

COMMUNICATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Introduction

1. The title chosen for this paper is "Communication and Rural Development". Why "communication" and not "education"? Because, however it may be re-defined, "education" still means, for most people, something that teachers give and pupils get, usually in schools and universities. This paper, on the other hand, is concerned with the whole complex, kaleidoscopic pattern of human relationships, through which ideas are exchanged, skills acquired, knowledge increased and behaviour changed and by which development is largely brought about.

2. In this multi-directional flow of ideas, 'purposive', 'directed' communication, in the form of education, training and public information, interacts with 'non-directed', 'socially controlled' communication - farmers chatting in the market place, women gossiping at the well, and people just receiving, absorbing and acting on information. And in the operation of this whole system, feedback from the farmer and the housewife is as important as input from the teacher and the technologist and should largely control it.

3. Development planners and educators are primarily interested in directed communication, which is the component they can most easily control. Nevertheless, its effect on development depends upon its action within the total communication network. This paper, therefore, deals with both directed and non-directed communication; with channels of communication and especially the role of literacy and the written word; with the relationship of technology and research to communication and the means by which research and experience are transmuted into messages and transmitted by media; with the role of action-research and evaluation in improving communication and enhancing its contribution to development.

## Preliminary Definitions

4. It is perhaps desirable initially to define the two terms "communication" and "development".
5. "Communication does not refer to verbal, explicit, and intentional transmission of messages alone....but includes all those processes by which people influence one another".<sup>1</sup>
6. Guy Hunter<sup>2</sup> poetically describes development as "the long ground swell of social and technical change". The American sociologist Everett Rogers<sup>3</sup> defines it more prosaically as "a type of social change in which new ideas are introduced into a social system in order to produce higher per capita incomes and levels of living through more modern production methods and improved social organisation".

## Development and Communication

7. However defined, development, and particularly rural development, involves more than communication. It involves more than communication. It involves research, planning, legislation, finance, organisation and administration and the provision of equipment and materials. All of these are, however, largely dependent for their efficiency on communication:-

-communication between research workers and planners, planners and administrators, administrators and field workers, providers of equipment and materials and their users and consumers, financing agencies and their beneficiaries;

-vertical and horizontal communication within systems of organisation and government, rural communities, co-operatives, plantations,

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<sup>1</sup>Alfred G. Smith: Communication and Culture. Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York 1966. p.626, ref. p.61.

<sup>2</sup>Hunter, Guy: Modernising Peasant Societies . Oxford University Press, London 1969. p.324.

<sup>3</sup>Rogers, Everett M : Modernisation among Peasants . Holt, Rinehart & Winston, New York, London. p.429.

irrigation or land settlement schemes ;

-above all, communication between change agents and the people whose lives they are helping to change.

The last of these must be two-way communication, with feedback conditioning and controlling inputs. It must also be multi-media communication using all appropriate and available channels as a system. It must often be multi-step communication reaching the population of a rural community, for example, through its more progressive members. It must be selective and sensitive communication, which treats adults - even illiterate adults - as experienced people, with particular interests and problems, attitudes and personalities, prejudices and potentialities - people to be consulted, listened to and communicated with, rather than taught like a captive class of school children.

8. This is not to belittle the importance of schools and universities, or of formal adult education and training, in laying a foundation of knowledge, skills, ideas and attitudes for development, but only to suggest that a simple conception of education and training as the essential motive force for rural development is totally inadequate.

#### Various Forms and Stages of Rural Development

9. Rural development takes many forms. In later stages of development and in the modernised sectors (for example, in land settlement schemes, irrigated areas, plantations) land use and the agricultural regime, are, and in large measure must be, planned, imposed, and even enforced from above. But if government cannot always be "by the people" it should be "for the people" and as far as possible "with the people". So one can detect three major functions for communication in the modernised sector :

-to keep the population informed of policy and practice, of necessary rules and restrictions, and the reasons for them, and of the progress of the enterprise: in short, management-labour relations;

-to feed back, from the population to the management, aspirations, suggestions and complaints: in short, labour-management relations;

-education and training for managers, field staff and labour, for the new and specialised functions required by modernisation.

