

REVIEWS

CREATIVITY: FUEL FOR THE FUTURE OF THE FIELD OF DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Arpan Yagnik
Assistant Professor of Advertising
Penn State University
48 Kochel Building
Erie PA 16563, USA
arpanyagnik@gmail.com

Srinivas Melkote
Professor, School of Media and Communication
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green OH 43403, USA
melkote@bgsu.edu

Abstract

This article emphasises and argues for the importance of purposeful creativity enhancement and its strategic role in communicative actions (i.e. Phase P conceptualisation of the POD framework) to fuel the future of the field of development communication for social justice in directed change. Development efforts, in the last 80 years has yielded a mixed bag of results. Development communication has moved and progressed from many dominant conceptual frameworks such as modernisation, participation, empowerment, and most recently social justice to best facilitate critical social change. The POD framework is an up-to-date and robust framework for understanding the complex and dynamic field of development communication for social justice in directed change. This conceptual article argues for incremental advances by systematically including creativity into the equation and justifying its relevance and importance to fuel the future of development communication. Phase P brings together the traditional as well as radical communicative actions from areas such as participatory action research, community organisation, action research, and other related models. At the core of all these communicative actions is the creation of communicative content or messages that are highly impactful. This essay will elaborate and detail how creativity and creative skills are central to various aspects of these communicative actions. Creativity is commonly perceived as the ability to come up with novel and useful solutions. However, creativity is more than that. Creativity has an inherent enriching attribute. This sort of enrichment is enabling and empowering, and therefore, the inclusion of creativity and systematic enhancement of creativity in the field of development and social change is conceptually and theoretically crucial. In simpler words, to further the car named world development, we have no choice but to inject the fuel of creativity.

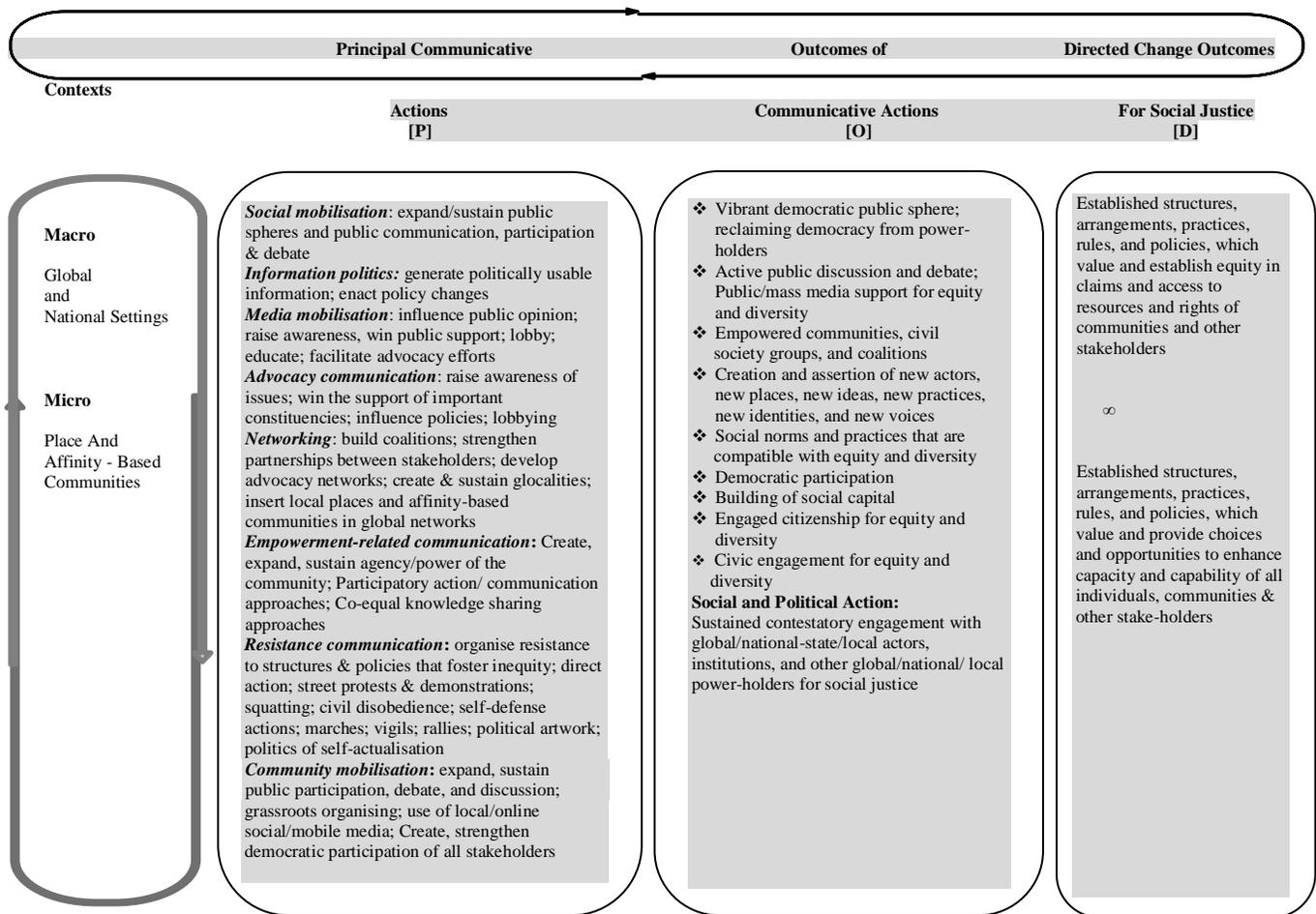
Keywords: communicative action, communicative content, social justice, creative skills

