

Cinema For Human Development: Adding Value to Community Development Projects in Cameroon – The Case of Mbohnso

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Abstract

Within the context of Human Development projects where the term development is measured in terms of the degree of change felt in people's lives, their lifespan, the quantity and quality of food on their tables, parents' ability to provide quality education to their children and more, the integration of Cinema For Human Development (C4HD) in their realisation processes can contribute to realising these goals. In the specific case of Mbohnso, a community where the farmer/grazier conflict is rife, C4HD rests on the Participatory Video model and Amartya Sen's Human Development and Capability Approach to exploit areas of human discord as a hub to promote development. To meet this objective in development endeavours, C4HD's public film screening sessions of and about a given community constitute its mechanism to create a forum of frank exchange between disagreeing parties. In addition, C4HD's functional mechanisms are by themselves tools for community members' empowerment. This paper case studies the Mbohnso community in Bui Division (North West Region, Cameroon) to contend that the integration of Cinema For Human Development (C4HD) in the formulation, implementation and evaluation processes of Human Development-spirited projects adds value to these projects, especially as C4HD enhances the projects' chances of success, and promotes sustained benefits accruing from the said projects.

Key Words: Film, Development, Mbohnso, Capabilities, Participation

Introduction

This paper operates on the basis that film can contribute to development as a communication tool for governments,

development organisations and communities. It proposes an approach to the use of film in human development. To Champoux (1999), if effectively designed, filmmaking creates a discussion platform where relevant development stakeholders – government, development agents and local communities – can formulate, implement and evaluate development projects. Like other mass media, motion pictures can improve on the quality of instruction in already existing institutions. They open possibilities of introducing in-service training and refresher courses to development agents and other economic operators, at lower cost. In this way, new skills can be learnt, outlooks reshaped, and behaviours changed, while at the same time, and depending on the need, helping to preserve results-yielding cultural and agricultural tendencies.

As an inclusive medium, film can promote information dissemination along all rungs of the social and economic ladders; being inclusive, it can be tailored to meet the needs of any community. To Hopkinson (1971), this promotion of knowledge can bridge the gap between the over-availability of knowledge in urban communities, and the lack there-of in rural ones; it can align the outlook of an entire community to the development policies of a country; it can stimulate new ways of thinking and show how shunning conservatism and embracing innovative agricultural and other practices pay good dividends; it can ignite curiosity and desire.

This paper contends that the integration of Cinema For Development (C4HD) in the formulation, implementation and evaluation processes of rural community development projects brings an added value, as it contributes to the projects' success, and promotes sustained benefits accruing from the said projects. Field work done in the Mbohnso rural community (North West Region, Cameroon) is used to demonstrate this stance.

Background

Rural communities in Cameroon experience a dearth of development agents (in agriculture, health, etc.). The applicability of film as an innovative medium in providing practical, hands-on instruction on essential tasks and procedures thus assumes some significance, especially in education, agriculture and health. However, film, as a mass medium, requires substantial amounts

of capital, as well as an already established film production sector (especially when film is yet to be fully integrated – as we think it should – in a country's development plan). Development stakeholders thus need to use public funds, research funds, etc. as the case may be, to procure filmmaking services. The aim will be to push for the delivery of messages and exchange of ideas that promote innovation in practical economic, health, educational and other concerns.

As Obie (2019) indicates, though it is true that all film genres can foster development, the purpose and message dictate the style, method, technique and approach to adopt.

Aligning Film Genres and Development Outcomes

The approach chosen is guided by the purpose and the message; the message is determined by the filmmaker's perception of what the audience expects. This leads to some film genres, each informed by different ideologies and motivated by different interests. Categorisation of film into genres generally follows similarities in certain narrative elements, the emotional response evoked, and the production approaches.

Broadly, motion pictures could be fiction or documentary, although several sub – and even hybrid – genres exist. Dirks (2016) cautions that film categories can never be precise, indicating that the broadness of general categories accommodates any film. He prescribes a consideration of certain film elements for comparison and evaluation. Such comparison and evaluation can be done within the framework of what the film achieves, or sets out to achieve – which in this case is development in rural or marginalized communities. Below, we consider in turn, feature and documentary films.

