

Interactive Media Initiatives for Community Development Projects In Kenya: Strategies And Challenges

Evelyne Awuor Olum¹, Prof. Okumu-Bigambo², Dr. Benard Malakwen³

1(Department of Communication Studies, Moi University, Kenya)

2(Department of Communication Studies Moi University, Kenya)

3(Department of Communication Studies, Moi University, Kenya)

Abstract: *It is highly observed that Community Development is not a new concept. Countries embraced it from early stages and Kenya is not left out. It is also clear that community development is aimed at promoting human development by empowering and strengthening community capacities for sustainable development. However, the concept has been misconstrued by both change agents and the purported beneficiaries. There is mistrust and fear of opportunistic implementation of development projects. It is vital to evoke trust among all stakeholders. This study recognizes the key roles of communication in community development. It's overarching objective is to investigate the interrogative media initiatives, strategies and challenges in community development projects. This is established by review of literature and visiting an existing community project in a rural area, conducting interviews, administering questionnaires and focus group discussions with project management and key stakeholders to get response on the type of interrogative media used as well as the level and types of participation used, as well as the involvement of a communication expert input.*

Keywords: *communication, community, development, organization, participation, performance, project, psychology*

I. INTRODUCTION

Jan S. (2008) has looked at the changing theories of development. On the modernization process, the founding of the United Nations stimulated relations among sovereign states. During Cold War, the superpowers tried to expand their own interests to the developing countries. He further says that the US was even defining development as the replica of its own political-economic system and opening the way for the transnational corporations. Development was defined as economic growth.

The researcher observes that a wrong position was created in people's minds, where the change agents bear the banking pedagogy mentality and the community members bearing in mind the opportunistic manner in which the community projects were handled. The concept was completely misconstrued. It is at this point that the applicability of the theories relevant to persuasion, participation and attitude change becomes paramount. The correct communication strategies must be employed and involving of communication specialists becomes vital.

The KIE (2005) Training Manual on Community Development posits that the aim is to promote human development by empowering and strengthening community capacities for sustainable development. It further says that community members have always been working together in one way or another to promote their welfare for example hunting and gathering to modern agricultural and industrially based development. In highlighting the history of Community Development, Chambers (1997) as quoted in KIE (2005) further argues that the approach became popular in developing countries in 1950's and this was influenced by both internal and external factors such as: Community improvement and social welfare programmes in the USA and Britain in 1930's focusing on the improvement of the welfare of rural communities, social welfare programmes geared towards poverty relief in urban areas in USA and Britain, Indian rural development experience from the 1920's and 1930's.

Jan S. (2008) describes development as a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems, which include economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being. He further posits that Rural Community Development is a process conducted by community members. That it is a process where local people cannot only create jobs, income and infrastructure but also help their community become fundamentally better able to manage change.

The researcher concurs that indeed Community Development is not a new idea, as seen in the background, at least in the sense of attempts, through some kind of collective action to improve community's material or spiritual life, "improvement". In fact, Dore and Mars (1981) say that improvement is defined more often by reference to other communities deemed to be more advanced. Flora & Flora (1993) have also added that Community Development combines the idea of 'community' with 'development and that community development relies on interaction between people and joint action rather than individual activity.

Gruidl&Hustedde (2015) also describe Community Development as building solidarity and agency by applying the methods of self-help, felt needs and participation. They further stress that these practices are value based and are most likely to be expressed within a democratic context. Solidarity is finding a sense of who we are together and can be discovered through shared norms and values or by addressing collective issues.

Well, as a strategy to diffuse the resistance and mindset created by the colonialists, communication becomes key to functioning organizations and groups. Communication, whether effective or not, takes place constantly in organizations and groups. Communication is inseparable from and essential to everything that occurs in a set up. We are living in an age of information and sophisticated communication technologies bring outside information into the organization faster and in greater volume.

This study was carried out in AlegoUsonga, a community in Nyanza part of Kenya. The project is notably expanding, arousing the interest of the researcher to conduct this study. It has greatly improved the living standards of the constituents and is highly appreciated.

