

A black and white photograph of a dragon fruit (cactus) with a person's face partially visible on the right side. The dragon fruit's characteristic bumpy, segmented skin is the primary focus, with its sharp spines visible. On the right, a person's face is partially shown, looking towards the camera. The text "Communication for Social Change Consortium" is overlaid on the image.

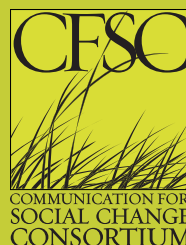
# Communication for Social Change Consortium

Listening...Learning...Local Voices Leading Change

The CFSC Consortium is a network of practitioners, researchers and scholars dedicated to building local capacity in marginalized communities so that the people living in such communities can own, create and manage communication processes in order to sustain democratic values and improve their own lives. We catalyze innovation in communication by funding research, analysis, evidence gathering and by elevating local knowledge. This work is based on a set of core principles including voice and participation for all; equity of access to the content, means and channels of communication; justice and tolerance. The Consortium serves as a core repository of knowledge, learning, research and best practice of communication as it is used to improve lives of people living in poorer communities throughout the world.

#### **WHAT IS COMMUNICATION FOR SOCIAL CHANGE?**

Communication for Social Change is a process of public and private dialogue through which people define who they are, what they want, what they need and how they can act collectively to meet those needs and improve their lives. It supports processes of community-based decision making and collective action to make communities more effective and it builds more empowering communication environments.

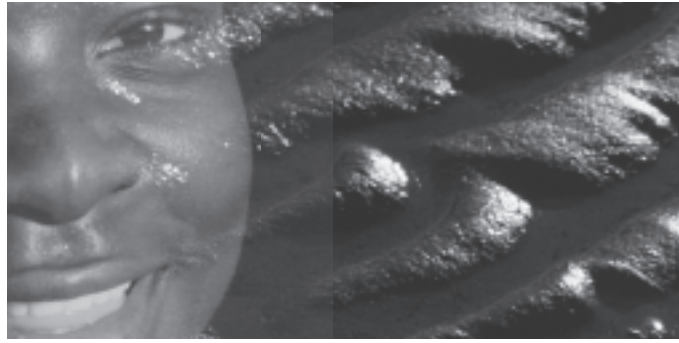


Throughout rich countries, the power of information and advertising to sell products, change attitudes and opinions, or heighten awareness is unparalleled. In developing countries, or other excluded communities, vertical communication methods can be viewed as tools that people outside the community use in order to “change things” within the affected community. Yet, social change cannot be sustained if the desire for change, the blueprint to bring about change, and the arsenal needed to implement such change is not internal to the affected community.

CFSC is a way of thinking and a way of working. It relies heavily on the fundamental skills of communicators—dialogue, writing, media literacy and access, understanding, and relationship building—yet has a heavy emphasis on building local capacity to do the communication work, rather than importing in experts to implement day-to-day communication activities.

With CFSC, the focus is on how dynamic and sustainable communication processes and tools can become embedded in the partner communities. The capacity left behind in communities—after aid money or other external influences have left—to use communication in order to improve lives is essential.

# OUR MISSION



The CFSC Consortium is dedicated to the belief that innovative communication processes are critical to development of poor and historically marginalized communities.

The Consortium seeks to increase the capacity of communication specialists, development workers, aid agencies, nonprofit organizations and communities to use communication for social change concepts in order to improve the lives of those who have been long excluded.

Based on important experiences that are surfacing through participatory research, the Consortium is redefining how communication is practiced and taught to development organizations and practitioners working in excluded communities.

# OUR VISION

## **Together changing minds, changing practice, changing lives.**

We will increase the capabilities of poor and marginalized people to use and control communication in order to bring about sustained social change that makes their lives easier.

By the year 2015, communication for social change principles will be broadly incorporated into most major development initiatives and practiced by a diverse network of practitioners.

CFSC approaches will be readily understood and practiced widely by public, private and nonprofit organizations and people living throughout Africa, Asia, Latin America, Europe and North America.

Principles of justice, equity, tolerance and ownership by affected communities will have become essential elements of the practice of communication for development.



# CFSC

## CONSORTIUM STRATEGY

The Consortium was created for a simple reason: business as usual among communicators working in development is no longer good enough.

