomy of 'the oppressors' and 'the oppressed' (Freire 1993). We found useful 'non-horizontal' characteristics in Habermas's description of the 'system-world' and Freire's language of oppression. To Freire, vertical dialogue is characterized by distrust, and a one-way depositing of knowledge into others. Habermas's 'purposive-rational orientation' describes how people in a system-world seek to influence or persuade each other in a dialogue, rather than seek common ground. We took from this a horizontal/non-horizontal dichotomy.

From our three key operational parameters for what defines dialogue mentioned above, we developed a definition of horizontal dialogue as: 'an equal

and committed relationship between partners; a relationship established through interaction characterized by mutual learning and understanding, with agreement and collective action as outcomes'. Equally, we defined non-horizontal dialogue as: 'an unequal relationship: a relationship established through interaction characterized by a depositing and an uncritical reception of knowledge, with one-sided decision-making as the outcome'. These definitions of horizontal and non-horizontal dialogue can be linked to the paradigmatic dichotomy presented above (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Horizontal and non-horizontal dialogue in a paradigmatic context



It was in the dialogical encounters that we would be able to observe and analyse the nature of the dialogue taking place between project staff and peer educators. In the terminology that we developed, we referred to these encounters as *dialogical structures*. In this project, the dialogical structures were the monthly peer educators' meetings and the YAC meetings.

According to our theoretical deconstruction, the horizontal relationship is characterized by solidarity, empathy and mutual trust. In the context of a development project, it is a relationship in which the development agent and the local population both have faith in the local population's ability to create change. It is an equal relationship – subject to subject (Freire 2005b: 40-42). Similarly, solidarity is the key element in Habermas's understanding of the horizontal relationship – concern for the well-being of both fellow human beings and the community at large (Habermas 1987b: 141).

The non-horizontal relationship, on the other hand, is a vertical and thus asymmetrical subject-object relationship, characterized by arrogance and mistrust

(Freire 1993: 72). The development agent is paternalistic, and issues 'orders' to a submissive and dependent local population. The non-horizontal relationship is dominated by money and power, which, in Habermas's terminology, are the main characteristics of 'the system' (Habermas 1990: 135).

The second dimension is the interaction between the stakeholders. In Freire's universe, horizontal interaction is the process of learning about the world and our relation to it. It is a process of 'critical learning', or *conscientização*. The aim of *conscientização* is for stakeholders to identify forms of power and oppression. Freire argues that once people understand the world, its problems, the causal links and the challenges, they will recognize how to respond and thus be able to act (Huesca 1994: 9). Both Habermas and Freire believe that an open dialogical space, in which all participants can freely express their thoughts and feelings, is the key to creating social change. In the open dialogical space, the system can be critically examined, and changed, on the premises of the oppressed (Freire 2005a: 21).

Freire stressed that people in an oppressive culture or context are not aware that they can transform it, that is, they do not see themselves as agents of change. Freire called this 'naive consciousness', and argued that participants should be facilitated in understanding what surrounds them, for them to realize that they have a voice and to exercise their right to participate consciously in the change process (Freire 1993: 85).

In our theoretical framework, non-horizontal dialogue is defined by a type of predetermined goal-orientation, derived from Habermas's theory of 'communicative action' and Freire's concept of 'banking education'. In a non-horizontal interaction, utterances are directive statements oriented towards motivating compliance (Jacobsen, undated: 11).

Looking at our theoretical deconstruction, agreement and collective action are the outcomes of horizontal dialogue (Fals Borda 1991a: 146, 149; Freire 2005b: 37-51; Habermas 1987: 287). Collective action means collectively reaching an agreement through unforced consensus, drawing up an action plan and carrying it out accordingly (Freire 1972). Through collective action, the oppressive society is transformed (Freire 1998b: 10). Decisions should arise from a synthesis of knowledge between the participants and the facilitator, but should ideally reflect the concerns of the oppressed (Fals Borda 1988: 94). The non-horizontal outcome is, in the words of Habermas, compliance with how the system operates. It is a continuation of the system as it is, driven by the wish to preserve rather than transform. Similarly, in Freire's words, the outcome is that the oppressed remain oppressed. Whereas the outcome of horizontal interaction is collectively steered, the outcome of the non-horizontal interaction is steered by one of two sides.

In order to explore the dialogue between peer educators and project staff, we spent four months in Mbarara in 2003. We were at the youth centre almost every day, engaging with the project staff and the peer educators, using interviews and observations to explore how they related and interacted, and how decisions were made.

The dialogue on the ground

It was through in-depth interviews and observations that we were able to understand the relationship between the peer educators and the project staff, as well as their interactions and the outcomes of their interactions. We interviewed eight peer educators, three YAC members and the three project staff, and we observed all the meetings that took place while we were there.

One of our first observations was that the peer educators were divided into two groups: an inner and an outer circle, that is, more versus less popular and influential within the overall group of youths at the centre. The division was not one that the youths themselves formed, nor was it imposed formally upon them by the project. Rather, it was an informal division that had emerged within the sphere of the project. There was a correlation between belonging to the inner circle and level of education/ability to speak English and living in the city close to the youth centre, as opposed to having very limited education, very little money and living in a remote area outside the city. Almost all the YAC members were in the inner circle. This division appeared to create mistrust and conflict among the youths.

We also discovered that, while the aim of the YAC meetings was to address overall issues, the meetings were used by project staff to retrieve performance information about the other peer educators. As one male member of the committee put it: 'We monitor and bring reports to the administration so that if a person who dodged [did not carry out his or her duties as a peer educator] one time also dodges again, we know he has a wrong character and should leave that activity completely, and do other activities instead'. This performance monitoring exacerbated the mistrust among the peer educators, as some peer educators perceived the YAC members as spies. As much as the idea of the YAC was to be a representative body, it effectively created a divide among the peer educators. Using Freire, distrust is the natural consequence of a vertical relationship in which some dominate others (Freire 1993: 72). The YAC members also perceived themselves as leaders, and expressed stronger solidarity with the project staff than the peer educators. Similarly, the project staff distinguished between an inner and outer circle of peer educators. As the main project officer put it: 'How do you compare the two? This one [the regular peer educator] is working for money, while this one [the YAC member] is saying "I can do it even without the money."'

The project staff did not address the division between the peer educators, or seek to bridge gaps. They did not address the patterns of submission and dependence emerged. Habermas would refer to this as a strategy of system-regulation of social actions (Habermas 1987a and b), while Freire would label it an oppressive strategy, in that the group was divided and some were put in a position to rule over others (Freire 1972: 127).

Relationship: 'Every family needs a head'

The peer educators constructed their project identities from their instrumental functions. As one, highly representative of the group, observed: '[My role] is to tell my fellow peers, first of all to know about their health and the role of the Family Planning Association of Uganda³ [. . .] Spread the gospel of our project'. In Habermas's and Freire's 'system' thinking, the peer educators construct their identities according to the 'work-division' and the functions imposed by the system. They see themselves as message deliverers not on behalf of themselves, but on behalf of something external to them – the project and the organization. The opposite, and Freire's and Habermas's ideal, is that they should articulate themselves as empowered agents of their own change process.

The relationship between the peer educators and the staff could best be described as a paternalistic relationship. As one YAC member explained, 'Every family needs a head' or, as another put it, 'You come to your Dad and you say "Dad, I want this, I want [food]". And he says "you want [food], ok, here is money, go and buy". That's what we do in the project. [. . .] That's the kind of relationship we have'. The father-child analogy was used by several peer educators. The issues discussed at the peer educator meetings were mainly related to the allowance and the work-related mobile phone credit, both characteristics of Habermas's 'system'. It was only on one or two occasions that we witnessed peer educators bring up issues related to what they had experienced while peer educating. As one of the male peer educators put it: 'the most important purpose of the meetings is filling out reports'. In other words, using Habermas, the purpose of the meetings is to comply with the system. During the peer educator meetings, the staff distributed reporting formats for them to fill in, which asked questions about how many youths they had talked to, how many condoms had been distributed, and so on. The reporting information was then collated by the project staff and forwarded to DFPA and RHU, who would use it to develop reports for the donors.

In a horizontal dialogue, trust is an essential prerequisite if an open dialogue is to take place. As much as the monetary allowance for the peer educators' work was recognized as a necessity, and the peer educators would not have been able to do their work without it, it also caused mistrust. Inner circle peer educators and some of the staff suspected outer circle peer educators of being in the project for the allowance alone, and that they did not take their responsibilities seriously. The project officer articulated a suspicion that some of the peer educators were sharing information because they thought that perhaps they would get money in exchange, or other kinds of advantages: 'There are reasons why people communicate. Somebody may choose to communicate with me, bring me information, with the purpose of getting certain, maybe benefits or whatever, or maybe, to stay close to me'. The project officer expressed fear of what Habermas calls concealed strategic communication – thinking that peer educators might expect to be given some material goods, or just seek to achieve their own personal objectives. The outer circle peer educators felt the mistrust

that they were exposed to. Simone, one of the peer educators, was sure that when she spoke up about problems, the staff saw her as a 'problem child', and would punish her by not selecting her for particularly attractive peer educator activities such as study trips: 'They think [...] Simone is talkative, we can't involve her in this activity. [...] Simone is going to disturb us'. To Simone, the distrust affected her relationship with the staff and her motivation to be a peer educator.

Interaction: managing performance vs. involving youth

The meetings between staff and peer educators reflected Freire's 'banking' (Freire 1972: 54), that is, domination of the dialogical space by the elite, or the staff. There was no turn-taking, which is stressed by both Freire's concept of conscientização (Freire 2005: 40) and Habermas's communicative action. To the extent that there were questions for the peer educators, these were closed or leading questions. Consequently, the peer educators would mostly either concur or express disagreement with particular statements. The staff did not stimulate critical thinking, and different experiences, interpretations and understandings were not invited or tested. The meetings resembled more than anything a classroom or lecture setting, with the peer educators sitting in a big group facing the staff, asking questions and receiving answers.

In an interview, one of the female peer educators said of the project staff: '[W]e expect from them that they advise us and tell us what we have done wrong'. This statement clearly reflects a student-teacher interaction. In an observed peer educator meeting, a peer educator raised the issue of the high demand for condoms in the field, and that he did not have enough condoms for distribution. The project staff responded that the problem was the peer educators' failure to report correctly on their condom distribution, leading to a shortage of condoms. The project staff provided a lengthy explanation of reporting procedures and administrative requirements, reflecting Habermas's 'open strategic action towards compliance' – getting the peer educators to act and perform according to the system, whereby the peer educators are integrated into the system (Habermas 1987b: 159). In Freire's words, the project staff should have critically examined the causes of the problem, and stimulated critical consciousness. Instead, the staff member provided his own interpretation of reality.

One of the male peer educators stated that they were not in a position to raise critical issues in the meetings: 'At the meeting? No, of course not. [...] The project officer is your boss! But that is kind of cultural. [...] You don't exchange words with someone who's older than you'. This quote suggests the existence of a cultural barrier to speaking up against someone who is older than yourself – a barrier that the dialogical structures did not address or try to overcome. The silence observed from the peer educators may also have been an example of Freire's 'culture of silence' – that silence is an act of resistance, particularly when the silent hold opposing views to those of the oppressors (Freire 1998c: 14).

As is mentioned above, the peer educators would submit a monthly report on their peer education activities. The peer educators clearly found the report writ-

ing cumbersome and difficult, and they were not sure how to answer particular questions. As was pointed out by the youth coordinator (a staff member), the reporting format had not been developed by the peer educators themselves: 'The tool which we are using was developed by us – those who have gone to school and can easily understand that data tool. They [the peer educators] did not participate in the development of the tool'. This is an example of absorption of the peer educators' life-world into the premises of the system, instead of the other way around – a key Habermasian characteristic of non-horizontal interaction. The peer educator reporting also highlighted the inefficiency of the system approach. The information provided by the peer educators was supposed to help the managers improve project performance, but the peer educators' poor understanding of the format caused them to make up information or report it incorrectly.

Outcomes of interaction: 'Making an agreement is to know each other'

In a horizontal dialogue, the interaction should be open and seek mutual understanding and collective action. Participants should jointly draw up an action plan and carry it out together (Freire 1972; Habermas 1987: 287). What we observed in the peer educator and YAC meetings were the characteristics of a non-horizontal dialogue driven by a goal-oriented purpose, or what Habermas and Freire would call the system's wish to preserve rather than transform.

Most of the peer educators we talked to saw the project officer as the leader in decision-making, and perceived agreement as when the peer educators accepted solutions or decisions brought forward by staff: 'We make suggestions, then the staff makes the decisions', as a member of the YAC put it. One of the peer educators suggested that the agreements made in the project were more like one-sided 'directions', characterized by a lack of mutual understanding between the staff and the peer educators: 'I think an agreement is done by people who know each other. You can't agree with someone who you don't know. If we agree, that means that we are all free. [...] But, if you direct me, you don't know what is inside my head. I may go and do it, just because you have directed me. But when I agree, it means I would like to do it, I have agreed to come, but you didn't direct me to come'. The project officer was also conscious of his use of strategic and persuasive communication in order to get the peer educators to do what he needed them to do: 'How best can you communicate what you want to deliver to these people so that, at the end of the day, you get what you want? You may have to switch the language, you may have to be soft, you may even have to create an environment where you are so friendly [...].'

Horizontal dialogue: not just an ideal

As is stated in the introduction, approaches to HIV/Aids prevention are continually reviewed and revised, and the scholars of participatory approaches promote

the involvement of local populations in the articulation of needs, problems and the means by which they should be resolved. Based on our observations and findings, it requires highly focused efforts, as well as time and human resources, to achieve an equal and committed relationship between partners; a relationship established through interaction characterized by mutual learning and understanding, with agreement and collective action as the outcomes. This chapter, however, argues that although a peer education project may not adhere strictly to the ideals of 'collective action' and 'turning over power to change agents', as argued by proponents of the critical paradigm, concepts such as equality and mutual trust and learning are critical to any application of participation. Our findings show that a lack of trust between project implementers and the youth involved is a barrier to youth engagement, motivation and a willingness to share views and experiences, which in turn affects their performance as peer educators. It also affects the ability of the project implementers to adjust and improve the project based on accurate knowledge about what works and what does not.

Our findings also underline that working with vulnerable youth requires careful consideration of the potential patterns of submission and dependence, and an awareness of the inherent asymmetry between the development agent and the local populations involved, as well as the cultural and social dynamics that act as barriers to an equal relationship and interaction. The societal structures surrounding the project were to a large extent reproduced in the project. The project did not include measures to challenge the societal structures that keep the youth in their disadvantaged position. Only by institutionally turning over some decision-making power to the young people involved can they overcome the submissive role ascribed to them for generations by socio-cultural structures. To become agents of change, they need an opportunity to realize their potential and to be encouraged to do so – not a prescribed potential but their own definition of what they want to achieve.

We have used our findings from Uganda, and the contributions from Freire and Habermas, to argue that horizontal dialogue is a critical dimension in any development intervention aiming for social change, and that the potential for behavioural change lies within social change. Unfortunately, we live in a time when demands for efficiency, cost-effectiveness and the demonstration of results drive development policies and planning processes, and we do not underestimate the time and effort that it takes to plan for or achieve horizontal dialogue. This is also about faith, however, in the impoverished and voiceless. This chapter calls for a critical reflection about what we mean by ownership and participation, and for making the concept of horizontal dialogue a commitment to how we think we can create change, instead of yet another vague development mantra.

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Notes

- 1 The names used in this paper, for the people met and interviewed, are not their real names.
- 2 SRH refers to physical, mental and social well-being in all matters related to the reproductive system, its functions and processes, and to sexuality (UNFPA 2008).
- 3 Reproductive Health Uganda was called Family Planning Association of Uganda at the time of the study of the project, in 2003.

HIV/AIDS Campaigns as Signifying Processes

Group Dynamics, Meaning-Formation and Sexual Practice

Abraham Kiprop Mulwo & Keyan Tomaselli

Abstract

This chapter examines university students' interpretations of the notions of 'abstinence' and 'be faithful', based on a reception study conducted to explore students' responses to ABC and VCT campaigns at three universities in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa. Using Reception Theories and Hermeneutics, the study examined the structures and processes through which university students make sense of the ABC and VCT campaign messages and the impact of these campaigns on students' sexual practices. Empirical evidence from the study suggests that the nature of cognitive influence and social action that behaviour change communication messages generate amongst the audience-publics, ultimately depends on how the meanings interpreted from the messages articulate with the situated discourses that led to the formation of those meanings.

Keywords: HIV/AIDS campaigns, communication, behaviour change, youth, sexual practices, South Africa

Introduction

Studies in many countries have shown that young people engage in unprotected sex in spite of their high levels of exposure to communication campaigns aiming to encourage behaviour change. Recent communication surveys in South Africa, for example, have demonstrated high levels of exposure to HIV/AIDS communication campaigns and a near-universal awareness of HIV/AIDS (Kelly, 2005; Pettifor, 2004). However, the sustained high level of HIV infection, in spite of these interventions, remains an enigma (Swanepoel, 2005). A study conducted by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) in 2005 concluded that: 'with respect to HIV prevalence and behavioural response it is clear that, in spite of massive investment, there has been inadequate progress in addressing HIV

prevention' (Shisana et al., 2005, p. 74). Currently, the national HIV prevalence in South Africa is estimated at 10.6% with about one in every three (32.7%) of females and 15.7% of males aged 25-29 currently infected with HIV (Shisana, et al, 2009). These statistics illustrate that young people continue to bear the brunt of the epidemic regardless of the fact that the majority of the behaviour change programmes are primarily targeted at them. Indeed, the unprecedented spread of HIV among the South African youth has been associated with sexual risk-taking (Harrison, 2005; Soul City, 2007).

Studies have been conducted to investigate the indeterminate correlation between exposure to behaviour change communication and the high levels of engagement in sexual risk-taking. Most writers argue that behaviour change communication programmes fail because they often fail to critically address the underlying social, cultural and economic conditions that may inhibit individuals' ability to carry out certain decisions at individual level, irrespective of their awareness of HIV/AIDS and knowledge of HIV prevention methods (Airhihenbuwa & Obregon, 2000 ; Airhihenbuwa, Makinwa, & Obregon, 2000; National Cancer Institute, 2005; Swanepoel, E. 2005; Swanepoel, P. 2005; Viswanath & Finnegan, 2002; Yzer, 1999).

In his analysis of the impact of Soul City communication programmes, Thomas Tufte suggests a new dimension that can productively be utilized to understand the link between communication interventions and individual/social change (Tufte, 2003). Tufte calls for the understanding of how audiences make sense of communication texts that they get exposed to through the HIV prevention campaigns. This approach is based on the evolving field of audience research, which conceptualises the meaning of media products as emerging at the point of interaction between the text and the audience (Hall, 1996). As pointed out by Tufte (2001), audience research is founded on three premises: That the audience are not passive receivers of information, but rather actively participate in the process of creating meanings out of the messages they have access to (Fiske, 1989); that media texts can carry more than one meaning (polysemy of the text) (Hall, 1996); and that meaning of a text is a product of many other texts (intertextuality) (Fiske, 1987)

Theoretical background: HIV prevention communication as a signifying process

Jeff Lewis has defined culture as 'an assemblage of imaginings and meanings that may be constant, disjunctive, overlapping, contentious, continuous or discontinuous. These assemblages may operate through a wide variety of human social groupings and social practices'. He argues that 'in contemporary culture these experiences of imagining and meaning-making are intensified through the proliferation of mass media images and information' (Lewis 2002: 15). Lewis further points out the ambivalent relations between culture, media and the audi-

ence: culture is not only a product of the mediation process but also forms the resource within which this process itself is formed. Audiences' experiences of HIV prevention texts thus not only derive from a particular culture, but are also part of a continuous process that shapes the formation of that culture.

Within a culture, mediation occurs through an exchange of signs. Charles Peirce, one of the pioneers of semiotics, defines a sign as follows:

'A sign, or *representamen*, is something which stands for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign. That sign which it creates I call the *interpretant* of the first sign. The sign stands for something, its *object*.' (CP 2.228) (Jensen, 1995: 21).

In the context of HIV prevention communication, texts such as 'Abstinence', 'Be faithful', 'Condomise and Know Your Status' (VCT), are seen in Peircian perspective as representamens, signs which stand for certain realities that exist outside these signs. When audiences encounter these signs through communication campaigns, other signs are then formed in their minds which then become interpretants of the first signs. Audiences therefore make sense of the first signs based, not on the signs themselves, but rather on the interpretants of those signs. However, as pointed out by Peirce, the interpretant "is neither identical with the interpretive agent, nor an essence representing the content of that person's thoughts. Being a sign, the interpretant itself calls up another interpretant, and so on *ad infinitum*" (Pierce cited in Jensen, 1995: 22). Peirce's notion of interpretant is thus key to uncovering the ambiguities involved in the mediation of 'Abstinence', 'Be faithful', 'Condomise' and 'Know your status' among university students.

The triad of signification: campaign messages, audience interpretations, and behavioural modification

Based on Peirce's notion of interpretant, Klaus Jensen has suggested a useful framework for analysing the interaction between the mass media signs, audience decoding processes and the influence of texts on audiences. Jensen observes that the meanings in mass communication are generated through a semiotic continuum involving three interrelated stages of interpretants: the Immediate, Dynamical and Final interpretants (Jensen, 1991, 1995). Peirce conceived of immediate interpretants as "the total unanalyzed effect that the Sign is calculated to produce, or naturally might be expected to produce" (Pierce, 1958: 413). This corresponds to Stuart Hall's (1996) notion of the *preferred* meaning and, in the context of HIV prevention communication, it corresponds to the meanings that the ABC and VCT texts are designed to produce amongst the audiences.

The second category of interpretants, the Dynamical Interpretant, "consists in direct effect actually produced by a Sign upon the interpreter of it" (Peirce, 1958: 413). This consists of the actual meaning that the audiences derive out of their interaction with the media texts. According to Jensen, interpretation at the level of Dynamical interpretant is not necessarily based on the media discourses

themselves but rather on the social context within which these discourses attain their relevance. New meanings may thus be generated at this level depending on the nature of the codes of interpretation that exist within a social unit within which the text is being interpreted. From a mass communication perspective, Hall further points out that:

'[...] the lack of fit between [meanings] has a great deal to do with the structural differences of relation and position between broadcasters and audiences, but it also has something to do with the asymmetry between the codes of 'source' and receiver at the moment of transformation into and out of the discursive form.' (Hall, 1996: 44).

Individuals thus generate their interpretations of media texts out of a collection of meanings that exist within their cultural space and which have been shaped by social, historical and material conditions (Lewis, 2002).

The impact of media texts can be conceptualised through Peirce's third level of interpretants, the Final Interpretant. Final interpretant refers to "the effect the sign would produce upon any mind upon which circumstances should permit it to work out its full effects" (Peirce, 1958, p. 413). In the context of HIV prevention communication, it is at this stage that campaign messages are expected to lead to behaviour modification, the ultimate objective of the campaigns. Peirce argues that the final interpretant provides the final link where the media text may lead to behaviour modification:

'It can be proved that the only mental effect that can be so produced and that is not a sign but is of a general application is a *habit-change*; meaning by habit-change a modification of a person's tendencies towards action, resulting from previous experiences or from previous exertions of his will or acts, or from a complexus of both kinds of cause.' (in Clarke, 1990, p. 24; Jensen, 1995, p. 24)

Jensen re-emphasises the significance of the Final interpretant as the final stage of the mediation process by asserting that it is at this stage that media discourses may significantly alter the cognition and action of the audience-publics (Ibid). Nevertheless, the kind of cognitive change and action may not necessarily be in line with the intentions of the communication campaigns. As Stuart Hall points out, the nature of influence produced by the media text in terms of alteration of cognition and social action, largely depends on the kind of meanings generated out of the text:

'Before this message can have an effect (however defined), satisfy a need or be put to a use, it must first be appropriated as meaningful discourse and be meaningfully decoded. It is this set of decoded meanings which 'have an effect', influence, entertain, instruct or persuade, with very complex perceptual, cognitive, emotional, ideological and behavioural consequences.' (Hall, 1996, p. 43).

It is within this framework that this study examined the meaning-formation processes that university students undergo in their interaction with the ABC and VCT discourses that they constantly encounter through a variety of media. The

ultimate objective of behaviour change campaigns is to disseminate information aimed at persuading individuals to change their sexual behaviours from highly risky sexual practices such as having multiple sexual partners, to less risky practices such as mutual faithfulness between sexual partners, abstinence, or using condoms during sexual intercourse.

The literature reviewed above illustrates that meanings generated by the audiences do not necessarily correspond to those intended by the message originators and, more so, may not generate the kind of impact designed by the communication. A clear understanding of the audiences' responses to campaign messages, therefore, requires an in-depth analysis of the conditions under which those texts were interpreted and the processes within which meanings are re-produced, or new meanings generated.

Methods

This study was conducted at seven campuses in three universities in KwaZulu-Natal (five campuses at University of KwaZulu-Natal and one campus each at University of Zululand and Durban University of Technology). A total of 1400 students (200 from each campus) were selected to participate in the survey through a multi-stage sampling procedure. In-depth interviews were further conducted with 24 students and three HIV/AIDS programme administrators drawn from across the three universities. Participant observation was also used to generate data on HIV prevention campaigns.

The main thrust of the study was to develop a hermeneutic analysis based on the interview responses, which were then used to complement the hard data generated from the survey and observations. The in-depth interviews were designed to generate textual experiential narratives to give nuance to the survey data. The interviews focused on: respondent's perceptions of and attitudes towards HIV/AIDS; respondent's understanding of A, B and C and VCT prevention strategies, including their perceptions on the relevance of each approach; respondent's sexual behaviours; and the social norms influencing respondent's sexual behaviour and perceptions towards HIV prevention strategies. Interview questions were carefully worded to avoid narrowing down responses to particular issues (Smith & Osborn, 2003) and were mainly focused on uncovering the symbolic senses and structures of understanding (Ricoeur, 1980; Heidegger, 1962) through which students interpret the behavioural change texts. Textual narratives obtained through the in-depth interviews thus provided the basis for an hermeneutical analysis which focused on understanding students' interpretations of behaviour change communication messages, and the processes through which those interpretations are produced. The study adopted what Anthony Giddens (1987) calls a "double hermeneutic" approach, which involves the researcher trying to make sense of the way the respondent makes sense of his/her world.

This paper draws on survey data and the in-depth interviews conducted with the students to analyse meaning-formation with regard to the notions of 'abstinence' and 'be faithful'. The paper further examines how these interpretations not only shape, but are also shaped by, the students' understanding of their everyday experiences especially with regards to sexual practices and lifestyles within the campuses environment.

Key Findings

Group dynamics and meaning-formation

Information obtained through in-depth interviews suggests that the majority of students who had not engaged in sex prior to joining university had their sexual debut during their first year of study at the university. This is also supported by the findings of the quantitative survey which established the majority of students had their sexual debut at 18, the average age for the first year students in this study. Group dynamics played a crucial role in influencing engagement in sexual activities/non-activity. Empirical evidence indicate that students were under enormous pressure from their peers to engage in sex as Mnqanyi, a third year black male student at Westville campus, explains:

'The thing is, like us, the students, no let me say like us boys who are living here, we used to talk about our girlfriends ok, maybe someone say, 'hey, I was sleeping with my girlfriend and hey, it was enjoyable'. All those stuff you see, and yourself, you want to express yourself to your friends, ok, and I have to go and sleep with my girl so that I will come and give my friends a feedback that 'hey, it was enjoyable', I was having that. So the competition starts there and not abstaining [...] we're busy, and you know all these stuff, not abstaining.' (Mnqanyi, July 2008, interview).

Sex was often socially constructed by students as 'cool', hence those who were abstaining from sex were socially ostracised as they were considered as being 'uncool'. Students who were abstaining were socially constructed as being 'abnormal', naïve and – among females – unattractive. This process of othering served to create the hierarchy within the student's social system where students who remained abstinent were considered to be of lower status than their sexually active counterparts. Consequentially, social exclusion was used as a weapon to pressurise sexually non-active students into engaging in sex in order to identify with the 'cool' group. Thus, some students indulged in sexual activities in order to gain social acceptance by proving that they were also 'cool'. Sex was a ritual through which individuals were initiated into the 'cool' group, where they would be able to talk about sex with peers:

'[...] it's not cool to be a virgin, it's not. You don't have anything in common with those around you. [...] Students our age, at this day and age, are sleeping

around, they have boyfriends, they have girlfriends and if you are, if aren't having sex with anyone at that time, you are not cool [...] it's practically not in fashion to be a virgin' (Sithole, March 2008, interview).

For others, like Zama, a first year black female student at Howard College, engaging in sex was seen as a way of asserting oneself. Female students who were not approached by males were considered to be unattractive. Engagement in sexual relationships, amongst some females, was thus a way of demonstrating their attractiveness amongst peers:

'When you're a girl, if guys don't approach you then you don't feel pretty like all the others who are getting attention. So you wanna prove that you're also attractive, you are also capable of attracting guys' (Zama, March 2008, interviews).

What is significant in this study is not just the nature of power dynamic that influenced the students' engagement/non engagement in sex, but also the way in which these sexual identities supplied the discourses through which students made sense of sexual practice and the HIV prevention texts.

