BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCED CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Behavioural Change Communication strategies were appraised with regards to the implications for enhanced corporate communications and sustainable development in Nigeria. Hinged on evidence-based assumptions, it was observed that behavioural change communication emerged to bridge the misapplication of communication in engendering attitudinal and behavioural changes in support of development interventions. Behavioural change communication principles as noted recognise development as a process of corroborative efforts through the use of effective communication to promote positive behaviour that will provide an enabling and supportive environment for sustainable development. This work is anchored on the theory of reasoned action, with the social network and social support theory discussed as a supporting theory. Based on the strategies analysed, we conclude that with efforts to build trust and confidence, by providing the supportive environment for change through strategic behavioural change communication, the desired healthy habits and behaviours would be engendered to enhance corporate communications in support of sustainable development interventions and programmes. Thus, a radical rethinking concerning the conceptualisation and initiation of development programmes with respect to policy formulation, implementation and monitoring in Nigeria is advocated. This is because experience have shown that behavioural change communication is often a missing link or not taken into consideration as a core element in the planning and implementation of development programmes, thus lending the programmes susceptible to the prevailing attitudes and behaviours that may be unhealthy for their sustenance.

INTRODUCTION

Identified as an agent of social change, communication plays a leading role in all spheres of human endeavour. As Eyre (1983:34) rightly notes, communication is the medium through which relationships are established, extended and sustained. It provides a means by which individuals and organisations act and interact; exchange information and ideas; develop plans; proposals and policies; make decisions, and manage resources towards the attainment of set goals and objectives. According to Grunig (1992:47), it is the recognition of communication as a catalyst in the process of development that has made it a key function of public relations. It is the same recognition as he observes that gave birth to the concept of development communication also referred to as communication for development, development support communication or communication for sustainable livelihoods.

According to Lantican (2003:12), the rationale behind development communication is the realisation that a prime factor in fostering change and development is the planned and systematic use of communication to help individuals, communities and societies accept change. She notes that communication forms the basis for creating awareness, building consensus, generating participation in the process of change and development, while making informed decisions and resolving conflicts.

Behavoural change communication is a variant of communication for development and an integral of public relations strategy that focuses on promoting positive change in the behaviour and attitudes of people through persuasive communication. Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (1998:21) point out that Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) focuses on promoting behaviours that appear most promising in reducing the barriers to development. This, they say, is in recognition of the fact that presenting facts alone does not ensure behavioural change. Therefore, a need arises to evolve more strategies that are designed to accommodate the stage of behaviour adoption of an individual or group and active skills integrally needed to enable and sustain change. Sufficing, Prochaska, Diclemente and Norcross (1992:47) observe that past communication efforts focused on knowledge and attitudes, but have had mixed impact on behaviour. This, they note, was responsible for the misapplication of communication strategies, especially in public relations.

Although behavioural change communication emerged to bridge this gap by focusing on the audience of communication both as a group or individuals on one hand, and service providers and communicators, on the other, as a specialised area of development communication, it suffered several setbacks due to the wrong notions and perceptions associated with its application. This, however, has led to fundamental changes in the concept, principles, techniques, strategies and applications of behavioural change communication. Consequently, it has increasingly become prominent in public relations and social marketing circles.

This work, therefore, focuses on behavoural change communication as an evolving paradigm with special attention on the principles, techniques and strategies. This will put us in better positions to understand the evolutionary changes of Behavioural Change Communication (BCC), its principles, techniques and strategies for enhanced corporate and development support communication, which in turn will equip us with the basic skills and working knowledge of how to implement behavioural change communication programmes for enhanced corporate communication and success of development intervention projects and programmes, both as public relations and social marketing functions.

CONCEPTUAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Communication is a multi-dimensional concept with varying views and perspectives regarding its components and variants. Consequently, there is always the compelling need to define concepts within which confines certain arguments are made or within the context in which the analysis of issues or

trends in a given field are focused. This has necessitated the tenacity to define the underlying concepts in this discourse in order to effectively set it in motion.

Development:

The term development has been defined by different scholars and analysts with varying degrees of interpretations and connotations depending on the point being stressed, content of the arguments, circumstances and scenarios. According to Mefalopulos (2008:5), development is an improvement in the economic and social conditions of a society which gives its population enhanced opportunities of managing and utilizing its natural and human resources.

To Inayatullah (1975) in Moeemeka (2000:7), development implies changes towards patterns of society that allows better realization of human values, or gives society greater control over its environments, its political destiny; and enables individuals to gain control over themselves. This indicates that development often is driven by some societal attitudes and behaviours as well as actions.