The Feature Film

Fiction or the feature film is made to entertain, but it is underpinned by the profit motive. Given the profit-driven objectives and philosophy that inform their production, feature films are not imbued with the potential to foster community development projects, especially in a rural community. Their length, for example, implies an over packing of not-too-easily-recollectable information, which handicaps the developmental goal of getting the audience to remember attitudes, concepts and skills that can be translated practically into, and can have a

concrete effect on, community members' lives. In addition, the non-inclusion of the target audience in the production process produces a detachment effect and engenders in the audience a sense of aloofness that impedes any serious discussion of the issues raised in the film.

Feature films can foster development but only in a very limited sense. A struggling couple, for example, may be inspired by the feature film story of a hard-up couple that perseveres and educates their child and, ultimately, live a happier and easier life because of the support they receive from their now working class off-spring. However, the feature film in most cases is considered by the audience as little more than entertainment. Such a film, if projected in typical rural community, will probably captivate its rural audience who will enjoy the action, the surprising abilities humans show (especially in science fiction), and the music that accompanies the whole show. However, they will ultimately leave having had a good time, but almost certainly incapable of recalling even the hero's name, not to mention recollecting helpful, inspiring exchanges of dialogue, valuable commentary, or potentially beneficial behaviours that they could adopt.

The Documentary Film

As Hopkinson (1971) indicates, the documentary film is made to inform, with the ultimate objective of furthering social progress. He perceives the production of a documentary as a revolutionary act, given that documentaries utilize the medium of the motion picture to attempt an improvement of the material and spiritual living conditions of men. They aim to help community members in their pursuit of happier, easier and better lives. The motive is not to earn profit, but to indulge the target community in a process that would foster its attempt to develop. We believe that motion pictures produced with this aim of helping development efforts should not only be an accessory, but an integral part of the development process. For this to happen, however, the filmmakers must utilize approaches that give the film (and its production process) the potential to captivate the genuine interest of the target community; to ignite meaningful, practical discussions on concrete life-affecting concerns; to effect attitudinal changes ; and to enable communities use the knowledge and skills acquired during the entire process to better

their methods of performing their activities, start using different, more rewarding ways of carrying out these activities, and venture into entirely new ventures.

Motion pictures that seek to foster these human development outcomes should be an integral part of the development process. To make development benefits sustainable, target communities need to be agents of their own wellbeing processes.

The Human Development Concept and the Capability Approach

According to the United Nations Development Programme (1990), Human Development is ‘the process of enlarging people’s choices and improving human capabilities (the range of things that they can do or be in life) and freedom so they can live a long and healthy life, access education, and a decent standard of living, participate in their community and decision that affect their lives.’ This process of ‘enlarging human choices’, or of expanding people’s freedoms was, as Sen (1999) notes, a means of fostering human wellbeing. Human Development (HD) focuses on enlarging people’s capacities as well as the available opportunities for people to use those acquired capacities. The HD mindset holds that, availing an individual of capabilities in terms of the range of things they can choose doing or being without widening the opportunities to use them would be fruitless. Thus, if social arrangements, political freedoms and economic policies improve people’s capabilities without creating opportunities for communities to employ those acquired capabilities so as to enjoy a long, healthy and decent lives, the enhancement of those freedoms yields little. Teaching someone how to drive a car means increasing the person’s capacities – an additional thing (driving) that individual can choose doing or being in life. The HD concept would validate that move as wellbeing enrichment only if cars and roads are not only available but are in standard conditions. Obie (2019) holds that it is within these conditions that the learnt driving skill can become an opportunity to exploit in an individual’s quest to live a lifestyle s/he values. As an HD forerunner, Ul Haq (1995) affirms this view; ‘The basic objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives.’ (9)

Cinema for Human Development and the Capability Approach

Having discussed the quintessence of the HD paradigm, we now consider what Cinema for Human Development (C4HD) stands for. C4HD is a filmmaking genre that seeks to foster attainment of Human Development-spirited frameworks and projects. When community development projects aim at addressing situations where humans have limited choices or no choices at all in their quest to live fulfilled lifestyles, C4HD becomes a service provider to such project managers. It focuses on areas where people have very low capabilities and very few opportunities. Spurred by its mission, C4HD – the proposed filmmaking approach – strives at intervening among communities that suffer varied forms of human deprivations. This implies that these communities bear some commonalities, despite cultural and socio-political distinctions. These distinctions suggest the need for some degree of flexibility in C4HD's methodology. C4HD thus encourages innovative efficiency in methodological procedures. To be effective and functional in its mission, C4HD employs a strategy that suits its objective. We broach this issue next.