Meaning of sex and the interpretations of 'abstinence' and 'be faithful'

In *"When is Meaning? Communication Theory, Pragmatism, and Mass Media Reception"*, Klaus Jensen argues that 'Mass-mediated signs give rise *not* to a transmission of entities of meaning, but to specific processes of reception that are performed by audience acting as cultural agents or interpretive communities' (Jensen, 1991, p. 3). Jensen identifies three types of conditions that constitute interpretive communities: discourses and genres, practices, and social institutions. In the context of this study, the interpretive communities were mainly constituted along the various sexual identities that were often defined by the socially constructed meanings about sex. Sexual identity, in this case, does not refer to the homosexual-heterosexual dichotomy as the phrase is often used in contemporary literature (Makhubele, Ntlabati, & Parker, 2007). Instead, it relates to the sexual action/non action and the various sub-categories within the heterosexual collective as explained in the previous section. The discourses about sex and HIV/AIDS within these interpretive communities supplied individuals with the interpretive repertoires through which they made sense not only of their sexual practices, but also of the texts relating to HIV prevention. This process reflected the dialectical relationship between meaning-formation and culture, where culture served as a means of generating meanings which then constitute that culture (Lewis, 2002). Interpretations of the notions of abstinence, be faithful and condomise thus varied amongst the two main categories of interpretive communities as discussed in the following subsections.

(a) Interpretations of abstinence

Interpretations of Abstinence, amongst the sexually abstinent students appeared to draw predominantly from the religious or traditionalist discourses. The major-

ity of respondents in this category perceived abstinence as an effective strategy, even though reasons for abstaining were often associated with the religious or traditionalist moral codes. Pre-marital abstinence was perceived in terms of morality and, consequentially, as the most effective and acceptable way of preventing HIV infection. Whilst responding to a question asking what she thought about abstinence as HIV prevention strategy, Amina equates abstinence with virginity, and regrets that she cannot abstain now, since she is no longer a virgin:

'I wish I could turn the hands of the clock but, aah, because right now I am trying to establish a healthy relationship between myself and my God. And I wish I could be a virgin again because, for me, Virginity means virtue, yeah abstinence not only helps you in bridging up the gap between you and your God, it saves you from emotional stress.... Even looking at our African culture, many cultures, African cultures that I know, they attach importance to virginity and chastity, and it is the pride of the family to send, to give a young lady to her husband as a virgin as a bride and that I uphold. I'm an African woman, I am a typical African woman who can't compromise cultural values that I think is safe importance' (Amina, June 2008, interview).

Amina's perspective integrates both religious and traditional cultural perspectives of morality. Sex was understood in this framework as a means of reproduction and the pleasure of sex was to be enjoyed only within a marital relationship. Pre-marital sex was thus conceived as immoral or sinful and, in Amina's account, creates a 'gap' between individuals and God.

Some, like Zodwa, a third year black female student at the University of Zululand, conceptualized the practice of abstinence as a cultural practice. In Zodwa's account, abstinence (which in this case is conceived as virginity preservation) is celebrated even though it is not seen in terms of HIV prevention, but in terms of obedience to culture. As Zodwa explains, her desire to abstain is mainly driven by the need to preserve virginity, rather than preventing HIV infection:

'Yeah, it [abstinence] works, 'cause the first thing it helps, myself I am still a virgin. My culture, when you are eighteen and you are not still a virgin (sic), your parents will be instructed to disown you' (Zodwa, March 2008, interview).

To prove that she is still a virgin, Zodwa undergoes virginity testing every three months. It would seem that the practice of abstinence, for Zodwa, is not out of a personal choice to avoid HIV infection, but is motivated by the fear of embarrassing herself and her parents. In Zulu traditions, the chief would demand a fine from the father whose daughter was found during virginity testing to have 'tainted the community' by losing her virginity. The girl would also be socially ostracized (Bruce, 2004; Leclerc-Madlala, 2002).

Amongst most sexually active students, abstaining from sex was seen as being 'abnormal', thus the abstinence message was often considered by some as an attempt to deny individuals the pleasure enjoyed by 'normal' people. Mqanyani explains in his response to the interviewer's question asking him whether many students go for an HIV test:

'I think other students, they go. More students who used to go there is (sic) those who are churching (sic), who are going to church 'cause they know that 'aah obvious I'm having Jesus on my side' and like they know that they are not sleeping around, they're not like normal people like us, who are just living freely like us' (Mnqanyi, June 2008, interview).

By representing those students who practise sex as normal, Mnqanyi, in essence, perceives those abstaining from sex as abnormal. In addition, those who are sexually active are represented as 'living freely'. Normality for him is associated with the freedom to engage in sex.

Amina, however, later regrets having lost her virginity – and thereby creating a 'gap' between herself and God. She now feels guilty of having engaged in immorality.

For David, a third year white male student at Pietermaritzburg campus, abstinence is more of a religious doctrine, which does not apply in real life:

'I really don't know, it seems to me like it comes from some Christian community, like Catholic Church, and I don't think it works for me; definitely, it has no connection to myself. I don't, I cannot identify myself with such a campaign because obviously everyone wants to have sex so that's not the real option, so yeah, I don't think it's good.' (David)

Oppositional reading of abstinence was particularly common among students who perceived themselves as having been denied the opportunity to enjoy sex by their parents, prior to joining university, and those who did not subscribe to the religious or cultural beliefs of chastity and virginity preservation. Entry into university, for some, marked the end of parental sexual control. They thus conceived engagement in sex as an exercise of freedom from sexual control.

(b) Interpretations of 'be faithful'

Concurrent sexual relationships was often understood by the sexually abstinent students as immoral, and being faithful to one partner as the ideal form in a marital relationship. When asked what he understood by 'Be faithful', Sithole replied that it meant 'that you are supposed to be in a marriage' (Sithole, March 2008, interview). Others, such as Khan, perceive Be faithful in terms of lifetime commitment:

'For me, be faithful is being with one partner for a long period, indefinitely. It is just dedicating yourself to one person and spending, well, hopefully, the rest of your life with that person.' (Khan, August 2008, interview).

Amina intends to begin practising 'being faithful' when she gets married. Her view is based on her religious belief, in which to 'be faithful' to a marriage partner is a pre-condition:

'When I get married I should be able to observe the, amh, the conditions that surround the Christian marriage and being faithful is one of those conditions.' (Amina, June 2008, interview).

Amongst the majority of participants, the notion of 'Be Faithful' was understood as a commitment to either a marital relationship, or one that culminates in marriage. The significance of this view is that the 'Be faithful' message was mainly seen to appeal only to those who were engaged in a 'serious relationship' – one that leads to marriage – or to those who are already in marriage. In this view, the perceived reason for engaging in a sexual relationship greatly influenced the perception of the necessity to 'Be faithful' to a sexual partner. Others, like Zama, thought that females engage in sexual relationships with concurrent sexual partners because 'they just [want] to experience the different things with different people' (Zama, March 2008, interview). Such sexual relationships seem to be driven by the desire to have fun derived from sexual pleasure, rather than engaging in a committed relationship. Those who did not consider themselves to be in a 'serious relationship' did not find it necessary to practice partner fidelity; hence 'Be faithful' does not apply to them, as Dlamini explains:

'It doesn't really work, it doesn't cause [...] here at varsity you can't be like with one person you're with and think that this is the person you will spend the rest of your life with. This is varsity. You are here to have some fun, study and leave [...] you can't start talking about being faithful.' (Dlamini, June 2008, interview).

For others, like Thenjiwe, however, the main reason why students did not practice being faithful was because they were in sexual relationships for reasons other than marriage:

'They don't even get into relationships because they really like the person... They know they are not in the relationship for the right reasons so it's really hard for them to try and trust the person and remain faithful' (Thenjiwe, April 2008, interview).

'Liking' the partner was seen in this account as a pre-condition for a 'serious relationship'. This, in contrast, seems to suggest that other forms of relationship were not driven by the 'liking' of the sexual partner, but by other factors. In the quantitative survey, close to half of the students (38.9%) claimed to be in a sexual relationship for fun/companionship, whereas others cited economic reasons (7%) or just because everyone else was in a relationship (10%). By confining 'Be faithful' to a marital or a committed relationship, this discourse seems to exclude those who do not consider themselves to be in such a relationship from practising partner fidelity. Zama, for example, explained that she was not practising 'being faithful' because she was not ready to commit herself to her current sexual partner:

I am not ready for commitment, you know, and amh, being this appreciating that it means being faithful (Zama, March 2008, interview).

The underlying connotative meaning of 'Be faithful', as understood here, is that you only need to be faithful to your sexual partner if you are married or in a committed relationship. Individuals who are not in a committed relationship do not necessarily need to be faithful to their partners.

The negotiated meanings of 'Be faithful' were noted to be common among students who were engaged in concurrent multiple relationships and especially those who reported being in relationships for fun and companionship. It would seem that their negotiated interpretations of the concept of 'Be faithful' served to rationalise their sexual behaviours as they saw themselves as being outside of the category of those who were expected to practise partner fidelity.

Discussion

Interviews summarised above illustrate the intersubjective nature of meanings relating to the understanding of sexual practice and interpretation of HIV prevention texts. The phrase "we/students", instead than "I/myself" was common in responses to questions asking about sexual behaviour and meanings associated with HIV prevention texts. This indicates a collective rather than individualised way of thinking within the groups. Individuals saw their behaviours through the collective lens of the group rather than the individual perspectives. This resonates with the process of social interaction described by Berger and Luckmann in *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (1966). Drawing on Mead's concept of symbolic interactionism, Berger and Luckmann argue that individuals construct their own identities through their social interactions with others. These collective identities, in the context of mass communication, define the formation of the audience categories through which individuals interact with media texts. Jensen employs Fish's (1979) notion of 'interpretive communities' to describe these audience groups and points out that interpretive communities are not just defined by their roles within their social formations but, more importantly, "by the strategies of understanding by which they engage mass media contents and other cultural forms" (1991, p. 13).

Amongst students in this study, meaning formation was often a collective process that was defined by group dynamics, rather than individual cognitions. Through a process of social interaction, students constituted themselves into various cultural categories which then supplied them with the discourses and interpretive strategies through which members of the group made sense of HIV/AIDS, sexual practice, and HIV prevention texts. Relationships that existed within these cultural categories were not just social relationships, but also power relations with social hierarchies and systems of control such as exclusion and inclusion. Consequently, individuals' behaviours were often aligned towards group meanings, hence the categories of sexual activity/non activity existed as a continuum of possibilities. Individuals' frames of reference were re-fractured through the collective lens of the group, hence, interpretations of HIV prevention texts often drew from the group. The codes of interpretation were underpinned by their daily experiences within their social groups hence, meaning-formation was a complex process that drew from a totality of competing discourses, ideologies, structures and social norms within the students' social networks.

Students who subscribed to the religious and/or cultural ideals of pre-marital chastity often understood the concept of abstinence from the religious and traditional cultural perspective, as a religious, moral practice and virginity preservation. This group of students perceived abstinence as an effective way to avoid HIV infection even though abstaining, for them, was primarily motivated by the desire to uphold cultural or religious ideals, rather than avoiding HIV infection.

On the other hand, students who did not subscribe to the religious/cultural ideals of pre-marital chastity often interpreted abstinence appositionally, as sexual abnormality or denial of sexual pleasure. Some argued that “normal people” engage in sex, hence those who “claimed” to be abstaining were considered “abnormal”. Among other students in this category, the call for abstinence was often understood as an attempt to deny individuals the opportunity to engage in sexual pleasure. Some argued that abstinence can be implemented successfully if the decision comes from individuals themselves rather than “being told what to do”. This illustrates that the resistance that the notion of abstinence encountered was often a result of the way the message was communicated in the moralistic discourses of culture and religion, rather than to the concept itself.

Conclusion

It is plausible, thus, to conclude that HIV prevention campaigns that appeal to individual action may become futile in the context where individual cognitive changes depend on the changes within the collective frames of understanding.

This study has illustrated, that besides understanding other structural and contextual factors that influence sexual behaviour, there is also need to conceptualise the meaning formation process as one of the key factors that may influence individual behavioural responses to HIV prevention communication. The findings of this study have also demonstrated that in order to understand the impact of HIV prevention communication campaigns, it is important to move beyond the assessment of changes in individuals’ knowledge, attitudes and behavioural practices relating to HIV/AIDS, to the actual analysis of the mediation processes that are involved in HIV prevention campaigns. As this study has illustrated, such an approach will provide a clearer picture, not only of the kind of meanings generated by the audiences, but also the structures that lead to the formation of such meanings and thus explain why communication campaigns may fail to influence behavioural change.

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Examining Civil Society Approaches to Adolescent Sexual Empowerment in Tanzania

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Abstract

In an effort to empower youth sexually, civil society organizations (CSOs) in Tanzania use diverse strategies to enable youth to modify their risky sexual behaviours, make informed decisions, communicate their sexual concerns to their partners and adults, and engage in dialogue about sexual norms and ideas. This empowering process takes place in different social settings and uses diverse communication platforms. One of the methodological challenges facing CSOs, however, is how to objectively measure adolescent sexual empowerment. On the one hand, sexual empowerment is measured subjectively as an internal feeling of power and agency regarding sexual practices. On the other hand, sexual empowerment often needs to entail objective measures of power and control which can be externally measured.

Using the three dimensions of adolescent sexual empowerment set out in Spencer et al. (2008), this chapter examines the empowerment strategies used by CSOs in Tanzania to demonstrate that adolescent sexual empowerment is a process and a matter of degree which no single CSO can claim the sole capacity to achieve. The chapter reflects on the theories that inform sexual empowerment. It provides a brief outline of the policies that inform current CSO practice in Tanzania and presents the strategies employed by CSOs to encourage youth engagement in matters that affect their sexual lives. The chapter provides a critical reflection on future directions for adolescent sexual empowerment in Tanzania.

Keywords: adolescent sexual empowerment, civil society, policy, power, reproductive health, youth engagement

Introduction

Studies on youth sexual empowerment are more common in developed countries than developing countries. Examples include the United States (Perterson 2010), Australia (Bryant and Schofield 2007; Whitehead and Kurz 2009), Germany

(Pinquart 2009), the Netherlands (Duits and van Zoonen 2006, 2007; Vanwesenbeeck 2009), New Zealand (Allen 2008) and the United Kingdom (Andrews 2002; Gill 2007; Henwood and Pidgeon 1995; Spencer et al. 2008). However, research on the extent to which interventions on sexual empowerment diverge or converge with existing strategies is under researched. In addition, while the theoretical and empirical notion of empowerment is well documented for adults (Zimmerman 2000), there are no similar studies for youth. In adults, studies on sexual empowerment have been approached from both psychological and community perspectives. From the psychological point of view, empowerment has been measured at three distinct levels: the intrapersonal, the interpersonal and the behavioural levels (Le Bosse et al. 1998; O'Donoghue et al. 2002; Speer 2000; Speer et al. 2001; Zimmerman 1990; Zimmerman and Rappaport 1988; Zimmerman 1992). The intrapersonal level refers to how people think about their capacity to influence social and political systems. This is similar to what Russell et al. (2009) call having and using knowledge. The interpersonal level addresses how individuals interact within their environments to successfully master social or political systems, including knowledge of resources and critical awareness and development of problem solving skills. Russell et al. (2009) call this relational empowerment. In addition to possessing knowledge, it includes how this knowledge is shared in relational terms depending on an individual's group membership and commitment, passing on the legacies of empowered youth to others and empowering them. The behavioural level refers to individual acts that influence the social and political environment through participation in community organizations and activities that aim to promote or defend the sexual rights of certain groups, be they in school or in the community. The underlying assumption is that individuals who [demonstrate a higher degree of empowerment participate more in community activities and are more likely to have a critical awareness about how to exert power to create change in their community environment (Speer 2000; Zimmerman 2000).

Rissel (1994) views psychological empowerment as a prerequisite for community empowerment. He defines psychological empowerment as a feeling of control over one's life and community empowerment as a situation in which psychologically empowered community members engage in political action to achieve a redistribution of resources.

Unlike for adults, studies of youth sexual empowerment do not state clearly what the concept actually entails. Sexual empowerment has come to mean the same thing as youth leadership, civic engagement (Flanagan and Sherrod 1998; Yates and Youniss 1998), self-efficacy or youth activism (Huebner 1998). Furthermore, earlier analyses have largely ignored the multilayered social contexts in which empowering processes take place among youth. This focus puts in the shade the ways that exposure to empowering processes enable youth and their allies to actively engage in creating positive change for themselves and their peers. As is demonstrated below, sexual empowerment has come to mean different things to different population age groups.

The case studies presented in this chapter are used to show the diversity of the strategies employed by civil society organizations (CSOs) as youth sexual empowerment processes. Two social processes are of particular concern: first, to understand the strategies that CSOs use in the process of empowering youth sexually; and, second, to understand the impact and outcomes of such strategies on wider social norms around sex and sexuality, which influence youth's sexuality by exploring the differences, if any, between the concerns and interests of youth and those addressed by civil society. The chapter specifically focuses on the approaches that CSOs use to empower youth on matters that affect their sexual lives.

Selected CSO interventions

Following the introduction of the 2002 Non Governmental Organizations Act,¹ a large number of CSOs shifted from being service providers to behaviour changing, advocacy and campaigning for social change.² This section presents a summary of selected CSOs and their respective thematic focus as they strive to empower youth on sexual issues.

Family Health International (FHI), Tanzania

Funded by USAID, Family Health International-Tanzania's two sister programmes (*Kaka wa Leo*, Modern Brother, and *Dada wa Leo*, Modern Sister) emulate the Programme H Initiative developed by the Brazilian Institute, Instituto Promundo, with other collaborating Latin American organizations. The two programmes aim to positively influence safer sexual behaviour, including increased condom use by the sexually active, reducing gender-based violence, fewer unplanned pregnancies, improved partner negotiation skills and increased utilization of the available health services. The programmes also focus on helping young men and women to reflect on and question the traditional norms that define manhood and womanhood.

The *Kaka wa Leo*/*Dada wa Leo* programmes work on two levels: (a) promoting attitude and behaviour change among individual young men and women; and (b) promoting changes in the social or community norms that influence these individuals' attitudes and behaviour. The programmes operate under the assumption that viewing women as sexual objects, using coercion to obtain sex and viewing sex from a performance-oriented perspective often begin in adolescence and continue into adulthood. Evidence for these assumptions has been reported elsewhere (Jejeebhoy 1996; Bledsoe and Cohen 1993). If responsible sexual behaviours are promoted in adolescence, young men and women will often continue this behaviour into adulthood.

FHI Tanzania strives to promote adolescent sexual empowerment by enabling youth to reflect and focus on gender-equitable norms and behaviour as defined by four principles: (a) relationships are based on respect, equality and intimacy rather than sexual conquest; (b) male participation in reproductive health pro-

motes sexual health for both partners; (c) men have some responsibility for their own and their partners' reproductive health and disease prevention issues; and (d) partner violence is unmanly.

FHI-Tanzania has developed training manuals to promote attitude and behaviour change among men and women aged between 15 and 24 years. In an effort to balance sexual health and financial stability among youth, FHI-Tanzania supplements the programme with microfinance credits to young men and women under the banner of a lifestyle social marketing campaign to promote changes in social norms related to what it means to be a man or a woman. The activities in the manuals are designed to be carried out in a same-sex group setting, generally with men as facilitators who can and should serve as more gender-equitable role models for the young men. Activities consist of role plays, brainstorming exercises, discussion sessions and individual reflection about how men are socialized, the positive and negative aspects of this socialization, and the benefits of changing certain behaviours. However, the extent to which the themes in the manuals were selected with the involvement of youth themselves is uncertain. At the time this data were collected, FHI-Tanzania had not yet carried out an evaluation of the impact of the manuals.

FEMINA Health Information Programme (FEMINA HIP)

FEMINA HIP is one of the largest Tanzanian CSOs. It seeks to use media platforms to empower youth in and out of school on matters pertaining to sexual and reproductive health. Since 1999, the organization has been extensively and intensively promoting responsible sexual behaviour among youth and adults in different social settings. With support from Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Global Fund, FEMINA HIP has established a strong multi-media vehicle consisting of magazines, television talk shows and youth clubs. The *FEMA* magazine is published quarterly and has a circulation of 180,000. It targets urban and rural youth both in and out of school. *Si Mchezo* magazine is issued six times per year and has a circulation of 173,000. It targets rural communities. *Pilika Pilika* is a radio magazine programme that reaches approximately 650,000 Tanzanians once a week. The weekly television talk show [*FEMA Talk Show*] and *Watoto Bomba* is a magazine targeted at school students. In addition, FEMINA HIP has established more than 600 youth clubs (550 in schools and 50 out of school). As part of its alliance-building efforts, FEMINA HIP collaborates with diverse partner organizations committed to working with young men and women.

At the core of FEMINA HIP's multimedia communication is its emphasis on dialogue, reflection and logical argument among youth, in which education is provided through entertainment or 'edutainment' (Tufte 2004). It does this on three levels. Level I, in and out of school, allows young men and women to participate in discussions focused on sexual and reproductive health, gender and its social constructions by reading FEMINA media products, through which sexual

and reproductive health awareness is created. The second level reinforces these concepts and focuses on building critical thinking, communication and mediation skills by inviting youth to participate in discussions about FEMINA products in youth clubs and FEMINA outreach programmes. Participants also discuss other topics, including those related to poverty and financial literacy. In level 3, youth meet regularly and participate in community activities and discussions on the issues raised in the media products. FEMINA staff have also recently begun to conduct group discussions with youth club members both in and out of school. The discussions distil key issues from many of the topics, ranging from adolescent sexuality to gender, poverty and civic education. FEMINA HIP recently introduced the topic of financial literacy with the expectation that healthy lifestyles can more easily be achieved when youth are financially literate and financially stable. Discussions are facilitated by trained individuals, such as teachers from participating schools, FEMINA staff and youth leaders as peer educators.

The American Red Cross-Tanzania (ARC):

Funded by USAID, ARC implements peer education programmes for youth in and out of school, and youth aged 20 to 24 years. Like FEMINA HIP, the programmes educate youth using an edutainment approach. Using a training manual developed in collaboration with key stakeholders working on adolescent sexuality in Tanzania, the organization trains community members and youth on youth and HIV, gender norms, sexual relationships and open communication between young adults. Other topics include coping with peer pressure, multiple and concurrent sexual partners, negotiation of condom use and transactional sex. Pre- and post-training evaluation is always administered at training sessions. Like FEMINA HIP, ARC works with adults as mentors. Based on successes recorded in the Kigoma region, the programme has been rolled out to include the Shinyanga region. The programme recognizes the limitations of using its training manual to empower young single mothers on sexual matters due to the fact that the ARC overlooked this category of youth when the manual was being developed.

Although not yet empirically evaluated, the organization has noted two major challenges: first, gender differences in community volunteering mean that male youth are less likely to volunteer for peer education work than female youth; and, second, the huge influence of inequitable social norms on adolescent sexual and reproductive health. However, the intervention has been successful at changing the views of male and female youth on gender roles, creating the potential for longer term behaviour change related to reproductive health.

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GIZ (formerly GTZ³)

Sexual and reproductive health and rights, and HIV/AIDS is one of GIZ's core programmes under the Tanzanian-German Programme to Support Health (TGPSH).⁴ The programme is being implemented in four regions of Tanzania for the 10-year period 2003–2013.⁵ The programme's main objective is to improve information

and services related to sexual and reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS, to enable men and women to take more preventive measures against sexual risks and to ensure that they are familiar with, and assertive about, sexual rights.

Unlike other CSOs, GIZ's approach is to reach youth using the existing local government system, which is encouraged to request financial support from GIZ in order to implement youth reproductive health-related programmes in their district. These programmes include HIV-related awareness-raising and life skills education for young people both in and out of school. It also uses community-based reproductive health promotion and encourages the mainstreaming of HIV prevention, gender sensitivity and human rights into youth health-related programmes. The programme also supports providers of sexual and reproductive health services to improve the quality of their services, and ensures wider access by using community-based approaches to distributing modern methods of contraception.

GIZ attributes the recent overall decline in the prevalence of positive tests of HIV in Mbeya region, an increase in knowledge about HIV prevention methods among young women and men (TMHIS, 2007/08:77-78) and more widespread use of modern methods of contraception⁶ in the areas where it is supporting community-based reproductive health services to its interventions.

GIZ also supports other CSOs that are working directly with youth in their communities. Through its slogan 'Theatre for Development', GIZ works with arts groups as well as media entities to impart knowledge about responsible sexual behaviour and equitable gender norms, and to promote sexual rights among youth.

Although public policy allows for the provision of adolescent sexual and reproductive health services (ASRH), their implementation has not always been smooth. For instance, despite the mass production of GIZ's adolescent sexual and reproductive health booklets promoting transparency on adolescent sexual matters, these booklets have been banned and similar publications withdrawn from circulation because the content was deemed to have surpassed so-called acceptable social norms and values.

Tanzania Marketing and Research Communications (T-MARC) Company

Funded by a diversity of donors, T-MARC offers youth an opportunity to learn sexual empowerment processes through social marketing and the distribution of health products. T-MARC is an independent Tanzanian owned and run organization registered in Tanzania as a not-for-profit business limited by guarantee. T-MARC works with Tanzanian businesses to develop or expand markets for health products that will achieve a demonstrable and sustainable health impact on HIV/AIDS prevention and care, the use of safe forms of contraception, child survival and the treatment or prevention of infectious diseases. T-MARC takes a dynamic approach that involves bringing together public and private stakeholders to design and implement health communications campaigns that aim to increase

the adoption of healthy behaviours, reduce the prevalence of risky behaviours, and support the sustainable growth of desirable health products and services.

The company gained prominence through two renowned sexuality-related programmes: *Sikia kengele: Tulia na Wako* (listen to the bell, stick to your one partner) and *Vaa Kondom* (wear a condom). Launched in March 2007, *Sikia Kengele: Tulia Na Wako* is an HIV/AIDS communication campaign that promotes faithfulness and reducing the number of sexual partners. It features a series of radio vignettes featuring Mama Ushauri, an older female counsellor, to improve knowledge of sexual health and contraception among the public. The radio broadcasts address reproductive health myths and misconceptions by recounting episodes from Mama Ushauri's life. The *Vaa Kondom* initiative promotes the correct and consistent use of condoms among high-risk population groups that work and live along key transportation corridors.

In 2007, T-MARC launched a male condom, *Dume*, a female condom, *Lady Pepeta*, and an oral contraceptive, *Flexi P*. It is working with commercial partners to introduce an array of new public health products to the Tanzanian market, including low-osmolarity oral rehydration salts (LO-ORS) and zinc tablets.⁷

The company uses mobilization events to encourage communities that interact with high-risk groups in Tanzania to adopt healthy sexual behaviour. Like other CSOs, TMARC has developed its own training manuals for youth to promote responsible sexuality and behaviour change through the mass media, interpersonal communication and peer education. From TMARC's perspective, sexual empowerment is regarded as a situation where people are given power to control their own sexual behaviour.

It is evident from the above examples that CSOs vary considerably in their aims, strategies and approaches to empowering youth on sexual issues. CSO strategies are shaped by their institutional perception of what adolescent sexuality is or ought to be. If a CSO regards adolescent sexuality as dangerous or disruptive, it is likely to take a moralistic position to promote risk reduction. On the other hand, where a CSO views adolescent sexuality as something life-enhancing and desirable, the empowerment process seeks to relax the tight grip imposed by social norms on how adolescent sexuality should be expressed. There is also an overconcentration on the first phase of sexual empowerment – the reduction of sexual risk (see below). By implication, youth sexual empowerment is still in its infancy. This raises important questions about what adolescent sexual empowerment is in practice.

Conceptualizing adolescent sexual empowerment

Evidence from the literature shows that sexual empowerment is not a once-and-for-all state. Instead, it is a process or mechanism by which people and communities gain mastery over their own lives (Rappaport 1984). Empowerment 'is not an absolute threshold that once reached can be labeled empowered' (Zimmerman 1990: 170). Empowerment can also be viewed as a continuum in which there are

no clear criteria for determining what degree of psychological empowerment has been attained² (Rissel 1994: 44). Thus, individuals may be sexually empowered at one time in their lives but disempowered at others. Wallerstein (1992) argues that it is not easy to determine who is empowered, or whether groups or only individuals can be empowered.

The lifespan of a CSO programme has a bearing on youth empowerment. It has been argued that participatory projects with limited lifespans are likely to disempower participants by giving them a sense of their problems but no means to tackle them (Nelson and Wright 1995). The fact that sexual empowerment embraces various strands of belief makes the length of CSO engagement critical. Although definitions are difficult to find, the concept of empowerment can be characterized. Kesby (2005: 2051), quoting from several authors (Maguire 1987; Wallerstein 1992; Batliwala 1994; Chambers 1994, 1997; Stein 1997; Allen 1999) summarizes the characteristics of empowerment as:

Rather than being concentrated in the hands of a few, it is redistributed among the many; rather than being hierarchical, vertical, dominating, and exploitative, it is reciprocal, lateral, accountable, and facilitating

In my view, there cannot be a one-size-fits-all definition of sexual empowerment because there are many different categories of vulnerable youth. Nor is sexual empowerment only about reaching youth with the information, services, and social and legal support they need; or reducing negative outcomes from irresponsible early sexuality. Finally, sexual empowerment is not only about the number of policies and programmes adopted in a country or implemented by CSOs and other partners. It is also about changing the long-held social norms which, for men, are generally built around power, control and independence, and for women are based on subordination and dependence. Sexual empowerment is about creating situations in which male and female youth can talk, reflect and openly make informed decisions about their manhood/womanhood while ensuring that youth find approval for their actions and receive community support

Using the above characterization, empowerment processes start when an individual realizes that there are variations in the way social institutions and governing laws treat individuals. Second-wave feminists (Stanley and Wise 1983) argue that empowerment is nothing more than raising consciousness and self-discovery. This self-reflexivity can be concretized through awareness training, political processes and social movements in a given society. The role of CSOs in this terrain is not to deliver empowerment but to facilitate an individual's internal struggle.

