



Participatory video for safer health: The Paikon Kore development communication project in perspective

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Abstract

The twosome of communication technologies and theatre can serve as veritable tools of development in all aspects of life if properly harnessed. Therefore, this research explores how Participatory Video provides opportunity for community orientation, contextual interactions and possibilities for shift in control of the people themselves. Using the Paikon Kore community as a microcosm, it also examined how PV can transform people in the grass root from passive participants to active participants in their own health development. This research is descriptive and it is anchored on the Transformative learning theory. It looks closely at Participatory Video (PV) and its significant roles in development communication. This research is qualitative; thus, it used Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approach which is a Communication-Based Assessment tool that enables the researcher to select and use appropriate communication research methods and techniques, as well as how to engage people in grass root in the investigation of their realities. It revealed that PV can succeed where the popular media such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio and the internet fail mainly due to its ability to communicate “in a multi-varied way and hence can maneuver the influence of the powerful few who control public opinion. Ultimately, the hallmark of PV is geared towards a conscientization process where the voices of the beneficiaries are heard, and their views respected through the bottom-up communication approach. Therefore, this research posits that even though there is no fixed way of conducting PV, which means that method varies according to the practitioner and the community response, practitioners must always accentuate the need for democratization of communication between outsiders and the community and amplification of the voices of marginalized community members. It concludes that communication revolution has opened new opportunities for participatory communication towards actualizing the social change potentials which is the destination of every development intervention. Hence, Development practitioners must jettison any form of top-down approach to development and relinquish intervention autonomy or ownership to targeted project beneficiaries.

Keywords: Development communication and project, Health, Paikon Kore, Participatory video

1. Introduction

Scholars of development communication have classically advocated that development anywhere in the world is improbable without integrating effective communication process and strategies. This has prompted scholars like Salawu (2008: 47) to observe that “the idea of using communication for the purpose of advancing the goals of development received a boost when it was realized that development has to do with the generation of psychic mobility and changing of attitude”. He reflects further that “the failures of certain development projects had been due to the absence of efficient communication component in the development calculus” (Salawu, 2008: 47). However, even though development communicators and or Community-Based-Theatre Practitioners work with the faith that increased communication will lead to development, it is expedient to always review the issues of inequality and discuss alternative strategies which would lead development efforts toward a more equitable ideological commitment.

In a new thinking in development communication action project, as Ekharefor, Okoro and Richard (2017: 92) observed:

development communication requires very careful and detailed planning that must incorporate six interdependent elements or tasks such as, the collection, collation and analysis of facts and figures about the target social system, problem identification, goal clarification, strategy selection and operational detailing.

The reviews, tasks, or new perspectives incorporates many of the concepts which are much talked about, i.e., ‘bottom-up’ development, ‘grass-roots’ involvement, participatory decision-making, citizen empowerment, conscientization, power sharing, indigenous knowledge and media, self-reliance, egalitarian rights, participatory message development, media integration, team building, interpersonal trusty, dynamic dialectical processes, interactivity, and coalition building. The formentioned concepts or the communication revolution has opened new opportunities for participatory communication, which retains some elements from its radical predecessor, and fosters the liberating role, actualizing the social change potential and emancipator motives throughout the communication process. The newer perspectives do not deny the role of mass media or modern communication technologies. The newer communication technologies provide opportunity for community orientation, contextual interactions and provide possibilities for shift in control of the people themselves. For example, the Participatory Video (PV) which is the focus of this study, is making it possible for the powerless to create their own messages share common experiences, question the absolute control over mass media exercised by the power elite retaining the power of communication within their own community to some extent. It is aimed at developing competencies of the community members, who become subjects of their own decisions thereby leading to a process of social change which they themselves have initiated.

According to Williamson in Nair and White (1993: 17), “the Participatory Video process is essentially one of putting film/video in the hands of people”. The author added that PV is a powerful means for involving people in “a process which enhances self awareness and self empowerment through objective reflection, consensus, community action, structural change and participation in development which improves the quality of those who engage in it” (Williamson, 2020: 18). PV can succeed where the popular media such as newspapers, magazines, television, radio and the internet fail mainly due to its ability to communicate “in a multi-varied way and hence can manoeuvre the influence of the powerful few who control public opinion” (Guingane, 2010: 11). In this way, it is worthy to note that PV has a liberating role that can provide opportunities for democratic interaction even among community members themselves. The PV experiments around the world have demonstrated its social change potentials embedded with dynamites to break the barriers to sustainable development. It is, therefore, very important to explore the flexibility and adaptability of this interactive medium to grassroot struggle and access to social services. This is exactly what this study sets to do.