Cinema For Human Development: Foundational Constitution

In attempting to foster Human Development ideals in development projects and frameworks, C4HD promotes a two-way communication process. C4HD's methodological foundation is twofold: (1) *Film genres* that successfully exploited, in their time, the art of filmmaking as a forum to engage viewers as relevant development stakeholders in development processes and (2) Theorists whose ideas foster the genuine participation of all groups involved in the realisation of a given goal. Consequently, we consider the Italian Neorealist filmmaking style, the Canadian Challenge For Change experience (or the 'Fogo Process'), case study films of Cameroon's Cinema For Development (as film genres), Henry Mintzberg's (1971) Organisational Theory, Development Communication Theory (Ganiu 2014; Mefalopulos 2008; Quebral 2001, Wilkins 2001) and Andre Helbo's (2006) Intersemiotic Adaptation Theory. This melange of filmmaking experiences and scientific theories proved invaluable to the constitution process of C4HD.

Cinema For Human Development: Design

As a specialised filmmaking genre, C4HD does not primarily aim at entertainment; it strives to use filmmaking as a platform via which target community members discuss issues that impede the development of their full potentials and their living long and healthy lives. We now provide a brief overview of concepts and attitudes essential to C4HD's design.

The Docu-fiction Genre

This hybrid genre shuns distraction and focuses on creating discussion panels for its viewers, thus heightening the notion of realism in film products. Though some degree of fiction (scenario writing) can be permitted, the use of actual footage remains important. To enhance realism, greater emphasis is laid on the Docu- aspect of Docu-fiction.

The Storytelling Format

Where a C4HD project has to use fiction to promote its aim, storytelling is still handled as an instrument for reinforcing the notion of realism and engaging viewers in ongoing film discourses. To meet these goals, the narrative stays in present time, is simple and straightforward, and includes popular events, places and faces. When activities like cultural gatherings and market-related events are part of the story, viewers relate to its contemporariness.

The Characterisation Make-up

Allying C4HD's aim to the use of participants in the filmmaking project, casting lays emphasis on selecting target community members and nonprofessional actors. The said community members (individuals and community representatives) are interviewees within the context of a documentary, and are major actors – when it is fiction. The use of 'local' actors is very important in the attainment of project's results in two ways. First, they reinforce the notion of realism in the films. Then, as non-professionals (acting out their own story), their acting appears more natural and realistic, thus engaging the viewers.

The Film Conflict and Conflict Elicitation Notion

Conflict elicitation during public screenings is a vital aspect to the success of a C4HD project Nemtin and Low (29) observe that:

The intensity of discussion should be related to the effect which the discussion has on direct development. In other words, if, as we were doing, the purpose of the project is intercommunity communication and creation of consensus, the degree of conflict then can be constructive.

The notion of conflict elicitation is perceived as a manifest sign of genuine communication among development stakeholders. To meet the empowerment goal, C4HD projects must elucidate discussion sessions (through conflict arousal techniques) at public screenings. Viewers must be provoked to discuss their views on film contents since these films must contain substantial issues whose discussion would have a direct impact on the development sought for. For this to happen, C4HD filmmakers clearly define conflicting opinions on issues handled in films. The clearer the conflicting opinions, the easier it becomes for viewers to take sides and express themselves on film contents. Besides, the notion of film conflict constitutes an efficient tool in establishing a cause and effect chain of current problems that viewers experience.

The Vraisemblance Notion

This notion is heightened for the sake of encouraging viewers to face facts. To this end, abrupt and loose film endings, actual documentary footage and location shooting are beneficial.