In some instances, youth empowerment has been equated with poststructuralist notions of agency, change and resistance (Kesby 2005: 2051). Empowerment in general is defined as youths' 'ability to make strategic life choices where that ability had been previously denied them' (Kabeer 1999).⁸ For clarity, sexual empowerment is midway in the change processes that affect youth at the individual, household, community and larger institutional levels. Beyond vital

improvements in well-being, adolescent sexual empowerment can result in youth gaining agency and the resources to make decisions, build confidence and act in their own interests. Eventually, such empowerment reshapes societal norms, attitudes and the institutional practices affecting adolescent sexuality.

As CSOs strive to empower youth sexually, it is important to note that sexual empowerment has different implications for young men and young women, that is, the social constructions of youth sexuality for young men and young women are in apparent opposition to each other. Youth empowerment does not have the same social effects on young men as on young women, and each have different social identities, expectations and sexual practices. While young women's sexuality is socially constructed to avoid recognizing, expressing or exercising their own sexual agency, young men's sexuality is socially constructed around expressions of virility, romance and demonstrations of potency (Holland et al. 2004: 117-155). Young women's empowerment is literally understood as a process of resistance to hegemonic masculinity, while that of young men is socially understood as adherence to the conventional hegemonic masculinity or 'being a real man'.

Holland et al. (2004: 118) define young women's sexual empowerment as a state that constitutes young women challenging ideas, identities, expectations and practices. However, the authors caution that such empowerment is a process that is unstable and contradictory. The implication is that attaining empowerment is not an event but a process that can never be permanently achieved, and has to be struggled for constantly. This process involves a series of strategies which are, either jointly or distinctively, brought about during negotiation in sexual encounters. The authors add that a young woman's sexual empowerment may be confined to one particular type of relationship and may not be extended to another encounter. In addition, young women may strive to take control of their own lives in sexual encounters and resist the passivity of conventional femininity, but this in itself does not enable young women to recognize and challenge male power. Instead, young women will be challenging conventions of femininity while leaving the conventions of masculinity intact (Holland et al. 2004: 119). In order to distinguish levels of sexual empowerment, the authors differentiate between intellectual empowerment, the expectations and intentions that young women bring to an encounter; and experiential empowerment, young women's ability to manage their sexual practice pleasurably and safely.

From this feminist perspective, the ideal sexual empowerment for young women would encompass enabling young women to recognize, negotiate and challenge male domination in a sexual relationship (Holland et al. 2004: 134). Similarly, the ideal sexual empowerment for young men would comprise seeking to modify, reject and challenge the social arrangements which systematically privilege the male over the female in sexual relationships. Thus, sexual empowerment for both young men and young women would involve resisting the pressures of conventional masculinity and femininity, respectively. However, young women's and men's sexual empowerment still attract contradictory social interpretations.

While young men's empowerment potentially subjects them to being belittled, ridiculed, rejected and even socially disempowered, young women's resistance to the demands of conventional femininity makes them look empowered.

Empowerment theorists (Spencer et al. 2008) generally recognize that empowerment occurs on multiple levels and make a distinction between the individual, structural and ideological levels of empowerment. Based on the work of the CSOs described above, at the individual level, the first dimension centres around the existence of initiatives to reduce youths' risky sexual encounters, that is, the extent to which there has been an emergence of new public spaces for youth engagement in open debates on matters concerning their sexual and reproductive health, taking into account the heterogeneity of youth categories and the diversity of youth needs. The second dimension, agenda setting, focuses on the extent to which CSO initiatives manage to bring these previously restricted issues out in open debate and enable youth to become involved in setting the agenda on such matters without shifting the social boundaries of what is 'appropriate' or 'inappropriate' about youth sexuality. The third dimension, challenging dominant discourses, highlights the extent to which CSO initiatives can persuade social mediators (family, school, religion and the mass media) to engage with, accept and even facilitate youths' resistance to the dominant frameworks of masculinity and femininity.

Policy responses to youth sexual empowerment

In Tanzania, policy responses to youth sexual and reproductive health have largely focused on creating a conducive policy environment for youth to access quality information, services and life skills for the realization of their full potential. As the government moves away from being an implementer of programmes and towards being a facilitator of interventions, the involvement of CSOs in developing national policies that affect youth sexual empowerment becomes critical. Youth-related sexual health policies and documents developed with the active involvement of CSOs include: Standards for Adolescent Friendly Reproductive Health Services,⁹ Standards for Peer Education, an Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Training Manual; and a Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit.¹⁰ These toolkits and strategy documents now guide different stakeholders, including CSOs, in the delivery of youth-friendly reproductive health services in Tanzania.

The basic rights of youths and their special needs can be grouped into seven thematic areas:

1. All adolescents are able to obtain sexual and reproductive health information and advice relevant to their needs, circumstances and stage of development.
2. All adolescents are able to obtain sexual and reproductive health services that include preventive, promotional, rehabilitative and curative services that are appropriate to their needs.
3. All adolescents are informed of their right to sexual and reproductive health information and services, whereby these rights are observed by all service providers and significant others.

4. Service providers at all delivery points have the required knowledge, skills and positive attitude to provide sexual and reproductive health services to adolescents effectively and in a friendly manner.
5. Policies and management systems are in place at all service delivery points to support the provision of adolescent friendly sexual and reproductive health services.
6. All service delivery points are organized for the provision of adolescent friendly reproductive health services as perceived by adolescents themselves.
7. Mechanisms to enhance community and parental support are in place to ensure adolescents have access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Although these standards recognize the role of a shared vision with complementary actions by different players in fulfilling the basic rights and needs of adolescents, the ASRH Strategy document admits that there are challenges in involving other players, such as CSOs. Examples include the short lifespan of some programmes due to an overreliance on donor support, managerial instability and leadership crises within CSOs.

While parents and guardians are recognized as having a major role to play in influencing the health outcomes of youth, this role has been constrained by inadequate communication with adolescents. It is claimed that parents and guardians are not empowered enough to discuss deeply intimate issues with their children, and that they do not fully understand their obligations to adolescents (NARHS 2011: 9).

CSO approaches to adolescent sexual empowerment

The National Adolescent Reproductive Health Strategy, 2011–2015 provides a framework for all CSOs working on empowering youth on sexual and reproductive matters. CSOs in Tanzania have two main goals on adolescent sexual empowerment: to educate youth on how best to make informed decisions about their sexual health; and to identify the burning issues that affect youth so they can be debated and addressed in diverse platforms. Several approaches are used in an effort to achieve these goals. The most common approach is the use of visual media to inform and promote critical and systematic discussion of sexual health and behaviour. FEMINA HIP's multimedia approaches and T-MARC's social marketing are cases in point. However, there is a gender variation in access to media information. Young women have less access compared to young men at the same age, thereby influencing the likelihood of them using such information as a basis for decision-making. In addition, in 2010, only 12 per cent of youth aged 15 to 19 years and 9 per cent of youth aged 20 to 24 had weekly exposure to all three types of media (radio, newspaper and television) The situation had not significantly changed compared to five years before (TDHS, 2010:235).

One approach noted above is the use of strategic alliances at the local and national levels. Another is to form strategic alliance with partner organizations.

CSOs collaborate with diverse partner organizations committed to working with youth on health issues to implement programmes at the community level. A funded CSO may train and provide technical assistance in facilitation skills and leadership, and sometimes build the organizational capacity of partner organizations in advocacy, community mobilization, social norms campaigns and policy change. In this way, partner organizations receive support with promoting youth empowerment at the individual as well as the community level.

Other CSOs rely on peer-based groups or peer educators as important vehicles for exploring and addressing myths and perceptions related to gender and sexuality. Peer educators are a continuing source of support for the adolescents and, through collective and constructive involvement, promote the social norm of youth as agents of social change.

The endorsement of community leaders is an important strategy that CSOs use in the mobilization of adolescents, through which community leaders are involved as watchdogs to ensure sustained change. The use of role models, such as football players, adolescent celebrities and comedians, is also a key strategy used to empower adolescents. These are key partners in mobilizing and motivating adolescents to participate in health interventions that aim to reduce health risks. However, the activities of such actors should be culturally appropriate and fun. FEMINA HIP has adapted this strategy by publishing stories about youth celebrities and successful entrepreneurs in its magazines, while others participate in television talk shows as individuals who in addition to their success also care about their sexual health and safety.

Many CSOs employ a combination of two or more. Some approaches, such as those adopted by FHI-Tanzania and FEMINA HIP, focus on changing power relations and norms between youth and the wider population by addressing structural issues that are causally linked with adolescent sexual empowerment.

Future directions

It is important to recognize the amount and type of information that CSOs provide to youth on sexuality matters and how this information expands youths' preferences and informed choices. However, it is also important to note that the health challenges youth face are deeper and broader than a lack of information. It is likely that the social outcomes that arise from the provision of such information will largely depend on individual youth preferences and the strength of the social institutions where youth live. Challenging questions still need answers. How do CSOs rationally determine what information is required to enable individual youths to make rational, informed decisions faced with the many alternatives available. How much sexual information is required by youth in order to make informed decisions? How do individual youth decide when to stop searching for information about their sexual matters? In addition, what do young people do with the information they receive? To what extent is this information sufficient to enable them set the agenda on issues such as sexual legitimacy among unmarried youth, or challenge the dominant sexual discourses?

Despite the fact that CSOs employ several strategies to empower youth on sexual matters, the extent to which the empowerment process results in collective action for sexual empowerment among youth is not well known. More specifically, a large proportion of youth facing similar social constraints, and those exposed to similar sexual information, are not making similar choices on sexual behaviour and are not being empowered in the same way. As CSOs continue to empower youth on sexual matters, it is important to note that social constraints and preferences also have a role to play (Friedman and Hechter 1988: 215) and therefore need to be taken into account. Thus, it is not enough to target youth simply because they share social characteristics such as age, education, social status, marital status and income. Instead, studying the factors that shape youths' choices, preferences and outcomes faced with sufficient available information is highly significant.

It is also important to note the efforts CSOs make to address the social constraints that may affect youths' ability to make rational choices about desired behaviour. As is shown above, programmes on themes that had not been linked to adolescent sexuality before, such as entrepreneurship (by FEMINA HIP) and the availability of micro-credit (by FHI-Tanzania), have been initiated as a complement to adolescent reproductive health programmes. It is expected that improved opportunity costs and reduced institutional constraints will provide youth with wider choices and preferences when making informed decisions. Thus, there is a need for more comprehensive studies of adolescents' use of CSO interventions and their connection to adolescent sexual empowerment in Tanzania. The Media, Empowerment and Democracy in East Africa (MEDIEA) Project, which is currently being implemented in East Africa in a partnership between the University of Dar es Salaam, Nairobi University and Roskilde University, Denmark, is geared towards this goal.

Conclusions

This chapter has examined whether CSO approaches to adolescent sexuality in Tanzania are likely to result into the sexual empowerment of youth. Such a perspective is often promoted by CSOs but rarely critically examined. Drawing on the interpretation of power by Spencer et al. (2008), the implications of CSO interventions on adolescent sexual empowerment were critically examined to assess what the sexual empowerment of youth might mean at various structural levels. Adolescent sexual empowerment is obviously a multi-level construct consisting of practical approaches and applications, social action processes, and individual and collective outcomes. Critical reflection on societal forces and power relations, and active community participation leading to changes in sociopolitical processes, structures, norms, or images are absent from CSO interventions in Tanzania. This review poses a number of significant challenges for current CSO interventions.

In regard to *the modification of risky behaviours* (the first dimension of power), much effort has been made by CSOs to ensure that adolescents have adequate information. However, the challenge remains how to move away from risk reduction to engage youth in strategies for challenging restrictive sexual ideals. We still know relatively little about how CSO approaches affect adolescent sexual beliefs and behaviour. Although they lead to the provision of a greater range of sexual health services to adolescents, the social infrastructure for the provision of these services is often inadequate. In addition, policies and laws focus largely on imparting basic scientific facts to young people and facilitating discussion of sexuality in a way that is likely to maintain the status quo of institutional power, rather than resistance. It is well documented (Shivji 2004) that, to a large extent, the CSOs in Tanzania operate within limited boundaries by ensuring that they facilitate, rather than frustrate, the reproduction of dominant power frameworks. Thus, more research with adolescents is needed to learn more about how media exposure and media use influence the frameworks of power.

While adopting the sexual empowerment of youth as their main agenda, current CSO programmes and practice continue to be governed by the rhetoric of reducing the risks to youths' sexual health. CSO interventions have primarily targeted changes in youths' risky sexual behaviour or use of health services through individual-level interventions in diverse settings (schools, health facilities and/or geographically defined communities). As a result, CSO activities serve to regulate, rather than empower, youths' sexual attitudes and behaviours. However, as is noted above, some CSO approaches are addressing power relations between youth and the wider population, and norms by addressing structural issues such as the social, economic, community, legal and policy aspects of the environment which are causally linked to adolescent sexual empowerment. Some CSOs are also directly addressing gender inequality, financial literacy and poverty reduction.

In relation to the second dimension of power, the policy climate is still too young to guarantee adolescents the space and capacity needed to *set the agenda*. Although policies and training documents now guide the delivery of adolescent-friendly reproductive health services in Tanzania, there are still considerable barriers to agenda setting. First, the lack of information about policies and services, and of capacity to critically review these policies, cripples agenda setting processes. Open discussion in the media and during CSO interventions has focused on HIV prevention and adolescent sexuality in general, but discussion of agenda setting has been muted. Youth are not truly empowered to have the capacity to address the social and structural barriers and processes that would eventually lead to them setting an agenda for adolescent sexual empowerment.

In addition, CSO interventions on adolescent sexuality largely focus on addressing risky behaviour and rarely pay attention to issues of pleasure and intimacy. However, FEMINA HIP is striving to go beyond this dimension by promoting pleasure in adolescent sexual relationships through several means including masturbation. Third, interventions that aim to promote youth-adult interactions are very rare. It has been suggested elsewhere that youth and adults would benefit from interventions that focus on building youth-adult partnerships (Sher-

rod et al. 2002). What can clearly be seen from the ongoing CSO interventions is that challenging adult-defined social systems is an important dimension of youth empowerment. Thus, Tanzania needs research to examine and illustrate processes of agenda-setting by youth while supporting adults and other gatekeepers in their different social capacities to strike a balance between guiding and directing (Zeldin et al. 2003).

At the third dimension of power, there is a paucity of information on adolescents demonstrating engagement in *challenging dominant discourses*. Further research is needed to understand how CSO interventions might influence adolescent sexual empowerment differentially. Evidently, individual youth, youth groups and communities will not experience sexual empowerment in the same way. The intersections with other potential power inequalities and differentials, such as social class, gender, culture and social institutions, are another area in need of further examination. Further research is required to investigate the extent to which youth are both affected by and affect CSO's approaches to adolescent sexual empowerment in order to gain a more balanced perspective on the reciprocal influences between the two. Adolescent sexual empowerment literally means changing the status quo of the social interaction between youth and adults in which social processes, practices, structures and social values need to change. This should be considered an opportunity for CSOs to encourage meaningful sexual empowerment.

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Notes

- 1 Act No. 24/2002 http://www.tanedu.org/Procedures_NGO_registration.pdf. Accessed on January 5th 2012.
- 2 For details of this discussion see Shivji (2004: 689-695).
- 3 From January 1, 2011, *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ)* changed its name to *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)*
- 4 The others are: Health financing and social health protection; Decentralized subsidiary (public and private) health services; and capacity development and human resources.
- 5 The programme intervention sites are: Tanga region in the Eastern Zone, Lindi and Mtwara regions in the southern zone and Mbeya region in the South-Western Highland zone
- 6 The use of modern contraception in GIZ-supported areas is more widespread than the national average of 27.4% (Tanga 41.1%, Mbeya 36.9%, Lindi 38.5% and Mtwara, 36.8%) (Tanzania Malaria and HIV Indicator Survey 2007/08).
- 7 Source: <http://www.tmarc.or.tz>, accessed 25 January 2012.
- 8 Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 2005: Standards for Adolescent Friendly Reproductive Health. Reproductive and Child Health Section, Directorate of Prevention Services.
- 9 Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, 2011: National Adolescent Reproductive Health Strategy, 2011-2015. Reproductive and Child Health Section, Directorate of Prevention Services.

Moving Sexual Minority Health Rights Forward in Uganda

A Study of Opportunities and Challenges Using Domestic Media

Cecilia Strand

Abstract

The Ugandan Anti-Homosexuality Bill of October 2009 caused an international outcry and sparked intense debate in both Ugandan and international media. Several Ugandan human rights organizations mobilized to raise awareness on the proposed Bill's potential negative impact on human rights and health rights in particular regardless of sexual orientation. The following chapter discusses a study of local Ugandan human rights defenders' attempts to influence local print media coverage of the proposed Bill during eight months after its introduction to Parliament. Based on the abovementioned study's findings, the chapter presents four recommendations aiming at maximizing the effects of future human rights advocacy on sexual minority health rights in Uganda.

Keywords: Uganda, advocacy, HIV/AIDS, Homophobia, sexual minority, state-sanctioned discrimination.

Introduction

In the wake of the introduction of a piece of legislation seeking to further criminalize sexual minorities, Ugandan human right organizations mobilized and created a campaign organization *the Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Constitutional Law*, hereafter *the Coalition* to respond and educate the Ugandan public on the Bill's potential adverse effects. The purpose with the Coalition was to raise awareness around the proposed Bill and its potential effects on human rights in Uganda should it become law. Another key message was that the proposed Bill would not only threaten sexual minorities' health rights but have negative repercussions for the country's often lauded HIV/AIDS programs. In short, allowing discriminatory attitudes towards sexual minorities to influence

public health policy is not only problematic from a human rights perspective, but also counterproductive to the broader efforts of addressing the HIV epidemic.

The Ugandan human right defenders' attempt to influence local media to include their concerns with the proposed Bill was analyzed in a recent study - *Kill Bill! Ugandan human rights organizations' attempts to influence the media's coverage of the anti-homosexuality Bill*, (Strand 2011a). Using the abovementioned study's findings as a point of departure, the following chapter will explore how the results can inform future advocacy work on sexual minority health rights in Uganda. In short, how could the recent analysis of human rights defenders' attempts to influence the way media framed the Bill to its readers inform future advocacy strategies and practices?

The chapter will start with introducing the Ugandan context and the study that was conducted on Ugandan human rights defenders' advocacy work (Strand 2011a). The remaining part of the chapter will explore how the study could inform future advocacy practices. This section will also include a brief review of other potentially useful country experiences.

Background to the 2009 anti-homosexualite bill

Homosexuality in Uganda became criminalized by the former colonial power, the United Kingdom (Human Rights Watch 2008). Despite the documented existence of same-sex sexuality in traditional Ugandan society, independence from the United Kingdom in 1962 did not result in a de-criminalisation of homosexuality (Murray & Roscoe 1998; Tamale 2003). Instead, in 2005, legal discrimination of homosexuality was strengthened further, when President Museveni signed into law a constitutional amendment that prohibits same-sex marriages (Mujuzi 2009). Mujuzi (2009, p. 282) suggest the amendment was the result of a perception that the Ugandan "prevailing mores are seriously challenged by growing humanitarian counter-values".

Internationally, Uganda has made no attempt to hide its position on sexual minorities. It was not among the 66 countries that endorsed the 2008 United Nations General Assembly statement calling on countries to end discrimination based on sexual orientation (Mujuzi 2009); nor among the 85 countries in 2011 that supported the Human Rights council statement "Ending Acts of Violence and Related Human Rights Violations Based on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity" (United States Government 2011). In mid-2011 Uganda reaffirmed its position on sexual minorities in its report to the United Nations Human Rights Council, stating criminalization as a tool to protect minors. "Those who practice and / or support lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) issues continue to push for their recognition as a right. There is information of covert recruitment, of especially our children and youth, into such practices which we consider to be detrimental to the moral fabric of our society. In Uganda, there is an overwhelming consensus that such practices are untenable; and thus

culturally and legally unacceptable. It is our considered opinion that such practices remain a matter of private choice. There should be no promotion of those practices,” (United Nations Human Rights Council 2011 p. 23). Furthermore the Ugandan report asserts that “Uganda has adequate legal, policy and institutional frameworks and measures for addressing issues pertaining to the sustainable promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights. These frameworks and measures have contributed to successes realized in areas such as: HIV/AIDS control; access to education through UPE and USE; gender mainstreaming; inter-faith harmony; vibrant media; democratic governance; etc.” (United Nations Human Rights Council 2011 p. 25)

In addition to the discriminatory legal framework, several high-level Ugandan officials including the head of state have carried out verbal attacks on homosexuality (IGLHRC 2007; Milton and Edyegu 2008, Human Rights Watch 2008). Besides homophobia among politicians and public servants, anti-homosexual sentiments run deep in Ugandan society. The Pew Research Center’s Global Attitudes Project 2007 found that 96% of the surveyed Ugandans agree with the statement “Homosexuality should be rejected”, which is a strong indication that public opinion favors criminalization of homosexuality.

Despite this history of state-sanctioned discrimination of sexual minorities, Uganda made it into the international headlines in late 2009 due to the “Anti-homosexuality Bill”, as it was referred to by Member of Parliament Mr. David Bahati from the ruling National Resistance Movement. The Anti-homosexuality Bill will be referred to as the “Bill” in this text. The Bill proposed amongst other things life imprisonment for anyone convicted of “the offense of homosexuality” (Bahati 2009, Clause 2), as well as introduced the term “aggravated homosexuality”, for which the proposed sanction would be the death penalty (Bahati 2009, Clause 3). In addition, and of particular importance to journalists and human rights organizations, the Bill also outlined the offence of “promotion of homosexuality”. This clause is intended to curb the publishing of any information related same-sex sexual practices, or providing resources to organizations working with individuals involved in sex with another person of the same sex (Bahati 2009, Clause 13). Through the proposed clause on “failure to disclose the offence” (Bahati 2009, Clause 14), the Bill sought also to criminalize knowledge of homosexual activities. As the clause outlined that a person is required by law to report homosexuals to the police within 24 hours or face fines and/or up to a three year prison sentence themselves, it could potentially have grave implications for not only family members, but also doctors, teachers and journalists. Finally, Clause 18 of the Bill sought to give Ugandan domestic legislation primacy over Uganda’s international human rights obligations that were “contradictory to the spirit and provisions enshrined in this Act” (Bahati 2009, Clause 18).

As the draft text circulated among domestic human rights defenders and internationally, the proposed Bill was heavily criticized by both local human rights groups and later international organizations and development partners (Human Rights Watch & The International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission 2009b; Amnesty International 2010; Human Rights Watch 2009); as well as polit-

ical leaders from Uganda's main bilateral development partners, such as the UK and the US. Criticisms also came from multi-lateral organizations such as the European Parliament (European Union 2009), and the United Nations (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner of Human Rights 2010)

Local human rights defenders attempts to influence media coverage of the bill

The local media was perceived a key tool to reach individual Ugandans outside the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and trans-gendered (LGBT) community, and thus a key channel to influence the public opinion to oppose the proposed Bill. In order to raise the Ugandan public's awareness on the Bill's potential negative consequences for human rights and public health, the Coalition organized a range of media activities aiming at influencing the way local media framed the Bill to its reader/listeners/viewers. The media activities consisted of press conferences, coalition members giving interviews to local and international media, petitions against the Bill, as well as buying media space for two statement "*Anti-Homosexuality or Anti-Human Rights Bill?*" in October and *Embrace diversity; end discrimination in Uganda!*" on the International Human Rights Day, 10th of December. In addition, the Uganda Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Constitutional Law published a report entitled "*Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Bill: The Great Divide*", that highlighted critical aspects of the Bill. The Coalition partner, Amnesty international Uganda chapter, launched a separate report detailing the Bill's implications for human rights.

Although the Coalition never articulate their conceptual universe, their approach and strategy to try to influence media's framing of the Bill, in order to mobilize a public opinion against the Bill, mirrors the basic premises of agenda setting theory, and in particular its second level agenda setting. The agenda-setting theory can be described as the process whereby "the priorities of the press to some degree become the priorities of the public. What the press emphasizes is in turn emphasized privately and publicly by the audiences of the press" (Shaw and McCombs 1977, p. 6). This is accomplished through a process whereby the mass media signal the importance of an issue by giving it preferential treatment, such as frequent coverage and/or a prominent position in the media product. This process is often referred to as the first level of agenda-setting. The second level of agenda setting theory proposes that media also has agenda-setting effects at the attribute level by the way media frames the issues they cover. That is, the various objects/issues on the agenda all have "a variety of characteristics and traits that describe them ... some attributes are emphasized, others are mentioned only in passing. For each object on the agenda, there is an agenda of attributes that influence our understanding of the object" (McCombs 2005, p. 546).

Methodology for analyzing influence

In order to establish how successful the attempts to use the media as an instrument to present critical aspects of the Bill to the Ugandan public a study combining semi-structured qualitative interviews and quantitative content analysis was conducted in 2010. The interviews were conducted October 2009 – January 2010 with ten individuals promoting human rights in Uganda. Eight respondents came from three different entities: Amnesty International, Freedom and Roam Uganda and Uganda's Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Constitutional Law. Two additional respondents were active in the field of human rights, but were formally unaffiliated.

The quantitative content analysis was carried out on the Government – owned newspaper, the *New Vision* and the largest privately-owned newspaper The *Daily Monitor*. The choice to include both the Government-owned newspaper and the largest private newspaper was based on previous research from Namibia (Strand 2011b), and research from Ghana (Hasty 2006), clearly indicating the existence of government-owned media's bias and house style. Hasty (2006, p.79) conclude that while the Ghanaian journalists were trained in and committed to universal rules of journalism, such as newsworthiness criteria, narrative techniques, relationships with sources, journalists at the state owned media nevertheless deployed “a completely different set of journalistic practices to routinely reproduce the distinctive ‘house style’ of the newspaper”. The *Daily Monitor*, owned by the Kenyan Nation Media Group was selected as it is the largest newspaper in terms of circulation.

In order to measure the Ugandan human rights defenders influence, their main concerns and subsequently the way the organizations tried to have the media frame the Bill in their coverage needed to be identified. Through an analysis of the Uganda's Civil Society Coalition on Human Rights and Constitutional Law two statements combined with the interviews, the Coalition's main concerns and subsequently promoted frames were identified as follows:

1. The Bill is a threat against public health, as it threatens to undermine commitments and efforts to provide universal access to HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment.
2. The Bill is anti-human rights and anti-constitutional as it is contradictory to international human rights commitments and human rights protections enshrined in the Ugandan Constitution.
3. The Bill has repercussions for all Ugandans and not only homosexuals.

In addition, the content analysis measured whether the frames were conveyed in positive, negative or neutral tone. The tone in which the frame is delivered will clearly influence how the reader interprets the frame, i.e., either acknowledge it as a valid point of view or discards it.

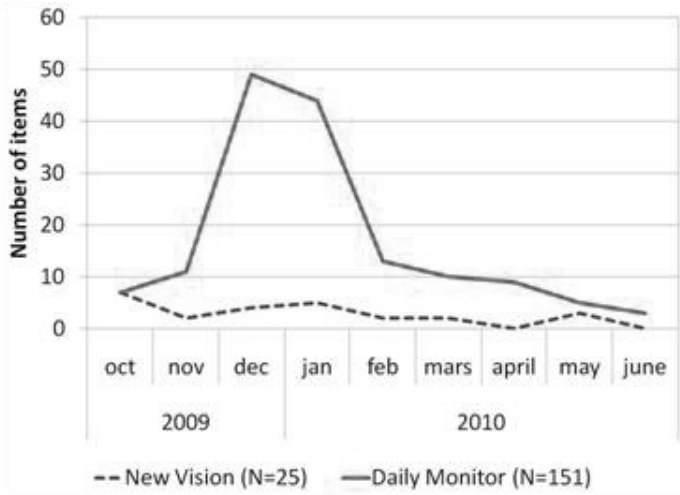
As the Bill was tabled in parliament on the 14th of October 2009, all items between the 14th of October 2009 until the 30 June 2010 containing one of the following search terms: 'homosexual', 'homosexuality', 'homo', 'gay', 'gays', 'gayism',

‘bisexual’, ‘lesbian’, ‘kuchu’ and ‘transgendered’ and a reference to the Bill was included in the sample. The time frame was selected to include the months of intense national and international debate that followed the tabling of the Bill in Parliament, and up until the point where no item on the Bill had appeared for two weeks. After mid May 2010 the Bill appeared to have almost disappeared from the media agenda.

Findings from the analysis

In total, 176 items were found between the 14th October 2009 and 30 June 2010 in the two newspapers. The total number of articles was distributed unequally, with 151 items found in the *Daily Monitor* and 25 items in the *New Vision*. Initially the *New Vision* and *Daily Monitor* awarded the Anti-Homosexuality Bill and issues related to sexual minorities an equal amount of coverage, only to a month later pursue two decidedly different editorial lines (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Number of articles (N=176) by month



Approximately at the time, mid- November, when the proposed Bill had turned into a source of intense international criticism, the Government-owned New Vision decides to decrease its coverage. *The Daily Monitor*’s editorial team instead increased its coverage.

Besides the differences in the frequency of coverage awarded to the proposed Bill, there were differences in the inclusion of the Coalition’s proposed frames. *New Vision* included two of the frames five times and the *Daily Monitor*, all three frames 34 times. (Table 1). It is noteworthy that *The New Vision*, failed to frame the Bill as having “*repercussions for all Ugandans and not only homosexuals*”.

