

**COMMUNICATION FOR
SOCIAL CHANGE**

ANTHOLOGY:
HISTORICAL AND
CONTEMPORARY
READINGS

Edited by Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron and Thomas Tufte



COMMUNICATION FOR
SOCIAL CHANGE®
CONSORTIUM

FOREWORD

By **The Honourable Vida Yeboah** (d.2006)

Vida Yeboah was the founding president and chief executive officer of the Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Ghana Chapter. She was formerly minister of tourism for her native Ghana and a deputy minister of education who led, for eight years, the implementation of Ghana's Educational Reforms which sought to increase access and make education relevant and functional for self and national development. Mrs. Yeboah also was an elected member of Ghana's legislature for two consecutive terms of eight years.

A well-respected educator, politician, civic leader and advocate for girls' education in Africa, Mrs. Yeboah was an inaugural member of the pan-African International FAWE Executive Committee, serving for six years.

Working for social and political justice and equity has been a central focus in my life, whether fighting for national sovereignty and human rights in Africa or raising awareness of gender and health inequities that plague women and children throughout the world. In working for change, it is crucial to ensure that we see and hear the voices and stories of the people and communities with whom we work. All too often we make the mistake of assuming viewpoints, needs and solutions on behalf of others. Yet long experience has shown that the people who are best able to push the need for change and identify the most effective solutions, are those who are most directly affected by the injustice, poverty and discrimination we seek to eradicate.

There can be little argument about the importance of communication in the modern world—including the power of mass media, the ubiquity of telephones and the immediate international connections provided through Internet communication.

Yet in the majority of villages and communities of the world, voice and listening is the day-to-day means of reaching out to others—of making human connection. It is the way our children learn how to be good people. It is the way we learn about our local traditions and operate within our native cultures. It is the way we learn of the values and morals of our forebears.

Perhaps less well known outside of the African continent is the history of, and the value placed on oral communication in moving communities and nations forward: the griot traditions, storytelling, drama, dance and song. In southern Africa, dialogue circles have prospered for more than 2000 years as ways for villages to make collective decisions. In West Africa, durbars announce news and visitors through song, dance and the spoken word. Women gather at marketplaces across the continent every day bringing news and stories that are important to the greater community. We are a verbal people and a community-based people who live the principles of communication for social change daily.

Change happens in many ways, but sustained social change relies upon people to endure: the power of people to advocate for the change that will benefit them, the power of people to negotiate through their differences, and the power of people to come together, to form social movements, in order to demand their rights. Communication for Social Change is a way of developing and strengthening people's confidence and skills to tell their own stories, explain their needs, and advocate for the kind of change they want.

Academic scholarship on communication often focuses on communication technology or the impact of media. This anthology is groundbreaking in that it spotlights first and foremost dialogue, listening and collective action. The writers included paint an interesting portrait of ideas about the history of participatory, community-based approaches. I can only hope that students of communication for social change will appreciate the rich foundation—evolving heavily from value systems with their base in Africa, Latin America and parts of Asia—analysed within these pages.

Arguing powerfully that the global community can use communication more effectively to save lives and improve our world, this is an important piece of work for communication scholars and professionals as well as development specialists and social activists.

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NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER

Denise Gray-Felder

President, Communication for Social Change Consortium

Thanks to the mission of the Communication for Social Change Consortium, I now truly understand the meaning of the words “love your work, live your passion.” This anthology, the Consortium’s fourth publication since our inception, reflects the commitment and passion of all the talented people in our worldwide network; people who dedicate their lives to helping move people out of poverty. With this book, like all our other efforts, we are able to demonstrate a love of humanity as well as a passion for our profession and craft.

Three years ago, Alfonso Gumucio had a vision that the Consortium should produce a signature contribution to the development field—an anthology that would trace the evolution of communication for social change thinking and practice. It is safe to say that none of us at that time had a realistic picture of what a daunting task this would be. But we did know that there was not only a need—but also a demand—for such a reference to illustrate the deep, historical roots of participatory communication as well as to demonstrate the heritage of communication for social change within the social science fields. We also wanted a book that connects, in multidisciplinary ways, contemporary academic thinking between scholars from rich countries with those from less economically rich countries.

Alfonso recruited Thomas Tufte of Roskilde University as co-editor. Off they went on an intellectual scavenger hunt for the most reflective and stimulating texts, looking as far back as the 1920s. The Consortium brought together an editorial advisory team to help make initial recommendations and to create the list of core writings that should be included in the book. For a week at the Rockefeller Foundation Study and Conference Centre in Bellagio, Italy, we pored over more than 200 manuscripts, arguing about intent and impact. Following that, Alfonso and Thomas read and considered

hundreds more famous and not-so-famous documents, debating the ideas included within them, in order to determine just which are the most instructive from among hundreds of seminal manuscripts.

