Module 3

The Role of Communication in Education and Development

Overview

Communication, education and development are closely linked. Communication is considered a tool for social change that can contribute to development and the promotion of education, while education is not possible without communication, especially instructive communication, in a way that it is admitted that it is itself communication. Module 3 allows users to have a common understanding of the role of communication for education and development, as well as its implications for communication officers, journalists and other media practitioners. It also enables them to understand the theoretical and conceptual foundations relevant for good utilization of communication and the media in the field of education.

General Objective

To enable users to analyse and exploit the links that exists between the role of communication in support of education and development, as well as its implications for their tasks.

Specific Objectives

- To enable users to understand the basic definitions and theoretical framework on Communication as related to Education and Development.
- Identify and analyze the theoretical and conceptual foundations of communication as applied to development.
- Draw the implications of the role of communication in education and development for journalists and communication officers.
- Build bridges between communicators and educators.
- Infer the role and responsibilities of the media in communication for education
- Make educators aware of the importance of the media in education.
- To distinguish the various stages of planning and application of a strategy or a communication programme for development.

This module will also enable trainees to identify and exploit effectively various issues that pertain to development with the use of different sources of information. They should be able to cover the education sector systematically and comprehensively from a developmental perspective and write accurate and interesting spot news, in-depth reports and features on education and development.
Expected Outcome

Users should be able to understand the meaning of development, in particular as related to education, and the importance of communication to achieve this.

Introduction

Communication for Education and Development is about dialogue, participation and the sharing of knowledge and information to promote education in a given country or society. It reviews the needs and capacities of the various stakeholders. Although the international community, as well as donors, NGOs and grassroots organizations have at varying moments experienced the implementation of various aspects of Communication for Development, there remains the need for a redefinition of Communication for Development within the context of the 21st century, bearing in mind the new political and media landscape, especially regarding the rural digital divide and other emerging issues related to education and development. Unit 1 provides a brief on Communication for Development, while Unit 2 tackles in Education for Development.

UNIT 1

What is Development?

Kendra Cherry says “Development does not just involve the biological and physical aspects of growth, but also the cognitive and social aspects associated with development throughout life”. By better understanding how and why people change and grow, we can then apply this knowledge to helping people live up to their full potential. Development must generally lead to better life through which people can develop their potentials and use it meaningfully for societal development.

Since the beginning of this 21st Century, the world has witnessed many changes which have posed considerable challenges today. These include the rapid spread of globalization and the spread of Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), the increasing divide between rich and poor, particularly at the international level, the changing nature of the nation-state, the changing nature of the private sector, ecological pressures which have resulted in climate change etc, the decentralization of services, the explosion of media – and the emergence of new social actors.

Communication for Sustainable Development

Communication for sustainable development is about people, who are the drivers of their own development. It must therefore contribute to sustainable change for the benefit of the isolated and the marginalized.
Further, Communication for Development is a horizontal, two-way process that is about people coming together to identify problems, agree on visions for desirable futures, and empower the poorest. It is about the co-creation and sharing of knowledge. It respects the local context, values and culture. And finally, the approach of Participatory Communication for Development does not only apply to work with communities. It is an approach of equal importance to all stakeholders.

The character of the digital divide is now changing, although there remains much more to be realized before it can be universally accepted that real changes are taking place. It is now beginning to be as much one between rural and urban and rich and poor countries, as one between countries. For instance mobile telephones have been spreading extraordinarily rapidly, particularly in Africa where an estimated 60 million people now own mobile phones. This is probably an underestimate. Radio remains the most widespread communication technology on the continent, even though this is not accessible to all.

For communication to be more effective in the context of sustainable development, the following must be borne in mind:

- There is the need for scaling up and better resourcing Communication for Development issues;
- Communication for Development constitutes building a communication component into development projects from inception;
- There is the need to ensure that national frameworks support free and pluralistic information systems and community media;
- Research and training should be improved for Communication for Development practitioners;
- New tools and skills for evaluation and impact assessments must be developed;
- Alliances should be built and local, national and regional Communication for Development processes must be promoted.

