

Development Communication

Development Communication, has been alternatively defined as a type of marketing and public opinion research that is used specifically to develop effective communication or as the use of communication to promote social development. Defined as the former, it often includes computerized linguistics analysis of verbatim responses to qualitative survey interviews and may, at times also involved consumer psychological "right brain" (emotional) research techniques. Defined as the latter, it refers to the practice of systematically applying the processes, strategies, and principles of communication to bring about positive social change. As most providers of "communication development" research use proprietary approaches that cannot be elaborated upon without revealing proprietary trade secrets, the remainder of this article describes the latter definition.

The practice of development communication can be traced back to efforts undertaken in various parts of the world during the 1940s, but the widespread application of the concept came about because of the problems that arose in the aftermath of World War II . The rise of the communication sciences in the 1950s saw a recognition of the field as an academic discipline, with Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm, and Everett Rogers being the earliest influential advocates. The term "Development Communication" was first coined in 1972 by Nora C. Quebral, who defines the field as

"the art and science of human communication linked to a society's planned transformation from a state of poverty to one of dynamic socio-economic growth that makes for greater equity and the larger unfolding of individual potential."

The theory and practice of development communication continues to evolve today, with different approaches and perspectives unique to the varied development contexts the field has grown in.

Development communication is characterized by conceptual flexibility and diversity of communication techniques used to address the problem. Some approaches in the "tool kit" of the field include: information dissemination and education, behavior change, social marketing, social mobilization, media advocacy, communication for social change, and participatory development communication.

History

The theories and practices of development communication sprang from the many challenges and opportunities that faced development oriented institutions in the last century. And since these institutions existed in different contexts, different schools of development communication have arisen in different places over time.

Manyozo (2006) suggests that the history field can be broken down into those of six different schools of development communication, with the Bretton Woods school being the dominant paradigm in international literature, and the other schools being the Latin American, Indian, Los Baños, African, and the participatory development communication schools.

The growing interest for these kind of applications is also reflected in the work of the World Bank, which is very active in promoting this field through its Development Communication division and recently (June 2008) published the Development Communication Sourcebook, a resource addressing the history, concepts and practical applications in this discipline.

The Bretton Woods school

The "Bretton Woods school of development communication" is a term that has been applied to the development communication approaches that arose with the economic strategies outlined in the Marshall Plan after World War two, and the establishment of the Bretton Woods system and of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund in 1944. The descriptive term is not widely used in the field, but has been used to differentiate between different "schools" or approaches to development which have historically evolved, sometimes independently, at later points in history and in other parts of the world. Leading theorists under this school included Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm, and Everett Rogers. Due to his pioneering influence in the field, Rogers has often been termed the "father of development communication."

Originally, the paradigm involved production and planting of development in indigenous and uncivilized societies. This western approach to development communication was criticized early on, especially by Latin American researchers such as Luis Ramiro Beltran and Alfonso Gumucio Dagron, because it tended to locate the problem in the underdeveloped nation rather than its unequal relations with powerful economies. There was also an assumption that Western models of industrial capitalism are appropriate for all parts of the world. Many

projects for development communication failed to address the real underlying problems in poor countries such as lack of access to land, agricultural credits and fair market prices for products.

Failure of many development projects in the 1960s led to it reconceptualizing its top-down methods. (Manyozo, 2006) The school has reviewed its approaches over the years and has been the most dynamic in testing and adopting new approaches and methodologies.

The World Bank currently defines development communication as the "*integration of strategic communication in development projects*" based on a clear understanding of indigenous realities.

Institutions associated with the Bretton Woods School include:

- the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO),
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO),
- the Rockefeller Foundation,
- the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, and
- The Ford Foundation.

Latin America

The Latin American School of Development traces its history back further than the Bretton Woods School, emerging in the 1940s with the efforts of Colombia's *Radio Sutatenza* and Bolivia's *Radios Mineras*. These stations were the first to use participatory and educational rural radio approaches to empowering the marginalised. In effect, they have since served as the earliest models for participatory broadcasting efforts around the world.