From the literature reviewed, the researcher is oblivious of the fact that; a wrong position about change has been created in the peoples' mind, that change agents bear the pedagogy mentality as the constituents also bear in mind the opportunistic manner in which change is handled.

This calls for relevant theories to be used to inform the study, especially persuasion, participation and attitude change. At the same time, correct communication strategies also must be employed as well as involving the services of a communication specialist to oversee the process of project initiation and implementation, for purposes of sustainability and ownership.

II. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

From a sociological point of view, KIE (2005) describes community as any consciously organized group of people residing in a specific area or locality, sharing common facilities, resources, services, interests, aspirations, bond of solidarity and a vision of preferred common future.

Jan S. (2008) define Development as a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems, which include economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being, Jan S. (2008). He further emphasizes that Rural Community Development is a process conducted by community members. That it is a process where local people cannot only create jobs, income and infrastructure but also help their community become fundamentally better able to manage change.

KIE (2005) describe Community Development as a process involving community participation in critically identifying and analyzing people's needs and problems, prioritizing them, setting goals and making decisions on sustainable use of available resources to improve quality of their lives. It is aimed at empowering communities, strengthening their capacities and motivating them to attain positive change of attitudes and self-reliance.

Dore and Mars (1981) assert that Community Development is not a new idea, at least in the sense of attempts, through some kind of collective action to improve community's material or spiritual life, "improvement" being defined sometimes by new ideals preached by reforming prophets more often by reference to other communities deemed to be more advanced. Flora & Flora (1993) on the other hand further indicate that Community Development combines the idea of 'community' with 'development'. Community development relies on interaction between people and joint action rather than individual activity.

The researcher's analysis in terms of looking at these concepts of Community Development as described above by KIE (2005), Dore & Mars (1981) and Flora & Flora (1993), it is observed that indeed community development is not a new idea. The new phenomena, however, is the bureaucratic institutionalization of community development, as such a true participatory development needs to be embraced. Supported by Syokau&Stradhdee (2010), they say that Participatory Development has been embraced by Third World governments and international organizations such as the World Bank as a means to reduce poverty and empower disadvantaged communities.

The researcher therefore agrees that the emphasis on creating partnerships and using participatory and people-centred approaches has obvious political appeal, however, there is evidence that in practice interventions designed to increase Participatory Development and reduce poverty have yet to have the desired empowerment, transformation and sustainability effect. This therefore made this research study vital as it sought to identify the types of interrogative media adopted by the organization under study.

III. PARTICIPATORY COMMUNICATION IN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Jan S. (2008) has this to say about involvement of local people in local planning for communication - Communication initiatives for the poor are rarely planned with input and participation from the poor, for example in India the invention of information kiosk, almost similar to the Kenya's community policing. These are beneficial to specific people like farmers and for crime control but less useful to the landless or those lacking basic needs who have other types of information need.

In view of the poor and their right to information/communication, while there is effort to enhance access to information, the combination of a top-heavy bureaucracy and institutionalization corruption remain an obstacle in the way of equitable rural development.

This therefore draws the researcher's attention to the concept of communication;

Hybels S. and Weaver L. (2007), describes communication as a process where people share information, ideas and feelings. The elements of which included sender, receiver, message, channels, noise, feedback and setting.

KIE (2005) refers to communication as a process of conveying and passing information from one source to another through a media in order to establish a common understanding. In this study, the researcher would ascertain this vital role and the interactive media that actually provoke the much needed participation in development projects. Communication helps to define a community by establishing the process, modes and acceptable structures within which the community members relate and interact.

People get into communication because they have information, ideas and feelings they want to share. This is not a one way process. People are sender-receivers. Channels/media used are the route traveled by a message, for example face to face, where sound and sight are key. Other channels include radio, television, records, newspapers in the mass media.

Feedback includes the responses of the sender-receivers, which is very vital since it lets the participation in the communication. It is important to note the possible noise-the interference that keeps a message from being understood or accurately interpreted. Forms of noises include external, internal and semantic. It is always vital to also put into consideration the setting. We have intrapersonal communication, interpersonal communication, small group communication, public communication and intercultural communication, Hybels S. and Weaver L. (2007).