Corporate Communications:

As observed by Oliver (2004: 21), corporate communications refer to the efforts made by organisations to create awareness and knowledge about their objectives, policies, products, services and interests through well defined communication activities such as publicity, advocacy and campaigns tailored towards a target audience for the mutual benefit of the organisation and the targeted publics. Grunig (1992: 63) also notes that the aim of

corporate communications is to educate, correct mistruth, and build trust or to improve an image in order to engender goodwill and favourable disposition of the publics.

MacNamara (2005: 28) adds that beyond raw information and awareness creation, organisations' policies through corporate communication activities are intended to package key issues in order to make them comprehensible and acceptable to their internal and external publics. Constructing comprehensive and coherent frameworks to promote an organisation's cause and building positive image, therefore, becomes the sole aim of corporate communications activities. The main functions of corporate communications as MacNamara explains, consists of informing, convincing, improving the image and accompanying analysis with regard to the organisation's activities and policies. This implies that corporate communications is a dynamic function of public relations that encourages different types of communication - internal, event driven, political, financial, crisis communication and lobbying.

Communication for Development:

This refers to the use of communication techniques, technology, principles and practices in the development process. Yahaya (2003:15) defines development communication as the application of the principles and process of exchange of ideas using a medium towards the achievement of development objectives. This definition recognises development as a multi-faceted endeavour which can only be fostered through a multi-faceted communication approach. It

also acknowledges the central role of communication in the process of development.

Mass Communication:

It is a process in which professional communicators use the mass media to disseminate messages widely, rapidly and continuously to arouse intended meanings in large and diverse audiences in attempts to influence them in a variety of ways. Similarly, McQuail (2005:54) refers to mass communication as a process comprising the institution and techniques by which specialised groups employ technological devices to disseminate symbolic content to large heterogeneous and widelydispersed audiences. This distinguishes mass communication from face-to-face communication.

Mass Media:

They are instruments or channels through which messages are communicated to large heterogeneous audiences. According to Fiske (1982:81), the mass media are organised, technical and psychological process of communication designed to reach and influence large number of people simultaneously without the necessity of personal contact. The mass media are radio, television, newspapers and magazines, among others, credited with the pervasive power of influence.

Behavioural Change Communication:

It is a process of using communication approaches and tools to develop the skills and capabilities of people to promote and manage their own development initiatives by adopting positive change that offers opportunities for growth and sustainable development, Blum (1999:16). Behavioural change communication, according to Prochaska, Diclemente and Norcross (1992:46), is a communication approach aimed at fostering positive change behaviour of people as well as their knowledge and attitudes. This is done by working in partnership with them to influence social norms, the policy environment and building consensus on the desired environment within which to function.

Strategic Behavioural Communication:

Strategic behavioural communication (SBC) is an interactive process with individuals and communities to develop tailored communication channels and interventions to promote healthier behaviours and support individual, community and societal behaviour change. According to Manoncourt (2004:21), it lends communication expertise to advocacy, social and community mobilisation, and other interventions to deliver consistent messages through multi-layered approaches and channels for maximum effectiveness.

It is evident from the conceptual definitions that development is multifaceted and communication is central to all efforts and programmes designed, conceptualised or evolved to foster development. The definitions have also shown that development is associated with failures and disappointments which propel people to action, hence the emergence of Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) as a continuumof development communication, which relies on variety of media in reaching its targets.

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

The concept of Behavioural Change

Communication (BCC) emerged from theories and models that attempt to explain the reasons behind alternations in individuals' behavioural patterns. Theories such as Self-Efficacy, Social and Observational Learning, theories of Reasoned Action, among others, cite environmental, personal and behavioural characteristics as the major factors in behavioral determination. Experience from knowledge and research into the potency of these theories, as helped in the application of communication strategies based on other theoretical constructs to bring about positive change and create an enabling environment that makes it possible for the desired behavioural change to take place.

In our attempt to highlight the principles, techniques and strategies of Behaviour Change Communication (BCC), it is trite examining the theoretical underpinnings of the discourse. Therefore, the 'Theory of Reasoned Action' conceptualized by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, 1980 and 2004) to estimate the discrepancy between attitude and behaviour finds relevance. This will be supported with a discussion of the 'Social Network and Social Support Theory' propounded by Israel *et al* (1985), to explain the mechanisms by which social interactions can promote or inhibit individual and collective behaviour.