1.1. Objective of the study

The broad aim of this study is to explore the potency of Participatory Video as a viable pedagogical tool to put development experts as well as target beneficiaries on a par towards achieving social goals for sustainable development. The study sets out the following objectives to achieve its aim:

- i. to explore the concept of PV.
- ii. to ascertain if PV can transform people in the grass root from passive participants to active participants in their own health development.
- iii. to ascertain if PV can serve as an effective tool that can initiate a dynamic process of engagement and dialogue on social issues of local concern.
- iv. to ascertain if PV can amplify the voices of marginalized social groups to the wider community.

2. Literature review

2.1. Development communication

Development communication has been defined in different ways by economic development experts, sociologists and communication scholars. Since the terminology originated in Southeast Asia, the definitions given by communication experts of this region have gained credibility among scholars. Definitions also differ between different regions of the world depending upon the definer’s point of view regarding development. A commonly used definition of development communication is the one coined in 1972 by Nora C Quebral:

Development communication is the art and science of human communication applied to the speedy transformation of a country from poverty to a dynamic state of economic growth that makes possible greater economic and social equality and the larger fulfillment of the human potential (Quebral, 1973: 25).

According to Goldhaber as cited in Imoh (2008: 193), development communication is the facilitation of the exchange of information for increased productivity and development. Development communication to Ifeduba (2010) as cited in Frazer and Restrepo-Estrada (2010), is the use of communication process, techniques and media to help people towards consensus, to help people plan actions for change and sustainable development, to help people acquire the knowledge and skills they need to improve their condition and that of the society, and to improve the effectiveness of institutions (Ifeduba, 2010: 25). For this researcher, development communication refers to the practice of methodically employing the approaches and principles of communication to bring about constructive, positive social change for the well being of the people. The World Bank, however, defines development communication as the integration of strategic communication in development projects (Manyonzo, 2006: 20).

It is expedient to note that the theories and practice of development communication sprang from the many challenges and opportunities that faced development-oriented institutions in the last century. Since then, different schools of development communication have arisen in different places over time. These schools include the Bretton Woods School being the dominant paradigm in international literature and the other schools being the Latin American, Indian, Los Banos,

African and participatory development schools. Leading theorists of the dominant paradigm were Daniel Lerner, Wilbur Schramm and Everett Rogers. The paradigm advocated the production and planting of development communication in indigenous and uncivilized societies. This paradigm was however criticized by the Latin American school, comprising Paulo Freire, Juan Diaz Bordenave, Luis Ramiro Beltran Alfonso, Gumacio Dagron and Cardoso (Mayonzo, 2006: 23).

They argued that the dominant paradigm which located the failure of development problems on the underdeveloped countries was inappropriate for all parts of the world; because they failed to address the real underlying problems of poor countries such as lack of access to basic services and therefore advocated participatory communication as the panacea. The African school of development communication on the other hand, sprang from the content's post-colonial experience. Africa saw the use of radio to promote educational, health and agricultural development especially in francophone countries. With support from FAO, some development programmes in Africa have used participatory communication approaches such as Participatory Rural Communication Appraisal (PRCA) to enhance project results and sustainability (Anaeto, 2010: 62). The Asian School of thought also, spearheaded by the University of Philippines, Los Banos, introduced the concepts of extension, cybernetics approach, participatory development and community participation in development communication (Quebral, 1973: 29).

2.2. Participatory video

Participatory video as a concept was developed by Nick and Lunch in 1967 as an attempt to attract and engage development beneficiaries in logical debates through its audio-visual effects. It is "an interactive, social and viable means of mobilizing the common people to catalyze their own sustainable development by handing over the camera to them so that they can come together to explore issues of common concern" (Nick & Lunch, 2006: 2). Gumucio (2001) defines PV as "an unscripted video production process directed by communities themselves with the aim of highlighting their living conditions towards a horizontal, vertical and exchange learning" (Gumocio, 2001: 61). PV according to Chris (2022: 20) is "an accessible, interesting, inclusive methodology that allows community to analyze, plan and negotiate among themselves, with other communities and with development agencies in which the focus is on community development".