The book before you will never be finished. I suspect that each reader will find a favoured scholar missing, or that you might question the inclusion of others. Following CFSC principles, we used an inclusive process in producing this book. We wanted to provide a broad array of opinions and perspectives. Several of the texts “dialogue” with each other: ideas are presented and then “responded to” with accompanying manuscripts. In this regard, the writers “talk to each other” in ways that illustrate, instruct and innovate.

You may be surprised to find several writers who are not household names. This is deliberate: we sought to give increased visibility to those scholars who are less well known in global fora, constrained simply because they write in a language other than English.

Every writer, in her or his own way, contributes to the foundation of the CFSC “building.” They illustrate that communication for social change, in some ways, has always been around. CFSC is a process of public and private dialogue through which people define who they are, what they want and need, and how they will work together to get what they need to improve their lives. It uses open and democratic dialogue that leads to community-based problem identification, decision-making and implementation of solutions to development issues.

Put another way, this type of communication process honours culture and tradition; respect for the power of local decision-making power; the dialogue involving external information and traditional knowledge; and dialogue between development specialists and communities. CFSC is about engaging people to want to change and to help them define the change and necessary actions to achieve their goals. The ultimate goal should always be self-renewing societies.

We learn from within these pages that as practitioners and scholars, if we keep the intended beneficiaries in the forefront of our work, we will be continually motivated and inspired.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the authors and publishers who contributed to this text. A complete list of them is included in the Permissions section.

In addition, this book would not be possible without the engagement of numerous communication scholars, practitioners and development professionals including those who participated in an editorial advisory capacity: CFSC Consortium board members Maria Celeste Cadiz, Warren Feek and Denise Gray-Felder; James Deane, Ailish Byrne, Rosa Maria Alfaro, Silvia Balit, Luis Ramiro Beltrán, John Downing, Cees Hamelink, Jim Hunt, Tom Jacobson, Chris Kamlongera, Alfred Opubor, Will Parks, Daniel Prieto Castillo, Clemencia Rodriguez, Jan Servaes, Pradip Thomas, Ruth Teer Tomaselli, Keyan Tomaselli, Robert White and Karin Gwinn Wilkins. We were also honoured to have the early and ongoing involvement in the Consortium's work of two true communication pioneers, George Gerbner and Everett Rogers.

We dedicate this book to George, Everett and to Juan Jamias, all who passed away before seeing the finished product. Our professional lives and knowledge were enriched by their contributions and our hearts were touched by calling each of them "friend."

Many contributions were received from people working in communication or in development in general. A key part of this process was ably facilitated by the Communication Initiative, and we thank the CI staff and people in their network, and especially for their help in locating hundreds of authors and references. We ultimately reviewed more than 1,000 texts, from which we selected the most representative. While we relied heavily on suggestions made by an editorial review board of experts from universities in Asia, Latin America, North America, Africa, the Pacific region and Europe, the final selections were ours. So the fault for any errors and omissions lies at our feet.

New translations were provided by the extraordinarily talented Paul Keller, plus Esther Gomez Babin, Florencia Enghel, Sheila Wilkins and A&A translations. Throughout the process we had numerous assistants: Maider Iriarte, Rocio Cajías, Ana Luisa Néca, Alejandra Gumucio, Janne Juul Sørensen and Amelia Morales Navarro. Special thanks to the editorial support team in the United States: Diana Burke and Jackie Bivens. We must give special recognition to Vivian James who kept all the files, kept track of details, and compiled thousands of changes from reviewers and proofreaders.

We owe a huge debt to our life partners—Katherine Grigsby and Pernille Tufte,—who forfeited weekends, holidays and social events while we were fixated on our computer screens.

To the Rockefeller Foundation staff, thank you for your core support which allows us to distribute copies of this book free of charge to institutions in poorer countries.

And finally, we'd like to recognize *our* talented editors: Denise Gray-Felder and Susan Mach, who read every word with precision and oversaw every detail of the production process with keen eyes. They too gave up weekends, holidays and celebrations with their families and spouses, Donald Felder and Larry Mach, for this effort. They shared our vision and persistence in making this book the best it can be, and we're proud to have worked with you.

We cannot end without giving special acknowledgement to the contributors whose ideas, thinking and vision has so clarified our own scholarship and practice. And to the people living and working in villages, districts and towns across the globe whose innovative use of communication as a way to improve lives continually inspires us. Without you, this book would not have been. Thank you.

Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron
Thomas Tufte
July 2006