Specific channels/media of communication as described by KIE (2005) are either direct or interpersonal and indirect or play. Direct or interpersonal is whereby one directly interacts with the audience or receives information without using any agent or intermediary. On the other hand indirect or relay method involves an agent or intermediary like community opinion leaders. This is criticized over its prone to distortion, however it is also suitable when dealing with hostile communities and overcoming language and cultural barriers.

Communication within communities could be through different modes, which include verbal communication, written communication and electronic communication. These could be on a one-on one, one-to-group, group-to-group, experts-to-community, award winning, field events, benchmarking trips. Community mobilization can involve local leaders, provincial administration, parents, religious leaders, women leaders, social welfare officers, community health workers, collaboration with other stakeholder. Advocacy strategies borrows from these elements, for example they could organize for advocacy meetings, lobby groups or media. Community mobilization therefore include public barazas, meetings, visiting people in their homes, group discussions, social and resource mapping, use of historical profiles and vision mapping and then action planning.

Communication forms integral part in formulating strategies to win over people on issues change. First step is to identify in each situation, who are in each category, for example, the ones cooperating, you must plan how to get them actively involved, plan a campaign of awareness for apathetic and passive group whose aim is to encourage them to agree and cooperate, for those opposing there is need to engage them in constant dialogue both as a group as well as individual.

Steps in making an entry/exit to a community include familiarization, negotiations, awareness raising (situation analysis/community diagnosis), target group selection, deciding on the action to be taken, training for sustainability and maintenance, participatory monitoring and evaluation including sharing of benefits/losses, organization formation/strengthening and networking, withdrawal and finally documentation of project experiences for the record and as lessons to those who may wish to work in the area in future or replicate elsewhere.

Challenges experienced by development workers in communities, which tend to negatively affect the effectiveness include poor entry points, corrupt leaders, disorganized communities, poor knowledge among the majorities on the social dynamics of exploitation in their communities, the culture of silence among community members, wrong conception of the project objectives and wrong expectations from the community members. Advocacy is a key communication aspect that is relevant in the success of community penetration and project acceptance.

Participation forms integral part of success of community projects, however, no consensus exists around a common definition of participation: it varies depending on the perspective applied. "Some stakeholders define participation as the mobilization of people to eliminate unjust hierarchies of knowledge, power, and economic distribution. Others define it as the reach and inclusion of inputs by relevant groups in the design and implementation of a development project. These examples represent two of the main approaches to participation: a social movement perspective and a project-based or institutional perspective. These perspectives

share a common understanding of participation as the involvement of ordinary people in a development process leading to change. Their scope and methods, however, can differ”, Tufte (2009).

Why is a participatory approach required? There are several answers. From the institutional perspective mentioned above, participation can be used a tool to achieve a pre-established goal defined by someone external to the community involved. For the social movement mentioned above, participation itself can be a goal as an empowering process. There is, however, growing consensus for active participation in the early stages of a development project or program, both in research and design of interventions. Such participatory goal setting does not secure a continued role for participation in the following stages of project implementation. It only indicates that with ownership in setting goals a sustained process with relevant outcomes and impact will be possible.

Furthermore, the fundamental aim of empowering people to handle challenges and influence the direction of their own lives is inherent in participation. In Deepa Narayan’s definition of empowerment, participation becomes a turning point: “Empowerment is the expansion of assets and capabilities of poor people to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control, and hold accountable institutions that affect their lives” Narayan (2006). Narayan’s perspective is the institutional one, where participation for empowerment is about strengthening the people’s capacities and the demand side of governance.

It is significant to note from these related literature that community Development emphasizes on peoples’ participation in development. Outsiders do not transfer technology but share methods which local people can use for their own appraisal, analysis, planning, action, monitoring and evaluation thus, liberating pedagogy becomes key in the communication aspect of community development. Development is not just about resources, it is also about attitudes and beliefs, which need to be persuaded to change making the application of the community development theories vital in any community development idea.

IV. INTERACTIVE MEDIA

The study found that top-down was the most commonly employed communication method in the project followed by down-top method, dialogic (2way) method and grapevine communication method. Grapevine communication is an informal, unofficial and personal communication channel or system that takes place within the organization as a result of rumor and gossip. In top down communication method, information flows for the top management downwards, while in down top communication information flows from the low level management to the top level management.