Theory of Reasoned Action

Formulated by Fishbein and Ajzen (1980:671), in their attempt to estimate the discrepancy between attitude and behaviour due to the fact that behaviour can be deliberative and planned, the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) which emanated from the Expectancy Value Models, according to Ajzen (2002:667), suggests that a person's

behaviour is determined by his/her intention to perform the behaviour and that this intention is, in turn, a function of his/her attitude toward the behaviour and his/her subjective norm. The best predictor of behaviour as observed by the theory is intention. Intention is the cognitive representation of a person's readiness to perform a given behaviour, and it is considered to be the immediate antecedent of behaviour. This intention is determined by three things: their attitude toward the specific behaviour, their subjective norms and their perceived behavioural control.
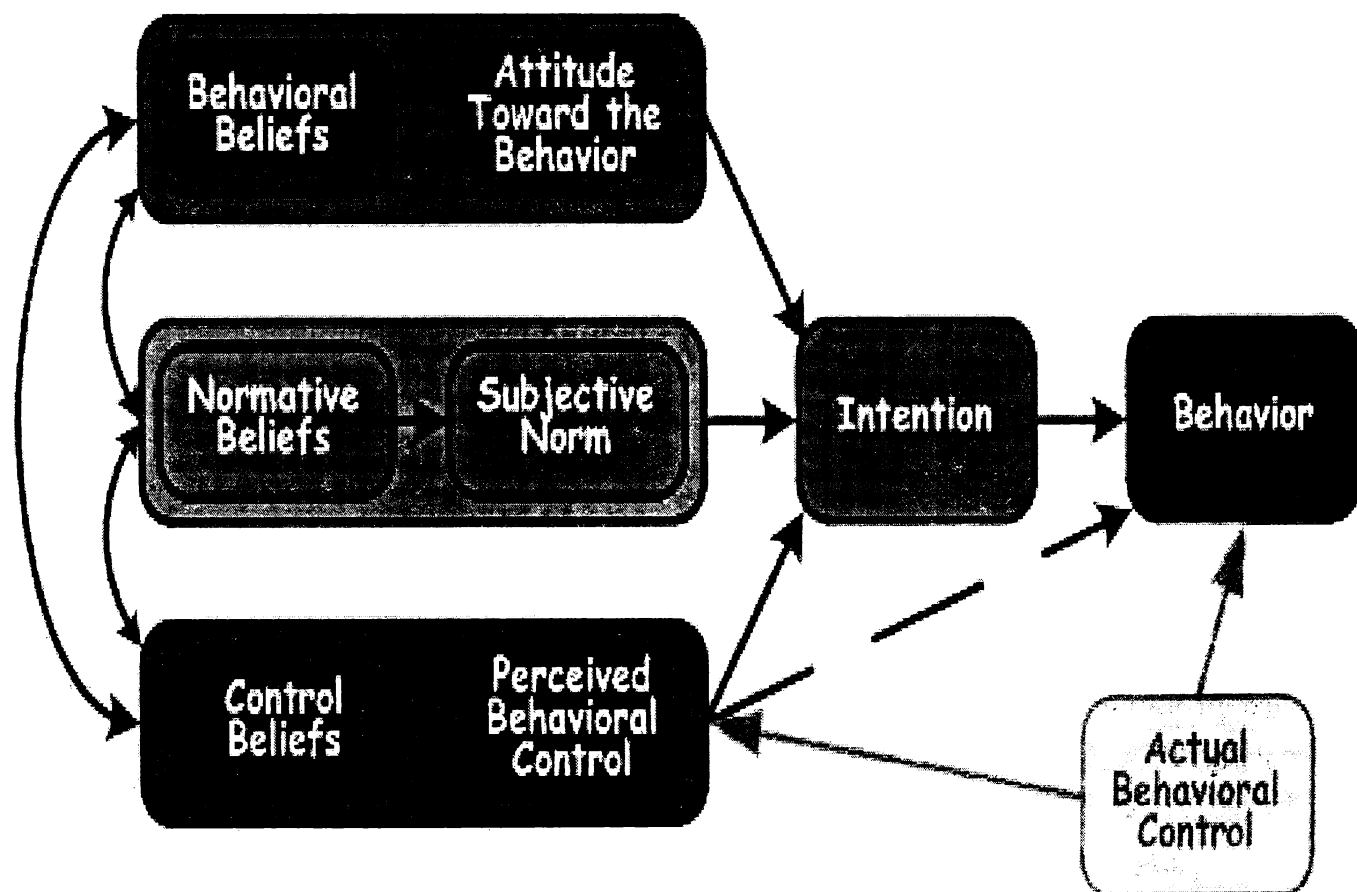
Explaining further, Fishbein and Ajzen (2004:221) suffice that the Theory of Reasoned Action holds that only specific attitudes toward the behaviour in question can be expected to predict that behaviour. In addition to measuring attitudes toward the behaviour, the theory suggests that we also need to measure people's subjective norms – their beliefs about how people they care about will view the behaviour in question. To predict someone's intentions, knowing these beliefs can be as important as knowing the person's attitudes. Finally, perceived behavioural control influences intentions. Perceived behavioural control refers to people's perceptions of their ability to perform a given behaviour. These predictors lead to intention. A general rule is that the more favorable the attitude and the subjective norm, and the greater the perceived control, the stronger should be the person's intention to perform the behaviour in question.