The Arousal and Sustainment of Viewer Interest Notion

Since generating and keeping viewer's interest all along screening is indispensable to encourage viewer's active participation in discussions, the C4HD specialist uses familiar images and sounds. Familiar images and sounds generally appeal to viewing populations. Local colour and human events are means of endearing both the film product and its personnel to viewers (Nemtin and Low: 26-27).

C4HD Agent's Genuine Interest in Target Community's Wellbeing

Since C4HD filmmakers work with marginalised communities, it becomes imperative that they bear a genuine interest in the target population's wellbeing. Such genuine interest produces the great deal of patience needed to work with people who generally need to be informed and reassured that they too can be agents of their own wellbeing. In addition, genuineness in C4HD work helps agents resist prospective 'sponsors' who seek to use development projects only to project their image.

C4HD Agent's Ability to Build and Maintain Good Human Ties

The success of a C4HD project does not wholly depend on the technical and artistic qualities of screened films but on the degree of respect and trust existing between target community members and C4HD personnel. This is because both parties play key roles in the process.

C4HD Agent's Aptitude to Communicate Genuineness in Development projects

C4HD activists must avoid being mistaken for schemers. They use varied means and ways to 'convince' community members of their genuineness in the pursuit of others' wellbeing. We lean towards Colin Low's techniques suggested in the Nemtin and Low (1968) report on the Fogo Island Film and Community Development Project. He stipulates:

The location and selection of individuals who can represent individual and group attitudes is not easy. Many factors are involved. Some people may be perfectly willing to speak on controversial subjects but because of certain circumstances their involvement in the film would jeopardize or diminish their position in the community. These must be avoided. A person holding a certain job could be in danger of losing that job if he brought up questions connected with the unethical practices, for instance, of the firm he is employed in. Sometimes it is hard to avoid such testimony if it is a vital question in the community. I think it is vital that the interests of the individual be protected and if it is necessary to bring out the idea that the welfare of the community is being jeopardized

by unethical business practices it should be done by people who will not be damaged by the revelation (6).

Going by this, the development agent's genuineness in his pursuits is communicated via the according of greater importance to the adverse consequence of somebody's involvement in the project than to the *success* of the development project itself. This builds respect for and trust in the C4HD activist, thus boosting the project's chances of success.

Cinema For Human Development: Methodological Considerations

We have indicated the close nexus between filmmaking techniques and approaches; the purpose and message dictate the style, method, technique and approach. If the purpose and message are development-oriented, then an approach that is participatory and holistic would seem to be the best way forward in a rural community like Mbohnso.

To transcend creating awareness (which other filmmaking genres generally exert at) and push for the translation of awareness into innovation and/or attitudinal changes, it is paramount to adopt an approach that suits the special needs of rural communities like Mbohnso. The Holistic Participatory Approach (HPA) is such an approach that has the potential of contributing to rural community development projects by adapting its methods.

The Holistic Participatory Approach (HPA)

This approach operates on a triple-pronged paradigm including target community members, local development agents, and filmmakers. It seeks to influence and motivate the kind of thinking that engenders innovation in rural and, sometimes, marginalised communities. The three-pronged method runs on the notion that a sound filmmaking approach, when well planned, well executed and – most-importantly – participatory, has a massive and integral role to play in fostering the success of a human development project in a given community.

To Jan Servaes (2008), while groups of people in a community can obtain information from impersonal sources, this information has relatively little effect on behavioural changes. He

emphasises that more is learnt from interpersonal contacts and from mass communication techniques that are based on the said interpersonal contacts. Moreover, development precisely envisions such change as the modification of mind sets, attitudes, farming methods and nutritional behaviours. The involvement of members of the community and local development agents due to C4HD's Holistic Participatory Approach (HPA) provides a platform for such interpersonal communication on issues that affect the quality of life they – the target community – live.

Generally, before people can discuss and resolve problems, they must be informed of the facts. At the same time, the public, if it has the means, can make its information needs known. HPA provides an opening for the community's needs (as perceived by its members) to be known. In this way, when ways of circumventing these problems and meeting these needs are either presented in the film or arrived at during post screening discussions, the chances of their paying better attention and potentially putting the innovative ideas into practice are higher.