Introduction

This article aims to argue for and emphasise the vital role creativity can play in the field of development communication for social justice in directed change. Over the past 80 years, development communication has progressed from many dominant conceptual frameworks such as modernisation, participation, empowerment, and most recently social justice to best facilitate social change. This article emphasises and argues for the importance of purposeful creativity enhancement and its strategic role in communicative actions to fuel the future of the field of development communication for social justice in directed change.

To elaborate and explicate our argument, we will look at the POD framework (Figure 1), which is a robust framework for understanding the role of media and communication for social justice in directed change. Phases O and D elaborate the outcomes for the communicative actions and outcomes for social justice. A new avatar for development communication is operationalised in phase P of the POD framework where we develop specific communicative roles for development toward social justice. Phase P brings together the traditional as well as radical communicative actions from areas such as participatory action research, community organisation, action research, and other related models. These include social mobilisation, media mobilisation, community mobilisation, advocacy communication, information politics, empowerment-related communication, networking for social and political action, and resistance communication. At the core of all these communicative actions is creativity fueling the creation of communicative content that is highly impactful for the achievement of social justice in development.

Creativity is the key to producing high quality and impactful content. This essay will elaborate how creativity and creative skills are instrumental in various aspects of communicative actions. Commonly, creativity is the ability to come up with novel and useful solutions (Runco & Jaegar, 2012). However, creativity has an inherent enriching attribute. "Creativity comprises the drive and ability to make something new or to connect the seemingly unconnected in significant ways to enrich our understanding of ourselves, our communities, the world, and the universe that we inhabit." (FAQ, MacArthur Foundation, 2019). Such enrichment is enabling and empowering. Creativity is not only needed for individuals and groups to create high-impact messages and content, which essentially fuel the radical communicative actions, but also for battling one's own entrenchments enabling one to ask "questions that open onto fields of inquiry as yet unexplored; developing innovative solutions to perplexing problems; inventing novel methods, tools, or art forms; fusing ideas from different disciplines into wholly new constructions; producing works that broaden the horizons of the imagination." (FAQ, MacArthur Genius Website, 2019). Such abilities may only be developed through getting in touch with one's inner creativity, enhancing one's creativity and letting one's actions and decisions be inspired by creativity.



Source: Melkote and Steeves, 2015

Figure 1: Development communication for Social Justice in Directed Change: The POD framework

Development Communication

The history of development communication would go back to the post World War II years when western-style modernisation was a preferred model all over the world. The whole enterprise of modernisation in which development communication was situated was influenced by the quantitative and empirical social sciences philosophy, theory, and methodology, in particular, it had a strong economics orientation. Development communication operations, in general, were tasked with the responsibility of preparing individuals in developing countries for a rapid social change toward modernisation. Mass media such as the radio were used in top-down models of communication to diffuse modernising and westernised innovations to the people. Communication was considered as the missing link in the development chain and it was considered the task of the media and development communication to inform and educate the masses. The communication models tended to be linear, one-way, top-down and prescriptive from the change agency to the people.

Toward a Participatory Mode: Much of this began to change, starting in the 1970s. The concept of development and change expanded to include many more types of change guided by different paradigms, theories, disciplinary influences, geographical considerations and methodologies. Change now included a widely participatory process of social change in a society and also included social and cultural aspects besides the economic. This was the first major interdisciplinary encounter in development communication, bringing together the positivist and the interpretive paradigms; they are the guiding forces of the modernisation and participatory models respectively.

