

DEPLOYING DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES TO SOCIO-ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS IN DEGEMA COMMUNITY OF RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the effectiveness of development communication techniques in addressing socio-environmental constraints in Degema community of Rivers state. Three research objectives and three corresponding questions guided the study. The study anchored on development media theory. It adopted survey research design. A sample size of 384 was drawn from a population of 140,898 residents of Degema community using Krejcie and Mogan sampling template. Questionnaire structured on the modified four point Likert scale was the instrument used for data collection. The instrument was validated using face and content validity method while the test-retest method was adopted for reliability of the instrument. Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient was utilized to test the reliability of the instrument and it yielded an index of 0.82. Analysis was done using mean statistics. The findings revealed that infrastructure development, education, health care services, economic development and skill development are areas of developmental needs in Degema community; and that the use of media as a tool for promoting social and environmental awareness, participatory and inclusive approaches involving collaborations with key stakeholders and training in areas such as community mobilization, advocacy, and many others are ways development communication strategies can be deployed for development in Degema community. Based on the findings, the study concluded that, development communication can help empower the community members to overcome its challenges and achieve sustainable development. It was recommended among others that government and other stakeholders should invest in the construction of roads,

bridges, schools, training centers, healthcare facilities and the training of medical personnel; plan awareness campaigns to educate residents about the importance of preventive healthcare measures. This will not only improve access to essential services for residents but also stimulate economic growth and create employment opportunities in the community.

KEYWORDS: ommunication, development communication, socio-environment, Degema community

INTRODUCTION

Development communication is a term used in describing the integration of strategic communication in development projects. Whereas strategic communication itself is a specialized approach to distributing and receiving information which connotes communicating the best message, through appropriate channel, to the right people, at the right time and using feedback from this process to stay focus on organizational goals. In other words, strategic communication is all about effectively providing information to clients, employees, the public and beyond to achieve organizational goals and objectives.

Development communication is a crucial aspect of promoting social and economic progress in communities around the world. It plays a critical role in promoting social change and fostering socio-economic development and improving the quality of life in communities (Quebral, 2011). By raising awareness about issues such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation, communication can mobilize individuals and communities to take action to address these challenges. This can involve the use of media campaigns, community outreach programs, and other communication strategies to engage people in dialogue and advocacy efforts. One of the key principles of development communication is the idea that communication is a crucial tool for promoting development. By providing people with information about their rights, opportunities, and resources, communication can empower individuals and communities to take control of their own development. This can lead to increased participation in decision-making processes, improved access to services and resources, and ultimately, greater social and economic development (Mefalopulos, 2020).

Development communication is an important tool in addressing socio-environmental constraints in communities, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria. The Degema community is one such community facing numerous challenges related to socio-environmental issues. These challenges include poor waste management, lack of access to clean water,

deforestation, and inadequate healthcare facilities, among others. Degema community is situated in Rivers state in South South geopolitical zone of Nigeria. Degema community is headquarters of Degema local government area of Rivers state. The community share boundaries with Asari Toru to the North, Akuku-Toru to the West, Okirika and Bonny to the East and a river to the South. Members of the Degema community speak the Kalabari language and belong to the Ijaw tribe. The community is known for its rich cultural heritage, traditional practices, and strong sense of community. The community is predominantly inhabited by the Degema people, who are known for their resilience and strong sense of identity.

The use of development communication techniques can play a significant role in addressing these challenges and improving the overall well-being of the community. Development communication involves the use of various communication strategies and tools to facilitate social change, promote sustainable development, and empower communities to address their own issues. Again, in the context of the Degema community, deploying development communication techniques can help raise awareness about the importance of proper waste management, promote sustainable practices to protect the environment, and advocate for improved healthcare services. By engaging with community members through various communication channels such as radio programs, community meetings, and social media platforms, development communication can empower the community to take ownership of their socio-environmental issues and work towards sustainable solutions. Furthermore, the use of development communication techniques can also help bridge the gap between government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and the community, fostering collaboration and partnership in addressing socio-environmental constraints. By creating a platform for dialogue and information sharing, development communication can facilitate the exchange of knowledge and resources to support community-led initiatives for sustainable development. It therefore means that deploying development communication techniques in the Degema community of Rivers State is essential to address the socio-environmental constraints facing the community. By raising awareness, promoting sustainable practices, and fostering collaboration, development communication can empower the community to take action and create positive change. This study aims to explore the effectiveness of development communication in addressing socio-environmental challenges in the Degema community.