10. At the other extreme, rural development may involve the gradual improvement of subsistence agriculture and raising levels of living in traditional rural societies. Here communication may be more concerned with motivation for development and the injection of new ideas, improved methods of farming and intermediate technology. This is much more delicate and difficult. Any tampering with traditional patterns of agriculture and animal husbandry may start a chain reaction of consequences and side effects, many of them unforeseen. New inputs, like fertilizer or animal drawn ploughs, will cost money which may or may not be recoverable by increased production. Unpredictable factors like rainfall and locust invasions, perhaps also more predictable ones, like salinity or wind erosion, may turn the best intentioned improvements into disasters. Furthermore, to change the behaviour patterns of conservative communities is notoriously difficult and generally slow. People living on the subsistence line are naturally reluctant to take risks and sceptical of advice from the outsider. Research in different continents indicates that a new practice seldom takes less than ten years, and often much longer, to permeate a traditional rural community.

11. Between these two extremes of modernised and traditional societies we find the situation which is increasingly common in developing countries - communities in transition. Here innovation has begun. More people are ready to listen. There is increasing confidence in the possibility and potential usefulness of change. Here directed communication, especially extension and training in various forms, should aim to further the progress of innovation and to help the population to modernise with the minimum of dislocation and suffering.

12. Thus systems and functions of communication vary with the environment and directed communication must be adapted to the aims and needs of each particular project. Nevertheless one can describe some of these functions and see how they fit into a phased programme.

#### Communicating fundamental research and field experience to planners and operators

13. It is deplorable how little of the relevant research reaches those responsible for rural development programmes and

how little of it is readable even if it reaches them. Errors will be repeated and valuable lessons remain unlearnt unless more is done to interpret and communicate research to the consumers. This may be helped by conferences and meetings, which bring together research workers, planners and senior operational staff. by high-level training/orientation courses and by disseminating research results in laymen's language in manuals, periodicals, digests, abstracts, films and tapes. This top-level communication between research scientists and operational staff is the link between scientific discovering and its application and extension.

14. Even more important is to communicate the results of relevant practical experience - success and failure - from other areas and other countries - a process which calls for similar techniques.

#### Feeding back the needs of development planners to research workers and research organisations

15. How much fundamental research is planned to satisfy scientists and research students, and how little to find out what the planners and operators want to know. More feed-back from operational staff to research workers would make research more relevant and realistic. This is only to emphasise that top-level communication must be a two-way flow.

#### Action research<sup>1</sup> and project planning

16. Fundamental research accumulates knowledge and expands technology. The successful application of this knowledge and technology requires action research in different environments and societies. Will the new strain of wheat or poultry resist the local pests, thrive in the local climate, require radical changes in husbandry beyond the resources of local farmers? Will the extra cost of improving a local craft price its products out of the market? Will the recommended family planning technique be applicable? More basically what are the human problems, needs and aims of development as the local people see them? All over the world there are recurring cases of failure and frustration because projects are launched before such questions have been answered. Rural development should therefore be preceded and

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<sup>1</sup>Action research might be defined as systematic study, the results of which are fed back directly and immediately to the operational staff to help them in improving the efficiency of their activities.

guided by action research - basic socio-economic studies, problem surveys to locate and define local development problems, problem studies to investigate key problems in depth, feasibility studies to examine possible solutions, pilot projects and experiments to test them, field tests to prove new equipment under local conditions.

17. 'Action research' is thus built into the programme of action and designed to get action going on the right lines. As far as possible, it should be systematic and objective research rather than subjective and intuitive study.

18. But what has this to do with communication? First, action research is itself essentially a communication process - feeding back information to the planners and operators. Secondly, it is a pre-requisite of directed communication. In jargon terms, it validates the message before the message is embodied in media and communicated to the target audience. Thus before directed communication begins, it helps to ensure that:

- any facts to be stated are correct;
- any ideas to be put across are sound;
- any action to be proposed:
  - can be carried out by the target audience:
    - with the skills they possess or can acquire,
    - in the conditions in which they live and work,
    - with the funds and equipment they have or can obtain;
  - will have the desired results in the given situations;
  - does not unwittingly conflict with social customs or taboos or personal beliefs and attitudes.

Thus action research feeds data into the planning of rural development and specifically into the planning of directed communication.