In the 1960s Paulo Freire's theories of critical pedagogy and Miguel Sabido's enter-educate method became important elements of the Latin American development communication scene.

Other theorists who have influenced this school include Juan Diaz Bordenave, Luis Ramiro Beltran, and Alfonso Gumucio Dagron. (Mayonzo 2006, Mayonzo, 2005)

In the 1990s, technological advances facilitated social change and development – new media outlets began to emerge, cable TV signal coverage spread over more regions, and as the presence of communication firms grew so did an echoed global trend from major corporations.

India

The history of organised development communication in India can be traced to rural radio broadcasts in the 1940s. As is logical, the broadcasts used indigenous languages such as Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati and Kannada. Independent India's earliest organized experiments in development communication started with Community Development projects initiated by the union government in the 1950s. The government, guided by socialistic ideals of its constitution and the first generation of politicians, started massive developmental programmes throughout the country.

While field publicity was given due importance for person-to-person communication - also because the level of literacy was very low in rural areas - radio played an equally important role in reaching messages to the masses. Universities and other educational institutions - especially the agricultural universities, through their extension networks - and international organisations under the UN umbrella carried the dev-comm experiments further.

Development communication in India, a country of sub-continental proportions, acquires many connotations. On one end of the spectrum are the tools and techniques locally applied by charitable and not-for-profit organisations with very close inter-personal relations among the communicators and on the other end is the generic, far-off, one-way sort of communication emanating from the government.

The need for development communication continues since a large population, over 600 million, lives in rural areas and depends directly on agriculture. Poverty is reducing as percentage of population but still over 200 million are very poor as of 2009. They all, and the urban slum dwellers, need government support in different forms. Therefore, communication from the government remains highly relevant. In addition to the traditional ways, a new form of communication is being tried by the union government to support its developmental activities, though at a limited scale. Called Public Information Campaigns, public shows are organised in remote areas where information on social and developmental schemes is given, seminars and workshops are held, villagers and their children are engaged in competitions, messages are given through entertainment shows. In addition, government organisations and corporates involved in rural businesses display their wares and services in stalls lining the main exhibition area. This approach brings various implementing

agencies and service / goods providers while the information providers encourage the visitors to make the best use of various schemes and services available. Some state [=provincial] governments have also adopted this model to take their development schemes to the masses.

Community radio is another new medium getting a foothold in rural India, though in patches. NGOs and educational institutions are given licence to set up a local community radio station to broadcast information, advisories and messages on developmental aspects. Participation of local community is encouraged. As community radio provides a platform to villagers to broadcast local issues, it has the potential to elicit positive action from local politicians and civil servants.

Africa

The African school of development communication sprang from the continent's post-colonial and communist movements in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Development communication in Anglophone Africa saw the use of radio and theatre for community education, adult literacy, health and agricultural education (Kamlongera, 1983, Mlama, 1971, Manyozo 2006, Manyozo, 2005).

In 1994 the FAO project "Communication for Development in Southern Africa" was a pioneer in supporting and enhancing development projects and programs through the use of participatory communication approaches. The FAO project, placed under SADC, developed an innovative methodology known as PRCA - Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal, which combined participatory tools and techniques with a strong communication focus needed to design strategies enhancing projects' results and sustainability. FAO and SADC published a handbook on PRCA and this methodology is still widely used today in various projects around the world.

Well into the 21st century radio has had a strong presence in the development communication research and practice. Radio is especially important in rural areas, as the work of the non-governmental organization Farm Radio International and its members across sub-Saharan Africa demonstrate. Linkages that exchange knowledge between development partners such as agricultural scientists and farmers are being mediated through rural radio (Hambly Odame, 2003).