Statement of the Problem

The Degema community in Rivers state is facing numerous socio-environmental constraints that are hindering its development. One of the key issues facing the Degema community is the lack of awareness and

information about sustainable development practices. Many community members are unaware of the impact of their actions on the environment and do not have access to information on how they can mitigate these effects. This lack of awareness is further exacerbated by limited communication channels in the community, such as poor internet connectivity and limited access to newspapers and television. Again, the Degema community faces challenges in terms of social capital, which hinders their ability to work together towards common goals. This lack of social capital is a barrier to implementing sustainable development initiatives and addressing environmental issues in the community. Furthermore, the Degema community lacks the necessary resources and infrastructure to support sustainable development efforts. Many community members do not have access to basic services such as electricity and sanitation, which hinders their ability to adopt environmentally friendly practices. Additionally, the community lacks the necessary funding and technical expertise to implement sustainable development projects effectively.

In light of these challenges, it is clear that deploying development communication techniques will be a panacea to addressing the socio-environmental constraints facing the Degema community. By communicating effectively with community members and stakeholders, development practitioners can raise awareness about sustainable development practices, foster social cohesion and collaboration, and mobilize resources for sustainable development initiatives.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study sought to:

1. identify development needs of the Degema community of Rivers State.
2. ascertain the socio-environmental constraints to development in Degema community of Rivers State.
3. determine ways development communication strategies can be deployed to achieve development in Degema community of Rivers State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the development needs of Degema community of Rivers State?
2. What are the socio-environmental constraints to development in Degema community of Rivers State?
3. In what ways can development communication strategies be deployed to achieve development in Degema community of Rivers State?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Development Communication

Development communication is a field of study that focuses on the use of communication to promote social and economic development. It encompasses a wide range of activities, including the use of media and technology to disseminate information, the development of communication campaigns to raise awareness about development issues, and the use of communication to facilitate dialogue and collaboration among stakeholders. Development communication is a two-way process of information dissemination and dialogue among stakeholders. Development communication is an environmental management tool to help assess risks and opportunities for environmental, social, and economic crises Sumardjo, Firmansyah, and Dharmawan (2023). Development communication aims to build consensus by sharing knowledge for positive change initiatives in development. Development communication is a two-way process of sharing ideas and expertise using various communication tools and approaches that empower individuals and communities to take action to improve their lives.

In recent years, the field of development communication has evolved to incorporate new technologies and approaches. For example, the rise of social media has provided new opportunities for reaching audiences and engaging them in development issues. Mobile technology has also been used to deliver information and services to remote and underserved communities, helping to bridge the digital divide and promote inclusive development. Overall, development communication is a dynamic and interdisciplinary field that draws on insights from communication studies, development studies, sociology, anthropology, and other disciplines. By understanding the role of communication in promoting development, practitioners can design more effective strategies for addressing the complex challenges facing communities around the world.

Functions of Communication in Development

Communication plays a crucial role in the development of individuals, organizations, and societies. It serves as a tool for exchanging information, ideas, and emotions, and facilitates collaboration, coordination, and decision-making. The following are the various functions of communication in development and how they contribute to progress and growth.

1. **Information dissemination:** Through communication, individuals and organizations can share knowledge, data, and updates on various issues, which is essential for making informed decisions and taking appropriate actions. For example, in the field of public health, effective communication campaigns can help raise awareness about diseases,

preventive measures, and treatment options, leading to improved health outcomes and reduced mortality rates (Smith, 2018).

2. Disseminating development messages to others is regarded as the principle function of communication. It is done verbally or non-verbally. Verbal messages can be oral or written. Whereas, non-verbal messages are conveyed through the use of body language, gestures, postures and so forth (The Business Communication, 2020). Daya (2019) opined that when the individuals in a community are well informed about any development initiatives, they tend to participate actively for its success. According to MacBride et al cited in Asadu (2012) information which involves the collection, storage, processing and dissemination of news, data, pictures, facts and messages, opinions and comments makes one fit to understand and react knowledgeably, as well as take appropriate decisions.