Worldwide, people of all backgrounds have grasped the importance of hearing their own stories in their own voices—and making their own decisions about what affects their lives. They are bolstered by rapidly changing communication technology that has helped bring about wider acceptance of many-to-many communication. Challenged by widespread globalization of information sources, deregulation and privatization of media outlets, marginalized communities worldwide ask: **“when will we be able to control, own and manage the communication processes and tools critical to our community’s social development?”**



Sparking  
Innovation

Even when excluded people have access to the technology and channels to make their stories heard, the primacy of their stories, debates and decisions – told in “the first voice” can still be minimized by the more powerful voices of traditional communication gatekeepers.

We’ve formed the Consortium so that individuals, institutions, academics and donors can, together, forge strategies that give greater power to those first-voices. United in the belief that communication processes—not just technology or scientific advances—are essential to development of traditionally marginalized communities, the Consortium advocates for community-based problem solving sparked by public and private dialogue that leads to collective action. This is followed by strategy design, implementation, community monitoring and assessment based on collective input from the affected people.

Our beliefs have coalesced both from experience and from intense consultations with organizations and experts throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America, as well as in the North. Such consultations have led to a growing realization that not only is the potential of communication for improving people’s living standards greater than ever before, the strategies, methodologies and models of communication interventions as they are traditionally applied need to change radically to adapt to increasingly complex communication and social environments. The strategies and concepts which underpin communication for social change practice stem not only from a concern for economic and social justice, but also from serious analysis of what works and does not work in improving peoples lives in a twenty-first century context.

The Consortium has a multi-pronged strategy:

- 1 To find and present evidence, thereby demonstrating how participatory processes and community-based communication approaches can work best on development efforts – ranging from the minute to the large-scale.
- 2 To build local capacity and abilities, especially among poor communities, to manage their own communication, to apply CFSC methods, and to replicate such applications when new situations come up.
- 3 To influence the field of communication by stimulating innovation and dialogue, leading to heightened use of communication for social change.
- 4 To increase the capacity of universities and training centers to offer specialized programs to satisfy the demand expressed by development agencies for qualified communicators for social change.
- 5 To support communities as they seek access, ownership and control of communication processes and content within their own cultures and societies.
- 6 To affect public policy that creates obstacles to such access and ownership by those living in marginalized communities.

# HOW THE CONSORTIUM WORKS

The Communication for Social Change Consortium (the Consortium) is a nonprofit organization working in four fundamental ways:

**1 Building Knowledge.** Developing curricula and training approaches in order to spread CFSC conceptual framework, methods and principles more widely throughout development initiatives, while building local capacity of poor and marginalized communities to use communication in sustainable ways.

**2 Innovation Watch.** Researching, analyzing, gathering best practices, monitoring and evaluating the potential, effectiveness and conditions for change in partner communities when CFSC methods and principles are introduced.

**3 Communication Incubator.** Nurturing innovation, research and scholarship in communication, based on CFSC principles. Focus on uncovering new ideas, new scholars, innovative practice and process measurements that derive from the communities.

**4 Applied Principles.** Supporting and using CFSC methods to solve critical issues facing marginalized communities. Applying CFSC methods to real-life situations involving critical global issues such as HIV-AIDS, gender imbalance, inadequate education, childhood immunization, tuberculosis, environmental issues, food security and poverty eradication.

The collective and diverse communication experience of Consortium team members makes us uniquely able to analyze best practice, apply CFSC methods to critical situations, develop and test new approaches, spark innovation and maintain a network of seasoned and committed practitioners.

## WHAT WE DO

The Consortium catalyzes shifts in practice, values and attitudes about the essentiality of communication for social change to community-driven development.

We collaborate:

- ➔ with funding agencies and donor institutions challenged by how to make communication approaches more cost effective and sustainable.
- ➔ with individual practitioners seeking better ways to maximize their efforts
- ➔ with communities where development work has been unsustainable
- ➔ with teachers who prepare the next generation of communication for development and social change practitioners and strategists.
- ➔ with leaders of institutions working with poor and marginalized people.





## Elevating Local Knowledge

The Consortium started as a special interests project of the Rockefeller Foundation in 1997. Due to rapid growth and widespread interest among communication professionals and development experts, the Consortium was formed in the summer of 2003 to continue the groundbreaking work as an independent organization. Critical support is provided to the Consortium from a number of organizations but notably the Rockefeller Foundation, the Communication Initiative and Panos London.

# OUR CORE ACTIVITIES

## **The Consortium will develop, implement or promote:**

→ **Master's-level curricula** among universities in the North and South. Academic leaders within the CFSC network have developed a master's course outline that the Consortium is testing in several universities in industrialized and developing countries.

→ **Practitioners' short course** available through regional centers of excellence. Consultants and academics working with the Consortium are available to train communication practitioners by delivering this 3-week course.