Many development communication activities that were influenced by modernisation, diffusion of innovations research, social marketing or even entertainment education approaches to development and change used a behaviour change communication model based on the positivist philosophy and methodology. The rules and methods of the quantitative empirical social sciences were applied and the outcomes of development and change were mostly quantitative, such as indicators of the economy or statistics about rates of infant mortality or maternal deaths, etc. in the health-related areas. On the other hand, more participatory approaches such as the participatory rural communication approach, participatory action research, or the liberation theology of Paulo Freire were influenced by the social change communication model based on the interpretive/critical theory and methodology. The rules and conventions of the interpretive and critical studies were considered more important and the outcomes of change included many non-quantitative dimensions such as independence, cultural and personal growth, participation, and emancipation.

The different disciplinary and methodological imperatives of the positivist and interpretive disciplines posed a challenge to the identity of development communication theory and practice. Many observers contend that it changed the way communication was conceptualised and used in development and change work. Behaviour change communication models of the past were now complemented with newer communication for social change models. In these newer models, a participatory approach between the sender and receiver communication structure was used and the bias was toward horizontal participation (subject to subject), critical awareness and dialogic communication processes (Ascroft and Masilela, 1989; Mefalopulos, 2008). Both the behaviour change model and social change model were useful for different contexts and objectives. Media information campaigns or strategic communication programmes would be best served by the behaviour change communication framework, while directed social change activities that involve participation, collaboration, capacity building, and empowerment are informed by communication for social change model (Melkote and Steeves, 2015).

From Participation to Empowerment: While the participatory mode of communication for development programmes and activities was a welcome addition to the development communication toolbox, the definitions of participation reflected a wide variety of approaches. In many contexts, the level of participation required by the people were low and perfunctory. Toward the end of the 1980s, the concept and practice of empowerment expanded upon the earlier objective of participation in development communication models and practices. This was the second major interdisciplinary thrust in development communication research and practice.

The construct of empowerment identifies the underlying constraints in directed social change such as the lack of power among the people at the receiving end of development programmes. The disciplines such as community organisation, critical education, women's and gender studies, and community psychology, among others, now offered concepts and practices that could be readily incorporated in development communication models and programmes. The concept of empowerment is frequently referenced in the disciplines noted above but was missing or inadequately explicated in development communication.

The newer disciplinary and methodological imperatives posed a challenge to the identity and practice of development communication. It changed the way communication was conceptualised and used in development and change work. Development communication in an empowerment paradigm has the goal of empowering the people, and building local capacity and equity. The objectives of development communication activities are now expanded to include the activation and the sustainability of social support systems, social networks, empowerment of local narratives, facilitation of critical awareness, and facilitation of community power.

The role of the development communication worker now moved from being just a communication expert to a collaborator, facilitator, participant, an advocate for individuals and communities, a risk-taker, and even an activist on behalf of the people (Melkote and Steeves, 2015). The challenges to development communication with the extension of participation to include empowered participation have been profound. Also, the differences between the earlier modernisation approach and the empowerment approach are stark. Modernisation utilises the

transmission model in which communication involves sending a message through some channel; the process is usually linear and top-down, while the messages are prescriptive and technical in nature. The transmission approach or the delivery of information in the modernisation approach is insufficient to the task of development and change. Empowerment objectives also require building understanding, empathy, and partnerships with the people. The emphasis of development communication work now expanded to also value communication for its organising value (Melkote and Steeves, 2015).

Quest toward Social Justice in Social Change: As we entered the 21st Century, fresh challenges have sprung up. For example, the challenge of unequal development in our communities and in our world continues to be intractable (Piketty, 2014; Stiglitz, 2012). This brings new challenges to the role and place of development communication in social change. This juncture is another major transformation period for the identity and role of development communication. Today, we face grave risks and dangers to our ontological security. For ‘devcommers’ the greatest threat to progressive change is that risks and dangers are differentially distributed around the globe between the privileged and marginalised individuals and communities (Tuft, 2012). Examples are the widening inequalities between people and communities on several life-giving resources, women’s empowerment, environmental degradation and climate change, among others. The overarching goal of change is now framed as a quest toward social justice in development and change.

The Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals have clearly put the focus on the most deprived individuals and communities in the world today. Therefore, a central concern among scholars, development professionals, and activists is the increasing inequality between the haves and have-nots globally. These developments and challenges have made us increasingly critical of the place and role of development communication in progressive change. The scope of development communication needs to be broadened. Scholars, practitioners, and administrators are putting an increased emphasis on social justice in directed social change. Social justice should serve as the anchor for the work and activities of development communication professionals. An important objective is to redefine how development communication could play a useful role to address and counter inequality and injustice in development and social change.

Development can be re-conceptualised as a process of directed social change with the establishment of social justice as its objective. The main reason why unequal and discriminatory development prevails around the world is because the definitions and practices of development have not captured important facets of social justice. However, while the term *social justice* connotes a fairly common understanding in the conceptual domain, its operationalisation has been a challenge. What is social justice in directed social change and what are the ways in which it may be operationalised? Achieving social justice would constitute the elimination of persistent and endemic deprivation of individuals and communities in areas basic to survival and enhancing the capacity and capability of individuals and communities to live effective and meaningful lives.

