

# COMMUNITY MEDIA FOR SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE: THE POWER AND PRINCIPLES OF PARTICIPATORY STORYTELLING

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## Abstract

As a social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) approach, community media blend the art of storytelling with innovative and scalable technologies that can excite and empower communities to improve their health and wellbeing. We define community media as any technology-enabled media that, to varying degrees, are developed in the community, about the community, and with the community. The range of community media tools and formats makes it an attractive health communication or SBCC approach that can be applied to interpersonal, community, and institutional settings. Community media are constantly evolving as they combine and use emerging technologies along with traditional communication platforms to better serve unique community needs. Community media's ability to deepen community participation, access, social learning, and engagement is increasingly made possible with Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

Although the definitions and implementation approaches for community media vary, having a flexible range of options in our SBCC toolkit is an asset for community programming, allowing implementers to adapt community media approaches to their own cultural, environmental, and programming contexts. This flexibility will allow community media to evolve with changing community needs and technology, primed to serve as a tool that empowers individuals to tell their stories and improve health and wellbeing in their communities for years to come. In this paper, we synthesise the literature on community media and provide principles and practical guidance to help programme managers and other decision-makers who are considering the use of various types of community media.

## Introduction

For thousands of years, traditional storytelling – the most basic approach to communication and knowledge transfer – has been used to help change or

reinforce social norms and promote the adoption of individual and community-level behaviours. Thanks to modern media technologies, storytelling can now have an even broader impact on communities and individuals, motivating them to improve the nutrition and health of families, friends, and neighbours. Through our work on USAID's multi-sectoral nutrition project, Strengthening Partnerships, Results, and Innovations in Nutrition Globally (SPRING), we have experimented with innovative technology-enabled storytelling techniques to change nutrition-related behaviours and social norms, and have shown how the power of storytelling can be maximised through community-based media platforms.

Evidence shows that sustained improvements in nutrition practices are often achieved through long-term, repeated exposure to behaviour-centred communications programming, reinforced by other complementary activities (Lamstein et al. 2014). Successful strategies for social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) interventions employ multiple channels and media, and engage both target audiences and the people who influence them (Lamstein et al. 2014). SBCC acknowledges that individual decisions, behaviours, and practices are influenced by a web of complex, contextual determinants that must be addressed to effectively encourage people to try, adopt, and maintain improved practices.

Community media, which we further define below as any form of technology-enabled media that are developed in the community; about the community; and with the community, allows us to share stories that are both entertaining and compelling, while also conveying appropriate health and nutrition information. This approach leverages and maintains the integrity of local experiences and narratives, while using innovative dissemination channels to reach large numbers of individuals to excite, motivate, and empower communities to move toward improved nutrition and health.

## **Health Education, SBCC, and the Rise of Community Media**

Disseminating health and nutrition information and motivating people to adopt new behaviours, especially in communities where health literacy is low and infrastructure is poor, is an ongoing challenge for global health practitioners. Interpersonal (face-to-face) communication, although an effective SBCC technique, generally has limited reach as it requires sufficient time, skill, and physical proximity to deliver effectively. Mass media for health education are also limited in that they are a one-way communication channel, and often are restricted to information flowing from urban centres outward, only sometimes reaching remote populations. Therefore, many long-established health communication techniques reinforce one-directional communication, often enabling only a limited exchange of ideas and input from and within communities (Berrigan 1979). The increasing visibility of social justice movements from the 1960s onward, however, has brought with it a growing focus on grassroots and community media as instruments of social change, underscoring the

need to more actively engage communities, provide an opportunity or space for the exchange of ideas, and stimulate enriching two-way communications (Howley 2010).

Community media’s popularity and evolution over recent years has been heightened with the rapid expansion and reduced costs of information and communication technologies (ICTs). The application of ICTs for health, nutrition, and agriculture has opened up vast new opportunities to exchange information and ideas and engage the most remote and marginalised populations. The increasing use of portable, digital-based community media tools for SBCC has the potential to expand reach, standardise health information, and provide platforms that encourage feedback, dialogue, and interaction around content delivery and modification (Strack et al. 2015). The expanding reach and accessibility of digital tools is a phenomenon transforming our traditional options for SBCC programming in all corners of the globe, representing a huge opportunity for reaching individuals and families.