PV emphasizes creation of a new order of self-governance. In general it means cultivation of personal and social responsibility, sensitivity to the environment, confidence, and mutual trust, knowledge of one's capabilities and potential, as well as acquiring the necessary skills to manage community affairs. This is achieved by democratization and media control by the people of the community, who are the ultimate beneficiaries of any development program. It is an interactive medium in development communication that ultimately result in increased participation, freedom of action, shouldering of responsibility, and acquiring of power to overcome the sense of helplessness. Melony et al. (2018: 45) reflect that:

PV activities can initiate a dynamic process of engagement and dialogue on issues of local concern, including highly sensitive topics. From conception through production and public screening, the process is driven by individual community members. The themes and topics are relevant to local audiences and presented in culturally appropriate ways. In the PV process, people are always keen to see their own community members on screen and this helps to amplify voices for change from within the community and fosters peer-to-peer outreach as audience members identify with what they are shown.

The intention of PV as a participatory approach is to galvanize a change in attitude and behaviour by converting the audience's passivity and its dormant emotions and channeling same into useful energy that triggers action, geared towards changing existing standards. Participatory Video experiments have aroused the interest of development practitioners and or non-formal education instructors in developing countries. It is seen as an ideal medium to promote audio visual literacy for motivation, attitudinal change, behaviour reinforcement, community participation, and entertainment. This medium has been used in rural development both as process and product (Though, its utility as a process is the concern of this research).

The first PV process is the Fogo Island experiment. It was initiated in 1967 as part of Canada's 'War on Poverty' in which the Memorial University of Newfoundland and the National Film Board of Canada participated (Dubey & Bhanja, 1993: 196). Film and video screening brought problems of political and economic and economic nature into the open to be discussed, analyzed, and acted upon. After watching video clips from different communities, the different villagers on the island came to realize the problems they have in common and realized that they could solve them by working as a team. "Politicians who lived too far away and too busy to actually visit the island frequently also watched the clips. As a result, government policies and actions were changed" (Nick & Lunch, 2006: 11). According to Nair and White (1993: 196):

Bangladesh, Gambia, Sri Lanka, Tunisia, Upper Volta, Peru, and Venezuela have used PV successfully in Agricultural development. Similarly, Egypt, Gambia, Iran, Jamaica, The Philippines and Thailand used it for childcare...Pakistan, Alaska, and Newfoundland in Canada used it for literacy program, urban development and generating community consensus/problem-solving with community effort and self-help growth.

For five decades now, PV is used all over the world and had been applied in many different situations from advocacy and enabling greater participation in development, to providing a therapeutic and communicative environment for the mentally ill or disempowered. It has aligned with analysis and change that celebrate local knowledge and practice while stimulating creativity both within and outside. Development workers and participatory researchers utilize because it

encourages the presentation of community issues from the ‘worm-eye-view’ perspective and project the voice and face of the community to the desired destination. Its democratic and didactic prospect coupled with its flexibility enables it to be applied in so many situations that link isolated individuals and groups and engage them in a more positive interaction.

2.3. Theoretical framework

This study stands on the *Transformative Learning Theory* which holds that, the way learners interpret and reinterpret their sense of experience is central to making meaning and hence, learning. It is the idea that learners who are getting new information are also evaluating themselves. This theory was first introduced by Jack Mezirow in 1978. Since then, the concept of transformative learning has been a topic of research and theory building in the field of adult education. Although Mezirow is considered to be the major developer of transformative learning theory, other perspectives about transformative learning are emerging. To Mezirow (2000), in defining the condition of being human, we have to understand the meaning of our experience. For some, any uncritically assimilated explanation by an authority figure will suffice. He adds that, in contemporary societies “we must learn to make our own interpretations rather than act on the purposes, beliefs, judgments, and feelings of others. Facilitating such understanding is the cardinal goal of adult education” (Mezirow, 2000: 36). The discussion of transformative learning as conceptualized by Mezirow, according to Kasl (2000), refers to;

...deep learning that goes beyond just content knowledge acquisition, or learning equations, memorizing tax codes or learning historical facts and data. It is a desirable process for adults to learn to think for themselves, through true emancipation from sometimes mindless or unquestioning acceptance of what we have to come to know through our life experience, especially those things that our culture, religions, and personalities may predispose us towards, without our active engagement and questioning of how we know what we know.