POD Framework: Innovative Way to Redefine Development Communication

Melkote and Steeves (2015) proposed a conceptual/operational model as shown in Figure 1. In this model, the attainment of social justice outcomes is the goal. Social justice outcomes are operationalised under the broad categories of *freedom from* inequality and *freedom to* explore one’s individual or group potential to live a meaningful and satisfying life. Thus, the outcomes of directed change include emancipatory politics and the politics of self-actualisation in contexts that range along a local-global continuum with social justice as the ultimate goal. Social justice outcomes are defined and operationalised for macro and micro level contexts. The macro level would constitute the national or a global context comprising other nation-states, supranational bodies, multinational businesses, global civil society groups and coalitions. The micro context would include spatial and interest-based communities.

The POD model (see figure 1) presents goals expected in directed change efforts that facilitate social justice outcomes (phase D); outcomes expected from media and communicative actions (phase O), (which would constitute the means or processes by which directed change goals (phase D) may be achieved, sustained or strengthened); and, principal communicative means (phase P) by which the outcomes desired by media and

communication (phase O) may be realised. The new avatar for development communication is operationalised in phase P of the POD framework. It brings together the traditional as well as radical communicative actions from areas such as participatory action research, community organisation, action research, and other related models. These include social mobilisation, media mobilisation, community mobilisation, advocacy communication, information politics, empowerment-related communication, networking for social and political action, and resistance communication.

The POD model represents a dynamic process. Therefore, throughout the model, the interactivity between the different phases (P, O, and D), and the overlap between macro and micro contexts are implied and stressed. The overlapping, reinforcing, and cyclical nature of the actions and outcomes between the various phases of the model and between the macro and micro contexts indicate that the process is neither linear nor teleological. The process is open-ended, multi-contextual, dynamic and ongoing.

The POD model (Figure 1) is conceptualised broadly and is useful for its heuristic value, framing a critical discussion of the concepts, processes, and outcomes of directed change for social justice, especially the role of development communication actions in this contested and never-ending process. First, the model rejects the methodological nationalism bias of the earlier development programmes and discourses. This bias in the social sciences in general and development theory, in particular, valorises the national space at the expense of the cosmopolitan or global (Beck, 2002). Globalisation scholars contend that the nation state is an inadequate frame of reference for understanding all aspects of mediated social and cultural life (Curran and Park, 2000). Yet, there has been a deliberate framing of the functionalistic paradigm invoked in the social sciences to fit a nation-centered framework. Consequently, media policy has always been exclusively nation-centered and further reified the imagined identity of 'nation-ness' (Chalaby, 2005). As an alternative to methodological nationalism, Beck (2002) suggests a cosmopolitan perspective, which emphasises *dialogic imagination*, that is, new ways of imagining the world that is not prefaced by just a national consciousness but by alternative lifestyles, beliefs, and experiences. The process of directed change as shown in the POD framework assumes cosmopolitan politics that posits global, national, and local connectivity, thus setting up a platform for the interaction of varied communicative ideas and strategies in multiple sites that include offline and online contexts and circumstances (Robins and Aksoy, 2005).

The POD framework (Figure 1) also avoids the teleology bias, which is frequently encountered in earlier models of development and change. Teleology is a causal process where phenomena move naturally and inexorably toward certain goals of self-realisation, and eventually reach an apex. In the earlier evolutionary models of social change and development, this thesis implied that the history of the development of societies is not a progression of semi-random acts and events over time, but a carefully scripted storyline that moves in an orderly way, has a definite direction, and tells a story of orderly progression amidst the jumble of general change (Tomlinson, 1999; Harvey, 2005). Giddens termed this as the "Grand Narrative" (Giddens, 1990:2). Causality is implied since the earlier stages are presumed to give rise to specific later stages in this social evolutionary process. The POD model does not suggest that the process is causal or even predictable, given the differential contexts and power positions of the actors and the contested nature of the process of directed change. While the ultimate objective is the achievement of social justice, the indicators of social justice are not universally defined for all times and contexts. They will vary across time and contexts because the outcome of directed change is never a universal end state of everlasting development, but is actually a protracted, sustained, and contested engagement and struggle between varied actors for achieving specific goals in overlapping local, national and global settings.

