RESEARCH

SOCIAL COMMUNICATION FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Unai Tamayo: University of the Basque Country, UPV-EHU. Spain
unai.tamayo@ehu.es

Virginia Rincón[1]: University of the Basque Country, UPV-EHU. Spain
virginia.rincon@ehu.es

ABSTRACT

In the present paper we explain the relationship between communication, culture and human development and we present the main characteristics of the activity carried out by the Non Governmental Organization *Kultura, Communication and Development*. This organization has been declared of public usefulness and its work is framed within cooperation for development. In particular, its work focuses on promoting equitable and sustainable human development through social awareness, education for development and various international cooperation projects. Its mission is the promotion of culture through social communication in order to extol the voice of minority cultures or communities whose rights have been marginalized. This Non-Governmental Organization uses alternative information and communication tools to deal with the unique model of prevailing thinking, thus accommodating the cultural and identity diversity of diverse groups marginalized by the system.

KEYWORDS: Culture - Communication - Development - Cooperation - Education – Interculturality - Equity.

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[1] **Virginia Rincón:** Doctora por la University of the Basque Country, UPV-EHU and Professor in Marketing and Market Research at the Faculty of Economics and Business Studies (UPV-EHU) Avenida Lehendakari Agirre 83, 48015 Bilbao (España).
virginia.rincon@ehu.es

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ABSTRACT

In this work, we explain the relationship between communication, culture and human development as well as the main characteristics of the activity carried out by the Non-Governmental Organization *Kultura, Communication y Desarrollo*. This organization has been declared of public utility and its work is part of the development cooperation. Specifically, its work is focused on promoting Equitable and Sustainable Human Development through social awareness, education for development and several international cooperation projects. Its goal is the promotion of culture through social communication in order to exalt the voice of minority cultures and communities whose rights have been marginalized. This Non-Governmental Organization uses alternative information and communication tools to fight against the prevailing thinking model, thus making room for cultural and identity diversity of various groups marginalized by the system.

KEY WORDS: Culture – Communication – Development – Cooperation – Education – Interculturality – Equity.

COMUNICAÇÃO SOCIAL PARA O DESENVOLVIMENTO HUMANO

RESUMO

No presente trabalho explicamos a relação entre a comunicação, a cultura e o desenvolvimento humano e expomos as principais características da atividade realizada pela Organização não Governamental "Kultura, Communication y Desarrollo". Esta organização há sido declarada de utilidade pública e seu trabalho se define dentro da cooperação ao desenvolvimento. Em concreto, seu trabalho centra em promover um Desenvolvimento humano eqüitativo e sustentável através da sensibilização social, a educação para o desenvolvimento e diferentes projetos de cooperação internacional. Sua função é fomentar a cultura através da comunicação social com a finalidade de enfatizar a voz das culturas minoritárias ou comunidades cujos direitos foram marginalizados. Esta Organização Não Governamental emprega ferramentas de informação e de comunicação alternativas para fazer frente ao modelo único de pensamento imperante, dando lugar desta forma a diversidade cultural e identificativa dos diversos coletivos marginalizados pelo sistema.

PALAVRAS CHAVE: Cultura – Comunicação – Desenvolvimento – Cooperação – Educação – Inter-culturalidade – Eqüidade.

1. INTRODUCTION

Human development was initially defined as the process by which a society improves the living conditions of its citizenry, covering their basic and complementary needs. In this sense, regardless of the supply of goods and services necessary for a dignified life, we must consider intangible elements that allow social integration of the citizens by creating an environment in which the human rights of all people are respected. Human development must therefore be understood as a measure of the quality of life of human beings in the environment in which they develop. According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), human development must be interpreted in a holistic way, considering interregional and inter-generational solidarity, gender equity and environmental sustainability, among other aspects.

According to the United Nations,

> Culture must be considered to be the set of distinctive spiritual and material, intellectual and affective features that characterize a society or a social group and which includes, in addition to arts and letters, ways of life, the way of living together , value systems, traditions and beliefs (UNESCO, 2001, p.4).

Culture *"encompasses, in addition to arts and letters, the ways of life, the fundamental rights to the human being, the value systems, the traditions and beliefs"* (UNESCO, 1982, p.1). All peoples have the right to a cultural identity of their own, and it has to be, undoubtedly, the basis of their own development. Communication is the tool that allows the necessary interrelation for the enrichment of cultures as well as being the great transmitter of human creativity. According to Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director General, investing in culture can transform societies. Creativity changes the world and this is our source of renewable energy (UNESCO, 2015).