The foregoing shows that information sharing creates space for the people to take part in development initiatives and ownership.

3. Persuasion and influence: Communication can be used to persuade individuals to adopt certain behaviors, beliefs, or attitudes, and to influence their opinions and actions. For instance, in the context of social change, communication campaigns can promote gender equality, environmental sustainability, or human rights, and mobilize support for these causes (Jones, 2019). By shaping public opinion and behavior, communication can drive positive change and contribute to the advancement of societies.
4. Communication serves as a means of building relationships and fostering collaboration. In development projects and initiatives, effective communication among stakeholders, partners, and beneficiaries is essential for building trust, resolving conflicts, and achieving common goals. By facilitating dialogue, negotiation, and consensus-building, communication can strengthen partnerships, enhance teamwork, and promote sustainable development (Brown, 2020).
5. Communication plays a critical role in monitoring and evaluation. Through feedback mechanisms, surveys, and assessments, communication enables individuals and organizations to track progress, measure impact, and identify areas for improvement. By collecting and analyzing data on communication effectiveness, stakeholders can make evidence-based decisions, adjust strategies, and optimize outcomes in development programs and projects (White, 2017).

Furthermore, Onah (2015) asserts that, through communication the followings are achieved in community development in various communities:(i) Conscientisation of members of various participating

communities. (ii) Attitudinal change (iii) Re-orientation. (iv) Social mobilization for promotion of community development (v) Ideas are communicated or made available for promotion of community development (vi) Information is made available to people for use (vii) Promotion of achievement of community development objectives and goals.

In the view of Onah (2015), through communication, the social inputs are provided into the social systems, change of behaviour is apparent, information appears to be more productive and effective, change is achieved. The foregoing shows that communication is a multifaceted tool that serves various functions in development, including information dissemination, persuasion and influence, relationship-building, and monitoring and evaluation. By leveraging the power of communication, individuals, organizations, and societies can drive positive change, foster collaboration, and achieve sustainable development goals. As such, investing in effective communication strategies and practices is essential for promoting progress, growth, and prosperity in the global context.

Socio-environment refers to the interconnected relationship between society and the environment. This concept recognizes that human societies are deeply intertwined with the natural world, and that the actions of individuals and communities have a significant impact on the health and well-being of the environment. In turn, the state of the environment can have profound effects on the social, economic, and cultural aspects of society. Again, socio-environment highlights the interconnected relationship between society and the environment, and the importance of considering social, economic, and cultural factors when addressing environmental challenges.

One key aspect of the socio-environmental concept is the recognition that environmental issues are not just technical or scientific problems, but are also deeply rooted in social, political, and economic systems. For example, issues such as climate change, deforestation, and pollution are not simply the result of individual actions, but are also influenced by larger social structures such as government policies, corporate practices, and cultural norms. Recently, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of considering the socio-environmental context when addressing environmental challenges. This has led to the development of interdisciplinary fields such as environmental sociology, environmental economics, and environmental psychology, which seek to understand the complex interactions between society and the environment.

Another aspect of the socio-environmental concept is the idea of environmental justice, which recognizes that environmental issues disproportionately affect marginalized communities and vulnerable populations. For example, low-income communities and communities of

color are often disproportionately impacted by pollution and environmental degradation, leading to higher rates of health problems and economic hardship.

In order to address these issues, it is essential to take a holistic approach that considers the social, economic, and environmental dimensions of environmental challenges. This requires collaboration between scientists, policymakers, community members, and other stakeholders to develop solutions that are equitable, sustainable, and effective.

DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

According to Aruma (2018), some development communication strategies for sustainable development are as follows. According to him, a mix of the following can be employed:

- i.) Social mobilisation: the process of bringing together all societal and personal influences to raise awareness of and demand for development actions that involves all the concerns actors.
- ii.) Advocacy: the process of creating programs and services, developing partnerships, and changing public policies, laws, and practices to facilitate development .
- iii.) Behaviour change Strategies: strategies that enhance participants' motivation and adherence to development actions.
- iv.) Social change strategies: a form of persuasion to internalised development efforts. Application of economic, political, and moral power and institutions to make people change attitudes, beliefs, behaviours, values.
- v.) Information dissemination and education: focuses on collecting and distributing information to educate people on development plan.
- vi.) Social marketing: an approach used to develop activities aimed at changing or maintaining people's behaviour for the benefit of individuals and society as a whole.
- vii.) Communication for social change: involves the use of variety of communication techniques to address inefficient systems, processes, or reluctance to adopt or adapt to developmental change or plan.
- viii.) Community participation: involvement of people in a community developmental projects or actions to solve their own problems.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was anchored on development media theory of communication. Development media theory was propounded by Denis McQuail in 1987 to explain the operations of the mass media in the developing economies. Bassey (2021) posit that the prevalent socio-economic and political situation

in the developing countries necessitated the evolution of a distinct media typology that will suit their circumstances. Development media theory is a critical framework that examines the role of media in shaping and influencing social, economic, and political development in societies. This theory posits that media plays a crucial role in the development process by disseminating information, shaping public opinion, and facilitating communication among individuals and communities (Quebral, 2011).

One of the central tenets of development media theory is the idea that media can act as a catalyst for social change and development. By providing information and raising awareness about important issues such as health, education, and human rights, media can empower individuals and communities to take action and improve their living conditions (Jeflyn, 2013). For example, radio and television programs that educate people about the importance of vaccination or family planning can help reduce infant mortality rates and improve public health outcomes. Another key concept of development media theory is the notion of media pluralism and diversity.

This refers to the idea that a diverse and independent media landscape is essential for promoting democratic governance and sustainable development. In countries where media are controlled by the government or powerful elites, there is a risk that information will be censored or manipulated to serve the interests of those in power. By contrast, a pluralistic media environment allows for a variety of voices and perspectives to be heard, fostering debate and dialogue on important issues and holding those in power accountable (Phukan, 2009).

Furthermore, development media theory emphasizes the importance of media literacy and access to information for promoting development outcomes. In today's digital age, access to the internet and social media platforms has become increasingly important for individuals to stay informed and engaged with their communities. However, disparities in access to technology and digital literacy skills can exacerbate existing inequalities and limit the ability of marginalized groups to participate in the development process. Therefore, efforts to promote media literacy and bridge the digital divide are essential for ensuring that all individuals have the tools and resources they need to fully participate in society.

In the context of the Degema community, which faces numerous socio-environmental constraints, the community is characterized by high levels of poverty, unemployment, and environmental degradation. The community relies heavily on natural resources for its livelihood, but activities such as oil exploration and deforestation have led to pollution, loss of biodiversity, and land degradation. These socio-environmental constraints have a negative impact on the well-being of the community members and hinder their ability

to achieve sustainable development. Therefore, by leveraging the power of media and adopting participatory approaches, development communication can help to raise awareness, mobilize support, and empower community members to address the challenges they face. It is essential for development practitioners, policymakers, and media professionals to work together to harness the potential of communication for promoting social and environmental change in the Degema community and beyond.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopts survey research design. A self-structured questionnaire was used to elicit information from three hundred and eighty-four (384) respondents, purposively selected from a population of 140,898 residents of Degema community using Krejcie and Mogan sampling template. A questionnaire structured on the modified four point Likert scale was the instrument for data collection and the test-re-test reliability method was adopted for the study and Pearson Correlation Coefficient formula was used to test the reliability of the instrument which yielded a reliability index of 0.82. Mean statistics was adopted to analyze data and 2.5 positive mean criterion was adopted.

Analysis

RQ1: What are the development needs of Degema community of Rivers State?

Table 1: Mean statistics of the development needs of the Dehema community of Rivers State

Development needs of the Degema community of Rivers State.							
s/n	Assessed items	SA	A	D	SD	N	X
1.	Infrastructure development	106	129	83	66	384	2.72
		424	387	166	66	1,043	
2.	Education	99	163	56	66	384	2.77
		396	489	112	66	1,063	
3.	Skill development	113	128	101	42	384	2.81
		452	384	202	42	1,080	
4.	Economic development	89	134	82	79	384	2.61
		356	402	164	79	1,001	
5.	Health care services	109	103	82	90	384	2.60
		436	309	164	90	999	
	Total						2.70

This Table indicates that infrastructure development, education, health care services, economic development and skill development are areas of developmental needs in Degema community.