The goal in the model is to articulate alternate futures that ensure equity in claims and access to rights and resources, especially the commons, as well as provide credible choices and opportunities for individuals and communities to live expressive and meaningful lives. Stakeholders of change will exhibit different value positions, have different visions of alternative futures, and hold differential power positions. Since there are no permanently privileged agents or constituencies in the process of directed change, the struggle to articulate and establish social justice is an ongoing process. The specific meanings and scope of social justice articulated by the stakeholders will vary in each instance according to historical contexts, opportunities, and potentialities.

Thus, structures, policies, rules, arrangements, conventions, and practices will need to be constantly monitored and tweaked by stakeholders to meet social justice goals in multiple settings during different epochs in history. This takes us back to the start of the model, thus, the process is never-ending.

Principal Communicative Actions (Phase P)

Real progressive change is not possible unless we directly address power inequities among different constituencies in society. Communication strategies under the participatory model often do not challenge the hegemonic structures of societies where inequality is rampant. Therefore, development communication professionals should help extend people's environment by acting as collaborators, facilitators, and importantly, as advocates. We believe that media and communication must probe the unequal distribution of power in a society and strive to increase the countervailing power of the vulnerable and marginalised populations. The communicative actions grouped under Phase P of the model are fundamentally different from the normal role of media and communication as transmission agents of a message and instead they are focused on how the media can be dynamic agents of change in society. Given below are examples of principal communicative actions of Phase P of the POD model.

1. *Social mobilisation*: Expand/sustain public spheres and public communication, participation & debate.
2. *Information politics*: Generate politically usable information; enact policy changes.
3. *Media mobilisation*: Influence public opinion; raise awareness, win public support; lobby; educate; facilitate advocacy efforts.
4. *Advocacy Communication*: Raise awareness of issues; win support of important constituencies; influence policies; lobbying.
5. *Networking for social and political action*: Build coalitions; strengthen partnerships. between stakeholders; develop advocacy networks; create and sustain glocalities; insert local places and affinity-based communities in global networks.
6. *Empowerment-related communication*: Create, expand, sustain agency/power of the community; participatory action/ communication approaches; co-equal knowledge sharing approaches.
7. *Resistance communication*: Organise resistance to structures & policies that foster inequity; direct action; street protests and demonstrations; squatting; civil disobedience; self-defense actions; marches; vigils; rallies; political artwork; politics of self-actualisation.
8. *Community mobilisation*: Expand, sustain public participation, debate, and discussion; grassroots organising; use of local/online social/mobile media; create/strengthen democratic participation of all stakeholders.

The examples of communicative actions mentioned above have the potential to become agents of change. The role of media and communication in these radical communicative actions is dialogical and dynamic. It becomes the starting point of a dialogue about social change rather than an afterthought. Its availability and accessibility make it possible to overcome barriers which were otherwise unbreachable.

The communicative actions of Phase P are the new avatar of the communication for development and social change. Change can now truly come from the fringes and is no more the sole propriety of governments and transnational organisations. However, as we closely examine these communicative actions, we realise that the creation of high-impact content and novel resistance ideas are critical for the success of these. The two assets that development and social change initiatives from the fringes have are creativity and a personal stake. Otherwise, they are always in short supply of financial resources, infrastructure, and more. Let us look at creativity in further detail.

Overview of Creativity

Creativity is a key that opens many doors including the door to generating ideas. Ideas that are inspired by creativity have tremendous problem-solving potential. Creativity enables an individual with the ability to

produce high quality and impactful content. In this section, we will elaborate how creativity and creative skills are instrumental in various aspects of the principal communicative actions.

As stated earlier, commonly, creativity is the ability to come up with novel and useful ideas (Barron, 1955; Runco & Jaeger, 2012). Ideas come with the potential to solve problems. For example, ever since humans wanted to set foot on the moon, several problems were hindering this from happening. How and where to escape earth's gravity, how and where to enter moon's gravity, how to not miss the moon and be lost in space, how to reenter the earth, etc. were the perplexing problems. And, simultaneously, there were several ideas generated as possible solutions to get there. Finally, one idea ended up being the best possible solution at that given time to limit fuel consumption by using the earth's gravitational force as a catapult to launch the satellite into the moon's gravitational orbit. The ability to generate solutions with the potential of solving perplexing problems is creativity.

Creativity has been in use for eons. But for the longest time, the praxis of creativity was restricted to the field of arts such as painting, sculpture, and music. Creativity remained an integral part of these domains and continues to do so. With the passage of time the frontiers of creativity's utility and application expanded with areas such as literature. The literacy revolution encouraged science and technology, and this led to further expansion of the utility and application of creativity and creative ideas. Creative ideas became the building blocks of inventions and discoveries.