This approach is equally informed by an anxiousness about the passivity and aloofness that is induced by viewing films. It seeks to use film production, viewing and other techniques in a way that actively involves members of the target community (Erik Zavrel, 2016). HPA uses techniques most documentary approaches use, but varies at the level of who is involved in production.

Realising a Cinema For Human Development Project in Mbohnso Community

Mbohnso is a locality within Mbven Sub-division in Bui Division, NW Region of Cameroon. Choosing Mbohnso was mainly motivated by the community's representativeness of Cameroonian society. Multiple aspects of this community's life mirror the scene at the national level. The hugely rural community sits on a plain located on the foot of the Mbiame hills, within the Mbiame local council area. However, this ruralness is belied by its complex linguistic cosmopolitanism. Several languages are spoken within this community; Lamnso, Bamoun, Nambila, Mbororo, Wimbun, Tikari, English and French. These, in addition to vehicular languages like Fulfude and Pidgin English render Mbohnso a singular representation of the complex linguistic and sociolinguistic scene in Cameroon.

Multiple languages signal the presence of several smaller communities, each of which brings its cultural baggage and contributes in creating a multicultural setup very much like the wider Cameroonian society. Attracted on the one hand by the fertility of the soil and on the other hand by the availability of pasture on the surrounding hills and a large water source (River Myrin) in the valley, groups of farmers and graziers have settled in the area. Large scale cultivation of palms and rice is accompanied by smaller scale cultivation of maize, beans, cow peas, huckleberries, soy beans, water melons and groundnuts. This abundance of greenery virtually all year round creates tension between farming and grazing communities. Besides (or because of) its natural endowments therefore, Mbohnso witnesses the farmer-grazier tension that may be expected in an area simultaneously used for farming and transhumance. Mbohnso is, therefore, beset by social problems caused by tension between farmers and graziers. Substance abuse, alcoholism and moral decadence equally add another very Cameroonian dimension to social life in Mbohnso.

Economic life in Mbohnso is however not limited to crop cultivation and cattle grazing. The presence of a large stream has created a small fishing community. Hunting for wild game is equally good business in the area. These, along with other activities like broom making, palm wine tapping, palm oil production, bike-riding and regular commerce, add another dimension to the economic life of the area.

Mbohnso equally mirrors wider Cameroonian society in terms of its religious complexity. Muslims, Christians and practitioners of African Traditional Religions co-exist largely without inter-religious squabbles. Relations between religious bodies and communities in the area are largely cordial. This reflects the general religious inclusivity that is observed on the national stage.

On a whole, choosing Mbohnso as the location for the film project was motivated by the high level to which the area represents several aspects of Cameroonian society.

Situational Aspects of Target Community: Hindrances*Multilingual Hindrance*

Given Mbohnso's linguistic diversity, we contrived that if a vehicular language was not used, comprehension would be problematic, especially if an effective filmmaking approach was not used. Using conventional feature or documentary filmmaking approaches would have been problematic to Mbohnso's community members. Amongst others, the rapidity of speech, level of language used, and over-rapidity in the presentation of new ideas would have hindered understanding.

Film Narrative Interpretation Hindrance

Besides rapidity in speech and idea presentation, the conception of the common Mbohnso community member towards film viewing was found to be problematic. The common Mbohnso community viewer considers the entire motion picture as one movement, and interprets everything s/he sees on the screen as part of it. The sophistication of the alienation shooting techniques (which some documentaries use) did not do much to help comprehension for such an audience. These approaches, which would have been relatively easier to use, seemed to struggle to generate the kind of enthusiasm and practical willingness that would go a long way to promote the success of a development project in Mbohnso. For a predominantly unlettered rural community, the level of concentration, assimilation and potential application of the knowledge and instruction the film offers appeared to be seriously hindered.

