

University Network News



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Who is in the network?

Some colleagues keep asking: who is part of this network? The answer is: any academic institution that has specialised studies with emphasis in communication for development and social change, at any level. The foremost example is the College of Development Communication in the University of The Philippines at Los Baños, which has been training generations of undergraduate, masters and PhD students during the past 25 years. This is why the inaugural meeting of this network took place in The Philippines, at Los Baños.

Other universities from Asia, Africa, Europe, North America and Latin America participated at that meeting in September 2005: Universidad del Norte (Barranquilla, Colombia), University of Guelph (Canada), Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar (Bolivia), The University of West Indies (Jamaica), Malmo University (Sweden), University of Roskilde (Denmark), Universidad Nacional de La Plata (Argentina), Ohio University (USA), G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology (India), University of Zambia, Pontificia Universidad Católica del Peru.

More universities joined the above twelve and became part of the network during 2006 and 2007: the Institute for Development Studies (IDS) of Sussex (England), the University of Malaga and the University of Sevilla (Spain).

This bulletin is distributed to all the universities above, plus many other colleagues in universities that have an interest in developing communication for development and social change studies.

The role of the Communication for Social Change Consortium is to facilitate the network and the exchanges among the universities that are members.

<http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/index.php>

New PhD course con CFSC in El Salvador

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The Universidad de Malaga (UMA) and the Universidad de El Salvador (UES) have started an international PhD course on communication for social change titled “Power Participation and New technologies in the Knowledge Society”. This programme, which is a pioneering initiative, will develop throughout 2007 and 2008, with support from the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation (AECI).

The objective of the PhD is to extend and consolidate the successful experience of 2006 with the post-graduate course on communication for development, “Socialization of New Technologies

for Local democratic development”, which was also supported by AECI. This course had wide acceptance within the university and among local development organisations. More than twenty communication for social change projects emerged from it. The new course will emphasize priority areas such as local governance, sustainability of the environment, prevention and management of disasters, peace and human rights.



Two professors from the Universidad de Malaga, Manuel Chaparro and Marcial Garcia, are coordinating the activities. Both are members of the Research Group on Communication and Power within the university, which aims to train researchers and agents of communication for social change through theories and methodologies of research, design, management and evaluation of participatory communication projects.

Contact: Alejandro Barranquero abarranquero@uma.es

Master Degree in Guatemala

A new master degree on Communication for Development exists at the Universidad de San Carlos in Guatemala. This public university is one of the oldest in Latin America; it was created in 1676...

The Master Degree is much younger, only 3 years old. One generation has already graduated in 2006, 44 students (27 female and 18 male). The third group of students (18 female and 9 male) started their classes in February 2007. The objectives of the Masters include: a) Professionally update university graduates in the field of communication for development; b) strengthening the capability of professionals to organise, manage and evaluate communication programmes with emphasis on development; c) to enhance research skills in communication for development, and d) to train professionals to effectively impact social change processes, specially in the fields of major important such as education, health, environment, human rights and new ICTs.

More information can be obtained through M. Sc. Elizabeth Avalos, who coordinates the Master Degree, at elisabethavalos@yahoo.com or maestriacomunicaciondesarrollo@yahoo.com





Our Media 6 conference in Sydney

The OurMedia 6th Conference (OM6) took place in Sydney, Australia, April 13-19. The Communication for Social Change Consortium, was represented by Alfonso Gumucio-Dagron, who facilitated along with Jethro Pettit from IDS (Sussex), Stream 2 on “Communication and Social Change”.

We can mention at least seven “firsts” in this edition of Our Media conference:

1. This was the first time the conference was organised in the South Pacific.
2. The first time that it lasted five days, including a one-day visit to Information and Cultural Exchange (ICE), a NGO working with young people from diverse cultural backgrounds.
3. This is the first time the conference was organised in thematic “streams.” We had 10 of them and each stream included three or four panels, with four to six presentations each, plus discussion time.
4. The total number of presentations, including those at the six plenary sessions, added up to about 250, which is also by far a first in Our Media. We never had so many before.
5. For the first time, we had a printed programme (92 pages) and a beautiful flyer. Most of this was done through the hard work of Juan Salazar and the local committee.
6. Artists with a profile of activists joined the network and were present at the conference: The role of artists in social change will, without doubt, become increasingly important from now on in our network.
7. But above all, the major “first” this time was the number of countries represented. In spite of Australia been “down under” and “too far,” we had no fewer than 35 countries represented by the 600 registered participants.

The Our Media 6 conference issued, also a first, a final document, the “Letter from Sydney”, which updates the position of the network regarding several issues. This is a 8-page document that the Communication for Social Change Consortium published in the recent issue of Mazi, both in English and Spanish. It can be consulted, along with a report on the conference, at:

<http://www.communicationforsocialchange.org/mazi.php?id=11>

And at the Our Media 6 conference website: <http://www.ourmedia07.net/>

MA on Theatre for Development in Malawi



The University of Malawi at Chancellor College’s Fine and Performing Arts Department has been in existence since 1982, with specialisations in the three areas of Fine Art, Drama and Music. From its inception the major thrust of the department has been that of linking artistic/cultural expression with national development. This has been particularly the case with drama, which has consistently grown, owing to its ability to attract students, and to find short or long

term employment for them in such development communication organisations as the (Malawi) German Technical Organization (GTZ), Creative Centre for Community Mobilisation (CRECCOM), The Story Workshop and (Malawi) Population Service International (PSI) amongst many others.

In recent years a major demand has arisen within the Government, and even more so within Non Government Organisations for skilled personnel in the field of performance communication. This follows a trend established in many other countries in the region. It has been observed that many development initiatives in such fields as health awareness, agriculture, forestry, human rights awareness and literacy have limited success owing to their failure to take into account local cultural factors. This has resulted in the rapid rise of such fields as Theatre for Development, Afrocentric Social Art and Media Edutainment.

These bridge the gap between local cultural perceptions and the transformation agenda of Government and NGO change agents. In addition, the demands of the Department of Culture for Research into Malawi's indigenous and syncretic cultural forms can meaningfully be met by high quality post-graduate research. The demand for such a programme goes beyond Malawi's boundaries. There are many institutions within the region which seek such training outlets. These range from potential clients who seek purely professional skills, for which the post-graduate diploma would be suitable, to those requiring a more academic approach, for which the M.A. courses would be more suitable. With the exception of the University of Natal, there is no university in the region, which is offering such a comprehensive and career oriented programme.

The Masters programme is coordinated by a graduate studies coordinator, selected by the Department. The programme is modular in that it is divided into two years. The first year contains mostly taught courses, and the second year consists of research and dissertation writing. Students can obtain a postgraduate professional diploma by completing the first year. If students wish to obtain a Masters degree the first year serves as a taught component of the degree leading to a second year of research assessed by a dissertation. The first year must be successfully completed with an average grade of at least 60% before a student can proceed to the Masters degree.

For more information contact: JJ Chimwenje at: jchimwenje@chanco.unima.mw or mufunanji_magalasi@hotmail.com

Send information for this newsletter to Gumucio@communicationforsocialchange.org