University of the Philippines Los Baños

The systematic study and practice of Development Communication in the Philippines began in the 1970s with the pioneering work of Nora C. Quebral, who, in 1972 became the first to come up with the term "Development Communication." In at least some circles within the field, it is Quebral who is recognized as the "Mother" of Development Communication.

Quebral's work with the University of the Philippines Los Baños' Office of Extension and Publications evolved into today's College of Development Communication, which in 1971 became the first to offer degree programs at the Doctorate, Masteral's and Undergraduate degree levels.

Aspects of development communication which the CDC has extensively explored include Development Broadcasting and Telecommunications, Development Journalism, Educational Communication, Science Communication, Strategic Communication, and Health Communication.

Cybernetics approach

Another area of exploration for the CDC at UPLB is the aspect of development communication relating to the information sciences, the decision sciences, and the field of knowledge management. In 1993, as part of the then Institute of Development Communication's Faculty papers series, Alexander Flor wrote a paper on environmental communication that, among other things, proposed a definition of Development Communication expanded from the perspective of cybernetics and general systems theory:

*If information counters entropy and societal breakdown is a type of entropy, then there must be a specific type of information that counters societal entropy. The exchange of such information - be it at the individual, group, or societal level - is called **development communication**.*

The Participatory Development Communication school

Focusing the involvement of the community in development efforts, and greatly influenced by Freirean critical pedagogy and by the Los Baños school, the evolution of the Participatory Development Communication School involved collaboration between First World and Third World development communication organisations. (Mayonzo 2006; Mayonzo, 2005; Besette, 2004)

Examples

One of the first examples of development communication was Farm Radio Forums in Canada. From 1941 to 1965 farmers met in groups each week to listen to special radio programs. There were also printed materials and prepared questions to encourage group discussion. At first this was a response to the Great Depression and the need for increased food production in World War II. But the Forums also dealt with social and economic issues. This model of adult education or distance education was later adopted in India and Ghana.

Similar to Canada's Farm Radio Forums, Radyo DZLB, the community broadcasting station of UPLB College of Development Communication is a forerunner of school-on-air (SOA) concept that provides non-formal education for rural folk. DZLB has hosted SOAs on nutrition, pest management and cooperatives.^[9] Currently, DZLB continues to air educational programming for farmers and cooperatives.

Instructional television was used in El Salvador during the 1970s to improve primary education. One of the problems was a lack of trained teachers. Teaching materials were also improved to make them more relevant. More children attended school and graduation rates increased. In this sense the project was a success. However, there were few jobs available in El Salvador for better-educated young people.

In the 1970s in Korea the Planned Parenthood Federation had succeeded in lowering birth rates and improving life in villages such as Oryu Li. It mainly used interpersonal communication in women's clubs. The success in Oryu Li was not found in all villages. It had the advantage of several factors including a remarkable local woman leader and visits from the provincial governor.

A project of social marketing in Bolivia in the 1980s tried to get women in the Cochabamba Valley to use soybean recipes in their cooking. This was an attempt to deal with chronic malnutrition among children. The project used cooking demonstrations, posters and broadcasts on local commercial radio stations. Some people did try soybeans but the outcome of the project is unclear.

In 1999 the U.S. Government and D.C. Comics planned to distribute 600,000 comic books to children affected by the Kosovo War. The comic books are in Albanian and feature Superman and Wonder Woman. The aim is to teach children what to do when they find an unexploded land mine left over from Kosovo's civil war. The comic books instruct children not to touch the anti-personnel mines and not to move, but instead to call an adult for help. In spite of the 1997 Ottawa Treaty which attempts to ban land mines they continue to kill or injure 20,000 civilians each year around the world.

Since 2002, Journalists for Human Rights, a Canadian based NGO, has operated long term projects in Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, and the DR Congo. jhr works directly with journalists, providing monthly workshops, student sessions, on the job training, and additional programs on a country by country basis.