Activity 1

Make a brief presentation of the planning process and the application of a strategy or a communication programme for development using transparencies, (a) analysis of the situation or a run down, defining a strategy, (b) how to come up with an operation mode of the strategy, (c) execution of the strategy, and (d) follow-up and evaluation.
Activity 2

The trainer will lead a question and answer session to sort out the differences and the links between policies, programmes, strategies and communication campaigns.

Activity 3

Identify categories of persons involved in the process of communication for development: participants and target audience, technical partners or service providers, donors, etc.

Participants are called upon to express their opinions on the process (clear message, simplicity, operational character, ...) The trainer ends by stressing the plurality of actors or on the need to bear in mind several requirements: coordination, cooperation, participation, feedback, credibility.

UNIT 2

Communication in Education for Development

Communication and education cannot continue to exist in the traditional way as if they were totally different areas. The information society has made it clear that it is necessary for the two worlds - the educational and that of communications, to come closer together and to interrelate. To achieve this, the different practitioners from both worlds must reach an agreement and take action. This agreement should start with a profound understanding of common values and activities and mutual recognition by those taking part.

A school, or an academic institution, is a body that communicates, transmits and provides orientations, codes and languages. A medium of communication is, to some extent, a system that leads the knowledge of a specific public. It also has such a degree of influence, especially on young people, that it could be referred to as informal education. Therefore, education and communication are forced into mutual understanding.

Development can also be defined as a long process of quantitative and qualitative change taking place in a given society at the political, economic, social, cultural and scientific level and leading to individual and community well-being. Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of current generations without jeopardizing those of future ones.
Communication for development is the planned and organized utilization of communication techniques and means (mediated and non-mediated) to promote development through the dissemination of relevant information and by eliciting active and conscious participation of all actors, including beneficiaries, in development actions. Its main components include:

- Social communication,
- Institutional communication, and
- Educational communication.

Educational communication allows people access to knowledge, attitudes and skills required for their emancipation and the improvement of their well-being. It also allows them to master the knowledge, norms, values and competencies deemed necessary by their society (knowledge, good manners, and know-how). Educational communication is conducted through pedagogy, andragogy and initiation, using communication between teachers/educators and learners on the one hand, and among learners on the other hand.

Media education is aimed at the theoretical and practical study of the media, their languages, content, technology, uses, effects, and culture. It analyses the relationship between the person or social groups and the media, proposing paths and channels to improve this relationship by encouraging personal autonomy, critical capacity and the expressive and creative side of people. It encourages use of the media to access personal, educational and cultural development and at the same time promotes its social use for cooperation and the setting up of ties of solidarity. It motivates creative use of communication, its function as social mediator and its capacity to develop the imagination and discovery as a way of spending a refreshing and enriching leisure time. Media Education is essentially a form of humanistic pedagogy which puts the media in the centre of the deepest and most legitimate interest of the person and of human society. It constitutes a privileged access to a form of active and participative citizenship in accordance with the demands of knowledge societies.

Media education is a key aspect of the new requirements that mediatisation presents to society. It is a consequence of the transformation that the media have gone through from being mere instrument to becoming a central area of human experience and social life.

Activity 4

Determine the relationship between communication and development:
Would you consider the media a parallel school? Why?
Activity 5

Are there necessarily any tensions between education and development values and those of communication? Please elaborate.

Activity 6

Can you distinguish between the different values transmitted by the media and by schools? Can you outline these different values?

Conclusion

The concepts communication education and development have been recognized as major instruments for development. In order to achieve sustainable development attention must be focused on all the three instruments to ensure a new transformation in Africa’s education system.

Further Reading and References

2. J.M. Perez Torneo in collaboration with M. De Fontcuberta, Communication and education : 3 key Questions, UNESCO, European Union. (Undated)