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<th>The role and impact of participatory communication in a population-environment IEC programme: the Philippine experience 1990-1993.</th>
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<td><strong>Author(s)</strong></td>
<td>Servano, Ricardo V.</td>
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The Role And Impact Of Participatory Communication In A Population-Environment IEC Programme: The Philippine Experience 1990-1993

by

Ricardo V Servano
PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION
Case Study

The Role and Impact of Participatory Communication in a Population-Environment IEC Programme:

The Philippine Experience 1990-1993

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Population-Environment IEC Programme (PHI/89/P05)
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
Quezon City, Philippines
30 March - 03 April 1993
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THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION IN A POPULATION-ENVIRONMENT IEC PROGRAM: THE PHILIPPINE EXPERIENCE 1990-1993

by Ricardo V. Serrano, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION

Participatory Communication is the process that calls for the conscious and active participation of the implementors and the intended beneficiaries at every stage of the development process with the objective of stimulating action.

This paper provides an overview on the role and impact of participatory communication of the 5-year DENR-FAO-UNFPA Population-Environment IEC Programme (PHI/89/PO5) being implemented by the Philippine Government through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). The project is now on its fourth year of implementation.

1 Paper presented at the AMIC-Sponsored Seminar, Participatory Communication in Environment Management, Ming Court Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 30 March - 2 April 1993.

2 National Project Director, DENR-FAO-UNFPA Population-Environment IEC Programme (PHI/89/PO5) and Director, Public Affairs Office, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Quezon City, Philippines.
Presented as a case study, the paper starts with the background of the project and then focuses on the use of communication for participatory planning and implementation through several activities reflected in its components, namely, research, training, materials development, linkages and field implementation. Although the tasks in each component are considered separately, they are related to each other by the dependence of each task on the successful completion of the preceding one.

The paper ends with some key results and the impact played by participatory communication.
Objectives

The Population-Environment IEC Programme aims at improving the life of selected forest communities by heightening the awareness of leaders and grassroots communities on the interrelationships among population, resources and environment.

Specifically, the project aims at establishing an integrated Information, Education and Communication (IEC) scheme addressed to farmers/families in 31 provinces in 6 regions by linking the project to DENR's social forestry program.

The integrated IEC scheme for the farmers/families is the plan that aims to lower the fertility rate of these target beneficiaries and hence, help minimize the depletion of resources in the forest communities. That is, beneficiaries need to have a knowledge of, and the right attitude towards the small family norm so that it may lead to the practice of family planning. With small families, natural resources can then be used within their limits and be protected to ensure that present and future needs are met to maintain a balance of nature.

Basic Concept

The project's basic concept is that rapid population growth in the uplands can disturb the balance of nature and have negative effects on natural resources and their capacity for sustained agricultural production.

Beneficiaries

About 18 million Filipinos live in the uplands (those areas 300 meters and above in elevation), 8 million of whom are in forest lands.
This project targets the farmers/families who live in these forest lands. They are generally poor. The average annual household income is P2,500.00, an amount far below the household minimum income for food of about P7,500. And, they are mostly underserved or even unserved by government agencies -- which is why they are considered by the government as "the poorest of the poor."

Limited opportunities have made it difficult for farmers to meet their basic needs for food, shelter and clothing.

The limited crops which they grow in their slash-and-burn farms are often insufficient for their own needs.

Moreover, they threaten to further degrade the already denuded forest resources around them. Uplanders, along with legal and illegal loggers, have been identified as the major cause of deforestation in the Philippines.

Social Forestry

In addressing problems in the uplands, the government has considered Social Forestry as one solution.

Social Forestry in the Philippines, initiated in the early 70's is a land development program which mobilizes and involves farmers/families in forestry activities that contribute to their increased income and work opportunities, increased food production, and the improvement/enhancement of the environment.

