Expanding Shrinking Communication Spaces

Philip Lee & Lorenzo Vargas
EDITORS

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*This book is dedicated to
the millions of people worldwide
who are struggling to create
a better world by advancing
and defending their right
to communicate.*

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CENTRE FOR
COMMUNICATION
RIGHTS

Many voices, one world

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Introduction
Expanding Shrinking
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This short book states the obvious: all human and social activity depends on communication.

Yet merely stating the obvious does not guarantee that people and communities are equally able or have the capacity to communicate. It ignores questions of accessibility and affordability; diversity and plurality; ownership and control; representation and misrepresentation; privacy and security. In short, it ignores the many political, economic, cultural, and social obstacles to full inclusion in society that impact lives and livelihoods – in particular those of marginalized, underserved, and persecuted men, women, young people, and children in every country of the world.

No matter the issue – poverty, conflict resolution, self-determination, migration, health, land, housing, the climate crisis – little can be done without effective communication.

In 2012, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development took place in Brazil. Known as Rio+20, it agreed to establish an "Open Working Group" of government representatives to make a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A key question was how the SDGs would relate to or improve upon the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of 2000. In August 2014, the Open Working Group reported to the UN General Assembly, setting out 17 goals for the period 2015 to 2030. Conspicuous by its absence was a dedicated Goal addressing the essential role played by communication, even though there are related targets such as under Goal 5 on "Gender Equality" to "Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women" and under Goal 16 on "Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions" to "Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms".

This apparent omission flew in the face of many UN-related agencies and most civil society organisations, which had agreed at the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS 2003 and 2005) and later at other fora that independent, diverse, and pluralistic media, and the provision of affordable access to information and communication technologies were vital to today's information and knowledge societies and to sustainable development itself.

In at least one commentator's opinion, among other things the SDGs failed in:

- Acknowledging the significance of free expression as both a goal of development and a means to development.

- Ensuring press freedom both online and offline, and providing a media system on all platforms that is free, pluralistic and independent as a means to optimise the role of communications and information in development.
- Ensuring the existence and implementation of national laws and/or constitutional guarantees on the right to information.
- Ensuring the safety of journalists and tackling impunity for crimes against them by highlighting the number of journalists, media personnel and human rights defenders killed, kidnapped or disappeared, unlawfully detained and tortured, as a result of pursuing their legitimate activities.
- Strengthening an enabling environment for free, independent and pluralistic media, as a guarantee of media sustainability, including quality journalism education.[1]

Arguably, these provisions do not go far enough and a much broader framework is required: one in which the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. A framework is needed that enables, empowers, and transforms; that sidesteps power structures and sociocultural traditions to guarantee the public voices and genuine participation of everyone – especially poor, marginalized, excluded and dispossessed people and communities. A framework that stresses justice, equality, democratization, and diversity because of the inalienable values attached to human dignity, mutual respect, and greater understanding.

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1   Fackson Banda (2015). "Setting a media agenda in the post-2015 Sustainable Development Goals". WACC: *Media Development* 2/2015.

Such a framework is offered by the concept and practice of communication rights, which call for a political and social infrastructure that realizes the notion of "Many Voices, One World" – the well-known title of UNESCO's MacBride Report of 1980 – and strengthens the capability of individuals and groups to communicate. Communication rights address key questions about:

- ownership and control of mass, community, and social media;
- access to new information and communication technologies;
- the right to information and knowledge;
- language rights;
- intellectual property rights and creative commons;
- net neutrality and access to the Internet;
- digital platforms, user-generated content, and digital ethics;
- government and corporate censorship and surveillance;
- personal and data privacy.

As such, it is all the more astonishing that communication and media were not made part and parcel of every SDG or subject to an SDG of their own, since none of the SDGs can be achieved unless people are able to communicate their dreams, concerns, and needs – locally, nationally, regionally, globally. The obstacles are many: social, cultural, political, ideological, yet communication can help overcome them all.

For this reason, since communication clearly underpins genuinely sustainable development and requires equitable access to information and knowledge, to information and communication technologies, as well as plurality and diversity

in the media, the chapters in this book point to the missing UN Sustainable Development Goal 18: *Communication for All.* Its purpose is self-evident:

Goal: Expand and strengthen public civic spaces through equitable and affordable access to communication technologies and platforms, media pluralism, and media diversity.

Target 1.1 By 2030, ensure the existence of spaces and resources for men and women, in particular the poor and vulnerable, to engage in transparent, informed, and democratic public dialogue and debate.

Target 1.2 By 2030, ensure the existence of regimes where creative ideas and knowledge are encouraged, can be communicated widely and freely to advance social justice and sustainable development.

Target 1.3 By 2030, ensure protection for the dignity and security of people in relation to communication processes, especially concerning data privacy and freedom from surveillance.

Target 1.4 By 2030, ensure communication spaces for diverse cultures, cultural forms and identities at the individual and social levels.[2]

2　These four targets are based on the landmark "Four Pillars" of communication rights identified by the CRIS Campaign in *Assessing Communication Rights: A Handbook* (2005). While global communications and media have changed dramatically in the intervening period, the values implicit in equality, accessibility, affordability, and diversity remain the same.

The indicators for these four targets remain to be determined. To some extent, they can be found in existing indices of political and social freedoms, such as the Social Progress Index, UNESCO's Media Development Indicators, Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index, and WACC's Global Media Monitoring Project.

SDG 18: Communication for All sets out the claim for spaces and resources in the public sphere that enable everyone to be able to engage in transparent, informed, and democratic debate. It claims unfettered access to the information and knowledge essential to democracy, empowerment, responsible citizenship, and mutual accountability. It claims political, social and cultural environments that encourage the free exchange of a diversity of creative ideas, knowledge and cultural products. Last but not least, Communication for All claims equality and justice.

The chapters in this book seek to explain and justify these claims. Chapter 1, "Expanding shrinking public spaces: Envisioning an inclusive world in 2030", leaps across the centuries to argue that communication has always been about power and exclusion and that its transformative potential has constantly faced obstacles. It sets out ten principles or entitlements that ordinary people can readily recognize and acknowledge as crucial to lives and livelihoods, to good governance, good citizenship, and democratic accountability.

In 1999, in a landmark essay, Michael Traber explored the philosophical basis for communication in society, linking the right to communicate with other social and political rights and with a democratic body politic. Chapter 2, "Communication is inscribed in human nature", articulates why people and societies cannot function without communication, likening it to "the nervous system of the human body". Traber makes a watertight case arguing that, "Society and its institutions must

enable the active participation of all in the economic, political and cultural life of the community. This is not a high minded expression of benevolence, but a demand of justice."

Chapter 3, "Communication and Information Poverty in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals" lies at the heart of this book. Focusing on the concept of "communication poverty", it is based on face-to-face and online consultations with real people: grassroots communication activists around the world. Exploring the relationship between communication and information issues and the 2030 Agenda, it presents a series of recommendations for donor governments, international institutions, national governments, and other stakeholders to address communication and information poverty as part of development interventions.

Chapter 4, "Addressing gender issues in media content", focuses on media's implication in achieving gender equality aspirations in all the 17 SDGs, as far as their role in maintaining social and cultural norms underpinning discrimination and inequality across all thematic areas is concerned. It offers evidence that more than two decades since the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, gender issues in media content remain pertinent and that the power to change lies with governments, the media, and ordinary audiences.

One of the groups often marginalized and discriminated against is Indigenous People. Chapter 5, "What do the SDGs mean for the world's Indigenous Peoples?", laments the failure to guarantee "the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in the development, implementation, monitoring and review process of action plans and programs on sustainable development at all levels". Nevertheless, by declaring 2019 the Year of Indigenous Languages in order to encourage urgent action to preserve, revitalize and promote them, the United

Nations underlined that Indigenous languages – and, therefore, communication – matter for social, economic and political development, peaceful coexistence and reconciliation.

A working paper published by the Institute of Development Studies notes that:

> "Efforts to restrict civic space tend to include both formal (legal, regulatory, administrative) and a range of informal strategies. Informal strategies cannot always be documented through official indicators, but they include discursive means such as the de-legitimation or stigmatisation of civil society actors within public discourse, and the overall effects of a 'chilling' environment on freedom of speech, association, and peaceful assembly."[3]

Civic space acts as the safety net for an open and democratic society. Well maintained and unimpeded, it allows individuals, communities, and civil society organizations to participate and communicate without obstruction. By doing so, they are able to claim rights and entitlements and to influence political and social policy-making. They can also hold governments, corporate entities, and themselves accountable, but only when the principle of *communication for all* is upheld and validated.

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3   "What Does Closing Civic Space Mean for Development? A Literature Review and Proposed Conceptual Framework" (2018) by Naomi Hossain, Nalini Khurana, Shandana Mohmand, Sohela Nazneen, Marjoke Oosterom, Tony Roberts, Ricardo Santos, Alex Shankland and Patrick Schröder. *IDS Working Paper* Volume 2018 No 515. Institute of Development Studies.

II

Expanding Shrinking Civic Spaces
Envisioning an Inclusive World in 2030

Philip Lee

Transformation is usually unforeseen and unpredictable. In 1517, when Martin Luther hung his 95 theses on the wooden doors of Wittenberg Castle Church, he did not intend to start the Reformation. That came later. What Luther really began was a communications revolution – and with global digital transformation in full swing, it is still going on.

The *Ninety-five Theses or Disputation on the Power of Indulgences* were a set of propositions setting out Luther's views on the practice of preachers selling "indulgences". These were certificates reducing the amount of time spent in purgatory for sins committed by their purchasers. Indulgences were sanctioned by the Pope, so Luther was basically challenging what he saw as an abuse of power. Today's indulgences come

in the form of carbon offsets, where a credit for greenhouse gas reductions achieved by one party can be purchased and used to compensate (offset) the emissions of another party, and of data surveillance, where people provide corporations with personal data that is then used to generate corporate profits.

Luther's theses were distributed throughout Germany and quickly found their way to Rome. In 1518, he was summoned to Augsburg, a city in southern Germany, to defend his views before an imperial assembly. A debate lasting three days between Luther and Cardinal Thomas Cajetan, a leading theologian of the day, led to stalemate. Cajetan defended the church's use of indulgences, but Luther refused to accept his arguments. On 9 November 1518, Pope Leo X condemned Luther's writings as being in conflict with the teachings of the Church. One year later, a papal commission declared them heretical, but a second merely stated that the writings were "scandalous and offensive to pious ears". Finally, in July 1520, a papal bull was issued giving Luther120 days to recant. Luther refused and on 3 January 1521 he was excommunicated. Later that year, the Holy Roman emperor Charles V signed an edict against Luther, ordering his writings to be burned. Luther hid in the town of Eisenach, where he continued work on his lifelong project, the translation of the Bible into contemporary German.

Luther's translation was eventually published in a six-part edition in 1534. It was not the first version in German, but it was the most influential in that it used the language of the people. To help him in translating it, Luther would visit nearby towns and markets to hear ordinary people speaking. The translation of the Bible into colloquial German was arguably an early instance of promoting freedom of information – making an arcane text intelligible and available to ordinary people. Later, Luther even had large-print Bibles made for people with failing eyesight (Lindberg, 1996: 92). The idea that

people should be allowed to use their own language was revolutionary and a direct challenge to the powers of both Church and State. It underlies many of the provisions in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and eventually found expression in the Universal Declaration of Linguistic Rights (1996) which recognizes communities that have developed a common language as a natural means of communication and cultural cohesion among their members.

In this respect, it is worth recalling that Luther was not alone in contesting the subjugation of the masses. On 16 February 1525, some 25 villages around the town of Memmingen in Swabia demanded that the local council take steps to improve their economic conditions and relieve their subservient status. The peasants complained about servitude, rent, access to land, and the clergy in Twelve Articles that strikingly include a call for recognition "that we are and that we want to be free". These Twelve Articles are sometimes considered the first draft of human rights and civil liberties in continental Europe.

Taking a rights-based approach to communication

Ideas about rights and liberty have existed in some form for much of human history – one thinks, for example, of the Cyrus Cylinder dating from the 6th century BCE and of England's Magna Carta dating from 1215 CE – although they bear little resemblance to present-day concepts. Today's rights-based discourse stems from the U.S. Bill of Rights (1789/1791) and France's Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1793). Called first-generation human rights, they are fundamentally civil and political in nature, serving to protect the individual from the excesses of the state. First-generation rights include, among other things, freedom of speech; the right

to a fair trial; freedom of religion; and voting rights. They were first enshrined at the global level in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and given status in international law in Articles 3 to 21 of the UDHR and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) (1966/1976).

Second-generation human rights are related to notions of equality and began to be recognized by governments after the 1914-18 World War. They are fundamentally social, economic, and cultural in nature and they guarantee citizens equal conditions and treatment. Secondary rights include a right to be employed; rights to housing and health care; as well as social security and unemployment benefits. Like first-generation rights, they were also covered by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) (1966/1976). All three – the UDHR, the ICCPR, and the ICESCR – are collectively known as the International Bill of Human Rights.

Third-generation human rights are those that go beyond the merely civil and social and are expressed in many progressive documents of international law, including the Stockholm Declaration of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (1972), the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992), and other examples of what are generally known as "soft law" (quasi-legal instruments which have no binding force, or whose binding force is weaker than that of traditional law). Because of the principle of sovereignty and the preponderance of dissenting nations, such rights have been hard to enforce through legally binding documents. The term "third-generation human rights" is to some extent unofficial and covers a broad spectrum, including group and collective rights; the right to self-determination; the right to economic and social development; the right to a healthy environment; the right to natural resources; the right to

participation in cultural heritage; rights to intergenerational equity and sustainability. In particular, as will be seen in the next section, they include communication rights.

Origins of communication rights

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed an urgent call for a New International Information Order (NIIO), later to be known as the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). The term NIIO was coined at a seminar held in Tunis in 1976, which urged the Non-Aligned Movement to fight for "liberation from all kinds of neo-colonialism and imperialist oppression", citing the peoples of developing countries as "the victims of domination in information and this domination is a blow to their most authentic cultural values, and in the final analysis subjugates their interests to those of imperialism" (*Information in the Non-Aligned Countries*, 1976: 25-26). In the light of this claim, in 1978, UNESCO's General Conference instructed its Director-General, Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, to undertake a review of the problems and challenges of communication in contemporary society seen against the background of technological progress and contemporary developments in international relations. The main issues raised in the subsequent NWICO debate were:

- How "Third World" countries were becoming increasingly dependent on rich industrialized countries for nearly all of their communications equipment, technology, skills and software.
- How poor countries were increasingly being integrated into a system dominated by multinational corporations, which for the most part only responded to the needs of private profit.

- How indigenous cultures were being progressively diluted by cultural integration leading to their steady deterioration and even disappearance.
- How information was being transformed from a basic right into a commodity to be bought and sold in the market place.

It is striking that all four issues are still relevant to today's digital societies:

- The Global South is still dependent on the Global North for digital communications infrastructure.
- The Global South is part of a system dominated by multinational corporations, which for the most part only respond to the needs of private profit.
- Indigenous communities are still struggling for recognition and their languages are increasingly at risk of disappearance.
- Digital data have been hijacked and transformed into a commodity to be bought and sold in the global market place.

Advocates of the NWICO pointed to the unfair advantages enjoyed by rich countries via international institutions created to manage frequency allocations for the electromagnetic spectrum; the threat to the survival of sovereign nations as a result of developments in satellite broadcasting technology; and gross inequalities in the intellectual property rights regime. They also emphasised the almost irreversible concentration of power in the hands of computer databanks and global computer networks owned and managed by multinational corporations primarily to their own commercial advantage.

Having comprehensively reviewed the situation, UNESCO's International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, chaired by Seán MacBride, published its report *Many Voices, One World: Communication and Society Today and Tomorrow*. Identifying the democratization of communication, diversity of media, and accessibility and affordability as key issues, the MacBride Report pointed out that democratization could not simply be reduced to its quantitative aspects:

> "[Democratization] means broader access to existing media by the general public; but access is only a part of the democratization process. It also means broader possibilities for nations, political forces, cultural communities, economic entities, and social groups to interchange information on a more equal footing, without dominance over the weaker partners and without discrimination against any one. In other words, it implies a change of outlook. There is surely a necessity for more abundant information from a plurality of sources, but if the opportunity to reciprocate is not available, the communication process is not adequately democratic" (*Many Voices, One World*, 1980: 173).

The MacBride Report was ill received in the USA, the United Kingdom and Singapore, all of which withdrew financial support for UNESCO. As a result, civil society organizations began to take matters into their own hands and in late 1996 a number of NGOs gathered in London to discuss issues related to communication and democratization. A Platform for Cooperation on Communication and Democratization was established, whose members set out to pursue advocacy of

specific communication issues, to assess the feasibility of setting up a media research database and, in particular, to lobby the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) to include representatives of civil society in its decision-making processes. Members of the Platform, under the guidance of Cees J. Hamelink, also articulated a *People's Communication Charter* aimed at mobilizing "individual citizens and their organizations to take an active role in the shaping of the cultural environment into which all children are born and in which all people live and learn". When UN General Secretary Kofi Annan announced a World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) to take place in Geneva in 2003, the group was renamed the Platform for Communication Rights. It had the following aims:

- To work for the right to communicate to be recognised and guaranteed as fundamental to securing human rights founded on principles of genuine participation, social justice, plurality and diversity and which reflect gender, cultural and regional perspectives.
- To defend and deepen an open public space for debate and actions that build critical understanding of the ethics of communication, democratic policy development, and equitable and effective access.