This is in line with Larrison (2002) argument that both top down communication method and down top communication method involve one way communication. Unlike, top-down communication method, grape vine and down top communication method, dialogic (2way) method is interactive. These findings agree with Frahm and Kerry (2006) findings that two-way communication (dialogic) allows interaction between members and leaders.

The study found that community development projects were collecting views of members of the community concerning the management style and newly emerging activities through meetings (open fora) and through open door policy. These findings agree with Zhimin, Lenan and Peng (2016) argument that open forum and open door policy are the most common methods of collecting views of members of the community. The study established that the most commonly used method to add knowledge on how to run their businesses to keep pace with the turbulent business environment was periodic trainings, followed by open fora and benchmark visits to other projects.

These findings agree with Jarrett and Jefferson (2007) findings that community based organizations use training programmes to add the knowledge of their members. The study found that the Sacco was mostly using face to face media initiatives to communicate change. While face to face, family/religious gatherings/barazas and women and key leaders to speak with others involve interaction between members, music/dance/drama, poetry, proverbs and storytelling involve one way communication. Communication specialists employed a variety of interrogative communication means throughout the implementation process of the projects. Among the interrogative communication means reported included door to door advocacy, flyers, use of text messages, community gathering, advocacy on utilization of suggestion box and use of local radio stations. The utilization of interactive media helps in dealing with challenges related to information flow, literacy levels and information clarity.

The main channels of communication in the project are top-bottom and horizontal. A bottom up communication method is where information flows from the employees or from the members to the management. This kind of communication ensures that members or employees are involved in decision making and hence it becomes easier to implement these decisions. On the other hand, horizontal communication involves formation transmission between people in the same organizational hierarchy like between members of the Sacco or between employees. A bottom up and horizontal communication is one of the best communication

method in a community based organizations as it enhances interaction and ensures that the members views and opinions are considered in decision making.

The channels of communication selected in an organization determine whether there will be interaction or not and hence the rationale is of great importance. The level of knowledge among the members is an important factor to consider. If some members do not know how to use a phone, social media sites like whatsapp cannot be used. In addition, levels of involvement of the members, culture and beliefs of the community, levels of delegation and number of groups within the projects influence the selection of channels of communication, which may be interactive or not.

These findings concur with Pieterse and Dijk (2012) argument that the factors influencing the choice of communication channels in community based projects include level of education, culture, beliefs and number of members.

The study found that communication is an important component of an organization Interactive communication between members and between members and management is very important to the survival and performance of an organization. This is because communication enables members and leaders to share ideas on what to change and how to improve performance. These findings concur with Zhang and Yi-Hsin (2015) argument that interactive communication allows exchange of ideas where both participants are active and can have an effect on one another.

5.2.2 Relevance of communication specialists in community development projects

As community development project grow, they experience various types of changes which include change in organization structure, organization policies, and membership requirements among others. Tension related to change or resistance to change in an organization mostly result from poor communication of the change or lack of involvement of members in the decision making leading to the change. Although, the study found that most of the Sacco members were not experiencing tension when implementing any kind of change, some members were experiencing tension which means they may have not been involved in the decision making or there was poor communication on the change. These findings agree with Simoes and Esposito (2014) argument that lack of communication and involvement of employee in decision making process leads to resistance to change.

The study found that education, consultation amongst all stake holders and grassroots consultation through community leaders involve interaction between leaders and members and leads to a reduction in resistance to change. These findings concur with Pieterse and Dijk (2012) argument that consultation has become a requirement in the successful development of community based projects. The study revealed that the level of education, communication flow and lack of feedback influence interaction between members and hence flow of information.

Communication specialists are responsible for ensuring that there is regular communication between leaders and between leaders and members through meetings. This enhances interaction between them and hence easier decision making and implementation of agreed solutions. These findings agree with Scott (2014) argument that one of the responsibilities of communication specialists is to ensure regular communication between stakeholders. The study also found that communication specialists enhance the process of helping a community to strengthen itself and develop towards its full potential.