Transformative learning as an act has 3 (three) fundamental components – critical reflection, rational disclosure, and centrality of experience. Individuals conduct them in order to be more self-motivated, self-governing, rational, collaborative and empathetic. These components develop autonomous thinking in people involved in its process. This is because to be able to own the outcomes of our interactions and properly take ownership of our roles in society as individuals, the ability to think for ourselves is necessary. It goes a long way towards helping our society and world to become a better place through our greater understanding and awareness of the world and issues around us. By putting video in the hands of the people to tell their stories, the PV process is in tandem with the tenets of transformative learning. It has proven itself as a powerful means for involving people in a process which enhances self awareness and self empowerment through objective reflection, consensus, community action, structural change and participation in development which improves the quality of those who engage in it.

3. Research method

This study adopts qualitative research approach by carrying out a PV process for safer health with participants; thus using Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) approach which is a Communication-Based Assessment tool that enables the researcher to select and use appropriate communication research methods and techniques, as well as how to engage people in grass root in the investigation of their realities. The PLA tools such as Transect Walks, Community Mapping and ice-breaking games were used where necessary. These tools tested the efficacy of the methodology as they assisted in revealing the socio-cultural values of the participants in a manner that encourages participation. The hallmark is geared toward a conscientization process where the voices of the beneficiaries are heard and their views respected through the bottom-up communication approach.

The location of the research is Paikon Kore; a community in Gwagwalada Area Council of the Federal Capital Territory. The community was chosen because majority of the facilitators live around the area. The team of Development Communicators (facilitators) was made up of Jimmy Akoh (this researcher), Henry Agbonika, Vanessa Adie, Terngu Gwer, Lillian Aderibigbe, Abu Umar, Tsibati Lass-Aina and Aisha Ali-Nana who were all researchers from the Center of Excellence on Development Communication, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Nigeria. Since it will not be possible to mobilize all the community members, and for reasons of time and economy, a total of eighty (80) participants were selected from four classified groups of men, women, boys, and girls in the community. Twenty members were selected from each of the groups as participants. Copy and paste from your manuscript. Copy and paste from your manuscript.).

4. Research method

4.1. The Paikon Kore experiment

There is no fixed way of conducting PV. Method varies according to the practitioner and the community response. For the Paikon Kore PV experiment, the following six (6) steps were followed: *Preliminary visits; Problem identification/Recording and playback of informal community discussion; Scenerio building and rehearsal; Performance/video recording of community issue by community; General community viewing and discussion; and Follow-up*

Step 1: Preliminary visit

Paikon-Kore is a peaceful community with a population of about 500,000 in Gwagwalada Area Council of the FCT. The community is five (5) kilometers away from the University of Abuja Teaching Hospital and their major pre-occupation is farming. Prior to the commencement of the PV process, a mobilization visit was undertaken to the community (Paikon Kore) for the facilitators to be acquainted with surrounding realities and to have intimate knowledge of the community's culture. More importantly also, there was a need to seek audience with the community leaders, religious and group heads to explain the purpose of the intervention and seek for their cooperation and support. Okwori (2005: 5) notes that: "a preliminary stage is very important as it helps to identify available communication channels, traditions and cultural factors without which the project cannot happen or succeed". The visit created bonds of understanding and mutual trust between the research team and the target community. It was a very huge opportunity for social research. Defined by Valek (2014: 49) as 'the scientific study of society which examines a society's attitudes, assumptions, beliefs, trends, stratifications and rules', social research provides a greater understanding of household and community dynamics and also provides baseline data for any intervention. Social research could clear the air over the following, which have the tendency to either accelerate or decelerate the rate of acceptance for an intervention by a community.

- a) Average literacy in the community,
- b) Level of poverty in the community,
- c) Level of communal organization,
- d) Communal unity,
- e) Political leaning of the majority in contrast with the ruling government, and
- f) Exposure to earlier or other programmes.

The above initial basic information about the community was collected after an agreement was reached with the community as regards the intervention. When this was done, the stage was set for the team to move into the community.

Step 2: Recordings and Playback of Community Discussion

On the 14th of August 2011 the facilitators returned to Paikon Kore. When they arrived the Etsu's (Chief of Paiko) palace to register their presence, groups of men, women, boys and girls were already waiting around the palace as they have already been notified about the date of the visit. Etsu Yusuf (the chief) and the elders present pledged their total support and goodwill for the intervention. As the facilitators were leaving the palace, the different group of participants who were already set for action led them to scenes of common community interest. Their school, clinic, stream, marketplace, electricity transformer, etc were recorded. At this stage, the participants were already showing interest in the operation of the video camera. The facilitators used the opportunity to demystify the video camera by coaching them to understand media capabilities like, recording, instant playback, erasing and other technical details. Throughout the period of the demystification of the camera, equal opportunity was given to participants, and it helped in building a very good rapport with the community. Due to this intimate involvement, the facilitators no longer remained above but moved with the community. What seem to be a mere 'transect walk', snowballed into in-depth informal discussions and reflections.