Ajzen (2002:671) presents a diagrammatic model for explaining the theory of reasoned action, which captures the components of the theory's three general

constructs: behavioural intention (BI), attitude (A), and subjective norm (SN). This suggests · that a person's behavioural intention depends on the person's attitude about the behaviour and subjective norms (BI = A + SN). If a person intends to exhibit a behaviour, then it is likely that the person will do it. Behavioral intention measures a person's relative strength of intention to perform a behaviour. Attitude consists of beliefs about the consequences of performing the behaviour multiplied by his or her valuation of these consequences. Subjective norm is seen as a combination of perceived expectations from relevant individuals or groups along with intentions to comply with these expectations. In other words, "the person's perception that most people who are important to him or her think he should or should not perform the behavior in question," Ajzen and Fishbein (2004).

To put this in more simple terms, the theory opines that a person's volitional (voluntary) behaviour is predicted by his/her attitude toward that behaviour and how he/she thinks other people would view them if they performed the behaviour, implying that a person's attitude, combined with subjective norms, forms his/her behavioural intention. Fishbein and Ajzen assert that though that attitudes and norms are not weighted equally in predicting behaviour, "indeed, depending on the individual and the situation, these factors might be of very different effects on behavioural intention; thus a weight is associated with each of these factors in the predictive formula of the theory.

CONCEPTUAL MODEL FOR EXPLAINING THE THEORY OF REASONED ACTION

Source: Ajzen, Icek (2002). Perceived Behavioral Control, Self-Efficacy, Locus of Control, and the Theory of Planned Behaviour. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 32,* 665-683.

Also contributing to the theory, Aronson, Wilson, and Akert (2003:82) explain the value and applicability of the theory, by noting that the theory of reasoned action provides useful information for the development of strategic communication strategies. The theory as they observe is more useful in evaluation studies. Other usages of the theory, as they note, include: voting behaviour, disease prevention behaviour, birth control behaviour and consumption prediction.

Social Network and Social Support Theory

According to Manoncourt (1992:156), the Social Network and Social Support Theory emphasizes the importance of social network and support in fostering positive behaviour among people. This, as he explains, refers to the linkages and social relationships between people, nations, and organizations; and the content of the relationship (what is actually being shared or transmitted during different interactions). The theory identifies three types of supportive actions considered in social networks as:

* Emotional Support: This comes in the form of care, esteem, love, sympathy, affection among others and could promote or inhibit individual and collective behaviour.
* Instrumental Support: This could be in the form of money, services, tangible aid, transport, infrastructure, etc., and could also promote or inhibit individual and collective behaviour.
* · Informational Support: This includes advice, suggestions, counseling, training or information useful in problem solving. This also could promote or inhibit

individual and collective behaviour.

With the growing complexity of modern society and increasing social problems as Ethier (2004:2) observes, the social network and social support theory has evoked a lot of interests. According to him, the premise of the theory is that "each actor of a group has a crucial influence in social relations and consensus building and dependent on group distribution of opinion. According to Ethier, the theory presupposes that opinion formation and supportive action are based on social networks which can promote or inhibit behaviour. Relevance of the theory to be discourse lies in its identification of social interactions as a key factor in promoting or inhabiting individual or collective behaviour, and its recognition of emotional, instrumental and informational support as key components of behavioural change.

BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE COMMUNI-CATION PRINCIPLES

From the definitional stance of behavioural change communication, which is recognized as a process of working with individuals, communities and societies to develop communication strategies to promote positive behaviour and provide a supportive environment which will enable people to imitate and sustain positive behaviour that presupposes the underlying principles. As noted by Young, Christmas and Skates (2009: 8), experiences have shown that providing people with information and telling them how they should behave (teaching them) is not enough to bring about behavioural change. This is because people change their behaviour in response to other changes in the

world around them, in their understanding of the world, or in themselves – which makes a new behaviour seem more advantageous, more prevalent and more do-able. BCC principles recognize that the source of the message and the social legitimacy of the change are important.

The principles of behavioural change communication as identified by UN (2001:17), are not far from the emphasis of the individual behaviour adoption and behavioural change communication approaches. UNESCO identifies the principles of behavioural change communication (BCC) to include:

• Tailoring of approaches to age and sex.
• Tailoring approaches to stage of behaviour adoption over time.
• Promoting gender equality and human rights.
• Encouraging youth participation
• Expanding effective interactions with scope for institutionalisation and scaling-up.

These principles recognise the multi-dimensional approaches of communication to behavioural change as well as the environment within which the behavioural change is to take place.