From January 2015 to January 2016 alone, the largest expansion in access to online ICT was reported in Africa, with Internet use increasing by 14 percent and social media usage up by 25 percent (see Table 1). Though the first mobile phone adopters are primarily male, educated, young, wealthy, and urban, secondary adopters, including poorer, elderly, female, and rural individuals, have been gaining access to the technology, thanks in part to the introduction of lower-priced models and the availability of airtime cards at lower price points (Aker and Mbiti 2010). The growing accessibility of new media technologies can democratise information, giving those most affected by health and nutrition problems greater access to information, and ideally, a greater voice in discussing and addressing these problems (Ali 2011).

**Table 1: Digital Annual Growth (January 2015–January 2016)**

|                    | The Americas     | Europe           | Africa            | Asia-Pacific       |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Internet Usage     | +6% 38.9 million | +4% 25.9 million | +14% 47.2 million | +12% 199 million   |
| Mobile Connections | +1% 9.6 million  | +1% 13.5 million | +9% 84.4 million  | +4% 156.6 million  |
| Social Media       | +6% 28.6 million | +3% 11.2 million | +25% 25.3 million | +14% 145.8 million |

Data source: Kemp 2016

## Characteristics of Community Media

“Community media” has no single definition or specific approach. The advantage of community media is that they combine some of the major benefits, elements, and strategies associated with both mass media and interpersonal communication (IPC) techniques while tapping into storytelling traditions. Community media are tailored to the local community they serve, and community members are involved as active participants in the process. A review of the literature reveals a wide range of media-related tools currently used in health and nutrition programming that are considered community media approaches, including video, radio, television, photography, and web-based social media. More traditional, low-tech tools are also sometimes

associated with community media, and include puppetry, drama, plays, song, dance, festivals, and storytelling as entertainment. However, no single, commonly accepted definition of community media predominates in the literature. A wide variety of other terms are used in relation to community media, such as “citizens’ media”, “alternative media”, “indigenous media”, “folk media”, “grassroots media”, “participatory media”, “amateur media”, and “radical media”, each with its own definition and principles.

We did, however, find two common characteristics that form a basis for our understanding of community media: 1) access and level of participation and 2) local and culturally appropriate content.

## Access and Level of Participation

Berrigan’s (1979) theoretical studies on the importance of community media as a communication tool for development identified two critical concepts, which have informed many subsequent definitions of community media: access and participation (Howley 2010). Access refers to the availability of communication tools and resources for members of the local community to express themselves collectively or individually, including the ability to receive information regardless of remote geography, class, ethnicity, or gender (Fairbairn 2009; Berrigan 1979). The level of access to community media has a direct relationship with the level of community participation.

Participation can mean the involvement of the community throughout the design, production, and implementation processes (Berrigan, 1979). This concept of participation is also found in the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) definition of community media as “in the community, for



Figure 1: Participation Ladder

Source: Adapted from Halcrow et al. 2010

the community, about the community and by the community” (UNESCO 2016). The World Bank acknowledges that communities, stakeholders, and donors all have very different notions of what participation look like, why it is necessary, and for whom it is most important (Tuftes and Mefalopoulos 2009). This idea of a scale of participation is illustrated in Figure 1; it can be viewed as incremental steps from a token level of participation to full ownership of the process.

There is some disagreement as to whether community activities that engage participation at the lower levels of the ladder should be considered community media. However, even activities at the lower levels of engagement, such as the opportunity to join a group and attend meetings, are critical components of community media in that they provide a voice for local representation, particularly for groups of people who may traditionally have less access to media, or who do not see their own views and circumstances reflected in traditional media. Community media can also be used to facilitate and build capacity for fostering debate, often providing a platform for marginalised indigenous voices (Buckley 2011; Fairbairn 2009; FAO 2003).

Traditional mass media campaigns typically have little room for community-level participation (Morris 2003; Servaes and Malikhao 2005). In contrast, community media incorporates dialogue and interaction as foundational to the approach where community engagement functions as a transformative process occurring between individuals, communities, and institutions (Singhal 2001). Table 2 identifies the fundamental distinctions between typical mass media and community media.