Plate 1: A facilitator interacting with community members during the process of camera demystification

Source: The Researcher (2011)

As a second stage in the process, problem identification and sharing by the community began and while this was going on, the four groups democratically selected twenty members each to represent them during the subsequent stages of the PV process for a more coordinated, constructive and positive discussion. After the selection of participants, the facilitators joined them to the Paiko Primary School where they engaged in ice breaking games and discussion of the broadly identified issues in a general discussion. Since the basic concern of this intervention was improving human life, there was no effort to achieve a predetermined target. After few hours of genuine dialogue, the community members identified some

of their felt and unfelt needs after which all that had been recorded was played back instantly before the discussants. After viewing the recording of the transect walk and community discussion, the participants adopted the indigenous style of “ku zo mu’hadu” which means gathering to discuss- a kind of the traditional forum to arrive at the core issues to be integrated into the performance which will be recorded and viewed by the community.



Plate 2: A Facilitator and members of the community during the ice breaking games
Source: The Researcher (2011)

This stage of the PV process goes beyond the recording of scenes of common interest and discussions. It recycles into a drama-making process the findings in Paikon Kore community which use the cultural elements found in the field to address problems of the people. The re-cycling process forms the contribution this intervention makes in the use of PV as a tool for a cultural liberation, self-rediscovery, and attitudinal change. The core issue identified was general health challenge and it was narrowed down to personal hygiene, alcoholism and environmental health. The appropriation and the facilitation of the participants to rediscover this process as a methodology for conscientizing themselves was the main goal of the recording, dialogue, and playback. It was an amazing discovery during the discussion that storytelling was reconfirmed as an equally good source for recovering and storing information and documentation of knowledge. There was a consensus that the storytelling technique shall be used as a medium to dramatize the findings.

As a form of conclusion of the Recordings and Playback of Community Discussion stage, the facilitators introduced a new form of participatory clapping which is a deviation from the conventional way of cheering. It is called the ‘mosquito clap’. This departure was deliberate as it encouraged a war against mosquitoes and malaria by extension. Instead of saying “A round of applause” or “Let’s clap for Mr/Mrs. A or B”, one would scream; “Mosquito, Mosquito” (everybody will raise up their two arms with fingers spread and humming the noise of a mosquito); “Catch am” (everybody will clench their fists, as though mosquitoes have been trapped in them); “Kill am” (everybody will then hit their two palms together to smash the trapped imaginary mosquitoes which will then form a sound clap). This rhythmic way of clapping which is a form of participatory learning and action gave this stage of the PV process a befitting end with serious panache.

Stage 3: Scenario Building/Rehearsal

One of the very fundamental aspects of rural development is problem identification. The success or failure of any one project hinges on proper identification and the choice of the most biting problem for attention (Abah as cited in Hagher 2005: 15). Having identified health as a major problem in Paikon Kore, it is now time to make it the focus of the intervention through drama making. Engaging in creating the drama is what this stage is all about and the essential characteristic is openness. This process was predicated on improvisation which means that the dialogue and action were formulated by participants themselves in an atmosphere of give-and-take and of trial and error. Engaging in creating the drama and especially in analyzing problems, the people took over the process of their own development within their own cultural matrix.

In conventional theatre, performances are considered the most important focus of a theatrical activity. In PV, rehearsals assume greater emphasis. This is because the emphasis of PV is on the process. The rehearsal stage involves the people trying out how to play the characters and dramatize the story. As they do so, they increase their awareness and understanding of issues at stake, thereby getting conscientized, re-oriented, and empowered. Rehearsals for this intervention were conducted in the open. Scenario building and rehearsal started on the 15th of August, 2011. The facilitators and the participants from the community jointly handled the choice of venue for the community rehearsal which was the Paikon Kore Primary School playground. Since the participants had been coached on the technical details of video camera, it was handed over to them for use in the PV process. The facilitators utilized a second camera which provided a means of documenting the process of filming. This stage began with the learning of folk songs and dances. Some of the songs learnt are essentially social commentaries as would be seen in the few examples below:

SONG I:

HAUSA

Lafiya jarine kasanhaka
Korai dagaski wani bansan dahakaba che lafiya jirici

TRANSLATION

SOLO: *Health is wealth to those who know!*

Do you know?