## Planning directed communication

19. As the objectives of development become clear, communication assumes a new role - to transmit ideas, knowledge and skills to the population. This involves systematic communication of selected messages to a variety of target audiences. It should be systematic not only in the sense that it is planned and efficient. It should also be planned as a system with the different components locked in with each other. Different sections of the population may need different information about the aims of the development plan, ideas on how to form and manage co-operative societies, knowledge about health, child care or family planning, new methods of agriculture, drainage or house construction, new skills in maintaining machinery. The better educated will want more complex and sophisticated information, using the printed work wherever appropriate, the illiterate will need concrete advice and demonstrations. All this will require what the Kericho Conference<sup>1</sup> called: "a much strengthened, more clearly thought out and effectively co-ordinated educational service to adults" - a wide range of information, extension, adult education and training, using all appropriate institutions, media and methods. These should not be planned piecemeal. There must be inter-departmental communication in planning the communication programme.<sup>2</sup>

### Directed communication: preparation of media

20. The directed communication programme cannot become effective until the ideas, knowledge and skills to be communicated have been embodied in training courses and programmes, manuals for teachers and extension workers and a variety of other media especially for adults at different educational levels and in a wide range of learning situation. The preparation of media is therefore crucial to an effective rural development programme.

21. It is also a highly professional task, requiring a specialised team or teams based on a well equipped media centre. The teams must travel sufficiently to make themselves familiar

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<sup>1</sup>Conference on Education, Employment and Rural Development: Kericho, Kenya, September 25 - October 1, 1966.

<sup>2</sup>An excellent example of this is the work of the inter-departmental Adult Education Board in Kenya.

with various forms of rural development and should do much of their production work in the field rather than in the centre. It is debatable whether there should be a media production centre for each Ministry of government service concerned with rural development (e.g. Agriculture, Health, Community Development etc.) or whether the Ministries and Departments should pool their resources and set up a co-ordinated centre. (This will be discussed in the last part of this paper which outlines the possible structure and functions of a Centre for Communication in Rural Development.)

22. Media production for rural development involves team work between topic specialists (with knowledge and experience in various fields of development, such as agriculture, health, housing etc.) and production specialists (with training in writing, editing, script-writing, photography, filming, radio programme-making etc.). The production specialists generally form the permanent staff of the media centre. They must have the power to call upon topic specialists from the various departments and agencies engaged in the development programme. Thus a cameraman or graphic artist would not be expected to be a specialist in agriculture or rural crafts. Nevertheless the director of the media team, and perhaps one or two of his writers, should have enough knowledge of rural development to enable them to ask the right questions and to obtain and transmit the right information.

23. The choice of media will depend upon the nature and importance of the programme and the budget available. The modern trend is to treat the various media as components in a learning system; hence the preference for a multi-media centre over the traditional pattern, in which, for example, book publishing, film production, radio broadcasting, and the production of low-cost visual aids was each regarded as the proper province of a different agency.

24. The staffing and equipment of a media centre naturally depends on the range and quantities of media to be used; conversely the choice of media will depend on the availability of competent staff and facilities for their production. These problems will be further discussed in later paragraphs.

#### Action Research and the Preparation of Media

25. Action-research is not only needed for project planning; it also has vital functions in the preparation of media.

(a) Topic Study

Before writers can begin to write, or artists to draw, there must generally be a systematic study of the topic - the subject matter or content to be communicated. This may involve: - consultation with topic specialists; study of books and other documentation; field visits (to see, for example, what is being done in research institutes, demonstration farms or in communities which have already introduced the innovations proposed); finally, and most important, "opinion study" (to discover what the target audience already does, knows, thinks and believes about the topic). This systematic preliminary study serves to validate the message before it is embodied in the media.

(b) Job - and Performance - Analysis

If the production team is preparing training media for a vocational training project, action research may be needed:

- to analyse the skills required in specific jobs;
- to discover the skills, abilities and deficiencies of the trainees, and their level of performance, if they are already on the job;

eventually the training programme must bridge the gap between the second and the first.