Table 1. Distribution of attention to the three frames advocated

The promoted frames →	Bill is anti-public health	Bill is anti-human rights and anti-constitutional	Bill affects everyone not only LGBT
New Vision (N=25)	1	4	0
Daily Monitor (N=151)	6	20	8

A further analysis of *where* the three frames appeared in the newspapers showed that a majority of the promoted frames reappeared in items either produced by social commentators/columnists or in the Letters to the Editor section. That is, the inclusion of the promoted frames in both newspapers were not primarily the result of respective newspapers' editorial teams, but rather the product of external columnists or ordinary citizens wishing to contribute to the debate on the Anti-Homosexuality Bill (Table 2).

Table 2. Placement of the promoted frames in *New Vision* and *Daily Monitor*

	New Vision	Daily Monitor
News	1	11
Opinion/social commentary	2	19
Letter to the Editor	1	2
Other(Q&A, Feature)	1	2
Total	5	34

Finally, the items containing the three frames were also coded on whether the coverage was neutral, positive/supportive or negative/dismissive. This analysis revealed another interesting difference between the two newspapers. Out of the 34 times the *Daily Monitor* included the three frames, 25 instances were positive and supportive of the frame. Only once was the human rights advocates' frame dismissed, i.e. covered in a negative manner. The *New Vision*, on the other hand, dismissed the frames four out of five times. A further look at the positive/supportive coverage of the frames in the *Daily Monitor*, revealed that this coverage was a direct result of the relative high frequency of social commentaries and letters from readers – space that normally allows for clear standpoints. Neutral coverage of the frames was primarily found in the journalistically produced items. Finally, the analysis of the items containing the three promoted frames revealed that none of the frames were ever awarded any prominence, i.e., front page coverage in either newspaper.

In conclusion, departing from the media study's findings; it appears that Ugandan human rights defenders were only partly successful in influencing the two newspapers' editorial choices to cover their concerns with the proposed Anti-Homosexuality Bill. Furthermore, it seems that their influence on the second level of agenda setting was primarily dependent on three factors: (1) being able to *mobilize readers and independent commentators* to communicate the frames through space earmarked for opinions and commentary and (2) *type of newspaper*, which refers to the fact that the privately-owned *Daily Monitor* awarded both the proposed Bill a more frequent coverage, and a higher frequency of coverage in absolute numbers of the promoted frames, as well as allowed for a significantly more neutral or supportive coverage of all three promoted frames. Finally, the (3) *timing*, which refers to the fact that inclusion of the promoted frames, coincided with the peak of international criticism of the proposed Bill. It thus seems that international actors' criticism validated or at least strengthened domestic actors' concerns', which reinforced the promoted frames' perceived news value.

An ensuing question is however, what does this mean and how can the study inform advocacy practice? The remaining part of this chapter will explore how the findings from the media study can indeed inform the strategic choices of human rights organizations. It will do so by trying to distill the core findings from the abovementioned study, as well as review the campaign strategies and experiences from other organizations working with sexual health rights.

Strategies for moving sexual minority health rights forward

The introduction alluded to some of the contextual difficulties in communicating around sexual minority health rights in Uganda. Legal scholar Tamale (2003, p. 2) has described the vilification of those who support and work for equal rights for all Ugandans regardless of their sexual orientation as; "It is impossible to describe the depth of the ugliness, rage, revulsion, disgust and malevolence exhibited by the vocal homophobic public". In short, homophobia is present in a range of various societal spheres, the legal, executive branches of government, and the general public. Keeping these contextual hurdles mind, the media study does however suggest that even in highly restrained contexts, there are opportunities. The following recommendations are based on the analysis of the previous attempts to influence local media's framing of the proposed Bill.

1. Focus on privately-owned mainstream media

The content analysis found that the privately -owned the *Daily Monitor* not only provided the proposed Bill with significantly more coverage than the government-owned the *New Vision*. Furthermore, and most importantly, the privately owned media's coverage was, as opposed to the government-owned the *New Vision*, either neutral or positive/supportive in its coverage of the promoted frames. In addition, the privately -owned newspaper included all three promoted frames,

while the government-owned media failed to provide any coverage to the frame: *The Bill has repercussions for all Ugandans and not only homosexuals*. It thus appears that privately-owned media is more open to covering socially contentious issues, and include views that challenge state-sanctioned discrimination of sexual minorities and Ugandan homophobia. The privately owned print media thus appear to be less restricted by the surrounding societal context. It is however important to make a distinction between privately-owned *mainstream* media and more tabloid and scandal oriented privately-owned media such as the Red Pepper and the Rolling Stone, both known for their explicit homophobia and loud calls for discrimination and by regularly outing individuals believed to be homosexual.

In conclusion, and somewhat contradictory bearing in mind that public health and increased access and utilization of HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment is a government responsibility and priority, the media analysis clearly showed that human rights advocates should focus their attention and resources on the privately-owned mainstream media in situations where resources are limited for mediated advocacy on sexual health.

2. Mobilize independent writers and columnists

The analysis further showed the importance of mobilizing social commentators, columnists and taking full advantage of the spaces that are earmarked for opinion and commentary. In both the government and privately-owned newspaper, columnists, private citizens and social commentators ensured that the promoted frames made it into print. Indeed these groups contributed to 60% of the coverage in both the *Daily Monitor* and *the New Vision* (table 2). Furthermore, the social commentators and columnists in the privately -owned media did not only ensure the inclusion of the frames, but also a positive/supportive coverage of the same frames. Being able to mobilize these writers appeared to be essential to not only getting the messages into print, but also without being tampered with.

3. The importance of building partnerships like-minded with organizations

In the case of Uganda, it appears that local human rights advocates were the most successful in getting access to mainstream media space when other key actors, such as international political leaders, international human rights organizations and development partners communicated similar messages. In the Ugandan case the concerns communicated by local actors from October and onwards, were only included in any significant numbers on news spaces in November. Local concerns needed, it appears, to be validated and strengthened by external actors to be taken seriously and move from opinion space to news space. International criticism against the Bill peaked in November and December, as did the inclusion of the promoted frames.

Subsequently, timing advocacy efforts with other actors, in particular international actors if possible, seems to ensure both space earmarked for social

commentary and opinion as well as news space controlled by journalists. Subsequently, future advocacy strategies should consider establishing relationship with likeminded organization in the global south and north prior to launching campaign. These partnerships could serve to validate local grievances, and strengthen actors involved in local battles for human rights by exposing the battle-lines and showing the universality in their claims.

4. Review other organization's campaign strategies

A final recommendation is to explore the experiences of other organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa working with claiming and protecting health rights. In this field of advocacy, the organization *Treatment Action Campaign* in South Africa is perhaps one of the most well known campaign organizations on the African continent. The Treatment Action Campaign is an HIV/AIDS organization that was launched on the International Human Rights Day in December 1998 to fight for HIV positive people's human right and rights to treatment. While South Africa, with its unique constitutional protection for sexual minorities, might appear irrelevant to Ugandan organizations working with sexual minority rights, the experiences of Treatment Action Campaign can still offer some key insights.

Firstly, by framing Treatment Action Campaign's fight for universal access to HIV/AIDS services as a human rights issue, the organization has been able to connect to "transnational advocacy networks sympathetic to its cause and able to provide a receptive international political venue for its message. The human rights frame offers a collective reservoir of meaning and symbols that served to bridge gay and AIDS advocacy struggles in the industrialized countries with AIDS struggles in Africa" (Jacobs and Johnson 2007, p.133). Translating this experience to Uganda, would suggest that Ugandan organizations might consider continuing to firmly frame sexual minority rights as human rights. The recent media analysis also suggest an acceptance of this particular message, in so forth that among the three frames, *The Bill is anti-human rights and anti-constitutional as it is contradictory to international human rights commitment and human rights protections enshrined in the Ugandan Constitution*, was the most included in both the government-owned and privately -owned media. Jacobs and Johnson (2007, p.133) further suggest that Treatment Action Campaign's choice to frame their struggle as a struggle for human rights rather than any narrow interests has made mainstream media more sympathetic to the organization than to the South African government.

A second interesting advocacy strategy is Treatment Action Campaign's use of direct action as a means of gaining access to media space. Mbali (2008) suggest that Treatment Action Campaign's tactics are inspired by American gay activism from the 1980s, most notably *ACT UP- unleash the power*. ACT UP initially consisted of HIV-positive gay activists who were the first social grouping to be highly affected and later open about their HIV status in the early 1980s. Furthermore, as a group they had a recent history of fighting for their civil rights, which resulted in the organization quickly started framing their demands for treatment

services as part of a broader civil rights agenda. ACT UP further developed and radicalized earlier civil rights movements' direct action tools to include die-ins, kiss-ins, protest marches, street theater, political funerals, guerilla marketing in major American cities. ACT UP gained notoriety for its witty and media-savvy direct action campaigns. It briefly had an office in South Africa. By the early 2000's Treatment Action Campaign started to systematically include civil disobedience as a response to the government's failure to act. Treatment Action Campaign has, in order to increase pressure and increase organizational visibility developed a range of methods geared to attract media attention, such as theater-inspired protests at international conferences, mass public protest and marches. In short, the organization has learned to recognize "the media's logic, shortcomings and daily work patterns and is savvy about constructing media frames" (Jacobs and Johnson 2007, p.). Treatment Action Campaign's communication efforts have generated not only significant visibility to their issues, but deeply influenced mainstream media's overall portrayal of HIV/AIDS in South Africa (Jacobs and Johnson 2007).

Treatment Action Campaign's strategy of combining relentless litigation which on a number of occasions has resulted in them winning important cases against the government, with a healthy dose of ACT UP-inspired activism, as well as formal deliberation using the South African system's various platforms for policy dialogue, is as it should be a product of the opportunities available in the South African context. While the strategies developed by Treatment Action Campaign cannot and should not be carboned onto Uganda, the experiences from other countries could serve as a source of information and inspire mediated advocacy tailored to fit within the unique Ugandan legal, socio-cultural context.

Final Comments

In the last couple of years, there is a growing awareness on the need to acknowledge the biological, social and cultural factors exacerbating sexual minorities' vulnerability to HIV infection and that a comprehensive approach to HIV/AIDS cannot exclude this group's needs of tailored interventions (Smith et al. 2009; Global Fund 2009; Epprecht 2008). The previously held perception that the increased vulnerability of minorities and subsequent higher HIV-prevalence were contained in 'social pockets', and thus not a threat to the general population's health, is an incorrect assumption not only in Uganda, but elsewhere as well (Horizons Program 2006; Lorway 2006, 2007; Okal et al. 2009, Baral et al 2009, Uganda AIDS Control Programme, Ministry of Health, and the Makerere University School of Public Health. 2010). Discriminatory public health policy and practices towards sexual minorities is thus not only problematic from a human rights perspective, but also counterproductive to the broader efforts of addressing the HIV epidemic. The Ugandan human rights organizations' tried to raise awareness on the proposed Bill adverse effects on the often lauded Ugandan HIV/AIDS programs. But this battle is far from won.

Future advocacy around these issues needs to depart from a clear understanding of the Ugandan context's limitations; i.e., negative public opinion on sexual minorities, legislative discrimination, as well as the executive branches explicitly negative attitudes. But, as the media analysis showed, it is not impossible to promote human rights for sexual minorities using media channels. By analyzing and understanding the communication context, *and* bringing together local and international allies to raise awareness and demand for social change, it becomes possible to identify and take advantage of the opportunities that do exist even in a country where the government is failing to protecting not only sexual minorities' human rights, but failing to recognize that their rights are interlinked with the rest of the population's health rights.

* * *

At the time of writing in early 2013, the ultimate fate of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill is still uncertain. The Bill was scheduled to come up for a second reading during the last week of the eighth Parliament of Uganda in mid May 2011. While both the Anti-Homosexuality Bill and the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Bill appeared on the Order Paper of Parliament, neither was re-introduced before the closing of the Parliament. In late 2011 and throughout 2012 local and international media reports continued to surface claiming that the Anti-Homosexuality Bill would soon be reintroduced to the Parliament for a second reading. The 27th of November 2012, Order Paper for the Ugandan Parliament, did list the Bill at the top of the section titled "Notice of Business to Follow". The Bill was however never reintroduced before the Parliament adjourned for Christmas, as it was tied up with two controversial Petroleum Bills. The Bill did thus not become a "Christmas gift" to the Ugandan people as promoted by Rebecca Kadaga, speaker of Parliament.

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PART 4

Culture and Social Change

Makamba Culture Clubs

Towards Communication for Reconciliation

Nikita Junagade

Those who stayed in the country were afraid of those people who were coming back from other lands...they were afraid... as they thought that, as they are coming, they are going to take revenge.

Jacqueline, farmer, Makamba, Burundi

Abstract

This chapter is based on research conducted in 2008 related to the non-governmental organization the Adventist Development Relief Agency (ADRA), Denmark, and its project for the resettlement and reintegration of internally displaced persons, returnees and vulnerable people in Makamba, Burundi. The principal research question focuses on how rural 'culture clubs' initiated by ADRA contribute to peace and reconciliation in the lives of club members. After generations of hostility, years of internal warfare and the loss of homes, livelihoods and family members, how can those most disrupted by conflict rebuild their fragmented society? The chapter describes how these clubs open channels of communication in a community governed by suspicion, and enable a process of empowerment and a recodification of identities, altering how members see themselves and how they perceive others. Through concepts from communication for social change, conflict transformation and narrative theory, the chapter draws from the Burundian experience to set out a theoretical framework for communication for reconciliation, that is, communication initiatives that aim to help reweave the social fabric of a post-conflict community.

Keywords: culture clubs, communication for reconciliation, post-conflict, empowerment, dialogue

Introduction

Burundi is a tiny country in East Africa affected by decades of armed conflict and ethnic hostility, and attempting to make its way towards political and economic stability. It has faced ethnic tensions for generations, and regular outbreaks of violence between Hutu and Tutsi have approached genocidal proportions.

In 1972, anywhere between 150,000 and 300,000 people were killed in a matter of weeks, precipitating a wave of refugees into neighbouring regions (Lemarchand, 2008). In the 1990s, while the genocide in Rwanda resounded in horror across the globe, the massacre of roughly 300,000 civilians in Burundi went largely unnoticed by the international media. As negotiations and fighting continued side by side, an estimated 40,000 Burundians returned to peaceful parts of the country, while a similar number fled fighting elsewhere to seek refuge in a neighbouring region or state.¹ In 2000, some 570,000 Burundian civilians were officially recognized as refugees, most of them living in neighbouring Tanzania. This constant and forced displacement has had a profound effect on Burundian society over the years. Although roughly 89 percent of the internally displaced have remained within their *commune* or province of origin (ADRA, 2008), household economic and social ties have nonetheless been substantially affected. Burundi is one of the world's poorest countries. It ranks second among sub-Saharan African nations in terms of population density, and most of its largely agrarian population faces water scarcity and a shortage of cultivatable land.

Image 1. Map of Burundi



Makamba, the southernmost province of Burundi, saw a mass displacement of its population across the border to Tanzania during the 1972 genocidal violence. In the decades that followed, the province was besieged by attacks from rebel groups, the Burundian army, and army-supported militia, all of whom looted and destroyed property, killing members of both Hutu and Tutsi communities in the process. As a result, the inhabitants of the region fled their homes to seek refuge in neighbouring areas. Most remained within the country, however, returning to their land for brief intervals, only to flee again following a resurgence in attacks. The period of displacement varied from a few months to over two years. Most of the people living in Makamba today were displaced from their lands during army and rebel violence in the years 1993-2002 (ADRA, 2008).

It is these people who now have to contend with the long-standing '1972 refugees', as they are referred to by the UNHCR, currently being repatriated from Tanzania. The Tanzanian government plans to close all its refugee camps, which has led to an exponential increase in the number of Burundian families returning to their homesteads. Makamba province has received among the highest number of returning refugees in the country. Since 2002, some 112,095 refugees have been repatriated (UNHCR, 2009:5). The province faces a considerable problem reintegrating these 1972 refugees into the community that remained in the country.

Image 2. Refugee camp, Kibago, Burundi



Unfortunately, signing peace treaties does not ensure the safety of displaced persons returning to their homes. Many of the adult refugees are entering Burundi for the first time in their lives. Their children, who were born in Tanzania, speak Swahili instead of the Burundian native language, Kirundi. Also, the lack of information in refugee camps means that the returnees are apprehensive about their welcome in the community after so many years of conflict. In addition to this fear of violence is an anxiety about how they will survive. The land abandoned by families fleeing the region 30 years before has been appropriated by the many subsequent governments and redistributed among the people who remained. As a result, the returnees make their way to their ancestral land only to find strangers living there. Naturally, this leads to potentially violent situations in which both parties claim the land. Such situations are widespread and have become a common problem. They lead to tensions between current residents and the returnees, and the local government struggles to cope.

After generations of hostility, years of internal warfare and the loss of homes, livelihoods and family members: how can those most disrupted by the conflict rebuild their fragmented society? Can the community move forward with the reconstruction of lives not just on a material level, but on an emotional one as well?

ADRA: Working for peace and reconciliation in Makamba

These are some of the issues that the Adventist Development Relief Agency, the global humanitarian organization of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church (active as ADRA DK/Burundi since 2000), is attempting to address in its project on peace and reconciliation in Makamba. In order to help the province's returnees resettle and rebuild their lives, ADRA provides support with the construction of houses and distributes seeds and other non-food items to the community.

ADRA has incorporated 'peace and reconciliation' activities into the project in order to address the tensions caused due to returning 1972 refugees and conflicts over ancestral land, by encouraging people to create 'culture clubs' at the *colline*² level. For ADRA, the aim of these cultural groups is 'to bring people together and give them the opportunity to learn through leisure' (ADRA, 2008). These groups are then invited to prepare a performance on the theme of peace and reconciliation for 'cultural days' organized by ADRA.

The culture clubs formed as a result of ADRA's initiatives have members of various ages, but most are composed solely of women. Most of the members had never been in a play, and many had never even seen one before. During club meetings, members improvise and collectively compose sketches, songs and dances, as well as poetry or traditional Burundian drumming performances, on issues related to peace and reconciliation. The meetings are a sort of brainstorming or collective storytelling session, where personal stories and experiences are shared to contribute to the group performance.

But what exactly does reconciliation imply in such a situation? How can communication for social change initiatives be tailored to address such issues in post-conflict situations?

Communication for reconciliation in theory

This section outlines the theoretical background for what I term communication for reconciliation.

Conflicts and reconciliation

The conflict in Burundi is what John Paul Lederach, an American conflict transformation and peacebuilding scholar, calls an intra-national conflict – a conflict that takes the form of an ethnic conflict rooted in long-standing fear, mistrust and paranoia among the people, reinforced by the immediate experience of violence, division and atrocities. Such conflicts are characterized by the close proximity of the conflicting groups, their shared common histories, and a dynamic of severe stereotyping coupled with radically differing perceptions of each other (Lederach, 1997: 15).

For individuals in such a context to reconcile with those perceived as belonging to the opposing group is no simple matter. Sidelineing theological and spiritual notions of reconciliation, and focusing instead on building a working definition of micro-level reconciliation at the practical grassroots level, reconciliation can be seen as the building or restoring of trust in the wake of wrongdoing (Govier, 2002: 144). Reconciliation is thus a matter of rebuilding and conducting a relationship (Govier, 2002: 77). It can also be defined as the process through which antagonistic attitudes and relationships between adversaries are transformed from negative to positive.³

Another important aspect of the process of reconciliation is the change in each party's identity. In conflict-ridden societies, individuals' identities are often constructed in terms of whether they are members of the oppressing or the oppressed class, and are based on the denial of the identity of the other (Dwyer, 2003; Kelman, 2004; Lederach, 1997). This must be addressed in the reconciliation process. Challenging one's collective identity by removing the negation of the other from it implies a degree of acceptance of the other's identity. It is necessary that each party revises its own identity just enough to accommodate the identity of the other and build on the positive interdependence of their identities (Kelman, 2004).

Lederach contends that as a social phenomenon, reconciliation represents a space – a place or location of encounter – where people can focus on their relationships and share their feelings and experiences with one another, with the goal of creating new perceptions and a new shared experience. People need the opportunity and space to share the trauma of loss and receive acknowledgement. The future must be envisaged in a way that enhances interdependence, and opportunity must be given to people to look forward and envision their shared future. Thus, reconciliation, in essence, represents a point of encounter where concerns about both the past and the future can meet. Reconciliation-as-encounter suggests that space for acknowledging the past and envisioning the future is the necessary ingredient for reframing the present. For this to happen,

people must find ways to encounter themselves and their enemies, as well as their hopes and fears. Where was this space in Makamba? How could this type of encounter take place between the returnees and current residents? Did the culture clubs play a role?

Storytelling: a narrative construction of reality

Jackson (2002), based on his work with refugees in Sierra Leone, explores the ways in which storytelling contrives to cross and blur the line between different subjectivities. How can storytelling transverse the space that we call private and the space that is public, and thus enable a therapeutic process in the culture club participants?

According to the political theorist, Hannah Arendt, storytelling is how we remember and think through experience. Thinking about an experience requires that we remember it and recount it to ourselves. This invariably takes the form of telling a story. She contends that storytelling redeems us through its power to convert private experience into general knowledge (Hill, 1979: 288). It enables a change from passivity to activity. This transformation will involve the person actively taking charge of his or her own memories, a process enabling the recovery of narrative memory – the action of telling a story (Hill, 1979: 175).

Refugees are often isolated and trapped within their own traumatic experiences, further exacerbating the feeling of being isolated in the world. (Jackson, 2002: 71). Storytelling, Jackson argues, changes our experience of events that have befallen us by symbolically restructuring them (Jackson, 2002: 16). Jackson sees storytelling as ‘a vital human strategy for sustaining a sense of agency in the face of disempowering circumstances. To reconstitute events in a story is no longer to live events in passivity, but to actively rework them, both in dialogue with others and within one’s own imagination’ (Jackson, 2002: 15).

Another point to consider is how storytelling in groups involves various narrators and several points of view. Storytelling, simply by virtue of being a shared action of speaking, singing, sitting together and voicing viewpoints, makes possible a momentary fusion of disparate and often undisclosed private experiences. Rather than the content of the story and its nature, Jackson emphasizes the ‘vital capacity of people to work together to create, share, affirm and celebrate something that is held in common’ (Jackson, 2002: 40). Did the storytelling and story-making processes within the culture clubs have a similar effect on the club members in Makamba?

Communication for Social Change: the meta-framework

Communication for Social Change (CFSC) is principally about creating a space where people directly affected by an issue can get together and engage in dialogue. It is essentially a process of public and private dialogue through which people determine who they are, what they need and what they want in order to

improve their lives (Gumucio-Dragon and Tufte, 2006: 14). The main principle behind CFSC is the idea that people can be the drivers of their own change. Thus, participation is at the root of this approach and the key notion is horizontal as opposed to vertical communication. CFSC attaches importance to the appropriation of the communication process – not just the content of the information. It also builds on local knowledge and traditions, basing the communication process on the societal realities of a particular community (Gumucio-Dragon and Tufte, 2006: 20).

Dialogue and conscientization

The foundation of participatory communication theory lies in Freire's basic model of dialogue. He places an enormous amount of importance on dialogue, which in his opinion must be based on mutual respect. It is not that one person is seen to be superior or more educated than the other, but people relating with one another as equals and each learning from the other. Freire also talks of the importance of raising collective consciousnesses to build the power to transform reality. In his book, *Education for Critical Consciousness*, Freire writes of how a 'culture circle' focused on participation and dialogue among the illiterate people of rural Brazil awakened the consciousness of the participants, that is, led to the evolution of a critical attitude.

Theatre and Communication for Social Change

Theatre is most often used as a tool for disseminating developmental messages to the audience that is the community. (This is in part what ADRA intended to achieve through the culture clubs.) However, it has many more possibilities from a CFSC perspective. In the opinion of the South African playwright, Zakes Mda, theatre can provide a method of implementing Freire's ideas on raising the critical awareness of people (Mda, 1993: 10). The objective of theatre as a development tool is to bring about an opening of the mind, rather than merely giving the community information that will increase its knowledge. This may be created through the audience's active participation in creating the message. *Conscientization* is a process that comes through active participation and involves a change in attitude, since participants are drawn out of the 'culture of silence' and become activists in the analysis of social problems and in the search for solutions. Mda calls this theatre for conscientization, in which participants are encouraged to voice their ideas, allowing them to bring their influence to bear on the final results (Mda, 1993: 88). For theatre to act as a vehicle for raising critical awareness or *conscientization*, the target communities should be active participants not only in the performance of the plays, but in the selection of the content and even in the choice of the medium. What effects did performing have on the club members on the culture club members in Makamba?

Producing communication messages

In her book, *Fissures in the Mediascape*, the Colombian communication scholar, Clemencia Rodriguez, focuses on the effects of the media production process on the community. Through participation in the creation of citizens' media and engagement in the production process, people actively participate in actions that reshape their own identities, the identities of others and their social environments. Pre-established cultural codes and traditional power relations can be disrupted, and participants can reconstruct their self-perception and social context as they become message producers and senders. According to Rodriguez, the myriad of power relations that involve everyone in the community are not static, but are constantly shifting. Participation in the production of citizens' media helps to permanently reconstitute these relationships. Rodriguez contends that citizens' media function as environments that facilitate the fermentation of identities and power positions. Thus, becoming the producer of a form of communication can be an empowering process, generating changes in the social and cultural spheres of people's lives.

I sought to examine the processes in the Makamba culture clubs in light of Rodriguez's theory by viewing the participants as the creators of their own communication messages.

Equipped with these theoretical lenses, I analysed the data collected during fieldwork in Burundi from September to November 2008, to explore whether the Makamba culture clubs served as a means of communication for reconciliation in action.

Communication for reconciliation in action in the Makamba Culture Clubs

During the fieldwork, I gathered qualitative data on the members of the culture clubs – brief life histories, their motivations and their activities in the clubs – through a combination of participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The sample of 16 people interviewed reflected the make-up of the clubs. Most clubs consisted of women from the age of 20 to over 60. A majority of the interviewees were women. Most clubs consisted of members from the same hill. All the participants had been directly affected by conflict. Almost all had had to flee their land. Some had stayed away for a few months while others had remained 'in hiding' for up to two years. Roughly half had lost close family members in the violence.

At the time of the study, there were over 30 culture clubs across Makamba. These clubs conducted meetings to develop a sketch, a dance and song, or a drumming performance based on the broad theme of 'peace and reconciliation'. They chose their medium of expression and had complete creative freedom over the content, based purely on their preferences and experiences, without a facilitator of any kind. The meetings were held in any location that was avail-

able – the headquarters of a political party, the school building or under the shade of a few trees.

During the meetings, the clubs improvised and spontaneously created their performance. In the discussions that preceded the creation of the content, the individuals in the group reflected on their experiences, beliefs and knowledge in relation to the issue concerned. These meetings were a sort of group brainstorming session, during which personal experiences were described and stories told, leading to the collective creation of the performance. Most of the resulting performances were a combination of an initial recitation of a poem followed by a sketch interspersed with songs, drumming, and dance. The clubs played various roles in the lives of their participants. This section describes how the clubs are interpreted as spaces for different processes of reconciliation.

Image 3. Performance drummer group “Le Pantheur”, Burundi



The clubs as spaces of encounter

Busy cultivating their land, and limited by the long distances between settlements, individuals in Makamba rarely have the opportunity to initiate conversation with people other than family members, hill leaders or a few close neighbours. Suspicion and rumour abound. Current inhabitants fear that new returnees will take their land, while the returnees, for their part, are suspicious and feel unwelcome. Such apprehensions inhibit contact between the two groups, and many interviewees mentioned that although they had often seen certain people in passing, no words had been exchanged. The culture clubs have succeeded in breaking down these barriers to initial contact. Many of the participants identified the clubs and the club meetings as one of the first places in which spoken interaction had occurred with returnees.

Isabelle, a 35-year old farmer, displaced for five years, who dances in the Twungubumwe club, expressed how she had changed her image of certain people: 'Yes, because once I thought that they were my enemies. When we met in the club, they became friends'. Asked who these enemies were, she replied: 'I cannot point to anyone, but of course, there were some that I suspected'. The clubs address these nebulous fears and suspicions that colour people's views of one another and, through transparent communication for a common goal (the performance), help dispel these misconceptions. This was reinforced by Charlotte, a 35-year old farmer and founding member of Twiterambere, who said, 'Before I entered the club, I had a strong vision of the other group different from mine. But nowadays, my life has changed, I am open as we have to live together sharing this land, we are brothers and sisters, and we have to live together like this although there may still be differences between us'.

Expressing how the club meetings also function as a forum of discussion, Charlotte referred to ethnic hostility: 'Before, we could not talk to each other in good temperament. But now we are together. If a problem occurs, we bring it and we discuss it in the group and then it is over. We don't go and hide so that tomorrow, it [the ethnic violence] may break out once again'. This is especially important in a situation in which ethnicity underscores every aspect of life and yet is never openly spoken of, and people generally avoid bringing disputes into the open. The cultural groups provide a relatively unobtrusive space in which to openly address such problems before they spiral into malicious rumours and suspicions.

The performances staged by the clubs are the product of a collective creative process and the result of group discussions. According to Charlotte: 'We are discussing, not quarrelling, not someone imposing himself'. The clubs are a place where women's opinions hold equal value to those of men, as women from mixed gender clubs made clear. It seems that the clubs provide the social openness for each member to speak out, even though some might not do so initially due to personal inhibitions.

The clubs as spaces of healing

Plagued by constant violence due to endless army and rebel attacks, the inhabitants of Makamba have been forced to flee, have lost loved ones and have witnessed countless acts of violence.

The entire club discusses potential narratives for their performance, sitting in a circle for storytelling-type sessions to generate a plot around the theme. Naturally, when dealing with a theme such as peace and reconciliation, these discussions evoke memories and stories relating to people's own experiences of violence, flight, fear and loss. It became apparent that the club group discussions functioned as a neutral space where events concerning flight could be recounted. Topics previously unapproachable in everyday conversations were now open for discussion in a non-threatening atmosphere. By providing unthreatening spaces for sharing personal recollections, the clubs broke the silence, bridging the private and public realms.