Pressing issues within the field

Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is the process of maximizing the use of available resources in order to ensure the long-term wellbeing of present and future beneficiaries. Sustainable Development is a continuous progress which aims for and maintains a constructive state of living in society as preserved by social institutions and systems. However, sustainable development entails

- i. Economic sustainability.
- ii. Social sustainability.
- iii. Cultural sustainability.

Community/People Participation

Community/People Participation is a voluntary involvement of an informed and motivated community while being equipped with proper knowledge and training in which they are equally gratified. It is the active involvement of members of a particular social unit in all aspects of developmental procedures (planning, decision-making, evaluating, monitoring, etc...). An equipped and facilitated environment is arranged to initiate the involvement of different willing social units, as to enhance the process of development and communication amongst its members. The participating people can inject or infuse to another people of the society largely, of the ideas and perception of the developmental process or project ongoing round about them. Community participation propels the objective of development communication. A variety of methodologies are used to advance people's participation, such as peer education, community mapping, participatory rural appraisal, among others. The sole heart of community participation is the people.

Complications in practice

Like any intervention covering the society, and more because human communication itself is complicated, development communication can become complicated. The complications increase when we deal with diverse societies over a large area, such as India; when we try to change behavior of the recipients and in the process bring in many types of media / persuasive skills; and when the ground realities do not allow results to reach the target audience, i.e. there is disconnect between the ground realities and messages. Cultural factors including local rituals and mores, nuances of language, gender perceptions, affect the reception of messages and their impact. The success of dev-comm will, therefore, depend on the credibility of the messenger, the simplicity and directness of the message, and its location-specificity. This aspect assumes more significance when we communicate in complex societies.

Other related definitions

Development Communication is recognizing the power of communication as a catalyst for social development. It is also the utilization of existent communication tools and applicable theories for result-driven strategies for the advancement of society. Development Communication can also be defined as purposive communication intended for a specific target audience that allows for the translation of information into action resulting in a higher quality of life.

It is greatly linked with the concepts of Sustainable Development (which can be defined as the improvement of a community using information and technology and the community's ability to maintain the created ideal state without compromising its environment and resources). It also relies greatly on Community and People Participation, which is the voluntary involvement of a group of people in a development activity with full knowledge of its purpose that will allow them to grow individually and as a community. Development communication is the process of eliciting positive change (social, political, economic, moral, environmental, etc.) through an effective exchange of pertinent information in order to induce people to action.

If the present understanding of communication and development are integrated, the horizon of a practitioner's understanding of development communication will widen. It will not be limited by historical definitions but include the following elements and more such aspects. Development "communication" thus would include: information dissemination on developmental schemes/projects, communication for eliciting positive change, interactivity, feedback on developmental issues, feedback/ reverse communication for eliciting change. On *development side*, sustainability issues need to be given proper importance vis-a-vis economic development.

Development Support Communication:

The term can be described as development planning and implementation in which adequate action is taken of human behavioural factors in the design of development project and their objectivities. It addresses development planning and the plan of operation for implementation. Development support communication is urgently suggested by UNESCO, UNDP and communication scholars and practitioners worldwide. It (DSC) stands for linking all agencies involved in the planned development works such as political executives, political planners, development administrators, subject specialists, field workers, opinion leaders, media representatives, researchers and the beneficiaries who continue the final delivery points and the consumers of the information. The route of communication envisaged are not only vertical as flowing from upper level to bottom or bottom level to upwards but also horizontal between the institutions and personnel connected with the process of development.

OBJECTIVITY:

The fundamental objective of DSC is to communicate the latest skills, knowledge and innovation to the agriculturists so that by adopting them the agriculturists may increase their output manifold. In this connection three vital groups are identified which are as follows:

1. Innovation or Knowledge generation.
2. The political leaders or government of the state.
3. Users of the knowledge or agriculturists.

A very close interaction is necessary among the three groups as mentioned above, to achieve the success of development support communication. (Phazcom 26.02.09.)