(c) Pre-testing of Media

Pre-testing is designed to ensure that the media will communicate their message as effectively as possible to the target audience. The techniques of pre-testing naturally vary with the media. Written material can be tested in at least three ways. The first is to ask individual

members of the 'test audience' (a sample of typical readers) to read the text aloud; this reveals words which they do not understand, sentences that are too long or too difficult. The second procedure is to give the complete text to a number of readers and give them a simple test to detect how far they have understood it. The third is to give it to a sample of people to read and then to bring them together to discuss it. If the discussion is recorded on tape the resulting dialogue may also suggest changes in style and vocabulary and even provide live phrases that can be incorporated into the text. The testing of a visual aid involves using the aid, with its accompanying talk, lecture or commentary, on the test audience and then testing individual members on their comprehension of each picture. Radio programmes, if recorded on tape, can be played to test audiences, who are then interviewed or tested individually to discover how far they understood the programme.

(d) Evaluation or 'post-testing' of media

The evaluation of completed media is a procedure which does not entirely fit the definition of action research, since the feedback from this type of evaluation can hardly modify or control the production process. Once the media are published and distributed in quantity, a negative evaluation can do little more than cause disappointment and possibly provide some data for the improvement of similar media in the future. Whilst, therefore, the evaluation of completed media may help the users of the media to select and employ them more efficiently, it is less valuable to the producers than pre-testing.

26. The integration of action research into the production of educational media is a comparatively new and difficult enterprise. The techniques have seldom been systematically applied by a media production team. They undoubtedly involve new expertise,

additional time and additional cost, but the experience so far gained indicates that the benefits and improvements will greatly outweigh the costs and difficulties and provide ample justification for including in the media team, in any important rural development project, a full-time action-research worker or associating the media team with an action-research unit.

### The Operational Phase: Training of Operational Staff

27. The transition from the preparatory and planning stage to the operational stage of rural development involves the training of staff for work in the field - both pre-service training for new staff and retraining, orientation and up-grading for existing staff. It should include instruction in communication techniques as well as in the subject matter and the specialised knowledge needed in the various jobs to be performed. It should include both essential theory and a maximum of supervised field experience. It should also imbue the trainees with an understanding of action-research and a readiness to study problems and not to trust in untested solutions.

### Extension, Community Development and "animation"

28. In most developing rural areas agricultural extension is already providing advice and training to farmers and their families. In largely illiterate societies this performance relies mainly on face-to-face communication and on demonstrations. Along with agricultural extension are often found nutrition education, home economics extension, health education and family planning programmes, the last two, in particular, organised by Ministries of Health. These extension services are sometimes related to, or included in, a wider community development programme, which may be administered by a Ministry of Community Development and Social Welfare and may employ its own community development workers. Community development has been described as "both an organisational and an educational process". Some community development programmes fill the gaps, covering fields not normally dealt with by other services, for example low-cost housing and building, road construction and rural crafts; others aim to co-ordinate the impact of various government departments and non-governmental agencies on rural communities. They frequently include, or are related to, basic adult education and adult literacy programmes. In any case communication between the people of the local communities and the government services and development agencies is a crucial

feature; indeed one might even define a community as a group of people who communicate.

29. An interesting application of community development is found in many French-speaking territories of Africa under the name of "animation". The workers of the animation service seek to identify the innovators (Fr: "animateurs") in the communities - generally the somewhat younger more progressive and educated elements - who are then brought out for short intensive residential training courses. In these they learn new techniques of development. On their return to their communities they are assisted in applying these, with equipment, modest finance and expert advice, by officials from the relevant government services.

30. The effectiveness of community development programmes can often be greatly improved by the introduction of better communication techniques and the provision of soundly prepared extension and training media.

#### Residential Training Centres and Courses

31. Residential training courses are not limited to animation programmes. Farmers' training courses, courses for women, for craftsmen, for local midwives, indeed for many occupational or social groups, are organised in a wide variety of rural training centres.

32. Residential courses can enable people from different communities to meet each other and to meet specialists from the government services or other development agencies. They free the people temporarily from their local problems and social pressures and enable them to study these problems with a certain detachment. Residential centres can also be equipped with better educational media (e.g. film projectors, overhead projectors, permanent exhibitions) than would be available in scattered rural communities.

33. Although such centres are essentially designed to benefit the local population they may be usefully combined with - or placed near to - training centres for the operational field staff of the project.