As Helene, who has not heard from her husband since he fled in 1972, and who became the sole supporter of their four children stated: 'I wanted to teach, to transmit what I knew, my sadness, my feelings [...] because you know, I had problems with long days of sorrow, without my husband, without someone to talk to'. Another club member, Alice, a 48-year old mother of eight who lost her father and two brothers during the violence, spoke of how recounting her experience to her group had given her a sense of liberation: 'The topic of people coming from other lands was a bad, a bitter subject. Now I dared talk in the clubs. Now I feel happy. And when I am with other women, playing, performing, I open my spirit, so to see other lands and so other subjects come into my mind'. Thus, by providing an atmosphere to help overcome mental barriers, and then providing a platform to air feelings, the clubs act as a therapeutic tool.

The clubs are also a sorely needed area where individuals can escape from the daily battle with poverty. Many participants spoke of the happiness they obtained from performing. 'This [the club] helps the audience, especially those who became orphans because this shows that they are not alone. [...] It helps them of course because while laughing they forget their past. And maybe they forget what things they were planning to do, bad things to do to maybe those who killed their fathers', said 23-year old Estelline. Estelline's statement here is particularly poignant as she herself lost her parents in the violence. For those who have lost their family and no longer have close ties with anyone, the clubs are a means of chasing away loneliness by forming new bonds. This is particularly true for Estelline, who has come to see her club members as a substitute family: 'These women are replacing my parents. They helped me very much in showing me how I could feed, look for shelter for and clothe my sisters...'. Similarly, Helene also had strong feelings for her group: 'Of course it changed my vision of the future. Because before I was alone. And I thought that all my future I will be alone. But now I am seeing that the remaining days of my life will be with the other women in the group and the other persons in all the community. I will be a member. I will be happy with them'.

It is clear that the clubs provide a new sense of collective identity and belonging to individuals who have been uprooted by the war and who have lost their social ties in the community. Through the clubs they can attempt to discover their place in this new society and can begin to build new relationships, reweaving the social fabric of their lives.

Image 4. Celebration during culture club performance, Burundi



The groups also serve as a relatively neutral area in which events of the war can be discussed, an area that is sorely needed in the current environment of rural Makamba. Talking of the past and mentioning ethnicity are viewed with suspicion and fear, and normally discouraged by the authorities. Although informal group discussions can never hope to be enough to adequately deal with and heal traumatic experiences, it cannot be denied that the clubs provide the means to break the silence surrounding such matters.

The clubs as spaces to recodify identities

The clubs are a space for learning and self-discovery. The members have the opportunity to create their own performances using the cultural medium of their choice. Through the finished product, they have succeeded in transforming their ideas into a concrete reality – a performance that is seen and appreciated by the

people around them. It is the process of creation rather than just the final product that is so important. It is an extremely empowering process – the participants discover their hidden talents, see themselves in a new light and reconstruct their identities and their relationships with those around them.

It is clear that the members see the clubs as a means of widening their horizons. Jean, the 25-year old founding member of the drumming group 'Le Pantheur', said: 'Through our drums we travel and we learn. [...] I discovered places and I also discovered friends.' The clubs also reflect the desire of many of the women to move beyond the limitations of their traditional roles and take a more active part in the community. According to Helene: '[...] Since I attended the group, it is the time that I saw the world being opened. From the time that I began to participate, I began extending, I opened the world'. Intelligence was a recurring theme in the interviews with the club members, especially the women, most of whom were illiterate or educated only to primary school level. On further exploration, it became clear that the clubs are bringing about a subtle Frierian shift in the notion of what is implied by intelligence. Participation in the culture clubs has helped people realize that inherent knowledge from life experiences also counts as knowledge. The club interactions led them to discover that they could contribute to the creation of the performance despite their perceived ignorance, simply through the richness of their own experiences.

Image 5. Performance by Club Terimbere, Burundi



Many club members made powerful testimonies to their new voice and their new-found sense of confidence. As Natalie, from the group 'Kugaruka Amahoro', said: 'For example today, I can speak to anyone. [...] Before I would have never done that – I would have been scared'; and Helene: 'Since I got into this club, I refreshed my memory. I got intelligence and I opened my mind. Now I'm feeling as much of a woman as others'.

It is clear that one of the key sources of this new-found sense of pride and self-esteem is the new role that performing in the club imposes on members – that of teachers of their community. For Estelline, for example, the fact that she is producing messages to help her community gives her a sense of purpose: 'When I am performing I am happy. [...] I was happy because I thought that all the spectators were seeing in me an image of an intelligent girl who is transmitting a message and who is going to perform and to work for the future'. In this way, when the members see themselves through the eyes of the public, they see a new image of themselves. For the women especially, their performances in the clubs have a clear impact on their roles in their own households, leading to a negotiation and renegotiation of family relationships. The support and pride of their families is a strong boost to their self-esteem.

The women not only overcome their inhibitions to perform, they also bring up taboo topics such as rape, and yet remain unsanctioned: 'remaining within, while simultaneously stretching the bounds of what is considered acceptable for women' (Downing 2001: 106). This is a means of 'slowly negotiating and eroding patriarchal codes without sparking damaging condemnation or retribution' (Downing, 2001: 106).

The clubs as a space for the beginnings of critical consciousness

The clubs help their members obtain a better understanding of the community's problems. For example, speaking of the negative effects of poverty, Helene said: 'Of course it affects the different members of the community. For example, some members of the community do not have shelter and they pass some days without eating. And you know, when you pass a day without eating, the following day your face will be dark. And you will be looking at your neighbour and this is the beginning of conflict of course'. Reflecting on what is needed in order for these obstacles to be overcome, Estelline, for example, found that: 'the source of fighting this poverty is maybe being in an association. Now, we made a first association – the cultural group. [...] When people are together, they will work together and maybe harvest a lot and fight against the poverty'. Although it is too soon to draw definite conclusions, the culture clubs seem to be slowly leading to other forms of collective action, such as collective farming efforts.

Speaking of what she learned from her activities in the club, Helene said: 'I learned something very important. That myself, I am very important. Being a human being, I am important as another one is important. Now we are important being two or more, we have to live'. This demonstrates how the increased sense of self-worth gained through the club enables her to acknowledge the inherent humanity and 'importance' of each person, including herself.

It must be admitted that in a society so long governed by fear, it is difficult for rural communities to look beyond the views of the authorities and of the people in power. Nonetheless, the clubs seem to have led some of the participants to critically question and address issues related to their daily lives.

Towards a new framework: Communication for reconciliation

Thus, weaving a thread that brings together the analytical findings and theoretical concepts outlined above, it can be seen that:

- Reconciliation is about transforming attitudes and relationships between people from negative to positive, and implies acknowledgment of the past, identity recodification, and the re-establishment of trust. It is about finding a space where interpersonal relationships can be rebuilt.
- Recounting experiences to a group of peers in the form of stories has the power to mediate between the private and public realms, thereby transforming traumatic experiences. It helps to rework the past, thereby creating a new narrative of reality.
- Theatre groups have potential as areas of participation, dialogue and consequentially conscientization, to produce a better understanding of the world.
- The creation of a communication message has the potential to recodify identities, reconstruct perceptions of the self and others, and thereby renegotiate relationships.

Communication for reconciliation combines CFSC theory and reconciliation theory, aiming to address the needs of post-conflict situations. It incorporates key concepts from CFSC to suit the particular contextual conditions in such cases, taking into account the requirements for reconciliation. CFSC, in general, is about action targeting structural change. Communication for reconciliation focuses more on the participatory aspect of CFSC, and uses it to open dialogue within the divided community. It focuses on opening channels of communication to transform identities by seeing oneself and others in a new way, thereby rebuilding relationships for a more sustainable, peaceful and interdependent future.

Taking account of the theoretical concepts and the analysis of the Makamba culture clubs set out above, I propose that the scope for communication for reconciliation initiatives address four dimensions:

- The first dimension consists of *looking back at the past*. It allows individuals to address the events of their own past. This can only be done if it enables people to communicate the trauma caused by these events, acknowledge it and move beyond it.
- The second dimension consists of *looking within oneself*. It is about using communication as a process for recodifying the individual's own identity,

to allow for the modified identity of the conflicting party and to come to terms with a new reality.

- The third dimension consists of *looking at others*. It is the relational dimension, which is about facilitating interaction and opening dialogue between people to rebuild relationships. It is about re-establishing trust, which can only be done through mutual interaction and mutual identity renegotiation – changing the impression of the ‘other’.
- The fourth dimension consists of *looking towards the future*. It is an interaction and exchange of ideas that enables movement in a forward direction, envisioning an interdependent future and taking the first steps towards this common future.

These can then constitute the building blocks for what may loosely be called communication for reconciliation – a new approach that provides a set of lenses through which to examine reconciliation initiatives from a CFSC point of view.

Returning to the specific case of the culture clubs in Makamba, and viewing the findings on their activities through these lenses, the clubs can be regarded as a form of communication for reconciliation in action. By enabling interaction and dialogue, the culture clubs address the dimension of communication for reconciliation initiatives that calls for *looking at others* and addresses rebuilding relationships. The findings also show that the clubs function as spaces for personal and collective healing by addressing the past through stories, drama, songs and dance, thus addressing the dimensions *looking at the past* and *looking within oneself*. The findings demonstrate that through processes that recodify identities and renegotiate relationships, the clubs also address the second and third dimensions, *looking within oneself* and *looking at others*. Finally, the findings show that the clubs enable their members to re-examine societal problems and envision forms of collective action that might bring about solutions. This is the forward movement towards an interdependent future addressed in the fourth dimension, *looking towards the future*. Thus, from this perspective, we see how the clubs fulfil all the conditions for communication for reconciliation.

Conclusions

What happens when wars end? Official ceasefires and peace treaties cannot lead former opponents to see one another in a fundamentally different light. Beginning within the CFSC paradigm, and complemented by conflict transformation theory and narrative theory, I have developed a theoretical framework for CFSC initiatives dealing specifically with reconciliation at the grassroots level. This framework maintains that the core aspects of communication for reconciliation initiatives consist of four dimensions, that is, they focus on the past, they focus on the individual within, they focus on interpersonal relationships and they focus on action towards the future. The findings on culture clubs in Makamba reflect

this, demonstrating that they help individual participants come to terms with their past, engage in dialogue with their peers, change their images of themselves and of others and, ultimately through all this, arrive at a better understanding of their neighbours and their community – leading to a more peaceful society with better relations between individuals.

Reweaving the social fabric of a community after it has been torn apart by violence is clearly a long, slow process. There is no short cut and no magic formula guaranteed to bring peace and rebuild trust in divided communities. However, the space provided by the culture clubs in Makamba is a valuable one. The impact of the culture clubs lies not only in what they have been able to do for the community as a whole, but also in what the clubs have been able to provide for their members – increased self-confidence, voice, a vision of the future, critical thinking, catharsis and a strengthened sense of belonging to the community with a better understanding of their roles and potential roles in it. By contributing to the creation of empowered individuals, the clubs contribute to building a more secure, sustainable and peaceful society.

A fundamental question in post-conflict scenarios, according to John Lederach, is how to create a catalyst for reconciliation and then sustain it in divided societies. It is clear that communication for reconciliation initiatives, such as the clubs in Makamba, have enormous potential in this regard – not only in Burundi, but also in other rural communities throughout the world. To leave the last word to Helene: 'Reconciliation, as far as I am concerned, means to see someone else as an image of you. You have to see another man as you see yourself. This is the basic, the foundation of humankind. This is reconciliation, because if you see a person as an animal, there isn't any way to be in peace, and to live together. First of all see the person as you'.

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Notes

- 1 For more details see the website of the IRC, www.irc.org.
- 2 The province is composed of six *communes*, each divided into zones, and further subdivided into hills, or *collines* as they are referred to locally. For all purposes, the hill is the smallest state administrative unit, and most people identify themselves and each other based on the hill that they live on. The 'village' unit as such does not exist.
- 3 Assefa, (http://www.gppac.net/documents/pbp/part1/2_reconc.htm)

Communicating Crime Prevention

Participation and Building Trust in Kibera

Ricky Storm Braskov

Abstract

Nairobi has been suffering from high levels of crime and violence for many years. This has had far reaching consequences for the city economically as well as for the welfare of its citizens. Until recently, there has been little focus on crime prevention to address these challenges, and the initiatives that do exist have been in the hands of the private sector and NGOs, with no clear leadership from the city council or local government. However, with the establishment in 2006 of the Safer Nairobi Initiative as a coordinating body for crime prevention based at the Nairobi City Council, the city has taken steps to address the issue. At the same time Nairobi's largest informal settlement, Kibera, has seen a surge in the establishment of youth self-help groups focused on developing livelihoods for unemployed youths. These groups, which are actively encouraged by the city council, are to a large extent made up of young unemployed men, who are the most likely to be either the perpetrators or the victims of crime. Using fieldwork conducted in Kibera, this chapter addresses crime prevention aimed at youth in Nairobi's slums. Focusing on community-based approaches and participatory communication, the study seeks to identify strategies and frameworks for more sustainable and effective ways of managing crime prevention. The study presents findings and recommendations on how future partnerships between Nairobi City Council and the Kibera youth self-help groups could contribute to more sustainable crime prevention interventions in Nairobi.

Keywords: crime prevention, participatory communication, youth, self-help, slum, community-based approach

Introduction

To be young in Africa (has come) to mean being disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginal in the political and economic sense (Burgess, 2005: ix).

The largest-ever generation of young people is currently entering the transition from childhood to adulthood in Kenya. Nairobi, in particular, continues to attract thousands of youths in search of jobs and opportunities. Most of them end up in overcrowded slums such as Kibera, Kawangware or Mathare. This large young population presents both challenges and opportunities for Kenya. Little has been done to include them in decision-making, however, and many feel marginalized. Of the many challenges facing Kenyan youth, unemployment is one of the most immediate. According to the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, the negative effects of crime and drugs also pose serious challenges for contemporary Kenyan youth, and violent criminal attacks such as rape, muggings, armed carjacking and home invasions are increasingly associated with youth (Nairobi City Council, 2005). During my interviews and meetings with marginalized youths and youth groups, it was clear that the majority did not have high expectations for the future. Almost all were unemployed and had no tangible prospects of gaining employment or securing an income in the formal sector. Since many of the youths have grown up parentless and have only attended school sporadically, they are also at high risk of victimization and involvement in crime from a very early age, and several reported that they had been exposed to drugs and crime from as young as seven years old.

During six months of research I interviewed and talked to chairmen and members of seven different youth self-help groups in and around Kibera's Sarangombe Ward,¹ and conducted interviews and focus groups with current and former young offenders. In addition, I interviewed several representatives of Nairobi City Council (NCC) and the United Nations, who were directly involved in projects and programmes linked to crime prevention in Nairobi. As many of the issues I discussed with the interviewees were of a sensitive nature, all the names of individuals, groups and places have been either withheld or changed.

Encouraging partnerships

As one of the main protagonists in crime prevention in Nairobi, Nairobi City Council should play a key role in formulating crime prevention interventions and coordinating the work of key actors. However, there is currently little or no interaction between the NCC and the residents of Kibera, and virtually none when it comes to the youths in the settlement. All those interviewed in Kibera reported that they had very little, if any, interaction with the NCC, and the majority displayed mistrust of the authorities such as the NCC, the police and local government. The same mistrust prevails in the NCC, to a large extent, and most officials are either ignorant of or indifferent to the issues and challenges facing the residents of Nairobi's slums. Although there have been attempts to establish a Safer Nairobi Initiative (SNI), as a coordinating body in relation to crime prevention in the NCC, there remain a crucial lack of communication, information exchange and coordination between potential partners in crime prevention in Nairobi. This means that interventions are often implemented or replicated

without concern for what has previously been attempted or is currently taking place in the city. If initiatives and interventions are to have a lasting impact on youth crime in Nairobi, there needs to be a greater focus on participatory crime prevention strategies that actively engage diverse actors in the process of establishing meaningful partnerships to address the issue. As is demonstrated below, this demands a greater emphasis on the role of communication processes, in particular participatory communication processes, as ways of increasing dialogue, trust, collaboration and mobilization. Based on recent studies from criminologists (Brogden, 2004; Pelser, 2002; Palmay, 2002; O'Malley and Hutchinson, 2007), my main assumption in this regard is that neither local government nor civil society can address the challenge of crime in Nairobi alone. Instead, for interventions to be effective, partnerships have to be established or strengthened between civil society, community groups and local government.

Identifying the partners

My initial research made it clear that the NCC should play a key role in the process. Previously, crime prevention had mostly been addressed by the private sector and NGOs. However, for interventions to be sustainable, the leadership needs to be with the NCC. With the establishment of the SNI as a coordinating body in relation to crime prevention, the NCC has taken steps to make this happen.

At first, I was unsure who might be a meaningful partner in Kibera. However, after spending time in the settlement, one of my interviewees introduced me to some of the youth self-help groups based in the Sarangombe part of Kibera. It was during these meetings that I saw the potential in the youth self-help groups as prospective crime prevention partners in Kibera. The youth self-help groups largely consist of young men, some of them former criminals, who have organized themselves around creating income-generating activities and livelihood opportunities. In addition to their income-generating activities, members of the youth groups are obliged to undertake community-based activities. In return, the local government gives the group a small plot of land and the status of a Community Based Organization (CBO). The NCC and the local government are actively encouraging the formation of these groups in strategies such as the City-wide Youth Policy, and in some areas of Kibera they seem to be sprouting up everywhere. The vast majority of the young men organized in the groups have been unable to find a job or secure an income. As an alternative, they organize themselves in self-help groups in order to help each other generate a small income through activities such as car washing, farming and garbage collection.

So after that I came out [of prison], I put my mind together and just decided to change my ways so we came up with our voice because all of us we stay together in one area, we talked, we gave each other advice, we said we can do this and this and get money instead of doing this and this. Because most of us were drinking, smoking bhang [cannabis], using drugs . . . so that's when we came up with this idea of washing cars (Youth group chairman).

During my visits and interviews I learned that the groups help provide an identity and a purpose for many of the young men, who to a large extent feel left out of mainstream society. Like the chairman quoted above, several of those interviewed explained that they had been involved in crime prior to setting up their group, and one particular group explained that they had been a criminal gang before they formed their youth self-help group and chose to reform.

Our group...in the beginning it was a gang. People who were doing crime, bad things...after all some of our brothers died. The police captured others.... So we decided to collect the remaining members and then we formed a group. [...] Once you form a youth group you stop it and then start seeing your project activities (Youth group chairman).

Help to self-help

The above is obviously an idealized picture of how participation in youth groups can prevent youths from committing crime. Not all the youths who decide to form or join a youth group will instantly bring an end to all illegal activity. However, for some young men the groups have provided a way out of crime and a means of earning a legitimate living. The large number of youth self-help groups in Kibera can be seen as a direct consequence of the Citywide Youth Policy, and the increased awareness in the NCC of the youth unemployment crisis. One of the priority areas in the policy is to develop an enabling environment for self-help initiatives for self-employment. This is stressed as a key area that needs to be addressed urgently (Nairobi City Council, 2005: 8). As is noted above, this led the NCC along with the local government to enable groups of youths to be awarded CBO status if they form a self-help group and live up to certain requirements. With CBO status they are granted a small plot of land on which to base themselves and carry out their activities. Although some of the youth self-help groups were already established prior to the policy, most were formed afterwards and several had been established since the post-election violence, when issues relating to youths received increased attention.

The youth groups in Kibera are almost entirely made up of young men aged between 15 and 36. They range in size from 10 to 20 or even 25 active members. None of the respondents I interviewed had jobs in the formal sector. However, many said that their work in the group was not enough to provide for their needs. Although the groups in Kibera are differentiated in terms of their activities and membership levels, they have all been formed around the idea of creating income-generating activities for otherwise unemployed youth. Currently, there is little formalized interaction between the groups. For the groups to be a viable partner for the NCC would require them to work together to acquire some form of collective authority and voice. This is already happening to some extent, for example, through joint community clean-ups, and many of the informants expressed a desire to extend this type of collaboration.

We wanted to form a youth network to work together as youth, to have one voice as youth within the Sarangombe ward (Youth group chairman).

By doing so they will give themselves a single, strong, collective voice.

However, this might prove a challenge since there are issues of competition, nepotism and corruption in and between the groups that might complicate the process. Since many of the groups' activities overlap, there is competition between them for the limited resources available, which could possibly grow with the introduction of more youth groups to the area. To counter this, there is a need for more transparency in the groups as well as further regulation of how the groups operate. This will require a more proactive role by the NCC. As of now, other than issuing the CBO registration and periodically reviewing the community work the groups undertake, neither the local government nor the NCC is involved in any aspect of the groups operation. Since help to self-help is an important aspect of the Citywide Youth Policy, the NCC might be expected to be more active than they currently are – if they are to live up to the promises made. First and foremost, a more formalized selection process is needed to decide which groups will be awarded CBO status. Until now, most of the groups that have been able to find a space or a plot of land, usually a small dumpsite, have been able to acquire CBO status. While this has been a positive outcome, land is very scarce in Kibera and it would make sense for the NCC to select new CBOs that undertake alternative activities to existing ones and demonstrate a strong commitment to their local community in their aims and work.

Initiating a safer Nairobi

The NCC established the SNI in 2006, following a request for technical assistance by the NCC to UN-Habitat. The SNI focuses on the development and implementation of a citywide crime prevention strategy, as well as on creating a local coalition to develop a community-based strategy for the prevention of crime in Nairobi. The SNI is a step in the right direction. During my interviews with staff it became clear that they are competent and dedicated but underfunded. The lack of staff and resources has so far prevented them from becoming properly institutionalized within the NCC. As a coordinating office they also face other challenges. Since safety and security are crosscutting issues spanning several NCC departments, such as planning and social services, it is imperative that all departments are committed in order to prevent the SNI from becoming over reliant on the personal goodwill of individuals within the respective departments.

We had that champion who actually made it [safety and security] one of the issues of the council and actually managed to run the support and get various departments on board. He then went on and became the mayor, and because the mayor serves for two years he then lost it to another candidate and that candidate didn't pick up on the issues of safety and they tended to be marginalized in the council (SNI representative).

Safety and security are not the specific responsibility of any of these departments, and the SNI faces a challenge of commitment from the various departments. A reform of these departments that incorporated the issues of safety and security into their mandates would oblige the departments to commit themselves to working together on the challenges and make the coordinating work of the SNI much more effective. Once the relevant departments have clear mandates and clearly defined accountability lines, they would be able to act collaboratively under the supervision of the SNI.

From punishment to prevention

The theoretical basis for the research presented in this chapter draws on a wide range of literature and research within criminology, crime prevention and development communication. I conducted my research in a specific community, so I focused on community-based approaches, which increasingly are being adopted by governments, city councils and practitioners within the field. In this approach, the positive role of communication and communication processes is increasingly recognized, and communication is more and more considered a full partner rather than, as previously, an add-on in crime prevention processes (Capobianco, 2005: 7). Involving communities in crime prevention interventions requires a lot of interaction between various and diverse actors, hence the need for communication strategies. In this sense, community-based crime prevention and participatory communication require and complement each other. In addition, in this specific case the role of communication is particularly pertinent as we are dealing with two partners that share a deep and long-standing mutual mistrust of each other. Getting partners to believe in each other's good intentions and to agree to work together towards a common goal is the primary challenge in any potential participatory process.

Crime and communities

The notion of a collective and proactive response to crime prevention first emerged in France and Canada in the mid-1980s. It has since become an approach that is globally recognized. In effect, there has been a transition from policing as the main focal point of crime prevention in the 1970s to collective urban policies in the 1980s and, more recently, to a greater understanding of the governance of security (ICPC, 2008: 133). There is now an extensive evidence-based crime prevention knowledge reservoir and, according to the 2002 UN Guidelines for the Prevention of Crime, there is clear evidence that well-planned crime prevention strategies not only prevent crime, but also promote community safety and contribute to sustainable development (United Nations, 2002). Central to these approaches is an increased focus on community-based crime prevention, encouraging ordinary citizens, NGOs and communities to participate (Little, 2002; Craig, 2007). This is the case in Nairobi, where the SNI within the NCC

has sought to bring together various actors. However, these strategies have been frustrated by the climate of slow institutional reform found in local government. As a result, many of the innovative initiatives have come from the private sector and NGOs, without any clear leadership from local government. (UN-Habitat 2005: 6) There is consequently still much to be done to develop a framework in which non-state and non-security actors can be included and play a meaningful role in crime prevention interventions.

Communication for social change

A similar trend to that which occurred in communal crime prevention has emerged in development communication. Recent efforts have aimed to integrate various theories of and approaches to development communication, most notably in communication for social change (Waisbord, 2001: 34). Although there is no precise definition of the communication for social change model, there is consensus on its key components. Importantly, the individuals and communities that are the most affected must own the process and the content of the communication. It should be empowering and horizontal, while also giving a voice to previously unheard members of the community and favouring local content. Emphasis should shift away from persuasion and the transmission of information by technical experts to dialogue, debate and negotiation. What is more, the emphasis on outcomes should go beyond individual behaviour to address social norms, culture, policies and the social environment (Figueroa et al., 2002). The fact that communication for social change not only addresses the behaviour of individuals, but also advocates a larger and more all encompassing intervention process makes it an interesting approach to the complex challenge of reducing crime among youth in Nairobi's informal settlements. By giving the affected community ownership of the respective initiatives, voice is given to the previously unheard, which in this case to a large extent means giving a voice to the youths who for the most part feel marginalized and not part of any decision-making processes. By actively involving the youth as well as the local community, this approach has the potential to encourage local residents to become engaged in the process. Furthermore, by placing more emphasis on social norms, culture and policies, this approach takes into account that crime among youth is a complex problem that demands an integrated approach. The fact that young people get involved in crime is not due only to behavioural factors, but influenced by a wide range of external factors that must also be addressed.

Promoting participation

Although there are many definitions of participation, dialogue is central to any interpretation. Dialogue provides a voice to previously unheard or marginalized groups and requires a shift downwards in power relations. Those historically prevented from speaking out must be supported in reclaiming this right in order to prevent the perpetuation of social exclusion. Furthermore, participatory

communication is strongly action-oriented. This means that although there is much emphasis on the empowerment process, based on reflections on specific problems, implementation will ground the talk in real-life problems (Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009: 11). In this case, the youth self-help groups have to be given time and space to articulate their concerns, to define their problems, to formulate solutions and to act on them. However, the value of participatory communication is not only in improved results. People's participation is now also considered a right on its own by an increasing number of NGOs, international organizations and UN agencies. By providing a voice to the poorest and most marginalized people and communities, such as the youths living in Kibera, participatory communication can fulfil a broader social function and become a tool that helps alleviate poverty and mitigate social exclusion. (Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009: 18)

Building bridges

The primary challenge facing any potentially participatory process involving the NCC and the Kibera youth self-help groups is to build and maintain trust after years of mutual mistrust. Until now, there has been very little interaction between the two sides, and the youth especially have been highly sceptical about the potential for interacting meaningfully with the NCC.

The city council... the government... I have never thought of the city council or government. Because they are corrupt bodies too they see a competition, they don't want to give the resources... they think if we have them [resources] we are going to benefit as they do (Youth group chairman).

The perception of the NCC and local government as corrupt and unwilling to interact with the youth was prevalent among all the groups interviewed. When I brought up these concerns with a representative of the SNI, he admitted that the NCC had not sufficiently encouraged participation by civil society, and identified the absence of an effective and clear framework as the main reason for this lack of interaction. One way the NCC *has* tried to reach out to the youth has been through the youth enterprise development fund. The fund came into operation in December 2006, and among other things it is concerned with providing loans to youth-led enterprises. This aligns with the government and the NCC's strategy for youth development. In 2010, however, only one of the seven groups I talked to had applied for a loan. This application was made five months before the interview, but the group had not received a response. None of those interviewed had heard of anyone who had actually received a loan. The fact that all of the groups except one had not felt it worthwhile going through the process of applying can be seen as an example of the lack of faith they had in any type of government initiative or intervention. Even when there is an initiative directly aimed at them, and at an improvement in their lives, they see little point in applying or do not feel that the scheme is really addressed to them. To counter this trend, the NCC will have to be better at communicating

with civil society when they have projects or initiatives targeting specific groups and, more importantly, it will have to live up to the promises it is making. This was acknowledged as a priority by the NCC:

That [communication with civil-society] remains a problem and I think we need to hammer it with a stone [...] the question of information flow, whether we are looking within the civil society it is not flowing, if we look outside the NGOs and in here it is not flowing, and that needs to be tackled. It's something that needs to be addressed (SNI representative).

In terms of participation and collaboration with civil society, the representative stressed that there is an urgent need for community support, but that problems with institutional inertia have caused people to abandon previous projects. If civil society, in this case the youth groups, is to be involved as an equal partner, it is important that the youth groups can see and feel that their projects are progressing through the institutional system. A representative of UN-Habitat also stressed the problem of a lack of communication and dialogue between civil society and the NCC, and stated that NCC workers from her experience did not always have the best grasp of what is going on in communities.

A lot of the times we have been going out in the communities, sometimes it's the first time a city council worker has been in that community, and they are so, how do you say, negative towards that community (UN representative).