Despite the superficial agreement on the importance and significance of creativity in so many fields of study, creativity itself was still not picked up as an area of interest for systematic examination. It was, finally, the advertising and marketing tsunami that significantly increased the demand for creative ideas. This fueled interest in systematic examination and study of creativity. Psychology took on creativity as a foster following the logic that creativity has something to do with intelligence, personality traits, and therefore the brain. Moreover, psychology was also one of the early fields in social sciences to have gathered a critical mass of scholars and, therefore, legitimacy as a field. It is only in the last thirty years that creativity has emerged as a field of systematic study and has managed to sustain two to three mainstream journals consistently publishing works in creativity.

Why is Creativity Important?

Creativity has become an increasingly important skill in the 21st century. Creativity is not only pivotal in enabling development communication in achieving social justice through directed social change but also is vital for finding innovative solutions for the problems humanity has created through its successes of the previous centuries. Creativity is an answer to the rapidly changing ecosystem. Without being creative and using creative thinking to find solutions to the rapidly changing ecosystem, which is on technological steroids, we risk seriously jeopardising collective wellbeing. Creativity is more important than technology because technology is an enabler but without the seeds of creative ideas and solutions technology by itself is unable to solve problems. Creativity is important because it is a skill that can be universally found among individuals.

Creativity is commonplace. Unlike technical or advanced skills, creativity is easily attainable. Every individual and every culture that has survived has been genetically transmitted creative abilities. The fact that culture is still surviving is a testimony to its creative problem-solving traits. It is possible that some individuals may not feel creative. Unlike other inherent or intrinsic characteristics, creativity can be enhanced and fostered. Creativity does not decrease or empty. It's like a car with an eternal full tank of gas. Literacy, as much an enabler, has also been a disabler. Creativity can surpass the barriers of language and literacy. A person does not need to be literate to be creative. He or she can be creative and can produce creative accomplishments despite his or her lack of literacy. This is crucial because the communities and individuals that are usually the targets of development initiatives are mostly illiterate.

Creativity is intrinsically rewarding. The reward is internal to the human being. The moment an individual can find a new solution or a variation to a given problem he or she receives an internal dose of happiness-

inducing chemicals which do not just make him or her happy but also foster a health habit that backs-up the overall wellbeing. Lastly, as the traditional saying goes, “Give a man a fish and you’ll feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you’ve fed him for a lifetime. Similarly, give a man a creative solution and you have solved his problem for a day. But teach a man to be creative and then you have enabled him to solve problems for his lifetime. This foundational aspect is also the critique for Positive Deviance.

A system that has become popular in the last two decades within the realm of development communication is Positive Deviance. Positive Deviance has been widely utilised to solve development and social change problems. The premise of Positive Deviance relies on identifying deviants that are doing something good or better despite the same challenges as the rest of the community. The individuals are the ones with a bright or a different idea of going about a certain thing and yielding desirable results. This idea is then popularised using the amplification abilities of mass media. Looking at it from a creativity lens, what PD does is that it identifies a creative idea that works despite the odds and then disseminates it. It affords the masses information about the existence of a creative idea that works. What it does not do is enable the masses to be able to think creatively. It does not attempt to empower the masses to be positive deviants. In other words, it does not intend or attempt to skew the normal curve to the positive side. By using positive deviance, you are providing a solution that works in the limited resources availability scenario. But you are still not enabling the individual to come up with his solution on his own. Creativity enhancement enables an individual to find innovative solutions for every problem he is and will be faced with in the future.

For all the reasons stated above and many more, creativity is crucial in general and specific to the development communication context. By ignoring systematic training and enhancement creativity in the past 80 years, the field of development communication has stunted its ability to achieve its goals.

Creativity Before Phase P

The call for action to advance social justice and directed change is no more only the prerogative of democratic superpowers and transnational organisations. With the new avatar of development communication, the call to action can come from anyone and from anywhere. Phase P of the POD model explains in detail the numerous mechanisms referred to as radical communicative actions and their place in forwarding the goal of social justice and directed change. This section elaborates the role of creativity in these radical communicative actions

Before going any further, it is important to remind the readers of the types of radical communicative actions. The radical communicative actions as listed in the Phase P are social mobilisation, media mobilisation, community mobilisation, advocacy communication, information politics, empowerment-related communication, networking for social and political action, and resistance communication. The underlying functions that make up these actions can be broadly categorised into three areas of action: content creation, content dissemination, and individual/people management.

Let us take resistance communication for example. Within resistance communication most of the direct resistive actions such as street protests and demonstrations, marches, vigils, rallies are straightforward. Creativity is required in planning different versions of these direct actions. Creativity has also been used to make format-based changes in these direct actions. The occupy movement is an example of a format change within the direct resistive actions. The occupy strategy was largely successful and it has now been deployed in more than eighty countries globally.