According to the United Nations, human development implies the participation of communities and, to do so, communication is necessary. UNDP, through its 1993 report on human development, argues that popular participation is becoming a key issue in our time (UNDP, 1993).

The **right to communication** is enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which states:

> Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes not to be disturbed by their opinions, to investigate and receive information and opinions, and to disseminate them, without any limitation of frontiers, by any means of expression (United Nations, 1948, p. 6).

One of the tasks of the agents engaged in cooperation and education for development and social transformation is therefore to claim the right to communication as a basic human right.

In the globalized world in which we currently live, where the power of conventional media overwhelms any kind of cultural identity of its own, it is necessary to invest in strengthening the communication capacities of communities and peoples. Armstrong and Kotler (2011) refer to cultural contamination and the large number of messages that our senses constantly receive through marketing and advertising.

Communicational empowerment of civil society allows us to generate communication with perspective, concerns and languages of their own, also strengthening the capacity to interrelate both at the local and international levels. Communication for development is therefore very useful to generate reflection and awareness on the different issues that affect sustainable human development such as gender equality, exclusion, immigration, sustainability or global citizenry.

According to UNICEF (2006), dialogue and active participation of individuals are essential elements of communication linked to the goals of human development. In this sense, and following the arguments of Freire (2005), communication must be generated in a participatory and bidirectional way among the public and not be served to the public in a unidirectional way.

2. OBJECTIVES

In the present paper we try to present the importance of communication and culture as axes for social transformation and the achievement of the goals of human development. In this sense, we present the activity carried out by the Non-Governmental Organization for Development Cooperation *Kultura, Communication and Development* (KCD-ONGD). This way, we show the existence of alternative information and communication tools and their usefulness in promoting the cultural diversity of several groups marginalized by the system.

3. METHODOLOGY

As a qualitative research method, we used the case study KCD-ONGD. According to Yin (2009), case study involves analyzing a phenomenon in its real context using multiple sources of information. In the same sense, Stake (1998) argues that case study consists of analyzing the particularity and complexity of a singular case to understand its activity in important circumstances. This method offers a contextualized perspective that allows us to address multiple and complex realities (Muñoz Serván and Muñoz Serván, 2001).

In this article, in order to show the role of social communication as a tool for the creation, development and promotion of culture, we present the main lines of action of KCD-ONGD. This organization has been declared of public usefulness and its main objective is to promote social and cultural communication as a response to the danger of the implementation of a model of unique thought that can sacrifice the diversity and legitimacy of the rest of the cultural identities.

4. DISCUSSION

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations argues that the social mass media can inform and raise public awareness of the consequences of problems such as teenage pregnancies, AIDS or drug addiction. The actions of social communication and the use of truly participatory methods can lay the foundations for a change of attitude in the community and create an environment that arouses interest in everyday problems of life.

The era of communication in which we live has witnessed rapid expansion of the media and improvement of techniques for the exchange of ideas. Thus, although the media have traditionally been at the service of power and have been intensely exploited for political and commercial purposes, today they can serve to promote human development. This way, the use made of communication will depend on the will of the competent authorities to take advantage of the possibilities that it offers. It is time to put it at the service of both human development and people.

Traditional and popular media such as theater, dance, puppet shows and popular poetry as well as the rural press associated with literacy programs and audiovisual materials can be very effective in stimulating community activities and disseminating information on development. In this field, the audiovisual format is a good example of the technological advances in the communication sector. Audiovisual materials can be used to share ideas and induce reflection or as part of a training method based on presentation, discussion and practice.

Audiovisual media for entertainment purposes can have a strong impact on society in the shaping of values. García Quismondo (2016) explains the effect of television series on society and refers to the first Indian soap opera, Hum Log, which had an audience of over 50 million viewers. The series began as a family planning program and quickly became a highly successful entertainment program. This soap opera spread topics related to women's rights and aroused positive results such as a greater rejection of domestic violence or an increase in the autonomy of women. The Indian model of using a television series as an educational entertainment method

(edutainment) is a benchmark that has subsequently been followed by countries around the world for purposes of family planning and other social goals.

4.1 Kultura, Communication and Development

KCD-ONGD is an organization that seeks to promote equitable and sustainable human development through social awareness, education for development and different projects of international cooperation. Its activity is based on the idea that culture and communication are concepts that are totally linked to development. KCD-ONGD began its journey putting emphasis on culture and communication when observing that they were questions little dealt with in cooperation and considering them necessary to reach Human, Equitable and Sustainable Development. In this sense, it raises the need to incorporate the true potential of culture and communication as tools for development in the master plans of public institutions.