In November 2001, the Platform initiated a campaign for Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS), arguing that the forthcoming World Summit on the Information Society was not an end in itself, but a means to an end. For CRIS, the "Information Society" should use the right to communicate to enhance other human rights and to strengthen the social, economic and cultural lives of people and communities. In this respect, the Information Society should be based on principles of transparency, diversity, participation,

social and economic justice, inspired by equitable gender, cultural and regional perspectives. The CRIS Campaign focused on areas that directly affected people's lives, such as:

- Strengthening the *public domain*, to ensure that information and knowledge are readily available for human development and not locked up in private hands;
- Ensuring *affordable access to and effective use of* electronic networks in a development context, for instance through innovative and robust regulation and public investment;
- Securing and extending the *global commons* for both broadcast and telecommunications, to ensure that this public resource is not sold for private ends;
- Instituting *democratic and transparent governance* of the information society from local to global levels;
- Challenging information *surveillance and censorship*, government or commercial;
- Supporting *community and people-centred media*, traditional and new.

WSIS 2003 (Geneva) was followed by WSIS 2005 (Tunis). Overall, civil society organizations were disappointed by the lack of sustained achievements and many felt that, if there had been an opportunity for more inclusive participation, greater impact could have been made. Minor achievements in the outcomes were offset by major shortcomings: insufficient attention was given to people-centred issues such as human rights and freedom of expression, the financial mechanisms for promoting sustainable development, and support for capacity building. A decade and a half later, even with the rapid deployment of digital media platforms and social media,

government bodies and corporate entities still dominate access to information and knowledge infrastructures and technologies. While genuinely interactive communication is much more of a reality, there are still many issues to resolve around security, privacy, surveillance, censorship, and ownership and control of data.

Communication and its relevance to human development

In an essay reprised in this book, Michael Traber argued that communication is recognized as an essential human need and, therefore, as a basic human right (Traber, 1992). Without it, no individual or community can exist or prosper. Communication enables meanings to be exchanged, makes people who and what they are, and motivates them to act. Communication strengthens human dignity and validates human equality. As such, recognizing, implementing and protecting communication rights underpins all other human rights (Girard & Ó Siochrú, 2003; Lee, 2004).

One of the pillars of communication rights is the ability to impart and exchange the information and knowledge essential to tackling issues related to poverty, health, education, politics, governance, gender equality, the environment, and the use of new technologies. Policies in these sectors are complex but, from the perspective of today's Agenda 2030 and its Sustainable Development Goals, recognizing and implementing communication rights is crucial. However, access to information and knowledge is only part of the picture. The United Nations Development Programme's Oslo Governance Centre has stated categorically that recognizing the link between human rights and social development matters, and that the human rights framework is an important tool in ensuring that goals are

pursued in an equitable, just, and sustainable manner (*Human Rights and the Millennium Development Goals*). Human rights also provide a normative framework that grounds development work in a universal set of values.

Social exclusion can only be overcome when principles of inclusion and participation form the bedrock of policies and actions aimed at "leaving no one behind" (the mantra of the Sustainable Development Goals). The principles that underlie communication rights determine who participates and whose voices are listened to when decisions are made. This is a *sine qua non*, since the core of human rights standards is that their normative implications pertain to everyone: the very concept of communication rights implicitly demands concrete measures for the inclusion of all people everywhere.

Ten principles to hang on the door of public communication

A persistent problem with the concept of "communication rights" has been how to translate them into practices that people understand and recognize as crucial to lives and livelihoods. The wooden doors of Martin Luther's All Saints' Church have long since been replaced by bronze, although they still carry his 95 theses in the original Latin. But if we were to hang ten principles on the digital portal of today's mass and social media, they would still reflect the essential claim for communication freedoms. In this respect, the following ten principles are formulated as propositions illustrative of communication rights that everyone might reasonably claim as essential to good governance, good citizenship, and democratic accountability:

- *Everyone is entitled to communicate, to inform, and to share knowledge*. This reflects the freedom of

individuals and communities to express their opinions and aspirations.

- *Everyone is entitled to dignity and respect.* This reflects the equality of individuals "without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status".
- *Everyone is entitled to just representation.* This reflects the need for balanced and fair representation in public communication and the need to counter misrepresentation.
- *Everyone is entitled to his or her own cultural and linguistic identity.* This reflects the need for public communication to open up space for alternative worldviews.
- *Everyone is entitled to communication skills and media literacy.* This reflects the need for adequate training and capacity building.
- *Everyone is entitled to accessible communication, information and knowledge at affordable levels.* This reflects the need for genuine accessibility to the communication infrastructure together with a minimum of economic obstacles.
- *Everyone is entitled to take part in the information and communication society.* This reflects the need to dismantle political, economic, social, and cultural barriers.
- *Everyone is entitled to independent mass and social media.* This reflects the need for media accountability, transparency and the symbiotic relationship between good governance and good citizenship.
- *Everyone is entitled to a diversity of opinions and points of view.* This reflects the need for a range of

information sources as well as balanced and contextualised news.

- *Everyone is entitled to fair and unbiased public communication*. This reflects the need for ethical norms and accountability at all levels.

The Global Risks Report 2017 warned:

"A new era of restricted freedoms and increased governmental control could undermine social, political and economic stability and increase the risk of geopolitical and social conflict. Empowered by sophisticated new technological tools in areas such as surveillance, governments and decision-makers around the world are tightening control over civil society organizations, individuals and other actors."

In the context of the digital transformation of society, it is critical to address these issues and to move beyond celebrating greater accessibility and affordability in order to tackle the fundamental questions about ownership and control, regulation, privacy, security and surveillance that are central to digital ethics and to today's right to communicate.

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III

Communication is Inscribed in Human Nature

Michael Traber

The discourse on the right to communicate seems to be gathering new momentum.[1] One reason for this may well be that many people, at the threshold of a new millennium, experience a sense of powerlessness about the world around them. They feel subjected to war, violence and environmental degradation. They feel manipulated in what they buy and how they vote, and feel insecure in their moral judgements. They doubt whether they can still assert themselves about the world they wish to live in and bequeath to their children. They want to speak out but cannot make themselves heard.

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1. *The Journal of International Communication* devoted a double issue (Vol.5, Nos 1&2, 1989) to the debate on communication and human rights in the context of globalisation and cyberspace. It is guest-edited by Shalini Venturelli, and contains contributions from leaders in the field, such as Cees J. Hamelink, George Gerbner, Marc Raboy and others.

In this situation, the discourse on communication as a right – private and public, individual and social – needs to proceed with a high degree of clarity, concentrating on the essential grounding of communication in human nature itself.

Yes, legal frameworks for the right to communicate, and the implementations of this right, are important. So are technologies that can either militate against or enhance the chances of freedom and democracy. And so are the cultural exigencies in an era of increasingly globalised mass media. Just because the right to communicate touches upon so many and such vital facets of human life, the need to find a common ground for the discourse is crucial. This is the main aim of this essay.

Its starting point is what it means to be human. Although we may first and foremost conceive of ourselves as individual persons, our very personhood depends on others. We are both individual and social beings. We then proceed to reflect on human nature as being-with-others, conditioned and orientated towards others. The uniquely human endowment of language as our social and cultural habitat, as well as the source of individual and social empowerment, demonstrates this.

Communication is, therefore, an essential human need and a fundamental social necessity. Its central core is the philosophical notion of intersubjectivity, which implies communication in freedom, equality and solidarity. Our final reflections are on communication as the life-blood of society.

Being-with-others: Intersubjectivity

One of the philosophical questions, which have occupied thinkers for centuries, is that of human authenticity. What are the essential characteristics of the human being? What

distinguishes us from other mammals? What is authentically human?

Human living is different from any other in that it is essentially other-directed. We seem to be conditioned to live in a world of "we", prior to the "I" and "thou". Bernard Lonergan (1972: 57) describes this as follows:

> "Just as one spontaneously raises one's arm to ward off a blow against one's head, so with the same spontaneity one reaches out to save another from falling. Perception, feeling, and bodily movement are involved, but the help given another is not deliberate but spontaneous. One adverts to it not before it occurs but while it is occurring. It is as if 'we' were members of one another prior to our distinctions of each from the others."

It has often been pointed out that humans are the only mammals who are completely dependent on other humans, first and foremost their mothers, when they are born. The very survival of babies depends on others, and not just for a few weeks but for some years. Little wonder then that the first manifestation of intersubjectivity may well be a baby's smile.

We do not learn to smile as we learn to walk, to talk, to swim, to skate. Commonly we do not think of smiling and then do it. We just do it. Again, we do not learn the meaning of smiling as we learn the meaning of words. The meaning of the smile is a discovery we make on our own, and that meaning does not seem to vary from culture to culture, as does the meaning of gestures. There is something irreducible to the smile (Lonergan, 1972: 60).

The smile expresses what a mother or father means to a baby. And throughout our lives a smile indicates what one person means to another. Its meaning is intersubjective. It spontaneously signals the "presence of the other". It is a primordial form of self-transcendence.

Human beings become authentic in self-transcendence. That is the very core of their being social beings. Solipsism is an inhuman abyss. And the intentional "absence of the other" is, in the words of Jean-Paul Sartre, "hell". In contrast, the highest form of self-transcendence is the self-surrender to another in love, which is "the abiding imperative of what is to be human" (Lonergan, 1985: 134). Thus by transcending oneself, one becomes oneself.

Language as self-transcendence

Plato defined the human being as "the animal that speaks" (*zoon logon echon*). There is little point in pitting Plato against his pupil Aristotle, for whom the human being is "the animal that thinks". Both speech and reason condition each other and are dependent on each other. Except that psychologically and in the stages of human development, language comes first.

Humans speak. We speak when we are awake and we speak in our dreams. We are always speaking, even when we do not utter a single word aloud, but merely listen or read, and even when we are not particularly listening or speaking but are attending to some work or taking a rest. We are continually speaking in one way or another. We speak because speaking is natural to us. It does not first arise out of some special volition.

Humans are said to have language by nature. It is held that humans, in distinction from plants and animals, are the living being capable of speech. This statement does not mean only

that, along with other faculties, humans also possess the faculty of speech. It means to say that only speech enables the human being to be the living being he or she is as a human being. It is as the one who speaks that the human being is human (Heidegger, 1971: 189).[2]

The philosophy of language is of course much older than the writings of Heidegger, who called language "the house of being". Yet language as the basis for philosophical anthropology may be one of the principal philosophical insights of the 20th century. Charles Morris' seminal work, *Foundation of a Theory of Signs* (1938), was one of the first fruits of modern semiotics. Morris (1975: 235) later said:

> "Everything which is characteristically human depends on language. The human being is in a real sense the speaking animal. Speech plays the most essential – but not the only – role in the development and preservation of the human self and its aberrations, as it does in the development and maintenance of society and its aberrations."

In the current philosophy of language, reason and language are co-original. One cannot develop without the other. "Reason only advances by means of establishing communicable expressions, and language is the sole and concrete manifestation of reason" (Pasquali, 1997: 43). In the

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2. The translation of this passage by Heidegger has been altered to do justice to the inclusive term he uses for the human being, namely *Mensch,* not *Mann* (man). See also Martin Heidegger, *On the Way to Language*, (trans. Peter D. Hertz), New York: Harper and Row, 1971, in which the author marvels (pp. 47-54) at the Japanese word for language, *koto ha*, which literally means: the flower petals (*ha*) that flourish out of the lightening message of the graciousness that brings them forth (*koto*).

communicative act, "language becomes the basis, form and substance of intersubjectivity" (ibid). Vaclav Havel (1990: 44) summarises the meaning of language as follows:

> "Words could be said to be the very source of our being, the very substance of the cosmic life form we call people. Spirit, the human soul, our self-awareness, our ability to generalise and think in concepts, to perceive the world as the world (and not just as our locality), and, lastly, our capacity to know that we will die – and living in spite of that knowledge: surely all these are mediated or actually created by words."

Human nature itself has provided tangible evidence for this view of language. Susanne K. Langer (1974) discusses in some detail the phenomenon of "wild children" or "wolf children", and the experiments with chimpanzees with respect to language learning. A number of cases of "wolf children", viz. children who grew up without human companionship, have been studied. The best attested are Peter, who was found in the fields near Hanover in 1723, Victor who was captured in Aveyron, Southern France, at the age of about 12, in 1799, and two little girls, Amala and Kamala, who were taken into human custody near Midnapur, India, in 1920.

None of these children could speak in any language; instead they had imitated the sounds of the animals among which they had lived. Amala and Kamala never managed to converse with each other, and after six years in human surroundings, Kamala, (who survived her sister) had learned about 40 words, managed to utter some three-word sentences, but only did so when she was spoken to. Apparently, small children have an optimum period of learning languages, which is lost in later life (see Langer, 1974: 122).

On the question of animal languages, Langer (1964: 33) comes to the following conclusion:

> "Animal language is not language at all, and what is more important it never leads to language. Dogs that live with men learn to understand many verbal signals, but only as signals, in relation to their own actions. Apes that live in droves and seem to communicate fairly well, never converse. But a baby that has only half a dozen words begins to converse: 'Daddy gone'. 'Daddy come?' 'Daddy come'. Question and answer, assertion and denial, denotation and description – these are the basic uses of language. The gap between the animal and human estate is... the language line."

Language then is the common condition of the human species. We live in the house of language. No group, tribe or people has ever been found that did not have a developed language system, regardless of the linguistic differences between them. But the aural articulation of sounds for words and sentences is only one, though the most potent, type of human language. The others are so called body languages, employing mainly touch, gestures and visual symbols as signs. Therefore, being-together as human beings requires a language to form, maintain and express being-in-relation with others, just as language enables us to "name" objects of the world around us.

In brief then, the essence of the human being as a social being is constituted and perfected by language. Being-together-in-the-world, or being intersubjective, is realised and actualised in the self-transcendence of communication. When we are deprived of this togetherness we cannot live lives worthy of human nature. Language is thus the symbolic human construct that allows the forging and maintenance of relationships.

Communication in freedom, equality and solidarity

It is fairly easy to demonstrate (as we have seen) that language is part of being human. Language in action, that is communication, is an individual human need – as basic as food, clothing and shelter. Basic needs are those that are essential for our existence and our very survival. They are the very preconditions of human life. Because of this, basic human needs become fundamental human rights.

While this logic is now generally acknowledged with regard to physical human needs – food/drink, shelter, clothing, perhaps in the descending order listed – the non-material human needs like language and communications are more controversial. Most people seem to survive solitary confinement, exclusion and excommunication, partly because they somehow manage to retain some sort of intentional interpersonal communication, and maintain or renegotiate a sense of belonging even though they are silenced. Being silenced never quite succeeds, because nobody can deprive us of our relational nature.

The experience of being silenced, however, reveals another existential dimension of the human being, namely the need for *freedom*. What good is the house of language if we cannot converse in it freely? Language and freedom are intertwined. The gift of language is at the same time a gift of freedom. Deprivation of freedom makes genuine communication impossible, and the first sign of repression in groups and societies is the curtailment of freedom of speech.

This can be very subtle. Intimidation or the inculcation of fear, the exposure to ridicule may suppress freedom, as can the building up or maintenance of authoritarian structures that allow little or no dissent. Freedom means being part of, and thus being able to participate in, life-in-common. "The principle

of freedom of expression is one that admits of no exceptions, and is applicable to people all over the world by virtue of their human dignity" (MacBride Report, 1980: 18).

> "Human freedom is axiological. It needs no proof. It is part of life experience and can only be reflected on. Reflection reveals that freedom is an integral part of human nature and thus a precondition of humans to be moral beings. Freedom makes all specifically human actions possible, including communications... The rationale for freedom is to become more truly human and humane. Freedom is both part of being human and becoming humane... Only in the free encounter with others can genuine freedom be experienced" (Traber, 1997: 334-335).

Humans, however, are not "born free". They are situated in existing relationships – in families and groups. Humans therefore encounter the freedom of others. True freedom accepts other freedoms unconditionally, and opens up the freedom of others. Freedom, it should be noted, is not primarily orientated towards objects but towards people. Only in the free encounter with others can genuine freedom be experienced. An intersubjective approach to the notion of freedom also establishes the rationale for the limitations of freedom, which are enshrined in the customary (and codified) laws of all societies.

These reflections lead to another dimension of communication: *equality*. We cannot communicate with others when we consider them "inferior". The master may impart information to his slave or servant, but genuine communication hardly takes place. The same is true when men consider women as "inferior" human beings. Mere information, or the sale of

and access to media products, may then become substitutes for genuine communication. Communicative freedom presupposes the recognition that all human beings are of equal worth. And the more explicit equality is and becomes in human interactions, the more easily and completely communication occurs.

Equality as a philosophical concept is unconditional, but does not deny the reality of specific social identities, loyalties or preferential interests. Equality does not mean homogeneity or uniformity. Neither does it contradict the special roles and ranks which societies confer on individuals and groups of people.