**Table 2: Communication Approaches in Communication for Development**

| Mass Media   | Community Media  |
|--|--|
| Vertical (top-down) approach to programming        | Horizontal programming                                       |
| Message to persuade/outcome-focused                | Process-oriented problem-solving and engagement              |
| Focus on individual behaviour                      | Socio-ecological approach                                    |
| Unilateral structure                               | Dialogic, bidirectional process                              |
| Passive design: targets audiences                  | Active design: interactive with communities and stakeholders |
| View of culture as an obstacle to behaviour change | Collaboration with culture to enable behaviour change        |

Source: Adapted from Singhal 2001

## Local and Culturally Appropriate Content

The rapid acceleration of globalisation as well as communication technology has facilitated the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and culture between populations and across borders, often at instantaneous speed. In contrast, community media are often distinguished by their overtly local content, commonly defined by the geographic location in which it was produced and for whom it was intended. Even so, community media locally produced in one corner of the globe can sometimes

have a social, cultural, or economic impact in another. Nevertheless, we feel that the success of any community media approach depends on two factors. First, the locally produced content must evoke trust in the target community. Second, community members must identify with the participants involved in the production. Both tasks may be accomplished if participants are real community members as opposed to fictional characters or actors. Role modelling is an important behaviour change concept reflected in community media programmes; when individuals see someone of similar means successfully trying something new, they are encouraged to also try the new behaviour. This concept is not as effective when the content is not contextualised and the viewer cannot identify with the person who is role modelling. This is especially true when attempting to change behaviours strongly related to cultural and social norms, as many health and nutrition behaviours are.

## **A Definition of Community Media**

Community media are constantly evolving as they combine and use emerging technologies and traditional communication platforms to serve unique community needs better. Community media's ability to deepen community participation, access to information, social learning, and engagement is increasingly made possible using ICTs. Innovation in communication for development does not call for abandoning traditional communication methods, but rather focuses attention on the growing acceptability of ICTs and their potential to enhance the reach and scalability of development programming. This fluidity, which makes community media a challenge to define, may be its greatest advantage as an effective SBCC approach.

Drawing from the characteristics and definitions of community media presented above, our definition of community media is: any form of technology-enabled media that, to varying degrees, is developed in the community, about the community, and with the community.

## **Principles for Effective Community Media**

The range of community media tools and formats makes it an attractive health communication or SBCC approach that can be applied to interpersonal, community, and institutional settings. Based on our experience of implementing community media projects around the world, we have defined four principles that should be considered in the design of effective community media programmes.

### **Community Engagement**

Local participation is an integral quality of community media that helps to foster trust in the information being shared. Inherently, there is a continuum of participation that also incorporates engagement with a broad range of internal or

external actors and intermediaries, depending on the requirements and desires of the programme. Nevertheless, appropriate and successful programming requires that, whenever possible, community members have the opportunity to engage meaningfully throughout all phases of the design and implementation process. In this sense, community participation and ownership as a principle of community media not only guides the process, but in some cases, can also be a long-term goal and intention of the activity. In the context of promoting health and nutrition, community participation helps ensure that the content is appropriate and the behaviour or practice being promoted is feasible. It also helps promote trust in the information being shared, as well as community buy-in to the process or programme.

## **Contextualisation**

Effective community media must ensure that the content and format of communication materials are acceptable and relevant to the target population, based on a clear understanding of, and adaptation to, the local context. This requires a careful balance between working within existing cultural and social systems, avoiding the reinforcement of harmful practices and relationships, and communicating the benefits of new behaviours and social norms. Our experience is that consumers of community media need to hear and see themselves in the audio and/or visual materials. They need to identify with the environment and characters—the families and individuals featured in the media—and believe that they can experience a similar change or impact in their lives.

## **Capacity Building**

Community media approaches build individual, community, and institutional capacity through training and peer-to-peer support groups and networks. This capacity building can take one or more of these forms: 1) building the necessary technical and production skills of actual community members, who are then engaged in various elements of the community media activity; 2) engaging community members as *players* or *actors* in the production of community media, telling their own stories and/or allowing their voices to be heard; and 3) supporting communities to transform this dialogue into tangible, systemic changes. This principle of capacity building also helps build the sustainability of the work by transferring the capacity to develop community media programmes from external technical partners to community members themselves.

## **Sustainability**

Community media can achieve sustainability in a number of ways. Careful and strategic planning can ensure that programming efforts by development

partners build lasting institutional partnerships and support so that communities can continue to access the resources necessary for self-directed community media. The other key principles for effective community media – community engagement, capacity building, and contextualisation – also help ensure sustainability so that the production and use of community media continues beyond donor activity timelines. If communities can continue developing and disseminating media beyond the intervention, the impact of the work will continue to grow.

## **Types of Community Media Approaches**

The body of literature describing or demonstrating the effectiveness of a large range of community media approaches is expanding rapidly. This section describes specific examples of technology-enabled community media that have proven successful or shown promise in the field of SBCC.