This is not an issue that is easily addressed and to a large extent it will depend on the NCC and how proactive it can be when it comes to building dialogue. Nonetheless, it is an important issue, and one that will have to be considered before bringing other partners on board. As W.G. Carson notes, issues of accountability and trust are at the heart of genuine participation (Carson, 2007: 719). This is especially important in this case, when there is so much animosity and mistrust between the partners. Building trust between the NCC and the Kibera youth groups is consequently a fundamental issue that has to be recognized and nurtured throughout the collaborative process in order for the intervention to be successful. In this case, where there is little history of interaction and no trust between the partners, it is essential that they are willing to accept some risk and make themselves vulnerable to the actions of the other partner. Vangen and Huxham (2003) have studied the issue of trust in inter-organizational collaborations and describe trust building between organizations with little initial trust as a cyclical process – the cyclical trust-building loop (Vangen and Huxham, 2003: 12). To initiate the cycle, they will have to agree on expectations about outcomes, and it is likely that the youth and the NCC might have differing expectations of what the immediate goals of collaboration would be. To counter the danger of getting stuck before even getting started, more modest outcomes and lower expectations and levels of risk might improve the chances that expectations will be met. This is called the 'small wins' approach, an approach in which trust can be built through the experience of mutual advantages gained through the successful implementation of low-risk initiatives (Vangen and Huxham, 2003: 16). However,

even modest outcomes will be a massive improvement on the status quo. The youth in Kibera are used to council workers and politicians making promises they cannot, or do not intend to, keep. Kibera is crowded with politicians and council workers giving speeches and making promises during election campaigns, but after the elections are over they are often never seen again. Thus, even if the initial initiatives are small in scale, the fact that they will actually happen will be an immense improvement and will incrementally help restore faith in the NCC and its projects and programmes. If the NCC and the youth groups find that the initiatives they are implementing are mutually beneficial, trust can then be developed over time. Nonetheless, the NCC and the youth groups will have to commit themselves fully to the process and understand that initiating the process through micro-level activities means that producing real and tangible results might prove to be a long, drawn out process.

Face-to-face dialogue is essential in the early phase of the trust building process. However, the initial physical interaction that took place between the NCC and the youth groups, and the communities where they reside, has most often been in the form of community consultation, which is usually a one-sided process in which the communities are invited to share their opinions but have little power over the decisions that are made. In future collaboration in Kibera, the NCC is likely to be perceived as the most powerful partner, making it vital that equality is stressed throughout and that both parties feel ownership of the process. For that to be possible, the NCC must be prepared to share decision-making power, which could be a challenge. Facilitative leadership and mediation will be crucial to establishing a constructive dialogue. In such a case, where there is an imbalance in power, external leadership can also be crucial to empowering and representing the weaker stakeholder (Ansell and Gash, 2007: 554).

Working together towards a safer Nairobi

If these challenges are properly addressed, the NCC and the youth groups will be able to act on the issues of youth and crime together. However, before developing solutions to address the challenge, the two actors will need to work together to define and articulate the causes of youth crime and their possible solutions. Again, it is important to remember that we are dealing with two very different partners with different skill sets and experiences of the issues to be addressed. As is argued above, a central aspect of dialogic communication is the consciousness of power relations. It will be essential to develop a participatory methodology that can give equal voice to both parties to discuss and define the challenges. The NCC will initiate the participatory process with clearly defined ideas of the causes of crime and some possible solutions, as set out in policies such as the Citywide Youth Policy. The youth groups must therefore be given space and time before engaging with the NCC to articulate their concerns, define their problems and formulate ideas.

Pain and Francis, two geographers who have researched participatory research techniques among youths, highlight participatory diagramming as a research

method that has proved useful during the initial stage of participatory research (Pain and Francis, 2003: 48-49). Using participatory diagramming and tools such as brainstorming, timelines and cause/impact diagrams, the youth groups should be able to come to a common understanding of their positions on the issues they will later negotiate on with the NCC. The next step will then be to discuss these understandings and issues with the NCC. In the negotiating phase, it is crucial that a common space is established where the actors feel comfortable expressing their views, sharing their concerns and providing their input on the desired change. In establishing this space, several communication methods, techniques and icebreakers can help facilitate the process and develop trust. These include: a *transect walk*, where the local stakeholders walk around the community illustrating various social issues; a *historical timeline* to trace the history and patterns of certain populations and groups; and *trend lines* to identify if and when certain phenomena have occurred, making it easier to identify key causes and possible solutions (Tufte and Mefalopulos, 2009: 25). As is argued above, equal ownership is essential and these methods can enable the youth groups to take the lead and steward the initial process. Since they have the local knowledge and are the experts on crime in Kibera, they could show themselves to be a competent and equal partner. With a competent mediator, this could ideally increase the confidence of and in the youths, as well as enhancing feelings of ownership, which will be vital for the success of the partnership. Once a common understanding has been established, the two partners will be able to take action through micro-level activities to address the issues, and this will ideally lead to more effective and sustainable crime prevention programmes and interventions for youth in Nairobi's informal settlements.

Concluding remarks

Crime and the devastating effect it has on societies is often construed as a problem *of* youths. However it is more useful to construct it as a problem *for* youths. There is little or no empirical evidence that blaming young people for all of society's ills and punishing marginalized groups is an effective approach. Instead, the focus needs to shift towards encouraging youth to participate in society. By using community-based and participatory approaches to address the problems of youth and their communities, governments and city administrators have an opportunity to encourage their young citizens to participate and help shape their own lives. In Kibera there is an invaluable crime prevention resource in the form of the youth self-help groups. Through these groups, the NCC has direct access to the unemployed and marginalized young men who are the most likely to be affected by crime either as victims or perpetrators. Although there are challenges related to participatory approaches and communal partnerships, the potential benefits of applying these approaches in Kibera far outweigh the risks involved.

In addition to the more tangible outputs, the processes should ideally lead to empowerment and enhanced feelings of ownership and citizenship. For the

youths in Kibera, these processes can also help establish trust in the institutions that should be working for them. At the same time, the NCC would benefit from having direct access to its young citizens, and be able to develop more effective programmes and interventions. Although many youths in Kibera express animosity towards the NCC, it is possible to reconcile potential partners with conflicting or negative views of each other. This is not an easy process and, especially in the early stages, it demands a strong focus on breaking down stereotypes and other barriers to communication. Despite these challenges, the NCC has little to lose and everything to gain from actively promoting participation by its young citizens. Some steps have already been taken, such as the formulation of the Citywide Youth Policy and the establishment of the SNI. However, not much has changed for the youth in Kibera, and now is the time for the NCC to act – not least because denying youth their right to participation could have severe consequences for the youth as well as the city.

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Notes

- 1 The youth self-help groups interviewed were: the Kibera Youth Self-Help Group, the Mizuka Youth Self-Help Group, the Kibera Zulu Youth Group, the Fort Jesus Youth Group, the Olympic Youth Group, the Vision Brothers Youth Self-Help Group and Youth Against Decadent Starvation.

Community Radio as Promoters of Youth Culture

Jessica Gustafsson

Abstract

Community media are usually understood as media that serve and belong to a community that produce content with a specific community in mind (Alumuku 2006; Carpentier, Lie and Servaes 2003; Downing 2001; Rennie 2006). Since 2006, three community radio stations have begun broadcasting in the slums of Nairobi that to a large extent both focus on and are produced by young people. Their content mixes entertainment with an educational focus in order to raise awareness about crucial topics. Involving young people in media production is believed to give youth a voice and an opportunity to gain professional skills and experience. In order to discuss the genuine potential for community radio stations to empower youth, it is necessary to engage with youth both as producers and consumers. Based on interviews and participant observations with youth working at these community radio stations, as well as group discussions with the young local audience, this chapter discusses: the benefits and drawbacks of working for the community radio stations; whether the young audience feels that the stations serve their needs; and if the focus on youth prevents the stations from properly catering for the needs of the entire community.

Keywords: radio, community media, youth culture, empowerment

Introduction

Sub-Saharan Africa is the 'youngest' region in the world: 28 percent of the population is aged between 12 and 24 years old (Fares and Garcia 2008: xvii). The political, economic, cultural and social changes of recent decades have challenged the traditional rite of passage from youth to adult (Diouf 2003: 2). Moreover, increased unemployment and a political culture that often excludes the youth force young people to find alternatives outside the establishment. Jobs in the informal economy or idleness are therefore common and, along with the

church and the street, popular culture has become a popular platform for young people to confront the reality that surrounds them. Kenyan hip hop addresses many of the social problems that affect young people, such as corruption, HIV/Aids, unemployment, tribalism, poverty and ghetto life in general (Mwangi 2004; Barkley 2007).

The community radio stations that have operated in the slums of Nairobi since 2006 aim to provide residents, especially the youth, with a platform for debate, news and useful social information. Moreover, they aim to challenge the stigmatized image of the slum by providing non-stereotypical and more positive stories about life there, and to provide media training and job opportunities for young people in the neighbourhood.

This chapter describes the main aims of the community radio stations, focusing on the experiences of the youth who work for them; and explores the views of their audience on how they benefit from these stations. Finally, the chapter analyses whether these media projects serve the youth or whether they serve the entire community.

The study of community media and youth

In 2006, *Koch FM* started broadcasting in the Korogocho slum. The local youth initiated the project to improve the situation in Korogocho. The following year two more community radio stations started in the slums of Nairobi, *Pamoja FM* in Kibera and *Ghetto FM* in Majengo. The three radio stations share the same frequency, 99.9 FM, which is possible because of their restricted reach.

The empirical data presented in this chapter are based on a larger study conducted between 2007 and 2010, which consists of over 50 interviews with producers of community media and eight group interviews with youth aged 16 to 21 in secondary schools in Korogocho, the area in which Koch FM is based.

Kenyan youth and youth culture

Colonialism, capitalism, urbanization and the struggle for independence have all altered and contested the relationship between youth and elders and therefore changed what it means to be young in African societies (Argenti 2002; Burgess 2005). Paid work within the colonial bureaucracy became a way for young men to ascend the social hierarchy and attain social mobility and autonomy from their seniors (Burgess 2005: xii). The maturity process for men changed in colonial times from 'child; single man/warrior; labourer/married man/self-supporting adult; elder' to 'child; school; employment' with a possible intermediate stage of higher education (de Waal 2002: 15). However, increased levels of unemployment, structural adjustment programmes and population growth have made the economic situation increasingly bleak for young people (Argenti 2002: 127).

In Kenya today, the average transition period between school and work is five years (Fares and Garcia 2008: xxviii). Youth are therefore dependent on themselves to create opportunities such as self-employment or entrepreneurial ventures (Fares and Garcia 2008: xxix) and are the major players in the growing informal economy (Boeck and Honwana 2005:1), which in Kenya is referred to as *Jua Kali*¹ (Kagwanja 2005). Difficulties gaining steady employment, in either the formal or the informal economy, mean that progression from school to employment is once again challenged. Today, the reality for most young people in Africa is 'school; 'youth'; unknown'. Youth is therefore for many a time that is characterized by uncertainty, insecurity and idleness.

In order to combat youth unemployment the Kenyan government has initiated a number of programmes, such as the Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF) and, most recently, the Kazi Kwa Vijana programme.² Kazi Kwa Vijana was launched in 2009 and aimed to employ 200,000-300,000 Kenyans, mainly young people, by offering them job opportunities in their local community (Republic of Kenya 2010). The Kenyan government has been criticized for mismanaging Kazi Kwa Vijana funds and programmes such as these have had meager results.

Popular culture is often perceived as an arena where young people can confront and deal with issues relevant to them (Hall and Jefferson 1977). Youth in Kenya have limited access to political institutions and public spaces. The increasing number of media channels and cheaper media production technologies have boosted the production of popular culture in East Africa, making it increasingly accessible to underprivileged groups such as the poor urban youth (Englert 2008). Popular culture is therefore becoming an increasingly attractive public sphere for many young Kenyans as it offers a space where traditional values such as family constellations and gender roles can be negotiated, challenged, reaffirmed and reimaged (Frederiksen 2000).

Hip hop music and discussion programmes on FM stations, for example, have become platforms where controversial issues such as sexuality, gender roles, corruption and tribal tensions can be publicly discussed (Mwangi 2004; Barkley 2007). Popular culture and media content are therefore becoming important mechanisms for negotiating norms and values, and can be understood as a 'force for the democratization of everyday life' (Frederiksen 2000: 210) and as 'breaking the culture of silence' (Odhiambo 2007) as well as an increasingly important component of the identity project of Kenyan youth.

Community media

Community media are normally understood as media that produce content with a specific community in mind. What is meant when talking about a community depends on the specific context. There are at least two ways to understand community in relation to the media. Community can be conceptualized either in a spatial sense, such as a neighbourhood or a village, or in terms of an identity or

shared interest, such as the black community or the gay community (Downing 2001). Since the community radio stations that this chapter discusses operate in slums and are run by the people living there, a spatial definition is used. The spatial definition is also connected to their legal conditions, as their reach is restricted to a few kilometres. Moreover, media that target a community in the sense of a shared interest and identity; for example, the different ethnic groups spread over a wide area, are in the Kenyan context normally referred to as vernacular media.

The most common medium when discussing community media is radio, mainly due to its low cost of operation. Radio is therefore also considered the best vehicle for promoting democratic communication (Vatikiotis 2004). Community radio stations are often small, non-profit, low-budget stations that are mainly run by volunteers and owned by associations, trusts, foundations or NGOs. Community media are often distinguishable from commercial media and state media by their provision of vital, accessible and participatory alternatives (Vatikiotis 2004). The idea of serving the community stresses the close relationship with the community, a relationship that should be characterized by community involvement and participation.

Community media can also be understood as an alternative to the mainstream media,³ since they cover stories that are normally neglected elsewhere, and are organized and operated in a way that enhances participation. (Atton 2002; Bailey, Cammaerts and Carpentier 2008; Rennie 2006: 36) Community media projects are often initiated because of a need for communication platforms within civil society, and community media are therefore often considered to be the third voice – between the state and commercial media (Bailey, Cammaerts and Carpentier 2008: 23). However, despite their depiction as an alternative to or something between the state and the market, some stress the rhizomic character of community media, meaning that they are able to cut across and link existing groups within the civil society but also that their relations with other institutions in society might not be as antagonistic as is often portrayed. Therefore, these types of media are sometimes better understood as trans-hegemonic rather than counter-hegemonic, since different forms of relationship often exist with both the state and the market in order to ensure survival (Bailey, Cammaerts and Carpentier 2008).

Community radio in the slums of Nairobi

The community radio stations in this study aim to create a platform to discuss issues that are relevant to and beneficial for the entire community, that is, old and young, male and female, and regardless of tribal belonging. The programming is very similar across the three radio stations and consists of three types of programme: news, topic-oriented shows and music shows. They all offer morning shows where current political issues are discussed and health shows where doctors inform and advise the listeners on air. Moreover, all three radio

stations broadcast youth-oriented shows that deal with the issues and obstacles that the youth encounter, for example, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, domestic violence and idleness, as well as the importance of leading a positive lifestyle.

The presenters and invited guests share their experience with the audience, who can phone or text (SMS) the studio to participate in the discussions. By openly discussing their own experiences the presenters openly discuss their own experience of the issues encourages the young audience to do the same, even if the topics are usually taboo. The fact that the presenters and the audience share the same socio-economic background and experiences of living in the slum, and that the audience can participate anonymously on air makes this dialogue possible.

Another aspect of these discussions is that the presenters provide information to the audience about governmental programmes and organizations that they can go to if they need assistance. This not only potentially leads to individuals gaining financial and other support, but also works in part to keep those in power accountable. Koch FM, for example, has for several years worked to empower the community by raising awareness of Constituency Development Funds and, together with the community, monitored the use of the funds to ensure that they are spent correctly. Mismanagement of funds and corruption have led to widespread distrust in the authorities, especially among people living in the slums (UN-Habitat 2008). The radio stations therefore encourage the community to participate in and actively influence these projects instead of dismissing them. Recently, Koch FM has worked with the slum upgrading project in Korogocho to promote the interests of the residents.

Music is an important component of the content. The discussions are mixed with music and a large proportion of the programmes could be categorized as music shows, in the sense that they are labelled on the basis of the kind of music that is played. There are at least two possible reasons for this practice: first, music is an important component of radio production in general; and, second, it is a good way of targeting different age groups in the community. Reggae and Bongo music, for example, are popular among the youth, whereas Lingala, Taraab and Zilizopendwa music are more popular among older segments of the audience. The music shows also include interactive discussions, but the topic is decided spontaneously in interaction with the audience and often reflects current events relevant to the community.

Another important aspect of the community radio stations is the absence of tribal content. Their aim to bring about unity rather than disruption is reflected in both the news bulletins and the programmes. Despite the fact that the news coverage at the community radio stations to a large extent draws on news collected from the mainstream media, there is a major difference in news values as community media journalists sometimes consciously choose to leave out certain aspects of a new story:

There are some things that I cannot talk about, even if they happen I can do it the other way out, not to create disunity among the communities. In Kibera

we have different communities, and they live differently and tribalism is a bit high, so when we get stories we don't always mention from which particular group it happened, we generalize it. [...] Some cases we don't even mention where it happened, because some regions are connected to a particular group (Allan, news reporter, Pamoja FM).

It is clear that news value is regarded differently in order to properly cater for the interests of the community. To reveal all the details of what has happened is not considered important, since some details might be harmful – creating disunity within the community. This is something which became even more evident during the post-election violence in early 2008.

The programmes are also designed with this ideal in mind. The radio stations do not target their audience as Luos, Kambas or Kikuyus but as Kenyans belonging to different age groups. Moreover, they proactively encourage the audience to perceive themselves as Kenyans, instead of clinging to old identities based on tribal belonging. In their quest to tackle the stereotypical image of the slums, the community radio stations highlight positive news and stories from the communities, and celebrate and promote a sense of pride in the slums. It could therefore be argued that the radio stations help promote a 'slum identity' as an alternative to the old identities based on ethnicity.

Community radio as youth centres and training grounds

Another aim of the community radio stations is to provide job and training opportunities for young people in the slums, as unemployment is high and many lack the financial means to enter higher education, and it is also believed to be a way to engage young people in community development. Consequently, the community radio stations are to a large extent run by local youth, some educated but the majority lacking in both journalistic education and previous experience of producing media content. For all of them, working at the community radio station is an opportunity to gain experience and to learn skills for a future career in the media. They all receive basic training, but most of the skills are learned step by step, on the job. Most explicitly state that they are driven by a passion to help develop and improve the situation of the community. By working at the radio station they achieve slum celebrity status and become role models for other youth in the community. However, financial constraints mean they all work as unpaid volunteers. This has negative effects on both the running of the radio stations and the lives of the volunteers. One of the biggest threats to the longevity of the projects is the high turnover of staff and the irregular attendance of the volunteers:

People are not consistent in working. Today they are there tomorrow they are not. You can't ask them because they are volunteers. You know I can't work alone, go to the field, edit, present. It has to be a team and the team can't be of one person. It has to be different people with the same goal. If today someone doesn't come it means you are disabled in one way or another as the news department (Shiko, News editor, Pamoja FM).

Shiko highlights the negative impact of volunteerism on the daily running of a community radio station – that it is impossible to force volunteers to turn up every day as they work without pay. Yet, it is difficult to run a news department when people are absent since its success is dependent on good teamwork and everyone taking responsibility. If one component is missing or weakened by being understaffed, the output of the whole news department suffers.

The reason volunteers fail to turn up is often money – or rather the lack of it. Everyone needs somewhere to live and something to eat. Working for free makes it difficult to secure even basic needs, and not everyone has friends and relatives they can rely on – at least not for long periods. The only remaining option is to get a part-time job:

The first challenge is how to go about your own life. Sometimes you are forced to stay home like you can't go to a show when you are hungry, you have to go and work somewhere else to get some cash (Sarah, Presenter, Koch FM).

Yet, as is mentioned above, jobs are hard to come by and the stress of hustling for and then keeping two jobs consumes time, energy and concentration.

Moreover, volunteerism contradicts the initial aim of the projects: combating youth unemployment. The problem is that volunteerism is associated with altruistic motives. Some therefore believe that compensating volunteers is against the core ideal. On the other hand, it is both naive and cynical to demand that poor people work without compensation (Moleni and Gallagher 2007; Wilson 2007). It appears that that being driven by passion and being paid are perceived as contradictory. If that were the case, leaving a position at a community media project for a paid job would be evidence that people were not genuinely interested in serving the community.

Yet, I do not believe that this is necessarily the case. Instead, most people leave because they simply cannot afford to stay. It is the passion to help change the community, and the opportunity to obtain skills and connections and gain exposure that motivate the youth, but it is the lack of payment and securing paid employment elsewhere that make them leave.

So these media projects often lose their trained and passionate members of staff when they can no longer afford to stay, who are replaced by untrained but passionate youth who also dream of changing the community and want to learn media production. Consequently, the community radio stations run the risk of being reduced to a training ground for youth – a space which they can occupy while other opportunities are beyond reach. Almost like youth centres, they offer local youth meaningful activity – something to do and somewhere to go to away from destructive behaviour – and something to belong to.

Community radio as identity and youth culture

Koch FM, the first of the three community radio stations to start operating, was initiated by local youth in Korogocho. This section is based on group interviews with local youth in Korogocho about the benefits of having a community radio station in the neighbourhood.

When the youth talk about Korogocho they describe a place with many difficulties. They mention general problems such as poor sanitation and the lack of security, but also issues that affect them as youth such as peer-pressure, drugs, HIV and the lack of role models.

Like HIV/Aids. You know in slums that's where the disease is spreading most. Some people are not aware of it: youth in particular, their lives, how they should take care of themselves (Christa, 18, Form 4).

Many people take drugs. Teenagers, for example, some of them are elders who take drugs and we see it as a fashion, try, copy and do the same (Edwin, 17, Form 3).

Christa identifies a knowledge gap by stating that many youth do not know how to look after themselves, which is problematic in a setting where HIV and Aids are widespread. Edwin emphasizes how drug abuse is a problem facing the youth as it becomes fashionable among younger individuals who copy older ones in order to gain status in the social hierarchy. Yet these are not the only problems the youth in Korogocho have to face. They also have to tackle society's negative perception of Korogocho.

People in these big estates they see people living in Korogocho are like chokoras and eat garbage (Rose, 16, Form 1).⁴

When you go to high places like Hurlingham they see people from Korogocho as not capable of doing anything like other human beings. About laziness I see everyone saying life is hard yet he is capable of doing something – being employed and getting wages which helps you earn a living. The government also seems not to be concerned about the slums. We see this through education and infrastructure (Malik, 18, Form 3).

Expressions such as 'the big estate' and 'high places like Hurlingham' suggest that the youth make a clear distinction between the place they come from and places where the rich live. It is inaccurate to argue that they have adopted society's view of Korogocho as a 'low place', but the stigmatized picture of the slums is something they have to relate to and negotiate because they cannot escape it. Both Malik and Rose express that they feel dehumanized and forgotten by the rest of society. The youth in Korogocho have arguably been betrayed by society on two different levels: first, they are denied basic needs and decent living standards; and, second, they are dehumanized by being associated with the social problems of their surroundings. Moreover, no matter how disgraceful and inhuman one perceives Korogocho to be, it is home to approximately 150 000 people. To them it is also everything that a home is or as one boy put it:

I can say Korogocho is a better place and as they say east or west home is best. Korogocho is a better place to be (Benjamin, 17, Form 2).

Koch FM has played a significant role in the process of negotiating and contesting the stereotypical image of Korogocho and gaining more pride for youth in who they are and where they come from. The mere fact that Korogocho has its own

radio station is a big step in that process, as media outlets are normally associated with the rich and powerful and located in the city centre – not in the slums.

People were happy and excited because they knew the slum has started to develop. Like they can have access to the radio station so they can pass their problems and hear the other people going through the community radio and also boost those people who have talent (Timothy 19, Form 4).

Timothy's description of people's reaction to *Koch FM* when it first started suggests that the establishment of the radio station was perceived as evidence that someone cared about them and valued their opinions, as well as a symbol of development and hope for a brighter future.

When discussing *Koch FM* with the youth, it becomes apparent that the radio station's most important role is to encourage them, believe in them and urge them to believe in themselves. According to the youth, older people in the community do not listen to *Koch FM* as much as the youth, as they prefer to listen to vernacular radio.⁵ They do this out of habit or linguistic preferences – they understand their vernacular language better than Kiswahili, the language that *Koch FM* broadcasts in. Koch FM also uses a slang called Sheng, which is a mixture of Kiswahili, English and vernacular languages mainly used by urban youth in Kenya (Mwangi 2004).

The vernacular radio stations, on the other hand, are not as popular among the youth as they perceive them to be irrelevant and incapable of teaching them anything useful in today's modern life. Language is again a relevant factor but in reverse – the youth identify themselves with the new generation and modern life where knowledge of English and Swahili are valuable. As one youth commented: 'where will you go to talk vernacular?'. This suggests a generation gap when it comes to media use. Moreover, the idea that English is the language to master can be understood in relation to aspirations to progress and leave their current situation, since they connect English with higher education. For many, education is perceived as the only available ticket to a better life, and this is reflected in their desire for educational content.

Even though the youth are very proud of *Koch FM* and say how the radio station has helped them, a majority of them listen to other radio stations too. Comments like 'I switch to the radio station with the programmes appealing to me' illustrate that they are conscious and active media users. The youth know what kind of content they prefer and what they consider useful. To satisfy these needs is more important than being loyal to a specific radio station. Furthermore, it seems that they prefer to listen to a variety of radio stations, as this minimizes the risk of missing out on something. Media usage is thus to a large extent motivated by the desire to stay *a jour* and to have access to a wide range of information.

One major reason why youth sometimes tune to other radio stations is *Koch FM*'s programme schedule, which they state is not adjusted to the timetable of their everyday lives. Consequently, they will switch to another radio station if *Koch FM* broadcasts a show that is irrelevant to them. This highlights the dif-

ficulty of being a community radio station, which must serve the needs of the entire community – needs that can vary a great deal between different groups.

Overall, *Koch FM* focuses a great deal on the youth, perhaps because the youth are the biggest and most vulnerable group in the community, and when it tries to reach other segments of the community it risks losing the youth as they switch to other FM stations. However, the focus on youth might also benefit other groups in the community:

Parents find it easier to use Koch FM to advise their sons and daughters. Some of the issues, for example, a mother can't sit down with her son to talk some issues...even a father can't sit with his daughter to solve some issues. It makes it easier (Grace, 18, Form 4).

According to Grace, *Koch FM* helps parents or guardians with their relationships with their children by handling issues that they themselves are uncomfortable with. Even though Grace does not agree that *Koch FM* is directed towards the youth, her point strongly suggests the opposite. Nonetheless, it also touches on something very interesting – the whole community benefits if the situation for the local youth is improved.

Summary and conclusions

Three questions were posed in the introduction above: What are the benefits and drawbacks of working for the community radio stations? How does the young audience feel that the community radio stations serve their needs? Does the focus on youth prevent the community radio stations from catering properly for the needs of the entire community?

In addition to the more universal aims of community radio, such as serving the community and offering alternatives to the mainstream media, it aims to offer job and training opportunities to marginalized youth, because unemployment and idleness are common problems facing the youth in the slums. Nonetheless there is a major obstacle – youth do not get paid or compensated for their work but must work as volunteers. Consequently, the economic situation of the youth is not improved by enrolling in a community media project. Moreover, the youth are only able to participate for as long as their economic situation allows, and many have to hustle for jobs in the informal economy to pay for food and rent.

Despite these economic drawbacks, it is evident that joining a community radio station is a positive experience for many of the young people. Through their participation they attain skills, and the ability to reflect on and communicate their own experience. Moreover, they have meaningful activity, and somewhere to go and belong to. They also become something by getting a professional identity as a community radio practitioner and often become well-known within the community as a local celebrity. Furthermore, the prospects of securing paid employment later on are believed to improve due to their improved skill levels, experience and connections.

Yet, naturally, not everyone can volunteer with a community radio station, so a majority of the youth only get the opportunity to consume the content and participate as part of the audience.

Slums receive unfairly negative publicity in the Kenyan mainstream media, which consequently stigmatizes the slums and their residents (Hesbom 2003). The youth in these areas are therefore caught in a conflict between their own experiences of the slums and society's perception of the slums. One of the most positive benefits of having a community radio station in an area like Korogocho therefore is to support the youth by reinforcing and strengthening a sense of pride in the struggle to redress some of the stigmatizing stereotypes. Compared to other media, *Koch FM* is producing images of its immediate surroundings that the youth can relate to, and by providing the youth with positive role models it has helped them feel proud of who they are and where they come from. However, the community radio stations' restricted reach make it difficult for such stations to alter society's perception of the slums.

Through the radio station, youth also receive useful knowledge, advice and encouragement to change their lives for the better and avoid destructive behaviour, whether through drugs, crime or peer-pressure. Moreover, the radio stations encourage discussion of topics which were previously taboo, and allows the audience to do so anonymously. In this sense, it is arguable that the radio station is challenging the norms of what is private and public by introducing new subjects into the public debate, and thereby also challenging the culture of silence (Odhiambo 2007) and being part of a process of democratizing everyday life (Frederiksen 2000).

The strong focus on youth can also partly be explained by the stations' constrained financial situation, which makes them dependent on volunteers. In addition, young people naturally feel more comfortable talking about youth issues with other youth. The high level of volunteers can be explained by two factors: the poor financial situation of the community media projects and the widespread acceptance that people who work to assist others do not need to be paid as they are motivated by altruistic motives. Volunteerism forms part of the ideals and politics of the international aid system, which is beyond the scope of this study. However, it is clear that the use of volunteers affects the ability of the projects to achieve their long-term goal – to be a progressive force in societal development.