Whereas, indirect resistive action such as the use of political artwork and graffiti are direct outcomes of the creative abilities of artists. A lesser-discussed resistive strategy that has been around for a while now is the publishing of cartoons in magazines and newspapers. The ability of a cartoonist to criticise the predominant system or shining light upon an important issue and supporting the call to action is again closely connected to one’s creative proclivities. A modern form of such cartoon-based resistive actions that came into limelight with the internet and especially social networking sites is memes. Memes are used as radical communicative actions and have at times larger viewership than traditional newspaper cartoons. The ability to create memes requires

creative thinking and some acumen in using editing software. In the case of newspapers, the creativity aspect was constant but instead of editing software people needed to possess drawing skills. Just like memes and other political artwork, graffiti is also creativity heavy. There are two components to graffiti. There is the message and the artistic depiction. Both rely on creativity.

In information politics, the goal is to generate politically usable information and enact policy changes. Creativity becomes important not only during the creation of politically usable information but also during the conceptualisation and drafting of new policies. Conceptualising new policies is inherently creative. Even finding innovative ways for strengthening existing policies is a creative thinking exercise. Through the radical communicative action of empowerment-related communication, one creates, expands and sustains the agency of an individual and a community. Creativity alerts individuals to their own entrenchments and subsequently also enables them to overcome their entrenchments. Actualising one's potential is unquestionably fulfilling. When one gets in touch with his or her inner creativity he or she becomes aware of the 'what it isn't' and this very journey from 'what is' to 'what could be' is a strong step in inching closer from life politics to emancipatory politics and journeying towards the politics of self-actualisation.

The goals for community mobilisation, media mobilisation, and social mobilisation influence public opinion, raise awareness, encourage debates and participation by using local, online social and mobile media. These radical communicative actions depend on content creation as well as content dissemination which requires creative thinking and creative problem-solving. An interesting phenomenon of radical communicative mobilizing actions against heavy control and censorship is currently happening in China. China controls and censors its media outlets especially the internet-enabled networking platforms. To counter the control and censorship, activists and resistive groups have resorted to creativity and redefined and reimagined aspects of language. This has led to a classic game of cat and mouse between the government controllers and activists. A primary way of controlling any anti-establishment initiative is by keeping checks on the use of certain words and phrases. To avoid the trap, activists have created codes and code languages to fly below the radar.

Creativity Enhancement

Creative achievement is like the accumulation of potential creative energy which upon release transforms into useful kinetic energy. Contrary to the misbelief, creative achievements are not sudden bursts, revolutionary or disruptive ideas. Creativity is a skill. It is an ability that has to be enhanced incrementally. "With creativity being distinctly integral and important to the field of development and progressive social change, it is vital to explore the ability to enhance or develop it" (Yagnik, 2018). Although there have been sporadic instances of the application of creative thinking and inputs in development communication, systematic and purposeful creativity enhancement has not been undertaken in the field. Brainstorming has been a popular method used to generate ideas. However, systematic training of how to use brainstorming is hard to be seen. Attempting to use a tool without proper training can be counterproductive. Before you start driving a car you are required to learn and know how to pump fuel in it. Currently, in development communication there are a lot of car drivers, but they do not necessarily have the required know-how to pump the fuel.

It is important to reiterate that creativity is a skill, an ability. This means that it can be taught, developed, and enhanced. As stated before, creativity is the ability to create ideas that are novel and useful. This much-needed ability is developed through getting in touch with one's inner creativity, allowing it to flow freely and finally by letting one's actions and decisions be inspired by creativity. There are several creativity enhancement systems that are generally popularised under the guise of idea generational systems. A very popular system is brainstorming. Brainstorming started initially as an idea generating system for individuals but in later years after research it was realised that brainstorming works the best when conducted in a small group setting. There are many other popular such systems such as "The six Hats Method, the Creative Pause, The Concept Fan, Movement, Setting Up Provocations, the Random Input, The Creative Pause, Turn the Situation Upside Down, Find or Apply Analogy, Borrow, Adapt and Steal Tactics, Simplify, Deviation Amplification, Let it Happen, Contrarianism, Redefine the Problem or Situation, and more."

Creative Aerobics (CA) (George & Yagnik, 2017) is another such system, which Yagnik (2018) argues can be beneficial to advance the work of communication for development and social change. As opposed to Positive Deviance, Creative Aerobics led creativity enhancement intends to empower every individual and hopefully gives them enough agency to become positive deviants. This is especially important in regards with capacity building, agency creation, and idea development. Given below is the strategic placement of creativity enhancement according to Yagnik (2018). An additional systematic and purposeful creativity enhancement intervention must be included in the overall process flow.