### **Community Radio**

Community radio is considered a powerful development tool through which to influence, educate, and mobilise a broad range of people. International agencies and the donor community have contributed to the establishment and expansion of community radio and donor support has, in some cases, assisted with licenses, transmitters, and broadcasting equipment (FAO 2003). Community radio stations function in a variety of ways, often joining networks to amplify their content, support each other in capacity building, and ensure institutional sustainability (BNNRC n.d.; Buckley 2011). Community radio has an extraordinary reach, with the ability to connect with millions of people at once. For example, the World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, a global membership organisation for community radio stations, has almost 4,000 members in 150 countries (AMARC 2017), and that number does not include the likely thousands more grassroots stations that function without representation.

The impact of community radio in promoting and sustaining behaviour change and engaging a broad spectrum of community participation has been well documented. In Kenya, for example, Mtaani Radio, run by a team of community-based volunteers in the Kawangware slum of Nairobi, responded to the 2015 cholera outbreak affecting their community. By broadcasting public service announcements and responding to community queries, Mtaani Radio was able to inform and educate as many as 10,000 people on water, hygiene, and sanitation practices to help manage the outbreak (Njuguna 2016).

In countries where most media are controlled by the state, community radio can provide an alternative information source. In South Sudan, for example, UNICEF's Community Radio Listening Groups project works with a community radio network to air key messages promoting children's rights as well as broader health messages. Initially, opportunities for community engagement were limited to participation



in listening groups; however, participation increased over time to include systems for community feedback and content production (NHD 2009). In Burkina Faso, USAID's SPRING project partnered with Development Media International to engage seven local radio stations in adapting nutrition messages for different regions and languages. This effort helped to ensure content reflected local context and reinforced complementary local video efforts in the region leading to behaviour change. These examples illustrate the importance of contextualising community radio based on the realities on the ground, including complex sociocultural and political settings. They also highlight the importance of various types of partnerships and related opportunities for capacity building.

Many radio projects now also leverage new technological solutions that increase relevance and access to a larger population. In Fiji, femLINK's mobile radio initiative FemTalk takes a suitcase radio to women living in remote rural and peri-urban communities who otherwise would not have access to this information. FemLINK Pacific has also embraced social media to diversify the accessibility of content through podcasts and YouTube, as well as Facebook and Twitter (femLINK Pacific 2014).

## **Community Video**

Sometimes called participatory video or digital storytelling, community video is a form of community media that facilitates groups or communities to create, shape, and tell their stories on-screen. It is an accessible, relatively cost-effective medium for empowering communities to develop their own stories and solutions and/or communicate their desires to decision makers (Dougherty et al. 2016; Gandhi et al. 2009).

A number of organisations focus on different types of community video approaches, working collaboratively with other public, private, and civil society organisations to improve agricultural practices and livelihoods (Digital Green 2017); promote social justice (InsightShare n.d.); train activists to use videos to expose human rights abuses (WITNESS, 2016); focus on female-centred social or economic issues (video SEWA n.d.); and enable exchange of and access to quality audio-visual training materials (Access Agriculture 2016). SPRING has also studied and implemented various types of community video approaches to promote nutrition, WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene), and nutrition-sensitive agriculture behaviours in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, India, Niger, Senegal, and Uganda. Together with Digital Green, SPRING pioneered the innovative Community Video for Nutrition approach, unique in involving the community at each step: design, production, and dissemination (Granger et al. 2015). With this approach, we have promoted a variety of behaviours, resulting in increased adoption of nutrition-related household practices such as handwashing and responsive feeding.

Despite the many types of video approaches, there are often similarities within the process of implementing a multifaceted community video programme. The first

step typically involves participatory formative research to gain an understanding of local practices and contextual realities as well as how certain determinants may promote or hinder adoption of key practices. Short videos are then scripted, directed, and recorded with varying levels of community engagement. Once completed, videos are either screened in neighbouring communities or shared with community leaders or decision makers to generate awareness, catalyse behaviour change, and spark dialogue between various groups. Aided by the most recent advancements in ICT, videos can be disseminated through any number of formats such as digital video/versatile discs (DVDs), handheld battery-operated mini (pico) projectors, downloadable or streamed visual files from digital platforms such as tablets or mobile phones, or video-sharing websites on social media (Okry, Van Mele, and Houinsou 2014; Tuong, Larsen, and Armstrong 2014).

The success of video as an SBCC tool is largely attributed to its ability to actively engage members of the community through experiential or emotional learning to increase self-efficacy, promote a given behaviour, and encourage its adoption. Storytelling through video draws on the idea that individuals learn through observing, modelling, and imitating others' behaviours, attitudes, and consequences of those behaviours (Bandura 1977).