SHIFTING PARADIGMS IN BEHAVIO-URAL CHANGE COMMUNICATION

Communication has been part of development intervention programmes over time. What became known as Behavior Change Communication (BCC), as observed by McKee (2000:19), grew into an essential part of comprehensive programmes targeted at helping members of beneficiary populations to increase their knowledge, change their attitudes and beliefs, modify

their perception and build their skills in adopting and maintaining healthy behaviours. Since its evolvement, the term "BCC" has been widely recognised in the field and is associated with communication programmes that pursue specific communication objectives in support of overall development programme goals. McKee points out that Behaviour Change Interventions (BCI) came to be recognised as another approach to promoting behaviour change and sustaining positive behaviours through strategically planned activities that are tailored to the needs of specific groups and create a supportive environment for individual and collective change. BCI implementers, Manoncourt (2004:24) notes, have stressed that, like BCC, BCI work in combination with services and commodities and through interventions such as advocacy, community mobilisation and social mobilisation. BCI place a greater emphasis than BCC on seeking to transform the social conditions in which behaviour change takes place by creating an enabling environment through social mobilisation approaches.

At the initial stage, Behavioural Change Communication associated largely with prevention-oriented intervention programmes that constituted the bulk of health related interventions. Over time, however, as Gray-Felder and Deane (1999:78) observe, the focus changed to reflect broad based behavioural change regarding policies, norms and trends in society, as such communication programmes also adapted to the changing landscape, expanding their expertise in support interventions. However, as they observed, the planners of intervention support

programmes often did not incorporate BCC, partly due to the perception of BCC as primarily a prevention strategy. The name change, from BCC to BCI, and now SBCC underscores the fact that BCC encompasses all relevant programmatic areas, not just prevention, by providing expertise for their communication-related component.

In addition, many in the field of development and communication began to question the effectiveness of approaches focused on inducing individual change and based on the assumption that change results from individuals making rational decisions. The name change emphasises the constant changes in people's lives and the interaction of people and their environment that results in additional vulnerabilities.

McKee, Bertrand and Becker-Benton (2004:31) posit that programmatically, the new term emphasises that population-wide shifts are needed to have a sustainable effect on development intervention programmes. SBCC is the driving force for population-based initiatives and community mobilisation that challenge social norms and promote structural interventions that go beyond a person-by-person approach to have a large-scale public health impact. While BCC and BCI approaches have proven successful at promoting behaviour changes in so many development intervention programmes, they did not capture behaviours like adherence because this represented maintenance or slight modification of existing behaviours rather than clear-cut behaviour change.

In some countries, as McKee, Bertrand and Becker-Benton (2004:34) note, the term "behaviour change" has developed a negative connotation associated with imposed or "topdown" approaches rather than strategies developed with full participation of primary beneficiaries, stakeholders and other community members. The new term emphasises SBCC's focus on behavioural goals that are not necessarily classifiable as "behaviour change." SBCC's broader scope includes influencing many different types of behaviours and removes the implication that these influences are imposed from outside a community or society.

BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE COMMUNIC-ATION TECHNIQUES

The path to behavioural change as observed by Lantican (2003:312) is through a process. Individuals go through a number of internal stages before they change their behaviour. They start from being aware and progress to a stage of becoming concerned and seeking information, then they learn and become more knowledgeable, after which they become more motivated to change, try the new behaviour, assess it and decide whether or not to sustain it. Lantican however, notes that both external and internal factors may impede the process and people sometimes drop out at one of the stages.

Sufficing the stages, Blum (1999: 32), has modeled the stages of individual behaviour adoption and behavioural change communication approaches in six stages. According to him, Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) recognizes behaviour as not only making a personal choice, but also providing a supportive environment to influence the behavioural change. The stages are tabulated viz:

Stage	BCC Approach
Pre-contemplation	Encourage awareness and value change
Early contemplation	Promote benefits of the new behaviour.
Late contemplation	Reduce the costs involved in adopting new behaviour (including financial costs and barriers to access), foster social support, and teach relevant skills necessary for the behaviour change.
Preparation for Action	Persona lise risks and benefits, deliberate decision-making, increase self-efficacy and self-esteem and perception of positive change among peer group.
Action	Reward and support change
Maintenance	Continue support of the behaviour change

Source: Blum (1999), *Positive Youth Development: Reducing Risk, Improving Health:* Geneva: World Health Organization.

This clearly shows that behavioural change communication approaches are closely monitored to ensure that the challenges associated with each of the stages are contained using special techniques. The most common techniques used in behavioural change communication, according to Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (1998:43), include:

- Embarking on research to find out the environmental factors that are likely to promote or inhibit behavioural change.
- Identifying the target group in terms of their demographic and psychographic composition.
- Identifying the factors that could be motivators for behavioural change.
- Identifying the factors that could be barriers to behavioural change.
- Determining what types of messages will be meaningful to each target grouping a community
- Determining which communication media would best reach the target group.
- Using multilateral and multiple communication channels and materials to enhance impact.
- Ascertaining which services/resources are accessible to the target group.

- Providing special services for each group peculiar to their needs and based on their environment.