In relation to culture, it supports local cultural policies of both supply and demand, which include different fields of work such as conservation, invention, dissemination and administration of culture. In the field of communication, it promotes the use of new technologies and different communication processes with the aim of achieving social goals beneficial to the communities with which it collaborates. It thus encourages peoples to defend their rights and to make their claims visible through alternative means of communication and audiovisuals. With regard to international cooperation, KCD-ONGD promotes programs and projects in impoverished countries in the fields of communication, culture and human rights in the broadest sense, by promoting and applying indisputable values such as gender equity, individual and collective rights, cultural diversity and sustainable human development.

What KCD-ONGD intends to do is make a kind of communication for development that is capable of reaching a diverse citizenry with the idea of providing both training and information. Its actions are aimed at promoting and applying values such as gender equality, human rights, cultural diversity and sustainable development. In KCD-ONGD, they believe in social transformation as a way to achieve equitable and sustainable human development. Here are a few principles that govern its activity:

1. A global and socially committed citizenry.
2. Democratic, diverse and plural communication.
3. Integration of traditionally excluded groups and communities.
4. Gender equality and empowerment of women.
5. Respect for cultural, ethnic, religious, political, social and sexual identity diversity.
6. Individual and collective human rights.

7. A sustainable relationship with nature.
8. A positive culture of peace.
9. Relations between people and peoples in terms of equality.
10. Humanization of migration processes.

Table 1: *Principles of KCD-ONGD*
Source: KCD-ONGD (2017a). http://www.kcd-ongd.org/quienes-somos

KCD-ONGD has chosen to make education for development through audiovisual tools because they have a fundamental role in the processes of socialization of people and their ability to transmit positive values and reference models. Their great capacity of attraction in all kinds of public makes them a fundamental element in the educative processes. The attractiveness of the audiovisual format and the great dissemination of the cinema market have facilitated their enormous impact on all sectors of society.

The film industry has helped generate stereotypes and promote a unique model of thinking. It is common that, on the screens of cinema theaters, many cultures appear as backward and barbaric or women are relegated to secondary and traditional roles. Therefore, from KCD-ONGD, the need to show other types of realities and to promote values such as gender equality, diversity of sexual choices or cultural diversity are raised.

All the work developed by KCD-ONGD is divided into two main areas:
1. Education for development and social transformation and 2. Cooperation for development. Below we mention the different aspects of each of the areas mentioned above (KCD-ONGD, 2017b).

1. Education for development and social transformation.

A. Publicize and promote culture and social communication as necessary and prestigious tools in the achievement of Local Human Development.
B. Consolidate and expand spaces for the dissemination and promotion of human rights, gender equity, interculturality and sustainable development.
C. Consolidate and expand forums for debate, exchange, reflection and promotion of projects about culture, communication and development.
D. Create spaces for the formation and empowerment of diverse sectors and groups, especially those composed of women, as participants in communication for development.
E. Promote gender equity in the film industry.

2. Cooperation for development.

A. Promote networks that link people and organizations working in the area of communication for development in different parts of the world.

B. Carry out development projects in impoverished countries for the promotion of human rights from culture and social communication.

C. Promote gender equality and empowerment of women through communication for development.

As for the axes of action of the organization, they are grouped into five large blocks that we mention below (KCD-ONGD, 2017c).

1. Creation of alternative spaces for dissemination and promotion of audiovisual materials of a social nature. In this sense, it is possible to emphasize the Invisible Cinema Festival of Bilbao.

2. Generation of contacts, networks and projects that link people and organizations working in the area of communication for development in different parts of the world. One of the visible examples of this second axis of action is the International Meetings on Culture, Communication and Development.

3. Make gender inequalities visible through audiovisual aids and promote the empowerment of women in the media. Within this bloc, KCD-ONGD organizes audiovisual training workshops for women as well as the Film Caravan conducted by women from Cairo.

4. The creation of alternative spaces for training in the field of culture, communication and development.

5. Search for funding for international projects related to culture, communication and development in countries of the South.

4.2 Invisible Film Festival and Invisible Express Prize

Undoubtedly, one of the most important areas of activity of KCD-ONGD is focused on the organization of the Invisible Film Festival of Bilbao. The International Invisible Film Festival "Film Sozialak" in Bilbao is the backbone of all the work carried out by KCD-ONGD. There are diverse areas awarded in the Festival, all of them being related, one way or another, to human rights. The prizes awarded are around 2,500 euros and a specific prize is awarded to the best work in each of the different subjects: human rights, gender equality, sustainable development and interculturality. Likewise, a prize is awarded to the best work presented by a woman as well as to the best work in Basque. There is also a specific prize for works presented by university students.