## **Social Media**

Social media are emerging as dynamic social change and communication tools increasingly used in many areas of development. Many consider social media as platforms on which community-based and other forms of media can be shared (Berger 2015). However, we would argue that the dialogue that social media platforms facilitate should also be considered community media. A commitment by many governments and private industry to increase Internet accessibility and the rapid growth and saturation of the mobile and smart phone markets has drastically increased access to the Internet, even among very remote and marginalised populations. This phenomenon has facilitated the upsurge in adoption and use of social media platforms. Access to social media enables communities, including policymakers, institutions, social groups, and individuals, to engage in multi-directional conversations.

Social media play an increasing role in development activities not only by spurring social movements and dialogue but also by tracking disease outbreaks and coordinating aid in disasters. A prime example is the use of Ushahidi, an open-source platform that integrates crowd-sourced information from phones, web applications, email, and social media sites such as Twitter and Facebook to provide an up-to-date, publicly available crisis map that can also be used by relief organisations. Ushahidi was deployed after Haiti's 2010 earthquake and helped link health care providers needing supplies to those who had them (Gao, Barbier, and Goolsby 2011; Merchant, Elmer, and Lurie, 2011). Increasingly, mass media campaigns

incorporate social media efforts to enable greater interactivity as well as to stimulate social movements that can take on a life of their own. Therefore, not all social media can be considered community media. However, as global Internet accessibility and mobile phone reach increase, social media are being used more often, either as components of, or as a standalone approach for community engagement, elevating local voices, advocacy, empowerment, and stimulating and supporting social and behaviour change efforts.

## **Best Practices for Implementing Community Media**

There are many benefits that make community media effective SBCC tools. With emerging technologies, community media make the information we share more accessible to wider audiences than traditional one-on-one interpersonal communication techniques. Recorded media also help to ensure the technical integrity of the information because they present accurate information that is uniform across communities, compared to traditional interpersonal communication, where messages can be left out, misinterpreted, or poorly communicated. Community media also have far greater reach than, for example, traditional IPC, but are less scalable than mass media. We are still testing and learning to see how scalable community media content is beyond the originating community, and to understand how widely applicable the contextualised content is and how best to define community in each context. Despite this, we feel community media strike a balance between contextualisation and scale, ensuring that audiences identify and connect with the stories and messages that can go beyond one single person's reach.

Through our work in community media across many countries and contexts, we have identified an implementation checklist that includes best practices and considerations for a community media intervention. This checklist is built around the above principles for effective community media and is based on our own programming experiences and research and widely agreed-upon best practices from experts in the field of ehealth/mhealth (Principles for Digital Development 2017). The checklist is intended to help future implementers think through considerations for implementing community media in their nutrition and health-related SBCC programming.

## **Community Media Implementation Checklist**

### **Community Engagement**

- Clearly define the problem before identifying a solution. The decision to implement community media, and/or what type of media, should be based on a thorough understanding of the problems, capacities, and needs of the target community, gathered through both a desk review and participatory research:

- Consult secondary sources to better understand the problem and context.
- Use participatory techniques in your needs assessment or formative research (see below).
- Engage the community early and often. For example:
  - Involve the community in the programme design and generating the content.
  - Involve the community in the production/implementation.
  - Transmit/disseminate media via local/community-held channels.
  - Collect data with and for use by the community (local entities, staff, etc.).
  - Facilitate bi-directional communication by developing processes for community engagement, feedback, and iteration to continually improve programming.

## **Contextualisation**

- Understand the programming environment and context – ensure your project is built and managed with consideration to the local ecosystem. Conduct formative research or assessments if possible to understand local cultures and beliefs, current practices, and barriers and enablers to optimal practices. In addition, analyse the current landscape – for example, existing stakeholders, media platforms, and local or national strategies.
- Consider whether you will reach your audience through existing groups and partners or whether you will need to organise new community groups.
- Consider innovative or unusual partnerships.
- Consider who is delivering what information – having people who are known in the community delivering the information can help build trust, whereas some information is best received from authoritative sources, such as religious leaders, community leaders, doctors, or other professionals.
- Ensure that community members identify with the characters/participants –the idea of modelling behaviour is central to our community media approaches.
- Pre-test media in the community before disseminating to ensure that the content and delivery is acceptable to community members and that they find it motivating. Following the pre-test, invest in making suggested changes where appropriate.