Social Forestry has three major characteristics, namely: it involves people; it is designed to meet the basic needs of people, and it encourages people to be self-reliant.
To the existing components of Social Forestry (socio-economic infrastructure, provision of support services, improved land use and agricultural practices, development of agro-forestry technology, and issuance of Certificate of Stewardship Contract), another plan attached to the support services is being established by the project -- that of an IEC integrated scheme which highlights the interrelationships among population, resources and environment as earlier explained. This is where the Population-Environment IEC Program comes in.

**Strategy**

**Major Thrusts.** The two major thrusts in this project are the national and regional IEC program focused on leaders of both the government and the private sectors, and the social organization and extension at grassroots level which is integrated into DENR’s social forestry action program.

Six regions (Regions I, III, VI, VII, X and XI) were chosen as pilot sites based on their (a) population trends; (b) environment trauma, and (c) direct effect of population trends and environment trauma on major sectoral industries.

At the grassroots level, the IEC package will become part of DENR’s Social Forestry Program. It is in this context that the project’s support service delivery would be required for maternal/child health and family planning (MCH-FP). This support service has not yet been included in the Program, until this project came in.

**INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK**

The DENR is the implementing agency; FAO is the Executing Agency, and UNFPA the funding agency.
On the national level, the technical staff manages the activities that moves the project toward the attainment of its goal. It is supported by an administrative staff.

On the regional level, each of the six regions is represented by one Regional Executive Director, two Regional Public Affairs Officers and one officer from the Social Forestry Division.

On the coverage of the 31 provinces within which are 32 community sites, Region I is represented by 8 Social Forestry Extension Officers, Community Development Officers and Community Development Assistants (CDOs, CDAs), 8 Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officers (PENROs), 18 Community Environment and Natural Resources Officers (CENROs). The same is true with the other 5 regions, except in the number of DENR employees.

The total number of ISF officers involved is 69 and the total number of information officers is 75 or a total of 144. Work of the DENR employees with the project is only a part of their full-time work and this is counted as the government's counterpart. (Please see Annex I, Organization Levels and Span of Management).

**Basic Consideration**

This is a given basic consideration: that the CDOs, CDAs, PENROs, and CENROs who work as fieldworkers with the project had earlier lived in the forest areas and hence, established rapport with the people in the project sites and have gained their confidence. It is this rapport that has made the field implementation relatively easy and hence, are successful with the project.
USE OF COMMUNICATION FOR PARTICIPATORY PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

Communication for participatory planning and implementation has been used almost all throughout the stages of the project's development. However, only six examples are cited for purposes of this seminar.

A. Training Activity Orientation Workshop

Regions 1, 3 & 6 April 17-18, 1991
Regions 7, 10 & 11 April 24-25, 1991

The output of this activity was the selection, survey and mapping of the project's pilot forest communities in the six regions. Such an activity was done as one interrelated activity. The objectives of such an approach were (a) to gather data not only of the pilot communities but also with and for the communities; (b) to use the exercise for both extension workers and these communities to initiate and maintain the joint responsibility for community organization and development.

Methodology. A simple survey form and mapping guide were developed. These materials became the output of this training.

The process of gathering information was the joint responsibility of the trained extension workers and community leaders. In the process, suggestions from the community on how best to implement IEC activities were documented.

Mapping became part of this information-gathering process. Again, this was a participative process between the extension workers and community leaders.

Linkages between survey/mapping and operations - information gathered and the mapping process were intended for both extension workers
and community to systematize information for the forthcoming benchmark survey, for enhancement of group action, and other farmers’ activities.

B. Research Activity: Benchmark Survey

Survey briefing with Data Gatherers

- Region 1 - July 27, 1991
- Region 3 - July 30, 1991
- Region 6 - April 6, 1991
- Region 7 - August 8, 1991
- Region 10 - August 12, 1991
- Region 11 - August 15, 1991

Total No. of Participants: 178

This training activity oriented the fieldworker data gatherers on the conduct of the benchmark survey in the uplands. Guidelines on the survey were discussed and agreed upon by the trainers and trainees. Having prepared a preliminary survey questionnaire, the group pretested the final survey questionnaire and translated this into 4 dialects.