This simply implies a blueprint for baseline research on behavioural change communication campaigns or programmes. Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada point out that a successful beavioural change communication programme requires careful and thorough research through careful pre-testing of communication materials. Blum (1999:315) adds that research and proper planning form the foundation of effective BCC campaign. Knowing the needs of the population and the best means of reaching the audience are crucial in achieving the goal of raising awareness and products that offer real benefits. Fraser and Restrepo-Estrada (1998: 48) also point out that many social change campaigns fail because the message is not meaningful or relevant and consequently not motivating to members of the target audience due to the the adoption of an ineffective technique.

APPLICATIONS OF BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE COMMUNICATION

Behavioural change communication

strategies are usually adopted in recognition of the diversity among the audience. Consequently, BCC efforts aim at creating excitement and introducing new opportunities for involvement, while creating and sustaining a safe environment. Blum (1999:40) observes that whatever possible, BCC strategies use existing resources and institutionalize programme efforts to strengthen sustainability. The most commonly used strategies as he notes includes:

- Applying interactive approaches and life planning skills to enable behaviour change.
- Ensuring repetition of key messages by using multiple channels, including face-to-face communication, such as counseling and peer education to address deeply rooted behaviours.
- Use of mass media to reach a broad audience and introduce new behaviours.
- Combining education with entertainment to engage the audience.
- Connecting with NGOs, CBOs, FBOs or other role models in the community.
- Linking closely with policy and advocacy activities at the local, community and national levels.
- Linking to other programme areas to increase impact by putting in place a framework for monitoring and evaluation of progress at each stage.

This helps in prioritizing BCC activities according to their potential effect and relevance, and adds coordination of the BCC supportive services and other programme areas like policy, institutional capacity building, livelihoods, and coordination and dissemination. Monitoring and evaluation assess the impact of programme efforts on key indicators and coordination across the programme. BCC evaluation strategies are usually aimed at maximizing impact and reach, sealing-up promising models, and integration of BCC with other programme components, while the impact and coverage of BCC interventions for key groups and examination of the pathways of change and why specific interventions were successful or not are provided through numerical information and qualitative evaluation.

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIC BEHAVIO-URAL CHANGE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Facilitating behaviour change as Singhal and Rogers (1999: 62) note, requires that the barriers to behaviour change are modified or diminished before new, healthier behaviours are tried and possibly adopted. Many well known strategies address some of the behavioural determinants that play a role in individual behaviours that are outside of the individual's control. Some of these have been used in the past, in the implementation of several programmes: strategic behavioural communication (counseling and interpersonal communication, mass media, traditional/ small media, etc.), advocacy, community mobilisation, social mobilisation and social marketing.

Each of these strategies approaches behaviours in a different manner, at a different level and with a different methodology, but in each of them SBCC plays a distinct role. This is why SBCC practitioners are often asked to participate in community/social mobilisation, advocacy and social marketing activities. Although community/social mobilisation,

advocacy and social marketing, all represent individual disciplines with their own methodologies and approaches, communication runs very prominently through their planning, design and implementation.

Figueroa, Kincaid, Rani and Lewis (2002:67) observe that given the evolving paradigms and dynamism of communication for behavioural change, new consensus has emerged among development scholars and behavioural trend researchers that:

• Strategic communication programmes must be structured to achieve carefully selected and appropriate communication objectives through the right combination of well-timed programme interventions. This means that all activities, tactics and tools are selected for their ability to move the programme closer to its pre-determined results.

• Strategic communication elements should be integrated into all programme areas so that they can be coordinated through strong linkages to ensure consistency of messages across the entire programme or project continuum. This will provide a unifying "look and feel" of all the themes, messages and graphic elements.

• Effective strategic communication is built on the foundation of well-chosen and designed programme elements, including: accurately segmented and researched beneficiary populations; well-researched and identified barriers to change; motivating factors and key benefit statements related to the desired behaviours; appropriately chosen channels, messages and activities; monitoring and evaluation indicators; and other communication-specific elements.

• Strategic communication programmes must be designed to fit in the context of the bigger picture within a given country or region to ensure sustainability.

Figueroa, Kincaid, Rani and Lewis (2002:77) add that the internal and external motivating factors and constraints to behaviour change must be taken into critical consideration at all stages of a programme's life span. They segment the internal and external motivating factors and constraints to include:

Sample	Motivating Factors	Barriers
External	• Peer and family support • Enabling environment • Positive opinion leaders • Positive policies/laws • Support groups	• Stigma and discrimination • Lack of services and commodities • Lack of supportive policies and/or donor • Restrictions • Cultural and gender norms
Internal	• Perceived self-efficacy • Perception of individual risk • Concern for own self • Familial ties	• Lack of life skills (such as negotiating capability and influence) • Fear of violence • Gender role expectations • Low self-esteem and/or low self-efficacy • Lack of knowledge or awareness of problem