CHORUS: *Oh yes, one will not live, if he does not know!*

SONG II:

HAUSA

Yawam mabushine damumaba amman sai
Idan kashire hayan gidanka sainan Nima Nasharenawa
Mutanen waje bazasu muna dariyaba

TRANSLATION

SOLO: *Our Population is never a problem, never because-*

CHORUS: *If you clear the path that leads to your compound, and I clear mine*

Outsiders will not look down on us.

After learning the songs and dances, scenarios were built around the prioritized issues – environmental health, alcoholism, and personal hygiene. The Scenario Building/Rehearsal was worth a while as it opened up opportunities for participants to see the relationship between their lives and the different scenarios. Their expertise in the operation of the camera at this stage was really fascinating. The different arguments among the participants as they built the scenarios about whether a scene is suitable or not gave the villagers a sense of ownership of the process which is in tandem with Mbachaga's assertion that; "Doing or changing as a result of what individuals or communities have discovered through development intervention is a matter of choice. They have to decide when and how they want the change. In other words, they initiate the process of change in their own terms" (Mbachaga, 2011: 34).

While the participants were building the scenarios, so much information was generated on the critical areas of the prioritized issue such as, Proper waste disposal, Hand washing, Sex education, Effect of alcoholism/poverty on health, Dangers of self-medication, Self-reliance, Safer drinking water, and many more. They were extensively argued out by everyone in-terms of how the issues came about, their effects, what can be done and to what consequences. At this stage, care was taken to avoid attitudes of blaming one party against the other. After producing different scenarios, the participants linked them in a dramatic way by adding more details and twists. This process was very flexible and did not follow any rigid criteria. For example, the context that the recording was carried out, everybody is equal irrespective of age differences or gender. While the rehearsal was on, the participants were recording in turns. Nobody claimed any form of monopoly of expertise and or dominance. The facilitators left the camera with community members throughout the rehearsals and took care to allow the story evolve from the general sensibilities of the people. After three days (15th-17th August, 2011) of scenario building and rehearsals, the community members were able to develop a spine story and were anxious to present it before a larger audience.

Stage 4: Performance/Video Recording of Community Issue by Community

Performances are an extension of the rehearsals. Like the rehearsals, they allow for the community members to intervene. The performance for this research took place between 2:20pm to 3:00pm on the 18th day of August 2011 and it competed with the noise, the obstruction and the human traffic encroaching upon the performance venue (the village square). The scenario that was finally dramatized with local modulations and or nuances is as follows:

It is an emergency community meeting at the Etsu's (Village Head) palace. The Etsu informs the villagers about the serious fight between two of their community members; Mama Asabe and Tumpapia who is a widow. The cause of the fight was as a result of Mama Asabe's constant dumping of refuse behind Tumpapia's house. She had laid her complaint to Baba Asabe (Mama Asabe's husband) but to no avail. Tumpapia had been patient until Mama Asabe mockingly told her that it was heavy intake of alcohol that killed her husband. On this very day, Tumpapia could not take it anymore, so she fought with Mama Asabe. As at the time they were having the meeting, both of them were on admission in the University of Abuja Teaching Hospital due to several injuries sustained. After listening to questions, answers and suggestions by the villagers, the Etsu accentuated the points made and encouraged everyone to co-exist peacefully. Baba Asabe was not sure of where his family would be dumping refuse to avoid problems subsequently. The male youths agreed to have a break-away meeting to set in motion plans for proper disposal of wastes and come back for feedback after 15 minutes.

As the youths were getting up, the narrator/joker abruptly, ran into the acting area and told all those present that there is no need for any faction to go and decide. Everybody has the right to contribute to such decisions. He reminded them that the two victims in the play are women yet, they still want only the male youths to proffer solution alone. He asked the people to think deeply on the scenarios and what they were going to do as soon as possible based on the issues raised in the performance. The narrator's questions were: "Was it a biased or a fair portrayal of our realities? Are these

illustrations foreign to us? And so, what is going to be our community action plan, based on what we have just experienced together?" A protracted silence followed immediately as the narrator/joker walked away from the arena puzzled. The narrator's action and expression can be seen as one of the many ways of emphasizing the participatory dimension in Participatory Communication (Mda, 1993; Johansson, 2011). And in this way, as Johansson emphasizes, the spectator assumes his double role as a theatrical witness and a social player in the communal events (Johansson, 2011: 21).