#### The Community School

34. The rural school should certainly be linked into the general network of communication. Schools have suffered too

long from isolation within the communities they serve. The education of the children, in the classroom and outside it, will derive much benefit from such links; so will the attitudes of parents to the education of their children and to education for themselves. How far the school should become an active centre, and its teachers active agents, in adult education and community development will depend on many local factors. These include the suitability of school buildings and furniture, the availability or lack of other centres for adults, the status, training and limitations of the teachers and the heavy work-load they already carry to fulfil their primary function. Nothing but good can result from any movement towards the community school ideal, provided it does not go too fast or too far, overstep its limitations, overstretch its resources or try to usurp the functions of more specialised and diversified educational services for adults.

### Mass Media Programmes

35. The mass media - cinema, radio, television, exhibitions, the press - can reach a large and scattered target audience and can exert a powerful emotive impact. They have, however, certain obvious disadvantages. First, they are non-selective, since it is not economic to direct specific messages to limited social or occupational groups; secondly, they are essentially one-way media, although it is possible to set up systems of feedback and audience research, for example by organising listening groups or farm-forums which communicate back to a broadcasting organisation; thirdly, they tend to be transitory in their impact; finally, they require expensive and delicate machinery, which needs careful handling, maintenance and repair. Nevertheless, where the necessary infra-structure exists and the budget permits, powerful use can be made of these media, perhaps especially radio, for motivation, information and the general education of adults. They should play their part in a communication system rather than being called upon to do the job on their own.

### Communication Related to the Provision of Finance and Equipment

36. Rural dwellers seeking to modernise are often handicapped in their efforts by not knowing where and how to obtain credit, equipment and supplies. This handicap can be overcome to a degree by communication between suppliers and consumers - consumer action-research, which studies the needs and problems of the local population and feeds back their needs to banks, financing organisations and retailers. The suppliers may also

need advice and guidance on how to make known their facilities and supplies. This is a question partly of improved communication with and through extension staff, partly of improved communication media. The media will include sales literature, how-to-get-it, how-to-do-it and how-to-use-it literature, short films, radio programmes, posters, exhibits and demonstrations. Although much of this literature and supporting media exists, it is too often unintelligible to the consumer. A rural development communication centre or media production team might well produce and pre-test media of this kind. This improved and simplified communication between suppliers and consumers is less necessary in the modernised sector, where consumers are more sophisticated. Its particular value is in the transitional and subsistence sectors and at the level of intermediate technology.

### Functional Literacy

37. Literacy is essentially an extension of the power to communicate, from speech to the use of the written word. A very large proportion of the adult population of rural areas in Africa, Asia and Latin America is deprived of this power by illiteracy. In quite a number of countries the incidence of rural adult illiteracy - always higher than in urban areas - is over 75% for men and over 90% for women. The problem is particularly acute where people speak localised vernacular or unwritten languages, since the acquisition of literacy then demands also the mastery of a second language.

38. In crude terms the problem of mass illiteracy is a result of the failure of the primary school system to keep pace with the population explosion. In the world as a whole the total number of adult illiterates continues to increase, despite a reduction in the percentage of illiteracy. Recent figures indicate that in Middle Africa each year more than 4 million children reach the age of 14 with no education or less than 4 years of primary schooling and will therefore, with rare exceptions, remain functionally illiterate for life.

39. How important is literacy to development and particularly rural development? Can the problem of illiteracy be solved and what measures should be taken to solve it? These crucial questions should be squarely faced by the planners of rural development programmes, but the answers are, however, by no means clear.

40. Communist countries have given the highest priority to the eradication of illiteracy and have tackled the problem literally without counting the cost. In many other countries considerable funds and devoted efforts have been spent on mass literacy campaigns. These have, however, had rather limited success, through lack of motivation among the illiterate adults, lack of efficient organisation and finance, failure to provide the necessary adult teaching materials and to train teachers for the specialised task of teaching adults. The rate of drop-out from adult literacy classes has often been very high and the follow-up which is essential to keep people literate has seldom been provided on an adequate scale. Regression into illiteracy has consequently been widespread.