Instead, they mainly become youth centres where local youth can come to learn basic media production skills while trying to find something else to do. In that sense, the goal of assisting the youth risks preventing them from assisting the community in a larger context, as the journalistic output is affected negatively due to high levels of staff turnover. Moreover, the use of unpaid volunteers makes it harder for older people to work for the stations since they often have a family to provide for. However, all three community radio stations broadcast programmes that specifically target older segments of the community and are presented by older people.

It is possible that if the economic situation of the radio stations improved and they could pay their staff, the content would become more diverse, as the radio stations would be able to attract older staff. According to the young audience in Korogocho, the older generation does not listen to Koch FM as they prefer vernacular radio stations. The youth-oriented content might be another explanation.

However, the youth underlined that older people in the community are still positive about Koch FM as it helps them in their relations with their children or grandchildren by advising the youth on issues that the older generation feels uncomfortable talking about. The radio station can therefore help relationships between different groups in the community. Moreover, the entire community benefits if the situation of the youth improves as the youth do not exist in isolation. If young people are kept away from destructive behaviour, for example, security in the neighbourhood is likely to increase.

The radio stations also do their utmost to unite the community and combat tribalism. Moreover, by working hard to challenge the stigmatized image of the slum and ascribe it with more positive connotations they promote a 'slum identity' as an alternative to identities based on ethnicity. When discussing the benefits of *Koch FM* with the local youth, it became clear that self-esteem and pride in who they are and where they come from have increased among both the practitioners and the audience. In other words, community radio seems to play an important role in their identity construction. Since the situation facing the youth is similar in most of the slums in Nairobi, these radio stations can be seen as promoters of youth culture that transcend not only the slums as a residential area but also ethnic belonging.

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Notes

- 1 Jua Kali means fierce sun in Swahili and is the common name for the informal economy.
- 2 Kazi Kwa Vijana means Jobs for the Youth in Swahili.

- 3 The mainstream media is defined here as established, corporate-owned media that operate commercially.
- 4 Chokoras means street children in Swahili
- 5 These broadcast in one of the 43 vernacular languages and often promote that specific tribe's culture and customs.

Film for Social Change

A Study of the Zanzibar International Film Festival's Initiatives for Bringing about Social Change for the Local Youth

Anne Sofie Hansen-Skovmoes & Line Røijen

Abstract

This chapter discusses the use of art and culture as strategic tools in development and social change processes. The use of the cultural sector as a strategic tool for social change in development work was put on the international agenda by the United Nations in 1992, when UNESCO established the World Commission on Culture and Development. The aim of the commission is to secure and preserve cultural diversity within and across borders. This is done through the sharing of different traditions, ideas, artwork and forms of cultural expression. Art, culture and creativity are increasingly seen as strategic resources in efforts to foster sustainable development and social change (World Commission on Culture and Development, 1996).

The chapter examines the strategic and methodological approach to the use of art and cultural events in development strategies and work. The theoretical framework is based on Professor Naila Kabeer's understanding of *citizenship* and *empowerment*, as well as Associate Professors Annika Agger's and Birgitte Hoffmann's respective concepts of *efficacy* and *endowment* as a part of empowerment and citizen participation. The case study on the Zanzibar International Film Festival, carried out in the summer of 2010, evaluates the use of film and film festivals to generate processes of social change for youth in Zanzibar. The chapter concludes that the film festival is a *potential* catalyst for processes that can lead to social change.

Keywords: film, social change, empowerment, citizenship, youth, media literacy, socio-cultural events

Introduction

The village of Ghana in Zanzibar is a two-hour drive from the main city of Zanzibar, Stone Town, along dirt roads to the north of the island. In Ghana, young girls and boys have created a forum theatre¹ with the NGO Performance for Social Change. While young men and boys play football, young women are babysit-

ting their younger siblings and children are running around playing in the open spaces. As soon as the show begins, everybody gather in groups according to age and gender round the temporary stage. It is quiet and they all focus on the young actors while they give short performances about parental alcohol problems, teenage pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. The young men are the only ones to express themselves: they shout out comments in Swahili, making the other spectators laugh and giggle. It is obvious with whom the audience are sympathizing. They boo the alcoholic parent and yell at the young man who denies all responsibility after impregnating his even younger girlfriend.

In the little plazas and winding stone streets of Stone Town, a different scenario is played out as men and boys gather round television sets. Television has become a gathering point as well as the source of information and knowledge, and there are lively discussions during the broadcasts.

The other cultural events in Zanzibar are the two festivals in Stone Town: one for music, the Sauti za Busara Music Festival; and one for film, the Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF). During the two festivals, men and women come to experience the music, shows and films, but also to tell their own life stories and express their hopes and dreams for the future through music, singing and participating in film workshops.

What patterns of thinking and processes do these different socio-cultural events spur in the population? Can film, television and other forms of art contribute to the processes of social change in Zanzibar? And is there an identifiable relationship between cultural events and processes of social change?

Art and culture as tools for development

In an examination of the use of art and culture as communication tools for processes leading to social change, it is necessary to define the concepts of art and culture. Art and culture can be perceived as two distinct and yet interdependent terms. In our point of view, we divide the concept into an anthropological part, in which culture is perceived as a group of social practices, and an aesthetic part, understood as the artistic expression of art, that is, fine art, performance art, film, and so on. Art therefore becomes an innate concept within culture. In our terminology, art and culture originate from a group's cultural practices, and this group's cultural needs and aspirations can be communicated and expressed through art.

Empower the people: a question of citizenship and solidarity

Can art and culture, understood in this case as film and film festivals, contribute to processes of social change? According to the social economist, Naila Kabeer, inclusive citizenship is a participatory approach in which social change is seen as a horizontal process created through dialogue and citizen involvement, and

Photos: Forum Theatre played out by youth in the small village of Ghana in Zanzibar. One of the many TV Corners in the small plazas in Stone Town. June 2010 (private photo)



based on people's rights, their access to the basic needs of life, people's identity and collective action (Kabeer 2005: 23). The sense of citizenship that Kabeer emphasizes is found in the local community groups with which citizens identify and in which they can express and articulate their needs, concerns and rights. These groups may be limited to family, the village, neighbours or other close relationships, but the sense of citizenship in other contexts may consist of a feeling of unity and solidarity with other people regardless of nationality, sex, religion, and so on (Kabeer 2005: 21).

According to Kabeer, this sense of citizenship may serve to forge identity. The feeling of unity and solidarity can strengthen citizens' capacity to act in life, and collective action can lead to processes of social change. Thus, citizenship is a question of not only of being able to claim ones rights, but also of the creation of a space where citizens can define their identities and establish solidarity and unity

among equals or peers. These spaces and the creation of groups or organizations may be viewed as the first important step in the generation of social change.

Empowering citizens is part of creating an inclusive citizenship, where there is a fight for the equal distribution of economic, social, cultural and symbolic resources. In this process, empowerment is often used as a term that seeks to support a sense of entitlement, and of the ability to act on the world. In other words, to have the possibility of changing one's own life conditions: 'Empowerment [...] understood not only as a matter of creating appropriate frameworks for accountability, but implying that the development of self-esteem and the self-realization of participants was essential in enhancing their capacity to act on the world'. (Molyneux 2003: 27).

According to Associate Professors Annika Agger and Birgitte Hoffmann, empowerment can be defined by the terms efficacy and endowment, since a sense of empowerment and citizenship occurs when one has efficacy and endowment within a given field (Agger et al. 2008:31; Andersen et al. 2003: 22). Efficacy deals with the limits of and possibilities for influence by the individual citizen as defined by political institutions. Endowment is about the capacity to effectively exploit opportunities for political influence (Højmark Jensen 2001:160).

Efficacy should not be handled only at the political level, but also in social contexts where the citizens can gain influence in the form of citizenship. Efficacy is the ability to effectively accomplish or fulfil intentions. Endowment is a perspective that focuses on openness to the individual, and on the citizen's feeling of empowerment – in the sense that the feeling of involvement depends on the degree of influence and insight (Andersen et al. 2003: 165). Furthermore, the endowment process is based on the individual's process of self-development and whether he/she is able to bring her/his own personal resources into play, and in this sense take part in the community.

How do the sense of citizenship and the sense of empowerment correlate with the growing use of the media in East Africa? In the communication for social change (CFSC) approach, it is believed that the media represent social and cultural resources that can empower people psychologically, socially and politically as citizens:

'Media, and not least the Internet, represent social and cultural resources that can empower people, in both their personal development and their development as members of society. An important prerequisite for empowerment of citizens is a concerted effort to improve media and information literacy. [...] in short, media and information literacy empowers people to influence and improve their lives – while promoting a well-orientated, democratic and sustainable society. But, we often forget how crucially important such skills are for both democracy and development.' (Engel and Tufte 2009: 9).

The role of the media is increasing in the everyday lives of people in East Africa, and the media field acts as a powerful communication channel to facilitate information exchange and the sharing of knowledge, possibly facilitating more democratic development (Mudhai et al. 2009). However, the new digital

age demands that young people in developing countries must become active participants in the process in order for it to happen. This raises the need to educate youth in the emerging field of media and communications. Can film be used as a communication tool to educate and include youth in global development processes? The section below examines further the idea of African films as a communication tool.

Africa communicating through film

The first African film was produced in the 1930s, but first in the 1960s, the African film industry developed very fast, as most of the African countries achieved independence and thereby the opportunity to create and manifest their own culture (Thackway 2003: 1-6). When African filmmakers began to produce their own films, they developed a film language that reflected their own narratives and cultural codes (Thackway 2003: 49).

Through the medium of film, African people were given a voice and could tell their own stories from their own point-of-view. Thereby films became a way to show the world how Africa looks from an African perspective – not the white man's portrayal of Africa that the world had become accustomed to. African film broke with the Western media's manufactured portrayal of Africa as a poor and powerless continent.

In order to challenge hegemonic Western iconography and assert their African identity, committed Black directors set out to emphasize Africa's cultural wealth and diversity – historical, political, economic, social, ethnic, cultural, ideological, and geographical (Pfaff 2004:1).

Film transformed from entertainment to become, like other art forms in Africa, a communication tool on an intellectual and political level of value to citizens (Cham 2004: 48; Diawara 2010). Since its inception in the West, film has had the ability to focus on issues on both an individual and a societal level, mainly through documentary and social-realist films.

The cinema is a wonderful tool for description and social satire. The problems of young people, rural exodus, unemployment, émigrés, racism, intellectuals and a bourgeoisie which are national only in name – these have all been treated with more or less felicity. And doesn't the role of the African woman in history, economy, crafts, art, and so forth, deserve to be exalted? There is almost an infinite material here. [...] Only a cinema capable of problem analysis can be an instrument of development (Joseph Ki-Zerbo in Imruh Bakari et al. 1996: 73-74)

The visual language of film is universal and appeals to people around the world, regardless of sex, age, educational level or religion. Thus, film can be used as a tool to promote understanding of values such as social justice, equality and sustainability. Moreover, film can advance the identity and encourage the self-esteem of socially marginalized people, as film is a way to communicate with the outside world (Danida 2002:6). Film as a medium has its advantages in com-

municating stories and personal experiences, and can thereby help to strengthen and position local culture and identity in a globalized world.

At the theoretical level, film seems to be successful as a tool for generating processes of social change, but is this really the case? Before analysing the connection between film and film festivals and social change for youth in Zanzibar, it is useful to take a closer look at the living conditions of young Zanzibarians.

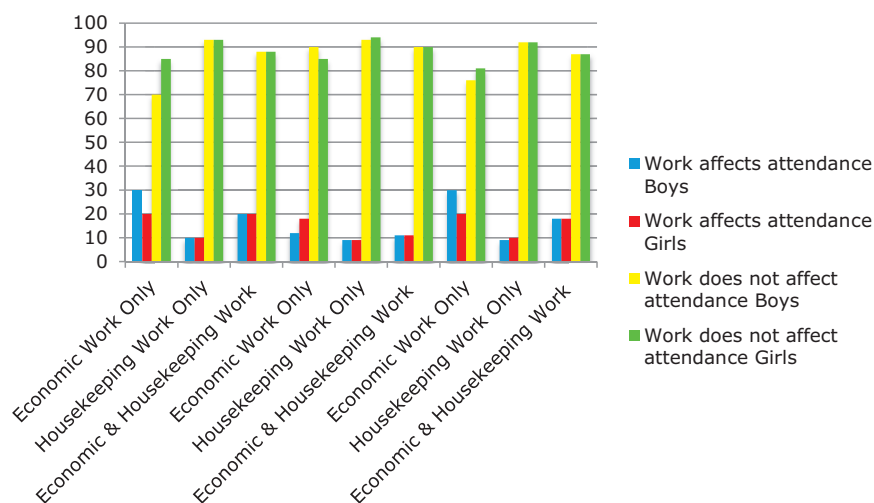
Film for social change: Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF)

This section provides a picture of Zanzibar's youth and their living conditions. The analysis is based on fieldwork on ZIFF's objective, to create social change for youth in Zanzibar, analysed through the lenses of the theoretical framework of empowerment, citizenship and film as a medium. The fieldwork was based on interviews with students of both genders, from two secondary schools between the age of 12 and 18 years. The participants were students either at a small village school or a larger school in Zanzibar's main town, Stone Town. Different empirical approaches were used, consisting of individual interviews, interviews in pairs, visual data where the youth documented their everyday life by using disposable cameras for the first time, video documentation, focus groups and participant observation (respectively, Kvale 2006; Schultz Jørgensen and Kampmann 2000; Phillips 2007; Staunæs 2000; Halkier 2002; and Hastrup 2003).

Being young in Zanzibar

In Zanzibar, poverty and lack of education are among the main challenges facing the youth. The vulnerability of children and youth in Zanzibar is mainly a result of poverty, cultural practices and weak systems when it comes to care, support and protection of the rights of children and youth. The children and youth in the rural areas are worst affected. While poverty drives youth to seek money by engaging in risky behaviour, low levels of education and high rates of dropping out of school reduce their capacity to make rational decisions and choices in life, such as on jobs and health.

Table 1. Working children attending school by sex, age group, type of work and whether work affects regular attendance



Source: ILFS 2006 (Mhamba et al. 2008: 9)

According to Save the Children Zanzibar, children and youth are in danger of being neglected and physically abused by their parents, and sexually abused by adults in their communities. Furthermore, many are potentially at risk from violence, drug abuse, teenage pregnancy, forced marriage, rape, sexually transmitted diseases and being lured into sexual relations with promises of money (Mhamba et al. 2008; Kilvington 2007: 2–9).²

Since 1964, education has been free of charge for all Zanzibar's citizens, and all children have access to 12 years of basic education (Mhamba et al. 2008: 36). Education beyond high school requires payment, which the majority of people in Zanzibar cannot afford. However, around 40 percent of children and young people never get beyond the primary level (EFA 2000 Assessment 1999; Kilvington 2008), mainly due the need to work at home or earn money for the survival of the family. Many families can only survive if the children stay at home to help the household or work outside the home to earn a living. A central part of the lives of many children and young people is religion – predominantly Islam. Many of the interviewees were Muslim and therefore attended a Madrasah, either after school or at the weekends. Muslim youth are therefore being educated through Madrasahs even though they might not finish school.

Table 2. Reasons for not attending school and the educational status of the sample of most vulnerable children

Reasons for not attending school: ZANZIBAR					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
	Under school age	21	7.4	22.3	22.3
	Sickness for more than 3 months	10	3.5	10.6	33
	Disabled	4	1.4	4.3	37.2
	Lack of funds to meet the school needs (uniforms, fees etc.) – Primary Education	41	14.4	43.6	80.9
	Lack of funds to meet the school needs (uniforms, fees etc.) – Secondary Education	2	0.7	2.1	83
	School too far	2	0.7	2.1	85.1
	Occupied with household chores	2	0.7	2.1	87.2
	Education is not important	5	1.8	5.3	92.6
	Other reasons	6	2.1	6.4	98.9
		1	0.4	1.1	100
	Total	94	33	100	
Missing	No response	191	67		
Total		285	100		
Highest Level of Education Reached					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	No education/	36	12.6	14.9	14.9
	Between grade 1 and 7	176	61.8	73	88
	Between grade 8 and 10	27	9.5	11.2	99.2
	Between grade 11 and 12	1	0.4	0.4	99.6
	Training after completion of education	1	0.4	0.4	100
	Total	241	84.6	100	
Missing	No response	44	15.4		
Total		285	100		

Source: Survey data from children’s interviews (Mhamba et al. 2008: 11-12)

The stories and photographs from the young interviewees' everyday lives document a busy life with a lot of duties at home and at school, a lot of homework and the Madrasah. Malika (17) spoke about a typical day in her life:

I help my mother with daily routines – cooking, cleaning and taking care of animals. My mother is a small businesswoman. So I help her doing her daily errands. For example, I help her to make the dough for making breads for selling or sometimes I help my mother to take care of her poultry and other livestock, such as cows and goats. We prepare food and eat together, go to school. I take a bath, we play and watch TV or listen to the radio and we also pray and lastly we sleep. (Malika, 17)

The interviewees mentioned that education is important to securing a good future, and that many children have to drop out of school to work at home either because of low family incomes or their parents' ignorance. According to Hamid (16): 'Another problem is that some parents are rich and they can give them education, but since they don't have any knowledge or awareness of education, they make their children help at home and not sending them to school'. Aida (18), who lives in Stone Town with her mother says of conditions for young people: 'Most youth in my country engage in drug abuse and related illicit traffic. This is a problem in my country'.

Although the Government of Zanzibar in recent years has set many initiatives in motion, the stories of everyday life show that there is still a long way to go in order to ensure good life chances for all children and youth in Zanzibar. The question arises whether a film festival as the Zanzibar International Film Festival (ZIFF) can help to improve the living conditions of children and youth.

ZIFF initiatives on reaching the youth

ZIFF was established in 1997 as a non-governmental, non-profit organization. The festival has been held annually in Stone Town since 1997, for eight to ten days in June or July. The film festival is not limited to the showing of films. There are also art exhibitions, workshops and live performances. These other art forms have been added to the festival because film does not play an equally important role in the consciousness of the Zanzibarians as music and theatre. The idea is to attract an audience that does not have an awareness of or interest in films. ZIFF's mind-set is that film does not only have a cultural and aesthetic expression, but can be entertaining and educational as well. In representing various art forms in the Zanzibarian context the festival celebrates and pays tribute to the local culture – the Dhow culture. The target audience is local citizens as well as the international film community. The films are primarily local films made by East African filmmakers, but the festival has also aimed for a more international flavour, with films from other countries in Africa as well as Europe, the United States and Asia.

In 2008, the film festival, in cooperation with the Danish Film Institute (DFI), created the Children and Film Panorama (C&FP) programme, which is primarily

aimed at children and young people of primary and secondary school age. The C&FP is one of the communication initiatives undertaken at ZIFF to support the personal growth and education of children and youth in Zanzibar.

The ambition of the programme is to give: 'children and youth access to a diversity of films – in terms of content, genres and cultural origin. [...] to strengthen the professional commitment within the field of producing and distributing films for young audiences in East Africa'. The long-term vision is to 'generate a political debate and action towards better premises for film and audience development – from a child perspective' (Web 1). C&FP tries to create better opportunities for young people so that they are able to understand critically and manage a media-dominated future (CFP project 2009: 1). Furthermore, the people behind ZIFF argue that:

Film can open eyes up for the world around and film can be an effective tool in development processes for youth. Films artistically reflect realities of life and each screening at the Children and Film Panorama will be facilitated and followed up by discussions about the film, content and form (Web 2).

C&FP wants to provide young people with visual technical skills in film and to increase their perception of the power associated with film and other media. Through exhibitions and discussions, ZIFF and the DFI aim to develop the visual literacy of children and create an awareness of the power of film and other media to promote self-expression.

These objectives are in line with the CFSC approach in which young people must be given a voice and empowered to act on the world, for example, through visual literacy and edutainment, which is any entertainment content that is designed to educate as well as to entertain. Does ZIFF implement and achieve these objectives in reality? How do young people in Zanzibar interpret and respond to the initiatives?

Dreams versus reality: Gaps and challenges

The interviews with children and youth show that the festival is neither well known among nor well attended by young locals. There were several reasons for this, ranging from the lack of publicity, the festival's location in Stone Town, far away from their hometowns, socio-cultural clashes and financial barriers.

The financial obstacles were the most often mentioned factors for the lack of attendance, because the need for the youth to work for their families in order to survive meant that they had neither the time nor the opportunity to attend. Haashim (16), from a small village, put it this way:

I have never been to ZIFF before. I heard stories about ZIFF from my friends and I also watched on the television [...] when I was in primary school, I have been told to save some money to attend to watch the film, but we could not make it. Because we did not have enough money to hire the dala-dala [local public bus] to go there. It was too expensive for us to organize it on our own.

Hadiya (15) explained that the film festival does not correlate with her everyday life:

I am supposed to go to school, madrasah and tuition [private classes]. ZIFF may clash with my daily programmes. Therefore, my parents won't be happy about this and obviously they might object.

According to Mufida (17):

We are living so far away from Stone Town where ZIFF takes place that we cannot afford the cost to town and for us girls, we are not allowed to go to ZIFF. It will be better if they come to our place rather than screening the films at Stone Town only.

These statements show that attending ZIFF is not a possibility for all. The majority of the young girls interviewed were not allowed to attend the festival because their families were insecure about the lack of supervision of girls, an extension of a general scepticism and anxiety about the festival's impact and influence on their children. Many parents fear that their children might become too Westernized as a result of the many tourists from Europe and the USA attending the festival. Said (19) put it this way:

My father doesn't allow me to go to ZIFF because the screening is at night and he feels it not safe. It will be nice if ZIFF organizes to conduct the shows in our nearest villages and towns. We will be allowed because we will be under the eyes of our parents.

For those who had participated in C&FP, the cultural encounter was rewarding. According to Asif (18): 'What I remember the most is meeting people from various countries and cultures, so I enjoy sharing my culture with them. I also love watching movies with multicultural themes'. The result is a conflict rooted in the young people's interest in the media and globalization and the older generation's insecurity about new social and cultural practices, brought about by an encounter with the new media.

In the early years of ZIFF, the festival was, with great success, taken to the rural areas through film projections and subsequent discussions, but for financial reasons it is now only held in Stone Town. The obstacles mentioned above illustrate that ZIFF and the C&FP do not reach their target audiences, and that the festival is ignorant of the resources, traditions and actual needs of the local population. It seems that ZIFF lacks an anchor or stake in civil society.

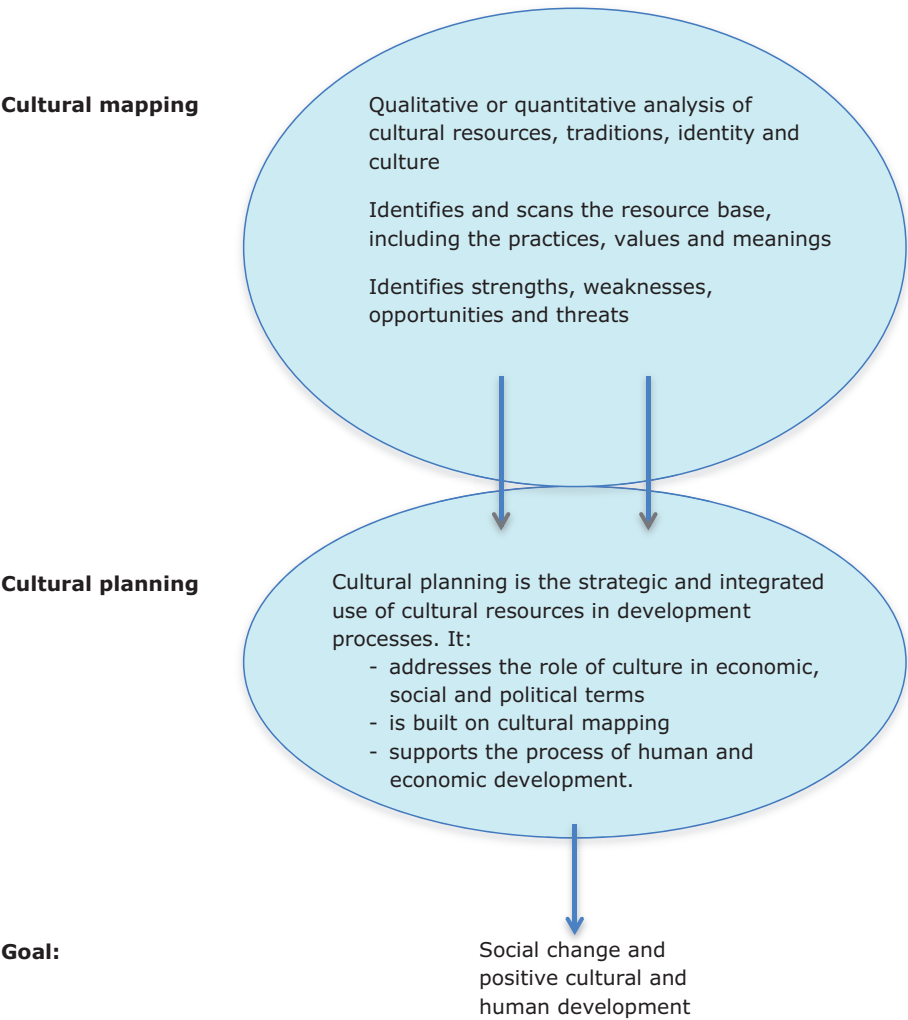
One way to overcome these barriers and develop a festival with a sustainable and CFSC-inspired approach would be to involve the target group and plan the festival from the citizens' point of view. This could be done through the use of professor Collin Mercer's idea of cultural mapping and cultural planning (Mercer 2002).

The basic idea of cultural mapping and cultural planning is that any development project and all efforts to work for social change must be based on the given area's local identity and resources. In the case of ZIFF, the cultural heritage in Zanzibar must be taken into consideration, which is largely based on Muslim

culture. Moreover, it is important to be aware that educational issues and a lack of financial resources threaten future development.

Cultural mapping and cultural planning are tools based on surveys, knowledge and practical implementation, and aim to achieve the goal of positive cultural and human development (Mercer 2002: 6-7). The approach focuses on social and cultural development based on the local environment and the people who live in and know the community. The most fundamental goal of cultural mapping is to help communities recognize, celebrate and support cultural diversity for economic, social and regional development.

Figure A. The use of cultural mapping and cultural planning to generate social change



The foundation of cultural mapping and planning is that social change must be achieved through interaction with the local community, based on local conditions and needs and not based on an outsider's expectations or point of view. Figure A illustrates the process from cultural mapping to social change.

Cultural mapping is based on a survey of the existing community or the region's culture, identity, resources and traditions. *Cultural planning* is a forward-looking methodology that has as its goal the creation of sustainable development based on the findings of the cultural mapping exercise. Cultural planning should thus be based on the experiences of citizens, and create an opportunity to involve both people and society as a part of the social change – bottom-up development consistent with the approach and philosophy of CFSC.

Opportunities for social change

Lack of education affects not only the economy of Zanzibar, but also the young people's life chances and their opportunities to change and develop in line with global development. The information and communications technologies available today have opened up access to information and knowledge, but the youth of Zanzibar will only benefit from these opportunities, if they have accesses to the media and thereby the latest information flow. Media and visual literacy is conceived as a repertoire of skills that enable people to understand and have a critical approach towards media contents, and moreover to create communications in a variety of contexts themselves. The level of media and visual literacy among the Zanzibar's youth is low. The question arises: Can efficacy and endowment within the information field create a feeling of empowerment and inclusive citizenship? We discuss below the opportunities for the festival to be more successful at achieving its aims.

In spite of their lack of attendance and awareness of the film festival, the young interviewees did highlight some ways for the festival to succeed in its objectives. The small number of interviewees who had attended the film festival were excited about it. Aida (18), indicated that she found inspiration, unity and solidarity in her encounters with other cultures.

To me I love going to ZIFF because I just love watching movies. I loved the film called Sarah. The best things I loved in ZIFF are numerous. I got to learn, meet people, sharing culture, and entertainment from watching movies. At ZIFF I learned how to work together with people from diverse cultures and from different places locally and internationally. I also love meeting people from various countries.

It is obvious from their statements that those who attended gained knowledge and inspiration. Moreover, several of the young people mentioned positive outcomes from meeting people from other cultures and watching movies from countries all over the world. In other words, the film festival does provide the young people of Stone Town with an opportunity to gather, watch movies, tell their own stories and discuss – in Kabeer's theoretical mind-set the film festival forms the basis

for the creation of solidarity and unity among the youth and a space for young people where they can develop their skills in the film and media field.

However, it is only a minority who get an opportunity to participate, which means that the festival does not reach its target audience and does not have the desired effect and outcomes. On the other hand, our research shows that young people have a great interest in and, as they pointed out, a need to express themselves, which the film festival could take advantage of in its work for social change.

Film as a medium could ideally give the young people an opportunity to communicate and act on the issues that concern them, and communicate these on a local and international scale. Furthermore, film can strengthen their self-esteem and belief in their own culture, and forge identity and character. Most of the young interviewees perceive film and television as sources of knowledge and education, and also as positive and entertaining ways to learn. Malika (13) and Hamid (17) put it like this:

I can learn a lot of things from the movies, for example, assault, raping, wars and robbery. So at the end of the day, I may choose what to avoid and what to follow. [...] I can learn about a lot. It [film] is like an eye opener. For example, I like the way the narrators discuss some issues – the way they explain or analyse issues. By listening to them, sometimes I pick up issues or things, which are very important to me. I can also be inspired by what I see or watch.

I can learn a lot of things – for example to get education and to make sure that I can take care of myself and lead my own life.

Film as a medium plays a role in the development of the youth. They can experience film as an exciting and entertaining way to gain knowledge. If film becomes a source of knowledge, it has the ability to empower youth and inspire them to self-realization. Moreover, watching and making films can teach youth about the society in which they live. As one of the young students, Haashim (16), points out: 'I learn that life skills are important from the movies. [...] It educates society for example the society may learn through film for example to how to have a good family'.