Alienating Commentary Hindrance

In conventional approaches, commentary is text oriented and cumbersome (and stuffed in a short documentary film). Without a platform for more engaging discussions on the issues raised in the film, the message may be lost on the rural audience. It became imperative to tailor commentary, when necessary, such that it remains easy to comprehend even with little audience concentration, and to facilitate the availability of film copies for individuals, households, schools, common initiative groups, etc. to watch when needed.

Community Life Versus Public Screening Hindrance

The nature of community life in Mbohnso was equally a major consideration. As an agricultural area, most villagers were absent during the day and tired when they returned at night. Since the aim was to gather the villagers all in one place (which is no easy feat), a period after the day's activities – at night – appeared plausible. However, the multiplicity of ethnic groups made the prospect even more daunting. Even if it were possible to get all, or most, of the villagers gathered in one place, the problem of how the film is perceived would still persist. To the ordinary Mbohnso community member, film projection is a social event, very much like video house film and football projections (though this particular film offered free viewing). The implication was that people could come and go as they wished; they may comment or laugh, as they are moved by one point or another in the film.

C4HD's Hindrance-Mitigating Capacity in Mbohnso Community

As a filmmaking approach geared towards promoting the success of Human Development-oriented projects, one of C4HD's strengths lies in its ability to alternate approaches to suit situations on the ground. When the development obstruction is linked to the lack of technical knowhow and the shortage of material adapted for use in a given situation, the approach used differs from that employed to tackle deeply rooted attitudinal postures.

In the case of Mbohnso, although C4HD ignited and encouraged interpersonal communication as a means of kindling interest and subsequent participation in the production stage, the final product still reflected the perspectives of a relative few; only those who directly contributed in the making of the film. Neither those who were absent nor those who were shy to speak in public had a chance to contribute to the debate sparked by film content. To increase the scope of community involvement in their own development processes, which is a way of promoting sustainability in development projects, the role of public screening is to forge a wider and deeper interpersonal communication process that can engender community action. Change of attitudes could be effected if film content mirrors the audience. If public screenings of people's daily issues, events,

aspirations and contradictions become stimulants of on-going debates in beer parlours, on farm to market roads, in farms, markets, streams and rivers, the people themselves might see the need to communally address even hitherto 'taboo' issues.

Input on the production process from the three groups (community members, local development workers and filmmakers) were tailored appropriately into techniques like the use of story, commentary, dialogue and sound effects. Specific techniques that may ordinarily impede comprehension and practice of acquired knowledge and skills were discovered during the production and screening processes, through the provision of feedback and real time evaluation of the content and method.

Producing film for development in this way enabled the filmmakers, development agents and audience collaborate to produce a film whose concept, production process, and final product viewing would, we hope, leave a perennial impact on the community. Our hope was that, following Hopkins (1971), filmmakers, film users and audiences would become a collective unit.

Operationalising the Holistic Participatory Approach in Mbohnso

HPA at Preproduction

HPA's preproduction stage was the research and consultation phase. The director and his team contacted and worked with local development agents including NGOs, teachers, and other government-sponsored or private-sponsored local development officers. They let them propose, from their knowledge of and experience in the community, possible areas of concern. They also allowed them suggest strategies that could generate practical discussions about the project within the community, and indicate members of the community who could be valuable in the production process.

The Mbohnso community considers the idea of a motion picture – any motion picture – exciting. Pre-production consultations suggested that the prospect of having one tailored to assist them in their daily struggles would be perceived as a novelty. The decision about whether or not to seize the chance to contribute in the production of the film was, quite literally, a no-brainer.

While the C4HD team schemed out a possible brief script, these local agents, and the selected members of the community discussed with their families, traditional groups and thrift societies, the project into which they had been directly implicated – the one of producing a film. They introduced the idea of novelty to neighbours and friends. Colin Low holds that inter-personal communication, coming from members of the community who are familiar with each other, facilitates the provision of genuine feedback about the content and language of the film to be produced. More importantly, it gets the message out and sparks discussion even before the production phase begins.

HPA at Production and Postproduction

When production began, the entire community was invited to share in the experience. Members of the target community were used in crucial roles. Filming was done in the presence of the production crew, local development agents, members of the community directly involved, and every other member of the community who showed up at the shooting location which was made public. Community members partook in film production not only as actors, translators or narrators, but as contributors and real time editors of language level, story appropriateness and dialogue. However, the director, who was in charge of operations, maintained discipline and limited interventions that began spiralling out of control.