41. This situation has led Unesco to advocate what it calls "a selective and intensive strategy for work-oriented functional literacy". It is being tested in Unesco's Experimental World Literacy Programme and work-oriented literacy projects of considerable magnitude are now operating in 12 countries.<sup>1</sup> In others, more limited experiments or micro projects are being conducted to test this approach.

42. The strategy is selective in that literacy teaching is provided in areas and for social and occupation groups where motivation is high, where illiteracy is a handicap to development, where there is the infrastructure and organisation to enable functional literacy to be provided and where it can be immediately put to use in training and extension programmes. The strategy is also selective in that objectives, methods and media are adapted to the needs of specific occupation groups (i.e. work-oriented). This implies that programmes and media have to be prepared for comparatively small numbers of people and related to individual jobs. The strategy is intensive also in that it favours quality rather than quantity, stresses efficiency and generally requires longer and more elaborate training. In this training the acquisition of literacy and numeracy is integrated with the learning of essential knowledge and skills. It is therefore more costly and more complex than generalised mass literacy teaching but seems likely to be correspondingly more effective.

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<sup>1</sup>Algeria, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Guinea, India, Iran, Madagascar, Mali, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tanzania, Venezuela.

43. Evaluation, built into the experimental projects of Unesco, may shortly indicate to what extent and under what conditions functional literacy of this intensive kind is cost-effective in development terms. Meanwhile those responsible for rural development must decide, largely on intuitive judgement, whether, and to what extent, adult literacy teaching should be included as a means of improving communication and promoting development and, if so, what language or languages should be used and what strategy and methods should be adopted. It is only possible within the scope of this paper to mention a few of the many considerations which should influence their decisions. Literacy enables a person to absorb written and printed information at his own speed in his own time, and to supplement his memory by the recall of knowledge, recorded by himself and others in writing. It thus reinforces oral communication and facilitates extension and technical and vocational training. Indeed these can only be taken to a very elementary level by oral exposition and visual demonstration. There is also no doubt that the acquisition and use of literacy brings to the individual increased powers of analysis, conceptualisation and generalisation and a greater ability to understand and solve everyday problems. Psychologists have also found a high correlation between innovativeness and literacy, from which it seems at least likely that literacy is an important factor in modernisation. But what percentage of literacy; and at what levels?

44. So the planners must enquire what is the extent and depth of adult literacy in the rural areas? Is it sufficient to permit communication through the written word at least with the more progressive elements of the local society? Or is mass illiteracy such a handicap to development that it should be regarded as a priority problem? What is the language situation in the area? Will a multiplicity of local languages - some of them perhaps unwritten - handicap the organisation and increase the cost of adult literacy programmes? In what language or languages should literacy teaching be provided? The answer to this last question will depend upon a balanced judgement between a number of conflicting factors. These include: the psychological advantage, greater ease and speed of teaching literacy in the learner's mother-tongue, which is the normal vehicle of his thought and self-expression; the economic and political advantages of imparting literacy in a language of wider communication with a fuller technical vocabulary and adequate existing reading matter, generally the national language of the country. Again it is wise to ask: what do the people themselves prefer? What is their motivation?

45. If it is decided to build adult literacy into the communication system of a rural development project what strategy should be used? Should preference be given to mass literacy campaigns followed by appropriate extension and technical and vocational programmes and the provision of reading material for the new literates? Or should preference be given to a selective, work-oriented, functional literacy programme, in which literacy teaching is integrated with technical and vocational training and adapted to specific occupation groups?

46. Whichever strategy is adopted - unless of course an effective programme is already operative - new teaching, training and reading materials will have to be prepared by the media, production service. These must be based on action-research and pre-tested in experimental classes and courses. The media may include teachers' manuals, literacy primers and simple visual aids, or, if the work-oriented strategy is adopted, programmes of technical and vocational training with the literacy component built into them. The mass media will need to be enlisted especially for motivation and information, and teachers and instructors will have to be enrolled and trained. Even under the most favourable circumstances the preparatory phases of an adult literacy programme are not likely to take less than two years, but the more thorough the planning and preparation the more effective and functional will be the effect on development.