**Benchmark Survey (1991).** A total of trained 123 DENR data gatherers in the 6 regions helped in the conduct of the survey among 1,123 respondents in these regions. They surveyed and analyzed the KAP of the upland residents of family planning and the environment, media preferences, fertility behavior, among other things. Aside from getting answers to the questionnaire, the data gatherers were able to introduce the project and its aims, and were able to arouse the respondents’ involvement in the project’s future activities.

C. Participatory Broadcast Observation: September 1991

Six DENR broadcasters lived with families in the pilot areas to get first hand information about the way of life in the uplands. Specifically, the
activity aimed to determine the level of knowledge, attitude and practice of upland dwellers on population and environment issues. It zeroed in on mother and child care/family planning and the use and conservation of resources and the environment. The output included 12 spot interviews and 7 lectures. The direct interviews with different publics such as farmers, MCRAs, youth and extension workers as well as the lectures were recorded and aired in 13 radio stations in Regions 6, 7, 10 and 11 in the local dialects.

D. IEC Materials Development (1990)

Two documentaries, 15 seconds each, Filipino with English sub-titles "Kababaihan sa Nayong Kagubatan" (Women in Forest Communities) and "Negosyong Pantahanan sa Nayong Kagubatan" (Small-scale Home Industries in Forest Communities) were developed/produced.

These materials were sub-contracted to Raya Media Services, Inc., a private media production outfit, working in close coordination with the project staff.

Participatory communication took place in a typical forest community when, before writing the scripts for the two VTRs, the Raya researcher/scriptwriter together with some project staff members, spent a day in the community to interview the village chief, the farmers, the women, and those who work in small cottage industries. From them were gathered information about the who, what, where, when, why and how of their work values and orientation, goals and aspirations; knowledge, awareness and practice (KAP) levels on family planning.

After writing a working script, the Raya crew came back to the community. The video recording took place from Friday to Monday. Tuesday and Thursday were allotted for travel to and from the place.
The "talents" in these two documentaries were the farmers/families of the forest community itself. The smooth flow of the VTR undertaking stemmed from the coordination between Raya and its contacts with village leaders who had earlier solicited the cooperation of the whole village, and who had set up the arrangement for the shooting, having been given the specifications earlier by the Raya crew.

Such participatory communication between the VTR crew and the village leaders and talents who live in the community reflected the realistic elements of the background. The dialogue on the track was often scripted on the spot but always bearing in mind the message content of the original working script. This became necessary because the documentaries had to carry a credible narrative flow to ensure sustained interest.

It is of interest to note that the messages and/or images on these VTRs were echoed in the pamphlets, comics, radio dramas, radio spot announcements, flipchart and the poster. The images in these materials were translated in the art work of print materials, and some dialogues were replicated in the broadcast materials for easier population-environment message recall. The communication principle of repetition was resorted to in the project's mass media and micro-media materials.

E. Focused Group Discussion

Luzon - Region 3 - Mt. Arayat ISF Site, Arayat, Pampanga
July 15-18, 1992

Visayas - Region 6 - Agcagay ISF Site, Jamindanan, Capiz
July 22-25, 1992

Mindanao - Region 9 - Kabilang ISF Site, Marilag, Davao
July 28-30, 1992
Audience analysis carried out with a technique such as focus group discussions is a participatory approach in communication. The Project carried out discussions with four separate groups that represented the typical target audience in each area. They were composed of unmarried boys and unmarried girls (youth) and married men and married women of reproductive age (MCRAs) in 3 areas wherein model site conditions were almost similar.

The participatory discussions involving from 8 to 12 persons at a time were focused on sex, marriage, family planning values, and life in the uplands through a well-prepared guide. The discussions, however, were allowed to run as freely and widely as possible. The members of each group sparked off with each other their ideas, while the fieldworkers took a back seat. They taped and noted down the main points of views and opinions that emerged. Subsequent analysis of these points led to a distinct picture of how these four audiences viewed the given issues through the participatory approach. More clearly than the baseline survey did they show the various existing psychocultural barriers that need to be overcome in traditional and folk media activities.