But equality also implies the right not to be discriminated against because of race, ethnicity, religion, or sex and age, etc. Commenting on the 1986 *African Charter on Human and People's Rights*, which emphasises the duties of the individual towards the community, and which formalises the notion of group and collective rights, Charles Husband (1998: 139) states:

> "In recognising that our individuality is contingent upon those communities of identity to which we belong we recognise our connectedness, our solidarity. Consequently, individual rights cannot be fully enjoyed, or guaranteed, in the absence of respect for the dignity, integrity, equality and liberty of those communities of identities, including our ethnic community to which we belong. And in demanding the recognition of any one of our communities... we must reciprocally recognise the legitimacy of the existence, and the integrity, of other communities, including their differences from us."

The non-recognition of such identities in public communication may lead to a "proliferation of communicative ghettos in which relatively homogenous audiences consume a narrow diet of information, entertainment and values" (Husband, 1998: 143). The inclusion in the public sphere of differentiated groups is likely to result in a heterogeneous discourse of citizens, in which social identities can be affirmed and collective interests expressed.

There is, however, another type of loyalty – often overlooked – that sustains the right to communicate, namely loyalty towards, and *solidarity* with, the weak and most vulnerable in society, like the physically or mentally ill, or the very young and very old. Solidarity further includes an active commitment to individuals and groups who have been relegated to the margins of society, like the refugees, the outcasts (for whatever reason), and the exploited and oppressed. It is not least a "solidarity with those whose freedom has been taken away, rendering them less than human" (Traber, 1997: 335). Active solidarity is one of the "inescapable claims on one another which we cannot renounce except at the cost of our humanity" (Peukert, quoted in Christians, 1997: 7).

Our common being-in-the-world is ontologically inclusive, and morally transformative. Gross injustices, to say the least, upset and disgust us, and this sense of revulsion may spur us into action. Self-transcendence then acquires a new and ethical quality. Intersubjectivity implicitly strives for an equitable social order and, ultimately, for the "good society", as one cross-cultural study on ethical proto-norms has shown (Christians & Traber, 1997). The good society is not only a utopian projection but also the subject of concrete analysis, which is both a task of social science and of social ethics. The transformative potential of communication is summarised in the following statement:

"Communication which liberates, enables people to articulate their own needs and helps them to act together to meet those needs. It enhances their sense of dignity and underlines their right to full participation in the life of society. It aims to bring about structures in society, which are more just, more egalitarian and more conducive to the fulfilment of human rights" (WACC, 1997: 8).

The right to public communication for all

The human needs approach leads to the right to communicate for individuals. The right is meant to guarantee and implement the social nature of humans through interpersonal communication. Although it implies the right to public communication, an explicit confirmation is still called for, because it is on this level that the right to communicate is most contested.

The right to communicate publicly is foreign to the thinking of all those who have traditionally associated public communication with the political, social and cultural elite of society. The notion of public "social actors" has greatly influenced the history of the press and of all other mass media of communication. The conventional criteria for news are obsessed with the news value of "prominence": the VIPs with political and economic power, and the "stars" of entertainment and of sports. In fact stardom is bequeathed by the media by repeated exposure; it is an invention of Hollywood that has spread from film to television and popular music. The mass media have, in the course of time, developed their own culture with its own norms. One of them is "professionalism". This does not necessarily mean training or education, but the elitist notion that only "special people", with special talents, should

be journalists and broadcasters. Public communication is thus the prerogative of those who can, and do, uphold the professional norms of media culture.

Another expression of elitism is the tendency (and it is no more than that) to evince mistrust towards "common" people who may misuse the freedom and the power of public communication. This mistrust is particularly evident with respect to youth. The assumption is that political and ethical responsibility is the prerogative of members of a certain social and professional class. However, the misuses of the power of public communication in recent years have been very much in professional hands. The reporting of the war in the Persian Gulf (1991), the role radio and television played in the genocide in Rwanda (1994), and the ethnic hubris and war mongering of the media in ex-Yugoslavia (long before the conflicts erupted) are cases in point.

Advocates of the right to public information for all challenge the prerogatives of the political and professional elite. Their model of public communication is democratic rather than authoritarian. They aim at the distribution of communication power from the few to the many, from the elite to the grassroots. This right further stipulates a new role for the State, which becomes only one among several concerned parties; it embraces other institutions as well as groups and organisations – apart from individuals.

In other words, the right to communicate is very much dependent upon the social structures in which public communication takes place. In brief, democracies require more than the election of representatives to a legislative assembly in a multi-party system. Over and beyond voting and party politics, democracy requires people who can make their wishes known – in public – and who participate in the debate about the type of political processes they aspire to.

The right to communicate, however, cannot stand in isolation. It is connected to other human rights, particularly the rights to education, culture and socio-economic development. Hamelink (1998: 56) stresses the entitlement to self-empowerment:

> "Among the essential conditions of people's self-empowerment are access to, and use of, the resources that enable people to express themselves, to communicate these expressions to others, to exchange ideas with others, to inform themselves about events in the world, to create and control the production of knowledge and to share the world's sources of knowledge. These resources include technical infrastructures, knowledge and skills, financial means and natural systems. Their unequal distribution among the world's people obstructs the equal entitlement to the conditions of self-empowerment and should be considered a violation of human rights."

The MacBride Report (1980: 253) says that the right to communicate is a prerequisite for other human rights. There is a direct connection between communication and all those other rights that stress participation in public affairs. Society and its institutions must enable the active participation of all in the economic, political and cultural life of the community. This is not a high-minded expression of benevolence, but a demand of justice. Such participation in the field of communication is of course more than "consumer choice" or passive access to the mass media, or even the interactive chats between buddies on the Internet. The participation meant here is public dialogue about the public good. Its aim is to contribute to the debate

about society, its values and priorities, and, above all, our common future. It's a dynamic and ongoing process, aimed at change and transformation.

Conclusion

So we return to the theme of intersubjectivity, or being-in-the-world-together, thus fashioning our future together. Our togetherness has a personal/private side, with its respective right, and a public responsibility, with its rights. The right to public communication pertains to public order and the public good, which are the right and responsibility of all, not just of a few.

Communication is similar to the nervous system of the human body. It is maintained by a multitude of signals originating from all parts of the body. If the nervous system or the immune system breaks down, the wellbeing of the entire body is in jeopardy. Similarly, no modern democracy can exist, let alone flourish, without a certain level of information and participation. It is thus the very body politic that depends on the right to communicate. The roles of communication, both interpersonal and public, have been aptly described in the first paragraph of Chapter 1 of the MacBride Report (1980: 3):

> "Communication maintains and animates life. It is also the motor and expression of social activity and civilisation; it leads people and peoples from instinct to inspiration, through variegated processes and systems of enquiry, command and control; it creates a common pool of ideas, strengthens the feeling of togetherness... and translates thought into action, reflecting every emotion and need from the humblest tasks of human

survival to supreme manifestations of creativity – or destruction. Communication integrates knowledge, organisation of power and runs as a thread linking the earliest memory of man [humans] to his [their] noblest aspirations through constant striving for a better life. As the world has advanced, the task of communication has become ever more complex and subtle – to contribute to the liberation of [hu]mankind from want, oppression and fear and to unite it in community and communion, solidarity and understanding. However, unless some basic structural changes are introduced, the potential benefits of technological and communication development will hardly be put at the disposal of the majority of [hu]mankind."

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IV

Communication and Information Poverty in the Context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Lorenzo Vargas & Philip Lee

Millions of people on every continent lack access to communication platforms, are underrepresented or misrepresented in the media, have low levels of media literacy, have restricted access to relevant and accurate information and knowledge, are excluded from participation in decision-making processes, and live in contexts with limited media freedom. These issues can be summed up as communication and information poverty, a form of poverty that contributes to people's sense of powerlessness and inability to make themselves heard, one of the most prevalent manifestations of poverty

according to a landmark 2000 World Bank study.[1] As such, communication and information poverty is a critical dimension of poverty in all its forms.

Addressing these types of communication and information issues is critical to achieving the vision of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).[2] This is because these issues impede full participation in development processes, especially for the poorest and most marginalized people in society. This belief echoes the findings of a 2013 report published by the UN Development Group on the post-2015 development agenda, which found that people want to have a public voice in decisions concerning development and calls for "putting people – their rights, aspirations and opportunities – at the centre of development".[3]

For example, it is difficult to imagine that universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services (SDG 3, Target 3.7) can be achieved unless women and girls can obtain accurate knowledge about reproductive health and are able to participate in decision-making processes about healthcare priorities. Similarly, reducing corruption and bribery (SDG 16, Target 5) will be difficult to achieve unless journalists have the necessary freedom and protection to investigate and shed light on cases of bribery.

Unfortunately, tackling communication and information poverty does not always form part development agendas set by donor partners, international institutions, and national

1   Deepa Narayan, Robert Chambers, Meera K. Shah, Patti Petesch. (2000). *Voices of the Poor: Crying Out for Change*. World Bank. New York: Oxford University Press.

2   Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. (2015). Sustainable Development Goals https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs.

3   United Nations Development Group. (2013). *A Million Voices: The World We Want. A Sustainable Future With Dignity For All*.

governments. Equitable access to communication and information, despite being the backbone of democratic societies, is often merely taken for granted by those who set development priorities. This can partly be attributed to the fact that communication and information issues are often less tangible than other development priorities, such as food security or access to life-saving medication. Nevertheless, information and communication considerations must be part of development agendas as they help enable the achievement of a range of other objectives, and can enhance the long-term sustainability of some development outcomes, such as health-related behavioural change.[4]

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda does shed light on a number of communication and information issues, which is very encouraging. For example, SDG 5 highlights the importance of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as tools for women's empowerment, while SDG 9 promotes universal internet access. ICTs are also mentioned in SDG 4 and SDG 17. SDG 16 calls attention to the importance of access to public information legislation and to the imperative of protecting journalists, trade unionists, and human rights defenders. Despite this progress, greater integration of communication and information issues into the SDGs and their targets would have strengthened the vision of Agenda 2030.

This chapter is based on a process that involved face-to-face and online consultations with grassroots communication activists around the world. It explores the relationship between communication and information issues and the 2030 Agenda. It also presents a series of recommendations for donor governments, international institutions, national governments,

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4   Sugg, (2016). "Coming of Age: Communication's Role in Powering Global Health". BBC Media Action

and other stakeholders to address communication and information poverty as part of development interventions guided by SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and SDG 17 (Partnership for Goals), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions).

Equally importantly, these recommendations reflect the position that taking a rights-based approach to communication and information is the most ethical way to address the issues mentioned above. This is because of the existence of widely accepted rights frameworks around communication and information, such as the right to freedom of expression, the right to access information, and linguistic rights, all of which draw on principles of equality, accessibility, affordability and inclusion.

Even so, communication between human beings is often taken for granted. Greek philosophers described human beings as "the animal that speaks", which later became "the animal that thinks" (see Michael Traber's chapter in this book). Communication (as a portmanteau word for speech, writing, visuals and now digital media) plays the most essential, though not the only, role in the development and maintenance of the human self, families, communities, and nations. The need to communicate is intrinsic to human nature. In this regard, communication is pivotal for individual participation, for communities organizing for change, and for a healthy social fabric.

In this respect, communication is political and controlling it becomes an exercise in power. Political and social change – and with them sustainable development – depend on unfettered access to communications. Conversely, communication and information poverty, a form of poverty that goes hand-in-hand with economic and social poverty, needs to be addressed in order to achieve sustainable development. Communication and

information are "essential conditions for development and affect every aspect of life. [Therefore], communication and information poverty, despite being only one dimension of poverty, affects all other dimensions".[5]

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Key Manifestations of Communication and Information Poverty

Lack of access to platforms meaningfully to raise concerns about issues that affect one's life

Under/misrepresentation in media content

Low levels of media literacy

Limited access to relevant information, including public information

Exclusion from decision-making processes

Restrictions on freedom of association and assembly

Absence of a free, independent, inclusive, and pluralistic media sector

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Communication and Development

The relationship between communication and development has taken many forms over the years, although the notion of communication and information poverty has not always been at the centre of this debate. Since the inception of international development as a global project in the 1950s, development practitioners and researchers have highlighted the potential

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5 Barja Daza, Gover and Bjorn-Soren Gigler. (2007). "The Concept of Information Poverty and How to Measure it in the Latin American Context". In Hernan Galperin and Judith Mariscal, eds. *Digital Poverty: Latin American and Caribbean Perspectives*. International Development Research Centre (IDRC) https://www.researchgate.net/publication248381571_The_Concept_ of_Information_Poverty_and_How_to_Measure_it_in_the_Latin_American_Context

of communication in supporting development processes.[6] Over the years, this led to the emergence of greatly varying practices within the field of communication for development, such as communication strategies for agricultural extension, technology transfer, behavioural change, and participatory communication.[7] As a result, a plethora of labels has emerged to describe the field, such as communication for social change, development communication, development support communication, communication for development, participatory communication, media development, development media, social communication, and behavioural change communication.[8, 9]

Two main approaches have historically shaped the role of communication in development. On the one hand is an understanding of communication as "a linear process of information transmission that causes social change in terms of knowledge, attitudes and behaviours". This understanding is typically connected to the view of development as modernization, which emphasizes the replication of Western paths to progress. An example would be early models of agricultural extension, which provided farmers in the Global South with information about new farming practices often without taking into account the local context. The transmission

6   Melkote, Srinivas R. (2000). "Reinventing Development Support Communications to Account for Power and Control in Development". In Karin Gwinn Wilkins, ed. *Redeveloping Communication for Social Change: Theory, Practice, and Power*. Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers.

7   Colle, Royal D. (2008). "The Threads of Development Communication". In Jan Servaes, ed. *Communication for Development and Social Change*. New Delhi & London: Sage Publications.

8   Quarry, Wendy & Ramirez, Ricardo (2009). *Communication for Another Development: Listening Before Telling*. London and New York: Zed Books Ltd.

9   Manyozo, Linje. (2011). "Rethinking Communication for Development Policy: Some Considerations". In Robin Mansel and Marc Raboy, eds. *The Handbook of Global Media and Communication Policy*. Blackwell Publishing.

approach generally tends to overlook issues such as local culture, local access to media, and farmers' ability to participate in decision-making, all of which are related to communication and information poverty.

On the other hand, there is the view that "communication is a complex process that is linked to culture, and that is connected to global and local economic, political, and ideological structures". This idea is conceptually linked to views of development as the empowerment of marginalized communities and challenging unequal power relationships.[10, 11] An example is the use of community-based theatre as a mechanism to generate debate, explore cultural identities, and build consensus around common problems. This approach tends to understand communication and information from a rights-based perspective, and addresses key communication and information poverty issues such as the existence of platforms for genuine participation, media literacy, and cultural and linguistic relevance.

The field has also been shaped by regional concepts of communication, with some regions of the world having a strong tradition in participatory dialogue-based communication and others having historically focused on media structures or on media content for development.[12]

Today, there is growing consensus that communication-based development interventions should abide by principles such as inclusion, locally driven development, gender equality, community empowerment, participation, and respect for human

10 Sevaes, Jan. (2006). "Introduction". In Jan Servaes, ed. *Communication for Development and Social Change*. New Delhi & London: Sage Publications.

11 Melkote, Srinivas R. and Leslie Steeves (2001). *Communication for Development in the Third World*. New Delhi & London: Sage Publications.

12 Manyozo, Linje (2012). *Media, Communication and Development: Three approaches*. New Delhi & London: Sage Publications.

rights. There is also increased recognition that all of the approaches to communication for development can contribute to processes of social change, depending on the local context, the issue at hand, and the appropriateness of tools used (mass media, community media, community dialogue, public art, etc.).

The notion of communication as a cyclical or two-way process of exchange embedded in culture is also a defining feature of interventions that view communication as one of the building blocks of sustainable development. This changing understanding of communication reaffirms the idea that integrating communication and information issues into development is more about a holistic approach that addresses communication and information poverty than about simply providing people with information or access to communication technologies.

Approaches to integrating communication into development processes include:

- *Communication for Social Change*: "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."[13]
- *Communication for Development*: "A social process based on dialogue using a broad range of tools and methods. 'ComDev' [or C4D] is about seeking change at different levels including listening, building trust, sharing knowledge and skills, building policies,

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13 Maria Elena Figueroa, D. Lawrence Kincaid, Manju Rani, and Gary Lewis. (2002). *Communication for Social Change: An integrated Model for Measuring the Process and Its Outcomes*. The Communication for Social Change Working Paper Series. The Rockefeller Foundation.

debating, and learning for sustained and meaningful change. It is not public relations or corporate communications."[14]

- A slightly different definition is "Communication for Development goes beyond providing information: it involves understanding people, their beliefs and values, the social and cultural norms that shape their lives. It involves engaging communities and listening to adults and children as they identify problems, propose solutions and act upon them. Communication for development is a two-way process for sharing ideas and knowledge using a range of communication tools and approaches that empower individuals and communities to take actions to improve their lives."[15]

- *Social and Behaviour Change Communication (SBCC)*: "The use of communication to change behaviours, including service utilization, by positively influencing knowledge, attitudes, and social norms."[16]

- *Media Development*: "Efforts to build media or ICTs infrastructures, media and communication policies, and journalists' capacities… The aim is to consolidate good governance, free speech, political citizenship, and sustainable development."[17] UNESCO's Media

14 The Communication Initiative, FAO, World Bank. (2007). *World Congress on Communication for Development: Lessons Learned, Challenges, and the Way Forward*. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / The World Bank.