International Communication, the intellectual field that deals with issues of mass communication at a global level - is sometimes also called development communication. This field includes the history of the telegraph, submarine communication cables, shortwave or international broadcasting, satellite television, and global flows of mass media. Today it includes issues of the Internet in a global perspective and the use of new technologies such as mobile phones in different parts of the world.

Communication for Development

Communication for Development (C4D) is a broad term used to refer to all the different types of communication that need to take place in societies if sustainable democratic development is to occur.

It encompasses access to and exchange of information, dialogue, creation of knowledge and open access to knowledge, development communication, strategic communication, participatory communication, expressive culture, media, information and communications infrastructure and technologies.

C4D recognises that communication processes often reflect power relations and aims to address this by enabling people's capacities to understand, negotiate and take part in decision-making that affects their lives.

The growing interest in this sector led to the first World Congress on Communication for Development organized by the FAO ComDev Team, The World Bank and The Communication initiative in Rome, Italy, in October 2006.

Communication for Social Change

Communication for Social Change, referred to as *communication for sustainable social change and development*, involves the use of variety of communication techniques to address inefficient systems, processes, or modes of production within a specific location that has not incurred major technological advances. Different mediums and approaches are used to help individuals among the targeted society to acquire new knowledge and skills. This will allow communities not only to experience change but to guide it as well.

A possible strategy in achieving sustainability and development places the people of the community in the center of the communication process. This technique is also known as the participatory approach where interpersonal communication is exercised through community media. The members of the culture are agents of change as opposed to the outsiders who may provide any necessary tools. Technology then becomes implemented by people in their social and economic contexts and results in a major shaping process. The participatory approach can be combined with three other types of communicative methods to effectively invoke social change. These include: behavior change communication, mass communication, and advocacy communication.

Different types of mediums can be used in achieving governance, health and sustainable development. Old media can be combined with new media to educate specific populations. Information and communication technologies (ICT's) in addition to multi-media are able to address visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners and prove to be an important contribution to economic growth. Questions need to be raised about who the stakeholders, policy makers, partners and practitioners are and what their goals might be for the community seeking sustainable development. Often times, those who set the agenda are the ones doing the funding for the project and may include international agencies, bilateral agencies, national authorities, NGOs, and local organizations.

Prior to the project, decision makers consider if introducing new technology will disrupt religion, language, political organization, economy, familial relations and social complexity of the targeted society. Other factors have to be acknowledged as well and may include already present policies and legislations, educational systems, service provisions, institutional and organizational constructions (in the forms of corruption, bureaucracy, etc), socio-demographic and economic aspects, and the physical environment.

Participatory Development Communication

Participatory development communication refers to the use of mass media and traditional, inter-personal means of communication that empowers communities to visualise aspirations and discover solutions to their development problems and issues.

Participatory Communication

"Participatory communication is a term that denotes the theory and practices of communication used to involve people in the decision-making of the development process. It intends to return to the roots of its meaning, which, similarly to the term community, originate from the Latin word *communis*, i.e. common (Mody, 1991). Therefore, the purpose of communication should be to make something common, or to share...meanings, perceptions, worldviews or knowledge. In this context, sharing implies an equitable division of what is being shared, which is why communication should almost be naturally associated with a balanced, two-way flow of information."

- Strengthen a regional training capacity to improve the development support communication (DSC) skills of intermediate-level professionals so that they could improve the effectiveness of the rural development programmes in which they work.
- Initiate an example of a sustainable national DSC service to support rural development programmes and projects.
- Advance towards the creation of a group of DSC professionals in the region, by means of preparing a regional Post-graduate DSC Professional Diploma Course (through collaboration with the University of Zimbabwe in Harare).
- Advise governments and other development-related organisations about the requirements for effective DSC in Southern Africa, for future action.