Communication specialists help in mobilizing community members for community development purpose and ensure adequate community communication which leads to effective collaborative efforts in the issue of development. These findings concur with Zhang and Yi-Hsin (2015) findings that communication specialists play a major role in the mobilization of members and in planning for stakeholders meetings. They also helped to engage citizens in development, to bring about social change among the marginalized and vulnerable population groups.

Further, the study found that participation must be fostered through communication as it leads to the transformation of the community which was the primary role of communication specialists. Additionally, communication specialists ensured effective communication which helped to move people from individual centered deficit model of learning, behavior development and change to a collective and community-focused model of participation, appreciation and equity.

V. CHALLENGES AND EMERGING KNOWLEDGE

From the focus group discussions, the Sacco members indicated that one of the main challenges they were facing was inadequate money to carry out extensive projects. In addition, the projects were facing the challenge of media reach and social media is inadequate. The project leaders need to reach members to relay information. The participants also indicated that forums, which is the current usage (group acceptance), may not be very effective in relaying information to the members. Also, the attitude towards savings and attitude towards loans and feeling that they will be auctioned was another challenge facing the members of various projects. Other challenges include previous experiences with microfinance institutions, lack of major source of revenue

and members low income. The participants of the focus group discussion also reported that registered members fail to save and they borrow loan and unable to pay due to lack of proper plan for the loan and lack of income.

The most commonly used communication method in AlegoUsonga Young Entrepreneurs Sacco is top down communication method, followed by down-top method, dialogic (2way) method and grapevine communication method. The results also show that this community development project was collecting views of members of the community concerning the management style and newly emerging activities through meetings (open fora) and through open door policy. Other methods used include open door policy, suggestion boxes, retreats, grapevine communication and use of point men. In addition, the traditional media initiatives used to communicate change include face to face, family/religious gatherings/barazas, women and key leaders to speak with others, music/dance/drama, poetry, proverbs and storytelling. Further, the interrogative media used by AlegoUsonga Young Entrepreneurs Sacco include door to door advocacy, flyers, use of text messages, community gathering, advocacy on utilization of suggestion box and use of local radio stations. Challenges facing information communication flow include lack of information clarity, high illiteracy levels and grapevine from members who happened not to be satisfied with certain decisions. The rationale of adopting various channels of communication comprise of levels of involvement of the members, culture and beliefs of the community, levels of delegation and number of groups within the projects influence the selection of channels of communication.

One of the roles of communication specialists is to enhance communication in the Sacco and reduce tension and resistance to change among members through education, consultation amongst all stake holders and grassroots consultation through community leaders involve interaction between leaders and members. The main problems that communication specialist have to deal with in the Sacco include level of education of the members, communication flow and lack of feedback. One of the roles of communication specialists is to enhance the process of helping a community to strengthen itself and develop towards its full potential. Communication specialists also ensure communication which is key component of sustainable development. In addition, they help in mobilizing community members for community development purpose. They also ensure adequate community communication which leads to effective collaborative efforts in the issue of development. This implies that communication is a central or the mediating factor facilitating and contributing to collective change process.

The results indicate that the projects initiated led to cooperation and participation, improved decision making, capital and resources, need assessment and ownership and management. The results also indicated that the AlegoUsonga Young Entrepreneurs Sacco projects were prompted by community ideas and they were sustained by the members contributions. The study also found that the benefits of projects meet the remote needs/expectations. Specifically the benefits of the projects include economic growth, sources of livelihood, created job opportunities, helped in socialization and were informative. The views of the members relating to sources of manpower, new ideas and expansion, leadership changes, areas of improvement and management issues were considered from time to time for the continuous improvement of the project.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study had to be undertaken so as to explain vital role of communication which provokes participation and to expose lack of communication expert input. The study therefore sought to find out the Interactive Media Initiatives in Community development projects. The ideal of 'participative communication' is widely accepted, however, the expert communication input is not explored and vital projects or change campaigns have failed to be embraced and owned by the beneficiaries. This study is important because many new ideas are introduced to developing regions from more developed regions without any acknowledgement of the differences with these areas. Such disregard for these differences has led to many failed and expensive efforts to diffuse new ideas into developing regions. In this paper the researcher addressed this gap by bringing out several specific lessons learned from the literature on community development projects, interactive media strategies, and the study of AlegoUsonga Young Entrepreneurs Cooperative Society.