15 UNICEF. (2018). *Communication for Development: Communication Lies at the Heart of Sustainable Development*. https://www.unicef.org/cbsc/

16 Health Communication Capacity Collaborative. (2012). *What is SBCC?* http://ccp.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/JHU_Social_and_Behaviour_FULL_OUTLINES_V2.pdf

17 Manyozo, Linje. (2016). The Governance and Sustainable Livelihoods Strands in *Media Development*. DW Akademie. Deutsche Welle.

Development Indicators are widely accepted as the main framework to assess media development.[18]

- *Communication rights and media-related advocacy*: Initiatives to modify or establish laws, policies and/or practices related to issues such as access to information, freedom of expression, media governance, or media democracy.
- *ICTs for Development*: The use of digital information and communication technologies (ICTs) and "big data" to enable and to "fast forward"[19] progress on development. The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Action Lines[20] provide a comprehensive framework to guide this work.

It should be underlined that that these are only some approaches to integrating communication into development. Other approaches, such as "edu-communication", "edutainment", health communication, and social marketing are also important parts of the field.

A Rights-Based View of Communication

Many believe that addressing communication and information poverty though development interventions should be done from a rights-based perspective. This is because, in addition to drawing on existing and widely accepted rights frameworks,

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18 UNESCO. (2008). *Media Development Indicators: A Framework for Assessing Media Development*. UNESCO.

19 ITU. (2018). ICTs for a Sustainable World. Website. https://www.itu.int/en/sustainable-world/Pages/default.aspx

20 WSIS Forum. (2015). WSIS-SDG Matrix: Linking WSIS Action Lines with Sustainable Development Goals. ITU. https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/sdg/Content/Documents/wsis-sdg_matrix_document.pdf

a rights-based approach provides development practitioners with a common lens with which to view, understand and address communication and information issues.

The right to freedom of expression, enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights,[21] is the starting point for taking a rights-based approach to communication and information. "It is regarded as a central pillar of democracy, protecting the right to call our rulers to account, vital to preventing censorship, an indispensable condition of effective and free media." [22] However, power among people in any given society both enables and limits access to information and communication, which may in some cases undermine freedom of expression. For example:

> "A poor person seeking to highlight injustice in their lives and a powerful media mogul each have, before the law, precisely the same protection for their right to freely express their views. In practice, however, the former lacks a means to have her/his voice heard, while the latter can powerfully amplify her/his message and ensure it is widely heard."[23]

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21 United Nations. (1948). *Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 19: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes the freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.* http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/

22 CRIS Campaign. (2005). *Assessing Communication Rights: a Handbook.* Communication Rights in the Information Society Campaign. Pg.22. http://cdn.agilitycms.com/wacc-global/Images/Galleries/RESOURCES/COMMUNICATION-RIGHTS/Assessing-Communication-Rights.pdf

23 CRIS Campaign. (2005). *Assessing Communication Rights: a Handbook.* Communication Rights in the Information Society Campaign. Pg.22. http://cdn.agilitycms.com/wacc-global/Images/Galleries/RESOURCES/COMMUNICATION-RIGHTS/Assessing-Communication-Rights.pdf

As a result, the right to freedom of expression is best guaranteed when promoted *alongside* a number of other rights. This is particularly important today as communication ecosystems are becoming increasingly complex due to rapid technological change, different levels of access to platforms, multi-layered and often transnational media governance processes, growing dependence on digital technology, and the emergence of media as a key space to advance inclusion and social change.[24]

Other rights that help "construct the environment in which freedom of expression may be fully consummated" include "a right to participate in one's own culture and language, to enjoy the benefits of science, to information, to education, to participation in governance, to privacy, to peaceful assembly, to the protection of one's reputation"[25] all of which are part of the International Bill of Rights.[26] Other crucial elements include diversity of media content and ownership, press freedom, diverse and independent media, and democratic access to media.[27]

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24 Couldry, Nick and Clemencia Rodriguez (2015). "Chapter 13- Media and Communications". *Rethinking Society for the 21st Century: Report of the International Panel on Social Progress*. https://www.ipsp.org/

25 CRIS Campaign. (2005). *Assessing Communication Rights: a Handbook*. Communication Rights in the Information Society Campaign. Pg.23. http://cdn.agilitycms.com/wacc-global/Images/Galleries/RESOURCES/COMMUNICATION-RIGHTS/Assessing-Communication-Rights.pdf

26 The International Bill of Human Rights (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/Compilation1.1en.pdf

27 CRIS Campaign. (2005). *Assessing Communication Rights: a Handbook*. Communication Rights in the Information Society Campaign. Pg.21-24. http://cdn.agilitycms.com/wacc-global/Images/Galleries/RESOURCES/COMMUNICATION-RIGHTS/Assessing-Communication-Rights.pdf

The following are some of the key rights already recognized in international human rights documents that help enable access to information, communication, and participation at all levels:

- Freedom of expression, including the right of the media to operate freely (Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) 18, 19, 21, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) 19);
- Access information from public and private sources that pertains to the public interest (UDHR 19, ICCPR 19);
- A diverse and plural media, in terms of sources, content, views and means of transmission (UDHR 19, ICCPR 19);
- Universal access to the media necessary to engage with the public sphere, including direct communication and a right to assembly (UDHR 19, ICCPR 19, 21, 22).
- The right to literacy and to a basic education (UDHR 26, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) 13).
- Affordable and equitable access to the means and media for knowledge-sharing (UDHR 19, 27, ICCPR 19, 27);
- Communicate in one's mother tongue in key spheres such as politics and media (ICCPR 10f, 27); and
- Privacy of personal communication (ICCPR 17).[28]

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28 CRIS Campaign. (2005). *Assessing Communication Rights: a Handbook*. Communication Rights in the Information Society Campaign. Pg.42. http://cdn.agilitycms.com/wacc-global/Images/Galleries/RESOURCES/COMMUNICATION-RIGHTS/Assessing-Communication-Rights.pdf

How Communication and Information Poverty Undermines the Vision of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

"Transforming our World: Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development" is the United Nations framework for development between 2015 and 2030. It is a universal agenda, including both developed and developing countries, that seeks to balance economic growth, environmental sustainability, peace, and human development in order to achieve meaningful change. Agenda 2030 is grounded in human rights frameworks and reaffirms the outcomes of other global processes such as the Declaration on the Right to Development (1986), the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development (1992), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (1992), and the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), among others.

Agenda 2030 sets 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are "integrated and indivisible, global in nature and universally applicable, taking into account different

national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities". Each Goal contains several Targets in order to guide implementation, though these targets remain "aspirational and global".[29]

While the implementation of the SDGs is the responsibility of national governments, Agenda 2030 envisions a Global Partnership between governments, civil society, the private sector, UN agencies, and other stakeholders in order to mobilize the resources and knowledge needed to implement the vision of Agenda 2030.

However, it seems obvious that the vision of Agenda 2030 cannot be fully realised unless communication and information ecosystems enable people to participate in decision-making related to their sustainable development needs. During the consultation process that led to the drafting of this chapter, SDGs 5 (Gender Equality), 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure), 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions), and 17 (Partnership for the Goals) were identified as key points where the intersection with communication and information poverty is most evident. Thinking and recommendations around these SDGs are explored in the sections that follow.

SDG 5- Gender Equality

Agenda 2030 recognizes the importance of addressing gender inequality as a central component of bringing about sustainable development. Goal 5 seeks to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Its nine targets and 14 indicators address critical gender issues such as discrimination against

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29 United Nations. (2015). Declaration. Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld

women and girls, violence against women and girls, harmful practices such as early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation(FGM), women's unpaid work, women's access to economic resources, and access to sexual and reproductive health, among others.[30]

Gender inequality is a key dimension of Communication and Information Poverty because gender issues affect how women and girls are represented in the media, have access to media platforms, and gain information and knowledge. Gender inequality also undermines the ability of women and girls to exercise their right to freedom of expression, which in turn prevents them from fully participating in decision-making processes about matters that affect their lives. In this sense, Communication and Information Poverty perpetuates gender inequality in a broader sense and undermines sustainable development.

Four targets in particular under Goal 5 highlight the relationship between communication and information poverty and gender equality. The first is *Target 5.1. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere*. As research has shown,[31] women are under and misrepresented in media content, a form of discrimination that exacerbates, perpetuates, and normalizes other forms of discrimination against women and girls.

The second target under Goal 5 is *Target 5.2. Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public sphere, including trafficking and other types of exploitation*. Many women and girls around the world face violence when exercising their right to freedom of expression. This is

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30 Sustainable Development Goal 5. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg5
31 Macharia, Sarah, et al. (2015). *Who Makes the News? Global Media Monitoring Project 2015*. World Association for Christian Communication. http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp/gmmp-reports/gmmp-2015-reports

particularly the case for women journalists, as many face gender-based violence at work according to a survey from the International Federation of Journalists.[32] The issue has also repeatedly come up in the context of online communications.

The third target under Goal 5 is *Target 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.* The link to communication and information issues is self-evident as women need to have access to communication platforms and to information in order to enjoy full and effective participation. The reference to equal opportunities for leadership, also reflected in indicator 5.5.2, is also important as it reinforces the need to promote women's leadership within the media sector.

The fourth target under Goal 5 is Target 5.B: *Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.* As mentioned above, one of the key manifestations of communication and information poverty is limited access to communication platforms and resources. Having greater access to a mobile phone, as Indicator 5.B.1 for this Target states, would certainly help address a number of communication and information needs for many women.

Working towards these targets is critical to helping address communication and information poverty as experienced by women and girls. Nevertheless, as the 2015 Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) report argues, there is significant work to be done to promote gender equality in communications. Despite considerable effort by activists, allies in the media,

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32 International Federation of Journalists. (2017). IFJ survey: One in two women journalists suffer gender-based violence at work. http://www.ifj.org/nc/en/ news-single-view/backpid/1/article/ifj-survey-one-in-two-women-journalists-suffer-gender-based-violence-at-work/

media training institutions and others, achieving gender equality in and through the media remains a formidable task. The GMMP's statistical evidence points to a loss of traction in narrowing media gender disparities over the past decade and regression on some indicators.[33]

At the same time, public awareness about the relationship between communication, gender, and development has grown in recent years, as has the number of initiatives by UN agencies, stakeholder networks, and civil society organizations. For example, the UNESCO-led Global Alliance for Media and Gender (GAMAG) was founded in 2013 to accelerate the implementation of recommendations on "Women and the Media" contained in "Section J" of the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. Similarly, in 2016 UN Women launched the Step It Up for Gender Equality Media Compact to urge media organizations to play their part in advancing gender equality and women's rights within the Post-2015 Development Framework.

Such developments reaffirm the imperative of considering communication issues both from a gender justice and from a human rights perspective.

Recommendations to Address Communication and Information Poverty from a Gender Perspective in the Context of Agenda 2030

Donor governments, national governments, international institutions, and civil society, need to:

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33 Macharia, Sarah, et al. (2015). *Who Makes the News? Global Media Monitoring Project 2015*. World Association for Christian Communication. http://whomakesthenews.org/gmmp/gmmp-reports/gmmp-2015-reports

- Recognize that gender inequality has an impact on the way people access communication and information, which in turn limits their ability to improve their lives. For example, while gender disparities in relation to communication and information vary widely depending on context, men tend to have greater access to information than women, which in turn excludes many women and girls from participating in decision-making;
- Support initiatives to enable and enhance women and girls' ability to participate in development processes, including access to media platforms where they can raise concerns about issues that affect their lives and opportunities for women's groups to establish their own media;
- Strengthen research and advocacy related to the representation of women and girls in media content;
- Promote women and girls' access to learning opportunities about media literacy, particularly in relation SDG 4 (Quality Education);
- Promote wide access to public information, particularly in ways that take into account the gendered dimension of access to information;
- Support efforts to make all media outlets "safe spaces" for women and girls. This can take the form of internal dialogue, the development of ethical standards, awareness raising, and specially crafted content. Community media, a form of media that is supposed to reflect values such as inclusion, diversity, and equality, should take the lead in guiding commercial and public media towards greater gender equality;
- Promote and strengthen networks of media professionals working for gender equality;

- Encourage and recognize the work of women through public communication via traditional and digital media platforms. This can take the form of advocacy, awareness raising, and specialized content;
- Support efforts to tackle patriarchal cultural practices and social norms at all levels, particularly at the grassroots level. Moreover, support communication and education processes that can help to raise awareness about the impact of patriarchy on society and help change behaviours in matters related to gender issues. This should also include working with community and religious leaders that reinforce patriarchy;
- Build the capacity of women and women's rights organizations at all levels, particularly at the grassroots level to articulate the ways in which women experience gender inequality;
- Support media training of women to help enable their participation in the media sector as journalists, editors, and managers.

A Declaration[34] was issued following a Consultation in New York in 2017, which offered additional recommendations, some of which are:

- Help eliminate gender stereotypes and hate speech from public media, and continually promote gender equality in the media;

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34 WACC Project Partners. (2018). *The New York Declaration: Gender and Media Post-2015*. World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) http://whomakesthenews.org/articles/from-bangkok-to-new-york-gender-media-post-2015

- Incorporate gender-sensitivity, local history and cultural diversity in the education and training of professionals in the field of communications in order to increase gender sensitivity of reporting and to eliminate sexist and misogynist media content;
- Ensure freedom of expression for women and lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender groups;
- Strengthen the visibility of women and girls from minority and marginalized groups, rural women, women with disabilities, migrants, refugees, displaced women, and their equal access to media to be part of media content production, news making and speaking about their experiences.
- Developing and promoting media tools for gender sensitive reporting (gender sensitive language, databases of experts, journalist codes) but also continually monitoring their implementation in media content, in the community of journalists and their associations.

SDG 9- Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure & SDG 17- Partnership for the Goals

In the United Nation's 2030 Agenda, SDGs 9 and 17 recognize the need to enable people everywhere to benefit from access to the Internet and to mobile telephony. This represents undeniable progress from a communication and information perspective as increased access to relevant technology and platforms can help equip people with the tools to participate in the information society, have their voices heard, and contribute to the production and dissemination of knowledge. This is especially relevant as it is estimated that about three

billion people today lack access to the internet and about two billion do not have access to a mobile phone.[35]

Goal 9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) highlights the issue of access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and the Internet under Target 9.C *Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020.*[36] For national governments, this Goal reinforces their obligation to provide universal access to basic telecommunication services to their citizens, including those living in remote areas. It also creates an opportunity to promote more democratic models for the development and ownership of communication infrastructure, as exemplified by community-managed telecommunication company *Telecomunicaciones Indigenas Comunitarias* (TIC) in Oaxaca, Mexico.[37, 38]

Goal 17 (Partnership for the Goals) focuses on the finance, technology, capacity, trade, effectiveness, monitoring issues related to the implementation of Agenda 2030.[39] Under the "technology" Target area of this SDG, two Targets focus on internet access. Target 17.6 *Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and*

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35 2018 Global Digital Report. (2018). https://wearesocial.com/us/blog/2018/01/global-digital-report-2018

36 Sustainable Development Goal 9. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg9

37 Ó Siochrú, Seán. (2017). *Spectrum Innovation for Small-Scale Community-Owned Mobile Telephony: Strategic Considerations*. World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) and World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC).

38 Lakhani, Nina. (2016). "It feels like a gift': mobile phone co-op transforms rural Mexican community". *The Guardian* https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/aug/15/mexico-mobile-phone-network-indigenous-community.

39 Sustainable Development Goal 17 https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdg17

access to science, technology and innovation, Indicator 17.6.2 *Fixed Internet broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants, by speed*; and Target 17.8 *Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology*, Indicator 17.8.1 *Proportion of individuals using the Internet.* Increased access to the internet can have a significant impact on communication and information needs, especially at the grassroots level,[40] particularly as access to services in many parts of the world is increasingly Internet-mediated.

The focus on access to ICTs and Internet services in Agenda 2030 is commendable. Nevertheless, at a time when digital communication is becoming increasingly prevalent and policymakers in many countries are developing the digital infrastructure and governance models of the future, it is critical to move beyond the mere celebration of access in order to address more structural issues. Questions about ownership, regulation, privacy, and illegal surveillance of civil society actors must be central elements of the conversation about ICTs in development. Some of these issues have been raised by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression, David Kaye, in his office's 2015, 2016, and 2017 reports.[41]

Agenda 2030 is an opportunity to advance transparency and accountability in relation to the digital infrastructure of

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40 Rey-Moreno, Carlos. (2017). "Understanding Community Networks in Africa. Internet Society". https://www.internetsociety.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/CommunityNetworkingAfrica_report_May2017_1.pdf

41 United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. Freedom of Opinion and Expression- Annual Reports http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/FreedomOpinion/Pages/Annual.aspx

the 21st century. Failure to address these issues will raise political and ethical concerns ranging from the subversion of democracy to intrusion into and control over peoples' lives. This may ultimately undermine the credibility and legitimacy of digital platforms, as the scandal around privacy practices at Facebook in 2018 demonstrated.[42]

Greater access to the Internet and digital platforms alone will not be sufficient to contribute to sustainable development. It is essential to promote the use of these new tools in such a way that those communities most often excluded achieve greater participation and that helps create the political will to implement public policies which contribute to greater equity and inclusion. This use of digital platforms must occur within a framework of rights that help generate genuine opportunities for free and informed participation to promote truly sustainable development.