Based on a "Results" section which synthesizes and recaps the main issues by reviewing how the conception and levels of participation identified in his research have shifted in each phase of the project, Mefalopulos concludes by arguing that participatory communication is an approach capable of facilitating people's involvement in decision-making about issues impacting their lives - a process capable of addressing specific needs and priorities relevant to people and at the same time assisting in their empowerment. In fact, he says, participatory communication is "a necessary component, consistent with a democratic vision of international development, needed to increase projects sustainability and ensure genuine ownership by the so-called 'beneficiaries'."

SIX PHASES OF PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION PLANNING

Communication planning for development is a logical process guided by a systematic and rational framework. This framework could be developed through situation-specific data gathered using participatory research techniques.

1. Preliminary situation assessment
2. Communication strategy design
3. Participatory design of messages and discussion themes
4. Communication methods and materials development
5. Implementation
6. Evaluation

1. Preliminary situation assessment:

Situation assessment could be done most effectively in a participatory manner through PRCA or participatory rural communication appraisal. Three kinds of analysis are done in PRCA:

- i. Audience analysis,
- ii. Programme analysis, and
- iii. Situation analysis.

Audience analysis: Audience analysis is essentially "listening" to what potential users of information need. They are the ones whom the communication program intends to reach. Users of information are also referred to as stakeholders of a communication program. Collecting baseline information about these stakeholders is an essential preliminary step towards developing a communication strategy. Segmentation, or dividing large groups

of stakeholders into smaller groups, helps achieve focus in communication strategy development. Segmentation is usually done in two ways:

- Conventional segmentation according to a. socio-economic status (income, education, age, sex, etc.), b. place of residence (urban-rural), and c. language/ethnic group;
- Innovative segmentation based on a. behaviour, b. needs, and c. values and lifestyles.

Programme analysis: When doing program analysis, program planners need to take both an inward and an outward look at the situation that is, looking at the organization's own vision, policies, resources, strengths, and weaknesses relevant to the problem. Are there adequate resources to realize this vision? How well are program managers using available resources? At the same time, it is important to scan the environment for existing programs that could affect, positively or negatively, the communication strategy to be developed.

Situation analysis: In doing situation analysis, planners look at both the possible problem to be addressed by the communication program and the conditions surrounding such problem. What are the factors which cause a gap between the existing and desired behavior of stakeholders? Is the problem due to the stakeholders' lack of awareness or knowledge of the nature of the problem? Or is it attitudinal in nature? Could the gap be due to their lack of skills to carry out certain practices? Situation analysis likewise includes assessing the communication resources in the area which could be tapped for the communication program. Knowledge of the area's mass and small media, as well as interpersonal means of communication, should contribute substantially to strategy development.

2. Communication strategy design:

Data that have been collected need to be analyzed and interpreted carefully as these will serve as bases of the communication strategy. Communication strategy is the combination of methods, messages, and approaches by which the planner seeks to achieve the communication objectives. The second phase of the process charts the direction of the communication program. It is at this stage where objectives and the corresponding standards and indicators for monitoring and evaluation are formulated. The very word strategy suggests a unique combination of techniques or approaches by which to achieve program goals and objectives. During strategy design formulation, planners also begin thinking of the following: • Preliminary action plan; • Communication modes/approaches; and • Basic messages and discussion themes.

3. Participatory design of messages and discussion themes:

The main activities under the message design phase are selection of message appeals and approaches and selection of communication channels and media. The big challenge at this stage is the development of the big idea or the creative concept around which the whole communication program would revolve. Professional communication outfits are often tapped to develop messages and communication materials for the above-mentioned processes. The disadvantage of this approach, aside from the huge expense involved, is the lack of participation from the stakeholders themselves. Involving the stakeholders in message and materials development increases the likelihood that the communication program would help achieve the bigger development goals.