In psychology, an attitude is an expression of favor or disfavor toward a person, place, thing, or event, while self-perception refers to how one thinks about himself/herself, which is greatly influenced by how people react to you. However, you begin to see yourself in your own way at some point. Perception is therefore a reflection of how we compare ourselves to others.

The attitude and perception of both communities and change drivers towards initiation and sustainability of community development projects at grassroots level has remained wanting both locally and internationally. Even though many projects have been erected with the aim of empowering communities, the emphasis on creating partnerships and using participatory and people-centred approaches has obvious political appeal, yet there is evidence that in practice, interventions designed to increase participatory development and reduce poverty are yet to have the desired empowerment, transformation and sustainability effect, Syokau&Strathdee, (2010).

Further, in the principle of participation, it is said that development projects will continue to suffer poor sustainability as long as development professionals and change agencies keep on doing things for communities. This calls for communication expert input to have the necessary interactive media initiatives that will see the beneficiaries empowered. This study brings into light all the key tenets needed for a successful community project as far as communication is concerned.

This research study was of use particularly to project managers, donors, communication experts, Communities, management of various firms and the government. For project managers, they may value and appreciate the contribution of communication experts in the whole process of project cycle and involve them right from the start. For donors, they may realize that it is time they consulted right from grass-root level (communities in question) and avoid imposing projects on communities, giving unrealistic timelines and high expectations of specific results.

Communication experts may appreciate and realize that they must diligently perform their liaison role, relating and understanding with various cultural beliefs, in an effort to ascertain their specific needs and avoid imposing projects that may finally fail.

Top level management in organizations together with middle level managers may value a two-way communication where feedback is key, while employees of organizations may learn to utilize their right to air their concerns through bottom-top communication and expect views to be addressed in a more amicable manner. The government has embraced devolved system and may require sustaining the projects at the grass root level. The report may also be used by other researchers to explore areas not fully researched.

Baltimore County Public Schools Design and Writing Team (2010) describe the limitations of a study as those characteristics of design or methodology that may impact or influence the application or interpretation of the results of the study. These are the constraints on generalizability and utility of findings that result from ways in which the researcher chose to design the study and/or the method used to establish validity.

Baltimore County Public Schools Design and Writing Team (2010) further looks at specific aspects of limitation as access, cultural bias, language and cooperation. They say that a study depends on having access to people, organizations, or documents and, for whatever reason, access is denied or otherwise limited, it is likely to hinder sufficient findings. However, the researcher has developed a network and a rapport with the administrator, who allowed access to the project. There exist biases, whether we are conscious of them or not. Bias is when a person, place, or thing is viewed or shown in a consistently inaccurate way. It is usually negative, though one can have a positive bias as well. However, the researcher strived to be as objective as possible, furthermore the researcher's choice of quantitative research also enhanced objectivity, the questionnaires were constructed with due respect to the cultural beliefs of the community.

As far as language is concerned, the researcher experienced this kind of barrier, as this study was being done in a rural setting, the level of English speaking was low, however, the researcher used simple and clear English as well encouraging having the questions answered in groups in trying to overcome this. The researcher used vernacular where necessary. While optimizing cooperation, some of the respondents were unwilling to disclose information, or provide data required during data collection. This may affect the research findings, however the researcher emphasized that the information given was to be treated in confidence in order to win their cooperation and trust. Permission was sought and the administrator was requested to explain to the subjects, the purpose of the research. On the other hand the researcher assumed that people were aware of the experiences that mostly affect their life choices. This is a community where people experience common problems and are guided by similar cultural beliefs. It is therefore believed that it is from these people that the true deeper needs and desires can be sought.