Plate 3: Video recording of community issue by a community member during the performance
Source: The Researcher (2011)

The performance provoked a shared sensibility for what lies behind abstract development concepts in the community to actual, easily understandable, and real concepts that the people could easily identify with. The performance showed a latent understanding of issues affecting the people and relied on ingenious use of local language, which involved the appropriation of local proverbs, wise sayings, local figures of speech, and other witty colloquial expressions in conveying the intended messages to the audience. Re-editing was done in some scenes, especially when a spect-actor feels that an issue was not presented satisfactorily. Thus, at the end of the performance, it was noticed that familiar theatrical qualities became less significant compared to the collaborative mutualism and open-endedness (of the drama) that created an obvious need for general community viewing and discussion (post-performance discussion). A common consensus was reached that the participants (actors and spect-actors) should reassemble at 5:00pm same day, for general community screen viewing where issues related to development as played up in the performance shall be discussed at length and without fear of victimization.

Stage 5: General Community Viewing and Discussion

At about 4:45pm, the crowd at the area where the performance took place was almost two (2) times the number of people present during the performance. Almost everyone had returned from their farms or work. This stage of the PV process was coordinated By Danladi Bawa; the Narrator/Joker of the performance. The community members and the facilitators formed a semi-circle, and a monitor (TV) was placed on a high table in front of them. The camera was connected to the TV and with the aid of a loudspeaker which was provided by the community members, everyone present could see and hear the clear sounds of the performance.



Plate 4: The general community viewing and discussion
Source: The Researcher (2011)

Of the many issues arising from the general community discussion, the most significant is the fact that the debates centered on the community's lifestyle and the dangers it posed to the social development of society. The community members were all in agreement that there is need to change their lifestyles and work together to develop their area. The women took exception to generalization about the community lifestyle. They put forward their domestic and common problems in the ways the issues affect them. With reference to the issue of safer health, most of the women complained bitterly that what they get from their farms cannot really take care of their feeding, so health issues are secondary. Some of the women seem to be hesitant of telling their own stories to openly but were nodding to what others were saying. Maimunat Sati; a 39-year-old housewife, hinted at this issue when saying:

Mu muyifarin ciki da irin wanan iki' maikyau. Mu dayake matane musa damuwan mu kadai awannan garin amma mu bamusan yanda zamu fadaba a fili Sabuda karmujawo ma kanmu wata damuwaba. Baadamu da abunda muke fadaba awannan gari saboda baadauke muabakin komaiba. Mudai namu damuwan baakan rayu wanmu kaiba amma anan garin bamu da abunmure rayuwaba irin ta zamani. Da ache zamu rinka somun irin wannan ikache ikache matuka da jindadi zazumana dukkanmu (August 2011).

Translation

We are so happy that you people chose our community for this kind of good work. We that are women know our personal and community problems, but we do not know how to say it so that we will not cause more problems for ourselves. Our voices are not always heard in the community but thank God that we are in the process of addressing it. Our problem is not majorly our own lifestyles. It is access to a lot of things that are necessary but not available like basic health amenities in our community. If we can be having this kind of activity in our community from time to time, things will get better and better for us all (August 2011).

This concurs with Johansson (2011: 86) who sees this form of intervention as "a forum for redress actions which allows community members themselves to renegotiate the validity of policies and practices thereby directing development to their areas of need". Although the debates were frenzied, the community members agreed with Maimunat that beyond the community lifestyle, the lack of standard health facilities is a major contributor to why a lot of people subscribe to self medication in the community. The elders present stressed the need for personal hygiene and cautioned those that take alcohol to reflect on their unchecked drinking habits and advised them not to ever drink on an empty stomach.

The discussions also made them see the need to dig a community refuse dump to encourage a cleaner environment for safer health. There was also a plea on the need for people to abstain from drinking water directly from the stream. They should rather drink from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) motorized water scheme borehole in the community. This realization is accentuated by Abah (2005) who acknowledge that in community-based intervention, "the people themselves engage issues about their own lives for their immediate consumption and which promotes development by stimulating dialogue within them using their own familiar artistic expressions. This buttresses how PV engage the beneficiaries in community action plan through collective reflection and reaction. This stage of the PV process was as a clarion call for the people to dialogue and work together for a common goal. The discussions provocatively took a rollcall of dominant concerns that the community should attend to for their own aggrandizement. The General Community Viewing and Discussion ended with a call (by the Etsu) for the people to unite if development is to be attained in Paikon Kore.