#### Influencing Socially Controlled Communication

47. Research<sup>1</sup> indicates that the spread of innovations, the adoption of new technology and new practices in a community largely happen by undirected and socially controlled communication. It also indicates that adoption is a long slow process in the rural community. Sociologists have studied this process and have analysed the characteristics which seem to go with innovativeness<sup>2</sup> in individuals. They have found a high correlation between

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<sup>1</sup>For a recent summary of this research see Rogers op.cit.

<sup>2</sup>Defined as "the degree to which an individual adopts new ideas relatively earlier than others in his social system".

innovativeness and literacy, educational aspirations, exposure to media, empathy<sup>1</sup> and cosmopolitanness.<sup>2</sup>

48. How far then can the adoption process be stimulated and speeded up? With this question in mind it seems logical that strategies, systems and methods of directed communication should be planned to achieve the maximum influence on socially controlled communication.

49. A promising communication strategy for rural development might, then, be a two-pronged attack on ignorance and inertia, involving:

- the selective and intensive injection of new ideas and skills into the more innovative and progressive sectors of the community by extension and vocational training;

- an effort to give to the more inert, illiterate and 'laggard' sectors some of the attributes and antecedents of innovativeness and to encourage their readiness to accept change. This will need fundamental education, functional literacy and mass media programmes.

50. The communication programme should, of course, go hand-in-hand with a social and economic programme - introducing land-reform, supervised credit and other appropriate measures for removing material handicaps to modernisation. And these in turn must be explained to, and discussed with, the local population - in short accompanied by improved communication.

51. Finally the channels of socially controlled communication can be cleared and extended, for example by bringing people together for discussion, smoothing out enmities and rivalries, strengthening old forms, and establishing new forms, of organisation, action and co-operation - village councils, farmers' or women's societies, 4H clubs, co-operative societies, community

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<sup>1</sup>Defined as "the degree to which an individual is able to project himself into the role of another person".

<sup>2</sup>Defined as "the degree to which an individual is oriented outside his social system" (Rogers op.cit.).

centres. Thus the organisational function of community development interacts with its educational function.

### Evaluation in Rural Development

52. Brief reference has been made to the evaluation of media, but there remains the question whether evaluation should be brought to bear upon the whole rural development programme or upon specific components of it. Within the communication field, for example, it might be applied to a training course, an adult literacy project or a mass-media programme, or used to compare the cost-effectiveness of two different strategies. A Unesco definition states: "Evaluation aims at measuring, whenever possible in quantitative terms, and according to well-defined criteria, the major direct and indirect effects of a certain activity, taking into account its objectives as established before its inception".<sup>1</sup>

53. An important purpose of evaluation is to provide the financiers, planners and administrators, who allocate funds for rural development with objective information on how these funds have been spent. It is particularly essential in an experimental or 'pilot' project, in which it provides a rational means of determining which elements or alternative approaches should be adopted and generally applied.

54. Evaluation may be rather of the action-research kind, feeding back its results to the operational staff to help them improve their efficiency, or it may be long-term and rigorous measurement of the overall results or cost-effectiveness of the programme. The first of these is of immediate practical value and can be undertaken by a comparatively modest action-research-evaluation unit. The second, essentially a 'before-and-after' measurement, must always be planned and started before the operational phase of the programme begins. It is a costly and difficult operation only to be undertaken if an independent and highly competent organisation<sup>2</sup> is available or can be set up for the purpose.

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<sup>1</sup>Unesco Manual on Adult and Youth Education: Evaluation of Experimental Literacy Projects. Provisional version: document ED/WS/135, Paris. 85pp.

<sup>2</sup>A good example of this is the Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission of the Government of India.

## Communication and Rural Development: Some Concluding Remarks

55. For the sake of clarity and at the risk of over-simplification, an attempt has been made to show how communication can be built into the successive phases of a rural development project. In fact it is more likely that programmes will already be operative. It will then be a question of improving and expanding communication. Communication in rural development projects is rarely planned systematically. Seldom are the various channels and media of communication used to support and reinforce each other. Still more seldom is action-research used to improve the effectiveness of the development programme and its communication component. Nor is evaluation generally applied to measuring their effects. If the vital business of communicating the ideas, knowledge and skills, on which modernisation depends, were better managed and more widely extended, this might well do more than any other single action to accelerate and improve social and economic development.