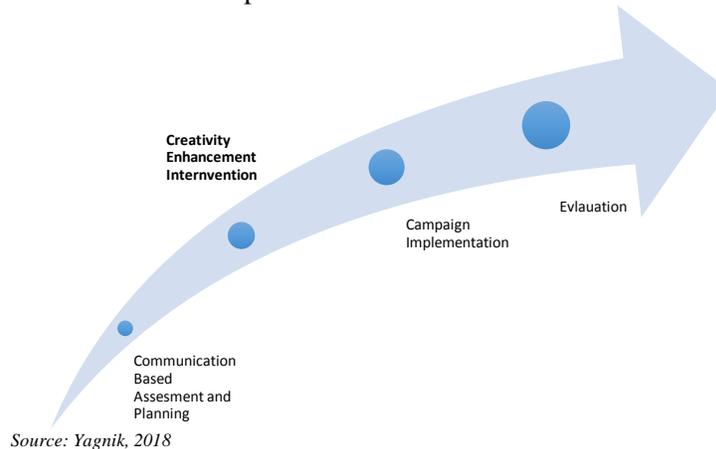


Figure 2: Creativity Enhancement Intervention Positioning

Even in the POD model, there has to be an addition of a creativity-based intervention labeled as C. The stages of assessment, planning, execution and evaluation are standard to all the radical communicative actions of Phase P. Moreover, as seen in an earlier section, creativity lends itself to content creation and dissemination, which is critical for the communication for development and social change field.

Conclusion

Creativity plays a vital role in the field of development communication for social justice in directed change. Communicative radical actions are like toothless tigers without creativity and creative individuals. Without high-impact powerful communicative radical actions of the Phase P, it is unlikely to achieve the goals of directed social change as put forth in the POD model. Systematic and purposeful enhancement of creativity should be given more importance in the field of development communication. Creativity is the fuel for the future of development communication. Without systematic and purposeful training in creativity and creative problem solving, the different actors involved in development communication for social justice in directed change are like cars without fuel. It is not that cars without fuels don't run. Cars without fuel run if they are on a slope or are being pushed by a few people. But the moment the slope becomes uphill and/or there is a dip in the number of people pushing it there is a crisis. Moreover, the work of directed social change and social justice is one of the toughest uphill treks. The car will be unable to transport individuals and societies to the destinations of equity and social justice. It is not sustainable. Therefore, it is time that development communication practitioners, scholars and organisations start systematically investing in creativity.

References

- Ascroft, J., & Masilela, S. (1989). "From top-down to co-equal communication: Popular participation in development decision-making". Paper presented at the Seminar on Participation: A Key Concept in Communication and Change. University of Poona.
- Barron, F. (1955). The disposition toward originality. *The Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 51(3), 478–485. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0048073>
- Beck, U. (2002). The cosmopolitan perspective: Sociology in the second age of modernity. In S. Vertovec & R. Cohen (Eds.), *Conceiving cosmopolitanism: Theory, context, and practice* (pp. 61-85). Oxford University Press.
- Chalaby, J. (Ed.). (2005). *Transnational television viewing: Towards a new media order*. I. B. Tauris.
- Curran, J., & Park, M. (2000). Beyond globalization theory. In J. Curran & M. Park (Eds.), *De-westernizing media studies* (pp. 2-15). Routledge.
- George, L. C. C., & Yagnik, A. (2017). *Creative aerobics: Fuel for imagination in the 21st century*. Sage Publishers.

- Giddens, A. (1990). *The consequences of modernity*. Stanford University Press.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford University Press.
- Mefalopulos, P. (2008). *Development communication sourcebook: Broadening the boundaries of communication*. The World Bank.
- Melkote, S. R., & Steeves, H. L. (2015). *Communication for development: Theory and practice for empowerment and social change* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Piketty, T. (2014). *Capital in the 21st century* (A. Goldhammer, Trans). Harvard College.
- Robbins, K., & A. Aksoy. (2005). Whoever looks always finds: Transnational viewing and knowledge-experience. In J. Chalaby (Ed.), *Transnational television viewing worldwide: Towards a new media order* (pp. 14-42). I. B. Tauris.
- Runco, M. A., & Jaeger, G. J. (2012). The standard definition of creativity. *Creativity Research Journal*, 24(1), 92–96.
- Stiglitz, J. E. (2012). *The price of inequality: How today's divided society endangers our future*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Tomlinson, J. (1999). *Globalization and culture*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Tufte, T. (2012). Facing violence and conflict with communication: Possibilities and limitations of storytelling and entertainment-education. In S. R. Melkote (Ed.), *Development communication in directed social change: A reappraisal of theory and practice* (pp. 80-94). Asian Media Information and Communication Centre.
- Yagnik, A. (2018). Communication for development and social change through creativity. In J. Servaes (Ed.), *Handbook of communication for development and social change*. Springer.