Stage 6: Follow-up

The importance of this stage is enormous. Since Participatory Video is issue oriented and a dynamic process of engagement and dialogue on dominant concerns of the members of a given community, there is always a need to go back and look at how far the issues raised, and solutions proffered have been effective or otherwise and to plan new strategies. Though, the team of facilitators re-visited Paiko again after two months (in October, 2011) for a rapid appraisal of the August experience, they never had up to three hours of discussion in the community. However, the ideology behind the essence of the follow-up exercise was achieved. It was an attempt to bridge the gap that has always existed in the sustenance of action plans and execution of such plans. In this instance, the same facilitators had pockets of discussions with gate-keepers, opinion leaders, men and women leaders, religious leaders, youth leaders and some other members of the community. Based on the information gathered during the follow-up, a 12 feet pit had already been dug for refuse dumping. The health facility close to the Primary School has also employed more staff members and was operating more days in a week.

An interesting discovery during the follow-up visit was the fact that the four groups that were formed has been converted into environmental Community Based Organizations (CBOs) charged with the responsibility of ensuring collective environmental sanitation and carrying self-help projects in the community.

5. Contributions of the study

This study advocates for a bottom-to-top form of development which is against early forms of development communication strategy that adopted the top to bottom approach. It encourages development communication practitioners to always see project beneficiaries as active participants in their own development. The study also opens more vistas for a multidisciplinary approach to development especially in our present techno-scientific age.

6. Implications of the study

Participatory Video as a democratic form of communication encourages dialogue that celebrates indigenous knowledge and practice while stimulating creativity and aspirations for collective attitudinal change and sustainable development. Films produced from a particular PV process can be used as a guide in another community to give development agents, opinion leaders and rulers alternative approaches or insights into the dynamics of community-led research. All community members have access to the process. Therefore, PV enhances integration between members of the community. The participatory process can help a community to rediscover their collective strength, embrace self reliance and share joy of accomplishment.

Rural communities are characterized with low level of formal education, as such, visual effect through PV becomes a simple way of educating the rural dwellers who can see and understand what the pictures are communicating. Moreso, The video medium is transportable, easily replicated and easily shared, it thus, has a wide spread effect (Nick & Lunch, 2006: 12) that creates avenue for policy makers, NGOs, Civil Service Organizations, philanthropists, etc within and outside the community to view and feel the people's predicaments and probably come to their rescue.

Despite the recognition that PV has gained globally, the process is not cheap. Atleast, a digital video camera with a flip-out screen must be available. There will also be need for a second camera to provide a means of documenting the process of filming and to create opportunity for two groups to work simultaneously. Other equipments are; speakers to plug into the video camera(s) with their own power source and batteries, spare video batteries that are specific to the camera model, a hand-held and zoom microphone with a long lead and mini tripod, a camera tripod that is sturdy enough to support the video camera and a monitor/TV set for community viewing . These hardwares can be provided by the facilitators but will be very difficult for the community folks who do not have the financial wherewithal to sustain the process.

During the Paikon Kore intervention, some of the facilitators lack technical knowledge of the equipments. This affected the smooth run of the PV process and almost created doubt in the minds of some members of the community who do not trust the authenticity and benefit of the activity. Some people were also shying away from the camera because they have a feeling that the recordings will be handed over to television stations for other reasons. The facilitators kept assuring them that it was solely for their own consumption and development and it would not be viewed anywhere else without their knowledge

7. Conclusion

Genuine health education and development can only be achieved through communication that is targeted at contributing to the practical concerns of the people by joint collaboration within a mutually acceptable ethical framework. Thus, this has made it necessary to analyze the media and theatre as effective communication tools that can be used to aid development. Through this study, participatory message development utilizing electronic media, particularly video, in a participatory mode has shown that the model can be a blueprint for people-oriented development that can steer people to take charge of their lives as opposed to the top-down module of development.

It is recommended that Nigeria and the African continent organize regular training programmes to empower government officials with PV skills before some development projects are embarked upon. Non-governmental Organizations, Civil Service Organizations and Development Practitioners can use PV to strengthen their action research and innovations to bring about collective change that can lead to accelerated sustainable development and self-reliance.

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