Recommendations to Leverage Increased Access to ICTs and to the Internet in order to Address Communication and Information Poverty

Despite the existence of several problematic aspects in the field of digital communication, such platforms continue to be vital tools for marginalized communities in that they help influence the media and public policy agendas in favour of their interests, help their communities organize for change, and encourage active citizenship. Donor governments, national governments, international institutions, and civil society, are called on to:

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42 Sich Adam. James Bullock, and Simon Roberts. (2018). "What is the Cambridge Analytica scandal?" The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/news/video/2018/mar/19/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-cambridge-analytica-expose-video-explainer

- Support community-initiated efforts to develop and/or manage telecommunications infrastructure in order to increase access to mobile telephony and internet services
- Promote initiatives that link established community media platforms to ICTs, especially in ways that promote interactivity and participation. The community media sector has a wealth of expertise and experience in participatory and democratic participation. Combining community with ICT can serve to turn increased access to ICTs into community-level participation;
- Facilitate the formation of networks of citizen communicators and journalists belonging to marginalized communities and social movements so that they can use digital communication platforms in their advocacy work on issues that affect their communities;
- Advance research about the relationship between access to ICTs, community participation, and development;
- Promote inter-sectoral partnerships to address violations of human rights online, such as online violence and illegal surveillance;
- Build digital media production training for marginalized and excluded communities, including women and girls;
- Support digital media literacy among marginalized and excluded communities, including women and girls;
- Build the capacity of marginalized and excluded communities, including women and girls, to develop and use open-source software;

- Build the capacity of civil society organizations to participate in policy making processes related to communication infrastructure, policy, and digital rights; and
- Promote digital solutions that help enable community participation in decision-making.

These recommendations should be implemented based on the following principles:

- Communication is a fundamental human right;
- Freedom of expression is a central element of communication seen from a rights perspective;
- The contents disseminated by digital platforms must reflect ethics, respect, pluralism and responsibility;
- The inclusion of traditionally excluded groups, for example people living with disabilities, in the use of digital platforms is essential to foster pluralism;
- Networks of citizen communicators and journalists should be horizontal, inclusive, multicultural, and democratic;
- Advocacy using digital tools must be carried out without endangering the security or the rights of the people involved; the use of encryption technologies is critical to achieve this; and
- Collaboration and networking are fundamental elements for the success of any digital advocacy effort.

SDG 16- Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

The 2030 Agenda, within the framework of Goal 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) recognizes that democracy, good governance and the rule of law play a fundamental role in achieving sustainable development.[43] Open and democratic access to communication and information underpins the achievement of all these objectives as it can help promote social inclusion, peaceful conflict resolution, advance the rule of law, shed light on corruption, promote trust in institutions, and enable participation. There is also a direct link to fundamental freedoms such as freedom of expression and freedom of association. A number of Targets within this goal have a direct link to communication and information issues.

Target 16.1 *Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere is strongly linked to media and communication issues*. Open and trust-based communication has the potential to help ameliorate conflict situations, promote a culture of dialogue, and advance non-violent conflict resolution. Peace-oriented media can also create spaces for meaningful exchange among perceived adversaries. Responsible and ethical media coverage of conflict can help counter hate speech, change perceptions and behaviours, and ensure access to information on conflict prevention.

Target 16.3 *Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all is intimately linked to information and communication issues*. Media freedom, access to information, and freedom of expression are essential to keep institutions in check, as well as to promote trust in the justice system.

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43 Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld

Target 16.5 *Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms* has a strong relationship to media freedom issues, as media outlets and investigative journalists need protection and safeguards to ensure they can carry out their work effectively. It would be difficult to reduce corruption when the media are concentrated in a few hands and journalists do not have the freedom to investigate cases of corruption.

In relation to Target 16.6 *Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels*, it is clear that freedom of information and other communication rights are essential to promote transparency and accountability within public institutions. The media ought to reflect the views of all sectors of society, especially those of the most disadvantaged people in society, in order to achieve greater transparency and diversity within public institutions.

Target 16.7 *Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels* has multiple connections to communication and information issues. An essential element of exercising communication rights is the opportunity for people to participate in decision-making, especially in relation to issues that directly affect their lives. This requires access to information, particularly public information. People must also be able to exercise their right to freedom of expression, have access to relevant means of communication and be guaranteed a right of reply and redress. People also have the right to participate in the "formulation and governance of the communication sphere… at the national level, but also in the context of international relations."[44]

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44 CRIS Campaign. (2005). *Assessing Communication Rights: a Handbook*. Communication Rights in the Information Society Campaign. Pg.42. http://cdn.agilitycms.com/wacc-global/Images/Galleries/RESOURCES/COMMUNICATION-RIGHTS/Assessing-Communication-Rights.pdf

Target 16.10 *Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements* has numerous connections to communication and information issues. The two Indicators under this Target reflect this: Indicator 16.10.1 *Number of verified cases of killing, kidnapping, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention and torture of journalists, associated media personnel, trade unionists and human rights advocates in the previous 12 months* and Indicator 16.10.2 *Number of countries that adopt and implement constitutional, statutory and/or policy guarantees for public access to information.* The inclusion of this Target and Indicators in Agenda 2030 is commendable. While an indicator related to freedom of expression would have strengthened this Target, especially in relation to the reference to "fundamental freedoms", this Target is still central for all those working on addressing communication and information poverty.

Target 16.B. *Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development* can also be examined from a communication and information perspective. Numerous groups in society face discrimination and other barriers in relation to communication and information. For example, many indigenous people are unable to access public information in their language, preventing them from participating in society.

In sum, the explicit references to communication and information issues within Goal 16 are limited to access to public information and to the protection of journalists and other human rights defenders. In this sense, the Goal fails to reference pivotal issues such as freedom of expression, linguistic rights, digital convergence, and media ownership and control that are firmly related to peace, justice, and strong democratic institutions.

Nevertheless, the many instances in which communication and information issues implicitly intersect with the Targets of SDG 16, as listed above, represent valuable opportunities for those tackling communication and information poverty. These intersections allow groups working in fields such as community media, media monitoring, advocacy on access to information, participatory communication, and citizen journalism to make direct links to specific SDGs in order to highlight the importance of their work and to gain broader support for it.

Recommendations to address communication and information poverty in the context of SDG 16

Donors, national governments, international institutions, and civil society are called:

- At the national level, to support an audit of existing communication and information laws and regulations in order to identify systemic policy and legal issues that undermine the rule of law, the struggle against corruption, trust-based relationships between citizens and institutions, participatory decision-making, fundamental freedoms, and the fight against discrimination;
- At the national level, to convene a summit of key stakeholders (civil society, public sector, media and communication organizations) to discuss communication and information poverty issues based on the national audit described above;
- To develop awareness-raising campaigns about the ways in which communication and information

poverty undermines peace, justice, and strong institutions;

- To work towards a Communication Rights Charter as a way to galvanize support around the need to address communication and information poverty;
- To support community media, particularly community radio, as it can be an effective communication platform to enable individuals and communities to participate in decision-making and access relevant information, particularly when strategically linked to social media platforms or SMS systems. Community media outlets that actively facilitate listeners' groups and are linked to people's organizations should be prioritized. This support should include extensive capacity building and efforts to link community stations with one another in order to share knowledge and technical expertise;
- To protect journalists and media workers linked to community media outlets, most of whom lack the support of established media organizations;
- To support and strengthen the role of independent public service media as one of the cornerstones of diverse and pluralistic media systems;
- To support the integration of media literacy into education systems, including adult education initiatives, in order to equip people with the knowledge and skills to demand transparent and accountable institutions and to participate in decision-making;
- To support interpersonal communication efforts. Peace, access to justice, and more productive

relationships between citizens and institutions can be greatly advanced through interpersonal communication processes, such as community dialogue, public forums, public art, etc. These are spaces where ideas can be discussed and shared. Communication processes must be consultative and non-hierarchical in order to lead to meaningful change;

- To highlight the experience of marginalized communities in public communication from a pluralistic perspective. This can help to strengthen institutions and to create spaces for new issues to be discussed. This can take the form of media content, especially when produced by communities themselves, which sheds light on the stories of those communities in order to promote awareness and international solidarity. This can help to address under- and misrepresentation, a phenomenon that undermines peaceful coexistence, fair treatment, and social cohesion;

- To build the strategic communications capacity of civil society organizations in order to enable them better to effect change. This also entails access to communication technologies and resources;

- To promote a diverse, open, free, accountable, and democratic media system;

- To defend the rights of freedom of assembly and association, including in online spaces, in order to enable people to participate in decision-making, hold institutions and decision-makers to account, and guarantee human rights; and

- To build the capacity of civil society organizations to participate in policy-making processes, particularly in relation to communication and information issues.

How Communication and Information Poverty Relates to Other SDGs

In addition to focusing on the four SDGs examined above, the link between communication and information and the rest of the SDGs was explored. The charts at the end of this chapter provide examples of key communication and information poverty issues that need to be addressed in order to help achieve the goals and targets of Agenda 2030. Where available, the chart provides examples of specific projects carried out over the past five years that sought to address issues highlighted by specific SDGs.

Communication Rights: Beyond Freedom of Expression

We have seen that information and communication are essential to contemporary society and are the starting point for public dialogue and exchange about the ideas and knowledge needed to shape and reform social, political and economic structures. In a world dependent on knowledge and information, communication rights are a crucial element in enabling societies and communities to tackle the unequal, unjust and destructive dynamics and forces that hold sway and of forging new and better ways of organizing and running the world.

The right to freedom of expression, enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is the starting

point for taking a rights-based approach to communication and information. It is regarded as a central pillar of democracy, protecting the right to call rulers to account, vital to preventing censorship, and an indispensable condition for effective and independent media.

However, power among people in any given society both enables and limits access to information and communication, which may in some cases undermine freedom of expression. As a result, the right to freedom of expression is best guaranteed when promoted alongside a number of other communication rights. This is particularly important today, as communication ecosystems are becoming increasingly complex due to rapid technological change, different levels of access to platforms, multi-layered and often transnational media governance processes, growing dependence on digital technology, and the emergence of media as a key space to advance inclusion and social change.

Information and communication are also vital to good governance and to improving the potential for people and communities to bring about sustainable development. Strengthening civil society – the many groups representing citizens – is critical to securing good governance at the local, national and international levels. Informed citizens themselves, regardless of class, religion or gender, must drive the agendas of governments, public institutions and international aid policies and organizations.

The right to know as well as equitable access to information enable people to articulate their concerns. In recent years right to information legislations in different parts of the world are beginning to lead to greater transparency and accountability and there is a general consensus that enabling "voice" through freedom of expression enhances other human freedoms.

Communication rights embrace the right to information and freedom of expression and in addition the right to access and to use knowledge and information.

In turn, freedom of expression, the right to know, access to information and communication technologies and to a diversity of content and cultural resources, underlie sustainable communities and societies. These basic principles contribute to the shaping of substantive forms of democracy and if one of these conditions is weak or lacking, it restricts and diminishes genuine communication.

Vision versus Reality

While recognizing the great potential of communication structures in contemporary societies, full recognition of communication rights is still problematic. A major concern is political control and interference with freedom of expression. In parallel with media saturation comes dependency on the media for knowledge about the world, which is all the greater in times of conflict. A second concern is the influence of propaganda and the impact of censorship. A third is discriminatory practices between men and women, especially from a rights-based point of view in particular social and cultural contexts and in terms of economic disparities.

For most of the world's people, communication rights remain a vision and an aspiration. They are not a reality on the ground. They are frequently and systematically violated and governments must be constantly reminded that they are legally required under the human rights treaties they have ratified to implement, promote and protect communication rights. The exclusion of large numbers of people from the democratic political process due to the lack of effective means of

participation is another challenge for communication rights. This problem is exacerbated by the expansion of around the clock powers to monitor and intercept communications, justified in the name of security but almost universally abused.

Communication has also become global big business. Many of its products and services are shaped by commercial goals instead of principles of common good. The global media market is largely controlled by a small number of giant conglomerates, endangering the diversity and independence of information flows. This threat to diversity is heightened by current trends in international trade negotiations, which risk subjecting culture to the same rules as commodities and undermining indigenous culture, knowledge and heritage. In tandem, strict intellectual property regimes create information enclosures and pose critical obstacles to emerging knowledge societies.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and a more profound understanding of communication rights have the power to make information and knowledge more readily available to people everywhere and to transform social and political processes. However, much remains to be done for this to become a reality, especially at a time when public trust in media institutions and digital communication actors such as large social media platforms is eroding.

The Missing Piece of the Sustainable Development Puzzle

Communication and information poverty arises from structural deficits that prevent people from fully participating in decision-making processes about issues that affect their lives, especially in relation to sustainable development. Key manifestations of this form of poverty include:

- lack of access to platforms meaningfully to raise concerns about issues that affect one's life;
- under/misrepresentation in media content;
- low levels of media literacy;
- limited access to relevant information, including public information;
- exclusion from decision-making processes;
- restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- absence of a free, independent, inclusive, and pluralistic media sector;
- prevalence of negative stereotypes about marginalized groups;
- social and cultural factors preventing genuine participation (e.g. discrimination because of gender, race, ethnicity, social class, etc.);
- media concentration in the hands of the powerful;
- inaccessibility of information and communication (e.g. linguistic barriers);
- breaches of privacy, especially in relation to digital communication; and
- limited opportunities to participate in decision-making processes related to the regulation and governance of communication ecosystems.

Gender inequality is also a key dimension of communication and information poverty because gender issues affect how women and girls are represented in the media, have access to media platforms, and gain information and knowledge. Gender inequality also undermines the ability of women and girls to exercise their right to freedom of expression, which in turn prevents them from fully participating in decision-making

processes about matters that affect their lives. In this sense, communication and information poverty perpetuates gender inequality in a broader sense and undermines sustainable development.

The articulation of such frustrated aspirations to have a public voice and to be able to contribute to local and national decision-making to address social and economic development challenges locally and nationally is not new. In February 2010, the four special rapporteurs on freedom of expression appointed by the United Nations, the Organization of American States, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe jointly identified ten key challenges to freedom of expression. Discrimination in the enjoyment of the right to freedom of expression was one of them. They said "...historically disadvantaged groups... continue to struggle to have their voices heard and to access information of relevance to them." The four authorities were particularly concerned about:

- Obstacles to the establishment of media by and for historically disadvantaged groups;
- Factors preventing historically disadvantaged groups from engaging in legitimate debate about their problems and concerns;
- Lack of self-regulatory measures to address inadequate coverage by the media of issues of relevance to historically disadvantaged groups;
- The prevalence of stereotypical or derogatory information about historically disadvantaged groups.

As digital technologies become increasingly central in today's societies, international experts on freedom of expression have begun to focus on the interactions between these obstacles and today's digital communication ecosystems. For example, the reports issued by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression in 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 have focused on issues such as the role of encryption technologies in relation to the protection of privacy, the impact of illegal surveillance in a digital world, the responsibilities of private sector actors, and online content regulation. These changes have been accompanied by the growing trend of shrinking space for civil society as documented by groups such as CIVICUS, a phenomenon that entails the curtailment and undermining of key communication and human rights such as the Right to Freedom of Expression, the Right to Free Assembly, and the Right to Free Association.

The issues highlighted in these reports are directly related to people's ability to participate meaningfully in the shaping of sustainable development agendas in their communities. In many developing countries, significant parts of the population are denied the right to communicate (both through legacy and digital communication platforms) because of status, location, identity, or gender. Public communication remains largely in the hands of the privileged and the public agenda reflects this disparity. When public communication does not address problems and issues affecting poor and marginalised people, their concerns are invisible and do not exist in the public eye.

In the light of all the above, a new Sustainable Development Goal is proposed:

SDG 18: Communication for All

Goal: Expand and strengthen public civic spaces through equitable and affordable access to communication technologies and platforms, media pluralism, and media diversity.

Target 1.1 By 2030, ensure the existence of spaces and resources for men and women, in particular the poor and vulnerable, to engage in transparent, in-formed, and democratic public dialogue and debate.

Target 1.2 By 2030, ensure the existence of regimes where creative ideas and knowledge are encouraged, can be communicated widely and freely to advance social justice and sustainable development.

Target 1.3 By 2030, ensure protection for the dignity and security of people in relation to communication processes, especially concerning data privacy and freedom from surveillance.

Target 1.4 By 2030, ensure communication spaces for diverse cultures, cultural forms and identities at the individual and social levels.

In the implementation of SDG 18, a number of key areas are absent from Agenda 2030. described in the following sections.

Democratizing Communication and Information Ecosystems by Bolstering Civil Society Participation in Communication and Information Policymaking

Many of the structures that perpetuate information and communication poverty are linked to the legislative and policy frameworks that govern media and information systems, which in turn reflect power dynamics in society that exclude certain groups from media landscapes. UNESCO's Media Development Indicators, which are widely accepted around the world as the main framework to assess media development,[45] exemplify the work needed to make media systems more inclusive, transparent, and pluralistic from a policy perspective. Current work by UNESCO to develop Internet Universality Indicators[46] in order to promote a more open, rights-based and inclusive Internet is also critical, and promises to become more significant as digital and internet-based communication innovations emerge.

Civil society needs to be an active participant in the development of legislative and policy frameworks to democratize communication, media, and information ecosystems. There is much to be learnt from the experience of a number of civil society organizations from Latin America which over the past 15 years have advocated more democratic communication, media, and information ecosystems in their national contexts.