According to them, once these motivating factors and barriers have been clearly identified, this information can be used to design an appropriate SBCC intervention programme strategy. Figueroa, Kincaid, Rani and Lewis (2002:82) note that whatever the goals, SBCC can help programme planners achieve them by providing the communication-related content to move beneficiary audiences closer to the intended behaviour. They observe the following to be the contributions SBCC can make to different programme areas targeting different population segments:

- Increase knowledge among beneficiary populations on how to reduce unhealthy and risky behaviours
- Influence the adoption of positive and healthy behaviours by members of the beneficiary populations
- Reduce stigma and discrimination
- Create demand for services to help the community fully utilise available resources
- Stimulate community dialogue on developing an appropriate response to development issues
- Work with mass media to stimulate more media coverage of development-related issues
- Invite audiences to change social norms to allow for more open discussion of development issues
- Improve the skills of the community for programmes or projects targeted at helping them adhere to healthy behaviours and seek help as needed
- Help change policy makers' attitudes and influence them to increase budget allocations for development programmes

SBCC shares several other guiding principles with technical programmatic areas of development agencies. Because SBCC interventions programmes are planned and implemented in the context of comprehensive programming and in full integration with other programme components, it shares the following principles with other elements of development programming:

- **Adapted locally:** Interventions should not be designed from the outside or a centrally funded office, but rather at the local site. Interventions have to be tailored to the needs of the local population and audiences involved. For instance, strategy design workshops are conducted with the participation of key community representatives and stakeholders to ensure that the activities, messages and channels respond to community knowledge and are culturally sensitive to the community's beliefs.

- **Beneficiary focused/driven:** The beneficiaries define the needs, perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and obstacles that the intervention must address. These must be identified through initial data collection, previous research and new formative research.

- **Evidence based:** Interventions are designed using all available data from baseline surveys, formative research, epidemiological data, demographic and health surveys, and any well documented, successful intervention done locally or elsewhere.

- **Results based:** Interventions must be designed to produce results that can be observed, documented and presented as concrete outputs. Monitoring and evaluation

systems aid in demonstrating results.

• **Quality assurance/quality improvement:** Interventions must meet the quality standards that are accepted in the field. Interventions must also address qualitative improvement.

• **Sustainability:** The interventions should contribute to the development of systems that can be sustained over time by building capacity, formalising informal groups, developing managerial skills, financial systems and supervisory mechanisms.

• **Responsiveness:** Implementation design should take into account the changes occurring in the field and make the necessary adjustments so that it captures the best of what the change imposes.

• **Creating partnerships:** No agency can confront development problems and challenges alone. As such, in each programme or intervention project, initiating or coordinating agency should work with all organisations that can contribute to the programme or project goals.

HOW TO DEVELOP AND IMPLEMENT SBCC INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Developing strategic behavioural change communication interventions strategies is an interactive process with individuals, communities and stakeholders working to create structured activities and tailored messages, using a variety of communication channels. Gray-Felder and Deane (1999:63) note that given the fact that communication interventions are aimed at creating awareness, building knowledge and providing appropriate skills to help prevent, stem or mitigate the impact of a problem or issues affecting a particular population, the tenet of SBCC frameworks are based on a step-by-step approach that assist programme managers in developing comprehensive SBCC strategies using the following steps:

Step 1. Establish programme goals; conduct situational assessments and baseline studies

Programme goals should be based on available behavioural data relating to the problem or issues and based on the results of situational assessments. Although programme goals are typically established outside of SBCC, the SBCC practitioners should be aware of the programme goals so that they can develop SBCC objectives, indicators and monitoring and evaluation plans to support programme goals. This step and all others should be implemented in collaboration with stakeholders and other key people. Programme managers and donors can most likely identify key people. They can also include people responsible for community mobilisation, social mobilisation, care, support and other programmatic areas.

Step 2. Involve stakeholders and other key people

Stakeholders and other key people (such as decision makers, gatekeepers, "influentials" and opinion leaders) are people who have an interest in, who stand to benefit from or may be affected by the outcome of a programme. For communication interventions to take root and make a difference, community members must perceive a programme as their own. Stakeholders involvement through all stages of a programme from design to

implementation, facilitates community ownership and gives the programme its best chance of success.

Step 3. Identify beneficiary populations

The most effective SBCC interventions have well-defined beneficiary populations. These are usually selected based on many factors, including baseline survey and situational analysis information, donor mandate, budget and schedule. Building a programme around a specific beneficiary population gives SBCC practitioners an opportunity to focus on the behavioural and communication needs of this group for maximum impact.

Step 4. Conduct formative assessment

SBCC programmes need to be based on detailed, in-depth information about beneficiary populations. Formative assessment results help to ensure that SBCC strategies accurately address the needs and concerns of beneficiary populations as well as environmental constraints in order to effectively motivate people to modify, change or sustain behaviours.