Over the years, people in underserved (less privileged) areas feel undeserving (inferiority complex) and tend to be protective in self-defense. This is inferiority complex and the fear of being violated. They protect what they know best and avoid outsiders from getting amidst them, as such the right strategies are needed for better penetration.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

This study therefore recommends that communication specialists/expert in community development projects should continue using diverse interrogative communication means as they were found to play a critical role in community development projects. However, it is importance to periodically assess the effectiveness of every interrogative mode used in order to ascertain its effectiveness. This will help to enhance clarity in all aspects in the implementation process thus enhancing efficiency in all operations.

The study found that projects still depended on sponsors and government for sustenance. This study therefore recommends that community projects should develop ways of ensuring sustainability after the exit of donors and sponsors. These should include income generating activities and members contributions.

The study found that most community development projects were using face to face communication to communicate change to the members. However, as the number of members continue to increase it becomes hard

to hold face to face communications. This study therefore recommends that community development projects should start adopting other communication channels like short messages and social media (whatsapp) as well as mpesa pay bill communication. In addition, it should increase frequency of meetings with all members.

The study recommends for appointment of a highly qualified communication specialists/expert as this was found critical in ensuring effective communication process in community development. The appointed communication specialists in community development should endeavor to engage in clear communication in order to ensure participation of every stakeholder. Communication specialists should also ensure effective circulation of information among different participants by using communication tools and channels appropriate to the groups involved.

Although the study found that most of the community development projects had improved the lives of their members and the community, they were facing several challenges. For instance, the study found that some members had a negative attitude towards savings and loans. This study therefore recommends that members should be trained on the importance of savings and management of their finances and loans.

This study was limited to selected community development project in a selected community in Siaya County in Kenya and hence its findings may be generalized to other parts of the country. The study suggests further studies on the challenges facing the implementation of interactive media initiatives in community development projects in Kenya.

REFERENCES

- [1] Jan S. (2008) The Role of the Humanities in Rural Community Development. *Maine Policy Review*
- [2] KIE (2005Community). *Development: A Training Manual for Community Mobilizers*.Kenya Institute of Education, National Centre for Early Childhood Education.
- [3] Dore & Mars, (1981). *Community Development*.UNESCO. London, United Kingdom
- [4] Flora & Flora(1993). Entrepreneurial Social Infrastructure: A NecessaryIngredient.” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*
- [5] Gruidl&Hustedde, (2015) *Towards a Robust Democracy*.The core competencies critical to community developers. Online journal
- [6] Syokau J. &Strathdee R. C., (2010), *Participatory Development in Kenya*. Ashgate Publishing Company. USA
- [7] Hybels& Weaver (2007), *Communicating Effectively, 8th Edition, Ashford University*
- [8] Thomas T.& Paolo M. (2009) *The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development*. The World Bank, Washington D.C, USA
- [9] Narayan (2006). Understanding knowledge sharing in virtual communities: An integration of social capital and social cognitive theories
- [10] Larrison, C.R. (2002). *A Comparison of Top-down and Bottom-up Community Development Interventions in Rural Mexico: Practical and Theoretical Implications for Community Development Programs*. Retrieved from <https://kb.osu.edu/>
- [11] Frahm, J. & Kerry, B. (2006).Developing communicative competencies for a learning organization.*Journal of Management Development* 25(3), 201-212.
- [12] Zhimin, C., Lenan, W., &Peng, C. (2016).Efficient modulation and demodulation methods for multi-carrier communication.*IET Communications*, 10(5), 567-576.
- [13] Jarrett, P., & Jefferson, L. K. (2007).Community-Based Vocational Training Project.*American Indian Culture and Research Journal*, 2(2), 34-43.
- [14] Pieterse, W. &Dijk, J. (2012). Channel choice determinants; an exploration of the factors that determine the choice of a service channel in citizen initiated contacts. *Proceedings of the 8th annual international conference on Digital government research: bridging disciplines & domains* PP 173-182
- [15] Zhang, C. B., & Yi Hsin, L. (2015).Exploring interactive communication using social media.*Service Industries Journal*, 35(11/12), 670-693.
- [16] Simoes, P. M., & Esposito, M. (2014). Improving change management: how communication nature influences resistance to change. *Journal of Management Development*, 33(4), 324-341.
- [17] Baltimore County Public Schools Design and Writing Team (2010)