### A Centre for Communication and Rural Development

56. The control-room-power-house envisaged for a comprehensive rural development programme - might appropriately handle three broad areas of activity:

- study, action-research and planning;
- preparation, distribution and maintenance of media;
- high-level training.

### Study, Action-Research and Planning

57. The centre probably should not conduct basic research, but it should be responsible for feeding the results of such research to rural development staff. For this purpose it will need a small study, documentation and publications unit. This might range from one versatile documentalist and a secretary-typist to a library and publishing unit of say six people, the size depending on the budget available to the centre and the facilities available from elsewhere.

58. The centre should certainly have a small action-research unit. This might consist of two or three professional staff members with basic training in the techniques of social research,

experience of rural development and a knowledge of communication and education. For data collection in the field it might employ either a small team of field interviewers or make use of the services of existing rural development workers or rural teachers, after appropriate short training courses. The action-research unit should be at the service of the planning staff for basic studies, feasibility studies and the like and should work closely with the media-production teams on topic study and pre-testing.

59. The centre might also contribute to, and provide facilities for, the planning and operational control of the rural development programme. The control of individual services, such as agricultural extension or health education, should not be taken out of the hands of the responsible departments of government. Inter-disciplinary planning and inter-departmental action, for example, by working groups, rural development committees or an adult education board, could, however, well be located within the centre.

#### Preparation, Distribution and Maintenance of Media

60. The core of the communication centre would be a media-production unit, staffed and equipped to plan, prepare, and publish whatever range of media the operational staff propose to use and are prepared to finance. If this range includes only the more simple low-cost media (books, pamphlets, manuals, flannelgraphs, flip charts and other simple visual aids), the staff may be comparatively limited in size and specialisation. It might then include: a director/educator with experience in rural development; two or more writers/script writers with training in writing material for readers at various levels of reading ability; one or more graphic artist/illustrators; a photographer; a specialist in lay-out and printing; a handyman/craftsman, capable of preparing exhibits and models and repairing the centre's equipment; and secretarial staff. If instructional films are to be produced this will require an additional unit of staff. If radio is to be exploited there should also be at least one staff member with training and experience in this medium. It is assumed that television is not as yet viable for rural development programmes; where this assumption is not correct, as for example, in India, the centre should have at least one person on its staff capable of planning programmes and collaborating with the television authorities.

61. Where a rural development programme operates in a number of local languages, staff and facilities for translation may be necessary.

62. The centre may also be staffed and equipped to select, purchase and adapt media other than those it produces. It should also have space and staff for the storage, handling and distribution of media. If mechanical/electrical media are being used there must also be a maintenance and repair service.

63. If the centre is serving a widespread rural development programme, or a number of scattered projects, it must be equipped with transport. Its budget must include provision for adequate travel. The production of media, and the action-research that goes with it, demand continuous contact with the consumers in the rural areas.

#### High-Level Training

64. It is assumed that most of the training of field staff will be done locally and departmentally. There is, however, a case for including in a communication centre facilities for special and high-level training. For example, it may make sense to train field staff in the use and maintenance of media and equipment in the same centre which produces, distributes and maintains them. Again courses in communication, essential to the staff of all departments concerned in rural development, might well be conducted in the communication centre or by its staff going out to local training establishments.

#### Localisation and Administration of a Rural Development Communication Centre

65. The size, structure and functions of a communication centre, and its location and administrative framework, will depend upon the nature of the programme it serves. If, for example, the programme is already inter-departmental and if the various Ministries collaborating in it do not have action-research units, media production teams and high-level training establishments, there may be a strong case for establishing a single National Centre for Communication and Rural Development, and even a number of sub-centres in distinct regions of the country or development projects. If, however, there are already training establishments, research and planning units, media production teams and agencies, publishing firms, printing houses, film units, radio networks - the function of a communication centre may

simply be to fill the gaps and to draw together, link up, and collaborate with, these various agencies.

66. The case for a single unified centre is particularly strong where there is a shortage of trained and experienced action-research workers, writers, artists, cameramen and other media specialists. Even where such persons are available, their concentration within a single centre can increase efficiency and reduce costs. Where they are in short supply the centre might be staffed initially by a combined team of national and foreign specialists, for it is at the level of the technical services that international co-operation and exchange can make its most effective contribution.