RQ2: What are the socio-environmental constraints to development in Degema community of Rivers State?

Table 2: Mean statistics of socio-environmental constraints to development in Degema community of Rivers State

Socio-environmental constraints to development in Degema community of Rivers State							
s/n	Assessed items	SA	A	D	SD	N	X
1.	Infrastructure and basic services	114	106	92	72	384	2.68
		456	318	184	72	1,030	
2.	Environmental degradation	142	138	52	52	384	2.96
		568	414	104	52	1,138	
3.	Social inequalities	112	116	110	46	384	2.77
		448	348	220	46	1,062	
4.	Economic constraints	123	128	126	7	384	2.94
		492	384	252	7	1,128	
	Total						2.84

The Table above indicates that infrastructure and basic service, environmental degradation, social inequalities and economic constraints are socio environmental constraints to development in Degema community.

RQ3: In what ways can development communication strategies be deployed for development in Degema community of Rivers State?

Table 3: Mean statistics of ways development communication strategies can be deploy to achieve development in Degema community of Rivers State

ways development communication strategies can be deployed to achieve development in Degema community of Rivers State							
s/n	Assessed items	SA	A	D	SD	N	X
1.	By the use of media as a tool for promoting social and environmental awareness.	98	201	66	19	384	2.98
		392	603	132	19	1,146	
2.	Through participatory and inclusive approaches	148	111	102	23	384	3.00
		592	333	204	23	1,152	
3.	Through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) as a	86	191	72	35	384	2.85
		344	573	144	35	1,096	

	development communication strategy.						
4.	By providing training in areas such as community mobilization, advocacy, and media production, community members can effectively communicate their needs and priorities to decision-makers, advocate for their rights, and mobilize resources for development projects.	152	123	72	37	384	3.02
		608	369	144	37	1,158	
5	Through partnerships and collaborations with key stakeholders	104	129	79	72	384	2.79
		416	387	158	72	1,071	
	Total						2.93

The table above indicates that development communication strategies can be deploy for development in Degema community.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The first findings of the study revealed that infrastructure development, education, health care services, economic development and skill development are areas of developmental needs in Degema community. Infrastructure Development is one of the primary development needs of the Degema community is infrastructure development. The community lacks basic infrastructure such as roads, electricity, and water supply, which hinders economic growth and limits access to essential services. According to a report by the World Bank (2019), inadequate infrastructure is a major barrier to development in many rural communities in Nigeria, including Degema. Without proper infrastructure, it becomes difficult for residents to access essential services and for businesses to thrive. Therefore, investing in infrastructure development is crucial for the progress of the Degema community.

Another critical development need of the Degema community is education and skills development. The community has limited access to quality education, which hinders the ability of residents to secure well-paying jobs and improve their standard of living. This finding corroborates the findings of a study by Okeke et al. (2020) which found that the lack of educational opportunities in Degema community contributes to high levels of poverty and unemployment. Access to quality education is essential for the empowerment and advancement of individuals in the community. However, the lack of adequate educational facilities and resources in Degema limits the

opportunities for residents to acquire knowledge and skills. Therefore, improving the education system in the community should be a priority for development efforts.

Access to quality healthcare services is another development need of the Degema community. The community lacks adequate healthcare facilities and trained medical personnel, which leads to high rates of preventable diseases and maternal mortality. According to a report by the World Health Organization (2018), access to healthcare services is a fundamental human right that is often denied to residents of rural communities like Degema. Access to quality healthcare services is essential for the well-being of residents and for the overall development of the community. However, the lack of healthcare facilities and trained medical personnel in Degema poses a significant challenge to the health of the residents. Therefore, investing in healthcare infrastructure and services is essential for addressing this development need.