4. Communication methods and materials development

Actual development of communication methods and materials is undertaken once the communication strategy is in place. A useful reminder to planners concerns the importance of pretesting not only the materials themselves, but also the creative idea and the messages. Pretesting allows for adjustments in the communication activities before substantial time, efforts, and resources are spent on their actual production. Pretesting measures potential effectiveness of communication messages, methods, and materials in terms of their being able to attract attention, to be understood, to be accepted, and to generate the feeling of self-involvement among the stakeholders.

5. Management and implementation

Management of the organization carrying out the communication program and networking are two of the most important activities in this phase. A manager's internal task entails preparing or training people for their respective tasks in the organization within a positive organizational climate. The external task calls for forging linkages with key organizations engaged in the same area of development work. After all the preparatory stages, launching and carrying out the communication campaign or program now takes priority. Together with this come monitoring the process of dissemination, transmission, and reception of programme inputs. The

management aspect also covers the management improvement process and the concept of leadership as they affect implementation of communication programmes.

6. Evaluation

Although the last step is labeled evaluation, it is not complete without its twin concept of monitoring. Monitoring enables the planners and implementors to answer the question: Are things going all right? Evaluation, on the other hand, provides answers to the question: So, did it work? Together, monitoring and evaluation help planners and implementors: • Achieve better understanding of how the communication programme is working; • Make informal decisions regarding operations and adjust to changing conditions; • Ensure most effective and efficient use of resources; • Look at the extent to which the program/project is having or has had the desired impact; and • Fine-tune future programme impact. To help gauge programme impact on stakeholders, it is important to set up clear standards and indicators based on the objectives set. How much have the activities contributed to achieving objectives of key organizations? This can be gauged by comparing evaluation with baseline data, specifically those gathered during the PRCA. More importantly, monitoring and evaluation data contribute to planning for program sustainability and self-sufficiency.

International Programme for the Development of Communication

The **International Programme for the Development of Communication** is a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) programme aimed at strengthening the development of mass media in developing countries.

Background

On December 10, 1948, Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights was adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly as Resolution 217 A (III). It stated that "*Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.*"

In 1977, UNESCO initiated the International Commission for the Study of Communications Problems, known as the MacBride Commission and named after the Commission's Chairman Sean MacBride. The Commission was given a three-year time frame to conduct investigations and report back to UNESCO. In October 1980, the report *Many Voices, One World* was presented at the Belgrade Assembly.

As a result of the report, UNESCO launched the **International Programme for the Development of Communication** (IPDC). The programme web site states that it "exists to strengthen the means of mass communication in developing countries, by increasing technical and human resources for the media, by developing community media and by modernising news agencies and broadcasting organizations."

At the November 1987 General Conference at Paris, UNESCO called for the continuation of its major plan called *Communication in the Service of Man* in which it re-affirmed that "it is essential gradually to eliminate existing imbalances in the field of communication, in particular by fostering the development of infrastructures, the training of people and the strengthening of production and dissemination capacities in the developing countries, and to encourage a free flow and a wider and better balanced dissemination of information, with a view to the establishment of a new world information and communication order seen as an evolving and continuous process."

At the June 2004 session of the UN General Assembly, it was "decided to maintain the Committee to Review United Nations Public Information Policies and Activities" with a mandate including "To promote the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order intended to strengthen peace and international understanding and based on the free circulation and wider and better-balanced dissemination of information and to make recommendations thereon to the General Assembly." It has been said that the "results of UNESCO's McBride Report regarding media diversity alerted UNESCO, and other international bodies to the necessity for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO)."

However, "Despite UNESCO's attempt to protect independent and national news agencies from being dominated by western news agencies and networks, the NWICO policy was boycotted by America and Britain, who withdrew their membership from UNESCO and funding of the organisation's initiatives. Although Britain rejoined UNESCO in 1997, the global media owners' opposition towards the NWICO policy (which collapsed thereafter) highlights their commercial stronghold in the international news market." (The USA also rejoined UNESCO, in 2003.)