At the end of a day of shooting, or after a scene, or at any point the director saw fit, the material shot was played back instantly, in the presence of all three groups that constituted the paradigm. Real time commentary and feedback was solicited, and then used to modify elements that required modification. Screening and editing were equally done with the development agents and community members. Thus, while the agents used their experience within their sectors in the community to provide insights as to what perspectives the filmmakers adopted in the editing work, they themselves saw and understood what would eventually be invaluable support material in their own development work, as suggested by Marilyn Fabe (2004).

Evaluation of audience reaction forms an integral part of the production and screening processes. Feedback from community members involved in production guided the shifting,

softening and modification of different film elements. This meant that the experience of the visual creation was shared, and community participation meant discussions on the substance of their experiences would be held severally, at interpersonal levels – just the kind of communication that changes attitudes and persuades people to try new things.

HPA at Exhibition: Public Screening Programming

Mbohnso's calendar counts eight days a week, the eighth being a day of rest (or *Contrey Sunday*). The greatest number of people are typically indoors or around home on this day. Programming public screenings on such days increases attendance during screenings.

The HPA at Exhibition: Public Screening

To fulfil its developmental purpose, the Mbohnso film project aimed at being a medium for dialogue in which the members of the community participate directly. Adding to the fact that their ideas were combed and refined through the editing and feedback process, the final version of the film product was made after public screening. To elicit discussion, the Mbohnso community members, local development workers and other relevant stakeholders watched themselves discussing, planning, and carrying out new and innovative ways of doing things that are of importance to their economic and family life.

Because HPA is adaptable to ground realities, public screening sessions can be used for two main purposes; first, attitudinal issues – new ideas to adopt – and as an open-ended film. This technique is purposely employed to create a platform on which all relevant stakeholders discuss issues at stake and decide on the way forward.

Depending on the contents, the filmmakers can programme three to four films on such days and invite people to comment (and possibly debate) on the content after every film. Whether or not viewers accept to talk when asked to do so does not hinder the progress of the screening phase. Generally, people prefer commenting among their peers than elsewhere. In the Mbohnso case, it was previewed that peer discussions and debates will constitute forums within which wide and deep interpersonal communication occurs. Frank examination and analyses of the contents of films and possible individual and/or

group reactions ensue from such forums. The filmmakers' target was to ignite and encourage these (in)formal interpersonal communication on film content within the community. The longer term outcome, we hope, would be personal and/or group initiatives taken to correct varied situations that hinder development processes. The idea is that when people start taking initiatives to resolve their problems, they have in fact become empowered, hence, agents for their own wellbeing. Besides, the people gain self-confidence as against inferiority complex that generally hinders them from taking bold steps to solve their problems.

Conclusion

As a participatory model, C4HD emphasises the importance of the cultural identity of target communities, and of democratisation and participation at all levels. It considers the perspectives of those who are traditionally known to be "receivers," and includes their feedback in its strategy. Local development agents like agricultural and health technicians, teachers, and local state- or privately-sponsored development personnel provide vital community-specific input, and highlight areas of sensitivity and relevance. The involvement of development agents and selected community members in the production process lends it credibility in the eyes of community members who are used to looking up to them for direction in their various areas of work. If development should be measured in terms of the degree of change felt in people's lives, their lifespan, the quantity and quality of food on their tables, parents' ability to provide quality education to their children and more, then the Mbohnso rural community development project would seem to bear some importance on the locality where it was used. Given its methodology, C4HD sensitised the local population on relevant aspects of development including health, education and agriculture. In addition, C4HD's production process was itself an empowerment tool that fostered development outcomes. As a film (resultant product of workshops), C4HD is also endowed with inherent qualities that can expose the development interests of target communities to the outside world. These aspects, in our view, make this filmmaking approach appropriate for contributing to realising community projects, especially in rural communities.

Used effectively, C4HD would be a practical and efficient means to foster the success of human development projects in other rural communities, as in Mbohnso.

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