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45 UNESCO. (2008). *Media Development Indicators: A Framework for Assessing Media Development*. UNESCO.

46 UNESCO. (2017). *Developing Internet Universality Indicators*. UNESCO. https://en.unesco.org/internetuniversality/indicators

Latin American Civil Society Engagement in Communication Policymaking

During the first two decades of the 21st century, governments of several Latin American countries, in most cases with the support of civil society actors, developed new laws and public policy frameworks that sought to democratize access to the media. Some examples among others are the Organic Law of Communication in Ecuador; the General Law of Telecommunications, Information and Communication Technologies in Bolivia; the Audio-visual Communication Services Law in Argentina; and the Media Law in Uruguay.

These new policies have had elements in common. For example, these policies promoted the equitable distribution of licenses between clearly defined sectors: public, private or commercial, and community. In some cases, there is also a fourth sector: the indigenous communication sector. Another element in common is the existence of rules to prevent and/or discourage the concentration of media in a few hands, especially in the hands of foreign or domestic capital conglomerates whose influence in other sectors of the country's economy is too great. In general, these policies have also included the establishment of regulatory agencies with the ability to impose sanctions to enforce the new rules.

Many of the new media regulation frameworks have faced considerable obstacles. On the one hand, the private and commercial sectors, accustomed to a much more favourable regime, have opposed the implementation of new policies, arguing that they constitute attacks on press freedom and freedom of expression. On the other hand, in many cases these new regulations have occurred in highly politicized environments and have been seen as tools for the governments

of the day to promote their political agendas. This politicization in many cases has reduced the legitimacy of these processes and has made them vulnerable to electoral change, as in the case of Argentina.

In addition, there have been many failures in the implementation of these new frameworks, such as a lack of concrete and sustainable mechanisms to strengthen the community broadcasting sector, on which production quotas were often imposed that were difficult to meet. However, despite such problems, it is undeniable that these processes of democratization of the media represent a step forward for communication rights.

Civil society played a central role in the development of these new media regulation frameworks, in many cases openly supporting and promoting them. Many civil society actors have tried to maintain an independent position, especially in contexts where the issue of media regulation has been politicized, while other actors have decided to align themselves more closely with clearer political positions. In some cases, this dynamic led to deep divisions within civil society in those countries.

New models for media regulation seen in places such as Uruguay and Ecuador contrast with the models of countries such as Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Chile and Peru, and most countries of Central America and the Caribbean, which have not undergone major changes in recent years. Most of these countries have legal frameworks for the regulation of media that in one way or another try to discourage the concentration of media, but the reality is that a market logic prevails in the field of communication in these countries. In some cases, the community media sector is recognized, as in Colombia and El Salvador, but in others, such as Mexico, Costa Rica, Guatemala

and Peru, the sector is either not recognized or faces great difficulties in order to operate legally. Cuba is an exception to the rule, because although the private sector does not play any role in the country's media, the state sector covers most of the media, in many cases excluding the community sector.

In addition to public advocacy to democratize access to the media, coalitions of civil society organizations in several Latin American countries have also contributed to the development of legal frameworks and public policies on other issues related to communication. For example, during the past 15 years several coalitions have emerged that contributed to changes in access to public information, as in the case of Brazil and Mexico, and to changes in legal frameworks that criminalized contempt and certain forms of public expression, such as in the case of Chile and Guatemala.[47]

Recommendations to Promote Civil Society Participation in Policymaking About Communication and Information

Bearing in mind that the development of more democratic legal and public communication policies is a long-term process and that their success depends in part on the political will of the government at the time, and that private sector actors can resist change, the central recommendation to stakeholders is to support the development of civil society coalitions at the national level interested in promoting concrete changes to communication and information legislation and policy, related to issues such as access to information, Internet governance,

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47 Maria Soledad Segura and Silvio Waisbord. (2016). *Media Movements: Civil Society and Media Policy Reform in Latin America*. ZED Books.

and media regulation. This recommendation is based on the belief that civil society is a crucial actor in the struggle for more open, inclusive, and democratic media ecosystems.

Such coalitions must be diverse, inclusive and open spaces for dialogue with different actors, but they must also have the capacity to develop clear common agendas and objectives. This type of coalition must also have the tools to produce and disseminate knowledge, interact with state agencies, establish alliances with sectors of civil society that have not traditionally been involved in communication activism, and influence public opinion in favour of the democratization of communication. It is also essential that they be participatory coalitions so that they are truly legitimate

Support for the development of these coalitions on the part of external development stakeholders should be a medium-term project in order to lay the foundations of movements that can monitor the implementation of any communication policy, and that can be mobilized when there are setbacks.

These coalitions must start from the following common principles:

- Communication is a human right that allows for the defence and promotion of other rights;
- The right to freedom of expression is an essential part of the right to communication;
- Cultural diversity is fundamental to achieve a more democratic communication system. The existence of a regulatory framework that promotes cultural expression, including those of marginalized groups, is necessary to guarantee cultural diversity;
- The electromagnetic spectrum is a common good and must be democratized. For this, there must be clear

and equitable rules on the ownership and concentration of the means of communication to avoid the concentration of power in a few hands;

- Citizens have the right to participate in governance processes and decision-making on communication policies;
- Community and citizen media are expressions of the right to communication and should be supported; and
- Efficient and equitable access to public information must be guaranteed

Donors, governments, international institutions, and other development stakeholders are called to support the formation of these coalitions through capacity building, technical expertise, access to financial resources, and opportunities to advance their agendas at regional and international forums.

Investing in Media Literacy for the Digital Age

The emergence of numerous digital communication platforms such as social networks and smartphones over the last decade has been accompanied by the hope that these platforms would help democratize communication ecosystems and help bring about social change. For instance, citizen journalism offered great potential as a counterweight to mainstream news media as it represented an opportunity for the mobilization of marginalized communities in addition to broadening access to information and knowledge.

However, despite the fact that in many cases these digital platforms have helped generate greater awareness of various social problems, there is a growing sense of caution concerning the risks that these new platforms present to society. For instance, the explosion of "fake news" has shown that digital

platforms can be used to manipulate and influence media agendas unscrupulously and to attack democratic processes.

Today, media ecosystems are characterized by a convergence of digital and traditional media, a fragmentation of audiences, issues of privacy, and a lack of transparency about how decisions governing communication and information flows are made.

Despite these new realities, in their curricula most educational systems have failed to reflect the need for students to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate a world that is increasingly mediated and digitized. This need is especially relevant in the context of SDG 4 – Quality Education.

Donors, governments, international institutions, and other development stakeholders are called to support the inclusion of comprehensive and information and media literacy programmes in the education systems of countries around the world.

Addressing the Communication and Information Needs of Marginalized and Historically Excluded Communities

It is generally acknowledged that social inclusion has to be at the heart of efforts to address communication and information poverty. This entails recognizing that there are groups in society whose communication and information needs are routinely ignored in the context of development. This can be the result of issues such as language barriers, prejudice, geographical distance, or differences in access to media platforms. Some of the groups whose communication and information needs are rarely addressed include people living with disabilities, migrants, ethno-cultural minorities, and people from the LGBTQ communities, among others. One of the groups whose

communication and information needs have most often been overlooked around the world by policymakers and decision makers is Indigenous peoples,

Today, among the world's current population of 6.7 billion people, there are more than 370 million Indigenous people in over 72 countries. Practicing unique traditions, they retain social, cultural, economic and political characteristics that distinguish them from those of the dominant societies in which they live. From the Arctic to the South Pacific, they are the descendants – according to a commonly accepted definition – of those who inhabited a country or a geographical region at a time when other people of different cultures or ethnic origins arrived.

Indigenous peoples are distinctive through their particular way of life, beliefs, and relationship to the environment. Many have left their traditional life for towns and cities, or work for wages part of the time and return to the land at other times. Indigenous people often practice mixed livelihoods, but in most cases, a subsistence economy is the basis of how they make their living. For indigenous peoples, "traditional environmental knowledge" is at the heart of their identity and culture – understood as the actual living of life rather than just the knowledge of how to live. Indigenous peoples are the custodians of unique languages, knowledge systems and beliefs and they possess invaluable knowledge of practices in the sustainable management of natural resources.

Many indigenous groups have faced multiple waves of assimilation, colonization, and in some cases, genocide. Today, Indigenous peoples often suffer from poor political representation and participation, economic marginalization and poverty and lack access to social services and cultural discrimination.

On 13 September 2007, the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), reflecting global concern that Indigenous peoples continue to suffer from historical injustices that prevent them from exercising their rights. The Declaration acknowledged the fact that Indigenous peoples are organizing for political, economic, social and cultural development, and that they have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinct political, legal, economic, social and cultural institutions. The UNDRIP is one the key framework for addressing some of the global issues that undermine the rights of indigenous peoples, such as climate change, threats to biological and cultural diversity, land grabbing, inequitable food production and distribution, and the curtailment of public services

The UNDRIP highlights a number of communication issues such as access to information, media representation, intellectual property rights, ownership and control of the media, and cultural diversity. Without a rights-based approach to decision-making, media platforms, and culture, the rights of indigenous people cannot be fully guaranteed. This belief has been echoed by numerous gatherings of Indigenous communicators, such as the International Encounter on Indigenous Peoples' Communication and Development, held in Bolivia in 2006, which reaffirmed the importance of communication as a fundamental element in the liberation, transformation and development of society and the validation of the rights of Indigenous peoples.[48]

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48 *The No-Nonsense Guide to Indigenous People's Communication Rights* http://cdn.agilitycms.com/wacc-global/Images/Galleries/RESOURCES/e-pubs/No-nonsense-guides/PDFS/09indigenous_peoples.9.pdf

According to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Rights, "Indigenous peoples participated from the start in the global consultation process towards the 2030 Agenda, and their advocacy resulted in a framework that makes explicit references to Indigenous peoples' development concerns and is founded on principles of universality, human rights, equality and environmental sustainability – core priorities for indigenous peoples… Many of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and targets are relevant to indigenous peoples and have direct linkages to the human rights commitments in the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. There are six direct references to indigenous peoples in the 2030 Agenda, including in Goal 2 related to agricultural output of indigenous small-scale farmers, and Goal 4 on equal access to education for indigenous children." [49]

Despite these positive developments, a number of Indigenous groups were disappointed with the lack of attention to issues such as the right to self-determination; the principle of free, prior and informed consent; and collective rights.[50]

Recommendations to Address the Communication and Information Needs of Indigenous Peoples

Communication can be a transformative factor for many Indigenous peoples because it can help strengthen their social fabric, improve governance processes, promote culture in all its diversity, and build bridges with other communities and

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49 *Indigenous People and the 2030 Agenda- A Backgrounder. UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.* http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/2016/Docs-updates/backgrounderSDG.pdf

50 *Indigenous People and the 2030 Agenda- A Backgrounder. UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues.* http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/2016/Docs-updates/backgrounderSDG.pdf

social actors. These changes can help reinforce the vision enshrined in the UNDRIP and the Goals promoted by Agenda 2030.

Key recommendations for development stakeholders are:

- Promote local processes of Indigenous community communication, and the development of networks of indigenous communicators, through training, accompaniment, visibility, and access to resources;
- Provide legal and technical advice to Indigenous communities involved in communication processes, such as the establishment of community radio stations;
- Provide support to the development of national knowledge exchange networks between communicators (both from the community sector and from state and private sectors), Indigenous leaders, and researchers to achieve alliances;

These recommendations should be implemented based on the following principles:

- Indigenous peoples have the right to have their voices be part of the communicative ecosystem of the society in which they live. They have the human right to communication;
- Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain their independence and autonomy in the field of communication;
- Cultural diversity, participation, inclusion, and pluralism are essential elements of any Indigenous communication process that aspires to promote the rights of Indigenous peoples;

- Indigenous communication takes many forms. Orality and ancestral stories are central elements of indigenous communication;
- Indigenous communication should contribute to the empowerment of Indigenous peoples and strengthen their participation in decision-making processes;
- Indigenous communication must contribute to gender equality;
- Indigenous communication is a process based on respect that seeks, among other things, the recovery and/or promotion of the customs, traditions, and beliefs of indigenous peoples; and
- The promotion of the communication rights of indigenous peoples should take as a starting point the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization (ILO).

Donors, governments, international institutions, and other development stakeholders are called to take these recommendations into account in order to help address the communication and information needs of Indigenous people in the context of advancing the objectives of Agenda 2030.

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Examples of Interventions to Address Communication and Information Poverty in the Context of SDG 5

SDG and relevant Target	Key Communication and Information Poverty Issues	How Activists Have Addressed this Issue
SDG 5- Gender Equality		
Target 5.1 - End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere Target 5.5 -Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life Target 5.b- Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women	Lack of platforms for Indigenous women and girls to share ideas and raise concerns about issues that affect their lives Under/misrepresentation of Indigenous women and girls and the issues that affect them in media content Low levels of media literacy among Indigenous women and girls Limited access to information among Indigenous women and girls	*Ixchel Estereo* in **Guatemala** (www.radioixchel.com/) works to create spaces for local Indigenous women and girls to learn about their rights, develop public communication skills, and raise their concerns through community radio. Ixchel Estereo also seeks to enable women to participate in decision-making processes and to reach managerial positions, both within the station and in local institutions.

SDG and relevant Target	Key Communication and Information Poverty Issues	How Activists Have Addressed this Issue

SDG 5- Gender Equality

Target 5.1 - End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere Target 5.2 - Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	Under/misrepresentation of women and girls and the issues that affect them, such as Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in media content Low levels of media literacy among Indigenous women and girls that prevent them critically assessing media content and denouncing discriminatory content Absence of an inclusive media sector that contributes to the promotion of human rights, including women's human rights	*Centro Ecuatoriano para la Promocion y Accion de la Mujer* –CEPAM in **Ecuador** (www.cepamgye.org) works to advance the rights of women and girls, particularly those from low-income urban areas. CEPAM has over the years carried out extensive media monitoring focusing on media content that perpetuates and normalizes violence and discrimination against women. Research findings have been used to advocate for a more responsible and inclusive media sector.

SDG 5- Gender Equality

Target 5.1 - End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere Target 5.5 - Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life Target 5.b- Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women	Lack of access to platforms for women and girls in parts of Palestine to raise concerns about issues that affect them Under/misrepresentation of women and girls in Palestine in media content Low levels of media literacy among women and girls in Palestine Absence of a free, independent, inclusive, and pluralistic media	*Community Media Centre* (www.cmcgaza.ps) in **Palestine** works to equip women and girls with practical communication skills, knowledge about their rights, and tools to document human rights violations. A key focus has been on enabling women to exercise their right to freedom of expression. This has contributed to a cohort of women and girls who actively participate in public life by engaging with local officials and using media to create dialogue about community issues.

Examples of Interventions to Address Communication and Information Poverty in the Context of SDG 9 and 17, especially in relation to access to the internet and digital technologies

SDG and relevant Target	Key Communication and Information Poverty Issues	How Activists Have Addressed this Issue
SDG 9- Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure		
Target 9.C- Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020	Limited affordable, reliable, and secure access to digital communication platforms and to the internet Low levels of digital media literacy	Communication Rights seminars can be organized in partnership with local academic or civil society organizations that seek to foster knowledge exchange on the ethical dimensions of communication in today's world.
SDG 17- Partnership for the Goals	Limited or reduced access to information, including public information, via digital communication channels	Seminars bring together academics and communication practitioners from around the world to interrogate and generate ideas in relation to structural communication issues, such as the ownership and regulation of digital platforms, privacy, illegal surveillance in digital spaces, and gender-based violence on the internet.
Target 17.8- Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology	Restrictions to freedom of expression and freedom of association online	

Examples of Interventions to Address Communication and Information Poverty in the Context of SDG 16

SDG AND RELEVANT TARGET	KEY COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION POVERTY ISSUES	HOW ACTIVISTS HAVE ADDRESSED THIS ISSUE
SDG 16- Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions		
Target 16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere	Lack of platforms for youth affected by conflict to engage in dialogue, build a sense of collective identity, develop communication skills, and raise concerns about their issues Under/misrepresentation of youth affected by conflict in media content Low levels of media literacy among youth affected by conflict prevents them from critically engaging with media content that normalizes or glamourizes conflict	*Grupo Comunicarte* (www.grupocomunicarte.org) in **Colombia** works with a community radio station and students from 12 public schools in the town of Arauquita, close to Colombia's border with Venezuela, to create spaces for dialogue, active citizenship, and the construction of a culture of peaceful conflict resolution. The project also helped to create a sense of belonging among youth affected by the armed conflict as a way to prevent them from being recruited by criminal groups. The project took place in a post-conflict context following the historic 2016 peace agreements in Colombia.

SDG AND RELEVANT TARGET	KEY COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION POVERTY ISSUES	HOW ACTIVISTS HAVE ADDRESSED THIS ISSUE

SDG 16- Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

Target 16.3 Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all	Lack of platforms for people denied access to justice following the atrocities committed during the Argentinian military dictatorship to raise their concerns Under/misrepresentation of people affected by the crimes committed during the dictatorship in media content, which contributes to a deterioration of historical memory among the public Limited access to information, including public information, about the crimes committed during the dictatorship and about justice and/or reparations for victims and their families	*Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos*-APDH in **Argentina** (www.apdh-argentina.org.ar) has been working to ensure that the process of Memory, Truth, and Justice launched to address the systematic human rights violations committed during Argentina's military dictatorship continues. The process is at risk due to limited political will, which means that there is a real risk that the achievements of the past few years could be reversed. APDH is working to build the capacity of community and mainstream media journalists to report on the process and encourage media houses to shed light on the issue.