The contest, in which short movies edited by university students are presented, is

called Invisible Express. The students have a week to work on a specific topic and prepare a three-minute-lasting short movie in audiovisual format on a specific subject matter. The motto of this contest during the 2015 edition was "Do not put borders on human rights."

Recently, KCD-ONGD has signed an agreement with several film festivals like *Voices from the waters* (India), *Chiapas Media Project* (USA-México) and *Finger Lakes Environmental Film Festival* (USA) to share experiences and promote the dissemination of works related to human rights, the environment, social justice, gender or sustainability.

4.3 Alternative Network Communication

Alternative Network Communication (CAR) is a platform that is born as a commitment to generate new alternative disseminating spaces that break with censorships of all types and that serve to support audiovisual realizations of a social nature in the whole world. In the context of the Bilbao International Invisible Film Festival, the first networks of people and entities linked to social cinema emerged.

CAR Network is born from the idea of assuming the commitment and responsibility of transforming society through communication. This way, KCD-ONGD invited people from all continents dedicated to alternative and social communication (filmmakers, producers, public entities, committed civil society) to share this commitment. Among the people and organizations most actively involved in CAR are representatives from El Salvador, Nicaragua, Mexico, Egypt, the United States and Euskadi.

CAR Network offers opportunities for works and experiences that have little chance of moving internationally. The main objective of CAR is to create a file of feature films and short films with social themes related to gender equity, interculturality, sustainable development and human rights.

4.4 Other KCD-NGO activities

Apart from the organization of events related to social cinema, KCD-ONGD also takes part in another series of actions related to human development. Among others, we can mention the organization of workshops for the elaboration of videos, always taking some social theme as the main thread, or courses on social communication. It also organizes social video projections in various venues and movie trailers in countries of the South.

In turn, without being a direct driver, KCD-ONGD also collaborates with projects of

other non-profit organizations. In this regard, it is worth mentioning its support for initiatives such as *Ojo de Agua* (Mexico), which seeks to promote indigenous and community communication, *Luciérnaga* (Nicaragua) specializing in audiovisual communication for development or *Casa Clementina* (El Salvador) whose ideals are to develop projects for integral shaping of individuals. Likewise, KCD-ONGD has collaborated with initiatives aimed at creating alternative spaces for dissemination, training and meeting of women's groups such as *Arab Klaketa* (Egypt) and the *Women's Film Festival of Cairo* (Egypt).

5. CONCLUSIONS

Communication is a tool for the transmission of values and the creation, development and promotion of culture. Specifically, communication for development promotes the analysis and management of communication strategies with the aim of generating or improving interpersonal, group and mass communication processes that aim at social development. In the same sense, it encourages communication projects that improve the quality of life of people. Its role is to focus on issues related to health, the environment, education, citizenry, gender equity, interculturality, diversity of sexual choices or non-discrimination on the basis of race or other issues.

KCD-ONGD uses communication to transmit social values and gives voice to groups that have no place in the mediated world in which we live. It is an organization that ensures human rights through the promotion of communication for human development. Among its lines of activity are, among others, the organization of the Invisible Film Festival with social themes, audiovisual training for human development or awareness of human rights through social cinema.

In the present paper, several actions are mentioned in which the organization participates and through which it tries to put its grain of sand so that the social claims of the less visible groups can be heard. The decision to shape active listening or, on the contrary, to cultivate an invisible reality is in our hands.

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AUTHOR/S

Unai Tamayo

Doctor from the University of the Basque Country, UPV-EHU and professor in the Marketing and Market Research area at the Faculty of Economics and Business Studies (UPV-EHU). He has published articles in national and international scientific

journals and participated in several congresses. His main lines of research are Sustainable Development and Ecological Marketing. He can be contacted at the Faculty of Economic and Business Sciences, UPV-EHU, Department of Financial Economics II, Avenida Lehendakari Agirre 83, 48015 Bilbao, <u>unai.tamayo@ehu.es</u>.

Virginia Rincón

Doctor from the University of the Basque Country, UPV-EHU and professor in the Marketing and Market Research area at the Faculty of Economic and Business Sciences (UPV-EHU). She has published articles in national and international scientific journals and participated in several congresses. Her main lines of research are Educational Innovation and the International Demand for Higher Education. She can be contacted at the Faculty of Economic and Business Sciences, UPV-EHU, Department of Financial Economics II, Avenue Lehendakari Agirre 83, 48015 Bilbao, virginia.rincon@ehu.es.