Step 5. Segment beneficiary populations

SBCC strategy is more effective when it is focused on addressing the needs of the specific groups of people with similar characteristics. To improve effectiveness further, beneficiary populations can often be segmented on the basis of these characteristics.

Step 6. Define behavioural and communication objectives

Behavioural and communication objectives should be stated in terms of the needs identified through formative assessments and based on the change in knowledge, attitudes, skills or policy environment that should result from activities. It is important to remember that most behaviour influence is incremental over a long period of time, so SBCC objectives should reflect and support behaviour change that is realistically achievable in a set time frame.

Distinguishing between behavioural objectives and communication objectives is also of critically important. While behavioural objectives refer to specific behavioural changes or sustained positive behaviours, communication objectives refer to changes in levels of awareness, knowledge, concern, motivation and/or intention. These are important steps that usually precede behaviour change or successfully sustained positive behaviours. Since people usually need services and commodities combined with communication to change or sustain positive behaviours, communication objectives are important because they help to determine the desired effect of communication on beneficiary populations. Both behavioural and communication objectives should be *Specific, Measurable, Appropriate, Realistic and Time-bound* (SMART).

Step 7. Design SBCC strategy and monitoring and evaluation plan

A good SBCC strategy clearly segments beneficiary populations and includes their profiles, communication objectives, indicators, barriers and motivating factors to change, a key benefit statement, themes and messages, a combination of interventions and channels, and links to services and commodities. An SBCC strategy should also include a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) plan based on the behavioural and

communication objectives.

Step 8. Prepare to develop SBCC activities, materials and monitoring tools

After designing a SBC strategy, the next step is to prepare everything required to implement the strategy. This may include developing training curricula, training of trainers, materials and monitoring tools, and selecting the most appropriate communication channels for any stand-alone SBCC interventions. SBCC staff will also need to collaborate closely with people in other programme areas on other interventions. Developing communication-specific inputs into other programmatic areas may also be required. Above all, SBCC practitioners need to develop and maintain solid linkages with managers of programmes providing services and commodities, particularly if the SBCC strategy seeks to create demand for these services and commodities.

Step 9. Pre-test

Pre-testing is essential to confirm the effectiveness of SBCC messages, materials, monitoring tools and training curricula. It gauges a beneficiary population's reaction to and understanding of messages, images and behaviour change information before materials are finalised and activities are implemented to scale.

Step 10. Implement and monitor

After the preparation phase, the programme is implemented and the strategic SBCC plan is put into action. The behavioural and communication objectives are translated into work or implementation plans that consist of activities and timelines and define who is responsible for them. Monitoring is intricately tied to the planning and implementation process as its data helps measure programme performance in terms of progress, reach and quality. Monitoring is different from programme evaluation in that it uses different methods, requires different expertise and is typically carried out by staff not involved in day-to-day programme management. Monitoring typically focuses on periodic accountability and ongoing programme management.

Step 11. Evaluate SBCC strategy

Evaluation helps determine if the SBCC strategy has accomplished its goals and objectives. SBCC strategies should be evaluated as part of the overall programme and preferably in reference to a baseline. As both behaviour and structural/environmental change are usually long-term processes and are influenced by other programmes and factors, establishing a direct causal link between SBCC interventions and behaviour change and other outcomes can be difficult. However, well-defined indicators based on behavioural and communication objectives (such as changes in knowledge, attitude or skills) can aid in determining the amount of behavioural or environmental change that may be attributable to the SBCC strategy. Often these indicators can be evaluated by repeating some of the in-depth formative researches with members of the beneficiary audience or through special studies that help identify factors influencing project outcomes.

Step 12. Analyze feedback and redesign

SBCC monitoring and evaluation results are used to give feedback on the progress of SBCC implementation and the effect it is having. M&E communicates the successes

and challenges of the project to key stakeholders, to give them an opportunity to revise the programme and to help programmers make evidence-based decisions.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, it might seem that communication alone through BCC could solve all the problems of social change and development. However, people may be full aware, knowledgeable, motivated and willing to change, but if the physical possibilities for that change are not present, the process will be stillborn. Behavioural Change Communication (BCC) can, therefore, only help to create demand in certain circumstances and thus, put pressure on the services to perform.

Proper attention to behavioural change communication and the human diversions of change and development would call for some radical rethinking concerning the way things are done and currently organized in Nigeria. Behavioural change takes place more easily and rapidly when groups, even small ones, become involved in analyzing information, discussing its relevance to their particular situation, internalizing it and making decision to take action as revealed in the discourse. Any attempt to make behavioural change communication (BCC) a part of development and enable people to change their behaviour, therefore, depends on a democratic spirit among decision makers and on the political will to make it happen successfully.

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