Economic development is a key area that requires attention in the Degema community. The lack of sustainable livelihood opportunities and economic activities limits the financial stability and growth of the community. Therefore, promoting entrepreneurship, creating job opportunities, and supporting small businesses are essential for stimulating economic development in Degema.

The present findings is in tandem with the findings of Leach and Scoones (2015) which found that identifying the development needs of the any community is essential for planning and implementing effective development strategies. Infrastructure, education, healthcare, and economic development are some of the key areas that require attention in order to improve the well-being and progress of the community. By addressing these development needs, stakeholders can work towards creating a more sustainable and prosperous future for the Degema community.

The second findings of the study revealed that infrastructure and basic service, environmental degradation, social inequalities and economic constraints are socio environmental constraints to development in Degema community.

Access to basic infrastructure is a fundamental requirement for the development of any society. Infrastructure such as roads, electricity, water supply, and telecommunications play a crucial role in facilitating economic growth, social development, and effective communication. The present finding corroborates Okeke et al (2018) which found that many residents of Degema community lack access to basic infrastructure such as clean water, electricity, bad roads and healthcare facilities, which hinders their ability to engage in development communication activities.

Many developing countries continue to face challenges in providing adequate infrastructure to their citizens, which in turn hinders their ability to engage in meaningful communication and participate fully in the development process. The lack of access to basic infrastructure constrains development communication via its impact on economic development. It hinders the movement of goods and services, limit access to markets, and increase the cost of doing business. This, in turn, can stifle economic growth, limit social development, constrain individuals' ability to communicate effectively and prevent communities from fully participating in the global economy. For example, a lack of reliable transportation infrastructure can make it difficult for farmers to transport their produce to market, leading to lower incomes and reduced economic opportunities. Again, poor road networks and limited telecommunications infrastructure make it difficult for individuals to communicate with one another, access information, and participate in public discourse. This hinders the flow of information, limit individuals' ability to engage in meaningful dialogue, and prevent communities from coming together to address common challenges. The study also found that environment degradation and pollution are constraints to development in Degema community.

Development communication is the process of using communication to promote social development, economic growth, and positive change within a society. However, when the environment is degraded and polluted, it can hinder the effectiveness of development communication efforts. One way in which environmental degradation and pollution affect development communication is through the destruction of natural resources. For example, deforestation and water pollution can lead to a loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services, which are essential for sustainable development. Without access to clean water, fertile soil, and healthy ecosystems, communities may struggle to meet their basic needs and achieve their development goals. A study by Jones and Brown (2019) found that environmental degradation and pollution exact negative health impacts on communities, which can in turn affect their ability to engage in development communication. For example, air pollution from industrial activities can lead to respiratory diseases, reducing the productivity and well-being of community members. This can make it difficult for them to participate in development communication activities, such as attending meetings or accessing information through traditional media channels.

This study is supported by Smith (2018) study which found that environmental degradation and pollution can exacerbate social inequalities and marginalization within communities, which can hinder the effectiveness of development communication efforts. For example, marginalized groups,

such as indigenous peoples or low-income communities, are often disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and pollution. This can limit their access to information and resources, making it challenging for them to participate in development communication processes and advocate for their needs. Degema community also faces economic constraints such as poverty and unemployment. These constraints further exacerbate the community's vulnerability and hinder its development prospects. Poverty is a pervasive issue that affects millions of individuals worldwide, limiting their access to basic necessities such as food, shelter, and healthcare. In the context of development communication, poverty acts as a barrier to effective communication as individuals living in poverty often lack the resources and infrastructure necessary to engage with communication channels. For example, individuals living in poverty may not have access to the internet or other forms of modern communication technology, making it challenging for development communication messages to reach them. This is supported by Smith (2019) findings which found that poverty limit individuals' ability to participate in communication activities, such as attending workshops or community meetings, further hindering the effectiveness of development communication efforts.