SDG 16- Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

Target 16.10- Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements	Lack of access to platforms at the grassroots level to meaningfully raise concerns Under/misrepresentation of grassroots communities in media Limited access to relevant information among people not reached by other forms of media Exclusion from decision-making processes for many communities who lack information and platforms to advance their agendas Absence of a free, independent, inclusive, and pluralistic media	*Swaziland Community Multimedia Network*-SCMN www.facebook.com/community MultimediaNetwork in **Swaziland** (eSwatini) works to change media legislation and policy to allow for community media to operate freely and independently. The Network is comprised of a several web-based community communication initiatives that voice local concerns and represent essential spaces for community participation. The Network plays a crucial role is advancing freedom of expression and other fundamental freedoms in the country.

How Communication and Information Poverty Relates to Other SDGs

SDG and relevant Target	Examples of Key Communication and Information Poverty Issues	How Activists Have Addressed these Issues
	SDG 1- No Poverty	
Target 1.1 By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than $1.25 a day Target 1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions Target 1.4 By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance	Under/misrepresentation of rural poverty issues in media coverage Limited access to information about rural poverty, its causes, consequences, and potential solutions among the general public, as well as among people in rural areas Lack of platforms where people from rural communities can raise their concerns	*SAMWAKI* in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (www.samwaki.org/) addresses the lack of media coverage of rural poverty in local media in the province of South Kivu. SAMWAKI monitored media coverage and used the findings to engage media houses, local government, and civil society organizations in joint work. Limited coverage contributes to a lack of understanding of the underlying issues that perpetuate this form of poverty, such as access to land or gender dynamics, among the public. It also means that many rural communities do not see their needs reflected in media coverage.

SDG and relevant Target	Examples of Key Communication and Information Poverty Issues	How Activists Have Addressed these Issues

SDG 2- Zero Hunger

SDG and relevant Target	Examples of Key Communication and Information Poverty Issues	How Activists Have Addressed these Issues
Target 2.3 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round	Lack platforms form rural women to raise their concerns about food security issues Underrepresentation of food security issues, especially as experienced by rural women, in media content Exclusion of rural women from decision-making processes around food and agricultural policy	*People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty* (www.foodsov.org) in the **Philippines** builds the capacity of rural women to advocate for their right to food, especially in a context marked by increasingly technical language around food security. The organization also work sought to increase media coverage of food security issues. It documented and disseminated materials describing food-related issues and solutions proposed by rural communities, such as cooperative systems and support for family farming.

SDG 3- Good Health and Well-Being

SDG and relevant Target	Examples of Key Communication and Information Poverty Issues	How Activists Have Addressed these Issues
Target 3.3 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all	Lack of platforms for people affected by low-income high-cost chronic diseases raise their concerns about the health system and advocate for their right to health Low levels of media literacy among low-income people living with high-cost chronic diseases, which prevents them from accessing information Limited access to information about health services and legal mechanisms among low-income people living with high-cost chronic diseases	*Fundación Comunicación Positiva* (www.comunicacion positiva.org) in **Colombia** strengthened the capacity of groups of low-income people living with high-cost chronic diseases to use citizen journalism to advocate for their right to healthcare. Patients were supported in the creation of a series of podcasts sharing their stories, received training on advocacy and on navigating the health system, and were connected to broader health advocacy networks

SDG and relevant Target	Examples of Key Communication and Information Poverty Issues	How Activists Have Addressed these Issues

SDG 4- Quality Education

Target 4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes Target 4.5 By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations	Unavailability of education in Indigenous languages contributes to many forms of communication and information poverty, such as: • Under/misrepresentation of Indigenous people in media content • Low levels of literacy and media literacy among Indigenous people • Limited access to information among Indigenous people • Exclusion of Indigenous people from decision making processes	*Likhu* in **Nepal** (www.soundcloud.com/ uttamkumar-sunuwar) works to ensure that children of the Sunuwar (Koits) Indigenous community are able to access education in their mother tongue, as mandated by the country's constitution. Radio Likhu works towards this goal by informing Sunuwar communities about their education rights and is helping to build a movement to call for change. Access to culturally and linguistically relevant education is crucial in enhancing the quality of teaching and learning.

SDG 5- Gender Equality

See section above on SDG 5

SDG 8- Decent Work and Economic Growth

Target 8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment	Lack of platforms for women migrants to connect with one another and to raise concerns about labour conditions Limited access to information about immigration processes and labour standards among women migrants, especially as a result of language barriers Restrictions to freedom of association and assembly for migrant workers	Asia Pacific Mission for Migrants – APMM (www.apmigrants.org) in Hong Kong, China, engaged women migrant workers from the Philippines and Indonesia living in Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan in the production of short podcasts in mp3 format about their personal stories, labour rights, access to services, and denouncing abuse. The content was disseminated through digital platforms so women could easily download it, share it, and listen to it during their work day. The content helped to create a sense of belonging among women with very limited opportunities to socialize.

SDG and relevant Target	Examples of Key Communication and Information Poverty Issues	How Activists Have Addressed these Issues

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SDG and relevant Target	Examples of Key Communication and Information Poverty Issues	How Activists Have Addressed these Issues
SDG 11- Sustainable Cities and Communities		
Target 11.1 By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums Target 11.3 By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries	Lack of platforms for those affected by lack of housing to raise their concerns Under/misrepresentation of the urban poor in media Exclusion of marginalized communities from decision-making about urban development and housing policies	*AlterMidya Network* in the **Philippines** (www.altermidya.net/) works to provide urban poor communities seeking access to housing with communication platforms to facilitate organizing and demand change, to explain their views in digital and traditional media, and counter negative stereotypes about urban poverty issues.
SDG 13- Climate Action		
Target 13.1 Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries Target 13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning	Lack of platforms for marginalized rural communities to raise their concerns about the ways climate change affect their livelihoods Limited access among marginalized rural communities to information about climate change Limited access among the general public and policy makers about the ways Indigenous and traditional knowledge can help with mitigation, adaptation, and risk reduction Exclusion of marginalized rural communities from decision-making processes about climate policy	*Getjenge Community Radio* in **Zimbabwe** (www.pdt.co.zw) engages community members in dialogue about Indigenous and traditional knowledge that can help with climate change mitigation, adaptation, and risk reduction. Getjenge believes that marginalized rural communities who are typically excluded from conversations about climate change (as materials are usually in English and use technical language) should be at the centre of this conversation, especially as their livelihoods are the most likely to be affected by changes in climate patterns. Getjenge works towards this goal by helping to mainstream indigenous knowledge and culture into climate policy in Matabeleland province.

SDG and relevant Target	Examples of Key Communication and Information Poverty Issues	How Activists Have Addressed these Issues

SDG 15- Life on Land

Target 15.1 By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements	Lack of platforms for communities affected by deforestation and the destruction of ecosystems to engage in dialogue and raise their concerns	*La Sandia Digital* (www.lasandiadigital.org.mx/) in **Mexico** works to build the capacity of rural communities (many of whom are peasants and Indigenous communities) to use media to defend water systems and forests from extractive projects (such as mining, agro-industry) that put biodiversity, livelihoods, and people's lives at risk while also undermining the role that forests play as carbon sinks. La Sandia Digital creates opportunities for communities to engage in dialogue and organize for change, helps provide platforms for those affected to share their views, and trains journalists about coverage of environmental issues.
Target 15.2 By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally	Under/misrepresentation of people working to protect forests and water systems	
	Limited access to information, including public information, among the general public about deforestation and its consequences	
Target 15.4 By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development	Exclusion of communities affected by deforestation from decision-making processes about development	
	Absence of a free and independent media sector that sheds light on environmental issues	

SDG 16- Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

See section above on SDG 16

SDG 17- Partnerships for the Goals

See section above on SDG 17

V

Addressing Gender Issues in Media Content

Sarah Macharia

In 1995, Governments participating in the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing reached consensus on specific strategic objectives and related actions to advance equality, development and peace for all women. One objective – to "promote a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media" (Section J[1] on "women and the media", Beijing Platform for Action, 2015) – listed several actions, inter alia, promoting research and implementing an information, education and communication strategy, encouraging the media to refrain from exploitation, sexualisation and commodification of women, and promoting the idea that sexist stereotypes in media are gender discriminatory, degrading and offensive.

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1. https://beijing20.unwomen.org/~/media/Field%20Office%20Beijing%20Plus/ Attachments/BeijingDeclarationAndPlatformForAction-en.pdf%20- %20page=104

Eight years later in 2003, the Commission on the Status of Women recognized "the potential of the media and of information and communication technologies to contribute to the advancement and empowerment of women" (Agreed conclusions[2] CSW47, 2003). The CSW proposed 24 actions for Governments, the UN system, international financial institutions, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders. The Commission underlined the need to prioritize gender perspectives in ICT and media policy and regulations, to support research, education and training, to strengthen inter-stakeholder partnerships, to tackle media-based violence against women and to allocate adequate resources.

The recommendations and commitments reappear in various global, regional and national gender equality and women's rights frameworks adopted over time (see Table 1).

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals "seek to realize the human rights of all and achieve gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls (Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[3] UN General Assembly, 2015). The role of media in advancing gender equality is mentioned specifically in the Post-2015 development blueprint under Goal 5 on enhancing the use of "information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women".

At the same time, it is clear that media are implicated in the achievement of gender equality aspirations in all the 17 SDGs, in as far as their role in maintaining social and cultural norms underpinning discrimination and inequality across all thematic areas is concerned. For instance, how could removal of social barriers to the empowerment of girls and women (Agenda 2030

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2. https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/outcomes
3. https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/70/1&Lang=E

Declaration, para 8), or eliminating gender violence (para 20) be possible if media content that channels negative gender stereotypes, belittle, degrade and sexualize women, and normalize gender violence, are not addressed? Media output that clearly challenges gender stereotypes provides the exposure needed to eliminate the prejudices, attitudes, norms and practices that sustain gender-based discrimination, marginalization and inequality.

The Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) recognizes the role of stereotypes in "giv[ing] rise to the multitude of legal, political and economic constraints on the advancement of women (Introduction, CEDAW,[4] UN General Assembly, 1979). Article 5 of the Convention obliges States parties to take measures to "modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women with a view to achieving the elimination of

Table 1. Policy instruments containing explicit gender & media indicators

Instrument	Indicators
Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003)[5]	3.3: States Parties shall adopt and implement appropriate measures to prohibit any exploitation or degradation of women 12.1(b): States Parties shall take all appropriate measure to eliminate all stereotypes in textbooks, syllabuses and the media, that perpetuate such discrimination

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4. https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cedaw.aspx
5. https://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/protocol_rights_women_africa_2003.pdf

Instrument	Indicators
South African Development Community Protocol on Gender and Development (2008)[6]	29.1 – States Parties shall ensure that gender is mainstreamed in all information, communication and media policies, programmes, laws and training in accordance with the Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport and other regional and international commitments by member States on issues relating to media, information and communication, 29.2 – States parties shall encourage the media and media-related bodies to mainstream gender in their codes of conduct, policies and procedures, and adopt and implement gender aware ethical principles, codes of practice and policies in accordance with the Protocol on Culture, Information and Sport; 30.1a - States Parties shall take measures to discourage the media from: promoting pornography and violence against all persons, especially women and children, b) depicting women as helpless victims of violence and abuse, c) degrading or exploiting women, especially in the area of entertainment and advertising, and undermining their role and position in society; and, d) reinforcing gender oppression and stereotypes; 30.2 – States Parties shall encourage the media to give equal voice to women and men in all areas of coverage, including increasing the number of programmes for, by and about women on gender specific topics and that challenge gender stereotypes; 30.3 – States Parties shall take appropriate measures to encourage the media to play a constructive role in the eradication of gender based violence by adopting guidelines which ensure gender sensitive coverage;
European Union: Roadmap for Equality Between Women and Men (2006)[7]	V. (Elimination of Gender Stereotypes in Society). Key Actions – the Commission will support actions to eliminate gender stereotyping in education, culture and on the labour market by promoting gender mainstreaming and specific actions in the European Social Fund, ICT programmes and in EU education and culture programmes, the Commission will support awareness-raising campaigns and exchange of good practices in schools and enterprises on non-stereotyped gender roles and develop dialogue with media to encourage a non-stereotyped portrayal of women and men;

6.   https://genderlinks.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/ADOPTED-REVISED-PROTOCOL-ON-GAD.pdf

7.   https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:c10404

Instrument	Indicators
Council of Europe Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence (Treaty No. 210) (2014)[8]	III.17.1: Parties shall encourage the private sector, the information and communication technology sector and the media, with due respect for freedom of expression and their independence, to participate in the elaboration and implementation of policies and to set guidelines and self-regulatory standards to prevent violence against women and to enhance respect for their dignity
Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence Against Women "Convention of Belem Do Para" (1994)[9]	Chapter III (Duties of the States) 8) (g) encourage the communications media to develop appropriate media guidelines in order to contribute to the eradication of violence against women in all its forms, and to enhance respect for the dignity of women
Secretariat of the Pacific Community: Recommendations and Outcomes of 12th Triennial Conference of Pacific Women (2013)[10]	(74) to recognise that community media and women's media networks are important for collaboration and partnerships; (75) Ensure that government communication and media strategies effectively promote their gender equality commitments; (76) to recognise and fully respect the knowledge held by women; (77) research with gender analysis, on the impact of inappropriate uses of ICTs, and called for the development of national regulatory infrastructure and policy

8. https://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/full-list/-/conventions/rms/090000168008482e
9. http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/treaties/a-61.html
10. https://pacificwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Triennial-Outcomes-EN_Final.pdf

prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for women and men". Combatting sexist stereotypes in the media is a necessary part of the process.

The evidence

While State media regulators, media industry bodies and media organizations have to varying extents made efforts to translate the global, regional and national commitments into implementable policies, codes and guidelines for the media, the

Globally, women make up only 24% of the persons heard, read about or seen in newspaper, television and radio news. In 20 years, the needle towards parity has moved by only seven points. The gender gap is narrowest in stories on science and health and widest in news about politics and government in which women are only 16% of the people in the stories.

As news sources, women appear most as persons providing testimony based on personal experience (38%) and least as experts (19%). Across 10 years women's voice as experts has increased by only two points.

Progress towards news representation that acknowledges women's participation in productive life remains elusive. Globally women hold approximately 40% of paid employment while a large proportion work in the informal sector particularly in Global South contexts. In the world depicted in the news, only 20% of the total workers in the formal labour force are women, while 67% of the unemployed and stay-at-home parents are women.

Only one out of ten stories since 2000 has focussed centrally on women. That this proportion has remained constant across almost two decades suggests that women's value as newsworthy has not changed, and perhaps a continued disinterest of reporters in women's lives, stories and experiences. Economic news followed by political news are least likely to focus on women, at 5% and 7% of stories in these topics respectively.

Many stories present opportunities to highlight gender equality or inequality issues, yet, only 9% do so globally. While this number signals a steady rise since 2005, it remains under the 10% - or one in ten – mark. The largest strides in integrating a gender equality perspective have

been in science and health news, followed by economic, and crime/ violence stories.

Similarly, many stories present opportunities to challenge gender stereotypes but only 4% do so, a negligible one percentage point change since 2005. Gender stereotypes have remained firmly embedded in news media output over the past decade. In 10 years there has been no progress in the proportion of political news stories that clearly challenge gender stereotypes, while stereotypes appear to have increased in social and legal news.

Women's relative invisibility in traditional news media has crossed over into digital news delivery platforms. The roles in which they appear mirror the results from traditional print and broadcast news. Only 4% of news media tweets clearly challenge gender stereotypes, exactly similar to the overall percentage of television, radio and print news stories.

Source: *Who makes the news?* Global Media Monitoring Project. 2015.

results remain uninspiring. The evidence above is confined to the news media due to the availability of a volume of data gathered over time and across multiple nation states.

Results from the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP) 20-year research on gender in news media content reveal that the rate of progress towards media gender parity has been very slow.

Recommendations

The research evidence suggests that more than two decades since Beijing, gender issues in media content remain pertinent. The power to change lies with governments, the media and ordinary audiences.

Governments need to acknowledge the important place of media and communication within the broader objective of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Professional media in particular have a fundamental obligation, following industry ethics, to present balanced, fair and accurate

content. Media organizations need to be accountable to the societies in which they operate and the audiences they serve. Gender equality is embraced as a global goal and media have a significant role in promoting or in sabotaging its achievement. Weak and inconsistent implementation of gender policies needs to be addressed. Institutionalization of a gender-sensitive journalistic culture remains paramount.

State media regulatory agencies

1. Require media houses to adopt and enforce a gender policy and guidelines for gender-sensitive reporting;
2. Include, in media evaluation criteria, issues of gender balance and demonstrated adherence to the gender policy;
3. Impose meaningful fines on media houses found liable for sex discrimination, sexist content or other actions of non-compliance with the gender policy; and,
4. Build capacity of staff responsible for hearing cases on media non-compliance with the gender policy.