→ **Decision makers/influentials awareness session** for key professionals including those in schools of public health, social work and aid agencies. This one-day course is designed for leaders who are not communication professionals but who do have a heightened need to understand and make decisions about communication resources.

→ **Integrated multi-disciplinary training**, valuing and uncovering indigenous knowledge of communication, at the local and regional levels.

→ **CFSC community audits and communication environmental index** undertaken in regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America designed to capture and monitor participatory development impact and essential communication elements needed for social change.

→ **CFSC Fellows.** With small stipends from the Consortium, CFSC Fellows from universities in the South are given time and space to explore innovation in communication as it is used to accelerate development.

→ **CFSC Network for Practitioners.** The Consortium—working closely with the Communication Initiative—will become the central repository and essential source of information for practitioners dedicated to CFSC methods, helping them update their skills and experience base.

→ **Global consulting resources.** The Consortium has developed affiliations with some of the best CFSC practitioners worldwide, helping them apply their skills and test new methods “on the ground” in poor and marginalized communities. Key focus will be on providing service to poor communities or those agencies serving such communities.

→ **Compilation of best practice.** In partnership with the Communication Initiative, the Consortium will continue to find the best work, analyze it, develop case studies and distribute them widely.

→ **Resource production.** Developing and distributing to poor communities CFSC resources such as an anthology of CFSC thought, body of knowledge, best practices and training materials.

→ **Right of control.** Promoting rights of excluded people for access and control of communication channels traditionally controlled by the powerful.



➔ **Local Capacity Building.** Strengthening communication institutions within poorer communities, including empowering people to access mainstream media as well as to help make community and alternative media more effective.

These activities should lead to:

- ➔ More effective development action whereby the desired values, opinions and outputs are embraced by affected communities because they are integral to the success rather than “targets” to be reached.
- ➔ Expanded critical thinking among communication professionals leading to better communication scholarship.
- ➔ Expanded course offerings in communication for development and communication for social change.
- ➔ Increased use of communication for social change by nonprofit, multilateral and bilateral agencies.
- ➔ Wiser use of aid dollars and budgets for communication.



# THE ROOTS OF THE CONSORTIUM

Communication has been an essential tool for development since early in the 20th century. The Rockefeller Foundation, as an early funder of communication projects, helped boost the academic success of the work of pioneers such as Wilbur Schramm at the University of Illinois and Paul Lazarsfeld at Columbia University.

In 1997, the Rockefeller Foundation's then communication director and later vice president, Denise Gray-Felder, began an exploration to, in part, answer nagging questions: why is the communication work of many Foundation grantees scatter-shot, unsustainable and heavily message driven?

Following a series of discussions with diverse groups of communicators over a 3-year period, the Foundation's communication staff introduced the concept of communication for social change to the foundation and donor communities.

They then pulled together a network of more than 200 committed CFSC practitioners. This network, along with Foundation staff, has successfully influenced the communication agendas of major aid agencies, and applied CFSC processes around the globe. With Rockefeller Foundation funding leadership, major NGOs in North America, Europe, Latin America and Africa are successfully applying CFSC processes to make their work more effective. Among those key institutions that have recommitted major areas of work to CFSC are the Panos Institute, USAID, PAHO, Communication Initiative (Latin America and global), Soul City, South Africa; The Exchange, Afri-Afya (Nairobi), URDT (Uganda Community Radio), FAO, and the CADEC, ZAPSO and Umzingwane AIDS Network in Zimbabwe.



## The Evidence Suggests:

Within marginalized communities, there is tremendous untapped potential to use communication for collective good. When people most affected by social inequity have the confidence and abilities to access, manage and control the processes, tools and content of communication, development efforts are more sustainable and effective. In other words, investing in communication pays off when donors also invest in building the communication capacities of the communities and people they're trying to reach.

## STAFF

The CFSC Consortium staff is a small and focused team made up of a president (chief executive), administrative manager, a managing director, and support staff. The applied practice relies upon more than 25 consultants working in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, Europe and North America. Denise Gray-Felder is president and CEO, and Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron is the managing director.

## GLOBAL TO LOCAL

Wherever there are poor and marginalized people, CFSC Consortium aims to have influence. Working globally, our main office is in the United States. Additional satellite offices will be opened in Latin America, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia in 2004.

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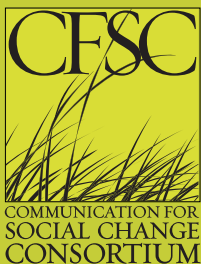
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