Unemployment is another significant economic constraint on development communication, as individuals who are unemployed often face financial constraints that limit their ability to engage with communication initiatives. The present finding is supported by a study by Jones (2020) which found that unemployment lead to social isolation and a lack of access to information, making it difficult for individuals to participate in development communication activities. Additionally, individuals who are unemployed may lack the skills and education necessary to effectively engage with communication channels, further limiting their ability to benefit from development communication efforts. Furthermore, poverty and unemployment can also impact the overall effectiveness of development communication initiatives by creating social inequalities and disparities. Individuals living in poverty or facing unemployment may be marginalized within society, making it challenging for development communication messages to reach them. Additionally, poverty and unemployment can lead to social unrest and instability, further hindering the progress of development communication efforts.

Moreso, social inequalities, such as gender disparities, tensions, and lack of social cohesion, also pose constraints to development in Degema community. Women and marginalized groups face discrimination in access to resources and opportunities, limiting their participation in decision-making processes and economic activities; conflicts and social divisions further

exacerbate the challenges faced by the community, hindering efforts to promote peace, stability, and inclusive development.

The third findings of the study revealed that use of media as a tool for promoting social and environmental awareness, participatory and inclusive approaches, information and communication technologies (ICTs) as a development communication strategy, partnerships and collaborations with key stakeholders and by providing training in areas such as community mobilization, advocacy, and media production, community members can effectively communicate their needs and priorities to decision-makers, advocate for their rights, and mobilize resources for development projects.

One way development communication strategies can be applied in Degema community is through the use of multiple communication channels. In today's digital age, there are numerous platforms and mediums available for reaching audiences, including social media, radio, television, print media, and community outreach events. By utilizing a mix of these channels, development communication campaigns can maximize their reach and impact, ensuring that messages are delivered to a diverse range of audiences. Furthermore, partnerships and collaborations with key stakeholders are crucial for the success of development communication campaigns. By working with local governments, non-governmental organizations, community leaders, and other relevant actors, campaigns can leverage existing networks and resources to amplify their message and reach a wider audience. These partnerships also help to build credibility and trust among target audiences, increasing the likelihood of behavior change.

Another way development communication strategies can be applied in Degema is through the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). ICTs can play a key role in improving access to information, facilitating communication, and promoting economic development in rural communities. By providing access to mobile phones, internet connectivity, and other ICT tools, community members in Degema can access vital information, connect with markets, and participate in online training and education programs.

Furthermore, capacity building and training programs can be implemented in Degema community to enhance the communication skills of community members and local leaders. By providing training in areas such as community mobilization, advocacy, and media production, community members can effectively communicate their needs and priorities to decision-makers, advocate for their rights, and mobilize resources for development projects. In addition, partnerships with local media outlets, civil society organizations, and government agencies can be established to amplify the voices of the community and raise awareness about development issues in

Degema. By working collaboratively with various stakeholders, development communication strategies can leverage the resources and expertise of different organizations to achieve sustainable development outcomes in the community.

CONCLUSION

The study assessed the effectiveness of deploying development communication techniques in addressing socio-environmental constraints in the Degema community. Within the purview of the study, it was found that deploying development communication strategies is essential for addressing the socio-environmental constraints in Degema community. Based on this finding, the study concluded that raising awareness, promoting community participation, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders, development communication can help empower the community to overcome its challenges and achieve sustainable development. It further inferred that leveraging on development communication entails that policymakers, practitioners, and researchers continue to prioritize development communication in their efforts to support other communities like Degema in their development journey.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Government and other stakeholders should invest in the construction of roads, bridges, schools, training centers, healthcare facilities and the training of medical personnel; plan awareness campaigns to educate residents about the importance of preventive healthcare measures and the availability of healthcare services in the community. This will not only improve access to essential services for residents but also stimulate economic growth and create employment opportunities in the community.
2. To address the socio-environmental constraints to development in Degema community, a multi-faceted approach is needed. Therefore, government and other stakeholders should invest in infrastructure development, such as road construction, electrification, and water supply systems; environmental protection measures such as stricter regulations on oil exploration activities; and reforestation programs and promotion of social inclusion and equality through education, awareness-raising campaigns, and community engagement initiatives. This will help to address social inequalities and foster social cohesion in Degema community.
3. Development communication can empower community members, amplify their voices, and drive positive change in the community. It is therefore essential for development practitioners and policymakers to prioritize

communication strategies in their development efforts to ensure that the needs and aspirations of the community are effectively addressed.

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