F. Traditional and Folk Media Presentations

Region 1 - October 6-12, 1992
Region 3 - October 19-24, 1992
Region 6 - November 16-21, 1992
Region 7 - November 3-9, 1992
Region 10 - November 30 - December 5, 1992
Region 11 - December 12-18, 1992

The project held the traditional folk media presentations to concretize the message dissemination of the various concerns/issues on the
the interrelationships among population, resources and environment. This system has helped the project to reach consensus with local forest communities on the development messages to be spread.

Before the project became involved with folk media presentations, the team conducted six workshops in the regions (126 farmers and 75 information officers and social forestry officers). The farmers were trained to plan, write the scripts, produce and present their folk songs, poetry and dramas to a live audience in the areas.

Another outcome was the folk media taped versions of the upland farmers. Even the farmer-participants were pleasantly surprised to find that they have talents among themselves.

The production and presentation of the chosen traditional and popular folk media that incorporated the chosen messages drawn up with the help of community farmers as a result of a communication process is basis for some of the interventions subsequently made by the project. The use of communication for participatory planning and implementation is one way to institutionalize this media form on population-environment messages. Folk media presentations may be staged during special occasions in upland communities even when the project has ended.

**A REMINDER**

It may be stressed that this paper concentrated only on the participatory approaches in the planning and implementing of some of the project's activities. Intentionally, it did not discuss some inadequacies and concerns that surfaced during "its growing up pains", for, as FAO's GIIS of Rome stressed - "this project is a pilot exercise that is actively looking for the right means and approaches rather than providing a blueprint."
KEY RESULTS

The key results of participatory communication in the management of the project activities, together with other factors, may have attempted to improve (1) the role and status of leaders; (2) the role and status of upland farmers/communities; (3) the institutional/organizational structure; and (4) the role in contributing to the government's thrust on sustainable development.

There may have been a heightened awareness of leaders on the interrelationship of natural resources, environment and population growth among local leaders, national leaders; information, social forestry and community development officers/assistants, and the DENR's regional executive directors.

Among the upland farmers/communities, there may have been a value affirmation of the small family norm and spacing of children; and a positive attitude and knowledge of environment and resources conservation. Also, an increased awareness, knowledge and right practice of DENR forestry activities.

In terms of institutional/organizational structure, there may have been a viable organization/self-help group, including women, with the help of DENR fieldworkers. The improved linkage to and delivery of population-environment messages through interpersonal communication, group communication and to a certain extent, the IEC materials have been noted. The increased participation in the field campaigns in the pilot areas has been paving a way for the institutionalization of campaigns for the prospect of sustainability.
Lastly, the improved role in contributing to the government’s thrust on sustainable development in the pilot areas has been shown through the project’s ability to: a) harness DENR fieldworkers as frontliners to implement the IEC action campaigns; b) get the facilitative support in the participation of upland farmers, including women, in folk media presentation; and c) pre-testing of materials, meeting with the local government and NGO sectors, and help in message dissemination.

**IMPACT**

The impact of the participatory communication in the management of project activities, together with other factors, may have been reflected in the 1) improved quality of life of forest farmers/families, including women, in the project’s pilot areas; 2) increase in awareness and knowledge of population, resources and environment; 3) increase in the number of MCRAs who have a knowledge of and the right attitude toward the practice of family planning; and 4) an increase in the proper care of natural resources in the forest community environment. # # #
**ORGANIZATION LEVELS AND SPAN OF MANAGEMENT**

**PHI/89/POS**

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**DENR Staff**

- Full Time - on the project
- Part Time - DENR Staff with Part-time assignment, on call, with project

*RED - Regional Executive Director
*RPAO - Regional Public Affairs
*SFD - Social Forestry Division
*CDO - Community Development Officer
*CDAA - Community Development Assistant
*PENRO - Provincial Env't. and Natural Resources Officer
*CENRO - Community Env't. and Natural Resources Officer

Total: 156 Officers = 99

Total Info.Offrs. = 75

Total = 144

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