## **Capacity Building**

- Consider engaging with local governments and potential advocates and champions as much as possible, involving them in training and other capacity-building efforts. This also helps contribute to sustainability.
- Work across sectors and link to other activities to create coordinated and more holistic approaches and cadres as appropriate.
- Partner with and invest in local organisations and individuals to contribute to the local economy and facilitate local ownership. Consider linkages with local

NGOs and entrepreneurs, as this approach does not have to be delivered through formal government systems or sectors, though it can.

## **Sustainability**

- Plan for scale and sustainability from the beginning. It is fine to start small and test things out, but there should always be the intention and a plan for how the project can be scaled up. For example:
  - Consider actively engaging government, other local institutional partners, and entrepreneurs to help expand your reach and scale.
  - Develop partnerships with local entities and focus on building capacity and transferring skills and management of the approach.
  - Explore options for local procurement and servicing of equipment.
- Consider whether the approach can transition to a livelihoods development activity. For example:
  - Partner with local entrepreneurs to continue the work as a business strategy after donor support ends.
  - Provide business management training to entrepreneurial partners you support.
- Understand and comply with national frameworks, strategies, and policies. For example:
  - Do you need authorisation from a national, regional, or local government body related to using various forms of media?
  - Ensure your project is flexible enough to adapt to changes on the ground as they arise.
  - Leverage data to support project planning and decision-making—monitor, adapt, and iterate.
  - Evaluate, document, and disseminate results, processes, and best practices, especially where there are gaps in data and evidence.

## **The Future of Community Media**

Community media are powerful and effective tools for improving nutrition, health, and hygiene. In coordination with traditional communication channels and platforms, as well as storytelling traditions, new low-cost technologies can be leveraged to vastly reduce gaps in information for both rural and urban families trying to improve their health and wellbeing. While the fluidity of community media makes it challenging to define, this flexibility to adapt the medium, message, and dissemination approach to each specific context may be its greatest advantage as an effective SBCC approach.

SBCC programming is uniquely challenging in highly remote geographic areas. Rural populations can be difficult to engage as a result of poor infrastructure, low literacy rates, and limited access to health care, all of which hinder health workers

from reaching people most in need. Mass media approaches require access to radio or television, which may not be available in rural environments. For example, in Niger fewer than 50 percent of households in rural areas own a radio, and only 3 percent in rural areas own a television (INS and ICF International 2012). In addition, information often flows outward through mass media, in one direction, from urban centres. In these cases, a small group of people and interests determine which information rural communities receive, rather than having tailored media content based on an exchange of ideas and requests that allows adaptation of information to the needs of rural communities (Berrigan 1979).

In previously isolated villages, the introduction of mobile phones, low-cost video cameras, computers, editing software, and mobile pico projectors is opening the door to an influx of information and exposure to new ideas. As noted earlier, the digital divide is shrinking, and people in the lowest economic quintiles and the most rural, inaccessible areas now have access to mobile phone and other technology. Additionally, technology itself is rapidly evolving, with new and enhanced devices being introduced every year. With increasing smartphone penetration and growing Internet accessibility in the farthest-flung places, many previously disconnected individuals will soon be better able to access global marketplaces and the exchange of ideas.

It is also worth noting that the concept of community is often no longer defined simply by culture and geographic location, but can expand to online and virtual global communities. Community health workers can support each other through national or regional WhatsApp groups or receive additional training as one cohort on their phones through programmes such as Mobile Academy in Bihar, India, and similar interventions (BBC Media Action 2017). In addition, mother-to-mother support groups now exist online with mothers from rural and urban locations, both within the same country and internationally, supporting one another during and after pregnancy.

Community media approaches will continue to evolve alongside the technology and electronic media they leverage. The world will continue to become more interconnected as access to technology and information continues to grow. Development programmes must embrace this progress and work with communities to help expand the reach and influence of traditional media by embracing advancing technology. We should never introduce technology simply for the sake of the new and innovative, but can and should engage technology solutions when they fit the identified problem and local context. When implemented thoughtfully - ensuring that the intervention engages the community, is suited to local context, focuses on local capacity building, and is designed with sustainability in mind - community media has the power to change social norms and behaviours. Although the definitions and implementation approaches for community media vary, having a flexible range of options in our SBCC toolkit is an asset for community programming, allowing implementers to adapt community media approaches to their own cultural, environmental, and programming contexts. This flexibility will allow community

media to evolve with changing community needs and technology, primed to serve as a tool that empowers individuals to tell their stories and improve health and wellbeing in their communities for years to come.

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