Young people's interest in film is a good opportunity to give them a voice to tell their own stories, and express their own needs and dreams for the future. Films are entertaining and educational at the same time, and can therefore be used to convey stories in an appealing way. The viewings, and the discussion of the films and the workshops at the festival open up a space for dialogue where new social norms and a sense of social cohesion may be generated. This could strengthen the sense of citizenship and empowerment.

While the festival is only held in Stone Town, however, it cannot be said that it reaches the marginalized and the poor in rural areas. ZIFF has previously established outreach programmes, consisting of film screenings in the smaller villages, but for economic reasons the festival is now held only in Stone Town. This means that the festival is mainly attended by those who live in Stone Town and by foreigners.

Rethinking initiatives for social change

This chapter discusses the use of art and culture as strategic tools in development processes. More precisely, it asks whether film and film festivals can initiate processes of social change. The theoretical literature on these questions contains a different dynamic to our empirical findings. Despite the good intentions of the film festival, it cannot be said that ZIFF has been successful at either attracting or engaging with young people. At the theoretical level, film and film festivals can contribute to processes of social change due to their edutainment character. Film can reach people regardless of their level of literacy. Moreover, the film festival, with its social character, workshops, film viewings, and so on, becomes a place for people to gather, feel unity, create dialogue, express themselves and be motivated to act on the problems they face. In other words, film and film festivals can on a theoretical level develop local skills and strengthen confidence. By giving the youth an opportunity to express themselves and their needs, they become active players in processes of change. Being heard creates a confidence in one's own abilities and a feeling of being able to act on life, thereby giving youth access to feelings of inclusive citizenship and empowerment in a globalized world.

Reality, however, does not always accord with the theoretical literature. ZIFF has established many positive opportunities for the youth, but many of the young people neither know about nor participate in the film festival. The reason why the film festival has not succeeded in its C&FP objectives can be partly explained by the lack of analysis of young people's situations – their actual needs and the possible barriers to participation. To develop a festival with a sustainable and CFSC-inspired approach, it is necessary to involve the target audience and plan the festival according to citizens' resources, traditions and needs. With the right anchoring and a stake in civil society, success awaits. The youth expressed a great deal of interest in film and saw it as a medium for being entertained and educated at the same time. They were eager to see and make films, to learn from the stories of others and to be given a voice to tell their own stories.

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Web 1: <http://www.ziff.or.tz/children-film-panorama-2012> June 2012

Web 2: <http://www.ziff.or.tz/children-film-panorama-2011>, November 2011

Notes

- 1 Forum Theatre, also known as 'Theatre of the Oppressed' invented by Augusto Boal (Boal, 1993), is an interactive form of theatre that encourages audience interaction and explores different options for dealing with a problems or issues. It is often used by socially excluded and disempowered groups.
- 2 See Table 2 for further information on the exact number and reasons why Zanzibarian children and youth do not go to school.

- 3 An educational institution that teaches the Qur'an.
- 4 The word *how* refers to a wooden sailing vessel used for trading in the Indian Ocean. During the Moonsoon each year, dhows from the different countries in the Indian Ocean have sought shelter in Zanzibar, and thus many different cultures have been gathered together and traditions exchanged (Kirknæs 2005: 127-140).

Hidden Voices on Air

Empowering Tanzanian Youth through Participatory Radio

Rosalind Yarde

Abstract

Half the population of Tanzania is under the age of 18, but they are rarely given a voice in society. All too often, children and youth are marginalized and disregarded, particularly in the context of social and economic development. This chapter explores the core concepts of voice, empowerment and social change in relation to young people, and how these might be promoted using a participatory media and communication framework. It is based on research carried out with former street children in Northern Tanzania, who were being cared for by an organization called Mkombozi. The aim was to see whether giving a voice to these young people would help strengthen Mkombozi's youth empowerment and community engagement agenda and thereby help bring sustainable change to the communities in which it works. Four Mkombozi youth were given free rein to make a radio programme about street children, which was broadcast on a regional radio station. The audience took part in a live discussion about the issues raised in the broadcast, using the phone, text (SMS) messages and email. The broadcast provoked an overwhelming audience response, suggesting that if repeated on a regular basis, a combination of participatory communication with traditional and new media, can be an effective way of empowering participants by giving them a voice. It is also a means to provoke debate within communities about attitudes to and problems facing young people.

Keywords: youth, Tanzania, empowerment, social change, participatory communication, street children, Mkombozi

Introduction

'The government doesn't invest much effort in children. They are forgotten. I imagine becoming president one day....I'll make the community aware of child abuse and child protection issues and reallocate funds to deal with these issues' (Morgan Amani, 18, Mkombozi youth and radio programme maker).¹

Sub-Saharan Africa is the most youthful region of the world: 44 per cent of its population was under the age of 15 in 2007 (Ashford 2007:1). Young people are rarely given a voice, however, and are often placed at the margins of the public sphere and of major political and socio-economic and cultural processes (De Boeck and Honwana 2005: 1). The social landscape is a complex one. De Boeck and Honwana (2005: 1) expose the ambiguities surrounding children and youth throughout Africa, describing them as ‘makers and breakers’ of societies. They are marginalized and excluded from political and social roles; their voices, visions and views are still to be heard; and yet they are actively involved in creating their own identities through innovative forms of popular culture – and are also important actors in the changes that are happening to traditional family structures and to communities (2005: 1). Helgesson (2006: 3) describes youth as an important group to study, especially in the context of social and economic development.

In Tanzania, young people under the age of 18 make up half the population but, despite some positive changes in legislation affecting children’s rights, most notably the Law of the Child Act 2009, which strengthened the legal protection of children, they remain a marginalized group. The Act strengthened children’s rights in Tanzania but is perceived in some quarters as lacking specificity and clarity (Mason 2011: 1), making implementation of the law problematic.

Street children in Tanzania are at the margins of this already marginalized group and may be seen as a symptom of underlying societal problems related to poverty, education, family conflict and child abuse, which affect many young people in Tanzanian society to varying degrees. Street children are often seen in Moshi, a town in northern Tanzania, but they are rarely heard and are widely condemned as ‘bad children’. Mkombozi, an NGO, provides a range of services for street children in Moshi and the nearby town of Arusha, working at the grass-roots level to address the factors that drive children on to the streets.

The fieldwork for this chapter was a one-off experiment in participatory communication in the form of a radio programme (Yarde 2010). The aim of the research was to investigate whether participatory radio, used alongside information and communications technology (ICT) such as mobile telephones and the Internet, could be an effective communication tool to help Mkombozi achieve its youth empowerment and community engagement goals.

A key objective was to explore the different levels of *meaning* in the concepts of empowerment, participation and social change in the context of new and traditional media. This chapter analyses what happened when the voiceless street children of Moshi were given a voice through radio, and how this might open up opportunities for them to engage with the communities in which they live.

Four young men aged between 14 and 18, who were living in Mkombozi’s residential centre, took part in the making of a radio programme: *Tulinde Watoto Sasa* (Protect Children Now).² The 30-minute programme was broadcast on 25 May 2010 on Radio *Sauti Ya Injili* (Voice of the Gospels), one of the longest established regional radio stations in Tanzania. The programme featured a mix of interviews, drama, personal stories, songs and features, which explored the

issues that drive children on to the streets. It was the first time *Sauti Ya Injili* had broadcast a programme of this kind and, judging from the response of the audience, the first time many listeners had had an opportunity to hear the voices of young people living on the streets. A half-hour live studio discussion followed the recorded programme, featuring one of the youth producers, the director of *Mkombozi* and the head of the Social Welfare Department in Moshi. Listeners were given an opportunity to phone in, text or email their responses to the programme and to join in the discussion.

This chapter outlines the theoretical framework underpinning the research and the methodology used by the author. It analyses how the young producers were empowered during the programme-making process and how the media platform enabled them to engage in dialogue with the wider community of listeners about the issues raised in the programme. It concludes with a discussion on participatory communication and its potential for contributing to social transformation.

Participatory theory

Early models of communication theory were in line with the modernization paradigm, in which communication was viewed as a linear transfer of information leading to the step-by-step change processes outlined by Lasswell (1948). Behaviour Change Communication (BCC) models were developed in the 1970s and 1980s, which focused on promoting specific individual behaviour change – linked to social marketing – through communication interventions. This model has been widely used in health communication and focuses on the careful crafting of content and audience targeting. By the early 1990s, development projects began to include information, education and communication activities, whereby information is disseminated through the production of audio-visual or printed material (Tufte and Mefalopulos 2009: 1-2).

The above models are not participatory in nature, but instead fit the diffusion model approach to development communications, based on one-way, monologic communication. At the core of this concept is the idea that the problem is the lack of information, that the catalyst for change is an external agent, that audiences are passive and that their individual behaviour can be targeted with messages that persuade (Tufte and Mefalopulos 2009: 1-2). The author had previously worked on a BCC project, in which content was produced with the help of expertise from external agencies and then crafted into radio programmes targeting the ‘behaviour, attitudes and beliefs’ of specific audiences.

By contrast the *Tulinde Watoto Sasa* project was based on the idea that by handing over control to the young people, they might serve as agents of change through participation – rather than simply being passive recipients of information. This participatory, bottom-up, process reflects a growing trend away from traditional top-down approaches, which are widely perceived as having failed (Waisbord 2005: 84; Malikhao and Servaes 2005: 94) because of their short-

term nature, their failure to understand and work within the cultural context and the lack of ownership by the 'beneficiaries' of the development process. Communication interventions that target individual behaviour also ignore the impact of wider social norms, social behaviour and power relations. (Tufte and Mefalopulos 2009: 8)

However, even the most avid proponents of participatory communication have found it difficult to design a template that fits all participatory projects (Gumucio-Dagron 2001: 25; Tufte and Mefalopulos 2009: 17). Maybe by their very nature of being 'local' and 'grassroots', participatory communication projects must be diverse and have their own unique qualities. It was therefore difficult to situate this research within a 'cast iron' theoretical framework. In common with the trend for a mixed 'toolbox' approach, the *Tulinde Watoto Sasa* research borrowed from a range of theories and key concepts, while remaining under the umbrella of participatory communication.

The foundation of the theoretical framework lay in the pedagogy of the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1997), whose literacy work empowered landless peasants to formulate their own demands for a better life and to liberate themselves from oppressive conditions. His philosophy was based on letting stakeholders get involved in development processes and determine their outcomes, rather than have these predetermined by an outside agency (Tufte and Mefalopulos 2009: 7). The focus was on empowerment and liberation through dialogic rather than linear communication processes, with an emphasis on participation in research, problem identification, decision-making, implementation and evaluation of change.

In a communication context, the concept of empowerment may be expressed in projects that enable local people to manage and oversee media facilities such as community public address systems; short-range, community radio stations, and simple communication centres and tele-centres (Cadiz 2005: 150). Prime examples of these are the Bolivian miners' radio stations in the 1970s and 1980s, financed and managed by the community of oppressed miners, which were described by Gumucio-Dagron (2005: 318) as one of the best examples of participatory communication for social change.

Gumucio-Dagron (2001: 12) suggests that radio, specifically community radio, has been an effective platform for public and private dialogue in the developing world. Despite rapid advances in ICT, radio remains the most accessible and widely used communication platform in Africa, and has historically been widely used as a communication tool for social change. There is growing interest in how new media might also be used as effective tools in these areas (Meyers 2008:1) and the *Tulinde Watoto Sasa* project was an opportunity to explore this further.

In order to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the radio project, the five characteristics of Freire's dialogic approach (Freire 1970), as described by Cadiz (2005: 147-149), were used as a framework. These are: (a) *communication between equals* – equality between the change agent and the partner; (b) *problem-posing* – where the learners' insights, knowledge and experience are

used to develop a problem-posing dialogue rather than them simply 'banking' the knowledge they are 'given'; (c) *praxis* – a cycle of action and reflection, which integrates theory and practice; (d) *conscientizing* – a process of advancing critical consciousness, as participants begin to understand the human, development and social processes; and finally (e) *five values* – love, hope, humility, faith and critical thinking, interpreted as the principles of effective interpersonal communication.

The essential elements of communication for empowerment identified by Cadiz, (2005: 150-151), were also used as a framework: (a) providing access to information; (b) putting users/ beneficiaries and local people in control; (c) building local people's capabilities in communication; (d) an emphasis on small and appropriate media; (e) learning with partners; (f) working as a collective; (g) capitalizing and building on felt needs; (h) making it enjoyable; (i) providing hands-on experience; and (j) sharing resources. Together, these concepts have the potential to create the deep sense of grassroots ownership that is fundamental to the success of participatory communication for social change initiatives (Gumucio-Dagron 2001: 26).

Research methodology

Rather than focus on a single methodology, a variety of approaches were used, similar to the 'methods toolbox' of ethnographic/participatory action research outlined in Taachi et al. (2003: 51). This was designed to produce a rich *variety* of information in an attempt to elicit deep levels of meaning from and understanding of, the above-mentioned themes, through the vehicle of the participatory radio programme.

Four approaches were used. First, *policy and archive research* was used to analyse the quantitative and qualitative research already carried out by Mkombozi and the other agencies that have contributed to its current strategic direction. Second, *participant observation* sought to gain a deeper insight into the environment and the participatory process. Field notes were taken either contemporaneously or soon after. Third, *qualitative interviews* – both group and individual – were carried out before and after the programme was broadcast with the young people who made the programme, Mkombozi staff, local authority representatives and radio station staff. The aim of the interviews was to gather richer and more sensitive qualitative data (Hansen 1998: 258; Kvale, quoted in Meyer 1996: 70) about the issues and how they affect communities and individuals, as well as the outcomes of the programme-making process in relation to the themes outlined above. Finally, *programme making* with the young people was a form of creative, experimental methodology, which produced insights into and a deeper understanding of the participatory process, the different levels at which it operated and questions arising from that process.

Analysis of youth empowerment through radio

Mkombozi's stated mission is to 'empower, engage and enable'. Great emphasis is placed in many of its interventions on the acquisition of skills, which not only equip young people to generate income but also give them self-confidence and enhanced self-respect. These latter outcomes are also pursued through *Mkombozi's* programme of sports, music and creative arts, and through occasional opportunities to speak or perform at national and international conferences and events. However, according to Freirean pedagogy, the essence of empowerment goes deeper than skills acquisition – it centres on dialogue and control (Freire 1997). This section analyses how the programme-making process linked with the ideas at the heart of participatory communication theory outlined above.

Putting users/beneficiaries and local people in control

The participants were chosen by *Mkombozi* staff because of their previous experience of drama or other creative and participatory projects. They were also quite articulate and it was felt they would be able to rise to the challenge of making their own programme. However, it was clear that although their previous participation in radio and drama interventions had given them some self-confidence, there was trepidation and even suspicion about the idea of being given full control. The young men were initially barely engaged and uncommunicative at the first meeting. When they were shown the recording machine and told they could try it out for themselves, they responded with disbelief but once they realized that they *could* use the machine themselves, their faces lit up as they took turns with the microphone. One improvised a humorous interview with an *Mkombozi* staff member, another sang a rap song and a third pretended to be a DJ. The fourth began telling his story. Having the freedom to 'perform' dissipated the tension and awkwardness in the room and helped close the gap between researcher and participants.

Once they realized they had the freedom to decide the content and format of the programme, the youths quickly embraced the idea and, after a session discussing among themselves what they wanted to do, they spent the next few weeks transforming their ideas into a finished product with the help of the author/researcher.

During the programme-making process, observations on the demeanour and responses of the participants were made in field notes. It was noted that the four young men visibly grew in confidence as they discussed their ideas and were listened to. In interviews carried out after the programme went out, they remarked on how having the freedom to make the programme made them feel good about themselves and their ability to create something worthwhile. They also recognized that they had been given the power to raise awareness of issues about which they felt the community should know.

In the case of the Bolivian miners referred to above, the radio stations were controlled by the local communities of miners. The *Tulinde Watoto Sasa* project,

by contrast, was a one-off experiment so the extent of wider local participation and control was limited. However, an element of local participation was achieved in the form of the phone-in that followed the transmission of the recorded programme, during which questions were raised as part of a studio debate on the issues raised by the young radio producers (see *empowerment and engagement* below).

Communication between equals

Freire refers to equality between the change agent and the development partner, or between teacher and student (Cadiz 2005: 147). In this context, the equality was between the 'expert' and the 'beneficiaries'. However, it became clear during the process that achieving such equality was not necessarily going to be straightforward. This was exemplified by the fact that at the first meeting, the young participants chose to sit on a bench that was lower than the seat on which I was sitting. This reinforced their perception of what they assumed to be the power relationship between themselves as children/youth and myself as both an older person and a foreigner. My observations at this meeting supported research findings about the subordinate position of youth in Tanzanian society (Stambach 2000: 5; Helgesson 2006: 87). It suggested that further reflection was needed on the position of the researcher in relation to the participants because of the influence of established cultural and social hierarchies, generational differences and the types of life experiences on both sides. Being told that this was *their* programme was not enough initially to break down the barriers. However, over the course of the programme-making process, some of the barriers did seem to break down as the young people became more comfortable with their relationship with me.

At first, they tended to not speak to me directly but instead communicated through one of the Mkombozi staff members. They also used the traditional greeting that is reserved for elders or 'superiors'. After a few meetings, however, they began to speak to me directly in Swahili or in English, to use my first name and even on occasion to use a 'street greeting'. They were still reliant on my expertise, but they understood that I also needed their expertise on issues that were alien to me and that I was willing to listen and discuss. Our co-dependence shifted the traditional boundaries between youth and older people in Tanzanian society, as we began to operate as partners.

Making it enjoyable and providing hands-on experience

As noted above, the young men were initially uncommunicative at the first meeting but began to open up when they were given a chance to use the digital recorder. Having the microphone in their hands transformed them, as they began to have fun, and to pretend to be radio presenters and DJs. During the recording of the drama and the closing song, they were clearly having a lot of fun while learning first-hand about the versatility of radio.

During the first session, there was a problem with some of the recordings and the playback. The mood in the room immediately changed and the four youths became quiet again. Their disappointment and deflation at not being able to hear the playback properly underlines the dual function of having a voice. It was not only important for them to be able to take part and be creative; they also needed to *hear* their own voices – almost to reaffirm the fact that they had produced something of merit.

Problem-posing/learning with partners

Drawing insights from the stakeholders' knowledge and experience was one of the main aims of the development of the radio show. The individual interviews were an opportunity to draw out these insights and to help the four think about the possible content of their programme. They also provided clues to some of the fundamental issues at the core of the street children phenomenon which I, as the external agent, would not have been aware of without engaging in such dialogue.

'I was born in Rombo. I went to the street because there was conflict in the family and when I left I didn't say goodbye to anybody. . . . I wasn't going to school in Rombo because there was no money to pay school fees. The teacher kept telling me to go home so I quit. I walked from Rombo to Moshi.' (Godfrey Joseph, 14, Mkombozi youth and radio programme maker)

'I've been living at Mkombozi since 2001 – when I was 8. There are five of us in the family and my mother and father separated. I moved to grandmother. Life wasn't that good. Then I went to live with my auntie. Life at auntie's wasn't that good. She was just selling small things, business. She used me to sell things, like ice, but I wanted to go to school. I went to Arusha to my father, who had remarried, so I could go to school. But things were not good. I was maltreated by my stepmother, beaten sometimes. Then I decided to go to the street. I was six years old.' (Morgan Amani, 18, Mkombozi youth and radio programme maker)

From these two interviews alone, it was possible to begin to understand some of the underlying issues which drive children on to the street, such as lack of education opportunities, family conflict and poverty. The themes that came out of the interviews reflected a cultural context that would have taken time to tap into and understand. These included the clearly defined social hierarchies within Tanzanian society and attitudes towards children, who are expected 'to be seen but not heard'.

Providing the freedom to articulate these issues in a dialogic process allowed them to emerge in a way that might not have happened if I, as a researcher, had made assumptions about the problems I thought children and young people face in Tanzania. Although it is likely that I could have found out about these issues through other means, engaging the participants in dialogue produced *meaning* behind the facts and figures (Kvale 1997/2009:1), as well as an understanding of their perspectives on them.

Working as a collective

After the individual interviews, a brainstorming session was held with all the participants. On one level, the individual interviews had resulted in a measure of empowerment because the young people had been allowed to tell their story – they had been given a voice. (Taachi et al. 2009: 4). The brainstorming session took the process a step further in that they were given a forum to discuss the issues they wanted to highlight in the programme and how they wanted to tackle them.

As the ‘technical expert’, my role was to outline the types of radio format they could use in the programme, such as interviews, vox pops, drama, music and features. Theirs was to discuss among themselves in order to define the issues and agree the content of the programme. In keeping with the participatory model, the ‘point of departure’ was the community, which was fully involved in the decision-making (Servaes and Malikhao 2005:95), rather than the expert, as in the monologic, top-down model. Since the group understood that they had control of the content, the discussion was a lively one. It was clear that they had been thinking about these ideas for some time. It is unclear, however, whether they had ever had an opportunity to express them publicly before.

Providing hands-on experience and building capabilities in communication

Unlike television, radio is technically simple and not labour intensive. It was therefore quite straightforward to teach the four how to use the recorder and the microphone. I noted that giving them the equipment immediately boosted their confidence. Furthermore, allowing *them* to ask the questions in the programme-making context helped them to set the agenda and control the direction of the process. Deo, for instance, had decided that he wanted to interview boys on the street, but also members of the community to find out what they thought of street children. We went to an area where the Mkombozi street coordinators meet the children who are living rough. Deo had control of the recorder and the microphone. I acted as his producer, or assistant, noting down the numbers that we would need for playback and making sure that the equipment was working properly. I was there if he needed to ask me a question about whether he was doing things correctly, but mostly he took the lead in selecting interviewees and questions.

Deo slipped easily into his role of journalist and was able to conduct interviews naturally and with confidence. It should be noted that he was probably able to elicit more information from the street children and passers-by than I would have been able to as a foreign professional journalist, because people immediately identified with him as one of their own community.

Once the boys on the street understood the purpose of the interview, they were very keen to tell their stories. Being able to speak out appeared to be liberating for boys like Daudi, who gave an insight into the types of opinion and the attitudes he faced from the community on a daily basis:

'They call us names, Kapuro, Chokora, thief. They don't want to be around us because they say we are thieves'.

Deo's response to the opportunity he had to interview street children and passers-by, gives a clear indication of how giving him a platform to create his own content inspired him and strengthened his belief that he could achieve something and make a difference. This could be interpreted as a form of empowerment.

'I enjoyed this interview because in my future I want to interview people so when I interview people and they talk with me good and smile, I get the confidence to ask people questions. I feel so proud because I want to be.... a journalist like you. So when I do it I feel so good. I think I don't waste my time. I do something which I want to do some day. But today I do. I feel so good. Thanks.' (Deo Antipasi, 13 May 2010).

An emphasis on small and appropriate media

Cadiz (2005: 150) identifies local broadcasting and youth theatre as two examples of 'small and appropriate media', which she suggests are effective ways of empowering rural communities through communication. Morgan's decision to write a five-minute drama for the radio programme exploring the issue of family conflict as one of the factors pushing children on to the streets, could be placed in this category of communication for empowerment. It also met the requirement to *capitalize and build on felt needs* because his drama created a scenario and messaging that were relevant to the community but which I, as the researcher/expert, would have been ignorant of. It was an example of what Taachi et al. (2009:1) refer to as participatory content creation – the idea that content creation activities can give marginalized communities a voice.

Morgan's drama was truly participatory in that he wrote a brief outline of what should happen in each scene and then left it to the actors – the other three programme makers – to improvise their lines. Although there was no script, no sophisticated recording studio and no involvement of a 'drama expert', the result was remarkable in terms of its impact.

Empowerment and engagement

The first stage of the radio project focused on how the making of the radio programme could contribute to the empowerment of the young participants by giving them control of the programme-making process, and allowing them to voice their own opinions and feelings. The second stage examined how the transmission of the programme and the use of interactive media might provide deeper levels of empowerment for the participants, by opening up new channels through which they could engage with the communities around them on the issues they raised. This was achieved by allowing the programme makers to

ask questions of people in the community about the issues that had driven them on to the streets, and by giving the programme makers the power to encourage people in the community to ask questions of themselves and of the authorities which should serve them.

This was evident in two of the items for the programme: Deo's package featuring interviews with street children and passers-by, and Charles's interview with the head of social welfare, Agnes Urassa. In the first case, Deo was able to tap into the community and provoke a response that I, as a journalist and outsider, would not have provoked: they connected as members of the same community. At the same time, Deo's role as interviewer was likely to have challenged, in the minds of the interviewees and the audience, the prevailing negative stereotype of the street child. In the second case, Charles was able to switch established hierarchies by allowing youth to ask questions of the adult, and to be treated with respect as a valued contributor to the dialogue on the issues raised.

The interactive segment of the broadcast served as a space in which listeners could respond to the issues raised, ask questions of the studio guests, including Charles, and, one would hope, generate conversations beyond the sphere of the radio programme within their own communities and interpersonal spaces.

During the broadcast, 22 text messages were received and many listeners telephoned the studio, expressing surprise and concern at the issues raised. There was a striking level of support from the audience for the street children, and a common call for support and action from parents, the community and the authorities.

This confirms the notion that a participatory process not only empowers the participants on an individual level but can also transform young people into agents of change by giving them the potential to empower the wider community to find solutions through dialogue and debate. For this to happen, however, more programmes would need to be made with wider participation from the local community over a longer period of time.

After the broadcast, the idea was mooted of making more programmes in collaboration with others in the community, such as schools, churches and mosques, so that more children and families could be reached. One year after the broadcast, Mkombozi and the author were involved in a similar project: the Youth Radio Network, launched by UNICEF Tanzania. This involved a larger number and wider mix of children in terms of age, gender and background, who were making radio programmes in partnership with NGOs and local radio stations in different parts of the country.

Summary

The process of giving the Mkombozi youths free rein to make a radio programme visibly increased their confidence and self-belief, and was an example of how participation in decision-making, content creation and public expression contributed to empowerment on a number of levels. A key factor in this process was the sense of ownership engendered by the knowledge that they were in

control of the agenda and the content, that their voices would be heard and that what they said was valid. The participatory process confirmed some of the key characteristics of Freire's dialogic approach, as well as the essential elements of communication for empowerment outlined by Cadiz (2005: 149-151): it drew from grassroots insights rather than external or 'expert' assumptions; it created a forum to discuss issues; it prioritized problem-posing over simply 'banking' information; and it transformed these young people into potential agents of change.

In addition, the project demonstrated how the media, in particular radio, can serve as an effective vehicle for establishing dialogue within communities, and confirmed that media interactivity is in itself a participatory tool in that it enables people to connect with the communities in which they live. The success of the programme in reaching out to and engaging with the community of listeners, lay in the fact that it was made by former street children themselves and not by outsiders representing them. Hearing their voices telling their own stories on-air was a powerful way of grabbing listeners' attention and raising awareness of issues that are largely hidden in Tanzanian society.

Conclusion: social change?

One radio show will not promote change, but there are indications that communication initiatives like this one, if repeated on a regular basis, can set social transformations in motion (Waisbord 2005: 86). For change to happen, there needs to be an understanding of the cultural context (Gumucio-Dagron 2001: 26). The experience and understanding of these young people of that context put them in an ideal position to act as the catalyst for such change.

'I want to think of something that can help – maybe have a joke but get the message across, perform something that is entertainment but with a message. I feel proud to have this platform. It should be monthly. I think it can help the government so they know what people think. We are youth. We can present things that you can see. Maybe we can get solutions to problems in order to have stability of development.' (Deo Antipasi, Mkombozi youth programme maker).

Not only were they empowered on an individual level but their programme also gave them a forum to provoke listeners to think about the issues and the solutions.

'It was so good to hear that people feel for the children. I think it is good to hear from many of them who said that they really feel bad about it and some of them even said that they want to do something: 'what can we do?'" (William Raj, Mkombozi Director).

The participation of the head of Social Work, Agnes Urassa, in the live studio debate indicated the potential for using programmes like these as part of an advocacy campaign and as a tool to make the government accountable to the wider public. Urassa was clear about how participatory radio of this kind could

help the authorities reach communities in order to promote change at the individual level.

'I was very, very happy to be a participant on the programme due to the nature of the job I am doing. It is very important and very crucial to make the community aware of the social problems which are affecting the people.' (Agnes Urassa, feedback interview).

Integrated approach

While the concept of participation was extremely successful in the experiment, there is a need to explore how a mix of top-down and bottom-up approaches might also have a place in such a project. Grassroots participation remains the foundation of effective social change but that does not mean that expertise, governmental input, information and knowledge dissemination should be excluded. Servaes echoes this point:

'Participation does not imply that there is no longer a role for development specialists, planners and institutional leaders. It only means that the viewpoint of the local public groups is considered before the resources for development projects are allocated and distributed and that suggestions for changes in the policy are taken into consideration.' (Servaes 1999: 157).

My technical expertise as a radio journalist was needed to bring the project to fruition. Similarly, Mkombozi's experience and knowledge provided vital input into the project and the research process. In going forward, one of the key issues, as outlined by Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009: 4), is to define what kind of participation is needed and who should participate.

Participation does not mean an unstructured free-for-all. The key is for the outside expert to know, particularly in the initial stages, when to hold back and when to intervene. Ideally, experts should act as a 'facilitators' to build the skills of the participants to a point where the facilitator can write themselves out of the picture.

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Notes

- 1 Interview with the author, May 2010.
- 2 This is the name of an *Mkombozi* child protection campaign and was chosen by the youth producers as the name of the radio programme.

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