Media

1. Develop a gender policy and gender aware ethics and practice codes, with action plans and targets for implementation;
2. Engage with community media organisations and citizens' media networks to advance gender equality in content production;

Civil society

1. Advocate for fair and equal representation of women and men in news media. Lobby for gender policy adoption and implementation for and by media.
2. Establish gender-focussed media watch and apply the results as evidence for public and media awareness, for actions to hold media accountable through State, industry and media house complaints mechanisms, and to support media houses committed to gender equality.

Funding agencies

1. Support the strengthening or establishment of media watch networks.
2. Support media development work that emphasizes gender equality in content production, media in-house policies and practices

Source: *Who makes the news?* Global Media Monitoring Project. 2015.

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UN General Assembly, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, 18 December 1979, A/RES/34/180.

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VI

What Do the SDGs Mean for the World's Indigenous Peoples?

Dev Kumar Sunuwar

In September 2015, heads of states gathered at a High level Plenary meeting of the UN General Assembly in New York and adopted a new development framework: "Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", known in short as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This decade-and-half long universal political agenda comprises 17 goals and 169 associated targets, as an extension to the earlier Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which concluded in 2015. The SDGs reflect some of the key human rights principles advocated by Indigenous Peoples, who therefore believe that it may be an opportunity for continuing advances, promotion and recognition of the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

"The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development has given Indigenous Peoples a certain level of expectation," said Chandra Roy-Henriksen,[1] Chief of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) Secretariat. Explaining further, she stated, "As the world moves forward towards 2030, there is hope among Indigenous communities that their priorities, concerns and rights will be recognized."

An estimated 370 million Indigenous Peoples around the world, belonging to 5,000 different groups in 90 countries are at the heart of the 2030 Agenda with its promise to "Leave No One Behind".[2] They make up 5% of the world's population, yet account for about 15% of the world's poorest. They lag behind on virtually every social, economic, or political indicator considered in the SDGs. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is of critical importance to Indigenous Peoples. It is also imperative that Indigenous Peoples are engaged, at all levels, to ensure that we are not left behind.

While the 2030 Agenda is beneficial to all global citizens, only the full and effective participation of Indigenous Peoples in the development, implementation, monitoring and review process of action plans and programs on sustainable development at all levels, will provide an opportunity for the fulfilment of the rights of Indigenous Peoples, as prescribed in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP).

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1. Chandra Roy-Henriksen, Chief, Secretariat United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNDPFII), spoke about Indigenous Peoples and the SDGs on September 23, 2016 at UN Headquarter, New York.

2. Sustainable Development Goals see more at https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld

SDGs: A Leap Forward from MDGs

The SGDs as an extension of the MDGs have been viewed as an opportunity to improve the situation of Indigenous Peoples worldwide. The critique of the MDGs was that they did not grant enough attention to Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples were excluded from the process and were mentioned neither in the goals nor in the indicators. The SDGs were developed to address the challenges and shortcomings of the MDGs, and will directly influence the lives of millions of Indigenous Peoples.

The SDGs aim to deal with issues directly related Indigenous Peoples, such as ending poverty, ensuring human rights and inclusion for all, ensuring good governance, preventing conflict, as well as ensuring environmental sustainability.

The Indigenous Peoples' Major Group (IPMG)[3] was one among nine major groups (youth, women, trade unions, local authorities, science and technology, business and industry, farmers and NGOs) represented at the UN with an official voice and right to intervene during the deliberations among member states. IPMG was actively participating in the SDG stocktaking and negotiation process since the beginning of the process in February 2013 and concluded with the summit in September 2015.

IPMG has been facilitating the participation of key Indigenous leaders from different regions, including research and delivery of statements and position papers. IPMG states that the Agenda's emphasis on human rights, human dignity, the rule of law, justice, equality and non-discrimination, respect

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3. The Indigenous Peoples' Major Group for Sustainable Development, more find at https://www.Indigenouspeoples-sdg.org/index.php/english/who-we-are/about-the-ipmg

for ethnicity and cultural diversity, access to justice and participatory decision-making are very positive. Indigenous leaders thus think that SDGs will provide an opportunity to remedy the historical injustices resulting from discrimination and inequalities that the Indigenous Peoples worldwide suffered for so long. Indigenous Peoples are striving to have SDG targets and indicators reflect their rights and their relationship to their lands, territories, and natural resources.

But there are also disappointments. IPMG during deliberations consistently proposed to include Indigenous Peoples rights to self-determined development, the right to lands, territories and resources, the recognition of Indigenous knowledge, sustainable use and management of biodiversity resources, respect for Indigenous Peoples' right to Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). Despite active participation of Indigenous Peoples throughout the process, most of these concerns were not specifically reflected in the SDGs.

Indigenous Peoples' visions of development were not included in the SDGs and their collective rights were not given sufficient recognition to be consistent with the commitment in the World Conference of Indigenous Peoples (WCIP) Outcome Document[4] to give "due consideration to all the rights of Indigenous Peoples in the elaboration of the Post-2015 development Agenda"[5] and also ignored the provision of UNDRIP that affirms Indigenous Peoples right to self-determined development.[6]

The SDGs also do not affirm the collective rights of Indigenous Peoples to their lands, territories, and resources.

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4. World Conference on Indigenous Peoples, see more at https://www.un.org/development/desa/Indigenouspeoples/about-us/world-conference.html
5. WCIP Outcome Document, 2014, paragraph 37.
6. UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), Article, 3, 23 and 32.

There are no specific targets relating to Indigenous Peoples' security of land, territories and resources. The Secretary General of Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, an umbrella organization of Indigenous Peoples Organization in Asia, Gam Shimray says, "land is the only basis for continuity of identity and also of holistic development which we call self-determined development. If land is left out, we are already being left behind. That's why land is so important when we talk about SDG goals."[7]

Mother Tongue Media

Media and communications are essential tools to create spaces for the expression of Indigenous voices and to share stories about the diversity of cultures, languages, and histories. Information, communication, and media have a power to educate, inform, and change society. Media can include and bolster Indigenous voices, revitalize Indigenous languages, and educate Indigenous children. It also helps to identify sustainable opportunities for development and can develop respect for and the promotion and protection of Indigenous Peoples' rights.

UNDRIP provisions to access and own media in their languages are one of the key rights of Indigenous Peoples. Article 16 says "Indigenous Peoples have the right to establish their own media in their own language"[8] and that states "shall take effective measures to ensure that state-owned media duly reflect Indigenous cultural diversity" and that "privately owned media… adequately reflect Indigenous cultural diversity."[9]

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7. Gam Shimray, Secretary General of Asia Indigenous Peoples Pact, an umbrella organization of Indigenous Peoples Organization in Asia while participating at the High-Level Political Forum in July 2017, New York. He was taking part in a live discussion on Indigenous Land Rights within the SDGs.
8. ibid Article 16, 1
9. ibid Article 16, 2

The role of media is well acknowledged. But we also have understand that it is only participatory communication approaches that help promote the voices of people who are often not heard or seen. The media landscape worldwide however indicates that Indigenous communities have relatively little access, voice, and participation in the mainstream media. By and large, media are owned and controlled by more socially and economically powerful groups.

In addition, language remains a major barrier, as content in Indigenous mother tongues (the first language) is limited in the mainstream media. Information and communication not available in their mother tongues prevent many Indigenous communities from accessing essential news and resources. And in many remote areas, Indigenous people, especially elders, may only speak one language, meaning that important messages broadcast in other languages in the mainstream media often do not reach this population. Thus, there is need for content production, including about SDGs, in Indigenous languages.

Today, radio stations, especially community-based radio, have been one of the most accessible platforms for Indigenous Peoples. Small, community-based radio stations may seem like an outdated mode of communication, but for many Indigenous Peoples the low cost of radio makes it the ideal tool for defending their cultures, their lands and natural resources, and their rights. Even in very poor communities lacking electricity, many people can afford a small battery-powered radio. Radio is the medium of choice in many remote areas with little other forms of communication and it is the primary source of news, information and entertainment.

In this way, the U.S.-based non-governmental development organization Cultural Survival[10] through its Community

10. https://www.culturalsurvival.org/

Media Grant Programs and Indigenous Rights Radio Program uses the power of community radio to strengthen the voices of Indigenous Peoples, their common struggles and equally to inform them about their rights, in their languages. To date, Cultural Survival in partnership with IPMG in the SDGs has also produced SDG spots in various Indigenous languages and is distributing radio content across 55 countries.

Self-determined Development

Indigenous Peoples have innate social, cultural, spiritual and economic ties with their lands, territories and resources, which shape their identity and existence. The land, territories and natural resources are part of them. Indigenous Peoples nourish the forest, desert, rivers and fields which form part of their cultures. They have built their knowledge systems and sustained their lives interacting with and co-depending on natural resources.

"But lately Indigenous Peoples have been evicted from their land, territories and natural resources in the name of hydropower dams, extractive industries, which have destroyed their land, villages, livelihoods, secrets sites, including their customary institutions," says Joan Carling, the International Focal Person for the IPMG in the SDGs. Carling further adds, "Such occurrences have caused Indigenous Peoples continuous discrimination and marginalization as an effect of economic development in many states across the world."

The plans are undoubtedly beneficial for the country's economic development. But such plans undertaken usually by multilateral development banks and private sector investors in many countries are creating suffering among Indigenous Peoples. Frequently, they are resulting in widespread human rights violations including escalating conflicts, forced

displacement, and irreparable loss of traditional livelihoods and massive environmental degradation.

Often development projects operate in areas typically inhabited by Indigenous Peoples, who are often entirely dependent upon rivers and forests for their livelihoods. Thus implementation of such development projects on or near Indigenous Peoples' territories without Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) has become the most pervasive source of human rights violations and one of the greatest challenges to exercising their full and internationally recognized human rights. Indigenous communities that stand against and obstruct the work often are portrayed as "anti-development" and are often detained, tortured, or even killed. Crimes against them are not investigated.

"Development and human rights are not contradictory concepts, and they should go together," says Advocate Shankar Limbu,[11] who is also secretary of the Lawyer's Association of Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples (LAHURNIP). "Indigenous Peoples are not anti-development. They are not stupid either to oppose the development works, because they also know that development works will eventually benefit them. But, if development is for people, their participation should be ensured. Their perspective of development is different, which is, self-determined, just and sustainable."

In relation to development, Indigenous Peoples demand a mechanism that requires FPIC. They simply want an inclusive partnership based on respect for their self-determined development, universal access to justice to ensure the effective protection of their collective rights against land grabbing, displacements, and destruction of cultural heritage by states

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11. Advocate Shankar Limbu, Secretary of the Lawyer's Association of Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples (LAHURNIP) in an interview.

and private sectors. Indigenous Peoples are the embodiment of sustainable development. Achieving the SDGs means respecting and protecting of Indigenous human rights, recognizing their customary institutions, and their sustainable resource management systems, going beyond the social and environment safeguards to fully respect human rights, equitable benefit sharing, and accountability.

The previous MDGs did not overcome discrimination against Indigenous Peoples. If the SDGs really want "no one left behind," Joan Carling says "States should take concrete actions and show willingness to be abide by and implement their international obligations and commitments to ensure effective and meaningful participation of Indigenous Peoples in decision making at all levels, institutional reforms and mechanism for enforcement of socio-economic development, as per the UNDRIP. Indigenous Peoples then are ready to extend cooperation in development and partnership to achieve the SDGs, on the basis of equality, equity, accountability, cultural diversity, non-discrimination and respect for human rights."[12]

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted in 2007 and signed by 144 states. It was created by Indigenous leaders for Indigenous Peoples around the world. Indigenous Peoples will continue their efforts for universal development goals such as the SDGs to include their collective rights demands.

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12. Joan Carling was interviewed on the topic of the SDGs, What is meant for Indigenous Peoples? during the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII) 16-27 April, 2018 at UN Headquarter, New York.

About the authors

PHILIP LEE is General Secretary of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) and Editor of its journal *Media Development*. His publications include *Communication for All: New World Information and Communication Order* (1985); *The Democratization of Communication* (ed.) (1995); *Requiem: Here's another fine Mass you've gotten me into* (2001); *Many Voices, One Vision: The Right to Communicate in Practice* (ed.) (2004); *Public Memory, Public Media, and the Politics of Justice* (ed. with Pradip N. Thomas) (2012); *Global and Local Televangelism* (ed. with Pradip N. Thomas) (2012). In 2013, he was conferred Doctor of Divinity (Honoris Causa) by the Academy of Ecumenical Indian Theology and Church Administration in Chennai, India.

SARAH MACHARIA leads the gender and communication programme at the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC). She is also the global coordinator of WACC's flagship initiative the Global Media Monitoring Project (GMMP), a 120-nations longitudinal research and advocacy initiative for gender equality in and through the news media running since 1995. She is the principal author of the 2010 and 2015 *Who makes the news?* The Global Media Monitoring Project reports and co-editor of the UNESCO-published *Setting the gender agenda for communication policy* (2019). She represents WACC on the board of the Global

Alliance on Media and Gender (GAMAG) initiated by UNESCO to follow up on the implementation of the media recommendations (Section J) of the UN 1995 Beijing Platform for Action for the Advancement of Women. Sarah holds a PhD in Political Science from York University in Toronto. Prior to her current role, she worked extensively with feminist movements at the pan-African level and at the UN Economic Commission for Africa.

DEV KUMAR SUNUWAR comes from Koits-Sunuwar, one of the 59 Indigenous communities in Nepal. A Community Media Grants Project Associate at Cultural Survival, he holds Masters Degrees in Journalism and Mass Communication, Political Science, and Law, specializing in International Law and Human Rights from Tribhuvan University in Nepal. He has worked in media for more than 15 years in print, radio, TV and online, and also has experience working as an investigative journalist. Dev was a column writer on Indigenous Peoples and Minority Groups for mainstream newspapers in Nepal. Most recently, in order to amplify the voices of Indigenous Peoples, together with his colleagues, Dev founded Indigenous Television, Nepal's and South Asia's first and only Indigenous community television.

MICHAEL TRABER (1929-2006) was born and educated in Switzerland. In 1956 he was ordained into the Bethlehem Mission Society from where he went to the USA to study sociology and mass communication at Fordham University and New York University (1956-60). He gained his PhD in mass communication. His publications include: *Rassismus und weisse Vorherrschaft* (Racism and White Dominance), Fribourg and Nuremberg (1972). *Das revolutionäre Afrika* (Revolution in Africa), Fribourg and

Nuremberg (1972); *The Myth of the Information Revolution* (editor), London: Sage Publications (1986); *Few Voices, Many Worlds: Towards a Media Reform Movement*, co-edited with Kaarle Nordenstreng, London: WACC (1992); *Communication Ethics and Universal Values*, co-edited with Clifford Christians, Thousand Oaks: Sage (1997).

LORENZO VARGAS is a communication for development specialist and researcher on citizens' media. He coordinates the Communication for Social Change programme of the World Association for Christian Communication (WACC), supporting community media initiatives in Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean, the Pacific, and Africa. He holds a Hons. BA in Development Studies from York University, an MA in Communication from McGill University, and has pursued further studies on media research and policy at the University of Brasilia and the University of Oxford. His publications include: *Citizen's Media as a Tool for the Local Construction of Peace in Colombia: Opportunities for Youth* (2013); *Producing Citizenship in Contexts of Conflict: Citizenship Practices among Youth Participating in Save the Children's Media Production Programs in Colombia* (2014); and *Indigenous Community Media Aid Reconciliation in Canada* (2015).

The Centre for Communication Rights

THE CENTRE FOR COMMUNICATION RIGHTS, with its slogan "Many Voices One World", promotes people's informed and democratic participation in decision-making processes about issues that directly affect their lives.

Despite the rapid spread of digital technologies, millions of people on every continent lack access to communication platforms, have limited access to relevant and accurate information and knowledge, are underrepresented or misrepresented in the media, and are not media literate. Shrinking spaces for civic action around the world exacerbate these challenges.

These failures exclude people, particularly the poorest and most marginalized members of society, from participating in decision-making processes about issues that directly affect their lives.

THE CENTRE FOR COMMUNICATION RIGHTS believes that vibrant citizen's media, democratic communication ecosystems, and open access to information and knowledge are the cornerstones of civic participation.

The Centre was established in 2017 in honour of a landmark report published in 1980 by the UNESCO-established International Commission for the Study of Communication

Problems that highlighted the critical relationship between democratic media systems and civil society participation. The issues raised by the report are even more relevant today amid the prevalence of information and communication technologies (ICTs), the transnational and multi-stakeholder nature of media governance, and worldwide threats to democracy in a digital world.

THE CENTRE FOR COMMUNICATION RIGHTS was established by WACC and is run from WACC's offices in Toronto and London.

All human and social activity depends on communication. No matter the issue – poverty, conflict resolution, self-determination, migration, health, land, housing, the climate crisis – little can be done without effective communication. A framework is needed that enables, empowers, and transforms; that challenges power structures and sociocultural traditions to guarantee the public voices and genuine participation of everyone – especially poor, marginalized, excluded and dispossessed people and communities. Such a framework is offered by the concept and practice of communication rights.

Since communication clearly underpins genuinely sustainable development and requires equitable access to information and knowledge, to information and communication technologies, as well as plurality and diversity in the media, this book identifies the missing *UN Sustainable Development Goal 18: Communication for All*, whose purpose is to expand and strengthen public civic spaces through equitable and affordable access to communication technologies and platforms, media pluralism, and media diversity.

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Many voices, one world